

PARISH PROFILE

✚ **St Paul's**
Harlow Town Centre



The Water Gardens,
Harlow Town Centre

✚ **St Mary's**
Little Parndon



Little Parndon



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

ST PAUL'S ✚ ST MARY'S
PUTTING FAITH IN HARLOW

THE DIOCESE: A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP GULI



Covering Essex and East London, Chelmsford is one of the largest, most diverse dioceses in the Church of England. We are home to more than 3 million people representing many socio-economic, ethnic and faith groups and a fantastic variety of cultures and traditions.

We have enormous opportunities for mission and service and considerable challenges to face and resolve as we continue to deal with the local, national and global challenges that have a direct impact on our parish churches, schools, chaplaincies and the communities we serve.

It is within this context and following a period of listening and discernment that started when I became Bishop of Chelmsford in 2021, that we set out a future direction of travel as a Diocese with a focus on [travelling well together](#):

- Our purpose is to love God and to love our neighbour; to worship faithfully and empowered by the Holy Spirit, witness to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ as we serve the extraordinarily diverse array of local communities in Essex and East London.
- Our approach is to enable and empower parishes and worshipping communities to discern how they are to be God's people in their own very different local contexts and as part of one diocesan family.
- Underpinning our approach is an invitation to a way of being articulated by shared diocesan values which might shape how we travel together, support each other and provide mutual accountability.

Since I became Bishop of Chelmsford, I have witnessed people's great warmth and I have seen first-hand, the wonderful things going on in our parishes and schools. Any new priest joining us in the Diocese of Chelmsford does so at a time of challenge, a time of change and most significantly a time of hope for our Church in this most diverse and vibrant of dioceses.

+Guli

Bishop of Chelmsford

Find out more about our Diocesan Direction of Travel and Values:



www.chelmsford.anglican.org/travelling-well-together

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Welcome!

Our parish is rooted in two distinct yet complementary evangelical churches, each with its own character and strengths, and united by a shared commitment to growing new disciples, deepening our life of prayer and worship, and serving the town we love. There is genuine openness here to new ideas, creative leadership and faithful collaboration, alongside a strong desire to build on firm foundations.

This role offers significant scope to shape the next chapter of our common life: developing mission in diverse contexts, nurturing disciples of all ages, and strengthening partnerships within the wider community. You will be able to help us to respond confidently to the opportunities that are offered by the redevelopment of the town centre, the growth in population and potential additional funding from the Church of England's Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP).

We are praying for a strategic, pastoral and gifted priest who will lead with wisdom and generosity, journey with us in hope, and bring humour and grace to the shared work of discerning where God is leading us next.

From the Area Dean

The Deanery of Harlow is looking forward to welcoming a colleague in the Town Centre who will be excited to join a Town where the next decade will see huge regeneration and many more people moving into the area. There is an open door for ministry, with the Deanery enjoying good relationships with our local council, and many bridges into the local community as our churches engage in mission and social action to benefit the whole community.

Our Chapter is a proactive place, with colleagues actively helping one another to sustain ministry across the Deanery - and our meetings being a safe and informal place in which we prayerfully support one another and share the huge range of experience that our team of Clergy bring to each other.

Our Synod is working to bring flesh to our joint Deanery Vision - which emphasises the importance of discipleship, and the value of enabling our churches to reach out to the wider community with God's love. Following this year's election of a new Synod we are holding an awayday, where we will be able to pray together, and seek God's heart for the people of Harlow and surrounding villages.

Please feel free to contact me as the Area Dean if you want an informal conversation about Harlow, or if you have any questions arising from the profile. We are praying for you as you discern whether God is calling you to become the latest member of our Deanery Team, serving in the crucial post in our Town Centre Parish.



Revd. Darren McIndoe



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INTRODUCTION



St Paul's, Harlow Town Centre

- One of the Church of England's Major Parish Churches
- Dates from the creation of Harlow New Town (1959)
- A diverse congregation
- Town centre location

St Mary's, Little Parndon

- A beautiful historic church serving a village since the Middle Ages
- Rebuilt in the 19th century
- On the edge of the countryside and new housing development
-



Vision

We are a parish that has great ambition for Christ's Gospel here!

We want to build on, and develop, our good relationships within our community; with the Town Council, with community organisations, with other churches and between ourselves. We want to better serve the wider communities here and realise our desire to stand as beacons of light and hope in the town.

We have good foundations to build on and need a strategic leader to help us be SMART and Christ-centred in our approach.

