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# PARISH OF ECCLESTON AND PULFORD

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PARISH PROFILE 2022



APRIL 30, 2022

E&P PCC

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## SUMMARY

Eccleston and Pulford are neighbouring rural communities in the south-west corner of Cheshire. The tight-knit village of Eccleston is near to the River Dee. It is believed that the name of the village derives from the Primitive Welsh *egleſ* (a church) and the Old English *tūn* (a settlement). Pulford is also a village but approximately three times larger than Eccleston being part of the Civil Parish of Poulton and Pulford since boundary changes in 2015. It is an agricultural area with a long history of milk and cheese production. The parish of Eccleston and Pulford has one PCC and two churches, one in Eccleston and one in Pulford. The two villages have very different characteristics as do the two churches; each church is supported by loyal congregations. Managing the two is not without challenges. However, there is a spiritual unity in the two congregations, and they share a number of activities, such as joint 'all age services' and Messy Church, both being well supported by volunteers from the villages. Pre-covid there has been joint support and attendance at Lenten discussion groups, Silent prayer, fundraising events, Christmas and Summer fayres, Harvest lunches and suppers, exhibitions and concerts as well as social occasions.

The Parish offers challenge and opportunity for growth and development. It offers exciting possibilities for the right applicant to lead change and growth to promote our vision of a vibrant, forward and outward looking parish. We are an inclusive parish which values all individuals, respects and reflects their needs in worship. We are a parish which values and protects traditions of the liturgy and the sense of history while reaching out to meet the diverse needs of each village, especially new families and the younger generations. We would like our new rector to encourage Sunday attendance, and to enable spiritual development 365 days a year through wider channels of communication and aspects of Christian Mission.

We NEED someone who can deliver traditional and modern services, as appropriate, who is empathetic to the needs of all worshippers, who relates well to all age groups: someone with spiritual and emotional intelligence, with energy and enthusiasm. Someone who can embrace our vision with ambition and optimism to take it forward and beyond...

## BIG ASK, BIG TASK, BIG REWARDS.

Someone who can 'rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven.' [Matthew 5:12]

## THE PARISH

The parish is situated SW of Chester, with the Welsh border on the west side ½ a mile from Pulford and the city of Chester on the north side 2 miles from Eccleston. The villages are surrounded by countryside with agricultural land and farms. Both are within easy reach of major road and rail networks and airports.

There are no churches of other denominations within the parish currently.

The adult resident population of Eccleston is approximately 160 and that of Pulford some 450. The church's electoral roll is 143 which includes people from outside the villages who attend the "church of their heart" for worship and community. A typical quote from a parishioner ...

*"We do not live in Eccleston, but immediately felt at one with the form of worship in this beautiful church. We have regularly attended in this our spiritual home since the late 1970's. Our daughter was a choir member, confirmed and married in this church and our grandchildren baptised".*

The population of Eccleston is relatively stable due to the nature of the housing. The Duke of Westminster is the Landlord to all but one house in the actual village, although outside some are privately owned. There is a mix of age groups and recently a few families with children have moved into the village. In Pulford there is also a mix of age groups and occupations but more mobility due to recent housing developments.



*Picture 1 Typical Eccleston Village House*



*Picture 2 Typical Pulford Village House*

Within the Parish there is the Chester Business Park, with numerous businesses . Also the smaller Bell Meadow Business Park on the Wrexham Road. Additionally there is a children's nursery and excellent garden centre in the Belgrave area.



