



St. John
The Evangelist
Great Sutton-

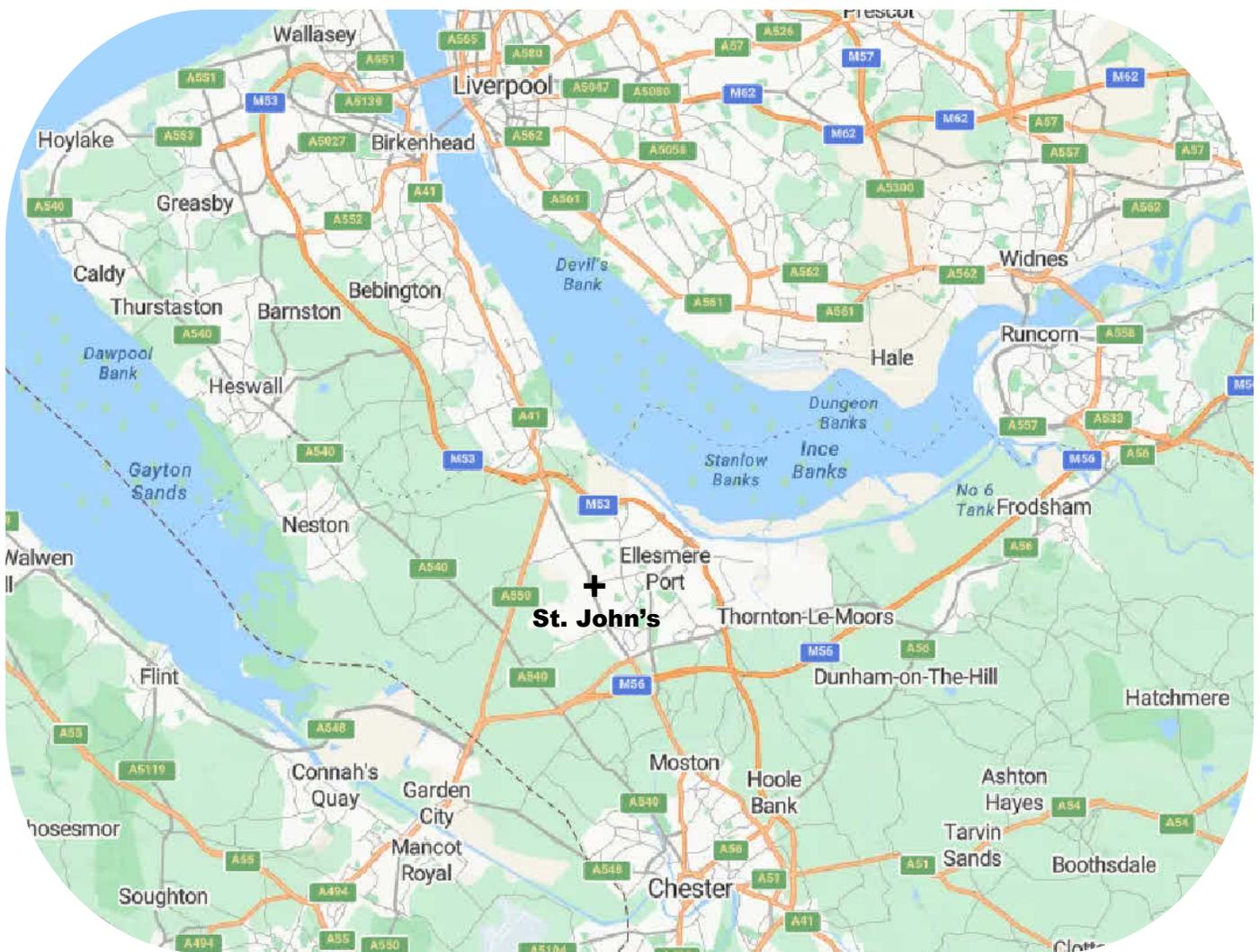
 **THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
Diocese of Chester

Psalms 32:8
The LORD says, "I
will guide you along the
best pathway for your life. I
will advise you and watch over you"