Our Area Bishop and Archdeacon have recognised the strategic importance of Harlow and the need for the church here to be strong enough to be a resource for others. Our parish therefore features prominently in the bid which Colchester Episcopal Area is making for Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP) funding. We are praying that this investment will enable us to realise our vision for revitalisation, outreach, and ministry with children and young people, supported by stronger administrative structures and a growing heart for mission.

We are also located in a town that is undergoing significant demographic change and development. New investment will bring new employment opportunities and industry. Our parish continues to grow in population and our churches need to reach out with the Gospel to welcome and invite newcomers.

STRENGTHS

Lay and ordained leadership team
(see page 10)



Links with organisations experienced in addressing numerous social needs



Congregation with widely varying backgrounds, skills and experiences



Extensive and well-located buildings



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

We struggle to resource our Sunday schools, but there is a real opportunity to develop this ministry and grow the gifts of our young people



The potential for St Paul's to establish itself in the developing Arts and Cultural Quarter, and expand its civic role



Congregations from other Christian traditions sharing our buildings present opportunities to learn from each other and share ministry.



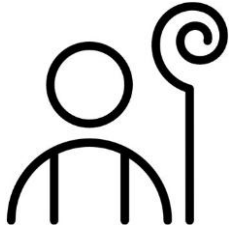
The wider expansion of Harlow (the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town development) presents many mission opportunities.



Increasing levels of social deprivation in the town



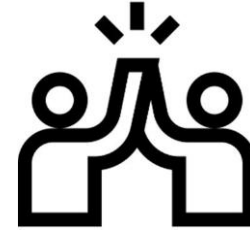
RECTOR'S ROLE



To serve as a shepherd to our flock, offering pastoral care while providing thoughtful and strategic leadership within our wider community.



To hold a deep love for the Scriptures, as the inspired and authoritative Word of God, and to share them in ways that encourage and nurture faith.



To recognise, encourage and release the gifts and talents of others, helping people grow in confidence, calling and service.



To minister creatively, with an open heart for evangelism, mission, growth and new possibilities, responding prayerfully to where God is already at work.



To be able to engage strategically and missionally with the many new developments across the town and beyond and to build, develop and sustain positive civic links across the town; to engage openly with town centre businesses and infrastructure working collaboratively for the flourishing of the whole community.



To work with us to realise our plans for developing our premises, making wise and hopeful use of the opportunities that come with investment from DIP.



To listen generously and valuing views and opinions that may differ from your own.



To love our people well, and to help us grow together in love for God and for one another.

MEET THE TEAM



Rev Jokey Poyntz, who is half time Team Vicar of St Mary's and half time Deanery Missioner. We expect that Jokey will be looking to retire during the next incumbent's tenure, and is unlikely to be replaced.



Rev Barbara Aylett - Non stipendiary associate minister at St Mary's



Peter Smith - Licensed Lay Minister (Reader), and treasurer



Rev Trevor Jones - retired minister with Permission to Officiate



Caroline Hatton - Pastoral Assistant



Austin Sobanam - Parish Safeguarding Officer



Tracy Norford - administrator (employed for 10 hours per week)



Carol Squires - Churchwarden



Vanessa Phineas Assistant Safeguarding Officer

In addition over many years we have trained a number of curates as this is an excellent training parish, and we expect this to continue.

MEET THE CONGREGATIONS

St Paul's

The average attendance in 2025 was 69 adults and 15 children. The congregation is ethnically diverse, with roughly equal numbers of Indian, African and (mostly older) 'white British' people. Services are held in English but this is not the mother-tongue of a good number of the congregation. There is a reasonable spread of ages in our diverse congregations, but we lack younger white British adults and children. A significant number of the congregation work in healthcare at the local hospital. There are retired people, and the less well off, and more recently refugees (several from Iran) who have settled in the area.



St Mary's

St Mary's has a smaller, diverse congregation (17 adults on average plus 2 children and 2 babies attending regularly) with several long serving members and others relatively new. With the lack of facilities for children or members who have time to do children's work, there are low numbers of families. However, as below the church has good links with the two closest primary schools and has planning permission for a small hall extension so there is much potential.



LIVING HERE - The Town

The Playhouse Theatre and cinemas



The Town Park



Art and Sculpture



Shopping and retail

The Town has a lot to offer...



