

# Parish Profile



**Benefice  
of  
St Helen's  
with Seaview**

**Deanery of East Wight**

**Archdeaconry of the  
Isle of Wight**

**Diocese of Portsmouth**



## 1 INTRODUCTION

We wish to appoint to this Joint Benefice of St Helens with Seaview a Parish Priest who will continue to draw the two parishes together in worship, ministry and fellowship, whilst at the same time recognising their distinctive nature.



We are looking for an approachable parish priest with a good sense of humour, who will be flexible and adaptable enough to relate both to the working village of St Helens with its roots in the countryside and the sea, and also the people of Seaview, many of whom are resident visitors or come for the sailing.

While the allocation according to the Deanery Plan is a post of 0.8, the Diocese is seeking to appoint a full time priest who will carry out non-parochial duties for the equivalent of one day a week. The nature of these duties will be agreed with the Archdeacon or the Area Dean.

The person appointed will need to be able to manage effectively the allocation of time between parish and other duties.

He or she will also need to be ready to enjoy the benefits, but also able to accept the practicalities of living on the Isle of Wight.

## 2 THE PARISHES



**St Helens** is a village and civil parish located on the eastern side of the Isle of Wight. The village is based around the Village Greens which are often used for cricket matches during the summer and football in the winter and also include a children's playground. The local pub is The Vine and the village also has two restaurants, Ganders on the upper side of the green and Dan's Restaurant on the south. The village is a short distance from the coast, with about a ten minute walk to St Helens Duver, which has a popular beach for tourists during the summer season and is protected by the National Trust. It is here that the original St Helen's Church, now a ruin, is situated.

St Helens has a population of nearly two thousand and is a mixture of traditional villagers, commuters working in Newport and Ryde and a considerable number of retired people. There is a good mix of ages and social backgrounds. The traditional occupations of St Helens were ship building, smuggling, fishing and farming but these have largely declined. Most of the housing is owner occupied, some of it is holiday accommodation and there are four holiday camps.

The village's only school, St Helens Primary School, with 85 pupils currently on roll, is one of the smallest on the island. The village also has a Newsagent, Post Office and grocery store, coffee shop, bookshop, garage and doctors' surgery. The Baywatch Café is located on the seafront and the Priory Bay Hotel is on the village outskirts.



*St Helens Beach*



**Seaview** is a small Edwardian resort located on the north-eastern corner of the Isle of Wight, overlooking the Solent. The village is popular with tourists and is only a 15 minute drive from the town of Ryde, where most tourists reach the island by ferry or hovercraft. Together with Nettlestone, it forms the civil parish of Nettlestone and Seaview.



The High Street is perpendicular to the shore. On the seafront lies The Old Fort pub, a drinking spot popular with both residents and summer visitors, which overlooks the ever popular rock pools. There is also a Thai restaurant with take-away, two hotels, a tea room, a Post Office, stationery shop, pharmacist, grocer's and a fine sports ground with a new pavilion.

The well-known Priory Bay is approximately a ten minute walk from the village. This stretch of beach can only be reached at low tide. It is filled with white sand and offers excellent swimming conditions. In addition, Seagrove Bay, between the village and Priory Bay, is quite popular. The Sea View Yacht Club was founded in 1893 and has been a significant part of village life ever since. Seaview is also home to the Seaview Wildlife Encounter, the Isle of Wight's largest wildlife park.



*Priory Bay*

Between Seaview and St Helens is the village of **Nettlestone**, mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, with its old manor, some Victorian and Edwardian houses, the village shop, the Roadside Inn and Nettlestone Primary School with 187 pupils on roll. Behind the older part of Nettlestone, a new estate was built in the 1960s and 1970s. Often called Seaview Heights, it consists of a number of detached owner occupied houses and bungalows.

The population of Seaview and Nettlestone is about 3,000 but this number is increased considerably in the summer and especially in August when the village is full of visitors. Many of

these are professional people from London or the Home Counties who own houses in Seaview. Many families have been coming to Seaview for generations and have built up a lasting attachment to it on account of its excellent sailing opportunities and the safe coastal environment for children. For most of the time Seaview's permanent population consists mainly of retired people, though there are families with young children. In the summer it is full of families of all ages, relaxing and enjoying all that our beautiful island home has to offer.



