



Parish Profile of St Mary's, Stoke D'Abernon



January 2022

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Introduction from the Diocese of Guildford

Letter from the Bishop



I moved to the Diocese of Guildford in early 2015, and have found it a warm and friendly place to be, with a strong cohort of gifted and passionate laity and clergy, and a growing commitment to building on the old and releasing the new, as we seek to 'proclaim the Gospel afresh in this generation'. In the Autumn of 2016 we launched our diocesan vision, Transforming Church, Transforming Lives, encouraging a deeper dependence on God in prayer, a focused attention to Parish Development planning and 12 Diocesan Goals as a framework for all of our mission here in Guildford. This has been well owned from the start, not least because around 2000 people fed into the process through a SurveyMonkey and a series of clergy meetings and deanery prayer events; and at the heart of it is a commitment to growing 'prayerful, confident disciples in daily life', as expressed in the first and most important of the Diocesan Goals. Do check out the details at: <https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/transforming-churchtransforming-lives> We recognise and celebrate the diversity of Church traditions in the diocese, and the range of contexts in which the Church is called to serve; and Transforming Church, Transforming Lives has proved remarkably adaptable, from catholic to evangelical, from the poorest communities to the richest, and from the smallest of villages to the largest of conurbations. If you share our excitement for this vision, along with the values that undergird our Diocesan goals, we would love you to apply!

+Andrew

Letter from the Archdeacon



There is much to celebrate in the life of St. Mary's Stoke D'Abernon. A well looked after, beautiful, church building together with a modern parish centre provides a good foundation for mission and ministry in this parish. The traditional services are the bedrock of this parish's worship. The establishment of a Mothers and Others Toddler group and a growing relationship with Parkside School provide much needed doors into the community.

Looking to the next season of ministry the new incumbent will need to find a balance between building on the current strengths of traditional worship and developing new expressions of worship that enable children and families to connect and belong. There is a need to reach out into the community more and to focus on deepening discipleship in existing members of the congregation and those who will join in the future. A passion for, and proven experience of, work amongst children and families is key for the new Rector, as is previous experience of effective ministry with schools. There is great potential in this parish for a humble, servant hearted leader with a passion for living out the Gospel and calling others to discipleship.

This appointment is perfect timing for receiving resource and support from the wider diocese. 2021 saw the launch of our new Parish Needs Process. This marked a brand-new way of working whereby the diocese will seek to walk alongside each parish to help them with vision and whatever needs they might have arising out of this.

I am very enthusiastic about this post. For the person that God calls, there is so much to offer here: the warmth of a great church family; the opportunity of leadership in a parish, deanery and diocese which offers considerable support and resources; the challenge of discerning with this community what God is doing and how we might join in; the privilege of living and working in a part of the country with so many opportunities for clergy and families.

If you'd value an informal conversation about this post, please do not hesitate to be in touch with me via archdeacon.dorking@cofeguildford.org.uk .

Venerable Martin Breadmore
Archdeacon of Dorking

A Personal Message from the Church Wardens...

During a time of vacancy, a parish goes through a time of reflection, prayer and planning as we look forward to appointing and welcoming a new Rector.

St Mary's is a living, devoted community, many of our parishioners have worshipped here for a long time. One of our strengths is our love of traditional worship. Looking to the future we wish to build on these strengths. In our mission as God's Church, we need to reach out to younger generations of worshippers and they may relate more to other forms of worship..

As part of the Vacancy process, we held a Vision workshop early in October 2021, facilitated by the Diocesan Mission Enabling team. This helped us identify our current strengths and focus on our future needs, embracing the principles of the "*Transforming Church and Transforming Lives*" initiative.

In presenting this Parish Profile, we hope to provide readers valuable insight about St Mary's. We believe that there are great opportunities in becoming our new Rector. We hope you will enjoy reading our Profile, and if you feel God is calling you to come to St Mary's, send in your application.