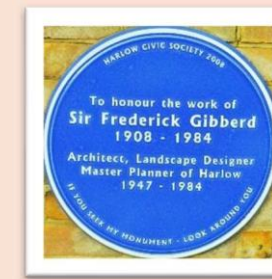
Sports Centre with swimming pool



Outdoor Pursuits Centre



Lee & Stort navigation



Gibberd Gardens and Gallery

LIVING HERE - The Rectory

The rectory is located in a quiet cul-de-sac of Upper Park, approximately 18 minutes' walk from St Paul's and 15 minutes from St Mary's. You can take a tour around the house here:

<https://www.madesnappy.co.uk/tour/1g721g195d0>

The study and a visitor's toilet are by the main entrance, and separated from the rest of the house by a door which leads into a main hallway, from which the lounge, dining room, and kitchen (with separate utility room) are accessed. Upstairs there is a single bathroom, and five bedrooms. The house has gas-fired central heating and is double-glazed throughout. There are imminent plans to refurbish the Rectory including adding an additional bathroom upstairs. Do speak to the Archdeacon if you would like to know more.

There is a primary school within 500 metres (without crossing a road), and there are several secondary schools in the town.

Harlow Town railway station is a mile away with good connections to London Liverpool Street (35 minutes), Tottenham Hale for London Underground via Victoria Line (20 minutes) and London Stansted Airport (15 minutes). Junctions 7 and 7A of the M11 connect the town to the M25, London, Cambridge and the North. The town has a network of cycle tracks allowing most parts to be accessed by bicycle without using main roads.

Harlow has a town-wide local bus service, as well as bus service connections to other nearby towns.



FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Sunday Worship**

Our regular worship pattern is:

	St Mary's 9:30 am	St Paul's 11:00 am
1 st Sunday	Holy Communion	All Age worship
2 nd Sunday	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion
3 rd Sunday	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer
4 th Sunday	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion
5 th Sunday	Informal Worship	Informal Worship

At St. Paul's the worship style is relaxed, with a mix of traditional hymns and newer songs. We occasionally use the pipe organ for traditional hymns, but the organ is not in a good state of repair. Usually our music is played at the piano, joined by a bass guitar, and occasionally a lead guitar or drums. Clergy do not robe. We have recently installed video screens, which are used for all liturgy and songs in the service (we also prepare a service sheet for those who find the screens hard to use), and are still in the process of learning how to use these to enhance our worship and open up new possibilities. Sunday services are livestreamed and available via YouTube each week.

There are Sunday school groups (ages 5 to 10; and 11 to 16) each Sunday during term time, except on the first Sunday of the month when we all worship together. Prayer ministry is offered after most services, and anointing is offered on occasion.

There were 15 baptisms at St Paul's in 2025 (including adults and children), and these are usually (but not always) at the All-Age service. We welcome children to communion before confirmation, and five were admitted to communion in 2024.

There were 17 confirmations in 2025 (all members of St Paul's and St Mary's)

At St Mary's the worship style also is fairly relaxed, with a mix of traditional hymns and newer songs, usually played on a keyboard, but sometimes projected song videos, and occasionally the church organ is used. A projector and screen are usually used for all the liturgy and songs in the service. Prayer ministry is offered after most services and anointing is offered on occasion.



There is no provision for children's groups at present due to lack of space.

There were two baptisms at St Mary's in 2025.

The ministry team serve both churches.

We have 122 members on the electoral role, 49 of whom live outside the parish (as at the 2025 APCM).

- **Weddings and Funerals**

There was one wedding at St Mary's in 2025.

There were three church funerals in 2025, and a further 7 funerals were taken by the clergy at the local crematorium or elsewhere. There were no burials of ashes in St Mary's garden of remembrance in 2025, and one in 2024.



FURTHER INFORMATION

• Midweek Activities

Our midweek activities include:

- Morning Prayer at Staff Meeting on Mondays, and online on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Heart4Harlow prayers online on Thursday mornings
- 'Cottage prayer' (a monthly fellowship meal, with teaching, sharing testimony and prayer) in people's homes
- Harlow Holiday Lunch Clubs (during main school holidays) aimed at vulnerable families, run by a local fitness company and supported by Active Essex with support from Jokey and Caroline
- Occasional Alpha and Nurture courses
- Helping Hands: a drop-in evening in the hall for those without homes or vulnerably housed providing light meals, refreshments and a place to socialise, led by Caroline Hatton
- Occasional fellowship meals especially at harvest or Christmas, often 'bring and share' lunches
- Occasional fairs and open weekends at St Mary's throughout the year and a Christmas Fair which alternates between St Paul's and St Mary's
- Sanctuary Drop-In at the front of St Paul's (outside on the terrace in good weather and a warm-space in winter) run in conjunction with MRCT (see next page) offering chat, prayer and free refreshments

Until recently there was a creche on Sundays, Messy Church in the holidays; a thriving playgroup; an after-school club - we would love to see these restarted.



