



Hebron Church, Long Ashton
Church Pastor
Information for applicants



Hebron Church Weekend Away, October 2023

INTRODUCTION

Hebron Church is an independent evangelical church located in Long Ashton, a village in North Somerset, and four miles from the city of Bristol. The church was formed in 1934 and has maintained a faithful witness within Long Ashton since then. Over the years Hebron has experienced times of significant blessing and growth, as well as more difficult times. Approximately 30 people currently attend our Sunday services, and we have a reach of about 150 adults and a similar number of children through our groups and outreach in the community.

Since the departure of our previous pastor five years ago, the church has been led by the team of elders, trustees and deacons.

We are looking to recruit a part-time pastor/church leader/minister to partner with the leadership team in developing Hebron's worship, outreach and growth.

WHO WE ARE

Hebron Church is a community of believers seeking to follow Jesus within our community of Long Ashton. Most people who are part of Hebron live in or around the village in neighbouring villages, or have close connections with Long Ashton. Membership stands at 29, with an average Sunday service attendance of approximately 30, ranging from new born to eighties. Our wider contacts through outreach activities, children's and family groups are approximately 150 adults and a further 150 children.

Hebron started in the 1920s as a Sunday school before it was a church. Today, there we still have a strong call from God to serve and witness to children and young families, as well as those of older generations.

People come to Hebron from a wide range of church backgrounds, including Baptist, Methodist, Anglican, Pentecostal and Roman Catholic churches. We are united in our desire to worship together and to share Jesus with people in our village. This is encapsulated in our vision and values statements.

OUR PURPOSE: to be 'a community of believers following Jesus together within our community of Long Ashton'

OUR VISION: 'every adult and every child in Long Ashton encountering the love of Jesus'.

OUR VALUES: the authority of God's **Word**, the presence and empowering of the **Holy Spirit** and the **community** He has placed us in as a church and in our village.

OUR AIMS: are to 'walk closely with Jesus, each other and the people of Long Ashton'.

From its first days, God has called Hebron to share the love of Jesus with children and families. This call remains today, and is a significant focus in our outreach and ministry.

The People

In addition to the 29 members, there are several other adults who regularly attend Sunday services, with approximately 35 adults attending over a period of several weeks. We have 13 children and young people who attend regularly.

Our regulars include a significant proportion of single people, including those who have been widowed or divorced, as well as married couples and families, some of whom have young children, and in many cases where only one partner has an active faith. We believe that this diversity of ages and stages is a real asset to our church and our ministry.

Activities

Sunday services

A service is held at 10.30am each Sunday morning. In recent times these have taken a variety of formats, with all age services being held twice per month. These are 'café style' services with coffee and croissants, and an informal interactive format, designed to be an accessible way for unchurched people to join with us and encounter Jesus for themselves, whatever their age. Other services have a more traditional format with children's groups and a sermon. We have a small worship group who play at all of our morning services.

We also hold a Sunday evening services on a occasional basis.

Groups and activities

Our regular outreach activities include:

- Come and See – a weekly toddler group currently attracting an average of 20 families each week
- Saturdads – a monthly dads and kids play session
- Kidz Club – a Sunday evening youth club for school years 3 to 7.

We also run occasional events for teenagers, such as Breakfast Club which is a movie night followed by a Sunday morning breakfast and discussion of the Christian themes in the movie.

We have run several other groups in recent years including Messy Church (in partnership with the Anglican church), Forest Church, a youth group for teenagers, and a seniors group.

Hebron has one house-group that meets on Monday evenings and a men's group, who meet between weekly and monthly. From time-to-time we pause these groups for a period to meet mid-week as a whole church for a video and discussion-based course. Recent courses include the book of Haggai and the 24-7 Lectio course.

We have a monthly prayer meeting ('Power Hour') which we regard as crucial to our church life together. There are also other regular prayer meetings and events, including mothers' prayers, pre-service prayer meetings, twice-yearly 12/24 hours of prayer, and village-wide prayer events and prayer walks.

The Building

The church building is situated on Providence Lane, overlooking the village. Built as both a church and a home for the first pastor, Ernest Dyer, it has been updated and extended over the years, with significant investment recently in replacing the roof, fire escape and electrical re-wire. The main meeting space accommodates up to 80 people and



Hebron Church Building



Main meeting space

has a baptistry. An adjacent hall provides further informal meeting space and access to a recently refitted kitchen, allowing us to cater for church lunches and other events. Upstairs space comprises of three meeting rooms used by our children's and youth groups, storage and a small office.