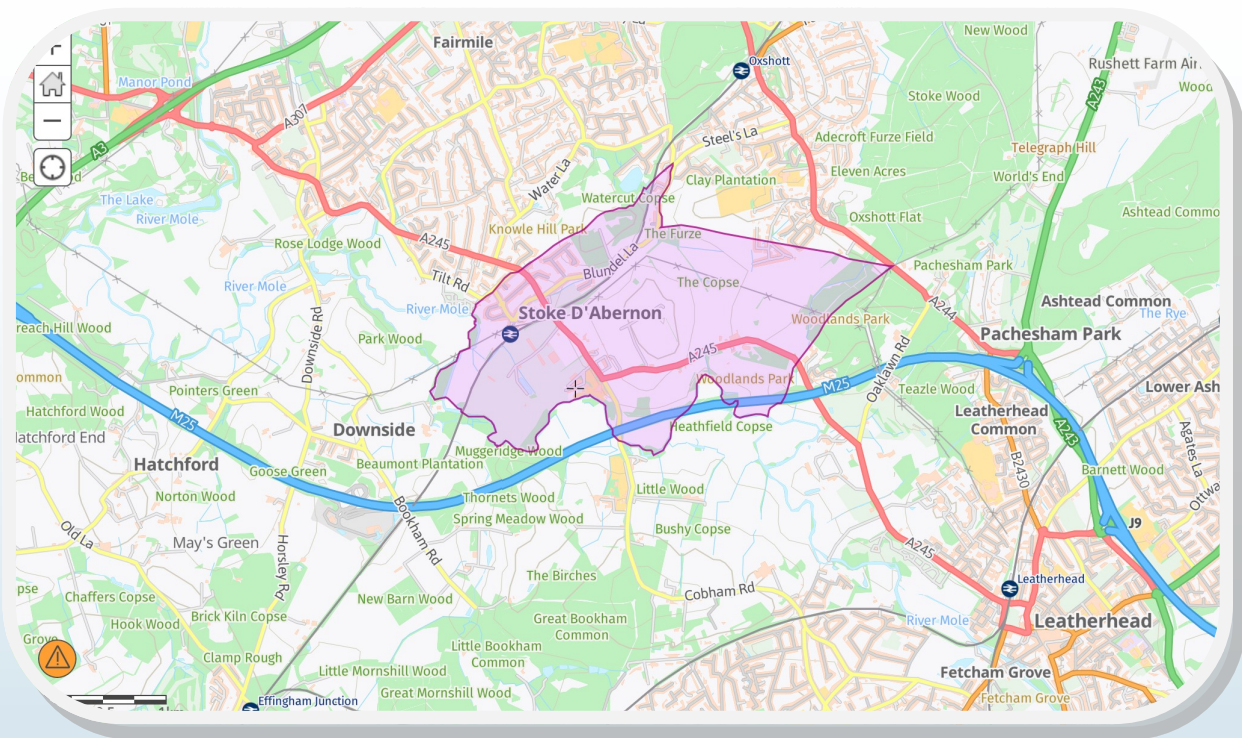


Introduction to the Parish and Church

The Parish Setting

Stoke D'Abernon is a village with a population of 1693 (2011 Census) in the borough of Elmbridge, Surrey, situated within the M25 on the right bank of the River Mole and adjoins the neighbouring villages of Cobham and Oxshott. Stoke D'Abernon has an active Residents' Association which liaises closely with the church.

The Parish Church of St. Mary's (part of the Leatherhead Deanery) lies within the grounds of Parkside School, a boys' independent preparatory school. The setting is semi-rural with a mixture of large detached and semi-detached housing. Home ownership is 20% higher than the national average, with a high percentage of managerial and professional households, which indicates that Stoke D'Abernon is a relatively affluent area. However, within the parish boundary there are also more modest communities where some residents rely on the Cobham Area Food Bank (Trussell Trust) which operates from The United Church, but is actively supported by St Mary's parishioners.



Parish Boundary of Stoke D'Abernon and Surrounding Area

The railway station of **Cobham & Stoke D'Abernon** is situated within the village and is a popular commuter route on the Guildford to Waterloo line. Close to the station is a small parade of shops including a Post Office with convenience store, delicatessen, bakery and hairdresser. The larger village of nearby Cobham has a greater variety of shops and facilities.

Oxshott, Cobham (with Downside) and Stoke D'Abernon form an integrated triangle of adjoining villages. Although each has its own identity, they share some amenities and facilities, such as doctors' surgeries and schools. There are no state schools in Stoke D'Abernon but there is the Parkside Preparatory School (ages 2-13 years) and the world-famous Yehudi Menuhin School, which specialises in musical tuition. A substantial percentage of children in Stoke D'Abernon and the local area are educated in the independent sector.