*Rock pools off Seaview*

### 3 BUILDINGS AND LAND

#### St Helen's Church



The present church building dates from 1719 and was extensively rebuilt during the nineteenth century. It is generally in good repair. The most recent major work has been the repair and re-tiling of the south east elevation of the Chancel roof. The Quinquennial Report of 2011 found the building to be generally in good order and commended the way that the church and its grounds had been maintained since the previous report. The church will seat approximately 150 in the Nave and Transepts. There is a small gallery which houses the organ and currently can be used for extra seating when necessary.



We are in the process of having a replacement pipe organ installed, thanks to a very generous bequest. This instrument comes from St Mary's Hospital Chapel in Portsmouth and should be a great improvement on our present organ.

The church building has no toilet accommodation, and the provision of this is an on-going issue.

Entries in the Visitors' Book frequently comment on the tranquillity to be found in the church.

The modern Community Centre in the village has a large hall, with a kitchen and toilets, all leading off an attractive entrance lobby. There is also an octagonal Chapel, St Catherine's, which seats up to 20 people and is used for mid-week and monthly Sunday evening services. This is a wonderful asset for the village and has considerable potential for the parish.



*St Catherine's Chapel and Community Centre*

#### St. Helen's Churchyard

We are privileged to have a beautiful, peaceful churchyard at St. Helens, an amenity which serves not only St. Helens itself, but Seaview and Nettlestone as well. The original part, round the Church, has been there since the present church was built in 1719 and over the years it has been necessary to extend it southwards so that it now occupies a very large area indeed.

A contracted groundsman undertakes the year-round tasks of mowing, strimming, tree work, weed control and other sundry jobs necessary to keep the churchyard properly maintained.

An honorary manager oversees all the work, including any burials. There is also a section set aside for the interment of cremated remains. A small section of the churchyard is left to nature as part of the 'Living Churchyard' during the summer months, where birds, glow worms and wild flowers can thrive. From October onwards this is all cut back ready for the rebirth in the spring and summer. Our last vicar created a labyrinth for contemplative prayer in the churchyard.

The income to the churchyard comes from fees charged for burials and interment of cremated remains, and headstones when they are fitted. There are also many people who make a regular donation to the funds and this helps us to meet the cost of regular maintenance.

## St Peter's Church



In 1862 the building of St Peter's Church was started on a site in the centre of the village as a Chapel of Ease to St Helen's, until 1907 when Seaview became a separate parish. Designed by the architect Thomas Hellyer who was responsible for a number of local churches, it was constructed in stone with a slate roof and having a fairly simple interior. An elaborate gothic screen of iron was erected in 1909 at the west end of the choir over the chancel step.

Following the First World War, the Lady Chapel and south aisle were added in 1921 to serve as a war memorial. Since then a number of additions have been built in matching stone so that there is now a clergy vestry, a choir vestry, an organ vestry, a flower vestry with toilet and most recently a porch linking the west door with the church hall. There is a well maintained two manual pipe organ and the church can comfortably seat 275 people. On the south side of the church is a very pleasant commemorative rose garden.



*Gothic Screen*

Following the last two quinquennial inspections a considerable amount of work has been carried out on the roof valleys, gutters and stonework and currently much of the lime mortar pointing of the south and west walls is being replaced to rectify areas of damp plaster on some interior walls, but otherwise the building is in a good state of repair. A new central heating boiler was installed in 2012.



*Porch entrance of St Peter's*

Adjacent to the church as a separate building is the church hall which is on two levels. The top level consists of a large hall, a kitchen and toilet. The lower level is an undercroft which has several rooms, toilets and a kitchen. At present much of this is in need of refurbishment and a project is in hand to achieve this with an application for a grant from the Bishop's Mission Opportunities Fund.

## The Vicarage

When the two parishes of St Helens and Seaview became a plurality about thirty years ago, the two original vicarages were sold and a new one was built on a piece of land next to St Helen's Church. The Vicarage is in a very convenient position on the main road between the two villages and an equal distance from each. It is also conveniently sited for the excellent general store in Nettlestone.

The house was constructed in 1988/9 as a new vicarage to contemporary Green Guide standards and offers a large family home with four bedrooms, two reception rooms, kitchen, study, utility room and a pleasant garden.



*The Vicarage*

Constructed of brick under a plain tile roof, the house provides accommodation of 176sqm on two floors. The garage extends out from the study, forming a wing on the west side of the house and there is ample space for parking. At the east end there is a bay extending to form the breakfast

room. Adjacent to the back door is a small timber garden store constructed in materials to match the main house. The windows are timber framed and all are double glazed. In 2011 all the windows and doors were replaced. There is an open glazed veranda on the south side facing onto the lounge. Unusually for a vicarage, the kitchen is fitted with an AGA cooker.



