

Paulsgrove

PARISH PROFILE



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BISHOP'S WELCOME

I am delighted you are seeking to discern whether Jesus is calling you to serve with His beautiful people in Paulsgrove. Be assured of our prayers in the diocese for you and those you love as you step into a time of discerning.

The Diocese of Portsmouth is a community of communities focused and centred in Jesus, and seeking the Father's heart of love for the world. We shall be praying fervently for you as you discern your next step of faith in response to God's faithfulness.

With love, in Christ,

'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.'

Colossians 3: 12-13

Jonathan Portsmouth



**THE RT REV JONATHAN FROST,
BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH**

a Rejuvenating community of Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking disciples



INTRODUCTION FROM THE ARCHDEACON

I have been Area Dean of Portsmouth over the last 10 years and now as Acting Archdeacon am delighted to encourage you to read and consider whether God is calling you to this post.

As you read this profile you will get a flavour of the exciting opportunities that lie ahead. Fr Hugo has brought energy and commitment to the Parish, which, as the Profile highlights, has already had an impact.

We very much hope as a Diocese that we can support him, this post and the community in Paulsgrove in being a sign of God's love and presence in the Grove.

We hope that the ministry developed here and the projects that are established will be a support and resource for other Parishes. We hope that other ministers in similar communities and those in the catholic tradition will be inspired by the example they see here.

Portsmouth has a long history and tradition of clergy and churches which seek to serve the communities which are facing challenges and being overlooked by wider society. I feel that Fr Hugo and the ministry of the church in Paulsgrove stands in that long line and tradition. We build on the shoulders of Robert Dolling, Bill Sargent and others who have sought to work with people and empower them to have a voice and change the world around them.

If you would like to be part of this great tradition, then please explore further and join us in this adventure!

Rev Canon Bob White

OUR CITY AND OUR COMMUNITY



VIEW OF PORTSMOUTH AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT FROM PORTSDOWN HILL, WITH PAULSGROVE IN THE FOREGROUND

Portsmouth is a densely populated city of around 220,000 people, with a proud maritime heritage and strong links to the armed forces, especially the Royal Navy.

Paulsgrove is a large estate on Portsdown Hill above the city, built in the 1950s to house people bombed out of Portsmouth during the War. It is still largely a traditional working class community, and faces issues of serious and long-standing deprivation as one of the poorest communities in the country. People often live complicated and challenging lives. It is therefore a place of immediate and pressing need, and there are huge challenges in getting the resources to meet those needs, especially for young families. It has historically been written off and patronised. That is its challenge.



But it is full of wonderful things and wonderful people – a vibrant, vivid place, to which residents – known as Grovers – have an intense affiliation and who make it a gutsy, plain speaking, cracking community to live in and to serve. Families have often lived on the estate since it was built. Roots grow deep in Paulsgrove. Our Bishop has spoken to us of how the love of God is fierce. Paulsgrove has a fierceness all of its own!

St Michael's was opened to serve the new estate in 1956. It's a dramatic, iconic building and the biggest in Paulsgrove by some distance, designed by Thomas Ford and Partners, and even featuring important post-war art by Hans Feibusch. It is though showing signs of age, so we want to make it fit for purpose for the mission and service to which we are called.

Paulsgrove is also a place where people have had things done to them, rather than their authentic voice being listened to and valued. That is changing. That is also true of St Michael's. We're about changing the culture so we work with rather than do to. Everything we do will be discerned from the context in which we are rooted and with the sort of people for whom God has a special care.

WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT: OUR NEW ASSOCIATE PRIEST



We have been blessed to be allocated SMMI (Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment) funding from the National Church to revitalise the Church in Paulsgrove, building on the work of Fr Hugo, the Priest-in-Charge, who has over the past two years already established local credibility and presence, and started to grow the church.

We're committed to growing St Michael's from a Sunday morning attendance of around 30 at a traditional mass, to over 80 people with an emphasis on bringing more young families and children to faith.

