



# Parish Profile

Making a difference, wherever we are, as we share Faith for Life in Christ

ST MARY'S UPTON



Thank you for looking at our Parish Profile. We have tried to share a picture of who we are, what we do, and where we are now, along with our facilities and resources.

St Mary's is a lively evangelical Parish Church with a passion for reaching out into and engaging with our local community.

We are a friendly, welcoming, caring group of people with a wide mix of age groups, educational and social backgrounds and Christian experience, all wanting to grow more like Jesus and to make a difference to people's lives by sharing His love.

WELCOME  
video

Please press the Welcome video button above. Throughout this document you can use the yellow buttons to navigate to either a specific page or a video.

CAN YOU  
HELP US  
page

WORSHIP  
page

FLOURISH  
page

GROW  
page

CONNECT  
page

SERVE  
page

SAFE-  
GUARDING  
page

FINANCE  
page

BUILDINGS  
page

VICARAGE  
page

UPTON  
page

WIRRAL  
page

CANDIDATE  
page

SUPPORT  
page

DIOCESAN  
page

# CAN YOU HELP US?



## Is this the place for you?

We are hugely grateful to God for His great blessings on our church over many years, through bold leaders, forward thinking people and generous financial provision, enabling the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be brought to the local area.

Now in 2025, we are a committed and active church of about 400 people, which is growing older, and despite the brilliant work of our dedicated Children and Youth team, we are seeing a decline in the numbers of families and younger adults becoming regular members of our church.

We are praying for God's guidance to bring the right person here who will lead us forward in our mission and build up our church family.

Can you help us-

- Renew our energy and vision.
- Encourage more families and younger adults to join us and become active members of our church family.
- Develop styles of worship that will engage our teenagers and younger people and help them grow in their faith.
- Continue to love and engage with our community to show them the love of Jesus.

### Our Current Mission Statement

Making a difference wherever we are as we share 'Faith for Life' in Christ by:

- celebrating our faith in Jesus through our 'worship' in the widest sense;
- welcoming people and helping them to belong to our church family;
- becoming a healing community where people find a place where they are helped in their pain and struggles;
- equipping disciples 'to make a difference wherever we are';
- delighting in sharing our faith in relevant ways.



MENU  
page



**We meet at four services every Sunday and one on Wednesday**

**WORSHIP**



**At the Parish Church**

Sunday 8:45am	A traditional service of Morning Prayer
Sunday 10:30am	Children's groups run alongside our 10:30 morning worship except for our monthly all-age service.
Sunday 6pm	An informal service. Sundays@7, an interview with a person with a story to tell takes place once a month.
Wednesday 11am - 1pm	A short communion service at the Parish Church followed by a sandwich lunch together.

**At the Centre**

Sunday 11am	An informal service of Morning Prayer with a music group
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Our electoral roll currently stands around 350 with roughly fifty percent living in the parish.

**Clergy:**  
Incumbent Vicar (post vacant in November 2024)  
Associate Vicar

**Paid Staff:**  
Operations Manager  
Administrator,  
Caretaker  
Three 0-18s Team members  
Pastoral Co-ordinator  
Parish Nurse  
Cleaners  
Two Christians Against Poverty (CAP) staff





## Flourishing in Sharing Faith in Jesus

FLOURISH



We want to share faith for life to grow deeper in Christ.

We run events and a number of courses which give people an opportunity to explore the Christian faith, ask questions and get to know the St Mary's church family.

Our Small Groups are important and meet at various times throughout the week, to share life, pray and study the Bible together.

St Mary's loves to celebrate, give thanks to God and share our faith. We enjoy putting on music, drama, speakers, films, exhibitions, meals, picnics and family days to which we can invite friends and community.

For example, we hold a community event for turning on our Christmas lights at the Parish Church as part of the Upton Village community group.