There is a steeply sloping garden to the rear which is occasionally used for church lunches and BBQs.

The building is solely used by Hebron and not rented out to other organisations.

Wider connections

Woodlands Group of Churches

Hebron is an Associate of [Woodlands church family](#) a large independent church meeting across multiple sites in Bristol. This informal link provides support, advice, training and networking with other churches across the wider Bristol area.

Long Ashton Parish Church (All Saints)

Hebron has close links and collaboration with the Anglican parish church, working together on initiatives such as village prayer events, a Good Friday Walk of Witness, and our Village Christmas Carol service. We seek to coordinate and complement each other's mission, for example through different styles of Christmas service and with our children's and youth provision. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the churches worked together to provide a Christmas trail around the village, enabling people to hear and enter into the Christmas message at a time when church services could not be held ([Long Ashton Christmas Trail](#)).

Evangelical Alliance

Hebron is a long-standing member of the Evangelical Alliance and we agree with their statement of faith.

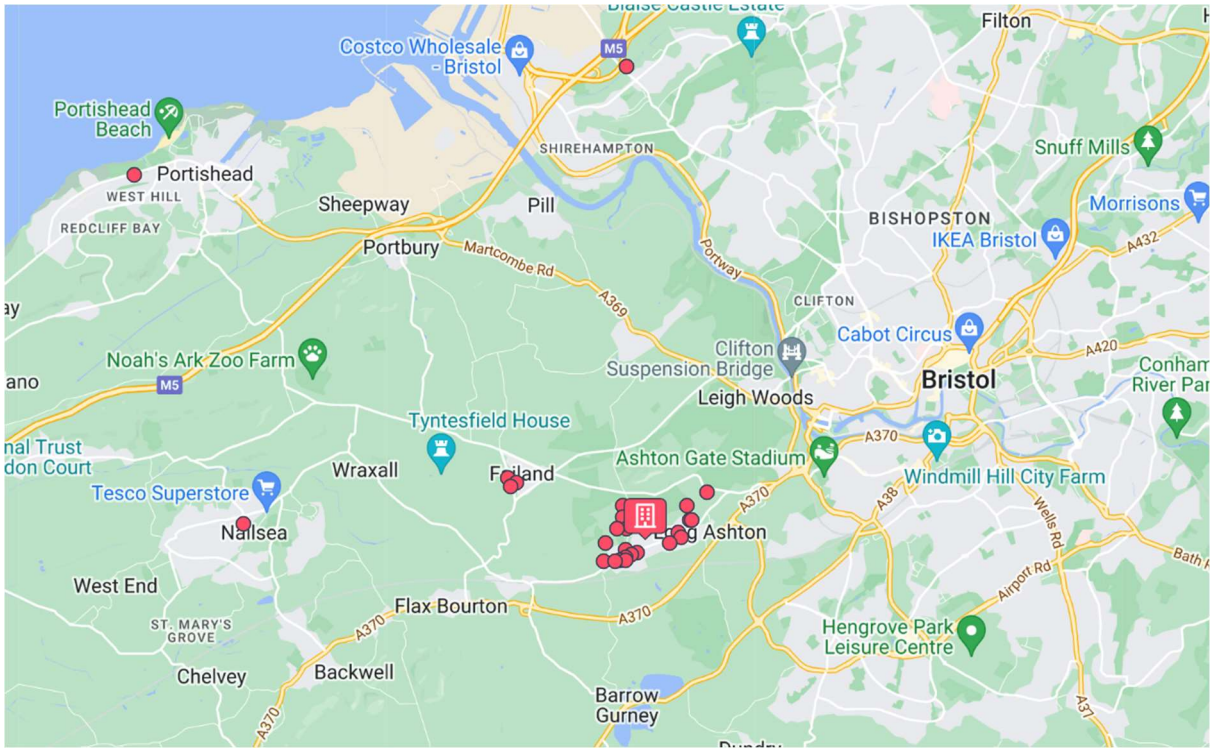
The Area

Long Ashton is a village of approximately 6,000 people. There are two primary schools, various local shops and pubs, and good transport connections being only 4 miles southwest of the city of Bristol. However, it is in the county of North Somerset.