Parish Profile
2025

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- GREAT SUTTON -

Old Chester Rd
Great Sutton
Cheshire
CH66 4RE

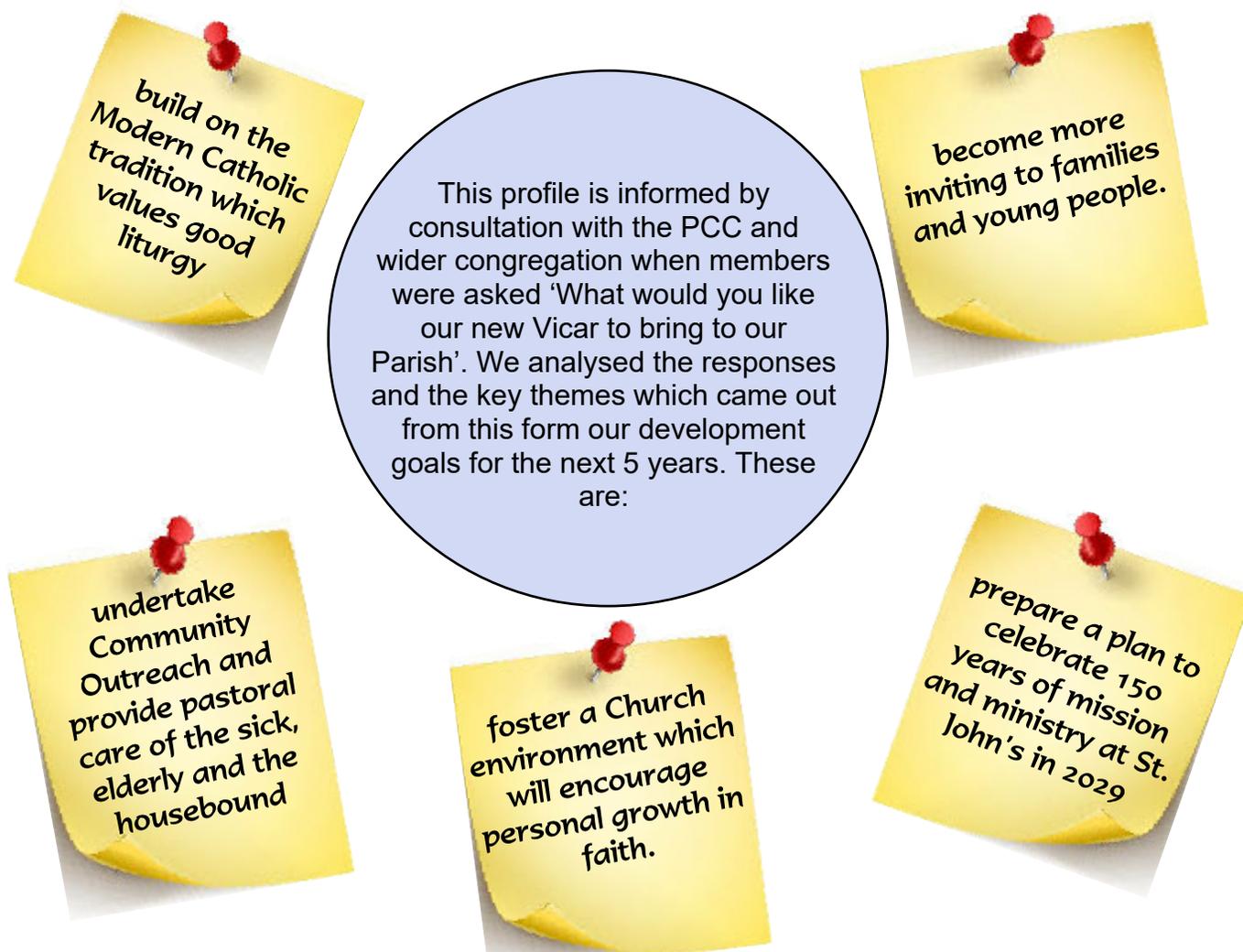
1. INTRODUCTION

St. John's Church in Great Sutton is a single church parish with a large population of around 15,000. There is a lot of scope for an energetic, development minded incumbent to guide and work with us to grow something special in our parish.

The church is a beacon of Modern Catholic tradition in the area. We are a church family which is innovative and open to new ideas and approaches within our traditional worship. We look for ways to take Christ's word into our community to encourage families and young people. We want to be visible and at the heart of the community. We are seeking prayerfully to be refreshed and look forward to a priest with a vision that resonates with that hope.



