

Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

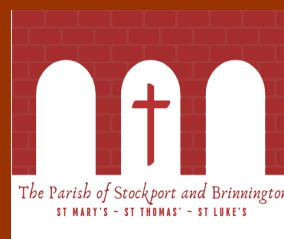
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

St Mary

Stockport Parish Church

St Thomas

St Luke



Parish Profile 2022



St Marys Stockport



St Thomas's Stockport



St Luke's Parish Centre
Brinnington



May 2022

PARISH OF STOCKPORT AND BRINNINGTON

PARISH PROFILE

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Produced by the Parochial Church Council for the Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

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with thanks to all those who contributed towards the contents of this publication



The Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

Part of the Archdeaconry of Macclesfield and Deanery of Stockport in the Diocese of Chester

Patrons

Bishop of Chester

&

Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius Cambridge in the University of Cambridge

An exciting opportunity has arisen to build on the solid foundations of the relatively recently created Parish of Stockport and Brinnington and move forward in spreading mission and evangelism in word and action through the town and borough.

The parish was created in January 2019 bringing together three existing parishes, St Mary's and St Thomas's in Stockport and St Luke's in Brinnington. Lynne Cullens as the Rector from shortly after the Parish's creation has been very effective in bringing the churches together into one parish, ensuring the Parish adopts a welcoming and open faced stance and moving forward on the potentially transformative development at St Luke's. Lynne has left to become the Bishop of Barking.

The new incumbent will inherit this platform. We are looking for an individual to take this foundation and move it forward with strength and confidence into its next phase. We need an individual comfortable with the differing nature of the three churches but able to drive forward in a confident open and inclusive way to spread the word of God through Stockport.

Could you be the person God is calling to this exciting and transformative ministry?

Mission focus on Urban Hubs in the Diocese of Chester

There is a recognition that urban centres, and their outer estates, have considerable potential for mission and evangelism. There is a collective effort to work collaboratively to resource these areas. You will find significant support from all the Diocesan departments. For example The Diocesan Board of Education is resourcing Christian leaders in schools, the Department for Outreach is supporting creative and transformative projects especially where that puts evangelism at the heart of urban ministry and the Department for Ministry is focussing on lay training.



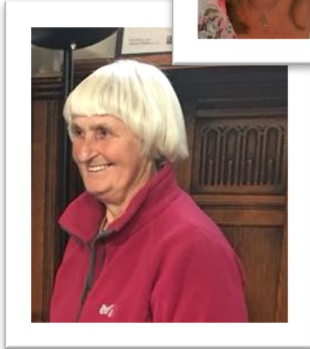
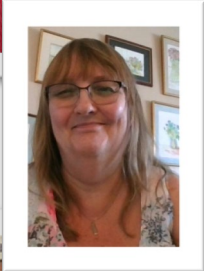
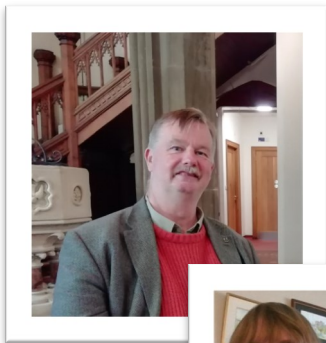
***Welcome to the Parish
of Stockport and Brinnington***

***Are you a prospective candidate?
Just think in a few months time this
could be your new home.***

***We are relatively small in
congregation numbers—a situation
not helped with Covid issues—but
we are generally speaking a happy
bunch of welcoming people opening
our doors again, starting up new/
old activities and are looking
forward to the future (and enjoying
a cuppa) following the appointment
of our new Rector.***

***Who is coming to sit in the empty
seat?***





We hope that this Parish Profile will give you an indication as to what you would be “taking on” joining us here in Stockport and Brinnington ...

... but that you will be just as interested and excited as we are at all that has and can be achieved.

We all have our part to play in the jig-saw that makes up the Parish— eager to do the best we possibly can.

If you believe that you are the right person to join us— to complete the picture—then we look forward to hearing from you soon.



The Rector of Stockport and Brinnington

Will be expected to:

Lead the parish through change

- > seek God's vision for the parish with the congregations of the three churches then work at turning that vision into action,
- > train and equip, in realistic and practical ways, those whom God is calling to resource the work of the Kingdom (e.g. in outer estates) in the management and mission of buildings; in families, children and youth work; in response to refugee and asylum seekers and whatever other challenges come along.
- > in promoting the Church of England's commitment to reach Net Zero Carbon by 2030.

Lead the parish in mission and growth

- > initiate new opportunities to share the Gospel in ways that are good news for those as yet unreached e.g. in the outer estates of Stockport; in the retail and business centres; for the night-time economy; through our church schools; at Stockport College; and with the homeless and marginalised,
- > plant new congregations or Fresh Expressions for those who respond or are searching,
- > model commitment to outer estate ministry through engagement and resourcing,

Lead the parish in shaping values and influence

- > offer a praying heart for the town and borough,
- > develop relationships with the town and borough so the church is a key partner in the redevelopment of Stockport and share in those conversations with the laity and clergy of the deanery.

Building on existing collaborations across parishes in Stockport borough, we anticipate that:

- > the planting of new congregations and fresh expressions and the evidence of new life they bring, will facilitate a continuing ministry resourced by the three deaneries in the borough,
- > the building up of expertise locally will enable the ongoing self-generated peer to peer training and resourcing to continue,
- > the effective identification of projects, that churches can jointly contribute to and benefit from, will generate the impetus for further joint working to be resourced long-term from collaborative funding.

Person specification for the post of Rector of Stockport and Brinnington

Essential Skills and Competences

Leading the parish through change

- > Ability to deal pastorally with difficult situations with wisdom and robustness when required.
 - > Ability to pioneer new opportunities.
 - > Experience of, and willingness to develop collaborative ministry with clergy and laity.
 - > Willingness to play a full part in the life of the Deanery

Leading the parish in mission and growth

- > Ability to nurture and develop all member ministry across diverse congregations.
 - > Passionate for outreach and willing to be bold.
 - > Willingness and ability to be innovative and help develop new worshipping communities.
 - > Ability to develop and lead fresh expressions of Christian community and worship and to look at new ways making disciples of Christ.
 - > Ability to seize the opportunities for pioneering ministry within new housing developments within the parish.
 - > An understanding of the missional and inclusive nature of occasional offices.

Leading the parish in shaping values and influence

- > Ability to develop links with the wider Parish community.
 - > Commitment to town center ministry.
 - > Willingness to work with the marginalised.

Desirable Skills and Competences

- > Experience of pioneer ministry.
- > Experience of growing town centre ministry.
- > Experience of working in schools.
- > Experience of developing engaging and relevant ministry for children, young people and families.
- > Experience of the supervision of youth and /or children's workers.
- > Experience of working with the homeless and marginalised.

LIVING AND WORKING IN STOCKPORT

A NICE PLACE TO LIVE...

Stockport is a borough situated south-east of Manchester famous in the 19th Century as the home of the nation's hatting industry, but it has come a long way from its industrial past— and for the most part it most certainly is a “nice place to live”.

With exceptional national and local transport links (road and rail) Stockport is ideally situated for travel and is only 7 miles from Manchester Airport.

If appointed as Rector of Stockport and Brinnington your new home is located just minutes off the motorway network at Portwood roundabout, is a walkable distance to/ from Stockport Railway Station and is relatively near to Stockport town centre. St Mary's Rectory (details given later on in this publication) overlooks St Mary's Way although well hidden by trees especially in the summertime. A detached, four bedroom house set back in its own grounds with large garden to the rear—we are sure you would find it an ideal place to live. Local shop and garage near by, post box and cash machine.

Stockport is a town of “old” and “new” - “ancient” and “modern”—it has many historic buildings, architecture and monuments and one of the most iconic viaducts in the UK. Yet there are many modern developments and the landscape is ever changing. Although an urban “built-up” area there are plenty of green spaces, parks and nature reserves to enjoy.

Stockport town centre is changing rapidly with millions of pounds worth of investment, including the creation of new homes and leisure facilities. Property developers said to have been snapping up derelict buildings close to the centre to convert into residential apartments—which must surely be good news for such areas as Stockport Old Town (the home of Stockport Market Hall and St Mary's) an area which is also enjoying a renaissance in the food and drink scene.

The heart of Stockport is becoming a really great place to live with new residential developments and improved public spaces. The town centre living offer is changing. The architectural story is old meets new with unique topography and great proximity to transport links. Interesting and varied green space and public parks can be found all around Stockport, with the River Mersey flowing right through the town, all adding to its appeal. There are outstanding educational establishments from pre-school through to sixth form and beyond.

[Extract SMBC: Stockport. Change Here].

“The Market Place (Stockport Old Town)”

Where the lord of the manor received a charter granting the right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair. Where a market cross, raised on six steps, stood in the square where banns of marriage would be proclaimed on three consecutive market days. [Dominating the area now an elegant Victorian indoor market built in 1861 from iron and glass].

The bells of St Mary’s Parish Church have rung out from its elevated position, for hundreds of years — calling its parishioners from far and wide.

Much of the older housing in the area has long gone but new apartments have and are being built. The “Old Town” and surrounding area may have lost many of its local shops and businesses over the years but it is emerging once again as a new vibrant area with award-winning independent businesses—dominated by “food and drink”.

[Also home of Robinson’s Brewery based in the heart of Stockport for some 181 years, although recently announcing plans to relocate its Lower Hillgate brewing and head office operations to its packing centre in Bredbury]

In recent years the area’s “evening economy” has begun to thrive with events like “Foodie Friday” and other attractions bringing hundreds (if not thousands) of people into the area - for awhile at least. However, in contrast with the “fine dining” experience that can be found at local restaurants—one only yards from the doors of St Mary’s— there is a serious problem of homelessness with various rough sleepers regularly found on church grounds and several incidents of unsocial behaviour regularly reported by local residents— some involving drink, drugs—and worse. A close neighbour and always available to help, The Wellspring (Harvey Street).

**Living and working in
the Parish of Stockport
and Brinnington**

***The Rector of
Stockport is patron
to:***

***All Saints, Marple
St John, Dukinfield
St Thomas, High Lane
St George, Hyde
St Chad, Romiley***

Stockport would not be Stockport without the wedding cake town hall...

