St Mary's, Portsea

PROFILE

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Portsmouth

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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 Portsea. Be assured of our prayers in the diocese for you and those you love as you step into a time of discerning.

THE RT REV JONATHAN FROST, BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH

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 for you as you discern your next step of faith in response to God's faithfulness.

With love, in Christ,

+Jonathan Portsmouth

'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

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

WELCOME FROM THE ARCHDEACON

I find myself in an unusual position, of introducing the parish profile and encouraging you to discern if God is calling you to this post, as both the Archdeacon and the Incumbent.

St Mary's, Portsea, was once named 'the Great Parish' by one of my predecessors (Archbishop Garbett) over 100 years ago and more recently one of the curates as they finished training described it as the 'best training parish in the Church of England'. After 25 years as the incumbent I would echo this. St Mary's and St Faith's are set in the heart of the city and have a rich and varied life of worship, social action and community life. I hope that as you read this profile you will catch something of that variety and diversity.

The PCC identified at its last review that the area we need to focus on is that of developing our ministry with young families and young people. This is already an area that we have invested in, but we are aware of the need for a more focused ministry in developing further our support for young people.

I hope that you might be interested in exploring further and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Ven Bob White
Archdeacon of Portsdown

PARISH SETTING

The Parish of St Mary, Portsea, lies at the heart of the City of Portsmouth, encompassing a predominantly residential community of approximately 22,000 people. Parts of the parish include some of the most deprived areas within the diocese, with additional pockets of deprivation elsewhere. Housing across the parish is varied, ranging from flats, council and social housing, and small traditional terraced properties to larger modern homes.

The parish contains five schools – four primary and one secondary – with which the Church maintains strong and active links. Within the area are several residential homes for older people as well as warden-assisted flats for the elderly. Two railway stations and a section of the main shopping centre also fall within the parish boundaries.

Local employment is diverse, reflecting the full spectrum of occupations found in the wider city. The area includes a significant student population alongside areas of high unemployment. The Parish Church draws people from across Portsmouth and beyond, welcoming individuals of many backgrounds, experiences, and skills. This contributes to a strong multicultural identity within the parish, clearly reflected in the rich diversity of the congregation at St Mary's.

OUR CHURCHES

The Parish is home to two vibrant and distinctive worshipping communities.

St Mary's Church, our large Victorian parish church, stands at the heart of Portsea. Rooted in a *liberal catholic* tradition, worship at St Mary's includes the use of vestments and incense on particular occasions. The church is a much-loved community venue, regularly hosting special services for local groups and charities, as well as music concerts and popular preloved clothing events.

St Mary's also benefits from a flourishing **Music Foundation**, supported by a Director of Music, an Assistant Organist, and an Organ Scholar. A major restoration of the historic organ has recently been completed, and further building developments are being explored following the latest Quinquennial report.

St Faith's Church, our Mission Church located in an area of significant deprivation, offers a more relaxed and informal style of worship. Its warm and prayerful community gathers regularly, including for a monthly **Healing Service** which is well attended and valued.

WORSHIP ACROSS THE PARISH

Worship is coordinated centrally, and both churches follow a shared structure for Eucharistic services while celebrating their own distinctive character and community life. A typical weekly pattern includes:

SUNDAY

- **8am** – BCP Communion, *St Mary's*
- **10am** – Eucharist with hymns, *St Faith's*
- **10am** – Sung Eucharist (livestreamed), *St Mary's*
- St Mary's also often hosts an afternoon or evening service. A Baptism Service (4pm) is held monthly as required.

MONDAY

- **12pm** – Mass (livestreamed), *St Mary's*

TUESDAY

- **9:30am** – Mass, *St Faith's*

WEDNESDAY

- **12pm** – Mass (livestreamed), *St Mary's*

THURSDAY

- **10:30am** – Mass, *St Faith's*

FRIDAY

- **10am** – Mass (livestreamed), *St Mary's*

SATURDAY

- **10am** – *Just Ask* drop-in session at St Mary's, offering an opportunity to enquire about baptisms or weddings.

DAILY PRAYER

- Morning Prayer is said at **8:45am**, *St Mary's*.

The Parish conducts approximately **130 funerals each year**, alongside around **10 weddings** – a number that has significantly decreased since COVID – and **30 baptisms**, most of which take place at the Parish Church. The clergy team share fully in the preparation for and celebration of all these Occasional Offices, offering pastoral care to individuals and families at key moments of life.

