

# Parish Profile

Church of The Ascension, Collier Row, Havering



## DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD

The Priest In Charge at the Ascension Church left to take up a new post as Mission and Stewardship Advisor of the Bradwell Area in February of 2020, and we now look forward to appointing a new priest in charge who can help us to continue with God's mission in Collier Row. The church is looking for someone to engage with the increasingly diverse population of the area. We are passionate to see the church evolve to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by building upon the foundations of the past.

The Bishop of Chelmsford initiated a programme for change with a policy document "Transforming Presence". Central to that programme are four key themes:

- *Living a distinctive Christian life in the world.*
- *Evangelising effectively.*
- *Holding ourselves mutually accountable over the basics of Christian ministry.*
- *Developing a new vision for a Church serving in a missionary context.*

In response to this policy, parishes were urged to enter a covenant to work together and to mobilise lay ministries. We have entered into that programme and are part of a recently commissioned Mission & Ministry Unit (MMU) known locally as PIMM (Partners in Ministry and Mission) see appendix.

The diocese has initiated a wide programme of training for authorised lay ministry and several our congregation have undertaken training in a range of roles including evangelists and pastoral assistants.

The Ascension is set in the heart of the community. There is a committed congregation and an able lay leadership. We are in the Barking Episcopal area within the Chelmsford diocese. We are looking to appoint a Priest from a high church tradition, with a heart for mission, a desire to serve and a vision for shared and collaborative ministry. Building on successes of the past, this post presents a wonderful opportunity for an experienced priest to lead and pastor the church.

### *THE DEANERY OF HAVERING*

The Deanery of Havering is amongst the largest in the Diocese of Chelmsford, when measured by the population of the London Borough of Havering, number of clergy, the churches' combined parish share of over £1.25M and combined Electoral Roll of around 3,500. Havering comprises a number of former Essex towns and villages, which over the years have grown and, in some cases, merged, particularly during the housing expansion of the 1930s. Of the East London Boroughs demographically, Havering is the most white British, but this is changing rapidly with the migration, in particular, of African, Eastern European and Asian nationalities.

As a congregation we embrace the full spectrum of church tradition, which we see as an opportunity to engage more holistically in God's Mission to Havering. With good clergy relationships and combined sense of purpose in the Deanery Synod, we have adopted a Deanery Mission Plan in response to the Transforming Presence vision of the Diocese of Chelmsford. Over the past eighteen months the Deanery Synod has held several sessions working together on how we can be ever more effective as missionary disciples in our individual and corporate lives. The Havering Mission Plan embraces the 5 Marks of Mission. Our vision is to join the mission of God, in order that lives will be transformed and thereby the communities of Havering will be transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Identified in the mission plan are priority areas, where working together with the Holy Spirit we can bring hope and transformation. Examples of mission priority areas include certain geographic areas; young people, children and education; the elderly and family life. With a heart for those on the margins pioneer ministry is being encouraged where appropriate in the Deanery. We see mission outworking at parish, Mission and Ministry Unit (clusters of parishes working in covenant relationship in mission and ministry) and deanery levels according to the area or issue to be transformed. Each parish has a particular gift, or charism, to contribute to the whole, so together we can complement one another to be as effective as possible in mission

Commissioned in January 2017, The Ascension is part of the mission and mission partnership with St Edward the Confessor Romford, St James Collier Row and St John Havering-atte-Bower, and The Church of the Good Shepherd Collier Row. This is a grouping reflecting a wide range of church traditions, all with a heart for mission in the north and central Romford setting we share.

The incumbents meet regularly for mutual support, planning and prayer with a mission focus for community transformation. Ministry, lay and ordained, is shared where this is appropriate. Each church has a lay PiMM 'champion' with the aim of building relationships across the congregations and building on joint mission activity to date. For example, in partnership a pioneering missional community has been established in partnership with The Good Shepherd in an area of the parish of The Ascension. Being situated in a wonderful location in the main shopping area of Collier Row enables The Ascension to provide witness at community events as well as a Foodbank outlet. Over recent years the lay leadership of The Ascension has encouraged an outward look to the life of the congregation. With the possibility of the building project there is a vision to exploit the location of the church buildings to an even greater extent for the sharing of the Gospel in Collier Row.