This might look like:

- A re-energised traditional expression of church, including a new family-focused service (around 85 Usual Sunday Attendance);
- A thriving community of children and young people;
- Four fresh expressions of church, including choir church (started in September 2024), reaching around 100 people;
- An additional outreach based on building community;
- New lay leaders and volunteers to undertake the expanded ministries (around 30-40 people);
- A church building that is fit for purpose to support worship and community outreach.

But how we get there and what we look like will be through shared discernment with our community – and what gifts the postholder brings to their work. The division of who does what will also be agreed through discussion and discernment with the Priest-in-Charge.



WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE AT

St Michael's is all about serving God and the Grove. We want more and more people to know the love of God in Christ. We know God has a special care for communities like this.



St Michael's is now in the liberal Catholic tradition – but has had a fairly limited wider presence and impact in serving the community. Just under a decade ago it was awarded a substantial National Lottery Grant to renovate the church building and engage with the wider community. For one reason or another, not least

because of COVID, this project did not have the impact originally envisaged.

St Michael's has also had a difficult few years, followed by a long interregnum, including over COVID, which saw numbers often reduce to single figures on a Sunday, and with little to no other wider activity and engagement by church members. The church to all intents and purposes had collapsed. One young adult who attended as a child recently said that it was a church that had lost its way.

Since the appointment of Fr Hugo, in early 2023, things have stabilised, grown and got better. Average Sunday attendance now averages between 25-35 and is over 70 on big occasions, with a worshipping community of between 70 and 80. People are also coming forward for baptism and confirmation – with 2 adults and 2 children confirmed in 2023 and 5 adults in 2024.



We worship together at a sung mass at 10am on Sunday, stream Compline on our Facebook page each Sunday at 8pm, and between 5 and 10 meet for a said mass in the Lady Chapel at 12:30pm on Thursdays, followed by a soup lunch in the Hall. We also offer home communions and a weekly service for around a dozen robust older Grovers living in sheltered housing at Bresler House.

Our worship is largely formal, with the priest wearing vestments and using incense each week – with the Eucharist at its heart. We gather around God's table and commit to love and serve him. While it is formal, it is also best



characterised as 'shabby catholic'. We are very much an authentic, incarnational community. We offer a safe and stable space in which a community of often fragile, vulnerable people are held, loved and healed by God's grace and the love of his people.

That sense of sharing and caring is something that is at the heart of who we are. We often talk about being a church family. Those who have become part of that family over the past couple of years are often adults – many with significant vulnerabilities – who have returned to church or who have felt hurt elsewhere. The vast majority live on the estate.

We are also proud of our cracking Sunday School – named by its members as God's Little Angels – which meets each week during mass for between 2 and 10 children. Two of the children occasionally serve during mass too.

We can't afford a Director of Music, but we have a friendly and supportive organist who plays for us on around two Sundays a month, and also leads our pop-up choir at Easter, St Michael's Day and at Christmas. This Christmas we're partnering with friends from the local Roman Catholic community to form a choir of around 25 at a joint Community Carol service. Our children will also lead our Christingle and Nativity on Christmas Eve – which has an energy all of its own! We're also rebuilding our historic friendship with the parish of St Peter and St Paul, Hambledon and support each other's patronal festivals. We were delighted to welcome around 20 Hambledonians on St Michael's Day in September 2024.

Moreover, newer members of our church family established and lead the Paulsgrove Bathroom Bank to combat hygiene poverty. This meets pressing need – but also has given us visibility and credibility with Portsmouth City Council and community groups.



With the support of the Diocese, we started ChoirClub@StMichaels in September 2024, a choir for local primary school aged children which meets at St Michael's each Friday. Around 15-20 children from all three local primary schools come, and are led in their music making by Graham Kidd, a local musician, supported by teachers from the schools and by helpers from one of the groups that meets at the Church, SEND Faces. This itself shows our reach and our presence. This will grow into a fully fledged Fresh Expression.

Fr Hugo has also worked to get known right across in the community, leading assemblies and taking classes in our primary schools and as chair of governors at one, as well as becoming a visible and integral presence at community events.

This means we now work closely with civil society partners to offer a space for events and courses, such as HomeStart, Portsmouth City Council, Advice Portsmouth, Seekers Create, SEND Faces (a support group for SEND families) and the Young Creatives (a local arts social enterprise). We have also built strong links with local churches, not least the local Roman Catholic community.

