



## **Church Profile**

### **The Town of Blandford**

Blandford Forum is a small, rural market town in north Dorset, situated approximately 20 miles from the south coast and has a population of around 10,500 people. There is an adjoining village, Blandford St Mary, across the River Stour which has a population of around 1,500 at the 2021 census, however, large housing estates have since been built. There are very small, minority ethnic groups represented in an otherwise largely white population.

About two miles outside of Blandford Forum is Blandford Camp, home of the Royal Signals with barracks and the School of Training for the Royal Signals. Approximately 6,000 soldiers and their families live on the Camp, which is also an employer of a large number of civilians.

Employment levels in the area are generally high, with the main employer in the town being the local brewery. On the two industrial estates in the town, there is a wide range of light and service industries. Local government and education are also major employers. The education system in the Blandford schools' pyramid, transitioned to a two-tier system in 2005.

The conurbation of Bournemouth and Poole, 18-20 miles away, is the nearest major shopping and cultural centre, with Salisbury 22 miles away to the northeast, and the county town of Dorchester 18 miles to the southwest.

There is no rail link to Blandford Forum, with the nearest mainline stations being Salisbury, Poole, and Bournemouth.

Blandford Evangelical Church was established in 1973, in a local farmhouse, but purchased and moved into the current facility, a redundant Methodist Church building, in 1975. A major extension was added in 1986, together with internal alterations, to provide a larger seating capacity for Services and more rooms for the youth, children's and other ministries.

### **The Church**

The church is an independent, evangelical and charismatic church. The church has a wide demographic in age range and the Sunday morning service aims to be sensitive and welcoming to newcomers who are unfamiliar with church. The teaching and the resulting challenge is applied to both Christians and 'not yet' Christians.

The church gradually and sensitively moved from its conservative, evangelical church roots and embraced renewal back in the late eighties. Today the church is still Bible-based,

evangelical, charismatic, and has a desire to be even more missional and Spirit-led in our outreach to our local communities. Historically, around fifty per cent of the congregation has come from the wider catchment area outside of Blandford Forum.

Recently, the church has begun to explore whether a change of name would make us more accessible to those outside church traditions, who may find the word 'evangelical' confusing or off-putting.

## **General**

Church Name: Blandford Evangelical Church.

Church Address: Sunnydale, Albert Street, Blandford Forum, Dorset. DT11 7HZ.

Church Office Tel: 01258 450689.

Web: [www.becbygrace.co.uk](http://www.becbygrace.co.uk)

## **Church legal identity**

The church is incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is governed in accordance with its Memorandum and Articles of Association. All Church Leaders and Pastors become ex-officio Trustees on their appointment. There are also non-Leader, elected Trustees.

Company Registration No: 5111593.

Charity Registration No: 1105954.

## **Ethos Statement**

Blandford Evangelical Church believes that our ethos emerges from a desire and motivation to express Christ's love to the community of Blandford, North Dorset, and beyond, and to reflect this love internally in our relationships with one another.

The motivation for our mission comes from Christ's love compelling believers (2 Cor 5:14) and is therefore rooted in our faith in Christ. This faith produces a distinctive heart attitude of love, which expresses and is characterised by the following values and behaviours:-

### **Values of a Relational Ethos**

Individual Centredness:	Seeing the image of God in each individual - relationships are as important as results.
Inclusively corporate:	Facilitating a sense of belonging to the church family. We recognise the value of people's diverse gifts, experience, perspective and contribution.

Interdependence:	Understanding the role of self and others in the overall whole. Each member of the church family is treated with respect as having different functions, but equal value.
Integrity:	The church and the individual being true to their values - by applying God's principles and ethics to internal and external activities and relations.