## OVERVIEW

### Vision / Mission

To make our Lord Jesus Christ known and loved throughout Collier Row, through the life of his Church by:

- *being a focus of worship and prayer*
- *demonstrating God's love through the way we live*
- *seeking opportunities to reach out and involve people in God's purpose for the world*
- *offering friendship, fellowship, prayer and support for everyone*
- *offering teaching on Christian faith and life.*

### Recent History

The parish encouraged by the Bishop explored a significant rebuilding plan. And although funding was in place the scheme ran into problems as more and more parishes sought similar schemes. The scheme proposed enhancing the site by demolishing the parish hall, building 30 affordable flats for rent and enhancing the church and building a new parish hall to be integrated with the church. As the scheme faltered, we took the decision to renovate the parish hall. And are now looking to renovating the church building. Our priest in charge (1990 to 2018) retired and was not replaced whilst the proposed development was considered as it would have involved demolishing the vicarage and building a replacement. In 2019 an interim priest in charge was appointed, he left in January 2020 to take up a new post as Mission and Stewardship Advisor of the Bradwell Area.

## Strengths

The Ascension is built on a traditional foundation of worship and teaching; the Eucharist is at the centre of our worship. We are a church catering to a wide range of parishioners and provide a broad range of activities for the Parish, amongst our strengths are:

- *The weekly prayer group*
- *Mother and Toddler group*
- *The active links with PIMM*

Our focus on becoming the centre of the community is being led through various outreach activities:

- *A Baptismal Support Group*
- *Praying for Streets*
- *Food Bank*
- *Visiting the sick and housebound and providing sacraments*
- *Promoting the use of the Church Hall for Community Groups*
- *Community Christmas, Easter, Summer & Carnival events*

## Challenges

We would like the new Priest-in-Charge to help us to focus on what is essential and enable us to breathe fresh life into our traditions. The areas of challenge identified by the PCC include:

- *deepening our spirituality; the life of prayer and knowledge of the Bible.*
- *experimenting with different types of worship e.g. non-eucharistic worship, services for the young and questioning, Taizé worship, Daily Offices, weekday 'seeker' services.*
- *encouraging vocations within the Church to ordained and lay ministries in their widest sense.*
- *building a youth ministry amongst non-Church-going young people and strengthening links with uniformed organisations and other youth groups in the area.*
- *Enhancing outreach to the community particularly amongst the men.*
- *Developing stronger Deanery links, e.g. joint teaching and training courses and openness to sharing a youth worker.*

## Who We Are Looking For ?

The Ascension is a 'high church' set in the catholic tradition of the Church of England. We are looking for a Priest-in-Charge who will value this tradition, but also work with us to give it fresh expression in a way that will be life-giving to a new generation. Our worship is centred on the Eucharist. We want this to continue, but we recognise the need to try other things.

We are looking for a priest who will inspire us with a vision for God's kingdom and encourage each and every one of us to discover our part in God's great mission of love.

We hope our new Priest-in-Charge will be:

- *an experienced spiritual leader, a person of prayer who, knowing their own need of God, is able to lead others to a fuller knowledge of God*
- *someone with a vision for the church in the 21st century who can think strategically, help set priorities for the future and lead the church in its evangelistic mission*
- *a good teacher, trainer and communicator with the ability to listen*
- *an inspiring motivator and team leader, with the ability and confidence to delegate and empower others.*
- *A person who can communicate well with children & young people.*
- *someone who can engage with the wide range of abilities and age groups in our church.*
- *A pastor who will care for our church and help us to care for the wider community.*

## ACTIVITIES

### Church Services

The Ascension is traditional Church of England, with a broad range of churchmanship ranging from moderate to high Anglo-Catholic. The main Sunday service is the Eucharist for which vestments are worn and five altar servers including a thurifer form the altar party. Sunday school starts after the absolution when the children move to the hall, they re-join the service for a blessing at Communion. At the end of the service the priest will involve the children by asking them what they have been doing, the children join in the final hymn with musical instruments. Refreshments are served after the service.

The Sacrament is often reserved for distribution to the sick and housebound by lay assistants during the week.

The table below lists the regular services held and their average attendances. vestments are worn and five altar servers including a thurifer form the altar party. Sunday school starts after the absolution when the children move to the hall, they re-join the service for a blessing at Communion. At the end of the service the priest will involve the children by asking them what they have been doing, the children join in the final hymn with musical instruments. Refreshments are served after the service.