We are therefore credible and valued players, with skin in the game of our community's shared life. But we aren't able to do what we are called to do ourselves – and we are sure we are called to grow, to do more and to serve more.



In summary, the challenges we are called to face are:

- Lack of engagement with children and young families
- A growing but still small church family with limited ability to take on new things for growth
- An unsuitable building which does not meet the basic requirements of warmth and shelter



THE PAULSGROVE BATHROOM BANK

It's an affront to God's justice that people can't afford the basics they need. So in November 2023 we started the Paulsgrove Bathroom Bank to provide a monthly package of bathroom basics for anyone who needs them. You don't need a voucher or referral – people come and choose a bag of what you need. The Bathroom Bank is all about Grovers helping Grovers – together with a little help from Angels of Paulsgrove, who make a small monthly donation. Now we're open three days a week, welcome 80 visitors a month and have given out around 7,000 items. Our Bishop recently told the team that "this is a special project, you are special people and you serve a special community". We quite agree!



GOD'S LITTLE ANGELS

We love the committed younger members of our church family. They chose to name the group, God's Little Angels – and that's exactly what they are. Between 2 and 10 of them meet each week during mass, come in for communion, show us what they've been up to, then lead the procession at the end of mass. Our Hall is decorated with the altar frontals they've made over the year. Summer, aged 8, said: "We always include everybody and get to make new friends. I love the fact that we always have fun doing arts and crafts, singing and acting". Everlynn, aged 5, said: "I like colouring and making things in Sunday school and I've made some new friends."





CHOIRCLUB@STMICHAELS

In September 2024 we kicked off ChoirClub@StMichaels, a weekly singing club for children, which we're growing into a fresh expression. Because we're rooted in the community, all three primary schools backed it, and teachers from each of those schools help out, while friends of St Michael's from a group that meets at the Church make food each month. Around a dozen children from Years 3-6 sing in the Lady Chapel each week while a smaller group of Year 1 and 2s listen to a story, sing and enjoy crafts. By the time you read this they'll have made their singing debut at our Community Carol Service.



WHAT'S STOPPING US?

While we put on some events – such as Easter Crafts mornings – to engage more widely with young families, we do not do so in any substantial or programmatic way. We therefore are not engaging, nor are we resourced to engage, right across the community and with the demographic that is the largest in Paulsgrove: young families. However, we are getting to know more and more through our work in schools, our own activities, and our partnership with groups like SEND Faces. This bears fruit in how so many support us – but has not yet translated in any significant way into pathways into faith.

The Lottery Grant tackled some of the cosmetic issues facing our 75 year old building. But it is still in poor shape, so any revitalisation of the church needs to make the building safe, secure and warm. We're going to install a radiant heating system to replace the defunct and dangerous gas system, pumped through pipes lagged with asbestos, and renew the roof, which leaks in several places, and, as far as we are aware, has not been replaced since the church was opened nearly 70 years ago. Our grant from the National Church has given us the means to sort out these fundamentals.

WHERE WE'RE CALLED TO GO AND WHO WE'RE CALLED TO BE

We're called to **capitalise** on the renewed growth, vigour and confidence of the traditional expression of church over the past two years and our growing credibility and presence within the community to nurture a mixed ecology, engaging with a far wider demographic, proclaiming the Gospel and building the Kingdom in greater numbers, confidence and commitment. We're called to live out our calling to serve God and the Grove.

We're called to **revitalise** St Michael's catholic expression of worship and community service, just as the great catholic mission parishes of our city did in the late nineteenth century, and express that tradition anew to a new generation of worshippers.



We're called to **embed** St Michael's deeper in our community, so that it represents and serves the people of Paulsgrove. Our goal is that those who are already Christians or who come back to faith have their faith deepened and that many more come to

Christ for the first time. But also to follow God's call to help more and more people in our community to know Him in word, sacrament and service, and be held in a loving supportive church family.