## THE CHURCHES AND THE VILLAGES

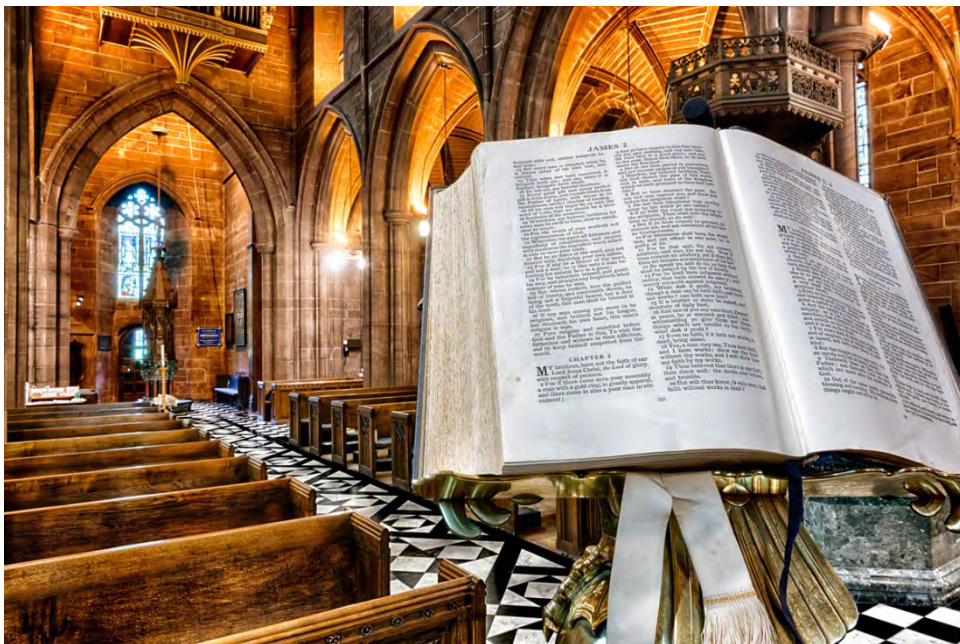
### St Mary's Church Eccleston

There has been a church in Eccleston since 1188. The present building is the third to have been built.



*Picture 3 Eccleston Church Exterior*

St. Mary's church Eccleston is a beautiful and inspiring building, a magnificent example of the work of the foremost ecclesiastical architect of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: G.F. Bodley. It is designed in his favourite Decorated Gothic style and built in his favourite red sandstone. It was commissioned by the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Westminster and was consecrated in 1900.



*Picture 4 Eccleston Church Interior*



It is said that the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke asked Bodley to build him a cathedral but on being told that one existed a few miles away he said “then build me a small one!”. Which indeed he did as a Grade 1 listed building.

The Church is in the centre of the village and part of the Duke of Westminster's Eaton estate, the Duke is patron. The village, situated 5 minutes' walk from the river Dee, is an attractive mix of houses which were originally built for estate workers dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The houses are a variety of size and style, the majority designed by John Douglas and are listed. The church and the village attract many visitors, ranging from ramblers to coach tours from all over.

Typical quotes from the visitors' book include:

*“A wonderful place to reflect”*

*“Calm and peaceful”*

*“A real comfort in time of need”*

The Church is open every day for contemplation and the quotes reflect the importance of this.

It is the Parish Church for Eaton Park and Eaton Hall the home of the Grosvenor family. Eaton Hall has a private chapel where, on occasions, there have been services for the parish and the family. Pre covid the current Duke opened the gardens to the public and gave the Parish the opportunity to cater on a given Sunday to raise funds.

Many members of the Grosvenor family are buried in the old churchyard in the shadow of the ruins of the former 17<sup>th</sup> century church.



Picture 5 Third Duke of Westminster's Headstone



Picture 6 Sixth Duke of Westminster's Memorial Plaque

The quinquennial reports noted in 2015 “St. Mary’s was found to be an excellent well looked after building, which could act as a model for any church. St. Mary’s is in excellent and robust good health.” A more recent report has been delayed by the pandemic.

St Mary’s does not have a Church Hall, but an excellent village hall is close by and is used for church meetings, church social, and fund-raising events. It is also used for wedding receptions, funeral teas and a variety of clubs and activities including yoga, tango and indoor bowls.



*Picture 7 Eccleston Village Hall*



*Picture 8 Wedding Reception in Village Hall*



*Picture 9 Messy Church Activities in Village Hall*



However, the Church is more than a beautiful building. It is a place for worship, for community, for private prayer and reflection and for contemplation. St Mary's is used by the school and by visitors and it is for these reasons that it is open dawn to dusk.