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	Service Type	Average Attendance
Sunday 10.00 am	Common Worship Parish Communion (crèche & Sunday School operates during the service). Followed by coffee.	35 communicants plus 10
Wednesday 10:00am	Morning Prayer and reflection with healing and wholeness	8

Additional Services		
Lent, Holy Week and Easter	Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Vigil, Good Friday, Easter etc.	200*
In Loving Memory	A service in collaboration with the local funeral directors for all those who have lost a loved one during the year	100
Baptisms	Average 10per year	Varies
Confirmation	Candidates each year including some adults	
Weddings	As requested	Varies

### Other Activities

#### Regular events

- PCC meetings. Approximately every 6 weeks; there are 12 members, with three members in addition to the clergy who sit on Deanery Synod.
- Bible Study Group meets weekly, studying the Bible or using Alpha type books for study of Christian and biblical thought.
- A weekly lunchtime prayer group is followed by a mother and toddler group.
- Baptism, wedding and other requests are managed through the parish office.
- Fund raising and social activities including the Christmas Fayre, Easter fun day, breakfasts, harvest supper, patronal festival, summer fun day, barbecue and others
- Weekly Sunday News Sheet, Web site,
- Regular churchyard maintenance

*In recent years we have run Start! and Moving On! courses in the homes of our congregation giving us the opportunity to explore and discuss our Christian faith. These nurture groups have been successful, and we are now in the process of repeating the exercise as we have successfully begun to attract new families.*

The Church hall is used by a variety of community groups throughout the week, these include an over 50s club, mother (carer) group, dance school, uniformed organisations, line dancing, Bulgarian folk dancing and Weight Watchers.

We host a Food Bank for those in need. The foodbank is an initiative by local churches and operates under the auspices of the Trussell Trust.

We participate in an annual community event at Christmas providing a Christian focus for the whole community. It is an event which attracts thousands; many of whom will enter a church for the first time.

We hold an annual Easter focused family fun-day.

We seek to use the church building for appropriate nonchurch events an example of which was a project "Giving Voice to Fallen Soldiers" funded by a Lottery grant of £10,000. Using researched material and actors we commemorated in a digital archive and exhibition featuring the lives and deaths of those from Collier Row who died in the First WW and whose names are recorded in the Church. It involved members of the congregation, local school children and the wider community.

### *Parish Office*

The church office is open on Saturdays from 10.30 am to 12 noon and is staffed by volunteers. Information is available in the office concerning groups, rotas and activities, as well as a breakdown of all documentation required for Weddings, Baptisms and hall hire. The main role for the office is to ensure that any enquiries, queries or requests are directed to the person or persons responsible. Duties include keeping the diary up to date, filing, collating service sheets as required. Facilities include a telephone/answer machine with remote access and copying facilities.

### *Outreach*

We hope to implement a Praying for Streets scheme whereby each week we deliver leaflets in one or more streets. The leaflet says that we shall be praying for the people in that particular street on the coming Sunday and inviting people to send in requests for prayer or special thanksgiving.

## *PEOPLE*

### *Church Electoral Roll*

The electoral roll currently stands at 73. Of those, 60% live within the Parish of The Ascension

### *Lay Participation in Worship*

The ministries of lay people at services consist of an organist, sacristans, servers, sides persons, lesson readers, intercessors, licensed eucharistic assistants and Sunday school

leaders. Groups such as prayer meetings, Bible study and other explorer courses (Start!, Moving On! and Pilgrim) are led by lay people.

### *Pandemic*

Whilst in common with all Churches we were obliged to close our buildings we were able to maintain worship and community contact through a regular morning prayer with various members participating in the readings and intercessions. All via zoom.

## *STEWARDSHIP*

### *Introduction*

Stewardship is a key part of life in The Ascension, and it is renewed as required. The management of time, talents and money are a cornerstone of our desire to involve the widest participation in all activities within the church.

### *Time and Talents*

The Ascension plans to create a register of church members' talents. The Parish can be more efficient and effective although we already save significant amounts by doing much of the DIY ourselves.

### *Giving*

The Christian Stewardship list currently shows 52 financial pledges split between monthly standing orders and regular giving envelopes. Of these 52, 28 people gift aid; we make good use of the GADS system and routinely claim from HMRC.

## *FINANCE*

### *Current Financial Position*

The Ascension's normal annual income is just over £30k. The PCC reimburses the Priest-in-Charge and church members for all budgeted and reasonable expenditure on parish related activities and travel.