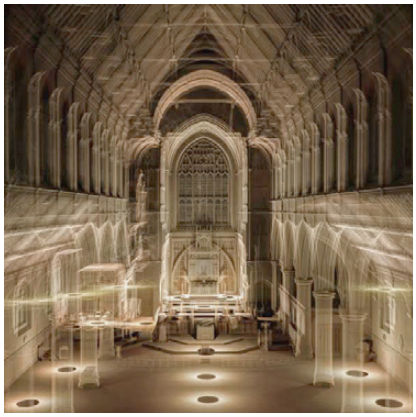
Alongside regular worship, the Parish supports a range of groups that enrich its spiritual life. A **Parish Julian Group** and a **Fellowship Group** each welcome small but committed congregations. At St Mary's, both the **Choir** and the **Children's Sunday activities** provide further opportunities for ministry and nurture.

The impact of COVID led to a noticeable decline in attendance among young people – particularly teenagers – highlighting the need for renewed investment in this area of ministry. Encouragingly, recent months have seen **growth in the number of children, families, young people, and young adults** across our congregations. There are now **around 40 children and young people** regularly connected with both churches, and we hope this post will help strengthen and develop this vital work.

The Parish has also established a flourishing **Messy Church**, held four times a year and supported by a dedicated team of around 20 volunteers. Each session typically welcomes **around 50 children and 50 adults**, offering creative worship and hospitality for families from across the community.

Beyond worship, the Parish enjoys a rich and varied **social and cultural life**. The annual **Parish Panto**, in which clergy participate enthusiastically, is a

much-loved tradition. Working closely with **Fratton Together**, the Parish contributes actively to community initiatives such as the **Pantry**. St Mary's regularly hosts Fratton's light festival, culminating in a lantern parade to the church. In recent years St Mary's has displayed a series of striking light installations – including the *Sun*, the *Moon*, and a specially commissioned artwork using the church building itself as its canvas. Throughout the year, the Parish offers an array of social events, from **Shrove Tuesday Quiz Nights** with shared cultural foods, to dances, skittles evenings, and much more.



A highlight of the Parish calendar is the **Community May Fayre**, held at St Mary's, which attracts between **10,000 and 15,000 visitors in a single day** and brings together people from across the city.

The Parish maintains strong **ecumenical relationships**, contributing actively to the local ecumenical network and playing a valued role within the **Deanery** and **Diocese** as we work collaboratively with others to serve the wider community.

VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The Incumbent and PCC have worked together over the past decade to shape and refine the Parish's shared vision. Most recently, this vision was revisited during a PCC study morning, where thoughtful and constructive discussion led to a renewed expression of our core calling:

To be with God;
to be with others;
and to be with the rest of creation.

This vision reflects our commitment to valuing and affirming the gifts of all people, and to offering a place of prayer, worship, and welcome for everyone within the Parish. Looking ahead, we aspire to develop **centres of excellence** – both in worship and in community involvement – ensuring that our churches serve as vibrant, wellresourced spaces for spiritual and social flourishing.

A key priority is supporting **both churches** in recognising their interdependence while also honouring their unique identities and strengths. Over time, we have reflected on the Trinity as a helpful model for understanding how distinctiveness and unity can coexist in creative harmony.

Our ongoing work seeks to build up the life of each church and explore how each can act as a valuable resource within its local community.

Strengthening the **spiritual life of the whole Parish**, and nurturing people on their journey of faith, remains central to this vision. In particular, we recognise the growing need to invest intentionally in ministry with **children, young people, and families** – a key factor in shaping and defining this post.

THE ROLE OF ASSISTANT CLERGY IN DELIVERING THE VISION

Assistant clergy play a vital role in supporting and shaping the Parish's future direction. They are fully involved in discussion, reflection, and planning at every level of parish life, including weekly staff meetings, meetings with the churchwardens, and the PCC. As the Parish's vision and priorities continue to develop, assistant clergy are encouraged to take an active lead in specific areas of ministry – supporting others, nurturing new initiatives, and taking responsibility for particular aspects of the Parish's work.

Full details of the Parish Vision can be found in Appendix 1.

COLLABORATION AND DIOCESAN VISION

The Parish clergy are part of a **Cairn**, formed as part of the Diocese's commitment to strengthening ministry, wellbeing, and mutual support. This collaborative group enables neighbouring parishes to explore how resources can be shared more effectively for the benefit of the wider community. Participation in the Cairn is a high priority for the Parish, and clergy are committed to its monthly meetings.

Cairns form a key strand of the **REVIVE** element of the diocesan strategy, supporting sustainable and flourishing ministry across the Diocese. Read more in the section Diocesan Vision and Strategy.

MEET THE TEAM

The Parish is served by a committed and experienced ministry team:

- **The Incumbent**, who has served in the Parish for 25 years and also holds the role of Archdeacon.
- **One Associate Vicar**, with a particular responsibility for Discipleship, who has been in post for nearly three years.
- **Two SSM Priests**, each offering support on Sundays and providing pastoral ministry one day a week.

OTHER MINISTERS

- **Three clergy with Permission to Officiate (PTO)**, who contribute actively to the life of the Parish and its Ministry Team.
- **Three Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs)**, exercising ministry across both churches.