The Parish has several open recreational spaces; Cobham and Oxshott have active sports clubs whose catchment areas include Stoke D'Abernon. The village has its own cricket club where Bob Willis developed his cricket skills as a young boy!

Chelsea Football Club's training facilities are located close to the church.



The Church

In 2019 the United Benefice of St Andrew's (Cobham) and St Mary's (Stoke D'Abernon) was dissolved. This allowed St Mary's to become once again a parish in its own right, with full autonomy over style and pattern of worship and parish administration. Thus St Mary's is both the oldest church and the youngest parish in the diocese, and is within the Patronage of King's College Cambridge.



Our church has been a place of Christian worship for 1300 years. It is a small but beautiful place of prayer and peace. Those of us who worship at St Mary's feel greatly blessed to gather in this ancient, sacred church nestled on the banks of the River Mole. In the summer, visitors come from around the country to see our unique monuments and many experience the sense of God's presence in our church.

St Mary's lays claim to being the oldest parish church in Surrey. It is mentioned in Simon Jenkins book *"England's Thousand Best Churches"* and merits a lengthy entry in Pevsner's *"The Buildings of England"*. It has its origins in Saxon times dating back to the 7th century but the Chancel dates from the 13th Century. The Norbury Chapel is early Tudor; and the west end of the Nave, the Tower and the Transept are Victorian. The church contains ancient memorial brasses (including the world-famous brass of Sir John D'Abernon The Elder, one of the oldest in the country) and other historic treasures.

There is seating for 168 people in pews, and for over 200 with the use of chairs. The fabric is well cared for with no significant findings at the Quinquennial Inspection carried out in 2021. The church was re-roofed in 1998.



The churchyard was closed in 2019 and is now maintained by Elmbridge Borough Council. A small group of parishioners voluntarily 'snip and clip' to maintain the approach path from the lych-gate to the church, Garden of Remembrance, memorial urns and other flower beds. The graveyard is used for the interment of ashes.



Worship at St Mary's

Long serving members of the St Mary's congregation have valued this beautiful and historic church as a sacred place to worship God and seek Christ through traditional forms of worship, including services based on Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer. St. Mary's liturgy follows the catholic, Eucharistic traditions of the Church of England, presided over by robed clergy. We have a strong, choral liturgical tradition which attracts visitors from beyond our parish to worship with us.

The pre-lockdown service pattern was as follows:

Time	Service	Style	Typical attendance
8am	Said Holy Communion	Common Worship traditional liturgy	13
10am	Main Service	1st Sunday: Choral Eucharist Common Worship traditional liturgy 2nd Sunday: Family Service 3rd/4th Sunday: Parish Eucharist Common Worship contemporary liturgy 5th Sunday: Matins (BCP)	51 48 46 36
6pm	Evensong	Weekly: Book of Common Prayer with occasional Cathedral Style Choral Evensong	21



In addition, services are held for occasional red-letter Saints' days and other special weekday and festal services.

Attendance figures:	2019	2021 *
Easter Day – Festal Eucharist	170	closed
Remembrance Sunday	117	63
Christmas Eve crib service	250	cancelled
Christmas Eve Midnight Mass	83	28
Christmas Day Festal Eucharist	63	50

* Post-lockdown and during the vacancy, St Mary's has restarted services based around the flagship 10am Sunday Parish Eucharist service weekly and 6pm Evensong twice monthly. Typical attendances: 32 and 20 respectively.



EVENT	2019	2020	2021 Jan-Sept
Baptisms	6	5	15
Weddings & Marriage Blessings	7	0	2
Funerals & Thanksgiving Services	10	4	9

Electoral Roll

At the end of 2020, there were 138 people on the electoral roll; of these 28 were resident in Stoke D'Abernon whilst 110 resided outside of the parish.

Music at St Mary's

Choral

St Mary's is renowned for its long-established tradition of high-quality music.

Cathedral Style Choral Eucharist is sung on the first Sunday of every month A Cathedral Style Choral Evensong is sung several times a year.

Special choral services include the candlelit Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, and choral services for major festivals include Christmas Eve Midnight Mass and Easter Sunday Choral Eucharist.

