



Parish Profile

For the Parish of Newport and Carisbrooke





A New Start for the Island

*Our mission and vision in the Diocese of Portsmouth is to **Live: Pray: Serve**. Believing in Jesus Christ as the source of our hope and salvation, we are called to:*

***Live** our lives in ways that are formed by his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again.*

***Pray**, on our own and together in community, for the growth and caring of the Kingdom.*

***Serve** the people among whom we live and work, caring for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor.*

*We want others to join us and to grow in **depth, impact, and number**, so that more people love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength; more people love their neighbours as themselves; and more people join us in going out to make new disciples and to make disciples of all nations.*

In June 2020 the three parishes of Newport Minster, St. John's, Newport and St. Mary's, Carisbrooke came together to form the new parish of Newport and Carisbrooke. This new parish is linked with the parish of Gatcombe and the Team Rector of Newport and Carisbrooke is also the Rector of Gatcombe.

This new parish arises from our diocesan strategy and comes with some strategic development fund support from the central Church of England. The aim is for the parish to become a resourcing hub for the island with a focus on:

- *offering a range of worship from traditional to more contemporary*
- *excellence in offering baptisms, weddings, and funerals*
- *exciting and coordinated work with families and children*
- *work in schools provided by a team of lay and ordained people*
- *new congregations aimed at young people in their 20s and 30s*
- *excellent and impactful pastoral care and social action*

It is a big vision and so we are looking for a significant staff team to lead this new parish alongside the Churchwardens and PCC. Due to the role of Newport Minster and the aim for the parish to be a resourcing hub the Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight is the Team Rector. We are employing an Operations Manager, there is an Assistant Curate in place, and we are now looking for three Team Vicars to complete the team.

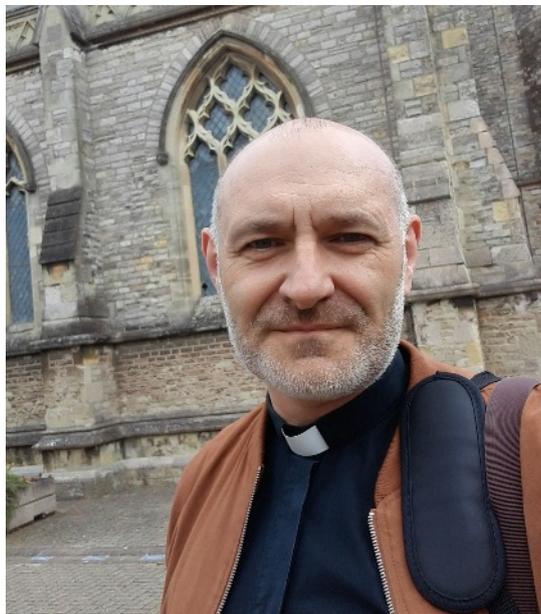
- *Team Vicar with responsibility for pastoral care and occasional offices together with pastoral responsibility for Carsibrooke and Gatcombe.*
- *Team Vicar with responsibility for families, children and schools and with pastoral responsibility for St. John's Newport.*
- *Team Vicar with responsibility for new congregations and with pastoral responsibility for Newport Minster.*

We have not been able to move as quickly as we would have liked with this new parish due to Covid 19. As we begin to recover from this global pandemic and as the Church faces the challenges ahead, we are looking for energetic and enthusiastic priests to work as a team and create this new resource hub which will transform the island.

I hope that this profile gives you a flavour of where we currently are, the possibilities which lie in front of us and a desire to be part of this exciting journey.

Peter Leonard

*The Venerable Peter Leonard
Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight
Team Rector of Newport and Carisbrooke with Gatcombe*





The Parish

Newport and Carisbrooke lie at the heart of the Isle of Wight, together acting as the historic and administrative capital of the Island. This new parish, formed in June 2020, has been created by uniting the parishes of Newport Minster, Newport St John, and St Mary's Carisbrooke with St Nicholas in Castro. It comprises that part of the Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council area that lies to the west of the River Medina, with a population of approximately 25,000. The vast majority of this population lives in the 19th century expansion between the medieval borough and the historic village of Carisbrooke, and in the estates built in waves over the past century.