Are you ready to inspire our church and community?



As a sign of the vibrancy of St. John's we have, since the 2020 Quinquennial Inspection, been able to complete the identified restoration work on the Church Spire by focused fundraising, generous giving and two legacies. As a result we have not incurred any debt and we are thankful for the result.

As you read further into our Parish Profile we hope you will gain a sense of our history, our current life and our hopes for the future. We are looking for a new incumbent who will embrace change and be forward looking whilst sharing some of the core values that for us characterise what makes St. John's special.

We are a warm and welcoming congregation who will be there for you.

2. THE CONTEXT OF MISSION AND MINISTRY

Deanery and Diocesan Mission Initiatives

Under Bishop Mark the Diocesan Vision was renewed with input from across the Diocese in a process called 'Casting the net wide'. The new vision narrative is entitled: **Together in Christ: Sharing Hope**. A key focus is for our churches to become younger and more diverse – in short becoming more representative of the communities we serve. As a parish we will need to consider how we respond to the Vision Strategy.



Priorities for the future would be to:-

- Make our church more inviting for families and young people
- Build on links with local care homes
- Implement a clergy-led system of Care for the Sick, Elderly and Housebound
- Re-introduce opening the church during the week for prayer
- Establish and nurture a church environment which will encourage and support personal growth in faith.

3. OUR NEW VICAR

Whilst our new vicar may not tick all the boxes we are prayerfully seeking an innovative priest who can continue to lead and nurture growth and fruitfulness in this parish. That person will be able to demonstrate continuous ministerial development and a commitment to leadership on safeguarding. They need to be empathetic, approachable and a good listener who can work collaboratively with The Church Wardens, The Ministry Team, The Director of Music, the PCC and others. The ability to delegate tasks and responsibilities where appropriate is important.

Qualities sought

- A strong and visible Christian and Eucharistic faith with the energy to draw our congregation together around a common vision of ministry at St. John's
- Enthusiasm in leading and helping us to explore fresh approaches whilst retaining our traditional patterns of worship
- A high level of interpersonal and communication skills with the ability to build and maintain good relationships and engage positively with people of different ages and backgrounds
- A spiritual leader who will motivate and encourage both clergy and lay people by listening to their views and encouraging lay participation in services and other activities
- To inspire our congregation to live out their faith in everyday life
- A commitment to foster a strong and effective safeguarding culture in the parish
- An ability to manage time well so that they can effectively balance the various demands, whilst still resourcing their own faith and allowing time for necessary recreation, in order to return refreshed.

Ideally, we would also like someone who:-

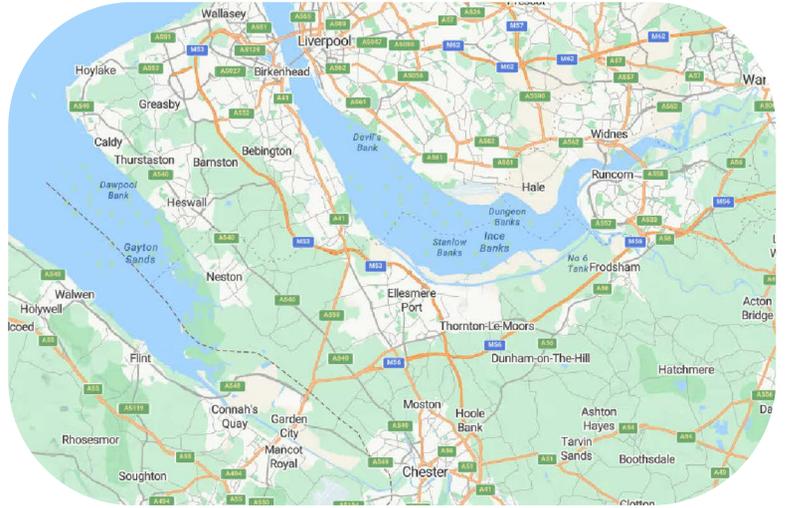
- Has experience of children and youth work, together with community development
- Actively supports lifelong learning in all areas of church life
- Will continue to build relationships with other local churches and organisations, whilst developing their own profile within the local community
- Has a natural ability to instil confidence in others
- Is involved in all aspects of church life
- Has an interest in music
- Will bring fresh ideas to St. John's to enhance the good work which already exists.