The boy and girl choristers currently sing at services of Choral Evensong; they form part of our Youth, Education and Outreach work, and are supported by trust grants. The Ouseley choral scholars are sixth formers or university undergraduates supported by a three-year grant from the Ouseley Church Music Trust, and have sung at a number of services including Parish Eucharist and Choral Evensong.



The five adult choral scholars are paid to sing at services of Choral Eucharist and Choral Evensong, and at special services including Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and Midnight Mass.

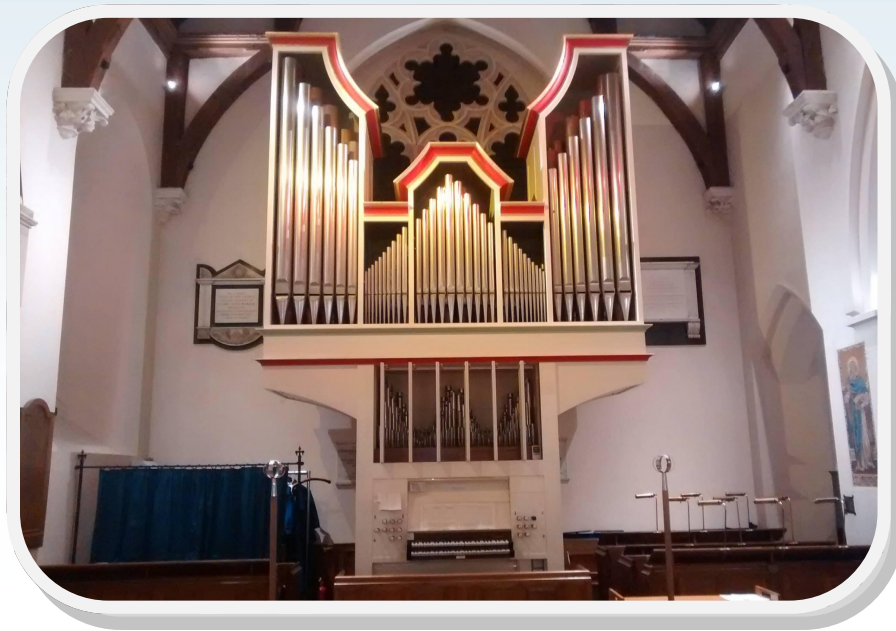
The choristers and choral scholars also sing at wedding services.

We have a small parish choir formed from members of the congregation who sing at parish Eucharist services.



Organ

Our superb organ was installed in 1975 by Frobenius Organ builders of Lyngby, Denmark. This outstanding instrument was voiced in the church by Erik Frobenius, being a smaller cousin of the renowned organ of Queen's College, Oxford, which was installed by Frobenius a decade earlier.



Concerts

There is a well-established and much appreciated monthly series of lunchtime concerts given in the Church and the Hall, which attract audiences from neighbouring parishes and beyond. These concerts include solo and duo recitals, organ recitals and chamber music recitals, some of which are given by musicians from our neighbours, the Yehudi Menuhin School.



Bell Ringing

Previous Rectors, the congregation and the PCC have always been very supportive of our bell ringing tradition. Every Sunday, parishioners are greeted by the tolling of bells as they come to worship God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

St Mary's has a light ring of six bells which have been refurbished and re-hung in recent years. The ring retains one of the oldest bells in Surrey, namely c1460. There is an active team of ringers who practise weekly on Mondays, with the purpose of ringing for the Sunday 10am service, for weddings and at Christmas and Easter.

The core team comprises eight regular ringers, with occasional additional visiting ringers. The enthusiastic team is continually learning new methods to improve technique and develop a varied repertoire.

St Mary's Stoke D'Abernon is in the Leatherhead District of the Guildford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers and also the Southern District of the Surrey Association. These provide a network of support from neighbouring towers.



The Church Hall

A new church hall was built in 2014 and opened in 2015; the freehold is wholly owned by the church with no outstanding debts. The modern facilities include two bright, capacious halls which are extensively used for church activities and outside lettings for wedding receptions, wakes, anniversaries, children's parties, meetings, exercise classes and business meetings (frequently used by NHS and Surrey County Council).