Although numerically small in population terms, the rural part of the parish, to the west and south, gives the area its unique setting, with rolling chalk downland, isolated farms, and a compact area of forestry. The urban part of the parish is wedged between this and the tidal section of the River Medina, that used to bring trade into the town.

Within the parish are some of the largest employers on the Island, including H M Prison (Isle of Wight), the Isle of Wight Council and the Isle of Wight NHS Trust, based at St Mary's Hospital, Gurit (UK), and Vestas. Retail is important, bringing many into the area, and is focussed both in the town centre and in pockets around the edge of the built up area although this has been hit hard by the Covid19 pandemic and there are now very many empty retail units.

The parish is also notable for the number of schools and colleges it contains, including three secondary schools / sixth form centres and the Isle of Wight College as well as five primary schools. Tourism is also important to the Island generally and has its local focus at Carisbrooke Castle, but is being developed more widely in the town, and our churches offer a significant contribution to this.

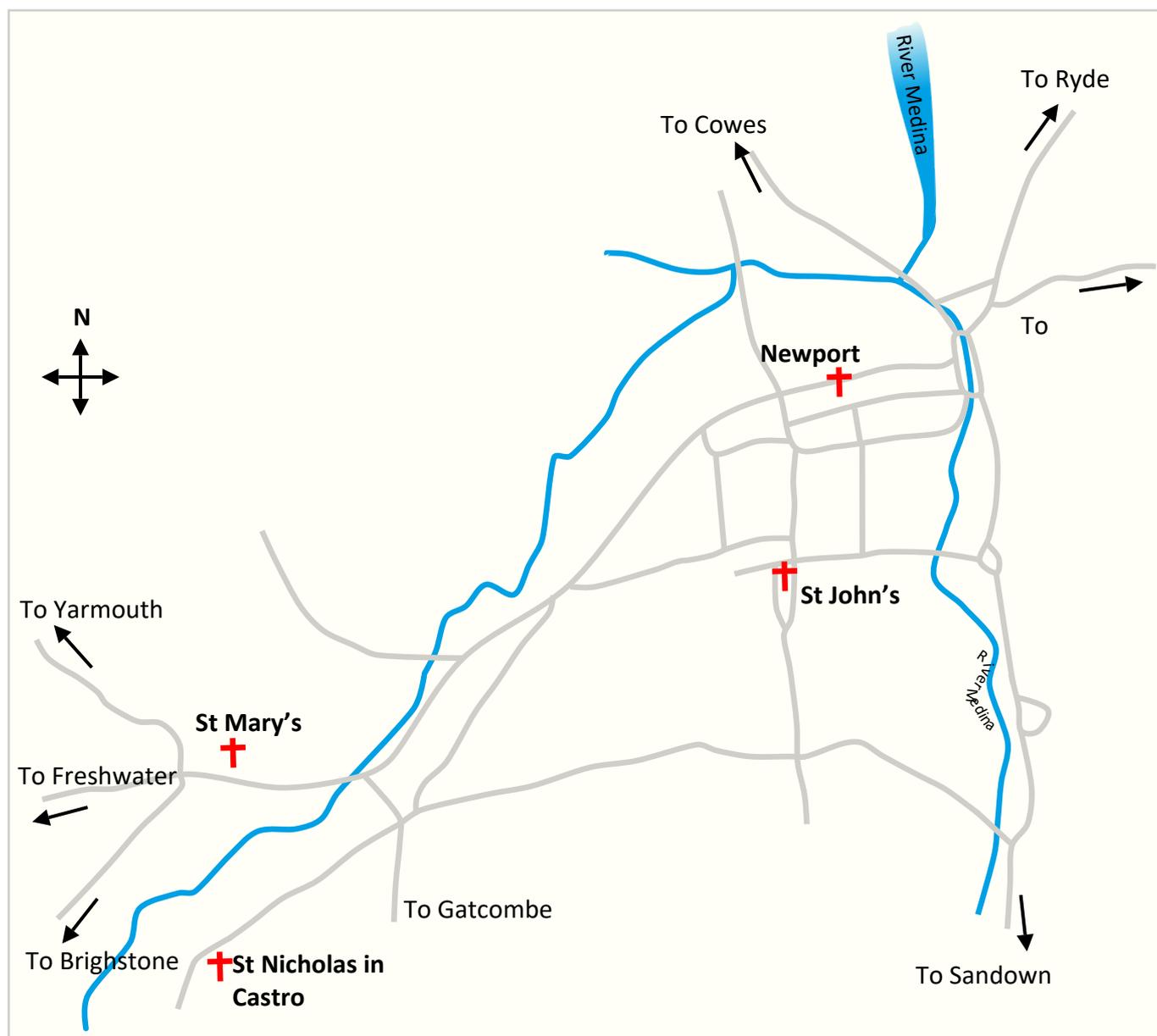
The population of the parish is overwhelmingly White British but has greater diversity than many communities on the Island. Ward profiles indicate higher than average levels of deprivation in some areas (Newport Central and Newport South) with the former having more pensioners living alone and older people living in poverty.