A fundraising event at St Mary's

Besides our own activities, St Paul's used by several groups:

At St Paul's:

- Integration Support who work with Refugees and Asylum seekers now use the hall 4 days a week for English lessons; women's fitness classes and an Arts & Craft club open to all (<https://integrationsupport.org.uk/>)
- Rainbow Services (a Harlow Voluntary Services charity) occasionally run Cookery Classes for vulnerable families in the hall
- Another church group (the London Pentecost Church, mostly Christians of Indian origin) meet in St Paul's hall from 7:30 am to 10:30 am on a Sunday morning
- An Assemblies of God congregation meets at St Paul's on Sunday afternoons
- The youth of The Redeemed Christian Church of God - Living Seed Church (RCCG LSC) The Bridge hold an outreach service at St Paul's on Sunday afternoons.

- In the colder months, if asked by the council, we provide a Night Shelter as part of its cold weather provision



Integration Support annual meeting

At St Mary's

- A Romanian Orthodox church uses the building and meets every second Sunday, and on some other days through the week (this church is by far the largest user of the building)
- A community choir (Voices of Harlow) meet for an evening rehearsal most weeks

• **Mission Support and Outreach**

- We contribute regularly to support link missionary Portia Yiadom in Ghana (via Crosslinks)



Portia Yiadom

- We also support Tear Fund, Bible Society and the Churches Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) financially and in prayer
- Through Jokey and the Deanery we are involved with the National Estate Churches Network (<https://estatechurches.org>). We work closely with the local homeless charity, Streets2Homes. We have made new connections with multiple agencies and charities across town. The parish has especially strong links with The Michael Roberts Charitable Trust - MRCT (<https://mrct.org.uk>) - a Christian-based charity whose aims and objectives are to develop voluntary work and social opportunities for people who are often perceived as being disadvantaged, either through a disability or social difficulty. Until recently the Foodbank and Bounty Club (a social supermarket), run by MRCT operated from St Paul's but the need was so great that the charity was offered a much bigger space in the indoor retail Harvey Centre which

now also runs a Uniform Shop; a baby bank (Bump-to-Five); and a hub for advisers from CAB; Integration Support; Peabody and Rainbow Services). However Jokey and Caroline in particular work very closely with them to provide support for the vulnerably housed and individuals and families in dire need of assistance including those in need of support with basic household items and furniture. We run a Church Furniture Project (CFP) using funds where necessary from the Lunch Clubs (HHLC) and local charities. Smaller items are stored behind the Foodbank and larger ones in a unit kindly provided by Harlow Council. We receive referrals from all the local support agencies.



**Michael Roberts
Charitable Trust**



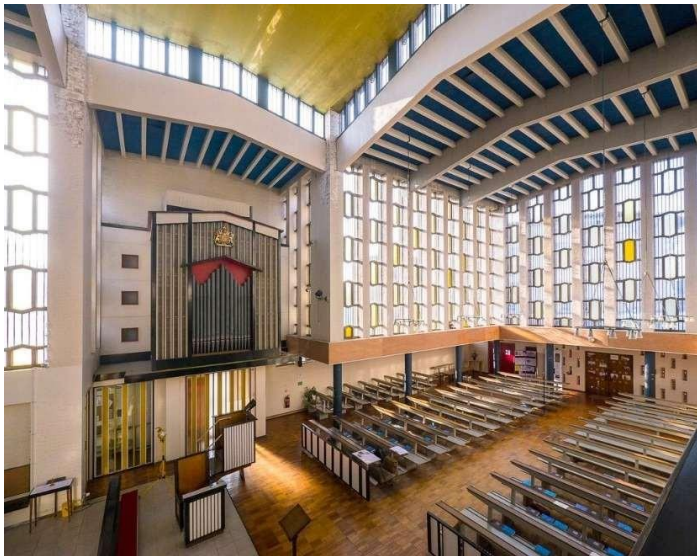
Foodbank at St Paul's

Our Buildings

- Overview

We are a single parish, with two church buildings. St Paul's was built in 1959 when Harlow New Town was established and the new parish of St Paul's, Town Centre with St Mary's, Little Parndon was created, replacing two temporary churches in the parish, St Michael's and St Barnabas. It is much the larger of our two churches. St Mary's is a 19th century building on the site of the previous 13th century church but retaining some of its fittings. It served the hamlet of Little Parndon long before the new town was conceived.