*View from the Vicarage across the fields*

The condition of the Vicarage following the last quinquennial was considered to be very satisfactory. The recent incumbent and her husband have found it a most comfortable house to live in. It has all mains services.

In the grounds of the Vicarage is the Parish Office. It houses a computer, photocopier, Risograph, collator, and a booklet maker. The office is used regularly by the Parish Administrator and the team who print, collate and booklet the monthly Parish Magazine.

The parish also owns a small cottage next to the Vicarage. At present this is let out to tenants and provides a very useful and significant income for the church. It is well looked after and maintained by the present tenant.

#### **4 WORSHIP AND MINISTRY**

The current pattern of worship, which is shared by the two parishes, is as follows:



##### First Sunday of the month

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion	St Helen's
10.00 a.m.	Sung Eucharist and Children's Church	St Peter's

##### Second Sunday

8.00a.m.	Holy Communion	St Peter's
10.00 a.m.	Sung Eucharist	St Helen's

##### Third Sunday

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion	St Helen's
10.00 a.m.	Sung Eucharist and Children's Church	St Peter's
6.00 p.m.	Evening Praise	St Catherine's

#### Fourth Sunday

8.00a.m.	Holy Communion	St Peter's
10.00 a.m.	Sung Eucharist	St Helen's

#### Each Wednesday

9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion	St Catherine's
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#### Third Thursday

10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion	St Peter's
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When there is a fifth Sunday in the month the 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion and 10.00 a.m. Sung Eucharist are normally celebrated in alternate churches.

The **Sunday attendance** for St Helens 8.00am is between 10 & 15, and at 10.00 between 50 & 60 with between 4 & 6 children in the choir. At Seaview 8.00am is between 15 & 18. The attendance at a 10.00am service is between 60 & 80 with 6 children in the choir.

On special days – notably Christmas, Easter, Remembrance Sunday and Regatta Sunday – extra services are held in both parish churches, and on these occasions the retired clergy are more than happy to help out.

At present Common Worship Order One is used at the Sunday 10.00 a.m. Eucharist. Order One Traditional is used at 8.00 a.m. The BCP Holy Communion is used for the midweek services. Evening Praise is an informal service incorporating hymns, readings and prayers.



*St Peter's Church organ*

St Helens and Seaview are 'middle of the road' Anglican parishes, neither high nor low church, and there is little difference in the style of worship in the two churches. Robes are worn by the clergy at all Eucharists. For the Eucharist in both churches we use service leaflets, created from the liturgy in Common Worship, which are particular to each church season.

Music is provided by our loyal organist who serves both churches. He is supported by a young deputy organist whom we have assisted financially over several years and who now plays on a regular basis in both churches. The choir is affiliated to the RSCM.

It consists currently of about fourteen adults and six children, most of whom sing in both churches. The children are mainly recruited from Nettlestone School.

There are several special services during the year. In St Helens parish an annual Sea Sunday service is held near the site of the old church on the Duver (sea shore). In Seaview the annual Regatta Service on a Sunday morning marks the end of Regatta Week and is always well attended. Easter Sunday services are particularly well attended in both parishes, by visitors and holiday-makers, as well as regular members of the congregation.



*Old Church on the Duver*

Apart from the incumbent there are three retired priests living in the two parishes who are very willing to assist when required. A Reader preaches and assists about once a month, as well as leading a regular Bible Study group and organising the pastoral visiting scheme. Two members of the congregation have begun Reader training.

Lay involvement in leading worship is encouraged; readings and intercessions are normally conducted by lay people. There is a team of lay people who take turns in administering the chalice, both at 8.00 a.m. and at the Parish Eucharist. They also run a Sunday morning children's church, which is small at the moment but we hope will develop.



*Floral arrangement in church*

A large number of church members give of their time and talents in helping to maintain the church buildings and in various kinds of service in the local community. They are encouraged to see what they do as part of their Christian ministry.

A pastoral prayer group, currently consisting of ten members, meets on the first Tuesday of each month in St Catherine's Chapel to pray for those in the community who are sick and frail. They also form a prayer chain, to pass on information about any who are in need of prayer. We have a team of pastoral visitors, three of whom take Holy Communion to elderly residents in their own homes.

Each year we run Lent courses and in the summer and autumn a group of about a dozen meets in someone's home for Bible study.

We have a good relationship with our two local primary schools (St Helens and Nettlestone) and there is scope for further involvement. Children from the schools have visited both churches from time to time.