Both Newport and Carisbrooke have distinct identities, visible in building styles and materials, yet benefit from being a hub offering easy access to and from the rest of the Island. This location means that the new parish has an unrivalled opportunity to host meetings of Christians from across the Island in a convenient location.



Newport and Carisbrooke

Showing the churches and major roads





Church Buildings:

The parish contains four churches or chapels.



Newport Minster is a Grade 1 listed building, currently listed in Historic England's At Risk Register. It has its roots in the 12th century and was re-designed by the Victorians using all of the medieval stone. It has some fine monuments from its earlier history. It is ideally positioned in the centre of the town, and its size enables the building to be used for civic and other major events. £2 million pounds has been spent so far on the restoration of the outside of the Minster and a bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund is being developed for a further £1 million pounds, to be used on a wide range of works, both internal and external, with the effect of removing the building from the At Risk register. This will be match-funded by a private sponsor, with a further £250,000 to be raised from grant applications and other fund-raising events. The Earl of Wessex is an active patron of The Friends of Newport Minster and has taken an interest in the project. These works are managed by a Heritage Board, responsible to the PCC, and made up of church members and a wide range of people from across the Island community.

The Friends of Newport Minster play an active role in fundraising.

St John's Newport dates from 1837, originally as a daughter church of St Mary's. It is light and airy with fine acoustics and is Grade 2 listed. The building has undergone essential repairs and maintenance, and this continues, the major challenge at present being the need for major repairs to the east window, not covered by insurance. This church benefits from having an adjacent hall: the two buildings have been the subject of an ambitious scheme, the 2020 Vision, to renew the buildings. £54,000 has been raised to date out of the original target of £75,000, as a percentage of future grant bidding. The aim is to make the Church more flexible in its use, and one



of the major musical centres on the Island, while improving and extending community use of the hall, whose facilities are much needed in the area.

St Mary's Carisbrooke dates back to the 12th century and is the earliest church in the parish, beginning its life as a small priory church. It is Grade 1 listed and is set up above the main road through the village. There are no major projects underway at present, but ongoing maintenance is important. Work on the fabric of the building is funded with the help of the Friends of Carisbrooke Church, which attracts support from across the parish. There are issues over accessibility to the building because of the number of steps up to the churchyard, although a number of public footpaths run through the graveyard, so that the church entrance is adjacent to a thoroughfare.



Two churches have closed churchyards but St John's is still open, however there have been no burials for many years.

St Nicholas in Castro is an ancient chapel in the grounds of Carisbrooke Castle which was rebuilt in 1904, and then restored and rededicated in 1929 as the County War Memorial. Day to day maintenance is the responsibility of English Heritage which manages the site.

All three churches have halls which are extensively used by the local community and are kept in good repair. Each hall has its own booking system, and arrangements for cleaning and access.

The Minster's hall "The Parish Centre" is a short two minute stroll from the Minster, and houses offices for the Parish, as well as a couple of meeting rooms. St John's hall is currently used to full capacity, hence the plans for enhancement in the 2020 Vision. It is a single storey building, unlike the other two buildings that have an upper floor. The church hall for St Mary's is conveniently situated close to the village car park and shop but is on the opposite side of the road to the church: a distinct disadvantage if events are taking place in both buildings. It has benefited from considerable investment over the past few years, and is currently self-financing, but the recent closure of the pre-school means that alternative users need to be found.



In addition there are a number of other buildings owned by the parish. These include the Working Men's Club in Carisbrooke High Street, currently rented as a store and two almshouses in Newport High Street. These are in sound repair due to recent updates and redecoration and are used to give young homeless people a secure place to live. They are single-storey one-bedroom properties and there are ambitions to further improve them.



Current Worship:

All three churches offer a range of Sunday and midweek services. The liturgical year is observed as part of this, with many additional and special services to reflect the particular season.

Newport Minster:

The main act of Sunday worship is the 11.00am sung choral Eucharist with robed choir. A number of lay people serve in various roles.

On Sunday evenings there is a 6:30pm service including a lay led candle lit Taizé service on the 1st Sunday of the month and at other times Evening Prayer and Compline alternate.

The congregation comes from across the Island and is an open Catholic inclusive family. There is a lay ministry team including a professional part time paid Director of Music.



St John's Newport

The usual pattern of worship has been for a service at 9:30am each Sunday, with a 6:30pm lay led service on the fourth Sunday evening of the month. The morning services include All-Age Worship, Holy Communion, and Morning Prayer, with a robed choir. Members of the congregation of all ages lead intercessions and read Bible readings. Drama and music can form part of the worship style. Taizé services and meditation, contemplative and alternative expressions of worship are also offered. Café services in the hall are also well received. Carols by Candlelight, Christingle services and Easter activities attract significant attendance. On Wednesdays there is a morning service at 11.00am, usually Holy Communion or Morning Prayer.

Junior Church meet every Sunday in term-time led by a Reader. 12 – 15 children aged from 3-16 usually attend. Older members of the group are encouraged



to help the younger children. Members of the Junior Church join the main church services and take an active role in All-Age Worship.

Walk in the Light is a youth group for secondary school students. It meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings in term time starting with pizzas and followed by Bible-based activities and discussion. There are eight young people who attend regularly.

The Ministry Team involves Wardens, two Readers and the Director of Music, who organise the worship rota during the interregnum.

St John's worship in a low church, Bible-based tradition enjoying formality, but in a relaxed way.

St Mary's Carisbrooke

St Mary's has two communion services on most Sunday mornings at 8 and 9:30. The first service is said with traditional language and a small congregation with a strong sense of mutual care, the second is the principal service for the parish, with four part-choir. There is lay participation in areas such as readings and intercessions. Use is made of liturgical colours and vestments. On the third Sunday of each month there is a non-communion Fruitful@9:30 service which is more informal and encourages involvement from people of all-ages. On the first, second and fifth Sundays there is a said Evensong, numbers for which are modest: on the third and fourth Sunday attendance is encouraged at Gatcombe and St John's respectively. On the first and third Tuesdays there is a short said service of Holy Communion at 9:30am, followed by coffee in the Eight Bells. A wide range of special services are held. Outside Christmas and Easter, the Advent Service "From Darkness to Light" and the Palm Sunday procession from the castle attract the most significant following, although work has been undertaken on an ecumenical Harvest Festival in recent years. At Lent there is a weekly Stations of the Cross. A small Sunday School runs in term-time, parallel with the 9:30am service, but is currently poorly attended.



A survey was carried out in the parish in December 2019, and returned by 40 respondents, both regular and occasional worshippers across a variety of age groups, but with the 65+ most strongly represented. This showed a clear appetite for communion services, some enthusiasm for café-style church and an openness to a range of other options including family, healing and Taizé services.

The parish sees itself as a middle of the road Anglican church trying to offer something for everyone.

All three churches have their own choirs leading Sunday worship, and music has an important role in each church. St John's has thirty members, and is the largest church choir on the Island, ranging in age from 7 to 86. with a rich musical tradition. The Minster has a growing Gospel choir and a Brass Ensemble who come together to support significant worship and occasions. All choirs perform concerts of sacred and secular music. At St John's children of the choir attend their own rehearsal and receive tuition to receive the RSCM Voice for Life awards, and a music group often accompany hymns and songs in services.

All three churches host services for local schools during the year. Members of the congregation are, or have been, on governing bodies of local schools, playing a significant role in their recent development. St Mary's has a particularly large number of schools in the area that it serves, their existence giving a distinctive flavour to the life of the parish.



