

The Joint Parish Profile of



St. Peter & Paul Wymering and St. Philip Cosham 2018 (held in plurality)



Diocese of Portsmouth



Logos of St. Peter & St. Paul Wymering (left) and St. Philip Cosham (right).

Introduction

The Parishes of St. Peter & St. Paul, Wymering and St. Philip, Cosham (combined population of c11,800) have been in plurality since 2011.

Patronage of both parishes, since plurality, is shared by the Bishop and the Nugee Foundation. The Nugee Family take a close interest in the affairs of the parishes.

Whilst we recognise there are challenging circumstances within the parishes; we are committed to being there for everyone and further building upon our outreach ethos through:

- involvement in the primary schools in both parishes
- an IT drop in centre & support service with wi-fi
- outreach as a film club, gardening club, lego club & cafe church.

Our joint vision is: to work together as two parishes united in mission and to serve the people within our communities.

The ancient Parish of Wymering sits at the foot of Portsdown Hill in the North of the city of Portsmouth. The parish is bisected by the busy A27, the Southampton Road. The area around Wymering Church is a conservation area and Medina Road, where the church is, was a designated “Garden Village” in the 1920’s. Much of the housing, including the Isle of Wight Estate and the area North of Southampton Road was built as an overflow from Portsmouth and many

families were rehoused here and in Paulsgrove after the war.

There are no church schools in the parish, but two “good” (Ofsted) primary schools, Medina & Portsdown primary school.

Wymering is an area of urban deprivation. According to the Church Urban Fund, the IMD rank is 861 out of 12,599 (where 1 is the most deprived parish.) The most significant poverty related issue in this parish is the relatively high rate of lone parenthood.

The next most significant issue is the relatively high rate of child poverty. Child poverty, pensioner poverty, working age poverty and lone parenthood in this parish are among the highest in the country.

Qualification levels in this parish are among the lowest nationally. Male & female life expectancy are lower than average compared with other parishes, nationally.(Wymering parish originally included the more affluent Port Solent, which has recently become part of Portchester parish. The CUF figures were issued before this move and therefore the actual poverty indicators are probably a little higher.)

The Parish of St. Philip is part of the industrial triangle, bounded on three sides by the railway and the Highbury Estate; which is a urban housing estate on the northern edge of Portsmouth, along



The Good Friday witness on Cosham High Street led by Churches Together in Cosham.

with shops and a few houses, bounded by the A27 to the south, the railway line to the north and east, and Portsmouth Road running north\south down it's western perimeter.

The parish contains Highbury College, Redwood Park Academy, which is a Community Special School and Highbury Primary School, which is at present an affiliated church school, in the process of becoming an Academy. Highbury School is a "good" (Ofsted) school and is very popular. As a result, and also because of it's approximation to the station, Highbury houses are eagerly sought after. Especially those original ones built in the 1930's. In addition to these, there are several blocks of flats, and a new development "Scholar's Walk" near Highbury College, all with a mix of owner occupied, shared occupancy and social housing.

According to the Church Urban Fund, the IMD rank is 4,846 out of 12,599 (where 1 is the most deprived parish.) The most significant poverty related issues in this parish are the relatively low male & female life expectancy. Female life expectancy in this parish is among the lowest, nationally. Child poverty in this parish is higher than average compared with other parishes, nationally.

Male life expectancy is lower than average compared with other parishes, nationally. Qualification levels in this parish are higher than average compared with other parishes, nationally.

Wider Church

Wymering, Cosham, Paulsgrove and Farlington are the four parishes in the North Portsmouth cluster. This cluster is also linked with the so-called "trans-creek" cluster, taking in the North Portsmouth parishes. The Area Dean is Fr. Paul Gully, Rector of Farlington.

The four parishes are served at the moment by two incumbents (Paulsgrove and Farlington), one Vicar and one Pioneer Minister (Wymering and Cosham.) The three incumbents work closely together to cover absences. St. Michael & all Angels, Paulsgrove is under the extended care of the Bishop of Richborough.

There is a Methodist church and hall near to Wymering parish church and this is the only other denominational meeting place in the parish. However the local RC church and Baptist church are also located in Cosham, just across the parish boundary.