Do you have the dynamic personality to join us in looking for ways to increase our church membership and take Christ's word outside the church walls to create opportunities for everyone to experience God's love?

Are you ready to take on the challenge at St. John's?

4. Our Parish

St. John's Church and its Church Hall, are Grade II listed buildings, in the Diocese of Chester and situated in Great Sutton Village, Cheshire, CH66 4RE. The church lies next to the A41, 5 miles north of Chester. The parish is an urban area near open countryside with the Welsh and Wirral coasts just a short distance away.



Ministry Team

There is a Licensed Lay Minister who preaches regularly and has led non-eucharistic services. He is also the Director of Music who leads a dedicated robed choir. A recently retired priest has joined our congregation. Preparation for Baptism, Confirmation and Weddings is clergy led. The incumbent undertakes funeral visits.

Lay Representation

Supporting the Ministry Team and Church Wardens are Altar Servers, Sidespersons and Vergers.

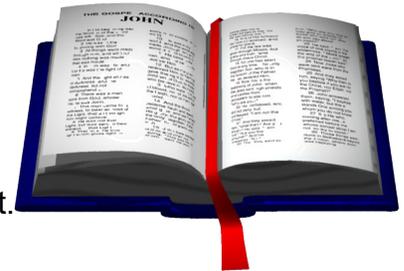
Additionally some lay people assist with the reading of Lessons and leading Intercessions.

Two lay members represent the PCC at Deanery Synod.

Monthly Prayer Group is mainly lay led with regular commitment from members of the congregation.

Weekly Bible Studies were led by a former Priest or by the Incumbent.

The Reader has also led a topical Bible Study on Care of the Environment.



Resolutions under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993



The Parish has accepted the Ministry of Women Priests since November 2008. In September 2013 and November 2024 the PCC has agreed not to reconsider this matter.

Living in Love and Faith

Last year, after discussion, the PCC endorsed the incumbent's proposal to offer Prayers of Love and Faith for same sex couples as part of regular worship. In the past six months prior to the vacancy these prayers have been used.



Parish Finances

St. John's Church meets the Parish Share, monthly and annual costs. The majority of our congregation give via standing orders and gift aid envelopes. The gift aid system works well. We have an investment scheme with the CBF. This money can be drawn upon to 'further the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the parish'. The detailed accounts provide additional information.

The Church and its Community



The church was consecrated in 1879. It is well appointed with the fabric being in good order with no major problems. The stained glass windows are superb and are admired by the Victorian Society. There are four unique WW1 grave markers displayed on the west wall and registered by the Western Front Society. Access to the churchyard is through a roofed Lych Gate.

The church hall provides an amenity for the local community.

The congregation is a healthy 80+ in number of mostly persons over aged 50 but with some younger and there is a bright and welcoming children's corner.



Our weekly notice sheet, "Focus", contains lectionary readings, services for the week as well as social events. It is distributed electronically to 150 recipients as well as hard copies in church. The church magazine is produced monthly and distributed throughout the parish by members of the congregation and is an important contact with the community. The church maintains an active website and also uses social media to spread church news.

Local Amenities

Education: There are two primary schools within the parish in which the church is involved. In nearby Ellesmere Port there are also 3 High Schools and a Further Education College.



Employment: There are some major employers in Ellesmere Port including an oil refinery and a car manufacturer, together with many smaller businesses.

Health: We have two medical centres in the parish. A modern large health centre is being built that will be opened in mid 2025 to replace the old Great Sutton Medical Centre.





General Amenities: We have a small local library within the parish and a main central library in nearby Ellesmere Port. Besides local village shops and convenience stores, Great Sutton is fortunate in being within 10 minutes of a large M&S Store and Cheshire Oaks Designer Shopping Outlet. Main supermarkets are within a short driving distance, so no shortage of shopping and dining out opportunities here.

Travel to and from the area is eased by nearby M53/M56/M6, local airports and local rail and bus services to all outlying cities and areas.

We believe our parish is a great place to live, worship and work.



5. THE CHURCH AS PEOPLE

We would describe our churchmanship as modern catholic and a list of services can be found in our Church Magazine and on the website <http://www.stjohnsgreatsutton.com>

We are very blessed within our congregation to have many lay people who volunteer to run several groups that target a wide range of ages.