- St Paul's



© Des Hill, DipArch RIBA with thanks



St Paul's (Grade II listed) is situated in Harlow town centre next to the Playhouse Theatre and close to the Civic Centre and the Water Gardens retail area. Immediately behind St Paul's is the Harvey Centre. The area around and in front of St Paul's is being redeveloped, forming a new pedestrianised 'Arts and Cultural Quarter' including a new library and residential buildings. Work has now begun in College Square and is expected to start on the Church terraces in May.

St Paul's site includes the main church worship area (which can hold ca. 250 people), a side chapel, an accessible toilet, a vestry, and an integral hall all dating from 1959. The premises were extended in the 1970s, adding a larger hall with kitchen and further toilet facilities, a small ground floor meeting room and office, and a larger first floor meeting room. There is also a residential flat (second floor), which is currently let commercially by the church to a tenant. The sacred space of the church and chapel is some 350m² and the linked block of main hall and three meeting rooms is some 270m². The main worship area is

¹ A war artist and designer of the glass windows at Coventry Cathedral

dominated by a major work of art, a mosaic by John Piper¹ based on the Emmaus story. The pews are fixed and like many of the other fixtures and fittings, date from the original building.

Outside there is a terrace (currently used for parking and some outdoor events) and small garden area, but no graveyard or outdoor memorial space. As the outside space is redeveloped and parking is relocated, we are excited to see our entrance way improved, become more prominent in the townscape and be more accessible.

The nave roof was replaced in 2004, low level roofs in 2018, and the boiler and heating system in 2010. The worship area was completely rewired, with a new lighting system, and new audio-visual equipment installed in 2024.

Further projects to repair, refurbish and upgrade the facilities are required, in conjunction with strategic thinking about how we are called to use our building for community and faith activities.

As the arts and cultural quarter is established we offer the only town centre venue with its own cathedral-like acoustic making it a suitable venue for ambient music such as choirs, ensembles and other



The John Piper mosaic

¹ A war artist and designer of the glass windows at Coventry Cathedral

performances that benefit from a natural reverberation in a unique space. We have recently hosted two ‘Lumos’ Candlelit concerts (featuring two violinists and a cellist) which have been very successful and more are planned.

● St Mary’s



St Mary’s (Grade II listed) is near the northern boundary of the parish, on the edge of a new housing development. With additional new houses being planned the area is becoming more densely populated. The church sits close to the river, where we benefit from beautiful walks, a nature reserve, and Parndon Mill art studios with whom we have built strong links.

It is a well-maintained and beautiful church, rebuilt in 1868 with many period features. It stands in a tranquil churchyard with pedestrian traffic from nearby housing to the river and mill. It houses, unusually, the gravestone of a valued slave (Hester Woodley) brought from the West Indies to work as a servant in Little Parndon in the 18th Century. There is now a blue plaque

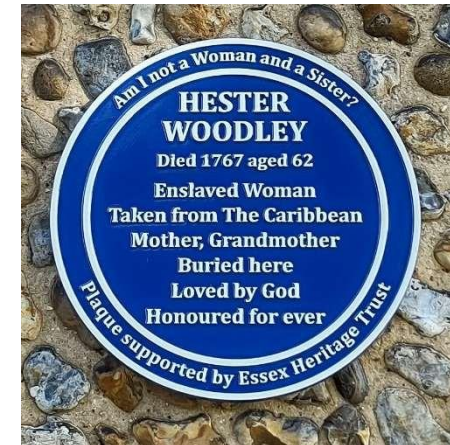
commemorating her on the wall of the church. There is a graveyard, no longer taking adult burials, and a Garden of Remembrance with a few spaces left, but with draft plans to extend as necessary.

The church itself comprises the main worship area, and a small vestry. The building has no inside water or toilet facilities, but there is a stand-pipe in the churchyard. Opposite the church there is a car park (licensed to the church by the Council) with a construction site portable toilet.

The building of new housing (Ram Gorse Park - formerly the site of Harlow Rugby Club) south of the church in 2020 led to the opening of a new gateway into the churchyard. This has a lit archway ('overthrow') paid for by the housing developers and designed in a competition run by Harlow Arts Trust in conjunction with the church and the Diocesan Advisory Committee won by modern sculptor David Murphy and now an item in the Harlow Sculpture Trail.