The various Christian denominations in the area form "Churches Together in Cosham", who hold a joint witness on the High Street on Good Friday; services during Christian Unity Week and events at Pentecost and Christmas on Cosham High Street.



Left: St. Peter and St. Paul Wymering in the snow. Right: Some of the Wymering congregation.

St Peter & St Paul Wymering

The Church, Churchyard and Graveyard

The church is a Grade II* listed building and thirteen monuments in the churchyard are Grade II listed. Existence of a church on the site is referred to in documents dating as far back as 1129. Original 12th, 13th and 14th century features remain, and there was a major restoration in 1860-1 under the direction of the renowned architect G.E. Street.

There are some significant memorials, including one to a local man who was lost in the sinking of the Titanic and one to Francis Austen, Jane Austen's brother, which was gifted by the Jane Austen Society of America.

Restoration and maintenance continues systematically and the fabric is in good order. A new lighting system was installed in 2016 and there is a faculty outstanding for the installation of glass outer doors to the porch as well as new chairs.

It is hoped to have the painting of the church scheduled for the summer of 2017. Funding is in place for the decoration and glass doors, but not as yet for the chairs.

The church is surrounded by a small churchyard. Monuments here date from the 18th & early

19th centuries and include members of Jane Austen's family. The Cosham & Wymering War Memorial stands in the south-western corner. A memorial contains the inscribed names of recently-cremated parishioners, and there is a memorial garden adjacent. The larger graveyard across the road, consecrated in 1862, has fifteen Commonwealth War Graves. Both yards are now closed to burials.

The Vicarage at Wymering

The vicarage is a Grade II listed building in its own right. The southern aspect is Georgian. Extensions have been added over time, and there is indoor access to the church via the parish office and hall. The master bedroom has a decorative plaster ceiling created by Napoleonic prisoners-of-war who at one time occupied the building. There are three downstairs rooms, four bedrooms, one upstairs toilet/bathroom, a large attic and a large cellar. There is also a recently-refurbished kitchen large enough to double as an informal dining room, and a newly installed easy-access ground floor toilet/shower room. See photos in appendix.

The Church Buildings and Vicarages

In each parish the church, hall and vicarage are adjacent and form an integrated unit.

The Church Hall and Meeting Room

The present church hall complex was opened in 1982. Level access is via a north entrance car park, and a porch with steps leads into the church nave. There are full facilities for the disabled. The hall is connected to the vicarage via stairs to the parish office. The four flat roofs over the complex were replaced in 2006, secondary glazing was installed in 2007, and the hall and meeting room redecorated.

The facilities are well used by the congregation for official meetings, social events and regular gathering after services, and there are increasing numbers of hall lettings which are managed by the Churchwardens. A major refurbishment is in the Mission Action Plan for 2017-18, for which community funding will be sought.

Worship

Wymering is a liberal catholic parish, using Common Worship in its liturgies. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the sanctuary. Major Festivals are observed where appropriate, sometimes as a joint Service with St Philip's (eg Ascension Day). There are full liturgies for Holy Week and Easter, including the Triduum.

Christmas Eve sees the Christingle and Midnight Mass and on the following morning 8 am and a 10 am joint informal Mass with Carols with St Philip's (at Wymering). There are a variety of seasonal and other service booklets. A nave altar is used for the monthly informal Mass ('Family') and often in August when the choir are on holiday. The church space and chairs allows for a flexibility of approach to worship. There is a screen and data projector available and this is often in use, particularly in family services. There is an adequate sound system. There are teams of sidespeople, Chalice assistants, readers and Intercessors.

Vestments are used at all Eucharistic services with incense and bells at the main Sunday Sung Eucharist, though incense is not usually used at the more informal Mass. There are Sacristans and a team of servers, young and not-so-young, with a Head and Deputy Head Server. The main Sunday

Sung Eucharist is accompanied by organ, and there is a digital piano. There is a paid organist and small robed choir. At present, the Vicar chooses the hymns from the New English Hymnal or Liturgical Hymns Old & New, or occasionally Mission Praise. Various mass settings are sung in rotation, with a sung responsorial Psalm and an anthem.

There are joint services with St Philip's, including Patronal Festival Choral Evensong in both churches and the Festival of readings and Carols on Advent 4. There are occasional evening services e.g. Songs of Praise, Healing and reconciliation, Taize services, Celtic Eucharist. Attendance at these is generally low in numbers..