The borough council initially had no single administrative headquarters. Offices were based in various parts of the town and a former warehouse in Warren Street used to house council meetings as well as the magistrates court, police station and cells. **Stockport's most majestic Town Hall (designed by Sir Brumwell Thomas) —opened in July 1908 — with its “wedding cake” tower standing 130 ft above the ground.**

It remains the administrative base for Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council [The foundation stone was laid in October 1904 with the top stone of the tower laid by the Mayor of Stockport in January 1907] along with other more modern buildings making up the modern day civic complex.

The Registrar for Births, Deaths and Marriages is located within the Town Hall (John Street entrance) with HM Coroner (Manchester South) based at Mount Tabor. Stockport Homes at “Cornerstone” 2 Edward Street.



From the Town Hall, heading towards Hazel Grove and set back from the A6—St Thomas's Place—where can be found St Thomas's Church—somewhat surrounded these days by a mix of domestic and commercial premises - low and high rise, converted premises and new build.

More about our church premises in a later section.



Brinnington

is a north-eastern suburb of Stockport located between the M60 motorway and Reddish Vale Country Park.

The population grew significantly throughout the nineteenth century, due to the development of nearby Portwood. St Paul's Church, Portwood was built (as a daughter church to St Mary's) in 1851 when Portwood consisted mainly of terraced housing for the workers in the cotton mills. The population later expanding into Lower Brinnington.

Brinnington was mainly open farm land before the local authority housing developments of the 1950's and 1960's. The area consisting mainly of council owned housing including high-rise flats and the area recognised as having high crime levels and long term unemployment. As the fortunes of Portwood declined Brinnington grew from strength to strength.

The area has undergone regeneration, including the building of 53 shared ownership houses (£33m investment) on the former TopShops site. New sports and leisure facilities were opened in March 2018 (representing a £7m+ investment by the council) and there has been a significant increase in both local and wider use of the new facilities, compared to the old centre.

Other complementary projects included the construction of 17 new homes for social rent at Lantern Close (2010); new play facilities across Brinnington and improvements to the public areas at the First House Community Centre opened in 2007 (2011) and the construction of 8 new 3-bedroom shared ownership homes on Blackberry Lane the former site of Tame Valley Primary School. The Blackberry Vale scheme was awarded category winner for 'Regeneration' at the RTPI Awards in 2019.

A "NEW" PARISH

THE STORY SO FAR

2019 to date:

The service of Induction and Institution of the

first appointed Rector of the new parish was held at St Mary's (Stockport Parish Church) in July 2019.

A happy and fulfilling appointment—even with Covid 19 suspending services and creating the need for completely new ways of working—ending perhaps a little earlier than we had expected in January 2022 with the postholder promoted to Bishop status in the south-east of England. What a wonderful opportunity and stepping stone for Lynne, much as we would have wished her to have stayed a little longer.



restore

A weekly space for quiet and reflection

20 minutes of music, Bible readings, prayers and silence
No participation required - just come along and find a little peace

PARISH OF STOCKPORT AND BRINNINGTON

ST MARY'S CHURCH

Tuesday lunchtime service 12.15pm

WITH HOST CAFE OPEN FOR HOT DRINKS, SOUP AND CAKE FROM 11.15AM-12.45PM. DONATIONS ONLY.

Please join us for a short service led by church leaders across Stockport, meet friends and enjoy delicious refreshments.



Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

Together

A weekly social get together every Monday at 2pm.

Join us for a brew and a chat at St. Luke's Church, Brinnington

Fridays: Join us on Foodie Fridays - come and eat your food in the church, or just pop in to explore this amazing building.

FOODIE FRIDAY

THE PARISH OF STOCKPORT AND BRINNINGTON

SUNDAY WORSHIP

WHY NOT JOIN US?

ST THOMAS' 9.30AM
ST MARY'S 10.30AM
ST LUKE'S 10.30AM

With churches closed and most the population in lockdown—the Ministry Team took a leap into the unknown and quickly learnt how to make better use of technology—Facebook, Twitter and by creating “Stockport Pew Tube” - offering pre-recorded on-line worship sessions on a Sunday as well as midweek - including stories for the younger generation. Members of the congregations bravely took to recording prayers and reading at home to be included in the on-line services. Stockport Pew Tube launched on the 24th March 2020.

Keeping the church community connected went very much “on-line” - e:mails, meetings on Zoom and the parish magazine published electronically —a whole new world and ways of working emerged during those first few weeks and months of the pandemic.

The re-opening of premises was always going to be a slow process with every effort continuing to be made to “stay safe”. Indoor services/events ran on smaller numbers than usual, and outdoor services/gatherings encouraged. Various organisations returned as soon as it was safe to do so, others delaying their return. Church opening hours have remained limited with the intention of gradually increasing them Spring/Summer 2022 and to starting again some of the activities that had to be suspended during the various lockdowns and enforced restrictions.

The Ministry Team:

Rev. Jess Piper — Associate Minister (part time). Rev Marie Flint — Curate—*ordained deacon October 2020—service streamed from Chester Cathedral and priested at St Mary’s—photo right — July 2021.*

Assisting the clergy: Brenda Baxendale - Reader Emeritus and joining the team at various times several Ordinand placements.



Initially premises re-opening for private prayer sessions and Sunday worship. A new opportunity for people to “pop in” followed (when restrictions allowed) with the introduction of “Restore” - a chance for those wishing to do so to simply call into St Mary’s on a Thursday lunch time. A short session (where any form of participation is entirely up to each individual attending) - with readings, prayers, music, and silence—a time of reflection, relaxation and if desired a chance to talk to a member of the Restore team over a cup of tea.

Sessions gradually started to open up again at St Thomas’s (including a Friday private prayer session) and at St Luke’s with return of the familiar Wednesday morning drop-in coffee morning and the Monday “Social Group” allowed back into the building. St Mary’s Tuesday morning private prayer expanded into the re-introduction of the familiar lunch-time service (with guest speakers from various churches offering support.



We have strong links within the community working with many organisations on a regular basis

Including:

Stockport Council
Stockport Market /Market Traders
Staircase House (SMBC)
Stockport Homes
The Wellspring
Asda
Where the Light Gets In ...
Stockport Street Pastors

Joining St Mary's for special occasions include:

Stockport Ex-Services Association
Stockport Sea Cadets
Age UK Stockport
Stockport Shopmobility
Stockport Youth Orchestra
Stockport Music Services
Beechwood Cancer Care
Vernon Park School
Banks Lane School
Mayor of Stockport
Stockport Homes
The Wellspring
Offerton Methodist Choir
Affinity / Beechwood Choirs
Tiviot Dale Methodist Church

Also supporting:

Christian Aid
The Children's Society
Teams4U
The Leprosy Mission

and others...



In response to the General Synod vote in February 2020, Stockport and Brinnington parish are looking at ways we can reach "Zero Carbon" by 2030. In particular, we are planning to adapt our heating and lighting systems to make them kinder to the environment.

Working with our Architects, Surveys and other organisations.

Weddings 2 / Baptisms 8 / Funerals (in church) 8 (other) 1 / Confirmation 4

Average Sunday Congregation Numbers:

St Mary's 17 (under 16's 0) / St Thomas's 20 (under 16's 0) / St Luke's 17 (under 16's 5)

Tuesday Lunch-time St Mary's—average attendance since relaunch 16 (a little way to go to reach pre-Covid figures of around 40—45)

Restore - average attendance 9

Electoral Roll 141

(St Mary's 57—resident in area 8—non resident 49)

(St Thomas' 50—resident in area 9—non resident 41)

Census & Deprivation Information: Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

Deprivation rank (1 = most deprived, 12,307 = least deprived) 120

Parish population (2011 census) 15,751

Parish number of occupied households 7,625

Population density (people per square mile) 7,735

% aged 0-4	8.3	% aged 5-17	14.9	% aged 18-29	18.8
% aged 30-44	21.6	% aged 45-64	24.3	% aged 65 and over	12.2

% White ethnicity	92.9	% Asian ethnicity	3.53	% Black ethnicity	1.2
% Mixed ethnicity	2.0	% Other ethnicity	0.3	% Christian	56.3
% Buddhist	0.3	% Hindu	0.2	% Jewish	0.1
% Muslim	2.4	% Sikh	0.0	% Other religion	0.5
% No religion	33.6	% Religion not stated	6.6		

Parish population (2018 update) 17,070

Parish Code 590427

Figures from CoFE Parish Returns database.



Leave a door open and you can just about guarantee someone will come in—such is the attraction of this—the oldest parish church in the borough of Stockport.

The church stands in Churchgate, Stockport, overlooking the market place and the historic Market Hall.

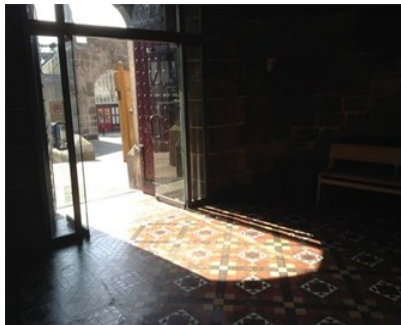
Of high significance historically, architecturally, and as a working church St Mary's is recorded by English Heritage as Grade 1 Listed. It is also a church of high historic value by the "National Churches Trust".

A notable and much valued landmark, St Mary's stands proud overlooking Millgate and the surrounding area. A church has stood on this site for hundreds of years, a focus for community life and Christian worship.

The church building has seen many changes, and it continues to change in order to meet the needs and aspirations of today's society. Not only is it an iconic building on the townscape of Stockport, but the oldest building in the district. Extraordinarily and thankfully this Parish Church is still in use for the purpose for which it was built all those centuries ago.

Much work has been undertaken in recent years to secure the future of the building and to open up it's daily working life to the wider community. Hopefully these changes will be seen to have added to its beauty, dignity and usefulness, which is an essential aspect to secure the future existence and prosperity of the church itself.



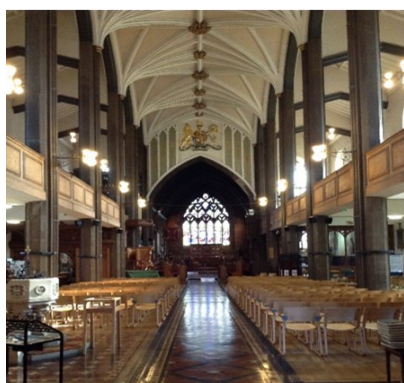


“I’ve lived in Stockport all my life but I have never been inside before”
So often that sentence will be said as people walk through the door for the first time.