We have, over several years, developed a design, and more recently, obtained planning permission, to build an adjoining hall with toilet and kitchen facilities. The next step is to carry out the detailed engineering design and specification for tender to contractors. This stage will cost up to £40k of which £20k is held in a restricted fund for the project.

We have recently had a visit from the DAC to look at also improving AV/heating and lighting in the church. We are keen to be able to respond to the new communities emerging around us now and into the future with the development of HGGT



FURTHER INFORMATION

- **History and Demographics**

Harlow is one of the New Towns created around London after the Second World War. It was built on agricultural land containing a few small villages comprising six traditional Anglican parishes. Green and wooded areas were retained throughout the urban landscape. Initially, the population was made up of rehoused workers from London's East End plus a wider influx of highly skilled workers in the town's newly located pharmaceutical, electronic engineering and other industries. In principle everyone arrived with a job and was accommodated in brand new 'council housing' managed by the Harlow Development Corporation. There was therefore a social mix but the population was relatively young and characterised by newlyweds and 'pram town', with only a few the older relatives of workers. Although there is an easy rail link to London, Harlow was not intended to be a commuter town.

Harlow has matured and grown in a number of stages. The national sale of council houses during the 1980s meant more significant private home ownership for the first time. The purchased homes were randomly distributed across the original housing so that the major public housing estates did not have the negative characteristics associated with some large-scale social housing in other cities. Although most of the pharmaceutical and electronic companies have moved elsewhere or closed there is still a significant social stratum of incoming graduate workers in the town's churches. The large stock of privately owned houses for sale gradually changed the original profile of the population and labour force. During the

2000s workers arrived from Europe and the Commonwealth, particularly to take up roles in the hospital. More recently, London boroughs have paid to have large numbers of their vulnerably housed residents placed in private accommodation in Harlow and 51% of new homes were built under Permitted Development Rights (PDR) for office conversions in 2018/2019, including several of which are in the Industrial areas near St Mary's; as well as many town centre flats with vulnerably housed residents around St Paul's. This has contributed to the social need in the town, aggravated by the austerity of the 2010s and the covid epidemic.

Members of both churches as well as clergy have had key roles in addressing these issues through community outreach and lobbying.



Terminus House

Harlow lies in the “London Cambridge corridor / Innovation Corridor” more information about some of its industry can be found at <https://www.harlowbusiness.org/locate-in-harlow/harlow-businesses/>.

The original purchase of land for the New Town was largely from the estate of descendants of the industrialist and financier, Richard Arkwright. One consequence was that there is no landed, ‘upper class’ in the town. In contrast, the founding ethos of Harlow was notably socialist and secular, and the relocated inner-city component of its original population had a weak church going tradition relative to comparable towns.

• The Future:

In June 2025, contracts were officially signed to deliver the transformational new Arts and Cultural Quarter in the Playhouse Square as part of Harlow Council’s mission to 'rebuild our town' and bring the council's ambitious regeneration vision to life. This will provide:

- Inspiring new live performance venue and exhibition spaces
- A welcoming new café/restaurant and booking office for the Playhouse
- A state-of-the-art music school and recording studios
- Modern studio spaces for both community and commercial use
- A new home for the Gibberd Gallery
- A beautifully improved public realm, including a vibrant public square and tranquil pocket park with an outdoor performance space
- Upgrades to the Haydens Road underpass, improving safety and accessibility



A typical view in Harlow

- 47 high-quality new affordable homes for Harlow residents

The Playhouse Quarter is one phase of the complete rebuilding of the town centre with the transformation of Broad Walk (the pedestrian shopping thoroughfare) well underway and the Market Square and Bus Station starting shortly.

In July 2025, there was an announcement that Harlow is set to become a national powerhouse of health innovation and economic growth as the Government confirmed that the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) will relocate its new headquarters to the town, with construction of state-of-the-art scientific facilities expected to open in stages from the mid-2030s, becoming fully operational by 2038. The move aims to create a national hub for health innovation, which will include a National Biosecurity Centre fostering collaboration and preparing for future health threats. Existing UKHSA operations at Colindale and Porton Down will continue until the new site is complete to ensure a seamless transition.