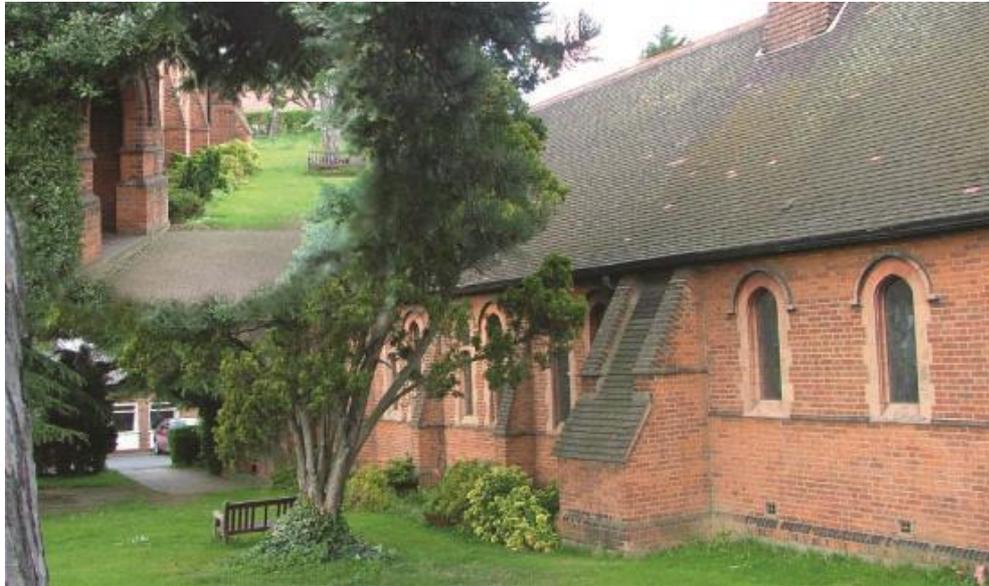
As a result of bequest income in 2015 and 2019 the Balance Sheet reports a balance of £100k. The Parish Share for 2019 was £20k which took into account the potential for a house for duty priest.

## *FACILITIES*

### *Buildings and Land*

In this section we will describe the current set up and then a proposed future development.

The Church of The Ascension is situated in the heart of the parish close to the shopping area. The church building will comfortably accommodate a congregation of 100 people.



Built as the chapel of the Ascension in 1882, its first Vicar was the Reverend Joseph Hardwick Pemberton



There is a pipe organ with a two-manual action, which has not been used for many years. Advice has been sought regarding its future and disposal and that idea was agreed. There are plans to dispose of the organ, reusing the pipes as a decorative feature. That will allow the relocation of the vestry and to the space currently occupied by the organ That will allow us to install toilet facilities in the room which is currently the. There is finance available

Our organist uses an electronic keyboard.

New heating has recently been installed.

## *The Vicarage*



The Vicarage, in Collier Row Road, is a very spacious 5 bedroom detached family home with a large garden set back from the road. Mature trees and bushes around the garden protect it from neighbouring properties. The house is located adjacent to the church and “village” centre and under a mile and a half to the railway station.

The house was built in about 1930. It is of brick construction, double glazed and the interior is in fair decorative order, although the bedrooms do need some freshening of the paint work. Entry is directly off the main drive, the ground floor which has a solid wood parquet flooring has a central hallway with a study, toilet and washroom as well as a chapel/utility room adjacent to the main entrance. Off the hallway there is a cloakroom and a shoe/boot under-stairs cupboard. There are two reception rooms connected by a folding screen. There is a modern well fitted kitchen; with a breakfast room, pantry, utility/boiler room, adjoining lavatory and access to the garden.

Upstairs the five bedrooms range in size from 10'x10' to 16'x13' the first floor also offers a family bathroom, with a separate W.C. and a landing airing cupboard. The roof space is fully boarded. Each bedroom has a hand basin.

The central heating is powered by gas, there is an alarm. Broadband Internet access is available in the vicarage.

Externally, the drive, which is predominantly hedged, comprises a garage, and drive with parking for several cars. Side gate access is available to the large, rear garden, which is

predominantly grass bordered by a variety of trees. There is a paved gazebo area, a goat shed, a greenhouse and a garden shed.

The House was heavily vandalised whilst empty awaiting a new incumbent. It is now boarded up and the dioceses has agreed a significant package of restoration the successful applicant will have an excellent property fully up to modern standard.