Safeguarding

We are committed to making St. John's Church a safe place. Everything we do is underpinned by a robust Safeguarding Policy and we have a dedicated lay member who undertakes the role of overseeing its implementation. We have completed most of the requirements to meet Level 3 of the Safeguarding Dashboard. All PCC members and church group leaders are DBS checked and have completed the required safeguarding training, with 4 members having completed the leadership course.



Children



Stay and Play has been running every Wednesday morning for many years with 15 toddlers regularly attending with their parents or guardians. They take part in a range of activities, enjoy snack time and a song and dance after tidying up. Each child receives a gift on their birthday and a book on their last day.



Church Lads and Church Girls Brigade is an established group which meets on a Wednesday evening with an age range of 5 to 16. They enjoy fun, faith and fellowship whilst developing their skills and abilities to work together and care for others. Members also enjoy an annual camp where they meet up with other companies.



Adults

Walking Group, held monthly, is now in its 3rd year and started following Covid lockdown to get people out and about again. The walks are very easy for all ages and abilities and end with coffee and cake.



Soup and Social, every Tuesday, is another initiative to help alleviate people struggling with the fuel and cost of living crisis. An average of 15 people attend, many who live alone and felt isolated due to Covid lockdown. Many friendships have been formed resulting in them meeting socially.

Munch Bunch, started out as Soup 'n' Sarnies following a mission week at St John's. It evolved to provide a two course hot meal with homemade bread on the third Thursday of the month and attracts between 18-24 people each month. A home delivery service is also offered for those who have become housebound.



Other volunteer groups:-

- *Flower Group*, is a group of volunteer lay members who ensure altar flowers are regularly refreshed and the church decorated on special days in the church calendar.
- *Cleaning Team*, another group of volunteers who ensure the church is cleaned on a weekly basis with a more in depth 'spring clean' once a year.
- *Fabric Team*, who look after church buildings and grounds, supported by a paid gardener.
- *Social and Fundraising Group*, a group of volunteers who organise fund raising and social events throughout the year.
- *Finance Team*, who control all receipts and expenses plus gift aiding, under the management of the church Treasurer.

6. THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES

Many people from the local community, who are not members of the congregation, come to us to celebrate the special events in their lives, baptisms, weddings and funerals (both in church and at the crematorium). We keep in touch by inviting people who have been bereaved to our service on All Souls' Day.

The families of the newly baptised are invited to our Christmas Crib service where the children act out the Christmas story. All these services are well attended.



The church, involving the local community, is about to publish a book of the fifty fallen or returned soldiers of Great Sutton in the First World War. We were fortunate to get Peter Hart the historian and author to write a foreword to the book together with anecdotal introduction by others as to how the book came about. The book will be placed in schools and libraries and on sale to the general public. On reflection, it has been a salutary lesson but St. John's Church should be proud of its achievement.

Church Hall

The Church Hall bookings are managed by a lay volunteer. This is well used by our regular church groups - Prayer Group, Bible Study, Church Brigade, Stay and Play, Munch Bunch, Soup and Social and Charity Coffee Mornings. It is also used throughout the week by outside groups such as Pilates and Yoga as well as for various social events such as children's parties. These all bring in a welcome income towards the church's finances.

Work with Schools

There are no Church Schools in the parish, but we have close links with 2 Local Authority primary schools. These are visited by the clergy to attend assemblies and give talks. The schoolchildren also visit our church on occasions throughout the year and participate in some of our services.



Working with the Elderly and Sick



There are 2 nursing/elderly people homes in the parish where residents are offered Holy Communion if requested. The sick and housebound are also offered Home Communion if requested.

Support for Local and Overseas Charities

Outward Giving is supported by volunteer led monthly charity coffee mornings held on the last Saturday morning of each month. Charities are mainly chosen with a Christian focus supporting local, national and international charities with efforts to raise the profile of these charities.



Contact with other Churches and Organisations

Ecumenical services were held with the local Catholic Church, but this has now closed.

Members of our congregation are actively involved in:-

- *West Cheshire Foodbank* – food provision to those facing a crisis in their lives
- *Night Church* – a sacred space at St Peter's Church in Chester offering a warm welcome throughout Saturday night
- *Street Angels* – a church led project helping to make the streets of Chester safer
- *Homeless Outreach*, providing a breakfast drop-in where showers, fresh clothes and advice are available and Church Action on Poverty.