For the Sundays@7 events, the church members are encouraged to bring non-Christian friends to hear in-depth interviews with Christians who have 'stories to tell' about how God has been at work in their own lives. This event replaces the evening service on the first Sunday of most months and regularly produces the largest congregation of the month. Most of these events are recorded and are available on YouTube.

St Mary's has excellent provision for presentations with a very comprehensive audio-visual system.



MENU  
page



**We look to be Growing Disciples**



## GROW

There are lots of exciting things happening at the Parish Church and at The Centre on Sundays and during the week for **0-18s**. We have a wide variety of groups that introduce children and young people to the Christian faith, and those that help them to hear and read the Bible and pray in a way that works for their age group.

**Sunday Groups** run during the 10:30am service at the Parish Church, except for the first Sunday of the month, which is an **All Age Service**. Our older CYFA group meets on Sunday evenings.

**St Mary's Preschool** runs during term time for those aged 2 up to school age.

We run two **toddler groups**, a **baby group** and a **mini praise** session each week, with regular bookable **baby massage** courses too.

**Fuse** is a weekly after school club for those in **Infants and Junior School**, with a **Parents' Cafe** that runs alongside each session.

The **Village Youth Project** was started in 1999 and through contact and friendship has developed relationships with thousands of local young people over the past twenty five years. The project's ministry strategy has a 'bringing in', 'building up' and 'sending out' model at its heart. Through this ministry many young people have come to a real and lasting faith.

Our youth **Drop In** sessions take place in **The Bank**, which is our youth centre in the village, and is the base for many of our youth activities, such as **School of Rock**, **Treading the Boards**, **Bank Bible Study** and our **Melt** young leaders programme.

We provide **Chaplaincy** at Woodchurch High School, which supports staff and pupils and promotes the Christian vision and ethos of the school. We also work closely with other local schools for assemblies and visits to church.

**Preparation for Baptism** is an important means of outreach. Baptisms take place within a Sunday morning 10:30 service. A Thanksgiving service can be held as a step towards baptism. We aim for mature Christians to 'sponsor' the parents of a child and bring them to a challenging preparation course. Adult immersion baptisms also happen as requested.

PRECHOOL  
video

CHILDREN  
video

YOUTH  
video

MENU  
page



We care about our Connecting Community

# CONNECT

Our **Pastoral Coordinator** and volunteers do a fantastic job of looking after those members of the community who are unwell, at home or in hospital.

On Thursdays we also have a **Parish Nurse** available to answer health concerns or monitor and support any long term health conditions.

We run, and are involved with, lots of different groups to help people connect with one another.

**Monday Makers** is a craft group with a focus on knitting, crochet and sewing. It is a great opportunity to chat whilst creating. At our weekly sessions we work on individual or community projects.

**Forget-me-not Café** is open each Monday at 11am in St Mary's Church, helping people with loss and bereavement.

**Elderbranch** is a group for anyone who is retired. They meet every two weeks apart from a short break in the summer and have a varied programme, often with a guest speaker, singer or choir.

**Our Place Café** meets each Thursday at 10am at The Centre, and is a great place to grab a drink and have a chat.

**SMART** (St Mary's Active Retired Team) Men is a group that meets regularly for various events; such as local trips, walks and activities.

**The Repair Cafe** occurs monthly on a Saturday morning. Our volunteers try their best to make good and repair items brought in.

Various outside groups hire our church rooms. These include Reading groups, Pilates, Phoenix Dance, NHS Respiratory and KOALA Breastfeeding clinic, Upton Village Community Group, National Heritage events, Guides & Brownies.

PASTORAL  
CARE  
video

PARISH  
NURSE  
video

ELDER  
BRANCH  
video

UPTON  
VILLAGE  
COMMUNITY  
video

MENU  
page



# SERVE

WORLD  
CHURCH  
video

ECO  
GROUP  
video

St Mary's is a lively church. We look to Jesus as an example of how to live and serve.

St Mary's relies on and appreciates a large team of volunteers to help run all the groups, services and activities which happen in the church.