Picture 10 Baptismal font cover

In terms of patterns of worship pre covid, the St Mary's had a weekly service of choral communion at 11.15 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The book of common worship; Holy communion Order one in traditional language was used for these services. Attendance at the services was around 40. During the pandemic and interregnum there have been joint services with Pulford alternating weekly between the two churches. There has also been weekly e-Home worship and regular compline on Zoom.

The PCC wishes to return to separate Sunday Services in each church 9:45am at Pulford and 11:15am at Eccleston with joint Messy Church and 'All Age Services' when there is a fifth Sunday in the month. However, the service times and frequency are subjects for discussion with the new incumbent.

Special services are held for Christian festivals including Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Mothering Sunday and Remembrance Sunday. On occasion there have been confirmation services. St. Mary's is a popular choice for weddings, baptisms and funerals.

St Mary's has a strong choral tradition, there is a robed choir of about 10 to 15 members with a choir director who is a professional musician. The organist is the only paid employee. The organ in Eccleston church is much admired and envied as a wonderful instrument. There are occasionally organ recitals by visiting organists.

The Bells of St. Mary's are a set of 8 from the world-famous bell foundry Taylors in Loughborough. These are rung before services, at weddings and funerals. There are often visiting bell ringers from all over the country to ring a peal, a half peal or a quarter peal much to the delight of those living close to the church. The bells and ringers are under the direction of a tower captain.

The Church is fortunate to have the support of a Lay Reader licensed to the Parish in 2021.

The Church has a dedicated children's corner. It has on occasions offered shelter when outside events have suffered inclement weather!

The Church supports various charities and organisations such as the local food bank and Christian Aid. Choir concerts are held to raise funds for the Centre for Brain Injury Rehabilitation & Development (B.I.R.D.) among others. Additionally Musical Festivals with bands and singing groups notably 'A Handbag of Harmonies'-Chester Woman's Choir and 'Proud Marys'- Chester's LGBT Choir.



## St. Mary's Church of England Primary School Eccleston



*Picture 11 St Mary's C of E Primary School Eccleston*

Eccleston C of E Primary school is a vibrant and successful school located in the heart of the village having both Eccleston and Pulford in the catchment area. We are proud to be a Church of England school and we value the many positive partnerships with both the church and the local community.

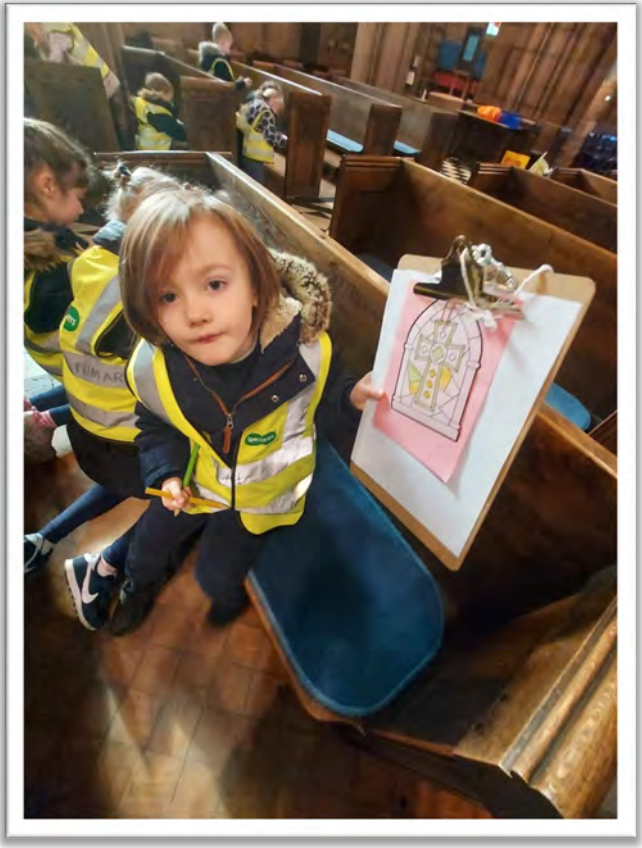
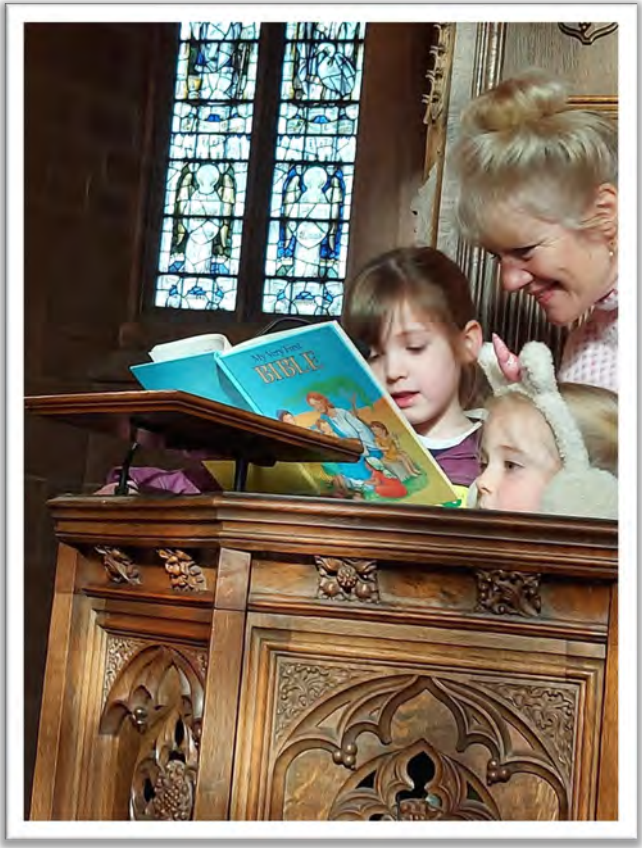