The main hall is equipped with an audio/visual system, and has fold-away tables and chairs. Bifold doors lead to a decked terrace area. There is also a fully equipped kitchen. A small (under 5s) children's playground was constructed in 2018 on the grassed area adjacent to the hall. The parish office is housed within the hall.

Church sponsored activities that take place in the hall include:

- ◆ Parish lunches
- ◆ Chair Yoga
- ◆ PCC meetings
- ◆ Discipleship groups
- ◆ Monthly midweek lunchtime concerts (when not held in church)

Children



Pre-Covid, a Family Service was held on the second Sunday of the month. It was a less formal service with children and young people involved in leading worship. The children read the lessons and prayers and delivered a presentation illustrating the themes of the day. Pre-Covid activities also included a Christmas party, Easter crafts and Messy Church. Unfortunately our previous leader of children's activities is no longer available and we are currently looking for a replacement.



A thriving playgroup called “*Mothers and Others*” is run once a week by a small team of volunteers in the church hall. It usually attracts about 25 children aged 0-4 with a parent or carer. It is popular due to the large open space of the hall, fun toys, and homemade cake.



The Crib service on Christmas Eve is hugely popular with a full church with standing room only. Children of all ages play the parts in the Christmas story and carols are sung by all.

Since lockdown we have seen a significant increase in the number of baptisms at St. Mary's (see Life Events Table - p10) which encouragingly suggests an increase in families' interest in the Church.

With more families moving into the area all the time, we are keen to expand our family and school ministry.

Resources

Role of Associate Minister

Mary-Beth Hawrish has been our Associate Minister since August 2020, having joined the Ministry team after the onset of the Covid pandemic and its impact on the parish ministry. She is involved in a variety of parish work, including leading worship and giving Lenten reflections on the parish WhatsApp group. She assisted with establishing a new Bible study group for Advent, run by a parishioner. Mary-Beth has lived locally for about 20 years. Before coming to St Mary's she was in charge of two churches in a large benefice in Hampshire and also served as a Minister in a neighbouring parish. She had previously enjoyed a varied career in secular work. Mary Beth enjoys working collaboratively and looks forward to supporting the new Rector.

Parish Administration Support

St Mary's employs a paid Parish Administrator, currently employed for 22 hours per week, who works out of the parish office in our church hall. The Administrator reports to the Rector and the PCC and has dual responsibilities for supporting both church activities and management of our church hall. We increased the paid hours of work of our Administrator in 2019 in response to the extra work required with managing, running and hiring out our church hall on a professional basis.

Leadership Team:

Incumbent (position vacant) *

Associate Minister

Two Churchwardens *

Treasurer *

Safeguarding Officer

Ringling Master

Director of Music/Lead Organist (salaried)

Parish Administrator (salaried – part-time 22 hrs/wk)

Parochial Church Council (10 lay members)

**Members of Finance and Standing Committee*

Volunteers

We have a loyal team of dedicated volunteers which we are always seeking to expand in number, in order that duties can be shared amongst a wide group of parishioners.

Safeguarding



The PCC have adopted the Diocesan Safeguarding policy and have Safeguarding as a standing agenda item. We are proactive in addressing safeguarding and embrace ideas from the Diocese such as Safeguarding Sunday, promoting safeguarding organisations, and all PCC members completing safeguarding training. All church activities have risk assessments and the needs of the vulnerable members of the congregation are our core consideration in all that we do to promote safeguarding. We are passionate about growing the family services and activities, and this has been highlighted as a key focus for the new incumbent. We will need to expand our current number of volunteers and we want to do this in a way that ensures safer recruitment, but is sensitive to the individual and does not discourage people. We all need to work together.

Outreach Activities

Outreach programmes have recently restarted after significant disruption during lockdown.

Regular activities include:

- ◆ “Mothers and Others” children’s playgroup
- ◆ Junior Choristers
- ◆ Lunchtime concerts
- ◆ Chair Yoga
- ◆ Women’s breakfasts
- ◆ Churches Together

St Mary’s makes financial donations to charitable causes through nominated parish appeals and the donation of proceeds from specific in-church collections and the christmas parish lunch. Beneficiaries from recent donations include:

- ◆ Cobham Foodbank
- ◆ Oasis Childcare centre
- ◆ Cobham Chatterbus
- ◆ Water Aid
- ◆ Royal British Legion

St Mary’s is situated within the grounds of the adjacent Parkside (boys’ preparatory) School which describes itself as a “Christian-based school, but embraces all religions”. Historically St Mary’s has enjoyed a strong relationship with Parkside. The School has held various key services in the church, which are being re-introduced post lockdown. We are keen to increase our involvement with Parkside on a collaborative and mutually supportive basis.

