

## **Media Questionnaire: Stuart Longworth**

Your age and also your original home village, town or city (i.e. the place you grew up):

**Answer: age 55, born in Bath and grew up in Bramhall/Stockport**

The church and location in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer: Buckshaw Village Church**

Tell us a bit about your family:

**Answer: married to Dawn for 25 years, with two grown up children, Harry and Georgia.**

If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry?

**Answer: I own a plumbing and heating business and am entering ministry as a self-supporting minister, so will continue with my work.**

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

**Answer: I attended church as a child but drifted away in my teens. I returned to church when my eldest child was a baby and became more involved as time progressed. We moved to Buckshaw Village Church as a family 18 months after the church was planted and, the more I became involved the more I felt called to ministry.**

What has been a) the most important thing you have learned and b) the most inspiring thing you have experienced during your training? (They can be different!)

**Answer: The most important thing I've learned is that you can't do any of this in your own strength. The most inspiring thing has been hearing the testimony of so many different people. Hearing people's experiences and challenges that have brought them to where they are today has inspired me to continue to share the wonderful news of the gospel.**

As parishes continue to recover following the trauma of the pandemic, please give us some insight into how your parish is moving forward at this time (you could reflect how people have adapted and changed in the way they 'do church', including online, as part of this response).

**Answer: Buckshaw Village Church has a greater online presence including morning prayers and regular social media interaction. The pandemic highlighted the importance of community and I look forward, in my ministry, to building upon this and continuing to explore alternative ways of sharing the gospel.**

What are some of the personal challenges and opportunities you face in your ministry in the coming year?

**Answer: As a self-supporting minister I have to be realistic and understand that my biggest challenge is balancing work, ministry and family. I have recognised during my training the challenges this brings and the importance of the support of others. Although full time employment is a challenge, it is also a huge opportunity to reach and speak to those outside of the traditional church community. I really look forward to the opportunity to grow further connections within the community.**

What do you view as your most significant personal achievement? (This may be connected to your ordination training of course or it could be something else from another aspect of your life.)

**Answer: When we gather as a family with my two grown up children I could not be more proud. The fact that we managed to get through the pandemic as a business, family and whilst going through the ordination process has to feel like an achievement in itself.**

When he was announced recently as the next Bishop of Blackburn, Bishop Philip said: *"I am committed to continuing the growth of the church in Lancashire, helping to build joyful Christian communities. I would love to see the Church of England in Lancashire being an ever-stronger voice for justice, especially for the poorest. And I believe children and young people need to be at the very heart of all that we do."*

How would you seek to support the Bishop in fulfilling these aims?

**Answer: I have a real passion for a joyful Christian community and for sharing the gospel. As a church which has around 30% of children and young people within its congregation, we have a huge opportunity for youth ministry and nurturing and growing their faith. My work often gives me a window to see people's real struggles and challenges, especially in the current climate of fuel poverty. This is an area in which I do feel called to help and I am currently praying into this situation.**

Tell us something people don't know about you that might surprise them?

**Answer: I had coffee with Gary Barlow and Take That and appeared in their documentary (briefly!).**

Finally, when you get the chance, what do you do you chill out and relax?

**Answer: My wife and I love to travel and explore new places; seeing God's beauty in all its fullness across the world.**