**Rev Andy Storch**

I grew up in Peppard, and retain my love for the countryside. Educated in the Reading area, Bradfield College was another beautiful rural setting. I went on to read law at Cambridge University, where my somewhat dormant faith caught alight, and where I also met Janice, now my wife, who hails from Northern Ireland.

I led the Christian Union at Guildford Law School and started in general practice in a High Street legal aid solicitors in Reading where I qualified. At the same time that Janice and I started our family, I set up my own law firm specialising in Criminal Defence work. Freya, then Phoebe, then Rory came along over the next 8 years and it was an enormous pleasure to conduct the marriage of Freya to Martin in this church on 28th October 2023.

Having worked largely from home at first, my firm expanded to a 10-person enterprise in Reading town centre and whist there I heard and obeyed the call of God to seek ordination.

Following selection in 2016, I was trained at St Mellitus theological college, an evening and weekend degree course, based largely in London, and I was ordained deacon in Summer 2019 at Christchurch cathedral, Oxford.

I completed my curacy in Caversham, and continued as associate priest afterwards, with specific oversight of St Margarets Church, Mapledurham. It shares many similarities to the 6 churches of this benefice. As I explored my next steps Bishop Olivia of Reading suggested I needed to experience true rural ministry – ie not just one church – and hence I found myself in the Valley last September, where I have been warmly welcomed. I therefore asked to cover for Sue Morton during her sabbatical in Spring this year, and was delighted to be appointed in July as the Priest-in-Charge. In this rather long gap since then, as the new Rectory in Pheasants Hill was purchased and effectively re-built, I have sold my law firm, which I am pleased to see has not (yet) changed its name from mine!