Finance

In 2020 income was £141,000 thanks to the generosity of parishioners and the government furlough scheme. With expenditure at £134,000 there was a small net income of £7,000. In January to September 2021, income was £102,000 and expenditure £97,000.

To date in 2021, 60% of income has come from Planned Giving and the associated Gift Aid. Fund raising policy at St. Mary's has been to raise voluntary income primarily through regular Planned Giving, augmented by occasional stewardship campaigns. The church has also been fortunate to receive occasional legacies.

Income and Expenditure

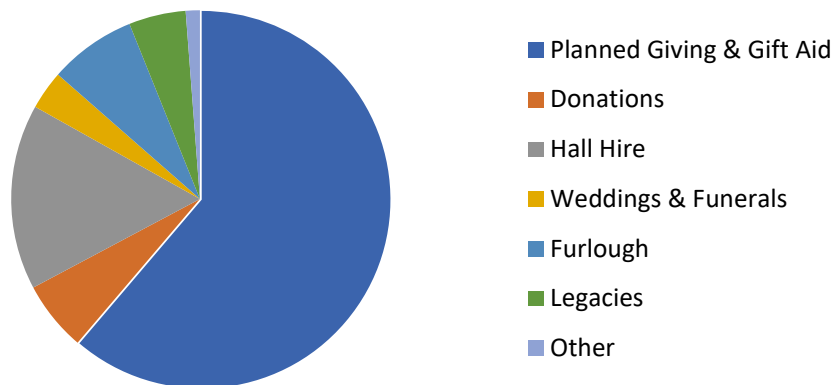
INCOME (£)	2019	2020	2021 Jan-Sept
Planned Giving & Gift Aid	83,284	92,560	62,444
Hall hire	28,802	13,346	16,349
Church collections & donations	24,027	18,518	6,200
Furlough		12,714	7,640
Legacies	149,431	1,000	5,000
Other	33,621	3,261	4,033
Total	319,165	141,399	101,666

EXPENDITURE (£)	2019	2020	2021 Jan—Sept
Parish Share	83,610	78,006	63,343
Maintenance	11,463	6,610	4,225
Church operating expenses	44,706	28,460	16,258
Hall operating expenses	47,160	16,659	10,134
Other	20,036	4,519	3,315
Total	206,975	134,254	97,275
Net incoming resources	112,190	7,145	4,391
Year end bank balance	133,023	129,070	146,554

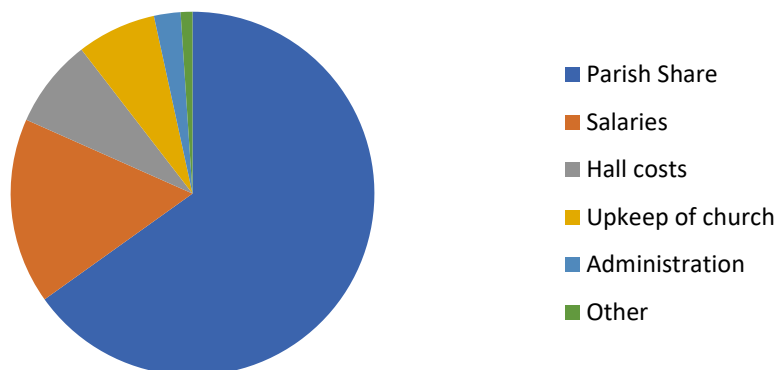
At the start of 2021, there were 85 regular Planned Giving donors. However, the proportion who are over 65 years old is well above the average for the Guildford Diocese. Persuading younger members of the congregation of the benefits of regular giving continues to be a significant challenge.

