

**St Peter's Church
Broad Oak Road
Parr
St Helens**

To know Christ better and to make Him better known



PARISH PROFILE



An invitation
for a special person
to share in our vision of how
we build on our heritage of 160 years
of serving God in this place
and to equip it and ourselves for the future

R S V P

We are offering a house-for-duty position (0.4) and are seeking a person who will join us in our vision of bringing the Gospel of God's Love and Redemption to the people of Parr.

We need help to reach out to families and young people, as well as supporting the needs of elderly people both within our congregation and within the wider community.

Are you the person who feels you might be the one
for whom this invitation is intended?

Then please read on . . .

St Peter's is a traditional parish church. As an evangelical parish, with CPAS as our patron, we place a high value on preaching the Bible as the word of God and applying it to our daily lives.

It accepts the ordination of women because in the scriptures women are often seen in leadership roles.

We operate an open table and welcome to it all those who believe and love the Lord Jesus.

We believe that holy matrimony is a gift of God between a man and a woman.

Clergy or Readers robe for Holy Communion services, wedding services. Baptism services and funeral services. Service of the Word worship tends to be more relaxed.

Our style of worship is traditional but simple and not overly formal, we believe that everyone has a ministry, and as all ministries contribute to the body we believe all ministries are equal.

Intercessions are lay or minister led, with a member of the congregation doing the readings. For prayer in a non-formal environment we operate a prayer chain which includes active members of the church and others who for a variety of reasons are not as active as they formerly were. A simple 'phone call activates the system. Requests for prayer are not restricted to Parr, St Helens or the UK. God is universal so are our prayers.

We haven't had a minister at St Peter's for twelve months, and Bible Studies were always focused at the two other churches in the former Parr Team. This year for Lent (as we did with a study during the pandemic), we are providing the congregation and others with copies of the Church of England "Living Hope" Lent journey, along with the children's version where needed. This will enable all members of the congregation to follow a Lent course and come back to church with any questions.

As stated earlier we believe that everyone has a ministry and all ministries are equal, so we encourage church members to explore and express their discipleship using their God-given talents and gifts.

We try as a congregation to meet people where they are on their journey of life. We know we serve in a very deprived parish so we try as far as is possible not to make finance a barrier to worshipping at St Peter's. For several decades we have not passed the plate round during services. At most social events we ask for donations rather than charging for refreshments.

As our Parish Profile says our objective is:

to know Christ better and make Him better known

The officers of the church are:

Warden	Jim Finney
Treasurer	Bill Roberts
Safeguarding Officer (we follow the Church of England safeguarding guidance and procedures)	Catherine Rowlands
Occasional Offices Enquiries/Bookings	Carol Littler
PCC Secretary	Sue Pye
Reader (PTO)	Chris Pye

In January 2020 St Peter's celebrated the re-opening of our newly refurbished building. It is an attractive Victorian church which was built at the end of 1864 after the first St Peter's was burned down. The new church opened in January 1865 and is much loved both by regular worshippers and the wider community.

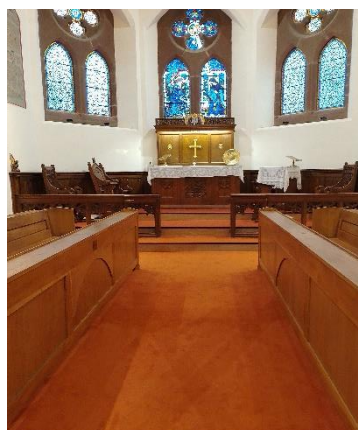
Several years before the refurbishment, prompted by the need for major repairs and our financial constraints, we considered thoughtfully and prayerfully what steps we should take and realised that this building was a great asset in helping us to spread God's message throughout Parr. We sold the church hall and field (a small housing estate now stands on this land) and the work began in 2017 to make the church fit for purpose in the 21st century - flexible for use as a worship centre and for and by the community.



During the building work we met as a church in the small hall to the side of the church.

It could hold up to fifty people for a church service or meeting, and we managed to hold our coffee mornings in there, but we were restricted as to what other mission we could do.

Seating in the refurbished church building is individual comfortable chairs instead of rickety uncomfortable pews, and all our services are on PowerPoint displayed on several large TV screens around the church space. We don't use prayer books, bibles, hymn books or service cards - everything is displayed on the screens.