So our goal is for:

- St Michael's to be for God and the Grove.
- Re-energised and more diverse expressions of church, meeting the spiritual needs of a far wider demographic and a far greater number.
- Traditional and fresh expressions of church that are still part of the same integrated church family. Fresh expressions might therefore have a catholic tinge.
- A church with young believers at its heart and in which those interested in faith have their hearts set on fire by the love of God.
- A living, deepening and growing traditional expression of church that speaks of the mystery of God and provides stability and community for often vulnerable people – but continues to do so for a growing number of believers – and with renewed vigour, verve, depth and variety. We want a traditional expression that lives out the energy, colour and mystery of the best catholic worship, but which is also incarnational, with Christ meeting his people in their lives and at the altar.
- A new generation of leaders from Paulsgrove for Paulsgrove.
- A building that is warm, secure and safe and helps instead of hindering participating in God's mission.

This post is going to absolutely central to helping to make this happen. How exciting is that!?



HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS

We're going to:

- **Encourage** people to belong before they believe by finding ways of serving our community, building on the model of our successful Bathroom Bank to combat hygiene poverty and drawing new people into the ambit of the church. This might especially focus on providing food and eating together as a means of establishing a community from which an expression of faith could come (between six months and a year).
- **Establish** fresh expressions of church, designed to reach unchurched families and children. These might be bespoke expressions which develop from our discernment, but could also be expressions which chime with our existing enterprises, such as Wild Church, developing naturally from our Community Garden (established after Covid, but which now needs new energy and new green fingers), or off the shelf offerings such as Bubble Church (initiated from between six months and year).
- Continue to **re-energise** our traditional expressions of church, so that it grows further, grows deeper, engages yet further with our community (immediate).
- **Renew** the fabric and infrastructure of the church so that our building is a resource we can use confidently to proclaim the Gospel and offer welcome and hospitality, with resources from this bid for the works to the fabric.
- Continue to work with local primary schools and families and build on the promising opening of ChoirClub@StMichaels, a separate fresh expression using the Choir Church model, which will contribute to the life of both traditional and fresh expressions.

OUR TARGETS

We're very grateful to the Diocese and the National Church for supporting us as we participate in God's mission. This does mean we have committed to achieving stretching but achievable targets for growth:

Year	Element
2025	Launch of Choir Church (september 2024) Recruitment of Family & Young People's Minister Discernment and preparation, with PCC, congregation and community Creation of a programmatic plan for outreach to families, linked to discipleship pathways Funding bids for additional elements of capital works Building works Raise up further volunteers and lay leaders Launch of an additional Fresh Expression Launch of a family-focused service (likely Sundays, 11:30am)
2026	Further building works Raise up further volunteers and lay leaders Launch of an additional Fresh Expression Launch of an additional community outreach programme Launch of discipleship program, e.g. Pilgrim
2027	Completion of building works Raise up further volunteers and lay leaders Launch of an additional Fresh Expression
2028	Raise up further volunteers and lay leaders Launch of an additional Fresh Expression
2029	Consolidation and further growth Exit of Family & Young People's Minister and celebration of handover to lay leaders and volunteers

WHO YOU'LL BE WORKING WITH

It's a sign of just how important Paulsgrove is to the Church that Fr Hugo was appointed as a full-time stipendiary priest to a single church benefice as the first appointment by our Bishop, Jonathan. He was ordained in 2019, after a career in politics.

You'll be working closely with him – and working out how together you can deliver what we're called to provide.

We're also blessed to have a highly proficient administrator, Angie, for 12 hours a week – and a team of volunteers, both from people who are regular churchgoers, those who are on its fringes but who are finding their way around faith, and lots of well-wishers who want to see St Michael's thrive. We love them and we're grateful to them all!



ROLE DESCRIPTION



OVERALL PURPOSE

We have been blessed by being provided with Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment (SMMI) Funding from the National Church for a new post in Paulsgrove. Over 5 years, the postholder will work with the Priest-in-Charge to build on the progress we have made in growing our church in depth and faith and building our presence, credibility and engagement with our community to revitalise our parish and live out God's mission in the sort of community for which He has a special care.

