

Hi all,

I'm very conscious that you may have heard that Vicki has an associate priest working with her at the moment, but many of you won't have had opportunity to meet me yet - so I'm glad that Vicki suggested writing a piece to introduce myself.

My name is Steve Willson, I'm married to Jennie, and we moved into Tongwynlais Vicarage four weeks ago with most of our three and a half children, who are all in their late teens and early twenties. Our oldest daughter, Rhiannon, is still working in Welshpool, where we lived previously. Eleri and Emily have moved with us, as has Jorj, Emily's fiancé, who has lived with us for the last year or so.

Although we've been in Mid Wales for the last ten years, I'm a Newport boy and Jennie and the girls were all born in Cardiff, so we very much feel like we have come home. We're looking forward to catching up with old friends and visiting familiar haunts, as well as being closer to family which has been the main motivation for returning south.

After leaving school at 16 I worked for British Rail as a Signalling Technician for eight years before training for ordination at St John's College Nottingham. I spent 20 years in Monmouth Diocese, ministering in Newport, the lower Gwent Valleys and East Cardiff. Jennie works for Servelec, developing software packages to support local authority's social care teams. She mostly works from home so didn't find lockdown too strange. Jennie was also a licensed Lay Evangelist in St Asaph diocese and a passionate member of the Church in Wales Governing Body.

My official title here is 'Interim Associate Priest'. This is a temporary role designed to ease the pressure on Vicki whilst giving time to reshape the new posts that will be advertised here in due course (the reshaping is necessary to take into account all the new housing in Plas Dwr). When the new posts are filled my current role will end, so I may be interested in one of them or I may move on – time will tell!

In Welshpool, Jennie and I were both very much involved in the transition to Ministry Areas, which happened around five years ago. Jennie worked for the diocese as a Transition Mentor and I was a MA Leader, so hopefully we can bring some useful experience to help you in what I know to be an unnerving time of change. If I were to offer just one piece of advice it would be 'Don't Panic!' – in Pool MA everyone worried their church would close but, five years later, none of them have, and everyone worried they'd lose their vicar, but none of them did. We found a lot of benefits from working more closely together and, personally, I very much see it as a change for the better, even if it didn't always feel like it in mid-change!

We are settling in pretty well to our new surroundings and I'm looking forward to meeting more of you over the coming weeks, especially in Tongwynlais, Taffs Well and the Pentyrch churches where I will be primarily based. If you want to get hold of me at any point I'm on 029 2081 1476 and stevewillson@cinw.org.uk

Best wishes,
Steve