We hold one worship service each Sunday, alternating between Service of the Word and Holy Communion, with a regular congregation of around thirty, plus six children.

After the service everyone is welcome to stay for tea, coffee and biscuits (and on special occasions cakes) and a chat.



Work is still on-going, as in having the tree/bush growth removed from the tower in September 2021 it was found that restoration work on the steeple/tower was urgently needed. We have a company ready to do this work, but at the moment we are still trying to raise funds to do the work - we need a grant and we have someone who is helping us with this.

Following our celebrations in January 2020 we looked forward to using the building to reach out to the people of Parr and growing the church, but our plans were halted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the doors were once again closed. During this time the PCC members kept in touch with our congregation and all on the Electoral Roll (current membership 50) via 'phone and e-mail.

When it was appropriate to do so we re-opened for private prayer for one hour twice a week on a Monday and a Thursday (which continued for quite a while), for funerals and for Sunday worship, thankful for the space our refurbished building gave us to do so safely.

We acknowledged what a huge challenge "growing" would be for St Peter's. Nevertheless we believe there are opportunities to build on what we do have. For example:

Coffee Mornings

We resumed our coffee mornings, held monthly and continued our policy of not charging for any of the refreshments, recognising we serve one of the most deprived areas in the Church of England.

We do have a basket with a notice saying that we are very grateful if people wish to, and are able to, make a donation – the proceeds going to specific charities (eg Macmillan Cancer Support, Willowbrook Hospice, The Leprosy Mission, The Church Army, The Salvation Army), or mission work within the church.



Normally between 20 and 30 people attend during the morning, spanning the generations, plus we regularly attract a group from a local care home who come along with their carers.

Men's Meeting

We host a Men's Meeting from 4 pm to 6 pm each Wednesday, which is led by St Helens Wellbeing. It welcomes all men to come along to enjoy various activities, refreshments and a good chat – again this attracts adults and their carers from a local care home in a neighbouring parish, and through this the meeting has attracted several ladies who need the benefits of a 'wellbeing' meeting.

Busy Bees – Mums and Tots

We opened a mums and tots group – St Peter's Busy Bees – on a Monday morning meeting from 9.30 am to 11.30 am each week through school term time.

As with any mums and tots group, it includes grandparents and other child-minders. This group has now moved to a Thursday morning.



Hot Refreshments

Throughout the year, other than mid-July and August, we open our church and offer free refreshments. We are open from 12 noon to 2 pm on a Thursday for soup and bread, or beans on toast, or just a biscuit, cuppa and a chat.



Occasional Offices

We hold many baptisms and funerals at St Peter's and an increasing number of weddings.



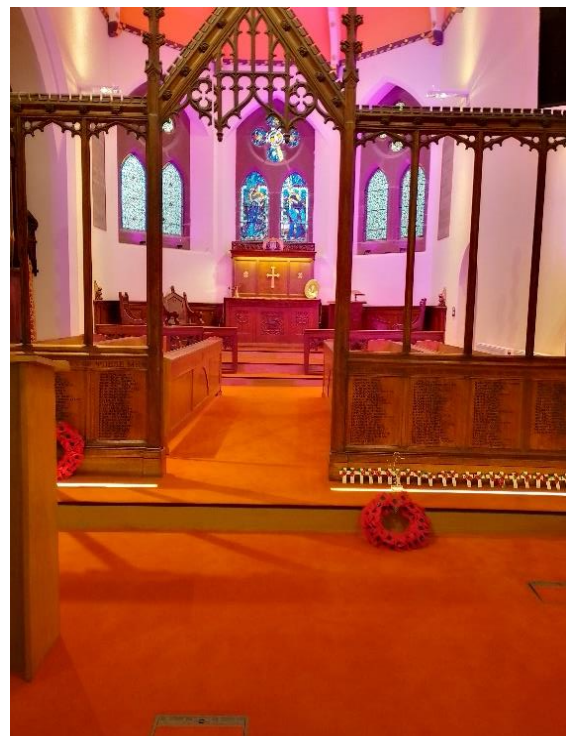
For the weddings we can change the colour of the lighting in the chancel to personalise the service whilst maintaining the original characteristics of the chancel.

These occasional offices therefore give opportunities to establish contacts with, and minister to, families at such important times of their lives.

We also hold a special memorial service on Advent Sunday each year for the families and friends of those who have been bereaved during the previous twelve months. As people grieve in different ways the service is also open to all those who wish to commemorate a loved one.

Allanson Street Primary School

We have a good link with Allanson Street Primary School, with the children coming into the church to learn about our Christian beliefs and our heritage through special activities we provide for them – they made the poppy crosses in the picture to the side, and the headbands they are wearing below were for an activity about Pentecost.



Members of the church also go along to the school to join in activities there – telling the story of Noah's Ark on World Book Day, providing oranges and helping two of the classes to make Christingles just before Christmas. We are in the process of establishing similar contacts with other schools within our parish boundary – two special care schools and possibly one secondary.

Our Grounds and Graveyards

As stated at the beginning of this document, we have a small hall adjacent to the church.

Currently it is used by an A.A. group, and the Community Payback group who help maintain our graveyards and grounds.

The main church building is used by the local council for election purposes.



We have two graveyards – one large behind the church, and a newer graveyard opposite the church grounds in Delta Road – both graveyards are still open.



In various places of the large graveyard there are nine official War Graves.



Heritage Open Days

We take part in the national Heritage Open Days and celebrate our heritage of 160 years by opening the church for people to explore the displays of pictures of bygone days and events enjoyed by the past parishioners of the church, plus there is video and PowerPoint footage of these pictures and the refurbishment works.



They can also remember those from the area who gave their lives during the two World Wars. The lives of the 200+ young men commemorated on the World War I Memorial screen and the World War II Memorial plaque have been researched and available in the church.



Recently we also hosted a special evening covering the History of Parr. This was presented by a local historian and attracted over 100 people who were able to study the displays from our Heritage Open Days, along with a special presentation by the local historian covering the early history of the Parr area of St Helens. Our church graveyard records were also available for people to inspect – the church warden helping people to discover the final resting place of their ancestors.



Parr Brass Band

We have a long and close relationship with Parr Band who come along to our evening Carol Service on the Sunday before Christmas to play the Christmas carols within the service (9 lessons and carols). The band considers St Peter's part of their heritage – the band having been formed from a church band pre-WW2, and we hope to have more events with the band during the year. They also, if available, play during a part of the Heritage Open Days.



The church also boasts a **Father Willis** organ (in the church since 1867) and we are looking to host one or two organ recitals.

During the last twelve months we have welcomed several asylum-seeking and refugee families into the church with their backgrounds being in Nigeria, South Sudan, Cameroon and Iran. We arranged for the family from Iran to follow the 'Come Follow Me' course over twenty weeks, followed by a three-week baptism preparation course and then they were baptised and confirmed. The family have been with us for fifteen months and attend our Sunday services regularly, as well as being good helpers in the church. The church service is translated into Farsi in a paper format for them which is also helping them with their English.

Care Homes

In the parish there is **Parr Care Home** and sheltered housing at **Burrows Court** and **Gaskell Court**. We would like to re-establish the contact we had with them pre-pandemic as we recognise the great need for ministry and care among the elderly both within our fellowship and the wider community.

We have a link with a care home for those with dementia which is outside our parish, and they come along, with their carers, to the men's meeting and whenever possible to our coffee mornings, and through this link they asked if we could provide a short holy communion service within the home. This has now been arranged and communion is taken there once a month.

Defibrillator

In September 2024 the PCC was approached by the North West Ambulance Service asking if we would consider having a defibrillator on the outside of our church building.

We had already discussed purchasing one, but the cost was significant and we would need to raise the funds. The Ambulance service were offering to pay for a defibrillator if we could cover the cost of having the machine fitted along with maintenance costs. We agreed to this and the machine has recently been fitted.



The building on one side of the church is the 'Church Inn', and they have a stab kit fitted to the outside wall of the building next to the entrance. On the side of the pub is a mural saying "Drop the knife, save a life", so between us we cover two serious events in life.

A-Spire for Parr

After completing the refurbishment of the church building, as stated at the beginning of this profile we were unable to open for services and to commence any mission work because of the covid pandemic.

In 2021 when we were open as a church again we searched for a company who could complete the outside 'look' of the building. Foliage was growing on the outside of the tower/steeple, and we needed someone to remove it, fill in the cracks as the foliage was removed, and put netting on the inside of the window slats that gave entry for pigeons.

We finally found a steeplejack company able and willing to do the work, and in September 2021 they began. However, when they had almost completed the job, they found that the steeple needed repair – the metal rods were corroded and thus expanded causing the stonework to crack and crumble. It would need major work.