*Picture 12 boy with candle*

Regular worship with the Rector in school and in church is something we look forward to. We are also grateful to use the church and indeed key personnel as a learning resource for Religious Education, Art, History and Geography. Our children benefit immensely from this partnership in both spiritual and educational development.

Messy Church is another positive aspect of church, school and preschool working together. Pre covid the school very much enjoyed coming together with the local and church communities to provide fun, food and prayers for our younger members and their families. This is an aspect of worship we wish to develop as are the workshops held in church and led by church members. A recent one was amazing. We want to expand the workshops into the many aspects of the church and bible that can make Christianity alive and relevant to the young participants. Additionally church

features including fantastic stain glass windows, historical plaques, colours of worship vestments, artifacts of communion and historical church records, are interesting and educational areas we hope to include in future workshops.





## St. Mary's Church Pulford



*Picture 13 Pulford Church Exterior*

Quote: "We love our church building for its homely simplicity".

Pulford's location surrounded by farmland and close to Chester makes it a popular village. The older houses are largely occupied by middle aged and retired people. However, in recent years there have been several housing developments built and an influx of younger families. The Church has been successful in encouraging their attendance at services, all age and especially Messy Church which is particularly well supported and has great potential for further development with a new incumbent.



*Picture 14 Pulford Village Hall Exterior*

There is no church hall but a delightful village hall just across the road with excellent facilities.

The hall is frequently used for a range of activities: church meetings, post service events such as Harvest lunch, Messy church, club meetings, special interest groups as well as for social events.





*Picture 15 Messy Church Activities in Village Hall*



*Picture 16 Rector's Leaving reception.*



*Picture 17 Pulford Church Interior*

The first Rector of Pulford was appointed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and church archives go back to 1551. The present church building was built during 1881 – 1883 and opened officially in 1884. The cost was borne by the first Duke of Westminster who gave the church to the parish. It was designed by the well-known Chester architect John Douglas, is listed and lies within an English Heritage Conservation area of archaeological interest known as the Pulford Motte and Bailey Castle.



*Picture 18 Pulford Church Choir and Altar*

Pulford was an independent parish until 1974 when it was linked with Ecclestone. Pre covid services were conducted at 9.45 a.m. each Sunday at Pulford, mostly Holy Communion but occasionally Matins; combined services with Ecclestone were held when possible, during Lent and other significant dates in the Church Calendar. The different Sunday morning service times enabled us to share the services of an organist.

There are no young people in regular attendance, other than couples attending to fulfil their obligations for marrying in the church. We are making great efforts to improve on this to ensure worship and witness continues.