Community Events



The Summer and Christmas Fairs are major fundraising events for the church bringing us into contact with members of the community. Two very popular concerts on the lawn were held last year along with other social and fundraising events throughout the year.



7. THE CHURCH BUILDINGS

The Church



The Church, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, is stone built and was consecrated in 1879, together with an adjacent school and intended Vicarage. The school was long ago closed and now serves as our Church Hall.

The surrounding graveyard was opened in 1908 and encompasses a War Memorial. It is now closed for both new graves and ashes plots. The graveyard is maintained by volunteers supplemented by a professional gardener. The Church is entered via a south facing door and porch which has an attached belfry (single bell) with clock.



The Church itself consists of a single central nave with pews for seating, originally for 240. It has been re-ordered to provide for a children's corner, which has proved successful and popular, plus accommodation spaces for two wheelchairs in the body of the Church; the seating now provides for about 160.

A stone font is located at the west end of the nave, which like the pulpit, is carved from Caen stone and marble. A screen, designed by Charles Deacon and carved by Harry Hems & Co. leads into a large Chancel with choir stalls each side, together with an organ, and entry to the vestry on the north side. The Sanctuary is bounded by a low altar rail and includes an aumbry.



We have some beautiful stained glass in the Church. This ranges from the original large East and West windows through to a recently installed modern window depicting scenes of our locality. The West window was designed by Henry Holiday and executed by Heaton, Butler and Bell as a memorial to the wife of principal benefactor Peter Owen. The East window was constructed by Mayer of Munich again as a Memorial.



The bespoke Alexander Young and Son's pipe organ, dedicated in 1907, is well maintained and in regular use by our Musical Director. There is an on-going discussion about future work/restoration of the organ.

The building is heated by an oil-fired boiler system and consideration is being given to replacing it with a more environmentally friendly option. The building is in good condition, with no outstanding work from the Quinquennial Inspection in 2020.



The Church Hall

The adjacent building and car park to the north of the Church was built originally as a church school and playground and was in use as such until about 1960. After closure it was converted to be used as a hall and it was subsequently completely refurbished. During this process a mezzanine floor was installed to provide additional space. The main hall will hold up to 60 people depending on the activity, and is equipped with a kitchen. A gas central heating system is installed. The hall is in regular use by church and outside bodies for a multitude of purposes. Adjacent to the church is a large lawn which is used for many fundraising events. Brigade and Stay and Play also use it for summer outdoor activities.



8. The Vicarage

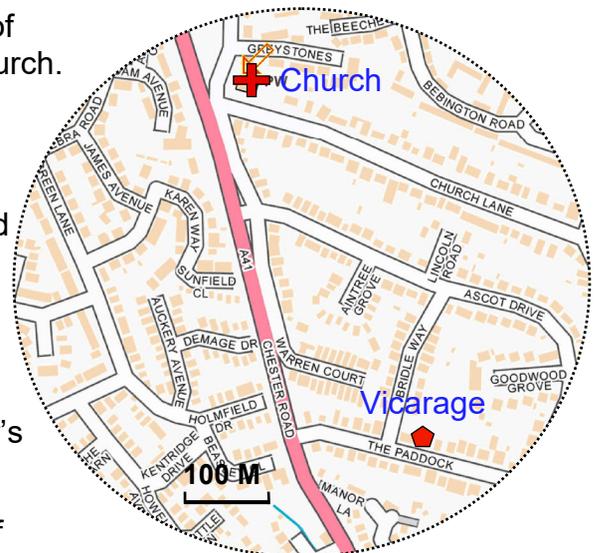
St. John's Vicarage is located in a quiet, desirable area of Great Sutton approximately a third of a mile from the Church.



It is a 1959 four bedroom detached house that has been considerably extended on the ground floor to include a modern, open plan kitchen/dining room.

The integrated garage has been converted into the Vicar's office/study with its own independent entrance.

This is an ideal family home within the catchment area of well rated primary and secondary schools.



There is a large private garden to the rear with an EV charging point on the front drive.



We hope this profile illustrates the faith, fellowship and friendship that we share within our church family and with the wider community.

As a parish we are open to new ideas and challenges while retaining our longstanding traditions and style of worship.

If you think you can lead us along this path please consider St. John's as your new parish and church family.



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