We have a very active Mothers' Union Branch that meets monthly in St Peter's Hall. The old St Helens Branch closed some years ago and amalgamated with Seaview, and there are currently twenty four members. As well as enjoying their monthly meetings several of the members are able to attend services and functions elsewhere on the Island and in Portsmouth and there is strong support for Mothers' Union projects, both home and overseas.



All three churches are open for daily prayer and contemplation.

## **5 ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE**

Each PCC has thirteen members including the normal statutory ex-officio members. The **Electoral Rolls** have recently been revised and the numbers on the roll as reported to the APCM are 50 at St Helens and 68 at Seaview.



**Copies of both sets of accounts** for the last financial year are attached.

The number of **Gift Aid** declarations is 86 at Seaview and 72 at St Helens.

The total **Missionary and Charitable Giving** for 2012 was at St Helens £1354.22 and at Seaview £1,782.00. Each parish makes a disbursement to charities at the end of the financial year.

The average number of '**occasional offices**' per year in both churches over the last ten years has been:

Baptisms	13
Weddings	10
Funerals	31



The **annual parish share** last year for Seaview was £29,757.00 and for St Helens £20,303.04.

The **trends over the last three years** have been positive in seeing an increase in income and a reduction in expenditure. The finances of both parishes are in a healthy state with reserves available for church maintenance, though there will be pressure in the near future from an increase in the parish share and also the need to carry out some impending and necessary repairs in both churches following the Quinquennials.

The previous Vicar submitted a monthly expense sheet for all expenses incurred in fulfilling the duties in the parish - a new incumbent may wish to review this method of dealing with expenses. She also made a monthly expenses return for any other clergy who have taken services. Where applicable the expenses are shared between both churches.

## 6 THE WIDER CHURCH

St Helen's and St Peter's belong to the East Wight Deanery, which covers the eastern half of the Isle of Wight. Each parish has two representatives on the Deanery Synod which meets three or four times a year. The Deanery is subdivided into three clusters and we are in the North Cluster, being grouped with the Ryde parishes and Bembridge. This arrangement is fairly new, and it gives scope for greater co-operation, between both clergy and lay members.

The parishes are also part of the Portsmouth Diocese, coming under the Archdeaconry of the Isle of Wight. The Diocesan 'Ministry for Mission' framework encourages us to develop a vision for the future and a Mission Opportunities Fund has been set up so that parishes can apply for financial assistance for appropriate developments.



*David and Heather Sharland*

The two parishes have a link, through IDWAL (Inter Diocesan West Africa Link) with the parish of Bolgatanga in northern Ghana. It is difficult to maintain communication, but we pray for the parish and give them some financial support each year. We also keep contact with our CMS link missionaries, David and Heather Sharland in Uganda.

Both parishes strongly support the work of Christian Aid. We no longer organise a door to door collection during Christian Aid Week, but we arrange street collections and a special money raising event.

There are no other places of worship in St Helens, but in Seaview there is a small congregation of Roman Catholics with whom we enjoy friendly relations. There is also a 'free' church called the Grace Church next door to St Peter's, although services are now held there only on alternate Sunday evenings. Joint services are held in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and also the Women's World Day of Prayer. There are 'Christians Together' groups in Ryde and Bembridge and church members could be encouraged to take a greater part in these.

## 7 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### St Helens

At the entrance to St Helens is the Community Centre, which is owned by the church and was built to replace the original 'tin tabernacle' which was a feature of parish life for most of the twentieth century. The Community Centre is well used by both the church and the wider community, hosting various groups including art, bridge and 'mother and toddler' groups, yoga, historical and horticultural societies, Ladies' Club, circle dancing and a photographic society.

The centre has its own caretakers and is run by a small management committee with representatives from the parish council and the PCC.



*St Helens Sports Pavilion opened in 2008*

In addition the village has a busy medical centre, sports pavilion and converted Methodist chapel which is home to a youth club. With its own football and cricket clubs holding weekly fixtures, the village green is well used. For young people there is a Scout and Guide company and a monthly meeting of Grapevine.

It is encouraging that local residents, including non-church goers, are looking for the presence of a parish priest not only in the church but also in their community. There is already a church influence with the Easter sunrise service and the

sea service, held outdoors on the site of the original church by the sea shore and the ecumenical Songs of Praise held on the village green.