We have a group of Bell ringers who ring before Sunday service and practise during the week. This is supplemented by ringers from Ecclestone if needed for weddings and joint services. The church's set of Hand Bells, dating back to the early 1900's is now in regular use by the Pulford Hand Bell Ringers who perform mostly for charity and at Christmas services.

The Church actively supports the local foodbank and has pre covid, provided a venue for concerts by the Rhos Welsh Choir and private carol services.

In 2018 together with our Messy Church family we successfully hosted a United Benefice Communion Service to welcome Bishop Libby Lane to our parish following her appointment and for her to open our children's corner. Several members of our congregation have served as governors of Ecclestone Church of England primary school over the years.

The Quinquennial Report in 2021 noted that there were no major issues and only minor cosmetic works needed to be addressed over the next few years. We were commended on the upkeep and general condition of the church.



## RECTOR'S ACCOMMODATION

The house is provided by Eaton Estate and is in the centre of the village. It is an interesting and attractive property. Currently it is having extensive refurbishment work with the intention of providing up to three bedrooms and two reception rooms, a new kitchen and bathroom. A special feature is to be a small walled private courtyard. There are also several other original features including a cellar (no wine though!)

The house is built of local stone and sits in a courtyard; five other homes share access through the courtyard to a back driveway.



*Picture 19 Rector's proposed accommodation*



## KEY TASKS FOR THE NEW RECTOR

Eccleston and Pulford have an active and committed church membership, who, while wishing to preserve past traditions, recognise the need to reach out to a wider group of people particularly younger generations.

We see the following as the key tasks for the new rector:

To provide inspirational and spiritual leadership.

To promote an inclusive church that welcomes all Christians, those of other faiths and those with no faith.

To promote the Christian message and encourage new members to attend and join the electoral roll.

To manage weekly Sunday services in both churches to nourish and expand congregations.

To review the liturgy and simplify as appropriate for some services to maintain and develop a wide appeal for both churches to all age groups.

To lead change and development to encourage worshipping communities in the villages.

To work with the PCC on finance issues and ways of increasing revenue.

To be involved in the worship and Christian teaching in Eccleston school, encouraging parents and their children to attend Messy Church and other special services.

To reach and include village children who do not attend Eccleston school to come to Messy Church and other church events and activities.

To provide opportunity and preparation for candidates, from both churches, wishing to be presented for confirmation.

To minister to the sick and those who wish for ministry but are unable to attend church.

To encourage the congregation in living out their faith in everyday life Monday to Saturday and not just on a Sunday.

To provide leadership in safeguarding and encourage all to contribute toward creating a safer church.

What the Parish needs is:

**A priest for all people, a man or woman for all seasons.**

## PERSON SPECIFICATIONS: Experience: Skills and characteristics.

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Wonderful if</b>
<b>Experience</b>	Church management	Rural communities	Teaching
	Pastoral work	Youth work Social work	Musical (voice or instrument)
	Preaching	Budgets	Bell ringing
		Fund raising	Juggling
<b>Skills</b>			
<b>Management</b>	Organisation Planning	Problem solving	Negotiation
	Communication	Team working	Presentation
	Time management	Computer technology	
	Good relationships	flexibility	
<b>Leadership</b>	Inspirational	empowering	Delegation
	Integrity	creativity	
	Democracy	Positivity	
	Diplomacy		
<b>Active listening</b>	Deep listening	Perceptive	Experience of confession
	Empathy	Non judgemental	Awareness of body language & hidden meanings
	Compassion	Reflecting/feedback	
	Patience		
<b>Personal</b>	Ability to relate	Cultural understanding	Sports interests
	Ability to communicate	Initiative and drive	Coaching skills
	Genuine interest in people	Social skills	
	Mutual respect		Argentine Tango
	trustworthy		
<b>characteristics</b>	Diligent	Curious	Adventurous
	Positive	Sense of humour	Fun loving
	enthusiastic	Optimistic	
	inclusive		

Do not worry about the number of boxes ticked because we are looking for someone who is **Honest, Honourable, Hardworking, Humorous, and HUMAN**. The incumbent should have a passion for the priesthood and its potential contribution to peoples' lives present and future.