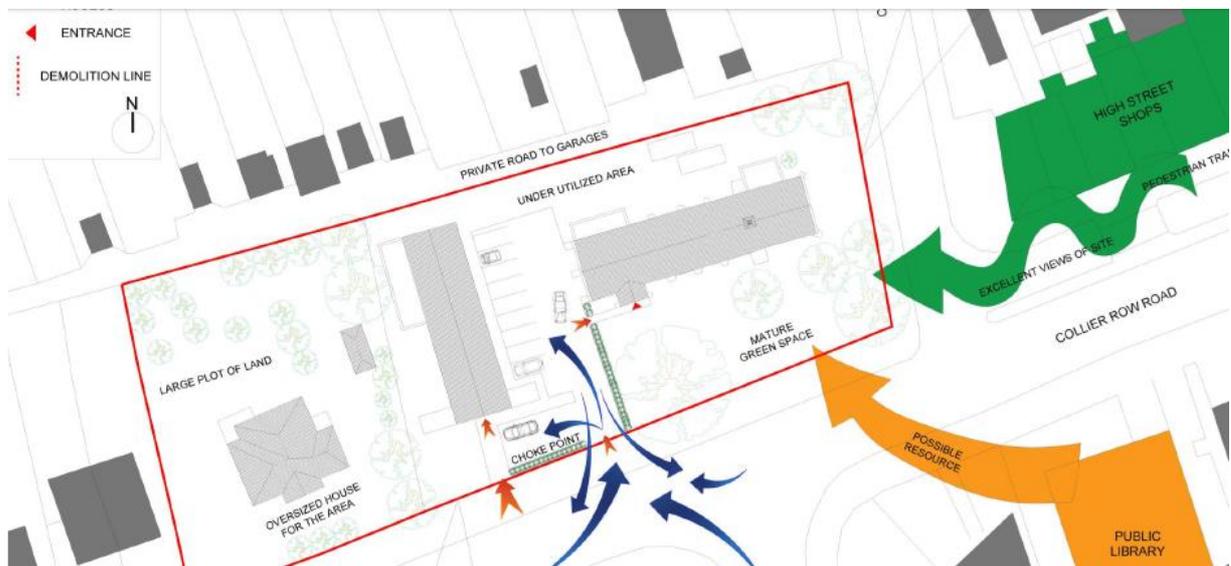
### Church Hall

The current church hall is adjacent to the church car park comprising toilets, main hall, kitchen, office, small meeting room and storage room.

There are also two shipping containers in the grounds which store resources for the food bank.

### Buildings Layout

Set out below is a sketch of the present site. The church runs parallel to Collier Row Road, to its west there is a car park and then the church hall, further west the vicarage and associated land.



## LOCATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### Geography

The Ascension is in the London Borough of Havering. The parish is in the Deanery of Havering, the Archdeaconry of West Ham and in the See of Barking in the Diocese of Chelmsford.

Collier Row grew up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the expansion of the historic market town of Romford at the coming of the railway.

### Transport links

There are mainline and underground stations are within 3 miles of Collier Row and accessible by public transport. Romford station runs a regular direct route to London (Liverpool Street) and the rest of the country. The new London Cross Rail Project is nearing completion and

comes to Romford. Fairlop station is at the easterly end of the Central Line.

There are extensive local bus services to neighbouring towns and London and is easy access to both the M25 and the M11. City, Southend, Stansted, Heathrow and Gatwick airports can all be reached 'within an hour' by car or public transport.

## Statistics

Information from the Office of National Statistics shows that the population of the parish is 6000, 9% are over 75 and 20% under 16, with 92% of the population being Caucasian, 72% declared themselves as Christian. The majority of the population aged 16 –74 years are in paid employment, 3% are unemployed. The rest of the population is either retired (11%) or students (3%). The majority of the population live-in owner-occupied homes. Havering is rated as the 3<sup>rd</sup> safest borough in London.

The population of the ecclesiastical Parish of Ascension is approximately 7,000

A high proportion of the area of The Parish of Collier Row is rural.

## Schools

Primary Schools:

	Last Ofsted Rating
Oasis Academy Primary	2
Clockhouse Primary	2
Crownfield Infant & Junior	2
St. Patricks Catholic Primary	2
Parklands Infant & Junior	2
Dame Tipping CoFE Primary School	2
St.Edwards CoFE Primary School	2

Secondary Schools:

	Last Ofsted Rating
Bower Park Adademy	4
Marshalls Park Academy	3
St.Edwards CoFE School & Sixth Form College	3

## Shopping and Leisure

There is an area of local shops close to the church and vicarage in Collier Row. The Town centre of Romford offers some of the most extensive shopping facilities in the region with the massive retail centres of Lakeside and Blue water within 40 minutes' drive

Within the main shopping area there is are a pub, restaurants and take-aways.

## Clubs and Organisations

Collier Row and the surrounding area have a variety of clubs and organisations catering for all ages. These include uniformed youth organisations, sports clubs, musical and dramatic societies, a British Legion and residents associations.

## CONTACTS

### Church Wardens:

Please do not hesitate to contact us on any issues of detail, if required

[Warden@AscensionPCC.org.uk](mailto:Warden@AscensionPCC.org.uk)

*Church of The Ascension, Collier Row: Parish Profile*