### **Our specific values**

Dependency on God:	We acknowledge our dependency on God, by faith through his Holy Spirit.
Commitment to the Bible:	We are committed to the truth of the Bible. We seek to be obedient to its teaching, evaluating our work and attitudes in its light.
Growth:	We seek the growth of our personal and corporate faith in God and numerical growth through our commitment to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).
Response:	We express our love to God in worship and the use of all our resources.
Believing Prayer:	We believe that prayer is foundational to all ministry we engage in.
Mission:	We are committed to sharing the Christian message and demonstrating God's love through practical aid and support.
Christian Unity:	We are committed to expressing our unity with other local Christian churches through co-operation, mutual support and shared resources.
Equipping:	We recognise the importance of training and empowering members of the church to use their gifts and abilities in service.
Achieving Excellence:	We are committed to integrity, honesty, quality, and professionalism, encouraging creativity and innovation in all we do

These values and behaviour are intrinsically linked to the success and fulfilment of our mission as a local church. Therefore, the attitude and motivation of our staff and the way our

mission is achieved are as important as the mission itself (John 13:34, Matt 22:36, 1 Cor 13:1-2).

As this attitude and motivation comes only from a relationship with Jesus Christ, it becomes a Genuine Occupational Requirement that our staff are committed Christians. Roles that have significant leadership, or that are central to fulfilling our aims and purposes or developing and maintaining our Christian ethos, will always be held by committed Christians. There are other roles that have key spiritual elements to them that can only be carried out by a committed Christian. It is also essential that these attitudes and behaviours continue, and so we expect our staff to act in good faith and with loyalty to that relational ethos and to Biblical Christian standards of behaviour. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Blandford Evangelical Church is committed to diversity amongst its staff and volunteers, and will not discriminate on other grounds that are unrelated to our ethos. We believe that defining our occupational requirements does not restrict, but enhances, our commitment to diversity.

We are also committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults and young people who are in contact with the church. All paid workers and volunteers who work with vulnerable adults and children are DBS-checked and receive regular safeguarding training.

## **Church Leadership**

Does the church leadership consist of Elders and Deacons?

Our male and female Leadership Team is currently five, made up of three men and two women. Every Leader is appointed on the basis that they are recognised as fulfilling the qualifying conditions of an Elder found in Scripture. They function and are regarded as Elders but are called Leaders.

We do not now have Deacons. However, the non-Leader Trustees take on many of the roles dealing with the practical aspects of running and maintaining ministry facilities, eg. buildings, equipment, repairs, upgrading, etc.

## **Church Staff**

### **Pastors**

Our two previous full-time Pastors, who were married, resigned in June 2024. They were responsible (in conjunction with the Leaders) for helping to set the tone and direction of ministry, leading services, teaching, pastoral visiting and crisis support, organising service programmes, teaching series, line-managing other staff, releasing and equipping new leaders, mission, establishing Team Leads, promoting and leading outreach.

It is now our intention to appoint a single post of Pastor over the coming months, with a view to the appointment being taken up at a mutually-agreed date in 2025.

## **Part-time Staff**

### **Administrator**

Based in the adjacent offices, the Administrator communicates information from the Leadership, plus activities, and prayer needs, by circulating a weekly newsletter via email and paper copies. Additionally, they update records, rotas, events, website, timings, etc.

### **Pastoral Support Worker**

The Pastoral Support Worker heads up the Pastoral Care Team, assesses pastoral needs and supports team members. They make pastoral visits and follow up any church attenders in need of additional support, especially those who are not an active part of our Home Groups. They work approximately 4-5 hours per week.

### **Maintenance Co-ordinator**

The Maintenance Co-ordinator endeavours to ensure the buildings are kept in working order, dealing with minor repairs and flagging up major work for the attention of the Trustees' Buildings Sub-Committee.

### **Cleaner**

The Cleaner undertakes weekly cleaning of the church buildings.

## **Church Services and Attendance**

**Main Sunday Service** is at 10.00am with attendance currently in the range 80-120 with worship, prayer, teaching, prayer ministry, etc.

**Children's ministry** runs concurrently from 10.15am in the following age groups: Sparklers 0-5, Transformers 6-11, Junction 12-14.