Planning permission to remove and then rebuild the steeple was finally given in June 2024. The total cost of doing the work is approximately £300,000. We obviously need a grant/grants to do the work, and we have a grant-finder who has managed to get several smaller grants to help. We can put some money towards the total cost, but at the moment we still need to have scaffolding around the steeple for safety and insurance reasons – costing £2,000 per month. Historic England visited St Peter's in October to assess if we were a church at risk as this would help to attract a larger grant. We still await the outcome.

Where is St Peter's?

The parish of St Peter's Church is in the urban area of Parr in the borough of St Helens, Merseyside – which lies mid-way between Liverpool and Manchester. St Helens is surrounded by two major roads – the A58 and A580 – and the motorways M6, M62, M57.

A large percentage of the population of Parr are on low income or benefits. The Church Urban Fund data says:

“The population of St Peter Parr is 7,953 and the IMD rank is 43 out of 12,239 (where 1 is the most deprived parish). The most significant poverty-related issue in this parish is the relatively high rate of child poverty. The next most significant issue is working age poverty, followed by the relatively low qualification levels.

“Child poverty, pensioner poverty, working age poverty and lone parenthood in this parish are among the highest in the country. Male life expectancy, female life expectancy and qualification levels in this parish are amongst the lowest nationally.”

Approximately 15% of the population is over 65, but this is not reflected in our congregation where the majority is over 65.

St Helens had several large coal mines, a thriving textile industry, a chemical industry, the home of an international pharmaceutical company, and the international home of flat/float glass manufacture, besides having several other types of glass manufacture and railway works. Many small businesses and shops relied on this strong industrial base which is now very much reduced.



**Statement from
the Area Dean of
St Helens**

St Helens Deanery

We have a diverse chapter of clergy that have worked well together. We are 13 stipendiary clergy plus curates, NSMs and retired clergy who represent 8 parishes. Previously we were 18 parishes however as part of the diocesan Fit for Mission initiative 11 agreed to work together as a Larger Single Parish, Church St Helens.

We are currently working out how to be chapter now that 9 clergy are working together closely as part of a Larger Single Parish. We continue to have regular monthly chapter meetings. When we have diocesan events such as retreats and study days we gather more informally. Our chapter meetings are usually convivial – we like to learn together, share food, humour and prayer. There is a good sense of support for each other and we communicate regularly via Whats App.

Our deanery is focussed on St Helens town which gives us a shared identity and culture. We have longstanding, good relationships with the council and our ecumenical neighbours.

Revd Canon Dr Chris Daniel

Team Rector: Church St Helens

Area Dean: St Helens Deanery

Fit-for-Mission - St Peter's Parr and Church St Helens

In early 2022 all the churches (18) in St Helens Deanery were asked to read various documents, reflect on them, discuss them within PCC meetings, and hopefully agree to all join together to become one church in the deanery – keeping the individual church buildings but having one administrative body over the governance of the churches. There were several additional documents over the year and into 2023 as the diocese gradually added to their first thoughts and plans, culminating in all the churches being asked to finally make their decision. St Peter's PCC discussed all the paperwork in detail and also discussed the plans with the members of the congregation, finally deciding not to become part of the proposed scheme – which became 'Church St Helens' on 1st May 2024.

Out of the 18 churches in St Helens Deanery, 11 churches joined the scheme and 7 churches decided to remain independent churches within the Deanery. When Church St Helens came into being, St Peter's was the one church left without a minister, which has created this vacancy for which we are seeking a new vicar.

St Peter's Vicarage



The Vicarage was built in the early 1970s, and stands in its own grounds.

The main entrance is in Delta Road, adjacent to St Peter's Church.

As you enter the Vicarage, on the ground floor there is

- a cloakroom
- a study
- a large lounge
- a dining room
- a kitchen
- a utility room
- through which you can enter the attached garage

On the first floor there are

- four bedrooms
- a family bathroom

There is a large garden with a substantial number of trees

In order to achieve any of our 'aspirations', and more, we need a house-for-duty vicar –

- who will work alongside us
- who will encourage and help develop gifts in the congregation
- who is interested in people of all ages.

We need a person
who will be committed to our parish,
who will help us to build on and further develop strong
relationships within the wider community,
who will help to enhance the worshipping life of
St Peter's and to grow the church.

**Are you the person
who feels you may be the one
for whom this invitation is
intended?**