Major re-ordering within the church included the provision of a semi professional kitchen, provision of three toilets, café area and creation of a Heritage Centre. The pulpit was moved and turned, the pews removed (replaced with modern stackable chairs and matching tables) - the Nave transformed into a multi-purpose area.

Easily cleared as open space, re-set in a number of different styles or left with the chairs traditionally facing the front.



The café area is easily re-configured to suit individual events or moved completely for such occasions as Baptisms where the traditional font is used.

From church worship (in a number of forms) to concerts, seminars, fashion shows, receptions, art exhibitions, dance groups or bands — St Mary’s is prepared to be part of the “action” - although a few rules apply to sound levels and protecting the floor tiles.

For a number of years the doors of St Mary's were locked for the most part during the week—no wonder so many people had never been inside.

Then changes were made and as well as for Sunday worship St Mary's opened its doors on a Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The church in the Market Place was open on market days and links between church and community developed further. An excellent relationship between the parish church, the market and market traders and local residents—many of those links remaining to this day. The Stockport Heritage Trust moved into the church, only moving out again for a short time during the refurbishment works.

St Mary's was open mid morning until mid afternoon and on creation of the new facilities opened its own properly registered (with the Council) Café outlet (The Nave Café) —initially run in partnership with Pure Innovations (a local charity) as an outreach initiative during the week and by church volunteers on a weekend. Regrettably numbers attending —particularly on a Thursday and Friday— or even staying after the lunch-time service on a Tuesday— were insufficient to find Pure Innovations trainees sufficient work and they moved their clients to other projects—the café left for church volunteers to run. Not expected of course the events of March 2020 and the total closure of everything and the end of the Nave Café.

No one could envisage what a pandemic could do and so quickly. The sadness saying “goodbye” to people prior to that first lockdown, locking up with no idea when the church would be open to the public again. *“We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when...”* somewhat matched the mood.

The doors have of course re-opened - but at the present time very much reduced in both days open and times. An issue that will be regularly addressed as a new “normal” emerges and new initiatives are introduced.

Step into St Mary's and in some respects you will walk back in time yet the church has moved into the 21st Century

The Nave Café is now replaced with a new format Host Café—opening initially just a few hours on a Tuesday and Saturday and managed by church volunteers. Stockport Heritage Trust too are open in person—reduced hours—Tuesday and Saturday but welcome the opportunity to extend those hours as soon as able to do so. Tuesday lunch-time service numbers are starting to increase again as people slowly return.

A new initiative “Restore” has allowed for the church to be open for around an hour on a Thursday, and opening up for “Foodie Friday” another opportunity once a month to encourage community engagement and offer support to the Stockport Street Pastors.



***For more information—see our
English Heritage section -
Appendix A***

The Heritage Trust (formed in 1986) moved into St Mary's Church in 1999 occupying initially the rather gloomy and in part rather damp Vestries— but nevertheless become an integral part of the life of the Church.

Over the years Trust members have written a booklet on the history of the church, recorded all the graves in the churchyard with histories of the significant graves. A window dedicated to Richard De Vernon has been produced and a notice board was erected outside the West Door.

The trust now occupies three (newly re-ordered) rooms in the Church. The first is a shop dedicated to promoting the history of Stockport. Another room allows people to research Stockport history and contains thousands of old photographs, old maps and many more historical documents including most of the records of the services of baptisms, marriages and funerals from 1584 to 1913 for St Mary's. The third room (technically the choir vestry) is dedicated to exhibitions, currently of Wedding Dresses through the years and Old Industrial photographs. Recent exhibitions have included Stockport in World War 2, Tunnels under Stockport and Archaeological digs.

The Trust works with St Mary's on various functions and supports the Church by organising and helping with such activities as Church tours for all manner of groups and individuals either by appointment or Ad Hoc.

Visitors to the Church often call into the centre and visitors specifically to the centre are attracted to the Church. The visitors book in the heritage centre records 53 different nationalities.

Stockport Heritage Trust



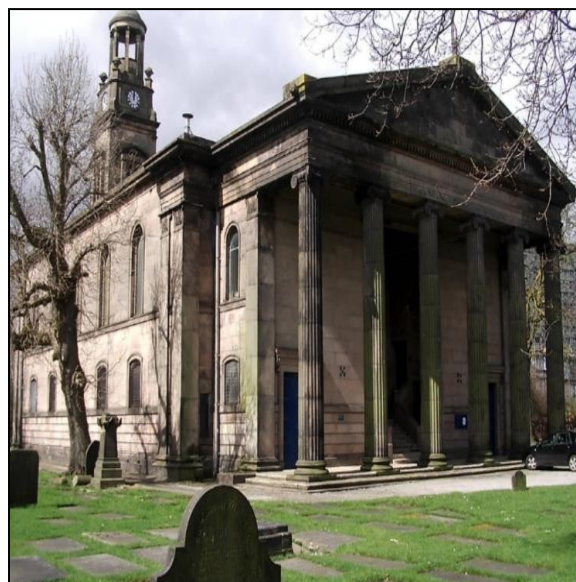
*A partnership for over
20 years*

*Stockport Heritage Centre
with Stockport Parish Church*



ST THOMAS' CHURCH

STOCKPORT



It is an astonishing building which takes your breath away when you enter, but it is also a place where there is a warm welcome from a supportive and active congregation.

The church has galleries on three sides, carried on square columns— which are continued up to the ceiling in the form of fluted Corinthian columns.



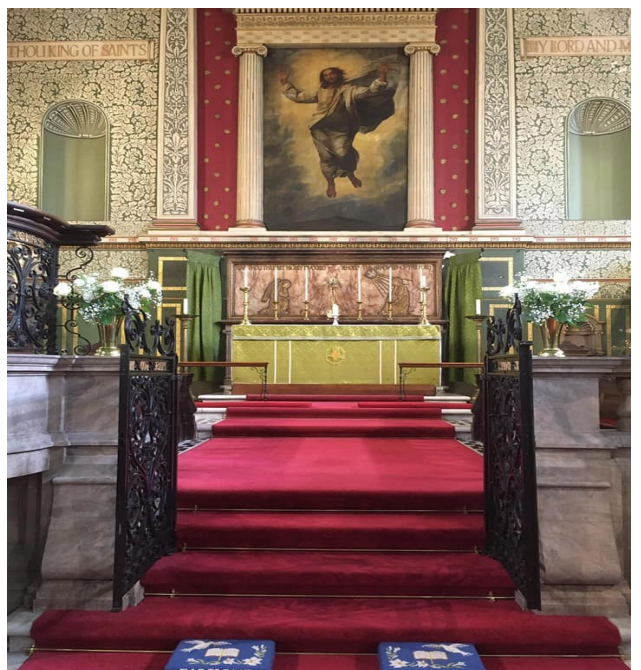
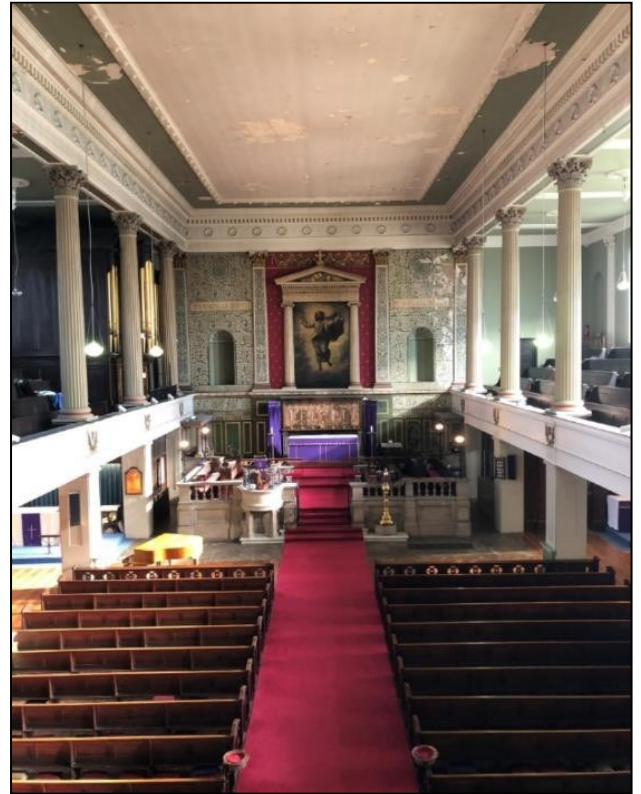
The chancel, remodelled in 1890 is raised, and surrounded on three sides by a balustrade. A semi-circular pulpit extends from the front of the balustrade on the north side; its lower part is in stone, and the upper in ironwork. In the corresponding position on the south side is a brass eagle lectern.

The marble reredos behind the high altar is carved with a depiction of the Annunciation. Above which there is a copy of part of Raphael's well known painting "Transfiguration of Jesus".

In the south aisle is St John's Altar, which was moved from the mission church of St John when it closed in 1941.

The east end of the north aisle is used as the Lady Chapel. The baptistry contains an octagonal font, and is floored with a mosaic depicting fishes.

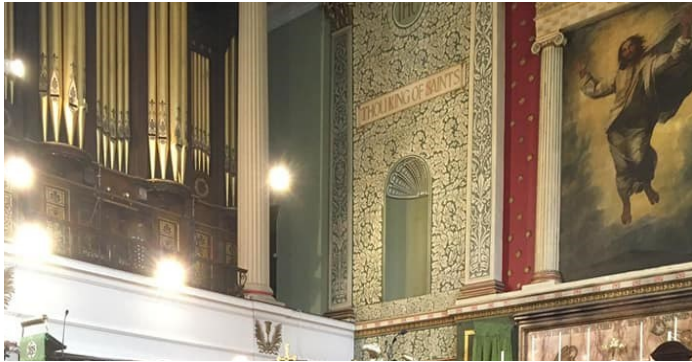
The stained glass dates from the late 19th century, and depicts scenes from the life of Jesus.





In addition to the beautiful and historic building the church is also blessed with a wonderful pipe organ built in 1834 by Renn of Manchester.

Whilst this instrument is still at the heart of regular worship and other musical events it, like the building, in need of major restoration to ensure it will be able to continue to produce beautiful sounds into the future.