There is an annual All Souls Mass, when bereaved families from the previous year are personally invited and names remembered at the altar, and a civic Remembrance Mass on Remembrance Sunday, with an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial. The local primary schools (Medina and Porstdown) use the church for their Carol Services. Additionally, the Vicar holds a brief service of hymns and readings at Cosham Court, a residential home, every two months on a Monday afternoon.

Services on Sundays

8.00 am Low Mass

9.15 am Sung Parish Mass (informal on the first Sunday of the month)

6.00 pm Evening Prayer (2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays)

Regular Weekday Services

Thursday 10.00am – Low Mass

First Tuesday of the month 2 pm – Church and Chat: a said Mass with tea and chat afterwards, generally for our more elderly who find mornings difficult. Morning and Evening Prayer is said daily, either at Wymering or St Philip's

Attendance

There are generally 2-4 people at the 8 am, an average of 30 at the 9.15 and 8-10 at the midweek services.

Home Communion

Communion is taken to various homes in the parish using the licensed Eucharistic Ministers. A team visit Jubilee House, an NHS inpatient unit, for communion and fellowship once a week and there is a number of communicants in Cosham Court.

Occasional Offices

The Occasional Offices provide by far the greatest opportunity for outreach. Congregation members are encouraged to attend where possible. There are a number of weddings every year. Couples are prepared by the Vicar and there is an experienced team to assist at the ceremony.

Baptisms are generally held on the first Sunday of the month, one family at a time, with a 12.45 slot and a 2 pm slot. Often in the Summer months this is stretched to most weeks! Baptism preparation is carried out by the Vicar through a short informal planning meeting and rehearsal.

There are a good number of funerals per year, some of which are held in Church. Bereaved families are invited to the annual All Souls Service in November which is reasonably well-attended.

Mission – Live/Pray/Serve

The parish takes Mission very seriously. There is a Mission Action Plan which is reviewed annually with new targets set, based on the Diocesan Live Pray Serve Initiative (attached). This is a standing agenda item. The congregation are encouraged to participate actively in the community. We have a Street Pastor among our congregation.

Teaching and Spiritual Development

The main plank of teaching within the parishes is the sermon. In addition to Sunday, there are sermons at midweek services. There is an annual Lent course and the congregation are encouraged to engage with the Diocesan courses where appropriate. There are occasional quiet days.

Family worship and teaching centres around Messy Church, which was begun in 2011, meeting

monthly on a Thursday after school and led by the present Vicar. The Messy Church format is used (greeting, craft, Worship and meal), and there is a strong and experienced team, some of whom are not Sunday attenders.

Attendance is very varied, depending on the pressures of family life, sometimes as few as two families, sometimes bursting at the seams! A Messy Eucharist is held occasionally. The Messy Church congregation generally do not attend on a Sunday and there is scope for a course for 'seekers and explorers' to be offered.

A small number of families attend regularly on a Sunday. The 3 Ps is an informal group of tween/teenagers (servers and choristers) which meets at Evening prayer on alternate Sundays followed by a session with the Vicar exploring a variety of matters and often preparing material for the Family Service when they led the prayers and take part in the presentations.

Both Parishes join together for an annual Pilgrimage to Walsingham in June. The Vicar leads this Pilgrimage which is an important part of the life and witness of the Parish. It is hoped that the new incumbent will continue to lead this Pilgrimage.

The PCC

Wymering has full membership on the PCC, including a Deanery Synod rep and Churches Together. Safeguarding is considered of the utmost importance and there is a Safeguarding Officer in place. The Safeguarding Policy is joint with St Philip's. There is a Standing Committee which meets a week or so before the PCC Meeting to set the agenda and check the Minutes, and various Committees/Working parties.

PCC meetings take place every two months, on the second Monday, and are held in the context of the Eucharist. Wymering has an electoral roll of 48. The part-time Administrative Assistant for the Wymering and Cosham parishes works eight hours a week in the parish office.

Community and Outreach

Wymering shares the ministry of a Pioneer Minister with St Philip's. Much of her focus in the first year or so is at St Philip's, but there are initiatives begun at Wymering, notably with the local schools and the informal monthly 'family' service. The Pioneer Minister is a licensed lay minister and works closely with the Vicar, meeting once fortnightly and being in constant communication between times. The Pioneer Minister recently attended the LYCIG course and there is considerable scope to explore this further.