Hall hire is our second largest income stream and a major focus for revenue growth. Since release from lockdown in May, regular outside lettings have increased significantly and next year it is anticipated that lettings income will surpass 2019

Where does our Income come from? January - September 2021



What is our Expenditure? January - September 2021



Rectory



The Rectory is a comfortable 1930's built detached house which has been extended and improved over the years. It is located within a mile of St Mary's. Downstairs, there is a kitchen/utility room, two reception rooms, separate study and toilet. There are five bedrooms, two en-suite shower rooms and a family bathroom, as well as a pleasant leafy garden. The Rectory is maintained in good condition and will be redecorated before the new incumbent takes occupancy.



Person Specification and Statement of Needs

Where We are Now – Things to Celebrate

- ◆ St Mary's is a much-loved historic church
- ◆ Committed, reverent and traditional Eucharistic worship style
- ◆ A loyal and friendly congregation, faithful in seeking to serve God and Christ in all we do
- ◆ A cherished tradition of choral and organ music both at our services of worship and also at our popular and well attended concerts
- ◆ Up to date facilities with our recently built church hall (6 years old) used by the church and local community
- ◆ Strong support from our Associate Minister and our salaried Director of Music and part-time Administrator. We also have a team of loyal lay volunteers who manage services, finance, events and other activities
- ◆ Active support for the Cobham Foodbank

Priority Areas for Development and Improvement

- ◆ Commitment to sustain and complement our traditional worship style with liturgies and music to cater for all ages
- ◆ Encourage parishioners in their faith, spiritual journey and actions in the mission of the Church through participation in Prayer, Bible Study and Discussion Groups
- ◆ Grow our congregation and church attendance by building relationships with families to attract a younger generation of worshippers
- ◆ Build and re-establish a regular Family (All Age) service
- ◆ Establish a Church Development Plan consistent with the Parish Needs Project
- ◆ Re-evaluate the current balance between paid choristers and parishioner participation in choral activities
- ◆ Develop our links with Parkside School
- ◆ Develop and enhance more proactive pastoral care
- ◆ Be bolder in our Outreach; be more outward looking; developing our links with the local community and local organisations
- ◆ Help secure long term financial stability for St Mary's
- ◆ Raise awareness of the church in the wider community since its location is not immediately obvious to people passing through Stoke D'Abernon

The PCC and congregation recognise any new incumbent will want to review the needs of the parish and build on these priorities. We trust that God will help us to evolve our vision, building on what has gone before.

Key Attributes of our new Rector

- ◆ Inspiring and visionary leader who will help St Mary's face the future with confidence
- ◆ Effective preacher and good communicator, helping us deepen our relationship with God and apply it to our daily lives
- ◆ A person with good pastoral skills and a compassionate heart who has the ability to inspire, empower and support people of all ages and backgrounds
- ◆ Someone who appreciates the catholic tradition, with a love for the Eucharist and traditional form of worship
- ◆ Ability to introduce change and new ideas sensitively
- ◆ Ability to relate to all age groups, including families and children
- ◆ Outgoing and able to build relationships, partnerships and links with the local school, community and neighbouring parishes
- ◆ Ability to manage people and teams; both staff and volunteers and help run the day- to-day life of the church

Skills and Personal Qualities

- ◆ Energetic, enthusiastic and young at heart
- ◆ Approachable and collaborative: a team player
- ◆ Demonstrates sensitivity, empathy and emotional intelligence
- ◆ Outgoing, sociable and pro-active
- ◆ Strong listening and communication skills
- ◆ Diplomatic rather than autocratic; however prepared to make tough decisions where needed

Experience of the following would be desirable

- ◆ Growing and developing congregations within a parish
- ◆ Experience of family and children's ministry inside and outside of the church
- ◆ Demonstrable ability to communicate across generations
- ◆ Embedding Safeguarding responsibilities in the activities of the church
- ◆ Promoting, marketing and championing the church in the wider community
- ◆ Comfortable with technology and social media
- ◆ Successfully introduced and embedded change and new ideas in a parish

Next Steps

If you would like further information, visit our website:

www.stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk

You are also welcome to contact the Archdeacon of Dorking to discuss the role informally (archdeacon.dorking@cofeguildford.org.uk, tel: 01483 790352).

An Application form is available from:

www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/vacancies/clergy-vacancies

This should be completed and returned to:

The Clergy Appointments Officer (sarah.bolton@cofeguildford.org.uk) by 12.30pm on Friday 11th March 2022