The acoustics of the building are superb, the church building used by many different organisations, many focused on music and taking advantage of the great acoustic properties St Thomas' offers.

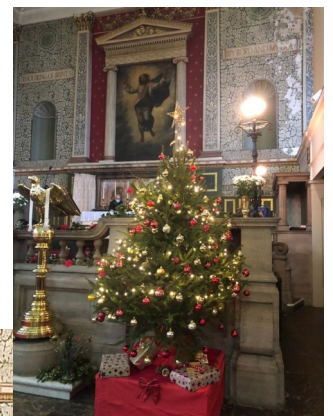
Several have held concerts and performances in the building.

St Thomas' is also regularly used for professional recordings.



St Thomas's has an extraordinarily successful choir for the size of the church, Hymns and Psalms are sung at most services with in-house musical settings of the Eucharist.

The musical year culminates with the annual service of Nine Lessons and Carols, where the choir is swelled by visiting members singing a range of material—some written especially for the occasion.



The church is a Grade 1 listed building and as such requires significant effort to maintain it in good repair.

The church community together with appointed Architects have developed a phased approach to restoration as well as updating the facilities available to support both congregation members and the wider community.



In recent years new toilet and baby-changing facilities have been created at the west end of the building, also creating an enlarged welcome area.

At the same time the opportunity was taken to install an external ramp.



The church benefits from a modern and very effective sound system including an inductive hearing loop with two radio microphones plus other fixed microphones for use by the celebrant and other key participants.

An improved lighting system has been added to brighten the worship and performance areas of the church.



In interior of the church is in very good order with most areas redecorated a few years ago with and facilities in the vestry improved to enable the serving of hot drinks and light refreshments.



As with any large space, heating is a major problem but the opportunity arose to recently install a modern internet-based heating controller and thermostat to control more accurately the temperature and operating hours. This has already been effective in reducing costs and ensuring the building is at an acceptable temperature for worship and activity times.

A clock tower is attached at the west end and a massive portico at the east, supported by six columns. When the church was built, the portico provided a frontage onto what was then the main road. Toward the top of the tower are bell openings, above which is a stage containing a clock face on each side. The tower is surmounted by an open cupola carried on eight plain columns.

ST LUKE'S PARISH CENTRE

BRINNINGTON



St Luke's [Brinnington] has been operating solely from St Luke's Parish Centre since 2017— when after the sale of main church building—a temporary chapel was created and licensed.

The old church has gone, the land sold, in its place a new retail development. St Luke's has gained a new private car park with monies raised from the sale of land held towards paying for the new development of the parish centre..

Exciting times are ahead - as planning permission is presently being obtained (from the local Council) for works to be allowed to start on the “new” church/centre. Not a total re-build—but a serious re-modelling with some changes to the footprint of the premises and to it's interior/exterior appearance.

A Parish Centre of this quality is long overdue in Brinnington and the PCC is anxious not to loose momentum, to ensure that this project runs as smoothly as possible and delivered at the earliest



St Luke's has a fascinating history starting initially in the 1950's and a scheme launched by the then St Paul's, Portwood in which a "mission" church was formed to accommodate the needs of an expanding population and creation of a large housing estate in the Brinnington area.

The "black hut" a temporary community centre grew into a fully fledged church - which became a parish in its own right.

Sadly for St Paul's - it closed (due to declining congregation numbers) in 1971 and the area merged into St Luke's. Talk about a change in fortunes! it became the successor of the former church and parish.

But fortunes change and although St Luke's continued over the years, membership declined and it became more and more difficult to maintain two buildings—the Church and the Church Hall.

St Luke's Church Hall was renovated and enlarged in 1991-2 when it became known as St Luke's Parish Centre. St Luke's (the church) became a cause of concern and eventually unfit for purpose—until in 2015 the decision was taken to sell the site on which the church stood to release capital to develop a new worship centre—as part of a re-developed parish centre. Not all the funding is in place, and addressing the short fall a priority, but new Architects have been appointed, plans drawn up now being submitted for planning permission, Public consultation sessions have been undertaken—with positive feedback. A group of interested persons is also being sought to carry the project forward during the interregnum so as not to lose or delay building works starting at the earliest opportunity.





St Luke's Parish Centre provides a vital hub within this area of the parish and has established a number of community activities as well as promoting the ministry of the church.

BUT.... Its usage is limited to the restraints of the present footprint of the building and the facilities available. St Luke's Parish Centre is ready for a new start—to be practicable, functional, attractive and noticeable—to once again position itself in the midst of community life—to encourage church attendance as well as community events—to be able to offer Marriages, Baptisms and Funerals which the new development provides. More than a church, this will be a community hub, offering a place for volunteers to show the love of Christ and for members of the community to experience Christ in a relaxed and welcoming setting. Weekly activities offering a glimpse as what St Luke's is all about and a gateway to Sunday attendance.

Consultation sessions have shown a positive response with interest in such activities as Holiday Clubs, Youth activities and Saturday morning "Brunch Clubs" - Art Clubs and Fostering Groups—the options are endless.

St Luke's Parish Centre is presently used for various community activities and user groups such as Toddler Group, Slimming World and Movieland Classic, a monthly community cinema for older people.

On Thursday mornings—a coffee morning from 10.00 to 11.15—where basic snacks (toast, crumpets, tea cakes) and drinks are served. Also to be found are stalls selling various items including household goods, bedding, toys, clothes, shoes, etc. The money raised contributes to the running of the centre. This is a popular and well attended event attracting people both locally and beyond. Numbers are again creeping back after the restrictions of the pandemic. The time to meet at St Luke's was missed during the pandemic with regular attenders keen to return as soon as they could. In normal times this event is also run on a Wednesday, which St Luke's hopes to re-introduce as soon as able to do so. What had been noticed is that the majority of people who attend the Thursday café are not part of the usual St Luke's congregation, giving missional opportunities—bringing the word of God to those people. Brinnington is a tight knit community and a new improved facility will bring hope and pleasure to the whole area.

St Luke's has the advantage of having a Parish Centre Manager and Administrator, Linda Mather, who technically works 10 hours per week, but in reality does considerably more as her own contribution to the ministry of the Parish, at St Luke's. Linda is responsible for locking and unlocking the premises, preparing the Centre ready for each activity, obtaining supplies, managing the volunteers, ensuring the centre is cleaned and maintained, and recording the income and expenditure for the day to day running of the Centre.

St Luke's Parish and Community Centre

A vision of the future...



Jay Ashall Partnership are looking forward to working with the Parish of Stockport and Brinnington to develop St Luke's The Evangelist Church Hall through extension and conversion to provide a new church that connects with the local community and a separate community hall which can also facilitate larger gatherings.

The new church will allow the Church community to share ideas of mission within the existing community of Brinnington.

Kind regards

James Webster

St Luke's is and always will be a church that welcomes the people of Brinnington (and beyond) through its doors with the aim to reach out into those communities by following Jesus' example.

To be a welcoming place where people can meet in a caring and safe environment.

3 Churches with differing traditions

St Mary's— less formal but with a tradition of using eucharist vestments, coloured stoles— scarf and hood (as appropriate).

For many years Sunday worship has alternated between Holy Communion (Common Worship) and Morning Prayer.

With no regular organist, music is generally downloaded and played through the sound system or via the television when services are conducted using power-point. Guest organists attended on invitation for special services—e.g. Civic, Weddings, Funerals etc. Hymns when books are in use are from Anglican Hymns Old and New—with some more modern music introduced with greater use of technology.

St Mary's does not have (and has not had for some years) it's own robed choir.

St Thomas's— probably the most formal of our three churches with a tradition that could best be described as modern catholic, with appropriate use of vestments and stoles. Incense is used occasionally.

The church has an extensive collection of vestments and has recently been gifted a reconditioned Monstrance, used for processions on Maundy Thursday and Corpus Christi and for adoration of the blessed sacrament.

St Thomas' aims to maintain a high standard of worship and music.

The Sunday morning service is (in normal circumstances) a Sung Eucharist from Common Worship.

Major services are accompanied by a robed choir led by the Choirmaster and Organist.

Music is mainly from Common Praise, supplemented by additional material when required.

St Luke the Evangelist Brinnington

Weekly services of Holy Communion (Common Worship) bible readings and hymns—with different emphases depending on the Church's season.

Children remain in church where packs have been provided for them but more recently use of a Scripture Union resource on tablets to help them relate to some of the stories in the Bible.

2 Closed Graveyards

THE LIVING CHURCHYARD

God's Acre—beautiful burial grounds



It is said that there were over 50,000 burials in the churchyard at St Mary's. The oldest surviving gravestone dated 1630. To the north of the chancel there is an interesting stone where the ages of those who died is recorded not in years, but in moons! A strange inscription appears at the end of the gravestone: "... lies under this stone, and cursed is he that disturbs one bone". Re-laid (but not in its original spot) is the fragment of the gravestone of John Wainwright who was once the organist at the Parish Church and also at the Collegiate Church (now the cathedral) in Manchester. Wainwright composed the hymn tune "Stockport" which accompanies the hymn "Christians Awake". A memorial to him can also be found in the church and a tradition that this hymn is sung on Christmas Day every year. The gravestones around the church have been re-laid and many removed. Wainwright's stone was nearly lost just a small piece survived.

It goes without saying that with all the other grave stones and the detailed records held and guide(s) available from Stockport Heritage Trust, there is more than a passing interest in the churchyard with many visitors and enquiries received every year – many from all over the globe.

St Mary's graveyard is what is termed a "closed churchyard" and kindly maintained by the local authority – the area surrounding the church is regularly maintained by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council and kept in excellent order.

The grounds provide a place of tranquillity for those walking round – an attraction for dog walkers in the area (many living in nearby apartments/flats) and those taking some quiet "time out" perhaps sitting on one of the many seats provided.

Guided tours are available (arranged via the Heritage Centre), and are extremely popular – as are tours of the church.

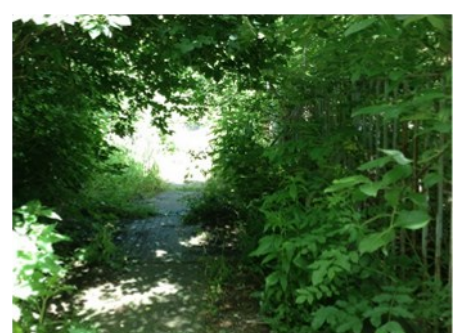
In the interests of environmental sustainability one corner of the main churchyard on the north/west corner is largely left untouched – the grass cut only annually with the planting of new trees only a few years ago. Seating in that area an attraction at lunch-time (being opposite the market) on a warm sunny day.