There are strong community links within the Parish. Wymering church is ancient and well-loved. Many families in Wymering have ties going back several generations. The Vicar is a regular visitor to both parish Schools, especially Medina, and welcomes the children in to Church on several occasions to assist with their RE teaching, or leads Assemblies in school.

The Vicar is Chair of the Honor Waite Trust, as required by its constitution, a local charity which assists single women with small grants according to need and is also a Trustee of Wymering Manor Trust. The Manor is situated next to the Church, is the oldest building in Portsmouth and has always been closely linked with the church. It is at present undergoing renovation for community provision and it is expected that the new Vicar will also become a Trustee, although this is not a requirement.

Wymering organises regular social and fundraising events such as film nights, quizzes and Sunday lunches. The two major community fundraising events are the Christmas Fayre, held on the last Saturday in November, and the Summer Fayre, held on the second Saturday in July. We welcome community groups using the church hall and Nugee room (small meeting room). At present there is a large and active Scout group, two dance groups, a baby group, the Philatelists and the Labour party, with a dog training school planned for the Autumn. The hall is also used for occasional bookings such as birthday or Baptism parties.

Hall lettings are managed by the Churchwardens. There is a paid hall cleaner.

Finance

The policy of the PCC is always to pay in full the Diocesan Fairer Share. 2010-2017 saw a drop in the deficit from around £12,000 to £5,000. Wymering has a number of historic reserves which have kept the church solvent over recent years, as can be seen in the latest financial reports. Finance is overseen by a paid Accountant and bookkeeper, with a Treasurer on the ground to record income and expenditure. There is also a Stewardship Secretary who handles Gift Aid and donations. The parish is actively engaged with registering for the Parish Giving Scheme. The parish engages in a number of fundraising activities each year, plus charity events/appeals. The annual report is appended.



Getting creative and having fun at Messy Church!



St Philip Cosham

Church Building and Site

St. Philip's Church has the privilege of being the only place of worship on the Highbury Estate. The site is Grade II listed, including the hall & vicarage, which is currently being used for housing a diocesan post. The church was built in 1937 and is architecturally significant, as it is the last church to have been designed and built by Sir Ninian Comper and his son Sebastian.

From outside it is just a red brick building, but inside is stunning, being entirely decorated in white plaster with high columns and an ornate golden Ciborium above the altar, which is towards one end of the church, with a large open chapel behind. At the West end is an impressive Comper font and organ loft.

St. Philip's is included in Jenkins' "1000 Best Churches" and is frequently referred to in John Betjeman's writing, as well as other guide books. The fabric of the church has been well maintained.

The hall is attached to the church and the one time vicarage (which is owned and managed by the diocese.) The hall is regularly used by the church and community and is accessible with a disabled toilet. Lettings are managed by the hall lettings manager, and there is also a hall management committee. St. Philip's is fully disabled accessible, with plans (at an early stage) to extend the kitchen and hall areas and to modernise & insulate the latter. Replacement energy efficient lighting has recently been installed.

Worship

The ethos of St. Philip's is liberal catholic. The sacraments are the core of corporate worship. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Sanctuary. Vestments are worn at all celebrations of the Eucharist, and incense is used very occasionally. The Liturgy is Common Worship.

St. Philip's has a small four part mixed choir who sing at the Sung Eucharist, major festivals and as an extension to the other occasional services. The choir is RSCM affiliated.