Success might look like:

- A living, deepening and growing **traditional expression** of church that speaks of the mystery of God, provides stability, support and friendship for often vulnerable people, and which does so for a growing number of enquirers and believers with renewed vigour, verve, depth and variety. We want to worship and live in a way that lives out the energy, colour and mystery of catholic liturgy, but in which Christ meets his people in their lives as well as at the altar.
- Re-energised and more **diverse expressions** of church, meeting the spiritual needs of a far wider demographic and a far greater number.
- Traditional and fresh expressions of church that are still part of the **same integrated church family**. We would anticipate that our fresh expressions have a catholic tinge or are lived out in sympathy with St Michael's traditions.
- A church that builds on our existing work with children, young people and families and which puts **young believers at its heart** – and in which those interested in faith have their hearts set on fire by the love of God.
- A **new generation** of leaders from Paulsgrove for Paulsgrove.

This role is for a fixed 5-year period, funded by the National Church, from early 2025 after which it will be reviewed. We have also been awarded a significant sum of money as part of the same award to tackle issues with our church building.



This project will be a pathfinder, informing subsequent mission in working class estates in the wider catholic tradition. From these pathfinders the Diocese aims to learn and to find approaches that can be applied more widely to encourage growth in similar areas.

Moreover, we envisage that investment and success in Paulsgrove will bring a huge boost in morale and confidence in similar parishes, especially those in the catholic tradition and in which people may feel left behind.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

The allocation of work between you and the Priest-in-Charge will be worked out through our shared discernment – and by the gifts and expertise you bring to the role. But it will be aimed at offering:

- Re-energised traditional expressions of church, including a new family-focussed service, leading to growth in depth and numbers across all age groups
- Four fresh expressions of church including choir church (established in September 2024 as ChoirClub@StMichaels).
- An additional regular outreach activity based on building community
- A church building that is fit for purpose to support worship and community outreach (although the work to enable this is likely to be led by the Priest in Charge)
- A way of enabling and empowering new lay leaders and volunteers to undertake the expanded ministries so that Paulsgrove people serve Paulsgrove, in a community in which people have historically had things done to them rather than being worked with.

The ideal candidate will be:

- Ordained and, if still in their curacy, signed off or have confirmation that sign off is imminent.

- Sympathetic to the catholic traditions of St Michael's – although we welcome applications from any expression of faith within the Church of England. We want the postholder to be committed to ensuring that, although we might worship differently, we are still one integrated church family.
- Committed to working in and serving the whole community in a working class estate facing significant challenges - and just as committed to listening to, working with and walking alongside wonderful people in a place with a strong sense of pride, identity and care for one another. We love Paulsgrove!
- Willing to roll up their sleeve and get stuck in – and to be resilient and creative if things don't work out how they thought or hoped they might.
- Work flexibly around the needs of the role.
- Comply with all policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, equality, health & safety and security, confidentiality, and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.
- Work closely with the Priest in Charge and the Diocese to monitor and match progress against the outcomes agreed.
- Take part in performance development as required.
- Work within agreed budgets

WORK PATTERN

The pattern of hours will be negotiated and will reflect the gifts of the candidate, and the pattern of life at St Michael's and of those we serve.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring you will have adequate time for preparation and planning – and also for rest and recreation. Agreed expenses will be met, ongoing training encouraged, an annual retreat supported and time off taken seriously. We want you to thrive in all aspects of your life!

ACCOUNTABILITY

Please refer to the table presented in the section entitled Our Targets.

As part of our grant from the National Church, we have agreed to stretching but achievable outcomes with milestones each year in each of our traditional and fresh expressions of church.



KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- Everyone in Paulsgrove, whether they have faith or not.
- The Priest in Charge, to whom the postholder will be directly responsible.
- Community figures, such as teachers and the community lead at the schools, other denominations in Paulsgrove and around it, community groups and councillors and council officials.
- Pastoral relationships with the existing congregation and with others, whether or not they become involved with the life and mission of St Michael's
- Other clergy and those working in the Deanery and across Portsmouth, and those leading projects in similar contexts.