This core team is supported by a skilled group of employed lay staff, including:

- A **part-time Admin Officer** (shared with the Deanery)
- An **Office Support Worker** (3 hours a week, assisting with major events such as the May Fayre)
- A **Finance Officer**
- A **Verger** at St Mary's (17.5 hours per week)
- The **Director of Music** (approximately 16 hours per week)

In addition, the parish benefits from the dedication of its active laity, including the **Parish Wardens and Deputy Wardens** (four in total), the **Lay Vice Chair of the PCC**, the **Parish Treasurer**, and many others who contribute to a wide range of ministries, projects, and activities.

A PARISH COMMITTED TO FORMATION AND GROWTH

St Mary's has a long and proud history as an excellent training ground for clergy – stretching back to the 19th century – and continues to offer a rich breadth of experiences and opportunities. Recent clergy have spoken warmly of their time here, with one describing it as *"the best training parish in England."*

The congregation is diverse in background and culture, yet consistently warm, supportive and appreciative of the clergy's ministry. Anyone discerning a call to join the team should be ready to work collaboratively with clergy and laity alike, and to thrive within a dynamic, adaptable and everchanging parish environment.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

The appointment of the Vicar, the Ven Bob White, as Archdeacon of Portsdown has created the opportunity to establish a new 0.5 post to support the Parish and his wider ministry. The primary purpose of this role is to assist the Vicar in providing leadership across parish groups, supporting the Pastoral Offices, and developing ministry with young families, children, and young adults.

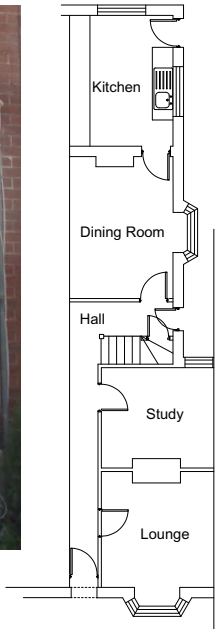
Although based mainly at St Mary's, the postholder will also contribute to the wider Parish Ministry Team and support the life of St Faith's Church under the leadership of the Associate Vicar, Revd Wendy May Jacobs.

This role will additionally work alongside the clergy of the Cluster (St Mary's, St Luke's, Stamshaw and Ascension, Holy Spirit, Harbour Church, and the Cathedral) to foster collaborative ministry across the inner city, sharing gifts and resources to strengthen mission and ministry.

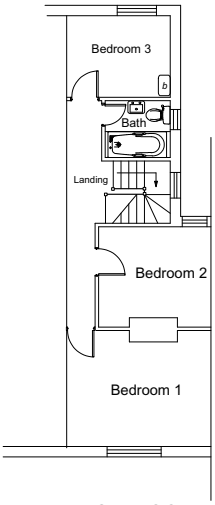
THE HOUSE

The house is a 3-bed terrace, owned and maintained by Portsmouth Diocese, which is a ten-minute walk from St Mary's Church. The property consists of three reception rooms, kitchen and one bathroom.

There is on-street parking available with a resident's permit (managed by Portsmouth City Council).



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

APPENDIX

PARISH VISION FOR ST MARY, PORTSEA

St Faith's Church Landport and St Mary's Church, Fratton

We seek to be a rejuvenating community of Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking disciples

By Being with God • Being with others
Being with creation

So that we may be 'rooted and grounded in love'.

To enable us to do this we need to ensure:

- All feel welcomed, valued and respected
- All feel safe and accepted to be themselves and to explore their faith
- All feel listened to, engaged with and understood

We will:

- Root and centre all this in our Eucharistic worship and prayer centred life, which will shape who we are and enable us to be transformative signs of Christ's presence and love in our lives and communities
- Celebrate our heritage and seek to regenerate it while being authentic and true to ourselves
- Value and enhance the gift of music and its use in the life of the Church
- Seek to be a spiritually uplifting presence
- Listen to, learn from and work with our local communities
- Open 'our doors, hearts and minds' for a variety of celebrations, activities and events

PCC VISION DAY REFLECTIONS – JUNE 7TH, 2025

AREAS TO CELEBRATE AND VALUE

- Eucharistic centred life
- The diversity of our communities
- Our strong and natural community links
- A welcoming community (but be aware of cliques!)
- Good liturgy and music which is rooted but evolving
- Our commitment to Eco issues and Social; Justice

AREAS OF LIFE TO CONSIDER AND EXPLORE

- Improve awareness of how all are welcomed – especially vulnerable groups
- Respond to changes in society and develop contemporary marketing
- Use informal conversations to learn about each other and draw up an awareness of skills
- Develop a platform for young people to be encouraged and given their space
- Engagement with social justice and develop pr social conscience
- Value and enhance the differences in the two church communities, while building up relationship – encouraging a true interdependence
- Allow people to be who they are, rather than stereotype them
- Consider the invisible barriers and how to break them
- Develop our social media presence and style
- Develop our confidence to 'chat faith'
- Develop our skills as good listeners
- Ensure we have 'lily pads' for people to use to explore and grow their faith

DIOCESE VISION AND STRATEGY

Our vision in our diocese is to be a Church with Jesus Christ at the heart of everything we do, a Church in which we seek God's Kingdom, and where all are enabled to experience a life-transforming encounter with Jesus Christ in order to become disciples.