St Mary's church grounds offer an idea setting for appropriate outdoor events, some held in liaison with the local authority and other community groups.



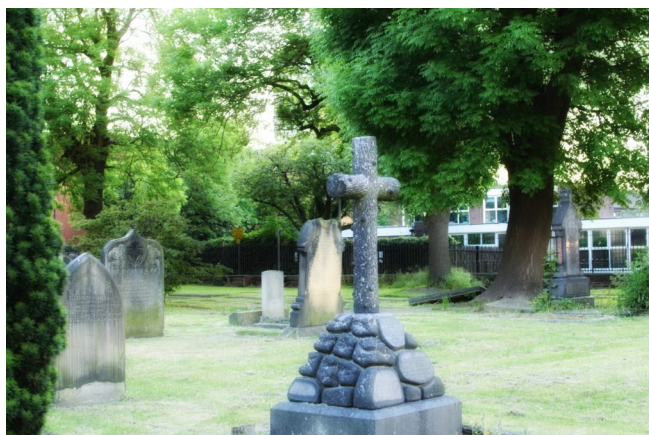
A second area is separated from the main church grounds by a pathway between Churchgate and Millgate leading down a steep set of steps. This area is part of the officially closed churchyard but subject to subsidence and presently overgrown and fenced off in the interests of Health & Safety. Other than for an annual inspection by the Council no work has been allowed on that area for several years although talks have taken place as to what works are required to stabilise the area and make it fit for use – potentially as a community garden (where no graves are listed) or a social area for entertainment, outdoor concerts etc.

Photos below were taken in “safer” days when access on the land was permitted. To date there are no fixed plans for development of the area or funding available to clear and make good sunken grave stones.



St Thomas' s churchyard

Consideration is presently being given to applying for faculty permission for the parish to be allowed use part of the grounds at St Thomas' as a memorial garden for the burial of ashes—removing that area from the closed churchyards regulations.



With thanks to the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport for the management and upkeep of the closed graveyards at both St Mary's and St Thomas's churches.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY

St Thomas' and St Paul's

There are actually 5 Primary Schools in the Parish, 2 of which are Church of England Schools. There are also tentative links with Stockport College and Stockport Grammar School too (which falls just outside the Parish).

Members of the Ministry Team have developed the relationship between the Church and St Thomas' and St Paul's Schools over recent years, and Jess, as Minister with responsibility for work amongst Children, Families and in Schools, also has regular contact with the other schools in the parish.

Weekly assemblies happen in the Church Schools - following the schools' values, and seeking to relate them to the Christian Faith. Special services, such as Harvest, Christingle and Easter services also happen in the churches for the schools, with the non-Church Schools also visiting St Mary's and St Thomas' on these occasions.

The Covid-19 Pandemic reduced the number of visits that have taken place in recent years, but ways were found to do this virtually, providing both online resources for schools to use during their assembly slot and also a virtual-tour being given around St Mary's to enhance a Reception class understanding of what a church is, and what a church does. Jess has also created a partnership with Stockport Christians in Schools Trust, working alongside them to deliver Anti-Bullying and Christmas workshops in St Paul's School, and is in discussion with them about how that relationship might be developed further. Previously the Rector has acted as Governor, with Jess currently sitting on the governing body of St Paul's.

Community Support Fund

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, a 'Community Support Fund' was set-up, with regular donations coming from within the church community, to support some of the most deprived families in our schools. As part of this, we provided regular food donations, items of clothing - such as coats, socks and underwear - and crockery/cutlery for those who turned up to school without them/ didn't have what they needed.

Some work has been done to extend the reach of this fund, to incorporate much of the social-action projects we are engaged in as a Parish, and it is hoped that we might reach out beyond our Parish for support with this.

For Christmas 2020, we partnered with the parish of Bramhall, where Jess' husband is Vicar, on a Christmas Appeal - providing 50+ luxury hampers for those families who miss out on external support, but for whom affording treats for Christmas wouldn't be possible. This was a deeply encouraging project, which led Bramhall to commit to supporting the Foodbank Project at St Paul's school on a monthly basis. It is hoped we might find others to partner with us on such things in the future.

St Mary's (or the Parish Church) School closed in 1988 - demolished to make way for the new road system (St Mary's Way). Closure of the school led to Vernon Park Primary School experiencing a large increase in pupil numbers and an association with St Mary's that continues to this day—with the school regularly visiting church for special occasions.

During the last year, we have strived to maintain and develop our relationship with the Church despite the obvious difficulties associated with Covid.

Rev Marie and Rev Jess visit us every Monday to deliver a whole school Christian-based assembly. During lockdown, we watched Jess and Marie's assemblies via PewTube.

We were unable to perform a school Easter service at Church during Easter 2021 due to Covid, so we videoed individual class performances, which were shared via Dojo. Rev Jess also suggested that each class could take part in the Easter Garden activity as a way to help teach children about Jesus and how he died for us and rose into Heaven. Photographs of the Easter Gardens were shared in the St. Thomas' Church Easter Service.

11th September 2021, St Thomas' Church held a Heritage Open Day which some of our children attended. There was a lovely community feel to it.

During Harvest 2021, we were delighted to be invited to perform our whole school Harvest Festival in the Church. Each class had a part to play, and Rev Jess provided cohesion between class performances as well as a blessing.

We were also invited to perform our whole school Christingle Service in the Church during December 2021.



A message from St Thomas' CE Primary School

We have shared Church events on our School Dojo page, such as Heritage Open Day, Songs of Praise activities, online worship. This helps to promote the importance of Church events to our children.

We have arranged for a whole school Easter service to take place in Church during March 2022 and have planned for Rev Jess to help us reveal the winners of our Easter egg competition.

During Summer 2021, we worked alongside Rev Jess to create a whole school plan which would allow each class to visit the Church at least once per year, in connection with a Christianity RE unit of work. We were unable to get this scheme up and running due to Covid, but we have arranged for this to start during Spring 2.

Future links - bring our choirs together for concerts or events.

ST MARY'S RECTORY



(Gorsey Mount Street, Stockport)

Home for the Rector of Stockport and Brinnington will be St Mary's Rectory, a four-bedroom detached house set in its own grounds (at the back of St Andrew's, Community Church, Hall Street).

Access via Webb Lane on to Gorsey Mount Street the property is situated at the end of the road, with a sweeping downward drive to the front of the house. The front garden laid mainly to mature trees on grassed area with gate access to the grounds at St Andrews and gated access to the back garden. Garage, car port and plenty parking space on the drive.

The property has gas central heating, double glazed doors/windows and consists of:

—downstairs: open plan kitchen/dining area (with new patio doors) , utility room (with side door to the front of the property), large living room (access to back garden), toilet, and under stairs storage. The office/study is also located downstairs (next to the front door of the premises overlooking the garden with view up to the top of the drive.

On the first floor are four bedrooms (the master bedroom included en-suite), toilet and separate bathroom. Some built-in storage in most rooms.

The house was refurbished with modifications to the heating system etc. around 2018.

The well sized back garden includes flower borders, good sized lawn, well established planting and potential for a well stocked vegetable plot.



ST ANDREW'S COMMUNITY CHURCH

Hall Street, Stockport



Located on Hall Street, there is a private car park at the rear and direct access to St Mary's Rectory.

It is a relatively modern building (in need of some refurbishment), opened in 1977 and consisting of small hall, large hall, toilets, store area(s), kitchen and office space (presently used as a part-time Parish Office). Outside areas are laid to grass with some paved area at the front.

It is ideally suited for "Mum and Tots" / Training style groups during the day, and other activities generally unsuitable for St Mary's.

Regular users include the Manchester Bach Choir, Stockport Operatic Society, Stockport RC Drift Club, Stockport Tai Chi and the Stockport Evangelical Church who hold services every Sunday. The premises are frequently used by Stockport Council as a Polling Station or for training purposes. One-off meetings, parties, and short-term lets can normally be accommodated.

St Andrews has the potential for greater development and growth, and had recently partnered with Brighter Futures Education and Training"—a project which regrettably has had a end due to financial issues.

Work remains ongoing to look at new initiatives, alternative partnership working and best use of the premises overall - although some discussion has taken place with a view to possibly selling the building or to it being put on permanent rental with an appropriate organization. The benefit of its use over St Mary's is that St Andrew's is located in a highly populated area of houses, flats and housing association property, with easy access and in a safe environment with its own private off-road parking.

Although still licensed for worship, St Andrew's has not been used for regular CofE worship for some time, leading it to being used more as a Community Hall / Parish Office.

It is however a valuable asset to the parish generally and an equally valuable (in non-Covid



THE VICARAGE

BRINNINGTON



A four bedroom purpose built house located to the rear of St Luke's Parish Centre. Entrance off Brinnington Road.

Agreement has been reached by the Diocese that the Parish may retain the house, however as it is not presently required (the Associate Minister - for which it was intended—living elsewhere) - arrangements have been made by the Diocese for the premises to be occupied for the foreseeable future.

RICHARDSON STREET

STOCKPORT

Former Curate's house —St Thomas' Church—has for many years been let to private tenant.

When that tenancy ended the decision needed to be made as to spend a considerable amount of money to bring the property to a standard whereby it could be re-let or to obtain permission to dispose of it. Agreement reached that the property should be sold.



Anticipated that the house should sell with relative ease— potential interest for purchase already received.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

& PARISH ACCOUNTS

Stockport and Brinnington Financial Summary 2021

The combined Parish has the benefit of a core of committed congregation members who are unstintingly generous in their support and the benefit of a level of brought forward reserves.

We keep a close eye on our finances which whilst tight have many positives:

The opportunity to grow planned giving is undoubtedly there as hopefully the mission brings new faces to our congregations and others return after the pandemic.

We believe there are opportunities to grow letting income particularly at St Thomas's and at St Andrews which is currently vacant.

Our trading activities whilst modest are set to recover and grow.

We have reserves brought forward of £82k

We have a surplus property, Richardson Street, available to sell.

The last two years have been very difficult as the pandemic impacted both our attendance and giving. We suspended Parish share payments in 2020 but were able to resume in 2021 albeit below the recurring level. We very much see it as our duty to 'pay our way' and hope that we can clear the arrears and pay our ongoing costs over time. Other costs have been on the increase across the board.

We are firmly committed to growing income and controlling costs and are confident that with passion and drive our finances can become an enabler rather than a constraint.

A summary of the 2021 accounts with 2020 comparisons are attached.

The following is an extract from the commentary presented to our recent APGM

"2021 was, as it was for many churches a very challenging year for the parish financially. Our total income fell from £128k in 2020 to £61k in 2021 whilst expenses at £120k were up from £56k in 2021. The resultant deficit was £60k reduced our funds from £105k at the start of the year to £48k at the end.

Income

Recurring giving from the congregation at £59k was £21k (or 29%) down as we sadly lost and some members moved away.

Last year we received a legacy of £13k, we have not received any this year.

Last year we received a grant of £30k from the Culture Recovery Fund as Government Coronavirus support. This represented 90% of the grant we have received the balance of £3k in 2021.

Parish Share

Last year we had a credit of £7k on Parish share as payments were suspended due to Covid. We agreed a level of resumed payments this year with the diocese, and this saw us pay £23k The annual Parish share (at 1.4 clergy) is c£30k and as at the end of the year we had an arrears balance of c£20k

Total church expenses at £54k were £8k up on last year.

We spent one off repairs:

£18k on essential, but discretionary repairs at St Mary's the major item being replacement boilers (£10k) as we took the opportunity of the CRF grant to do this as £15k of the £33k grant was allocated to essential repairs one of the qualifying heads.

£8k was spent replacing the gates to improve the security at St Thomas's

Reserves / Cash

The £60k deficit was offset by a £34k transfer from restricted funds such that our funds reduced to £82k at the end of the year.

Additionally the Parish has various restricted fund totaling £69k at the end of the year.

Richardson Street

The Parish owns a property which is available for sale. This has been valued at £150k and the intention is that this would be used to match fund any grants received for the rebuilding of St Luke's which is a key objective."

STOCKPORT & BRINNINGTON - OVERALL FINANCES ANALYSIS

	2020	2021
Planned giving	50,750	39,692
Collections at services	5,416	2,573
Other giving	9,776	7,388
Gift aid recovered	17,169	9,241
Recurring giving	83,111	58,893
Legacies received	12,845	0
Grants received	30,060	3,340
Total voluntary giving	126,016	62,233
Interest income	22	50
Richardson St net income	1,433	-2,740
Fees retained by PCC	269	1,322
Net income/cost of St Andrews	-934	779
Income from letting St Thomas's / St Marys	0	3,210
Net income/cost from Nave Café	-1,254	-2,962
Other commercial income	569	475
Parish Centre income	1,933	1,585
TOTAL INCOME	128,054	63,952
Costs of fundraising activities	-75	-100
Mission giving and donations	-1,673	1,060
Mission fund expenditure	-1,406	-1,710
Parish share	6,926	-22,023
Church expenses	-45,957	-53,664
Major repairs - St Thomas's	-259	-7,734
Major repairs - St Mary's	0	-17,198
Major repairs - St Luke's	-1,113	-3,227
TOTAL EXPENSES	-55,962	-120,215
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	72,092	-56,263
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS B/F	44,665	104,974
Transfers in/out of restricted funds	-11,783	33,600
Surplus/deficit above	72,092	-56,263
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS C/F	104,974	82,310
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS		68,733
TOTAL FUNDS		151,044

WHO'S WHO

APRIL 2022

Rector of Stockport and Brinnington	vacant
Associate Minister	Rev Jess Piper
Curate	Rev Marie Flint
Reader Emeritus	Brenda Baxendale
Churchwardens:	Jayne Brindley (St Thomas) Sue Heap (St Marys) Paul Heard (St Lukes) Anne Jepson (St Thomas) James Kitchen (St Luke's) Adam Pinder (St Mary's)
Parish Administrator (voluntary)	Sue Heap
St Luke's Centre Manager (part-time)	Linda Mather

PCC Membership (as at APCM 2022)

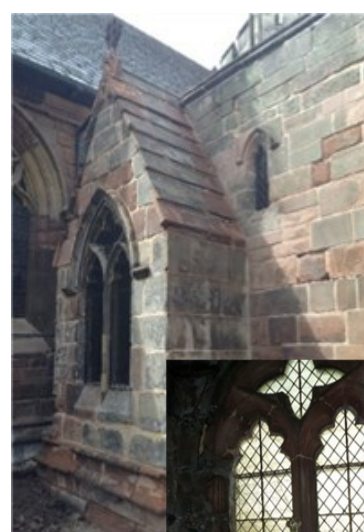
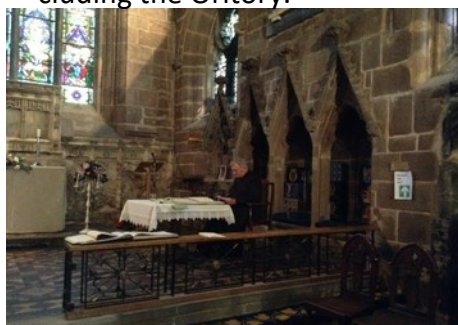
Barbara Ashton (Elected 2022 for 2 years)	St Mary
Brenda Baxendale (Reader) / Safeguarding Co-ordinator	
David Birch (Elected 2022)	St Mary
John Brearley (Elected 2020) / PCC Treasurer	St Thomas
Jayne Brindley (Church Warden)	St Thomas
Rev Marie Flint (Curate)	
Margaret Forster (Elected 2021)	St Mary
Pat Hamilton (Elected 2022) / Environmental Officer	St Luke
Sue Heap (Church Warden) / PCC Secretary	St Mary
Paul Heard (Church Warden)	St Luke
Anne Jepson (Church Warden)	St Thomas
James Kitchen (Church Warden)	St Luke
Janet Langton (Elected 2021)	St Thomas
Tony Marsh (Elected 2020)	St Mary
Linda Mather (Deanery Synod member)	St Luke
Peter Nelson (Elected 2022) / Vice Chair	St Thomas
Adam Pinder (Deanery Synod member)	St Mary
Rev Jess Piper (Assoc Min)	
Jane Scott (Elected 2020)	St Thomas
Ann West (Elected 2022)	St Mary
non PCC member: Eric Tomlinson – Electoral Roll Officer	St Thomas

ENGLISH HERITAGE [ST MARYS IN THE MARKETPLACE] APPENDIX A

FOR THOSE WITH AN INTEREST IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS



The present church building was constructed 1813-1817 (Architect Lewis Wyatt), with further changes being made during the 20th and early 21st century (complete restorations in 1848 and 1882). In 1931 work was completed on a restoration of parts of the exterior and the cleaning of the chancel roof beams and memorials. The chancel walls were pointed and a new clock was installed. In 1958 the communion rails were replaced and a new holy table and brass tablet were introduced. A ramp was installed at the west entrance around 1998. Between 2007-2015 the biggest restoration since 1882 was undertaken. Significant repairs to the chancel arch and major repairs to the tower (including replacement of the tower roof). The vestries were repaired/restored and updated (including re-roofing and new lighting and heating systems) with extensive conservation work(s) including the Oritory.



The Choir vestry was created in 1882. The East door, which is part of the medieval church previously led straight into the churchyard.

During one of the latest phases of work in that area the west wall has had a new arch and window installed to open up access from the “new” Heritage Centre.

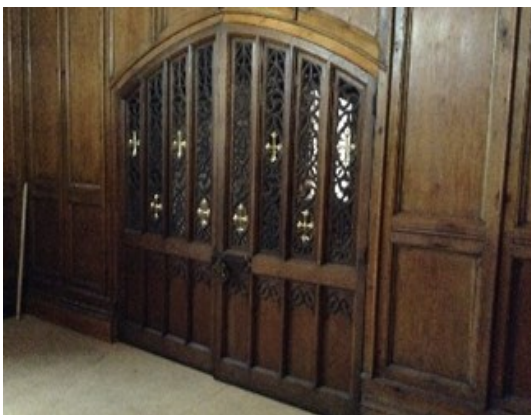


The newly restored Vestry (traditionally used by the Rector but for many years providing modest accommodation for the Stockport Heritage Trust) has now been returned to its former glory and use.

It consists of two rooms – with gates (which have been newly gilded) separating a small medieval chapel, known as the Oratory

Where required interior panelling was repaired but most the structural work now out of sight at roof level.

A small medieval window to the side of the Oratory is now visible from the inside through a viewing panel.



Recent works also discovered a gothic door beside the fireplace that led to an upper room. The corner fireplace (previously covered over) is now revealed with its original hearth – and the addition of a gas fire. Another welcome addition to this end of the building, a hand basin with the provision of hot and cold water.

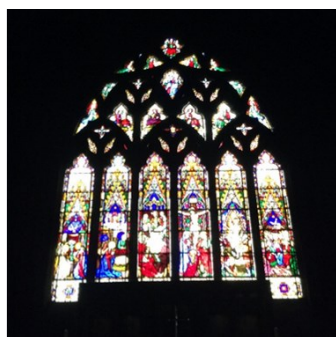
A feature light fitting was added – attached to the restored timber ceiling. Retained was the large green safe – although another “secret” panel does reveal a wall safe.



The chancel arch dates from the 1882 alterations to provide light into the medieval chancel. At the start of the 21st century there were visible cracks to the arch leading to full restoration – including the George III Coat of Arms (2010).

The recess known as the Easter Sepulchre (located in the Sanctuary) is surmounted by the Arms of the Warrens and the Ardernes and is dedicated to Elizabeth Warren who died in 1644. In his will (written in 1663) Edward Warren founded the alms houses built adjacent to the church in the Folly which were demolished in the 1930's. He was buried under this arch in September 1687. An effigy of Richard de Vernon (1334) with a dog couchant at his feet lies under the Easter Sepulchre.

The double piscine and triple sedilia – located in the Sanctuary dates back to the original stone church.



St Mary's has some extremely decorative stained glass windows including the east window – in memory of Roger Rowson Lingard (1844). It consists of six lights representing the life of Christ. It replaced the old east window which had largely consisted of ancient coats of arms.

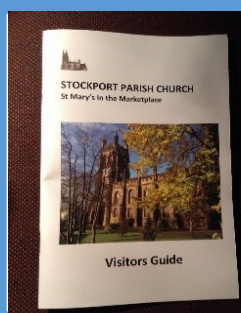
Also of great significant interest are the many memorials located at various locations throughout the building

The church has a new Public Address sound /loop system, Makin electric organ and concert quality grand piano.

"Stage lighting" (which can be moved to various locations within in the Gallery area) and portable staging is on-site and available on request.

With excellent acoustics the premises are a popular venue for concerts and special events, including having been used as a film set on a number of occasions.

With the removal of the pews the Nave within St Mary's is now a multi-functional and popular venue.



For anyone visiting St Mary's there is available a self-tour "Visitors Guide" starting at the font and walking clockwise around the church, having entered via the main west door, or side entrance.

St Mary's is the "civic church" and will host major services throughout the year as well as on special occasions, with a regular guest list of VIPs including the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, the High Sheriff and of course the Worshipful Mayor of Stockport and other civic dignitaries. The Christmas Programme of events and services can match many a Cathedral with something happening most days Advent to Christmas.





Worthy of note, the floor tiles present throughout the church, many areas of which were subject to repair & restoration during the 2013-2015 reordering.

The church has a fine collection of silver – the ancient and most valuable kept “off-site and on public display at Stockport Town Hall. There remains the communion plate etc. at St Mary’s (kept in a locked safe) but remaining on view silver cross/candle sticks on the main altar and brass crosses, book stands etc. in different areas of the church. A number of pictures (originals and prints) hang from the walls in the Vestry.



The tower scales 95ft in height on a base of 30ft square and equipped with a peal of ten bells. St Mary’s does not at the present time have its own bell ringing team, but is a popular venue for visiting team(s) from across the country.

The clock is one of many important features of the building with a large amount of restoration work was undertaken in 2013 to the frame/clock faces keeping the exterior of the clock preserved for many years ahead. Additional works were completed in 2021 to repair, modernise and update the internal clock mechanism.

The Clock, made by W Potts and Sons of Leeds in 1930, takes the form of a cast iron flatbed movement, with hour strike & quarter chimes.

St Mary’s is on the register of “at risk” churches and has greatly benefited from grants in the past—without which much of the recent conservation and restoration work would simply not have been possible.

The last Quinquennial Inspection Report was completed in November 2018 (received June 2019). There remains (as you would expect) a considerable amount of work outstanding — this being monitored in liaison with our Architect (Duncan Sanderson) of Kepezyk, Pearce, Sanderson – Architects, Surveyors & Historic Building Consultants.

A decision was taken to halt new major works from 2016 – 2019 when the parish was in an interregnum situation and whilst changes were being made to the make-up of the parish.

Meetings of the “Project Team” at St Mary’s was suspended due to Covid 19 restrictions with only minor works completed during 2020 — including installation of a new third boiler, repairs to porch roof (south side) and other items of essential maintenance (including restoration of the clock mechanism and repairs to the flagpole.

It is anticipated that planning will start again shortly to address those items in the report deemed to need urgent attention, or recommended as essential/desirable—of which there are many in all categories.

See Appendix B for details from the Quinquennial Inspection report etc.

QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION REPORT St Mary's

The last Quinquennial Inspection was completed November 2018, issued in July 2019 by Architects Lloyd, Evans, Prichard. Inspecting Architect was Duncan Sanderson (who remains the Church Architect for St Mary's.) It was never going to make ideal reading for there remains a considerable amount of work to be undertaken—internally and externally.

Recommendations in the summary of the report include:

Urgent Works Requiring Immediate Attention

- > Undertake a programme of works designed to address the backlog of maintenance issues identified in the report
- > Renew asphalt roof covering over South West Porch
- > Commission a report from a Structural Engineer into the integrity of the stone surrounds to windows, principally at Gallery level, where significant damage has occurred from corroding ferramenta .
- > Commission a report from a leaded light specialist into the condition of the glazing and ferramenta in connection with the above
- > Commission a report from a specialist timber treatment specialist into the condition of the structural timbers and boarding of the Bell Chamber, Clock Chamber, and Ringing Chamber floors
- > Ensure access can be gained to the Heating Chamber

Works Recommended as Essential Within the Next 18 Months

- > Re-fix sagging section of north Chancel eaves gutter over ridge of Clergy Vestry roof
- > Replace missing cover flashing at abutment of south Chancel roof slope and Nave east wall
- > Check security of cover flashings around perimeter of Nave roof and parapet gutters, secure into bed joints, and point in LM mastic
- > Check security of cover flashings to North West Porch and secure into bed joints where necessary. Back point in BLM mastic
- > Act on the recommendations of the Electrical Inspection Report
- > Mortar seal large gap between Tower east wall and abutting merlon to canted wall to the north
- > Check stability of cruciform finial to Chancel east gable and secure if necessary
- > Commission a report from a leaded light specialist into the condition of the glazing and ferramenta in connection with the above
- > Commission a report from a specialist timber treatment specialist into the condition of the structural timbers and boarding of the Bell Chamber, Clock Chamber, and Ringing Chamber floors
- > Subject to available funding instigate a programme of phased masonry repairs and re-pointing to the main body of the church, commencing with the north wall of the Nave, to address the defects noted
- > In association with the above masonry instigate a programme of works to attend to issues identified in respect of corroding ferramenta and failing wire ties to the leaded light glazing, informed by specialist report
- > Re-fix loose grilles covering heating ducts where noted
- > Lift and reset loose floor tiling adjacent to Kitchen, North Aisle
- > Point up / lift and reset damaged and displaced areas of paving in the churchyard
- > Remove loose copings to wall retaining ramp to South West porch entrance and secure to masonry beneath with stainless steel dowels

Considerable and detailed planned work needs to take place in the Gallery areas—potentially structural and other. Internal decoration required . Suggestion of fitting of lightening conductor to tower and alarm/surveillance equipment. ALSO TO BE INVESTIGATED STRUCTURAL DAMAGE FOLLOWING SEVERE WEATHER FEBRUARY 2022

Works Recommended As Essential Within The Next 5 Years

- > Overhaul slated roof areas, including replacing any damaged / slipped slates where noted, and renew lead tin gles in stainless steel
- > Re-point ridge tiles to Nave
- > Renew asphalt roof covering and cover flashings over North West Porch, including any necessary timber remedial works, and renew Upvc downpipe in cast iron
- > Commission a programme of external decoration works to the building to include the following:
- > Rub down and redecorated corroding metal sections of bell mechanisms
- > Instigate a programme of periodic monitoring, by borescope or panel removal, to areas of timber wall panelling to detect early signs of rot in the wall cavity behind, specifically to: Rectors Vestry/ North and South Aisles and Galleries over
- > Subject to available funding continue with the phased programme of masonry and window repairs to the church, second phase being the South Aisle

Other recommendations are listed “as desirable works” and those where improvements could be made to improve disabled facilities and access to the church.

The heating system is no longer a priority issue since all three boilers have been replaced and the pipework (for now at least in a relative good condition. Worthy of note however is that the main body of St Mary’s is heated by a cast iron pipe system set in gratings in the floor and supplemented by radiators. It is of considerable age, and there are areas where there have been leaks—and where these could not be accessed areas of the pipework sealed off (in particular to the tower).

Additional radiators were fitted during the 2013-15 internal works and additional pumps added to assist the circulation of hot water. No programme of works prepared to replace the pipework to a more effective system and no alterations made to the pipework other than within the boiler room. Within the church some of the cast iron grating are broken and in need of repair and replacement. Cast iron radiators can be found in the main body of the church —supplemented by modern steel ones in the vestry areas. A separate electrical convector system supplements heating available in the memorial chapel.

At some point it is evident that attention

Electrical Inspection Report—The last “5 year” Electrical Inspection Report was undertaken in August 2017 by D M Anderton Ltd.— the report received February 2018.

The general condition of the installation was reported as being UNSATISFACTORY and it was recommended that a further inspection was completed the following year—it was not—and no further action taken, other than to note the contents of the report.

There were no C1 category findings — danger present / risk of injury—immediate remedial action needed. However there were 12 C2 category findings—potentially dangerous —urgent remedial action needed and 9 C3 category findings - improvements recommended. NB: that the report covered 100 sockets having been tested, 50% lighting— limited tests to inaccessible areas and no testing undertaken to high level lights

Urgently required a new inspection needs to be undertaken—a re-wiring programme costed and necessary plans and permissions obtained in order to seek grant funding etc. The Church would also wish to replace all light fittings, spot lights etc. and install a new lighting systems (LED energy efficient) throughout the church—including up-lighting to the Chancel Roof (oak timber beams) and adequate downlighting in the Chancel and Sanctuary areas.

This is considered to be the next most urgent Phase of work(s) needed .

St Thomas' Parish Church was opened in 1825 having been built as one of a hundred churches funded by grants from the government and regarded as a thanksgiving for victory over Napoleon, hence the name "Waterloo" Churches.

It was designed by the architect George Basevi, and was one of his earlier works. It is his only surviving "Commissioners" church.

The church was built between 1822 and 1825 at a cost of 15,611 (1,080,000 as of 2013), A grant of 15,636 was given by the Church Building Commission.

The contractors were Samuel Buxton and Son, and the land was given by Lady Warren-Bulkeley.

The church was consecrated on 25 September 1825 as the daughter church of St Mary, Stockport.

At the time it was built it could seat 2,000.

The church was refurbished by T.H. Allen in 1881, and the chancel remodelled by Medland Taylor in 1890. The original seating has been replaced, but the galleries have survived.

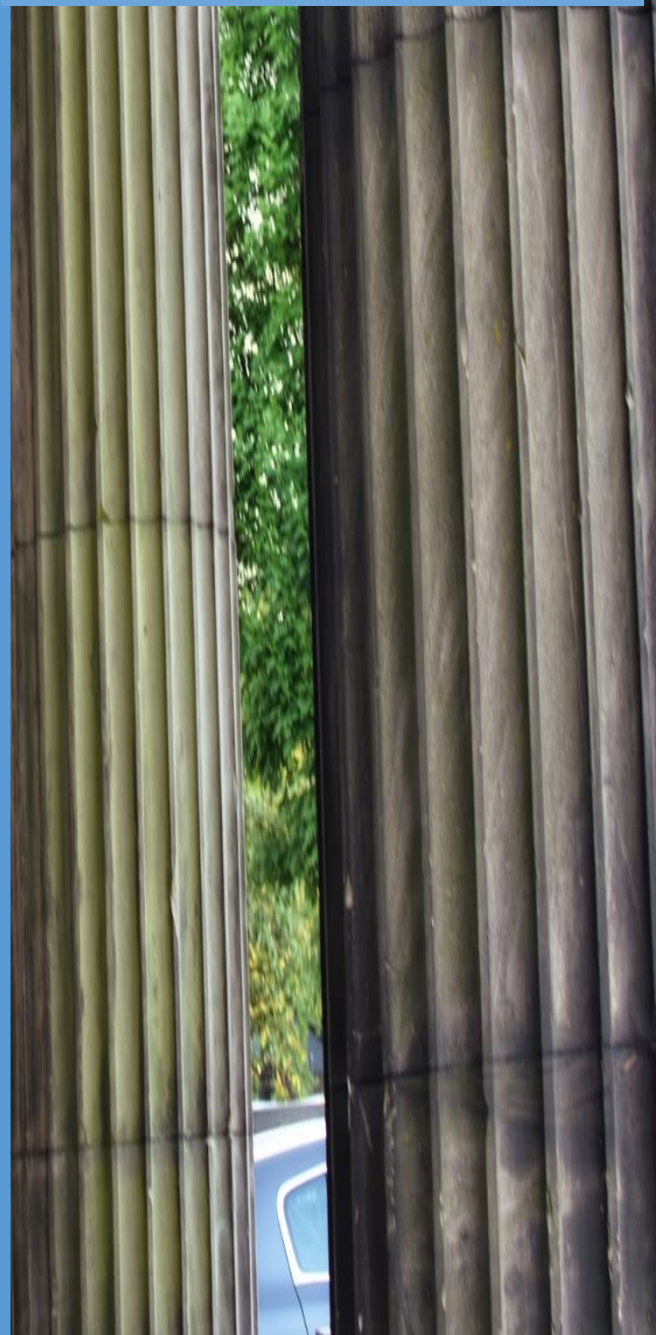
St. Thomas was built in the classical style and is now recognised as a building of National importance (Grade 1 Listed).

It was built to front onto Hillgate which was then the main route from London to Manchester and Carlisle; hence the grand portico at the East end.

Hillgate is still rich in hostelrys originating from those days, but Wellington Road (A6) and Wellington Road Bridge were opened soon after and became the main throughfare into Stockport.

ST THOMAS' CHURCH

STOCKPORT



As you would anticipate with any Grade 1 listed building there is always works to be undertaken—the following gives an indication of the fabric of the church as explained in the Annual Report for 2022 presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (April 22)

EXTERIOR (West Gateway) - The South side wall has suffered impact damage causing it to move off its base. This is the second time this has happened. On the first occasion we were able to push the whole structure back. It may be possible to use brute force to reposition it but long term will require a rebuild. Awaiting estimate for rebuild.

South East Corner Parapet—There is a gap in the parapet stone work which overhangs the South East corner. There is concern that the slab could fall. Identified as requiring urgent attention in the 2010, 2015 and 2020 our new Architect reported in his Quinquennial Inspection Report “this is of serious concern.”

Stonework—Numerous parts of the stonework have become damaged as the cast iron ties have rusted and thus expanded and caused the stone to split. The stonework around the parapet gives greater concern as it allows water ingress between brick and ashlar. Also there is considerable growth of vegetation where seeds have entered the gaps in the parapet stonework

Roof Leak—During heavy rain combined with a North wind the roof leaks in the North West corner. This problem has occurred ever since the Church was re-roofed in 1999. Cause has never been identified. No obvious visible signs of cause. There is also an occasional leak in the South gallery and again there is no visible cause. Both leaks are causing consequential damage to the ceiling and probably to the wooden roof structure.

Interior Walls—Damage to plasterwork in the Vestry, Baptistry and Sacristy suggests that damp is rising from the three corners of the building. Roof drainage and the poor state of the flagging below the rainwater pipes is the probable cause. Our Architect is aware of the problem.

Broken Windows—There are 3 broken windows.

1. Upper storey North East corner. Ordinary glass fitted when the stained glass was removed. / 2. Ground floor ante room off the vestry/portico steps. Georgian wired. Broken from the outside by persons unknown. / 3. Ground floor ante room off North East entrance. Georgian wired. Broken from outside by persons unknown

Drains—Some drains are blocked and have been found impossible to clear using self-help. Some drains require new covers due to corrosion of existing. Probably requires Drainage Contractor input.

Gates to East Entrance—New gates have now been fitted and to a certain extent they have reduced anti social activity. However it is known that the churchyard has been entered by scaling the wall.

Pathways—Pathways are in a poor state with many potholes. Much of the top layer of stone has disappeared in some areas. Potholes could be filled with new stone aggregate but that would only be a temporary solution.

Graffiti portico steps—A complete eyesore. Several trials by specialist contractors have proved to be ineffective. The pigment used to deface the building has penetrated deeply into the soft, absorbent sandstone ashlar. Being a Grade 1 listed building we are not allowed to paint over the area with Masonry paint. It seems that the only solutions would be to a) Replace the stone. b) fix boarding over the area. (which would be allowed)

Flagpole—Is in a poor state of repair and currently unused. Will become unsafe over time and should be removed/replaced

South West Door—No longer used and in a state of neglect and disrepair. Needs repairing and oiling

Down Spouts—In a good state but need painting as they are cast iron and beginning to rust.

Advice to be sought from Architect as to Paint type and colour. (Listed Building Regs)

Gallery Windows—The “temporary” installation of double glazing in polycarbonate is proving to be quite successful in terms of warmth retention and noise prevention.

There are signs of water ingress via the temporary glazing. In time, consideration should be given to replacing windows in keeping with the architecture. (Georgian squares?)

INTERIOR—Ceiling—The main ceiling is the final area in need of decoration. A quote of £10k was obtained in 2017.

East Wall—Damage to the South pilaster and stencilled acanthus leaf decoration is in need of professional attention

Vestry Plaster—Perished plaster in South East corner caused by rising damp

Baptistry Plaster—As for Vestry plaster above

Tower—The tower has four chambers.

1. The Clock Chamber. Contains the four clock faces. There is a new ladder giving access to the Cupola. In good state.

2. The bell chamber. Contains Four bells providing the clock chimes and one bell for ringing for services

All the bells are in good condition but the “Service Bell” is loose in its head stock. If it were to fall, it would fall onto the four clock bells. Precautions have been taken in that a wooden frame has been erected just below the bell so that if it does fall it will only drop a matter of inches onto the frame. This area needs cleaning, the walls need painting and the wire netting attached to the louvres needs renewing. Over time it has rusted and recently it was found that a pigeon had gained access and was nesting. Pigeon evicted and netting repaired. Later inspection showed further pigeon infestation via more corroded netting. The louvres were also covered with plastic sheeting to reduce winds entering the area. Over time this has been torn and needs replacing. During a recent visit by Smith’s of Derby to carry out clock maintenance, the engineer reported that the floor of the bell chamber was unsafe .

3. The Clock mechanism chamber. The clock mechanism is contained within a wooden cabinet with glass doors. The cabinet and walls would benefit from a coat of paint and the area needs cleaning.

4. The lower chamber. Giving access to the gallery and upper chambers. Used too much as a storage area. Walls become very damp in winter. Could do with painting.

Cellar—This houses the boiler which continues to function satisfactorily. Piping in this area could do with lagging.

Report written by Eddie Lockett.

ORGAN REPORT for St Thomas' Church (Stockport Parish) – April 2022

The organ has survived three Covid-related church closures and the relative inactivity remarkably well.

Return to full Sunday use was only gradual, the Sung Eucharist re-instated in September 2021 after an absence of eighteen months. During this Covid period, Harisson & Harisson had suspended all routine tuning and maintenance. Nevertheless, their visit in December 2021 found the organ in good fettle, the tuning holding up well. This is a reflection of Harisson's expertise and the benefits of controlled heating, double-glazing and humidification.

Unfortunately, the humidifier's casing is disintegrating (first recorded 2019). Holes are appearing in the aluminium lid, putting the unit's operation at risk. Some parts have become detached and the motor is slightly noisy (a rumbling is audible). Humidifiers are now made using fibreglass, eliminating corrosion problems and extending their working life. However, installed 25 years ago and now well past its "use by" date, the current humidifier has undoubtedly helped keep the organ playable. Whilst promising to keep the current humidifier working for as long as possible, Watkins & Watson recommend a replacement. The cost of £3,110.00 (+ VAT) includes any modifications required to fit existing water, electricity and wind supplies to the new unit. If the current unit fails, and is not replaced, the organ will decline, probably quite quickly!

Finally, we have been warned by Harisson & Harisson that the blower cabinet is lined/insulated with asbestos. Whereas routine maintenance is safe, further intervention or repairs would require specialist removal of the asbestos prior to any work being done.

Peter Mayo

St Luke's Parish Centre

St Luke's Parish Centre continues to provide a vital hub within Brinnington.

It is however recognised that its usage is limited due to the restraints of the present footprint of the building and the facilities available. St Luke's Parish Centre is ready for a new start—to be practicable, functional, attractive and noticeable—to once again position itself in the midst of community life—to encourage church attendance as well as community events—to be able to offer Marriages, Baptisms and Funerals which the new development provides. More than a church, this will be a community hub, offering a place for volunteers to show the love of Christ and for members of the community to experience Christ in a relaxed and welcoming setting. Weekly activities offering a glimpse as what St Luke's is all about and a gateway to Sunday attendance.

Architects were appointed, plans have been submitted, public consultations taken place, planning permission is pending.... 2021 was a year of preparation / 2022 we anticipate to be a year of ACTION as we work towards achieving this goal. Plans have been submitted to Stockport Council. This week 4th April, they have asked for an extension until 13th May 2022. We have received one observation from a member of the public who appears to be a resident of Brinnington, who while agreeing with the proposed development doesn't feel we are providing adequate facilities for profoundly disabled adults. The architect is seeing if we can improve on the existing plan for the appropriate WC.

Maintenance issues : Two minor maintenance issues compared with our other Worship centers, but still needing attention as it could be years rather than months before our redevelopment is completed, are the lights in the parish hall which need the strips replacing and the electric shutters on the Remembrance Garden side of the hall, 2 of which will not open due to faults on the motors.

