

How can I help during the Vacancy?

You may be thinking that this information is not for you. This is, however, a time when the prayers and efforts of all the church are important.

Prayers

Please be faithful in praying for the church during the time of vacancy. Please remember the Churchwardens, the Area Dean, the vacancy leadership team, those working on the parish profile, and all who have additional responsibility during this time. Please also pray that God will call the right person to be your new vicar and for wisdom in discerning this.

Working together

There will be increasing responsibility on many during this time of vacancy. It is helpful if people continue with their duties as much as possible. If you find you have some spare time on your hands, then it may be worth asking your Churchwardens whether there is anything additional that you might be able to do to support them during this time.

Reflections

Very soon, there will be consultation about your perception of priorities going forward that will feed into the building of a person specification for the new rector. Please pray and reflect upon this and pass any ideas to the Churchwardens.

A prayer for use during the vacancy

*God our Father, you have welcomed each one of us in Jesus and called us to be His body in this place:
Send your Holy Spirit at this time of uncertainty and change,
to fill us with vision, energy, and faithfulness in prayer,
that we may be true to our calling to bring new life to our community.
Give your heavenly wisdom to those who are to choose a new rector for this parish, that she or he may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people, ready to serve us with joy, to build us up in faith and to lead us by example in loving obedience to your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

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Archdeacon's Newsletter September 2026



Dear Friends

The purpose of this newsletter is twofold.

Firstly, I wish to say a huge thank you to Alan, who has been Rector at St Nicolas for over 18 years. During this time, he has made a significant contribution to the life and witness of the parish. We pray that he and Suzie may continue to know God's provision as they follow God's call into the next season of ministry and retired life.

Secondly, I want to take this opportunity to explain how the vacancy will be managed and how the process of appointing a new Rector will work. You will see that inside there is a timeline of the important stages in this journey.

I look forward to working with the Wardens and Parish Representatives to make the best possible appointment. Please be assured of my care, prayers, and support during the coming months.

Every blessing

Martin Breadmore
Archdeacon of Dorking

Diocese of
Guildford 
Transforming Church
Transforming Lives

What happens when Alan leaves?

Who is in charge during the Vacancy? Following Alan's departure, the formal running of the parish is the legal responsibility of the Area Dean (Rev Renos Pittarides) and Churchwardens. Together, they are the sequestrators.

How does the parish function without an Incumbent? Whilst the Area Dean will provide oversight and support, he also has responsibilities elsewhere and will not be able to be present in the way that Alan is. Most of the work, therefore, will be coordinated by the vacancy leadership team who are accountable to the PCC. This will consist of the Churchwardens, administrator, treasurer, and others who share in ministerial and administrative support. It will meet regularly to ensure things continue as normal. For good reason, the Area Dean will ensure that no strategic decisions are taken during the time when there is no incumbent in the parish.

What if I have any questions during this period?

Please speak to the Churchwardens in the first instance. They will be able to direct you to the right person.

Who decides who our new Rector will be?

There are five people who will be on the formal interview panel:

- The Patron's Representative and Bishop of Dorking (Rt Rev Paul Davies)
- The Archdeacon of Dorking (The Venerable Martin Breadmore)
- The Area Dean of Leatherhead (Rev Renos Pittarides)
- The two Parish Representatives (elected by the PCC)

Will there be consultation?

Yes. The most important work that needs to be done now is the putting together of a parish profile and person specification. This is the document that lays out our priorities for St Nicolas' going forwards and the gifts that we seek in a new leader. The compilation of this document will be done by a small *Parish Profile Team* but following a process of wide consultation which will be facilitated by the diocese. There will also be an opportunity for the PCC and officers of the parish to meet shortlisted candidates and offer feedback.

What is the Timescale for all of this?

We attempt to be as efficient as possible. We do, however, need to go through a process that is laid down by the Patronage (Benefices) Measure (1986). We have already started to prepare for this process, and the following dates have been agreed.

<i>Archdeacon's meeting with the congregation</i> (to explain the process)	1 st Sept 2026
<i>Vacancy Vision Workshop</i>	10 th October '26
<i>Final Draft of Parish Profile completed by</i> (stage at which most of the work is complete)	Early January 2027
<i>Section 11 Meeting</i> (profile formally agreed and parish reps chosen)	Early February 2027
<i>Advertise Post: Rector of Great Bookham</i> (Diocesan website, Pathways and Church Times)	19 th , 26 th Feb, 5 th , 12 th March
<i>Closing date for applications</i>	16 th March 2027
<i>Shortlisting via Teams</i> (Interview panel meets to shortlist candidates)	23 rd March 2027 4.00 pm
<i>Interviews</i> (held in the Parish over two consecutive days)	13 th + 14 th April 2027

The Bottom Line...

So when can we expect to welcome our new Rector?

As soon as possible... but the process can't be rushed! If we are successful in appointing a new Rector in April, we might expect an induction during September. The average time between interviews and an institution (welcome service) is approximately 4 months. Do remember, too, that a panel can decide that God's person for the post is not amongst the shortlisted candidates. This can be disappointing. It is, however, important that the right person is appointed, even if it means re-advertising and waiting a little longer.