**The World Church Group** looks after our global mission links and partners; those who serve in the UK and overseas.

We work with **Christians Against Poverty (CAP)** by running the Wirral Debt Centre, who see people released from the pressure of unmanageable debt.

The **Eco group** work hard to encourage the church as a body and as individuals to promote and then adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle. They have set up a conservation area in the church grounds to encourage native plants and wildlife.

St Mary's is committed to the Church of England's target for "**carbon neutral 2030**" and we are striving to continue our efforts to further reduce our carbon use. Last year we put solar panels and an air source heat pump in The Bank

**A Rocha International**, which started from our Church in 1982, is a global family of conservation organizations working together to live out God's calling to care for creation.

**True Freedom Trust (TFT)**, founded by a couple of members of St Mary's in the 1970s, offers support to those with same sex attraction.

St Mary's has strong links with **The Sisters of Jesus' Way**, an Evangelical Anglican Community living on the Wirral. It is not in our parish but our clergy lead a weekly communion service at the Sisters' residence and sisters attend services at the parish church or The Centre on a regular basis.

MENU  
page



## Our Safeguarding

# SAFEGUARDING

We take extremely seriously our responsibility to and for children and young people and vulnerable adults and are committed to developing a culture of safer working practice and care, reporting and recording.

Ensuring we offer safe space and active listening is important to us as we share God’s love, compassion and welcome with and for all.

We have adopted the House of Bishops guidance and good practice documents as our policies and procedures. We currently have one Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) who has high visibility and also 2 designated Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) officers and we are developing a team to support the growing best practice. The PSO has completed specific PSO and Leadership training.

We ensure safer recruitment of all new staff and volunteers is carried out and we are currently retrospectively completing application forms and taking up references for existing volunteers.

The number of volunteers who have completed Basic safeguarding training exceeds 80 and leaders of activities have also completed Foundation training. All staff have completed Leadership training. We are signed up to the Parish Hub and we are learning how to use that to best effect.

The PCC receive a safeguarding report at each meeting and also receive a summary of the actions outstanding on the Parish safeguarding dashboard. We are at level 3 on our Parish dashboard which we use as a tool for improvement. PCC members have all completed the required safeguarding training.

We have an excellent professional working relationship with our Diocese Safeguarding Officers and we host the Wirral PSO network on their behalf.

We agree that ‘Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility’ and we take that responsibility seriously.



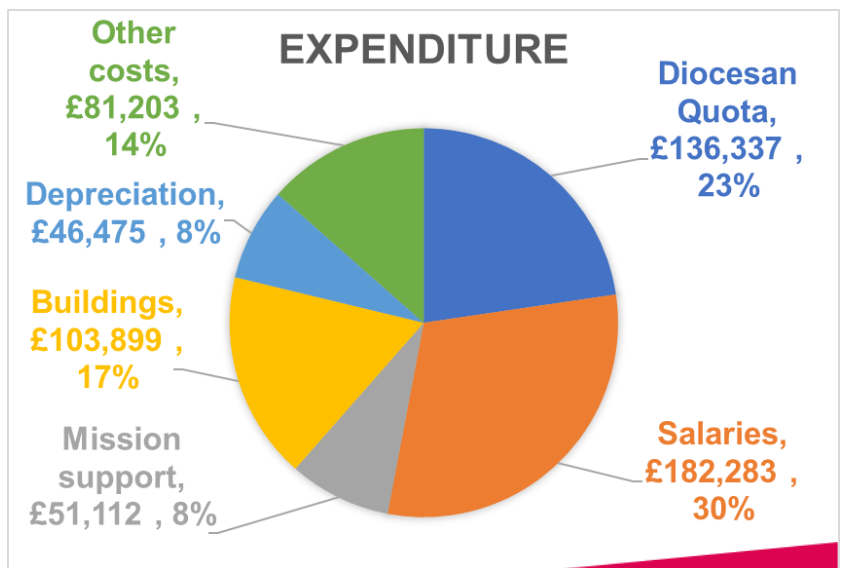
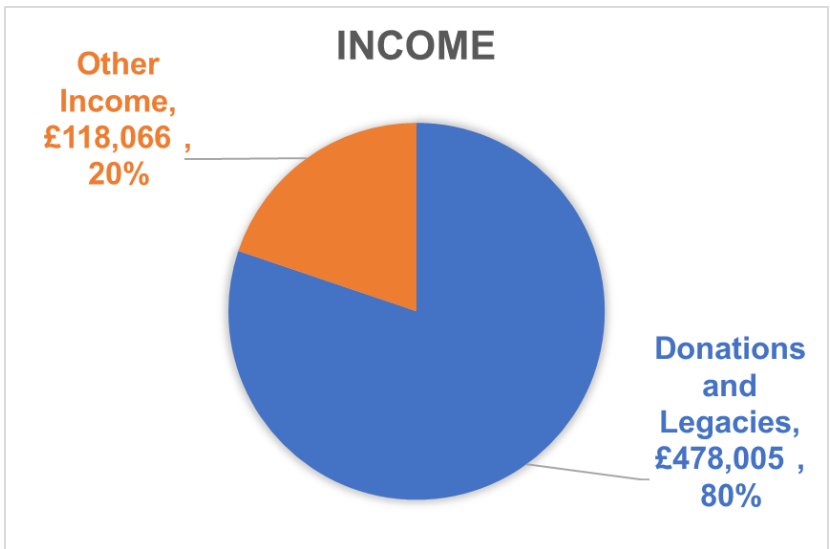