We have now crystallised that thinking into a phrase that we hope sums up what we aspire to be: a rejuvenating community (one that rejuvenates itself and seeks to rejuvenate others) of Jesus-centred (learners and followers of Jesus, with our actions shaped by him), Kingdom-seeking (including our devotion to God, our passion for social justice, our care for creation and fellowship with each other) disciples (we are committed to our faith, and want to keep on becoming more like Jesus).

That vision is supplemented by two further priorities:

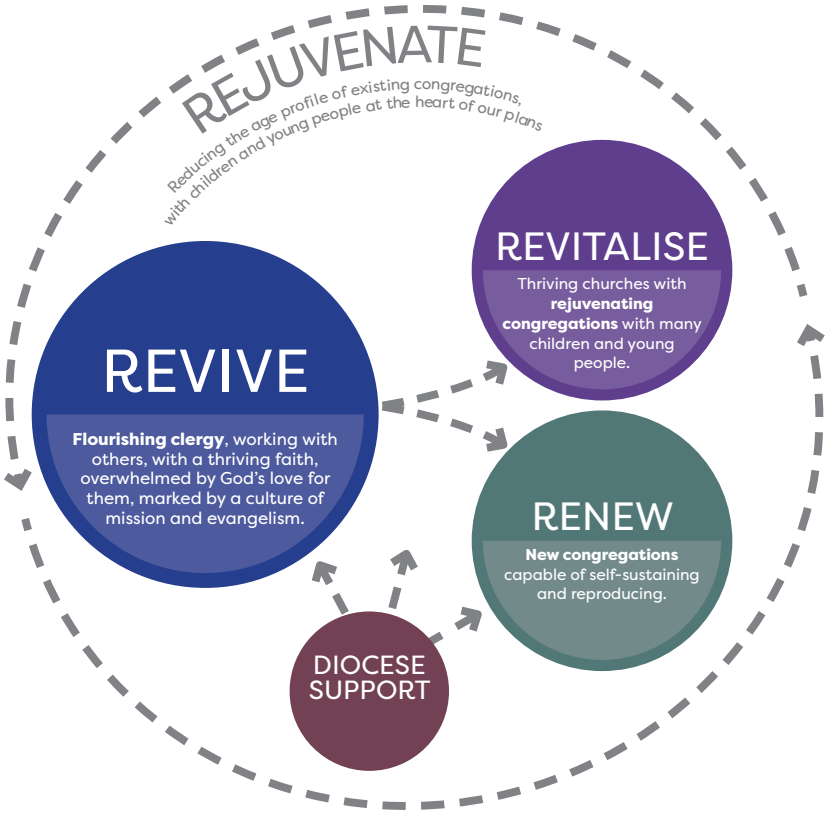
- We deliberately prioritise our work with children, young people and young adults, to enable a new generation to grow in faith and find their voice. They are the Church of today.
- We value and treasure our older people, and ensure they are being cared for holistically, by the provision of Anna Chaplaincy to support them in every parish, benefice and cluster across the diocese.

As a diocesan community, we are invited to take part in the strategy that we pray will guide us towards the vision described above, as we are led by the Holy Spirit. This strategy aims to tackle some of the challenges we know that we face as a diocese: declining attendances, older congregations, expensive buildings, over-stretched staff, and a gap between the costs of our ministry and our income.

So our REJUVENATING strategy aims to place children and young people at the heart of our planning, and also seeks to REVIVE, REVITALISE and RENEW our network of parishes, chaplaincies and church schools. Creating thriving churches with an emphasis on children and young people is a watermark that runs through these parts of our strategy:

- REVIVE: a call to spiritual renewal for all our clergy and lay leadership to experience a continued personal refreshing of the wonder of God's presence in our lives.
- REVITALISE: to grow our existing churches, connecting ministries together to form a pathway that reaches people who are unconnected with church, and supports them as they journey to become committed disciples who own for themselves Jesus' mission.
- RENEW: in communities where there is no effective church presence, we believe it is right to plant/transplant new congregations and build New Worshipping Communities to focus on outreach and younger generations.

Our STRATEGY is summarised in this diagram:



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.

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

Diocese of Portsmouth

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND