

Parish Profile
Parish of Rostherne with Bollington and Over Tabley
Deanery of Knutsford

Overview

There are three churches in this largely rural parish:

St. Mary, Rostherne.

Holy Trinity, Little Bollington.

St. Paul, Over Tabley.

The benefice of St. Mary's is united with that of Holy Trinity.

Rostherne lies within five miles of the South-Western edge of the Manchester conurbation, and about two and a half miles from the market town of Altrincham. Both Little Bollington and Over Tabley are roughly equidistant each being around 3.5 miles from Rostherne. The nearby A556 dual carriageway links the M6 and M56 motorways.

All our churches are situated in lovely settings, and the buildings are beautiful and in good repair. The congregations get on well with each other and want this to continue into a new era for us all.

Present Clergy

Incumbent: Revd. Philip Robinson

Curate and now Associate Priest: Revd. Patricia Robinson.

St. Mary, Rostherne

St. Mary's is the largest church in the parish. It was founded over eight hundred years ago and was the mother church for an area, including Knutsford, considerably larger than now. It stands on the edge of the village of Rostherne on rising ground overlooking the bird sanctuary of Rostherne Mere. The building is Grade 1 listed and demonstrates varying phases of construction.



The fabric of the church is in good condition, and the last quinquennial inspection took place in 2017. Considerable work has taken place over recent years including the addition of toilets in a new stone-built extension, the installation of a kitchen in the choir vestry, creating a meeting space by joining two adjacent chapels, putting in a chair lift for the disabled, and a new sound system. The lighting in the church has been converted to LED lighting. The Simpson memorial and the lychgate, both Grade II listed, have been restored, and the similarly listed sundial is undergoing a similar process. In time it is intended to do work on the dormer windows in the main roof of the church. St Mary's has a church cat who is a very popular part of the church community, particularly with the children.



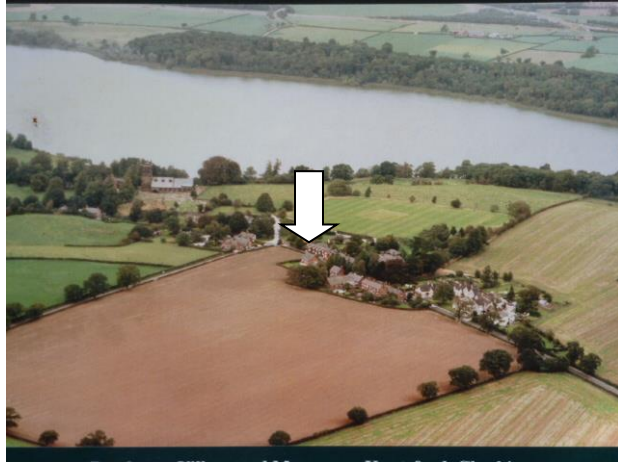


There is no parish room, but the Egerton Hall in the village has been used regularly for social activities.

Vicarage

The vicarage for the parish is a short walk away from St. Mary's in the village of Rostherne which adjoins Tatton Park. It is a short drive away from both Holy Trinity and St Paul's. The vicarage was extensively refurbished some twelve years ago and is in good condition.





Holy Trinity, Little Bollington

Holy Trinity stands beside the Lymm road. It is somewhat smaller than St. Mary's and was built to the design of Anthony Salvin in 1854.



The fabric is in good condition. Much work has been carried out in recent years and the reordering includes refurbishing the organ (the village war memorial), complete rewiring, a new boiler and putting in a new kitchen and accessible toilet. Externally the church has disabled access ramps (Holy Trinity is the most accessible of the three churches), and the bell was recently refurbished.





Church school

Next to Holy Trinity is the flourishing Church of England primary school. Voluntarily controlled, the school is now an Academy with the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust. The latest OFSTED inspection graded it a Good School. The latest SIAMS inspection rated it Outstanding. There are one hundred on the roll and the numbers are increasing. The school buildings are in good repair and the latest addition has been an eco-classroom. The school has strong connections with the parish which enjoys good relations with the excellent head teacher and staff. Little Bollington School is partnered with Ndege School in Kenya and staff have made reciprocal visits.



St. Paul, Over Tabley

St Paul's is in what is now a quiet cul-de-sac (formerly the A556) with ample parking and a riding, cycling and walking track. Built in 1853, again to the design of Anthony Salvin, the church is Grade II listed.

There are two day-nurseries and a pre-school in the parish.



The church building is in good condition and the interior has been renovated very recently. The floor has been partly replaced, a new kitchenette and accessible toilet have been installed and a meeting space created.

Decorations are a work in progress. Magnificent new embroideries have been completed by members of the congregation. The Plough Service is an annual highlight.

Traditionally St Pauls has had a very full calendar of events, and a regular coffee and chat which is now held in the church building. This is intended to be dementia friendly. The nearby and recently refurbished Mere and Tabley Community Club is used by all three churches for social activities, including the harvest lunch.



Graveyards

Each church stands in its own churchyard, they are all open for burials, and all include an area for cremations. The churchyard at St. Mary's was extended in 2012.

Church services

St Mary's

One of the attractions for the congregation at St Mary's is the use of traditional services based on the Book of Common Prayer. To attract younger church members, Philip and Patricia Robinson started a Storytelling Service which is highly successful. The congregation would like to continue this arrangement of services.

Holy Trinity and St Paul's

The services at Holy Trinity and St Paul's are also based on the Book of Common Prayer, but also using the form of Common Worship.

Ministry in the Community

There are two care homes within the parish, and the present clergy have an active ministry with the residents. During the lockdowns this has taken the form of video recorded services.

Change in the team of churches

Until 2021 our group of churches included St John's, High Legh. That church is now seeking a separate incumbent. We retain good relations with our friends there.

The future

We are a close-knit family of churches who have spent years renovating the fabric of our churches under the leadership of a talented, inspiring, and very active husband and wife team. This has brought us all together in faith and witness, and though we have been through a lot in the last thirteen years we have emerged with a degree of confidence that would have surprised us at the start of our journey.

We have also survived the pandemic and our churches are slowly returning to normal. A key point is that the United Benefice of St Mary's and Holy Trinity, and St Paul's, have been able to pay their agreed parish share without fail.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, the comments in all our congregations state a

preference for more of the same, in other words, more of what we know. Certainly, we want to build on the firm foundations we have carefully laid, whilst recognising the need for each of our churches to develop and increase their congregations.

The scope for increasing the income of all our churches depends on increasing the numbers attending church, as many in our congregations are retired or on fixed incomes. In terms of development, we should like to see an increase in the numbers of all ages. Music is an important part of our weekly worship (St Mary's benefits from the services of a superb organist), and we would hope this could be invigorated and expanded. From the parish fact sheets it is clear that services other than Holy Communion, like matins and evensong, could be reintroduced and brought into our existing patterns of worship.

It is vital that the new priest-in-charge recognises the importance of our Church of England primary school, and that the new incumbent is able to continue the work of the previous one and build on that role. The incumbent will be one of two Foundation Governors, the other being a Churchwarden from Holy Trinity.

The new incumbent

The new incumbent will find an active and committed church community who readily see the need for change and progress, supported by our PCC's.

We are seeking someone who will:

- offer wise and prayerful leadership from a strong personal faith.
- be comfortable with ministry in a rural context.
- be able to communicate effectively with people from diverse social and economic backgrounds.
- enjoy working with the staff and children of our C of E primary school.
- encourage the development of lay leadership.
- respect our existing congregations' traditional approach.
- continue and develop the existing ministry with children and young families.
- possess a strong sense of humour.

The post is for a house for duty/priest-in-charge, for Sunday services plus two and a half days, who will occupy the vicarage in the village of Rostherne.