# FINANCES



St Mary's, historically and currently, has been blessed with a solid base of generous giving. Most of our income, around 80%, comes from donations and legacies, just over £478,000 in 2023. The rest from income from room lettings, etc. Going forward, we continue to manage our expenditure and increase our income to fund all the ministry and mission that St Mary's provides.



# BUILDINGS



St Mary's Church is in the Deanery of Wirral North and the Diocese of Chester. It has an evangelical tradition, the Simeon's Trustees having accepted patronage of the church in 1909. There has been a church in Upton since the 11th Century – see book "Set Upon a Hill"

The present church, a Grade 2 listed building, was built in 1868. It was designed by John Cunningham, and mainly financed by William Inman, owner of the Inman Shipping Line. He also lived in the parish. A school was also built next to the church around this time, with a teacher's house attached. These are now part of the parish building and the caretaker's house. In 1977 an extension was built on the side of the Church to provide extra space and seating. A large building project, (Parish Building) -

total cost of just over £2m, was launched in 2013 & completed in 2018.

St Mary's Centre is situated in a row of shops, in Saughall Massie, about a mile from the church. It was opened in 1976 to hold services for local people in that area. A service is held on Sundays at 11am with an average congregation of around sixty. The congregation is 'mature' but lively in worship and praise. The Centre is used by many different groups: Rainbows, Reading group, Tot's spot, MP surgeries, an AA group and as a Polling Station.

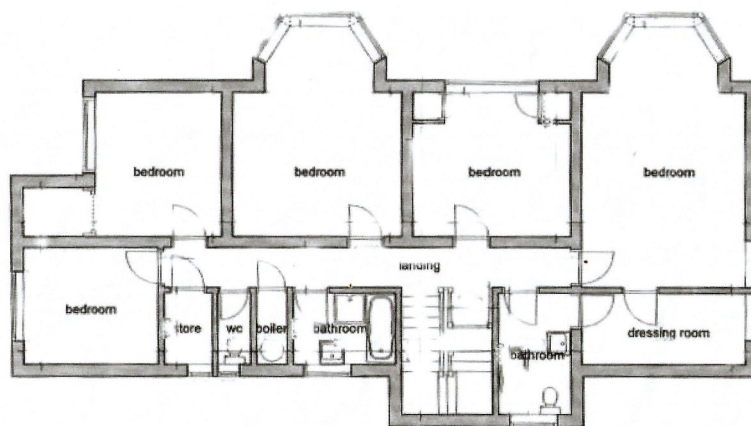
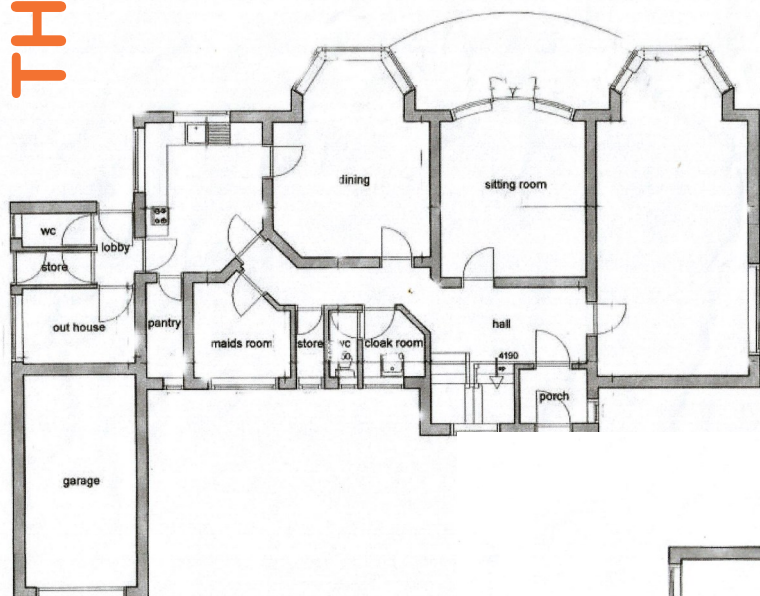
The church owns The Bank, a former bank which is the home for our Village Youth Project (VYP). St Mary's also owns two properties in the parish which are used for staff housing when needed.



# THE VICARAGE



The vicarage is a five bedroomed & three reception roomed detached house which is located within two minutes walk to the church. It has gas central heating, upvc double glazing and large mature gardens.



VICARAGE  
video

MENU  
page



# UPTON

Upton is in the centre of the Wirral and has a wide social mix, reflecting the more and less affluent sides of the peninsula. It was a Stone Age settlement, and grew from about 800 inhabitants in Victorian times to its present 13,000. It now has two churches, St Mary's and St Joseph's (Roman Catholic), one secondary school, four primary schools, two pubs, a park, tennis club, cricket club, dentist, two GP surgeries, library and a variety of shops and small businesses, and is close to the local hospital. There is good road and public transport with easy access to local areas, plus Liverpool, Chester, North Wales and beyond.

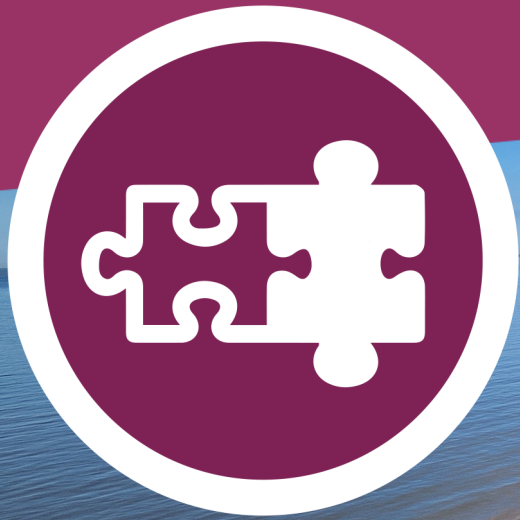


St Mary's has a good relationship with three of the four local primary schools (Overchurch Infants, Juniors and Hayfield) and runs the Chaplaincy at the local Woodchurch CofE High School just outside the parish boundary. The age range of residents is wide, with predominantly families and older retired people. The Parish is 93.5% white British and this is reflected in our congregations. There is a mixture of housing, including housing association property, several care homes and supported living apartments for the elderly.

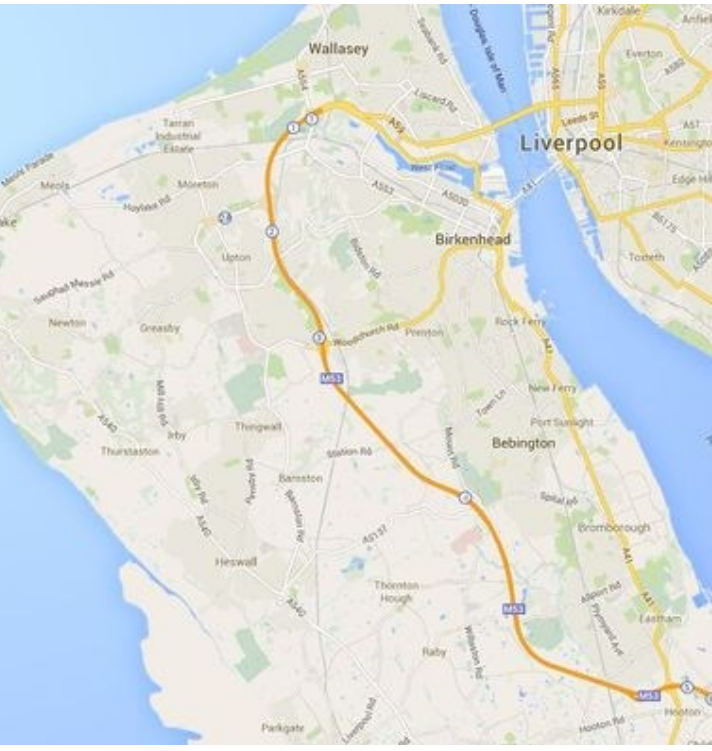
The churches support and encourage the Upton Village Community Group who promote and improve the village.

For more detail about Upton in general, please visit [www.upton.cx](http://www.upton.cx)





# The Wirral Peninsula



Wirral is called the Leisure Peninsula and is bounded by the rivers Dee and Mersey plus the Irish Sea. It is a wide mixture of urban, suburban and rural areas. It is a beautiful area which offers woodlands, sandy beaches and many facilities. There are many opportunities for walking, running, cycling, sailing, fishing, and golf, football, rugby, cricket etc. Many people who come here don't want to leave.

The M53 motorway runs down the middle of the Wirral, which enables easy access to the whole of the Wirral. Access to the M53 is but 2 minutes from St Mary's.

The major local football team is Tranmere Rovers with of course Liverpool and Everton over the water!





## Who we are looking for:

### The Candidate ...

- Will love Jesus, be a leader in evangelism and be able to encourage the congregation in living out their Christian faith, not just on a Sunday.
- Will have a strong awareness of the importance of safeguarding and be able to foster an effective safeguarding culture in the parish
- Will be a genuine, humble, compassionate, caring and welcoming person with a love for all people. Put another way - kind, friendly, approachable and with a sense of humour.
- Will be a prayerful person who will have vision, passion and enthusiasm and be blessed with wisdom and discernment.
- Will have a heart for ministering across the age ranges and a desire to see our church grow, especially in the 0-18 and 20s, 30s & 40s age groups. Proven experience in growing a large church to include younger people and families will be key to this appointment.
- Will be grounded as a bible teacher in the evangelical tradition and will have the ability to give strong biblical preaching and teaching, imaginatively communicating biblical truth relevantly so all can understand.
- Will need good leadership skills for both the staff team and volunteers plus the ability to encourage and empower the gifts of Church members to flourish.
- Will be committed to putting faith into action through loving service, the pursuit of peace and justice in society and the care of God's wonderful created world.
- Will need to be aware that although there is a range of views within both our PCC and our congregations, in July 2024 the PCC voted unanimously to support our clergy (our current Associate Vicar and our former Vicar) in their decisions to not offer Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF).



## How we can help you.

### How we can support you.

You will be supported in the church office by two full time members of staff in our **Operations Manager, David Steele** and our **Finance & 0-18s Administrator, Inga Lanigan**.

In addition, we have our full time **Caretaker Sandra Fletcher** who is responsible for the efficient and effective cleanliness, maintenance, security and access to the buildings and facilities of St Mary's.

Turning to clergy support, we are very thankful to have our associate vicar, **Revd Alec Ham**, four retired clergy in **Revds Beth Gardner, John Rainer & Chris Bray** plus **Bishop John Hayden**, a self supporting minister in **Lyn Weston** plus two lay readers in **Graham Morris & Dave Wood**.

### What we can offer you.

We will do all we can to help you feel at home at St Mary's. Whether that's practical assistance as you move in and settle down or simply being a friendly face when you're around the various church buildings, we'll make sure you soon feel a part of the family.

You will have a capable and supportive staff and ministry team, wardens and PCC. We will provide support and encouragement to take annual leave, retreats, etc and for your overall well-being.

We'd like to think of ourselves as flexible and open to new ideas and to this end, we'll do our best to encourage and support you in your vision and play our part in bringing it to life.

As you journey with us, we'll support you in prayer, asking for God's wisdom and guidance to lift you up to make great things happen with us in our parish.

We're excited for what the next chapter holds and can't wait to discover it with you!



David Steele



Inga Lanigan



Sandra Fletcher



## Our Place in the Church of England

Upton is within Wirral North Deanery, in the Diocese of Chester.

Under our Diocesan Bishop, Rt Revd Mark Tanner (since 2020), the Diocese has been through a consultative vision discernment and casting process. This led to the formulation of the vision, which has a clear focus on reaching the estimated 1.5m people (of the Diocese's population of 1.65m) who do not have a meaningful connection with any church:

**"Together in Christ, Sharing Hope".**

### **What are we hearing?**

That we believe in the Gospel

That we believe in the local and seek transformation

That we care about the environment locally and globally

That we want to engage young people and the 'disconnected'

That we want to do bigger/better/bolder things together...simply

That the 1.5m people in our diocese matter

That we need to plant new communities of faith

### **What is God calling us to?**

Growing, braver, fuller faith

Blessing 1.5m lives, one life at a time

Transformative loving service (in practice)

Engaged locally, working together in loving generosity







## Our Place in the Church of England (continued)

Having formed the vision, work has begun on formulating and putting into practice a Diocesan strategy. This is being developed in four streams:

**Growing our Missional Health** - helping each worshipping community (of which parishes are a main constituent) grow in their personal discipleship to Jesus Christ, and their mission together in their local community

**Increasing our Missional Reach** - helping each worshipping community to reach those key demographics in their local context who are not currently part of their worshipping community - in particular this is about helping us becoming younger and more diverse

**Planting new Missional Communities** - helping each worshipping community to be inspired to plant one new worshipping community by 2030, and looking at specific strategic planting / collaborative mission opportunities

**Developing Missional Leadership** - encouraging and supporting our existing leaders (ordained, licensed, employed, volunteers), and creating the pathways to ensure that we can grow, train and release more people into missional leadership.

**The Deanery of Wirral North** forms an L shape across the northern half of the Wirral, excluding Birkenhead and Wallasey. There is no natural centre of gravity for the Deanery – it comprises 14 parishes, covering nearly as many separate population centres, and with 21 churches with a range of size, style and tradition. There are good relationships in the Deanery particularly between the clergy, for whom it provides a valuable forum for fellowship and mutual support. Synod meets three times a year, usually with a speaker on a topic of relevance, often one of the Diocesan team. Because of the size and makeup of the Deanery we do not currently have Deanery-wide initiatives involving all the churches, but some churches partner with & support one another or are involved in joint events together on a local basis.

The outworking of the Diocesan strategy may lead to changes in the structure and function of the Deaneries, which will be important in connecting Diocese and parishes in the outworking of the strategy.



Bishop of Chester  
Mark Tanner



Bishop of Birkenhead  
Julie Conalty