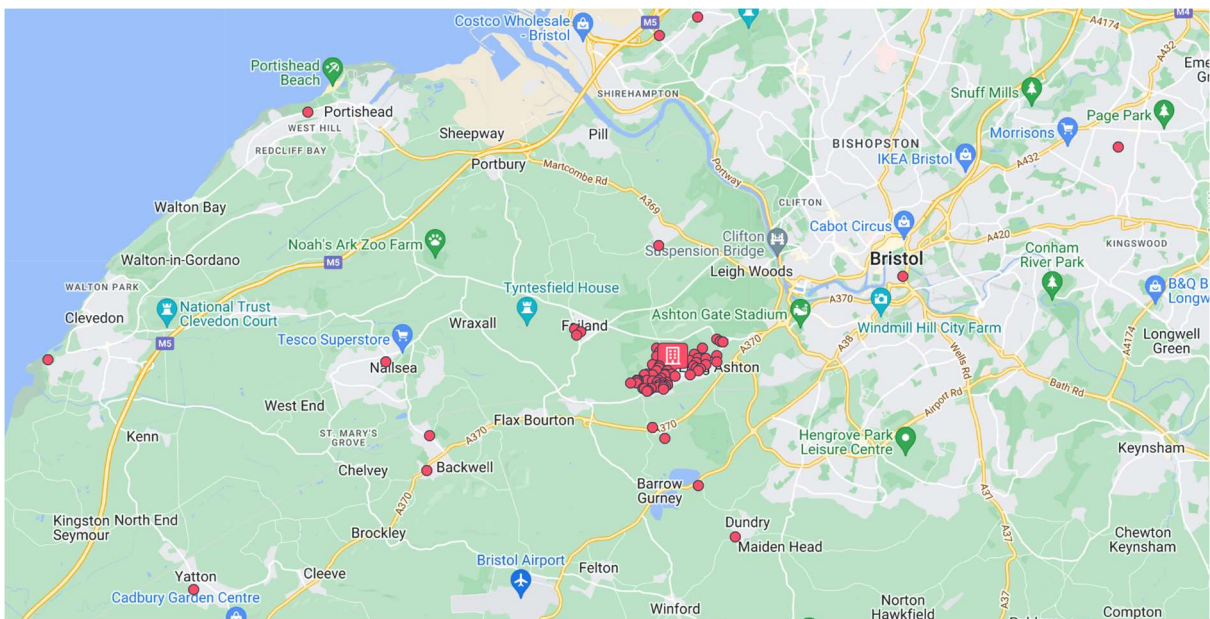
Surrounding the village is some beautiful countryside, including woods and farms. Further out are the villages of Flax Bourton and Cambridge Batch, Failand, Abbots Leigh and Barrow Gurney, which are all slightly smaller in size.

Many people choose to move to Long Ashton from Bristol for a larger home and access to countryside, often when they are planning to start a family. This means that there are large numbers of young families within the village, particularly in the newer housing developments. There are also many long-standing residents, with some in their seventies or eighties having lived in Long Ashton for their whole lives.

The following maps show the location of the church and the addresses of those who are part of/or served by Hebron:



Location of regular attendees at Sunday Services



Location of those attending any Hebron activities (whole church database)

Leadership structure and decision making

Hebron is spiritually led by a team of elders, who are elected by members at the annual church meeting. There are currently three elders in post. It is anticipated that the Pastor would serve as part of this team and provide overall leadership to the church.

There is a separate team of trustees who work with the elders and hold responsibility for the stewardship of church's resources, including finances, the building and legal, safeguarding and compliance issues. There are currently four trustees. The elders and trustees meet together several times during the year.

There are also deacon positions, which vary from time-to-time. There are currently three deacons, two of whom coordinate our prayer life, and the other who has responsibility for aspects of children's and youth work.

In addition, we are currently approaching individuals to take on coordinator roles for some of our key ministries, e.g. hospitality and welcoming.

There are two safeguarding officers in place, and a clear set of safeguarding policies, procedures and training. We also have a pastoral care team in place who support church members who need extra care, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

We believe that significant decisions that affect the life and ministry of our church should be made at church members meetings, seeking to discern the mind of Christ together. Smaller decisions in specific areas are delegated to the trustees, elders and/or deacons who are expected to be accountable to the church members meeting for the decisions they make.

Employees

Aside from the *church leader/pastor* role, the only other employee is an individual who works three hours each week to clean the building.

THE MINISTER/PASTOR WE BELIEVE THAT WE NEED

Following the departure in 2018 of our previous pastor of nine years, the Hebron Church family have taken on many different roles to help us continue to be church together. We are now in a position to seek a church leader who will build on this foundation and further encourage church members to identify and develop their gifts and to grow in their ministry, supporting people to lead in every area of the life of the church.

It is essential that the new church leader senses and tests a clear sense of call from God to take up this role. The church leader will share the vision God has given Hebron to be a community of believers:

“Every adult and every child in Long Ashton encountering the love of Jesus”.

They will also be able to lead us through a process of reflection and inspiration as we look at how best to live out that vision in the years ahead. This will include helping us to build a plan of action so that we are clear about where we will invest our time, energy and finances.

They will work closely with the leadership team of elders to achieve this and will model the pursuit of the Christian Life through worship, prayer, Bible reading, personal discipleship, the empowering of the Holy Spirit and accountability.

It will be important that they encourage members to engage with God through prayer and worship, both individually and corporately.

They will seek the leading of God for the church by listening to God, taking wise counsel, consulting with the Leadership Team and church members and by weighing what is received.

Gifts, Knowledge and Competencies

We see the danger of writing a profile for Superman or Superwoman! We would hope to see many of the characteristics, abilities and skills listed below in whoever becomes our new Pastor.

- A Spirit-filled believer who will encourage freedom for the Spirit of God to move in our church.
- Preaching and teaching ability – we want our pastor to be able to preach and teach on a regular basis, and to bring Bible focused truth to us to help us be more like Jesus
- A pastoral heart – we want the pastor to be part of the pastoral care team, but do not expect this to dominate their time.
- Evangelistic gifts – we want our pastor to show us all how to participate in the joy of sharing Jesus in our community.
- Leading our services and communal worship –we see that preparing and leading our services is a team activity and we recognise the different giftings and roles within this
- Recognising and supporting the importance of sharing communion together on a regular basis, including our families, children and young people. (We use grape juice rather than wine).
- Welcoming the gifts of the Spirit – we long for the experience and power of the Holy Spirit. We welcome and encourage the gifts of the Spirit, looking to 1 Corinthians 14 for guidance on how to use these to bless the church in an orderly way. We would love to see more of this in the regular life of our church.
- A genuine team leader - our Pastor will be the leader of our church, working alongside others in leadership roles to serve the church in its mission for God. Our church is one where many people exercise leadership in different ways to serve the church.

Practical points

We think it likely that you will have previously completed or currently undertaking appropriate theological and ministry training. As the role is part-time, it may be appropriate to undertake the role alongside theological training/education. We use MS Office and ChurchSuite for most of our communications and publications.

Responsibilities

The person who takes on this role will operate across the life of our church, working alongside other leaders and many church members, empowering all of our church members as they volunteer in some aspect of church life.

- Working with the church members to serve God in Long Ashton in line with our vision and values.
- Planning and developing the Church's preaching and teaching programme together with the elders.
- Overseeing the delivery of Sunday services by engaging appropriate service leaders, preachers and worship leaders.
- Fostering the advance of God's kingdom through outreach and evangelism, including proclamation and social action.
- Equipping and encouraging church members in their ministries and gifts
- Supporting and encouraging our shared life of mid-week groups, prayer meetings and study series as a context for discipleship, spiritual growth and pastoral care.
- Being committed to partnership and to work with other ministers and agencies in our community.

- Developing relationships with the two village primary schools, supporting them and providing a Christian voice to pupils and staff.
- Maintaining communication with our mission partners and disseminate their news as available.
- Planning and delivering seasonal events and services such as Christmas, Easter, Harvest/ Thanksgiving, baptisms, celebrations and anniversaries, as leading services for life events including weddings, dedications and funerals.
- Flexibility with working times and arrangements.

Character and personality

- We would not do well with someone whose style is too directive, authoritative or strident. Almost all of our church members and attendees participate in serving the church, so the ability to deal with people respectfully and gently is especially important.
- We are aware that church is a theocracy not a democracy, and we trust that the Pastor will show leadership, recognising that people in our church come from very varied denominational backgrounds.
- In terms of Christian discipleship and lifestyle, we want our pastor to be obedient to the teachings of the Bible, and to demonstrate self-control in every area of their life, including their sexual life. (Note: As a church we always lean towards love and grace, whilst recognising the authority of scripture).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH



Our church weekend away in 2021

In the later 1920s a young Christian, Ernest Dyer, and his sister came out from Bristol every Sunday and held a Sunday School for the children of Long Ashton. He built a meeting place on Providence Lane which also doubled as his home. Hebron was officially established as a church in 1934, with Ernest Dyer as the Pastor, a position he occupied until his death in 1967. The church was named "Hebron" because an aim was for it to be a "place of refuge" and in reference to Joshua 14 v14 where Caleb is given Hebron within the Promised Land "because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly".

During the 1930s and 1940s, Dr Vernon Charley, who developed the blackcurrant drink Ribena whilst at the Long Ashton Research Station, was the organist and an Elder of the Church. During the 1950s, Roger T Forster, founder of Ichthus Christian Fellowship was a regular preacher whilst doing National Service with the RAF.

Since the early days, the church has been led by a number of leaders, on both employed and voluntary bases. During the late 1990s/early 2000s, the church membership grew significantly. Numbers then reduced following some difficulties in the church and have remained around 30-40 regulars in the time since.

The previous pastor joined Hebron in 2009, leaving in 2018. Following his departure, the elders established links with Woodlands Church in Bristol as one of their 'associate churches', receiving support, advice and networking. Our existing relationship and cooperation with Long Ashton church has also been maintained and developed during this time.

OUR DOCTRINAL POSITION

Our constitution sets out our core beliefs:

1. The full authority of the Bible
2. The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. His miraculous virgin birth, spotless life, vicarious death, bodily resurrection and ascension, and personal return
4. That Man, by nature, is a fallen being, and there is no salvation apart from propitiatory sacrifice of Christ on the Cross
5. That those who truly believe in our Lord Jesus experience a new birth, being quickened into new and eternal life by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Divine Word, while those who finally reject Him will be lost eternally.

We believe in the baptism of adult believers by full immersion, whilst recognising that some members of our church were baptised as infants and subsequently confirmed and believes that this is a valid position to hold.

As a member of the Evangelical Alliance, we agree with their Statement of Faith. As a church blessed by the faithful ministry and preaching of both men and women, we support women in ministry in all forms.

CONTRACT INFORMATION/PRACTICAL MATTERS

Role title: Pastor / Church Leader / Church Minister (to be confirmed on appointment)

Working hours: Equivalent of three days per week. Working days and hours to be agreed upon appointment, according to the needs of the church and other commitments of the appointee (for example if the individual is undertaking theological training).

Salary: TBC, dependent on experience

Contract: Two-year contract initially, subject to extension or conversion to a permanent role by mutual agreement. This will include an initial probationary period of six months.

Start date: September 2024, or as available.

Location: Hebron Church, Providence Lane, Long Ashton, Bristol, BS41 9DQ.

Benefits: 20 days' annual leave and 8 public holidays, pro-rated to the part time hours agreed, including some Sundays, pension scheme, flexible working arrangements.

Training: We will consider funding relevant training to develop your knowledge, skills and gifts for this role. Some training elements such as safeguarding will be mandatory. If you are training for ministry we would expect to make a contribution to your training costs.

Reflection: Up to 5 paid days per year, taken together or separately, taken away from Hebron, for prayer, reflection, conference or retreat.

Support: Working as a collaborative leadership team with the elders and trustees. Informal support and networking with other church leaders through the Woodlands Associate Churches network. Regular appraisal and feedback with a nominated elder and trustee. We would also strongly encourage the pastor to have a mentor outside of Hebron.

REFERENCES

Applicants will be asked to:

- prove eligibility to work in the UK
- be fluent in both spoken and written English
- undertake an enhanced DBS check
- understand that being a practising Christian is an occupational requirement for this role (under Section 10 of the Equality Act 2010)
- provide relevant references for their faith, conduct and competencies.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, you are welcome to contact the church elders (Peter O'Donnell, Andrew Long and Rachel Stone): elders@hebron-church.co.uk

If you would like to talk informally before expressing your interest please speak to Rachel Stone on 07747 105639.

If you would like to express your interest formally, please complete the expression of interest form that you can access through our church website: hebron-church.co.uk