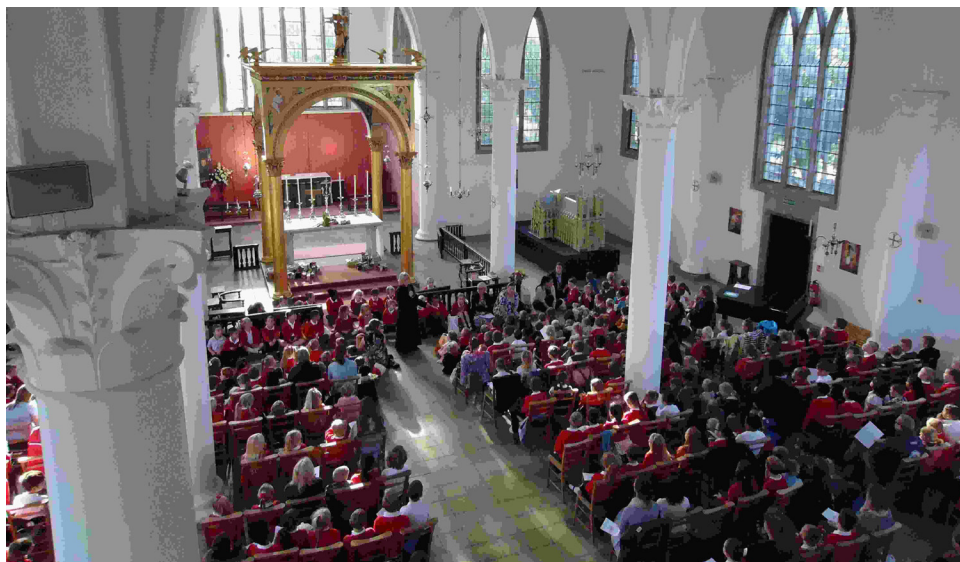
A wide range of musical resources is available and the choir leads the congregation in singing hymns, psalms and mass settings. Anthems are sung at special services.

Sundays

The service pattern for 11:00 Sunday is: Sung Eucharist, second, fourth and fifth Sundays.

First Sunday: The Come & See Eucharist is an informal service using alternative Eucharistic Prayers. Come & See is a flexible service, usually involving moving around the church at various points such as the address (which is interactive and informal, using a variety of different ways of exploring a theme) and prayers. The prayers are led by church families.

Third Sunday: Lego/Café Church (Eucharistic). This is led by our lay Pioneer Minister, and is aimed predominantly at seekers/explorers. It is



Highbury Primary School celebrate Harvest at St Philip's.

very informal with prayers and discussions. The communion element is celebrated by the Vicar.

6 pm Evening Prayer (first and third Sundays.)

Baptism's take place as required, normally at 12:45.

A mid week Said Eucharist takes place on Wednesday at 10:00.

Festivals and other services

There are joint services with Wymering, including Patronal Festival Choral Evensong in both churches. Currently, to manage festivals with only one priest, the Festival of Readings and Carols on Advent 4 (generally) is at St. Philip's, and the Triduum at Wymering. During the early part of Holy Week, a service, usually stations of the cross, alternates between the churches. Evening prayer at St. Philip's on Maundy Thursday combines with stripping of the altar and on Easter Sunday the Paschal candle is received into St. Philip's with the renewal of baptismal vows.

Though Harvest Festival is celebrated in both churches; a joint harvest supper the night before alternates between the two churches.

Other festivals are celebrated at both churches. Christmas Eve at St. Philip's sees the very popular Christingle service and Midnight Mass. There is an 8:30 Said Eucharist (10 am at Wymering) on Christmas day; an annual All Souls Eucharist held on the nearest Wednesday to 2nd November when bereaved families from the previous 12 months

are personally invited and names remembered at the altar and a Remembrance Eucharist for Remembrance Sunday which begins outside at the garden of remembrance at 10:55.

Home Communion

The Vicar takes Communion to those who have requested it.

Occasional Offices

The Occasional Offices provide a good opportunity for outreach. Congregation members are encouraged to attend where possible. There are a small number of baptisms and weddings throughout the year, and funerals either in church or at the local crematorium or cemetery. In the last 12 months to August there have been: 10 baptisms, 1 wedding and 3 funerals.

Teaching and Spiritual Development

The main plank of teaching within the parishes is the sermon. In addition to Sunday, there is a sermon at the Wednesday Eucharist. The two informal services (Come & See and Cafe Church) provide the greater scope for teaching and exploring the faith. Cafe church in particular involves a variety of opportunities for discussion and creativity. Children are admitted to Communion before Confirmation at St. Philip's, with a preparation of about ten weeks, led by the Vicar. Children are also taught in informal sessions preparing the prayers for Come & See with a lay member of the congregation.

The Vicar meets the children who have been admitted to communion every few weeks. There is no Sunday School at St.Philip's.