St Helens has four holiday camps, considerably increasing the population during the summer months, as well as Brading Haven Yacht Club. Besides all the on-going activities, the village organises various events in the summer, including a carnival and travelling fair, a horticultural show, open gardens and sports day. These events are well supported by residents from outside the village.

### Seaview and Nettlestone

Seaview has a prestigious Yacht Club, of which the parish priest is invited to be an honorary member. Although the village caters for second home owners and tourists in the summer months, there are also permanent activities for the local residents throughout the year. The Sports Club has a swimming pool, tennis, badminton and squash courts and a well-equipped gymnasium, which are well used. The club arranges various sporting events, and hosts Shrove Tuesday pancake races and an Easter Egg hunt.



*Sea View Yachts*

The village has a council football ground, where a new pavilion has recently been opened to serve the local community. This project was funded by various grants and generous local support. The football field is the venue for the St Peter's Church Fete in mid-August, which is viewed by the village as a community event.

St Peter's Hall hosts a variety of community activities, which include a Toddler Group, Mums and Tots, an art group, Women's Institute and table tennis. It is used by groups such as the Royal British Legion and RNLI for their coffee mornings and other fund-raising activities.

Seaview and Nettlestone have their own Community Partnership, who organise the annual Lights of Love service for the Isle of Wight Hospice and Carol Singing round the Christmas Tree in the church garden. They also organise an annual Street Fayre in May and a summer Music Evening on the sea front. These events are seen as an important part of village life and whenever possible it is hoped that the parish priest will be involved.



*St Helen's stall at the May Fair*

The interplay between church and community is seen in the annual Remembrance Day Service, the Christingle Service and the Regatta Service marking the end of the August Regatta.



Many of our seasonal visitors to Seaview have expressed a wish to be included in the life of the village and the church, and our challenge is how to reach out to them in a meaningful way. It is important that the church is able to meet the needs of both the permanent and seasonal residents and help bridge any gap that might exist between them.

Regular coffee mornings are organised in both parishes, which bring people together socially as well as raising money for the churches. In August St Peter's Church organises a summer fete on the recreation ground which is very popular and well attended by local residents and visitors. At St Helens the church has a stall at the annual village fete.

For people living alone, mainly in Seaview and Nettlestone, regular Friendship Lunches are arranged, and these provide a wonderful opportunity for them to meet others and enjoy a time of fellowship.

Church members run a Community Care Call scheme which arranges for people living on their own to be called up by volunteers on CB radio every morning.

Parish outings have been arranged for many years – both day trips and residential visits. These have attracted not only church members but people from the wider community.

## **8 OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

In response to the Bishop's call to '**Ministry for Mission**' we have identified the following three areas for development:



- **Children and young people.** We are beginning to find ways of engaging with children and young people and introducing them to the Christian faith by giving greater priority to children's church on Sunday mornings. We hope to introduce Family Worship and establish some kind of mid-week activity. We plan to develop the youth group, starting with the young people we already have in the choir and we hope there will be scope for greater involvement in the schools.

- **Community Outreach.** We recognise the need to participate more fully in the community life that exists in both our villages. We aim to strengthen the churches' link with the Community Partnership and the Yacht Club in Seaview and with the people who use the St Helens Community Centre and meet on the Village Green. Living as we do in a place where people come to take their holidays, to relax and recharge their batteries, we have a wonderful opportunity to welcome visitors and try to meet their spiritual needs.
- **Facilities.** We want to find ways of improving our facilities, both at St Peter's and St Helen's. In particular the undercoft below St Peter's Hall needs to be refurbished and brought back into use as a facility for young people and small groups. To update St Helen's Church we are keen to install a toilet, and we are on the verge of launching an appeal in the village in order to achieve this. We are aware that the lack of a toilet deters some people from attending the church.

## 9 OUR NEW INCUMBENT

We hope that our new incumbent will be:

- a spiritual person.
- a good leader and organiser and a ready listener, who can delegate and encourage others in their own particular ministry. This includes both lay people and the retired clergy.
- involved in pastoral care, with a special sensitivity to the needs of those who are elderly or housebound.
- keen to welcome newcomers to the church and to develop a pattern of worship that is attractive to young families as well as the older members of the congregation.
- committed to the schools and to youth work, having a desire to help children and young people come to a knowledge of the Christian faith.
- welcoming to visitors, second home owners and holiday makers.
- interested in the musical life of the church, supporting and encouraging the work of the organists and choir.
- determined to maintain a high profile in the community, being involved in community events and organisations as well as the church.
- willing to work closely with colleagues in the cluster and the wider Deanery.