GOOD FOR PAULSGROVE, GOOD FOR GOD'S CHURCH



These aren't just exciting plans to live out God's mission in Paulsgrove. They have a wider benefit for the Diocese as a pathfinder for other parishes:

Across the Diocese we will:

- Bring together leaders from a range of growth projects in deprived, working class areas in the Diocese, for mutual support and to capture learning on what works well in such areas. This will include Paulsgrove, Leigh Park (both pathfinders in our SMMI bid) and North Gosport (SDF-funded project in progress);
- Learn from and share our own learning to the National Estates Church Network;
- Bring forward a next group of parishes to adopt the approaches developed in the project. Current candidates include: St Luke's Church, Southsea, Holy Spirit Church, Southsea, and St Mary's Church, Portsea.

Doing what we're called to do in Paulsgrove will help the Church across the country to learn:

- How to effectively grow churches in an catholic tradition;
- For any tradition:
 - » How to raise up leaders from estates/working class areas;
 - » The challenges and opportunities of mission in estates, especially "working with" and not "doing to" people.



SAFEGUARDING

St Michael and All Angels, Paulsgrove takes very seriously its responsibilities surrounding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults who may be at risk. We work in partnership with the Diocese of Portsmouth to ensure that we work in accordance with best practice at all times. You can find a copy of our current safeguarding policy our [website](#).

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH



The Diocese of Portsmouth stretches across south-east Hampshire and includes the whole of the Isle of Wight. It includes 133 parishes, from Botley in the west to Emsworth in the east, and from Blackmoor in the north to Ventnor on the south side of the Isle of Wight. It includes diverse communities, ranging from the densely populated and relatively deprived parts of inner-city Portsmouth, to rural villages in Hampshire; and from a range of seaside towns on the Isle of Wight to suburban communities west of Fareham and Gosport. In total, it covers 420 square miles and has a population of 784,000.

The Diocese of Portsmouth has 170 churches, ranging from historic listed buildings to brand new, purpose-built churches. There are around 150 clergy serving in those churches and their parishes, around 50 of whom are self-supporting. There are also around 70 licensed lay ministers who help with leading services and pastoral work. Around 13,500 people regularly worship in our churches, on Sundays and during the week. Attendance numbers have been declining over the past 10 years, but there are particular congregations that have grown. Only a tiny number of churches have been closed in recent years.

Parishes and chaplaincies within the diocese are supported by a small diocesan team, based in Peninsular House, Portsmouth. These officers support parishes and church schools, administer clergy housing and stipends, manage its property portfolio, promote social justice, handle communications, manage safeguarding procedures, and run a variety of training courses. The Diocesan Secretary oversees these staff. Separate teams of staff are employed in the bishop's office and for the three archdeacons. There is no suffragan bishop.

The diocese includes 44 Church of England schools in south-east Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. These are still mostly schools funded by the local authority, but the diocese supports them with regard to governance and admissions, building projects, Christian ethos, RE and recruitment of headteachers. The education team supports schools across both Portsmouth and Winchester



dioceses, under the authority of a Joint Board of Education. Two schools on the Isle of Wight are joint Church of England/Roman Catholic schools.



Bishop Jonathan Frost was installed in March 2022, and has shared his vision for the diocese – a place where all are invited into a life-enhancing encounter with Jesus Christ. It should be a place where children, young people and young adults are given a particular priority; and where ministry to the elderly is supported by a network of Anna Chaplains, working in every locality. The vision is encapsulated by a vocational call to all Christians, which has been

supported by strategic funding from the national Church of England to promote the planting of new congregations and a network of pioneer ministers. You can read more about our vision and vocation at portsmouth.anglican.org/our-strategy.

The Diocese of Portsmouth is one of the smallest dioceses in the Church of England, but has often “punched above its weight”, with senior staff and diocesan officers involved in the national Church, managing joint projects or implementing innovative ideas. Financially, the payment of parish share has always been good – but the recent Covid pandemic has resulted in some financial challenges.

There is a range of churchmanship across all traditions within the diocese, few parishes deliberately exclude themselves from deanery and diocesan initiatives, and our smaller, family feel means that most clergy and lay leaders know and respect each other.







Diocese
of Portsmouth

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THE CHURCH
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