There is a monthly study group (Open to God) which is held in a parishoner's home and the annual Lent Course is a joint one with Wymering; each session is held twice a week, one in the evening at Wymering, one in the daytime, at St. Philip's. There are joint quiet days and the annual pilgrimage to Walsingham, which has always been well supported.

The PCC and Congregations

St. Philip's has a small but active PCC with a number of sub committees/working parties. Meetings are held once every two months, on a Monday evening, preceded by a standing committee meeting which sets the agenda. St. Philip's has an electoral roll of 50.

The congregation at St. Philip's is small but faithful. The average attendance on a usual Sunday is about 20, including children, with 12 at the Wednesday 10:00 service.

St. Philip's touches many more lives, however, and with the arrival of the Pioneer Minister the whole idea of "doing church", particularly Sunday morning worship, is under review.

Mission – Live/Pray/Serve

There is a Mission Action Plan which is reviewed annually with new targets set, based on the live pray serve initiative. (Eucharist, followed by full English breakfast and then the discussion.) This is a standing PCC agenda item. The congregation are encouraged to participate actively in the community.

Pioneer Ministry

The lay Pioneer Minister was licensed to both parishes in March 2016 and works predominantly

in St. Philip's parish. Since working in the parishes; a number of excellent links and initiatives have been developed. There was a Family Fun day in 2016, coinciding with Her Majesty the Queen's ninetieth birthday in June, which was well supported by the community. She has also increased the links with various community organisations such as the Community Centre and those who use the Church Hall.

With emphasis on our mission to families, with accessible and inclusive worship, a monthly Cafe Church was begun, replacing one of the Come & See Eucharists. With film, discussion, drama, music, crafts, coffee, cake, croissants and informal communion. Cafe Church is a welcome addition to our worship; innovative and inclusive.



With pioneer funding, a monthly film club was established, which has steadily increased in numbers and participation. As part of maintaining the strong links with Highbury School, there is a weekly lego club, which meets after school and is for families, not simply children, with Bible story based lego building. There is also a community garden project being developed at Highbury Community Centre.

Community and Outreach

The Vicar is a governor at Highbury School, which remains an affiliated Church School despite its unsuccessful bid to become a Church of England Controlled School. It is due to become an Academy (Chichester University Trust) from September 2017. The whole school continues to hold an act of collective worship in church on the first Monday and end of term assemblies. The school regularly uses the church as a resource for RE and the Vicar attends Collective Worship in the school once a week.

There have always been close links with Highbury College, which holds its annual carol service in St. Philip's. There is a Deanery Youth Chaplaincy presence in the College and the present Vicar is on the management team of the Deanery Youth Work project. Redwood Park Academy caters for 11-16 year olds with special needs; there have been links in the past, but after a management restructure, these are not as strong as previously.

The principal outreach activity in the parish is the community lunch club, (Monday Meeat) which takes place twice a month in the hall, and is open to everyone. This has a stable number of regular attendees at around 10-15 and is publicised by flyers to houses on the estate and on the parish website.

The hall is widely used by community groups and private lets including: Brownies and Guides; The Highbury Players drama group (who have two productions a year and have been supporting St.



Bishop Christopher visiting Lego Club at Highbury School.

Philip's for over 50 years), Pitchpipers (ladies harmony choir) and Slimming World. The church holds monthly Table Top sales and a full range of fundraising and social activities, including an annual Christmas Fayre. Two very successful Christmas tree festivals have been held in the past with a further one planned for 2017. The church holds a monthly Beetle Drive.

The parish has a scout group which meet in the scout hall adjacent to the church. Members of the uniformed organisations associated with St. Philip's, whether they meet in the Church Hall or the Scout Hall, are invited for Harvest and Remembrance Sundays. St. Philip's actively supports the local food bank and the harvest gifts are usually sent there. The church supports The Children's Society with collecting boxes and a Christingle collection; some members of the congregation support Compassion UK. In addition, there is support for Christian Aid through envelope giving (door to door) and occasionally as the designated harvest charity.

Finance

St. Philip's always pays its Parish Share and was one of the first churches to adopt the Parish Giving Scheme. For a number of years there has been a deficit at the end of the church financial year, which is currently covered by rapidly diminishing reserves. Finances are managed by an assistant treasurer and book keeper. The annual report is appended.

Appendix: Vicarage Photos