What this means for Harlow:

- 2,750 high-quality jobs created at the UKHSA campus
- £80 million a year injected into the local economy once completed
- £28 million a year injected into the local economy through construction
- 1,600+ construction jobs in preparation for the move
- A world-class science and health campus at the heart of the town
- An anchor for skills, STEM education, and innovation in Harlow creating transformational opportunities for Harlow's young people
- A permanent home in the UK Innovation Corridor, unlocking national and regional growth

Also in July 2025, Harlow Council announced it will buy and redevelop a converted office block in the town that has been used by London boroughs for temporary accommodation. The building, Terminus House, is one of several office blocks in the town that have been converted for temporary accommodation, placing strain on local services and the town centre, said the council. The deal will see the building's current owners work with housing partners to support tenants into suitable alternative accommodation before the agreement is completed, ensuring the building is vacant when the council purchases it. The council plans to redevelop the site - which includes the converted office block and a multi-storey car park - for housing, complementing the scheme to rebuild Harlow town bus station and transform Terminus Street. Terminus House is one of several buildings in the town centre the council is buying to drive town centre regeneration.

Harlow Council endorsed in 2023 a £1.3 billion development for c. 23,000 homes, including c. 10,000 in the area of Gilston village just over the border in Hertfordshire / St Albans Diocese. See <http://hggg.co.uk> for more information.

All these developments provide an exciting opportunity for ministry and mission, and for the church to be at the heart of plans for the town.



Artist's impression of the new cultural quarter

FURTHER INFORMATION

• Church and Community Links

We have good relationships with other local faith groups through the Harlow Ethnic Minority Umbrella and Integration Support where new links have been established with joint outreach work.

We also have strong links with our local MP, Harlow Council, and Harlow Arts Trust. In particular we hold a Civic Service each year, which brings together local government, and community leaders; the local funeral directors hold “In remembrance” services near Christmas; and the hospital, local scout organisations and local schools hold their Christmas carol service at St Paul’s or St Mary’s.



Civic Service at St Paul's

Our clergy have been/are governors in local schools and are regularly asked to visit to take assemblies or services or help with religious education. None of the schools in the parish are Church of England schools, (though there is one Catholic Primary School) but some have strong links with the two churches and there is potential for more. There is also an excellent Ecumenical Group (Great Open Door) which does Christian Assemblies in local Schools.

Pemberley Academy Primary School and Hare Street Community Primary School have their Carol Services at St Mary’s and St Paul’s and pupils perform at our events. Clergy are invited

in to all the Primary Schools in the Parish and the pupils visit both churches. We have many strong community links which we hope to build on once the St Mary’s extension is built (see page 20). and as the town centre is developing too. Our outreach activities and Christingle Services attract many families.

The BMAT STEM Academy opened in the parish in 2014 as Sir Charles Kao University Technical College (named after the Nobel prize winning scientist who worked at Standard Telecommunication Laboratories in Harlow, for his work on optical fibres). Local churches have supported the chaplaincy provision to the college, and our clergy have been in to Burnt Mill Secondary School (part of the BMAT academy) and the College.

We also have close links with the hospital chaplaincy.



Harlow Town Hall

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Other Churches**

St Paul's and St Mary's is one of eight Harlow parishes, and part of the Harlow Deanery which also includes eight villages outside Harlow.

We have links with other Christian denominations especially via Heart4Harlow (<https://www.heart4harlow.org.uk/>) with which we have strong connections. This is a grouping of churches and church leaders working in partnership to show God's love in our town. In particular it organises a Good Friday walk of witness each year, carols at Christmas in the Harvey Centre, and runs a monthly prayer meeting as well as organising "Hope for Harlow" which offers food and sometimes overnight accommodation in churches (especially St Paul's because of its location).

Therefore within the Deanery, and the interdenominational Heart4Harlow structures, the parish has a strong opportunity to influence and participate in the wider advance of the Gospel in Harlow - while humbly recognising its place as one amongst equals.

Besides the congregations of other denominations which meet at St Paul's and at St Mary's (as above - see Midweek Activities), there are several other churches within the parish, including a Pentecostal Church with a predominantly Ghanaian congregation, which used St Paul's for many years before obtaining their own premises in a nearby former United Reformed church building.

Finances

The Annual report and Financial Statements for 2024 can be download from the charity commission website:

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk>

This section supplements and summarises some of the detail in that report.

The PCC does not separate finances for St Paul's and St Mary's. The two congregations act as a single parish entity, with a single budget for income and expenditure.

The table below shows our general fund income and expenditure over the last two years. The most significant change is the increase in Parish Share (the diocese introduced a new method to calculate this), which will be a challenge to meet going forward, as donated income is barely sufficient to cover this. We are heavily dependent on lettings, and cannot invest this income into our buildings as things stand.