There is a dedicated group of bell ringers who serve the Minster and St Mary's. The towers host many visits from mainland ringers.

St Nicholas-in-Castro falls outside this regular pattern. The number of services involving the local church community have declined in recent years and is now focussed on Palm Sunday and Remembrance Sunday. Other services are held in the chapel and are usually linked to its role as the Island War Memorial, although English Heritage staff have supported innovations such as

Christmas carol services. Despite this status as a war memorial, the best attended service on Remembrance Sunday is at the War Memorial in St Thomas's square by the Minster. The chapel is small and not easy to heat satisfactorily.

A Lent course is held in the Minster for a cross-island audience, and Alpha courses three times a year, which are lay led. St Mary's has a small bible study group at Advent and/or Lent, and a monthly meeting to pray for the church in the vicarage or the church. St John's has a Ladies Prayer Group, a Men's Group and two Bible Study Groups. Home groups generally would benefit from further nurturing.



Increasing use is being made of social media by all three churches. Daily prayers and videos are shared, and links presented to a wide range of resources at a local and Diocesan level. In the Covid lockdown weekly reflections, services and other resources have been offered. Those with expertise in social media have been active in sharing their skills with others.



Church and the Community

The occasional offices are important opportunities, used by all three churches, to serve, and engage with, the local community. Due to its size and location the Minster has a significant role as the venue for major occasions of joy and sadness on the Island, both by hosting ceremonial funerals and by accommodating large congregations where a local tragedy needs to be marked appropriately. A distinctive feature of Newport Minster's ministry is its civic role. During the year there are a number of civic and community services, some are annual fixtures, others ad hoc. The best attended of these is the Remembrance Sunday service with over 600 attendees. In addition, an all-Island confirmation service is held here.



The Minster receives some 30,000 visitors a year, and is open and stewarded in the mornings (Monday to Saturday) There is a coffee shop serving tourists, coach parties, local shoppers, the homeless, the hungry and those needing other support. The social and missional aspect of this work is important. Additionally, it runs a drop in coffee shop and craft fair two mornings a week in the Parish Centre. A weekly café is run in the church hall in Carisbrooke, meeting a similar need on a smaller scale. Tourism brings larger numbers to St Nicholas in Castro each year, but an admission fee has to be paid to access the English Heritage site, and the information is largely framed in terms of its history and role as a war-memorial. St Mary's Carisbrooke is open throughout the day, unattended, and its quiet and atmosphere is known to be appreciated by locals and visitors alike. St John's also aim to keep the church building open for quiet prayer wherever possible, most visitors being from the local community.



All three church halls are well used by a wide variety of church and community organisations, both Carisbrooke and the community around St John's are short of other suitable venues. Users include Brownies, Guides, Rangers, Parent and Toddlers, a Memory Clinic Dementia support group, Alzheimer's support, U3A, dance, music and singing groups. Halls host an active programme of events for congregations and community.



Churches Together in Newport is a partnership of different denominations, which, though valuable, would benefit from a higher profile, both in the community and among existing congregations. There is scope for more ecumenical co-operation at the grass roots in the town. Revive Newport is the result of churches working co-operatively in the town to provide practical, financial, and emotional support to residents of all ages. On the southern edge of the parish the work of Carisbrooke Priory, a house of prayer and Christian healing, is a significant presence in the community. It is a registered charity with its own Board of Trustees. Youth for Christ and Street Pastors and School Pastors also have a significant role in the community.

St John's has a distinguished tradition of support for mission and evangelism throughout its history, including famous figures such as Edgar Greenshield and William Carus-Wilson. That support is still significant. It holds a weekly Wednesday lunch-club for over 40 older members, many of whom live on their own. Additional activities include outings and a Christmas party. Chatterbox is a weekly group for parents, carers and pre-school children, meeting in term-time with 25 under 5s attending. This is a major community outreach, with services at key points in the year. A smaller lunch club is held at St Marys in the church hall. This meets twice a month, once for a meal and once for quizzes and board games.