**Sunday evening prayer meeting:** 6.00-7.00pm. Attendance: 5-10 (running since April 2024).

**Informal prayer groups** with specific focus during the week.

**Monday Fellowship** on Mondays at 2.30pm (attendance 30-35) providing a Service which tends to attract a slightly older demographic, but also reaches out to people in the community. Regularly has outside speakers, including those from missional organisations. The Gospel is regularly presented.

**Footprints (Parent and Toddler Group)** meets Tuesdays in two sessions: 10.00-11.30am and 1.15-2.45pm. Almost entirely attended by 20-25 families who do not attend our Sunday Services. This is very relational with some Bible stories and songs.

## Other Midweek Activities

**Monthly prayer meeting** on first Wednesday each month (attendance: 8-20).

**Homegroups** on various days and times throughout the week. There are 8 Homegroups.

**Youth Discipleship Group** for Year 9+ (attendance: 3-5).

**Monthly Men's Breakfast** 8.00-9.00am on Saturdays. Has developed into an inter-church event with Anglicans at BEC (attendance: 15-25).

**Monthly Women's Bible Study Group**, 10.00-11.30am on Saturdays. This has recently re-started with new leaders (attendance: 15-20).

## Church Attenders by Age Group

We have lost a number of families over the past 18 months, which distorts the demographic figures below. Since the Covid pandemic, there has been a reduction in consistency of attendance. If every person who attends over a period of 2-3 months, attended on the same day, we would have a congregation of 150.

Over 60 years old = 57+.

40–60 years old = 41+.

20–40 years old = 14+.

10–20 years old = 17.

Under 10 = 10+.

**Number of regular attendees who are church members:** 116.

**Number of people who have come to faith in the last 12 months:** between 2-5, plus 2 Baptisms.

## Church Finances

The proposal is to employ one Pastor.

**Pastor's salary:** £40,000-£45,000.

**Pension Offered:** our pension scheme is operated by Nest, and we pay 5% employer's contribution with a 3% employee contribution, calculated on the full gross salary.

**Current bank balance in the church accounts:** approximately £40,000. We will shortly be making our next Gift Aid claim, but we also have some imminent large bills. However, our monthly income currently exceeds expenditure by around £5,000-£6,000.

**Outstanding debts on our buildings:** £0.

## **Mission Partners**

- Music For Life (African Children's Choir). Christian Education, healthcare, etc. (Sally France).
- Bethesda Project, Tamil Nadu, Southern India. A school and children's home. (Simon and Sarah Devaraj).
- Dorset Youth for Christ. Outreach and support work in schools and youth events. (Aaron Rigby and team).
- Wycliffe Bible Translation. Lugwere language Bible translation and literacy for the Bagwere people of Eastern Uganda. (NT completed and published 2017, and also now approximately one-third of OT.)
- Nourish Community Larder and Foodbank, set up by BEC and other local churches, and under the Faithworks umbrella, serving the DT11 postcode area.

## **Church Building**

The external woodwork of window frames has recently been redecorated, and repairs were carried out to the roof and gutters. The boundary wall was recently rebuilt. A new fire alarm system was fitted last year. The building is generally in good repair.

New LED screens were fitted in the Autumn of 2024, for media and songs.

We have a house next to the Church with garden space for activities and events. This house was originally used for the Pastor and family, but was converted to three offices and a one-bedroom flat above for any staff members requiring accommodation. The flat is currently temporarily rented out to a recently-appointed Children's and Families' Worker at Blandford Parish Church.

The church does not have a nursery operating from its premises.

The building is not currently let to any external organisations or groups, but has in the past permitted the free use of the building for certain community groups such as The Opportunity Group which provides support and space for parents of children with special needs, but which now has a permanent building elsewhere in the town.

## **Other Information**

The church is a member of the Evangelical Alliance and adheres to its Basis of Faith.

We believe in the priesthood of all believers and the spiritual gifting of each one for service in the Kingdom of God and the building up of the church.

We believe in leadership being plural and for men and women (Church Leader being the term we use for those with an Eldership role). We see the Pastor as being 'first among equals', with all Leaders demonstrating servant leadership. We see accountability to one

another being of vital importance. We are currently exploring becoming part of a church network to provide external accountability, resources and support.