Both St John's and the Minster have trained lay pastoral assistants responding to the needs of the parish in conjunction with the Ministry team. St Mary's has no such system in place although many members of the congregation provide a significant level of pastoral care. It wishes to develop a stronger network, and to increase its presence on the local estates. St John's has a Prayer Ministry team which offers support through a prayer chain and pray for healing after Sunday communion services. The Minster provides votive candles & provides a place for all prayers to be left. They also provide the facility on all their social media channels. A winter shelter organised by the Salvation Army has been supported over the winter months for the past three years. Before the current arrangements St John's offered accommodation for the shelter, once a week, in their hall.

Charities supported across the three churches vary. Christian Aid and the Food Bank are important elements in this. A mix of overseas mission and local charities are helped including CMS partners in Uganda, TEAR Fund and the Children's Society. A young person in Africa is sponsored by St John's Junior Church. The annual bike ride for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Historic Churches Trust is also supported.

Among the community initiatives in Carisbrooke is the SOCKS handicraft group meeting monthly in the Eight Bells. This was a group formed by the church, and focused on knitting and crocheting, and has in the past run a Wool Festival based in the church and church hall.



The Friends of Carisbrooke Church formed in 2014 has an important role in linking the church to the community. It has raised £33,000 in the last five years paying for the upkeep of the church buildings. The Quiz Nights, Beetle Drives, Annual Carisbrooke Fete and in 2019 an Open Gardens event are very well supported

A significant form of outreach is the local community newspaper, Carisbrooke Parish News. This is produced monthly and contains news of interest for the local areas. It is run as a separate trust, but this is an organisation on which St Mary's is well represented, working in co-operation with volunteers from other churches and parish organisations. It is delivered free of charge to 3,600 homes in the parish, thanks to donations and advertising. It is the main means by which local churches offer the Christian message into homes in the community.



The Context for Ministry

The Diocesan Strategy is underpinned by a set of values and asks all parishes to consider what it means in their context to be

- Courageous
- Pioneering
- Resourceful
- Generous
- Collaborative

The blueprint to guide the diocese is summed up through the motto Live, Pray, Serve. The Diocese seeks to equip people to live as disciples of Christ; to pray individually and together as worshipping communities; and to serve our local neighbourhoods and society together. To achieve this the Diocese is committed to encouraging and supporting parishes as they make disciples of Christ, grow our churches, equip people for life-long learning and promote the transformation of society. The aim is for God's church to grow in Depth, Impact and Numbers.

The Isle of Wight is a single deanery and Archdeaconry, covering 59 church communities. Parishes are encouraged to know who they are and what their values are, to translate these into actions and to carry out these actions competently and confidently.

Newport and Carisbrooke is a new parish, created from three existing parishes in a process that has been protracted and frequently challenging. The new combination of churches in a single parish offers an opportunity to work with existing and potential congregations to celebrate the strengths of the old parishes and build new opportunities and avenues for mission.

As well as the Team Rector who will also be the Archdeacon, the new parish will have a trainee curate in post, three team vicars and an operations manager all of whom are to be recruited to these new roles. The parish also has active licensed lay readers. The three churches have a range of PTO clergy who support ministry and the parish offers a supportive base to the chaplains of the Isle of Wight NHS Trust and the Mountbatten Hospice, praying for them and including them on the service rota as

appropriate. St John's has volunteer administrators and there is a part-time Minster Office manager, responsible for running the coffee-shop, Parish Centre and volunteers.

Finance

St John's and the Minster gain income from membership of the Parish Giving Scheme, hall lettings and other fund raising. St John's is up to date on parish share and its costs. The Minster has had a debt, which in 2011 stood at c£75,000. This has been reduced to £29,000 with Parish Share in recent years paid in full.

St Mary's has faced increasing challenges financially since the church shop that it ran in Newport High Street closed in 2017. It has fallen behind with payments in each of the last two years and at the end of 2019 the debt had risen to £22,000. When the longstanding Treasurer moved away from the Island in early 2019 no replacement was found, and so there has been no-one in this role for well over a year. Day to day recording and payments are conducted by a member of the PCC. The Friends of Carisbrooke Church which reports to the PCC fundraises for work on the fabric and furnishings of property owned by St Mary's and has ring-fenced resources to do this.

Each church has one or more small charities for which the churchwardens and vicars are trustees. Most of these are used to support those in hardship or distress, directly or through organisations such as the Foodbank.

All images supplied by members of the parish.