2024 included a large insurance claims (£20k) included as Other Income, and spent as a Building running cost.

The PCC benefits from a steady income from the flat on St Paul's site.

Significant funds were raised in in 2023 and 2024 for St Paul's lighting, rewiring and Audio-Visual work. £88,000 was donated by the congregation and other donors and £47,500 was raised in grants (a further £25,000 grant from Listed Place of Worship Grant Scheme). The overall project cost was £175,000.

PCC St Paul's & St Mary's Harlow - General Fund

	£	£
	2025	2024
Income		
Donations	90,423	76,213
Fees	1,086	688
Property letting	43,467	37,582
Other income	<u>937</u>	<u>20,430</u>
Income	<u>135,984</u>	<u>134,913</u>
Expenditure		
Parish share	85,097	70,202
Mission and relief	3,003	2,050
Building running costs	22,105	51,980
Administrative costs	<u>18,857</u>	<u>19,202</u>
Expenditure	<u>129,061</u>	<u>143,434</u>
Deficit / surplus	<u>6,923</u>	<u>-8,521</u>
General fund balance	7,335	1,948

We have various other restricted funds. At the end of December 2025 St Mary's Development Fund (for the new hall) had c. £25,000, with a further £7,900 in St Mary's general fund (for the care and maintenance of St Mary's).

The parish has paid its Parish Share in full throughout the 21st century apart from a COVID year, and 2024.

Parish boundary

The parish map can be found on the ArcGIS Church of England parish map:

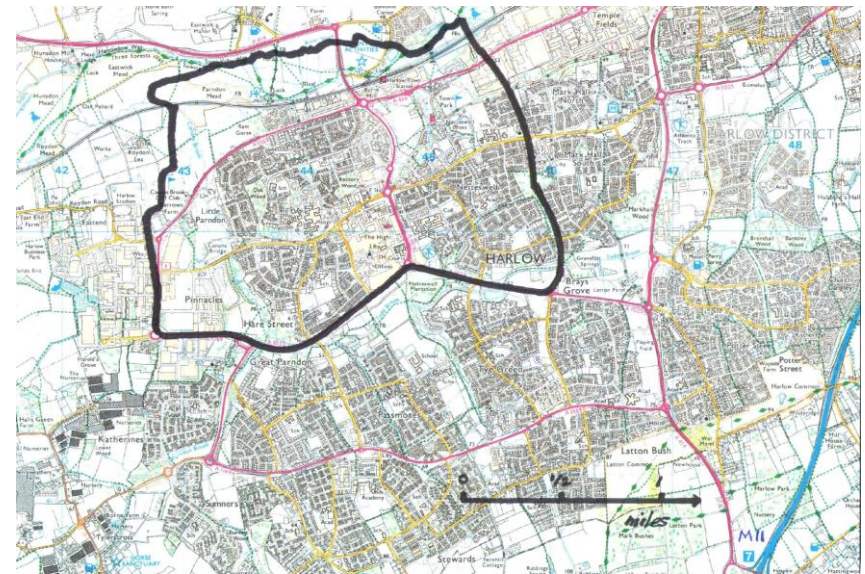
<https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a#!>

Open the map and search on 'Harlow'

There is much within the parish boundary:

- Five primary and one secondary school,
- The Princess Alexandra Hospital, an NHS general hospital with full A&E
- Alexandra House, a care home, next door to the hospital with which the parish has had strong links
- 'The High' - town centre shopping area including the Water Gardens and indoor retail Harvey Centre
- The Playhouse theatre
- One of the two cinema complexes in the town
- Harlow Council offices
- The Gibberd Gallery (a visual arts space run by the Harlow Art Trust)
- The Police Station (until recently a curate and our Team Vicar were Chaplains)
- Harlow College, a college of further education including the *BMAT STEM Academy*, a University Technical College within its campus.
- The designated centre of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) at a former GSK complex
- The Town Park
- The LeisureZone sports centre
- Harlow Town Football Club

- Herts and Essex Community Farm
- An outdoor pursuits/ water sports centre
- The Stort Navigation
- Two industrial areas
- A number of 'Sculpture Town' public sculptures and painting by famous artists some of which are in St Paul's and one at St Mary's



Parish boundary of S Paul's, Harlow Town Centre with St Mary's, Little Parndon
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Population statistics

The total population of Harlow has increased by 13.9%, from around 81,900 in 2011 to 93,300 in 2021. This growth rate is higher than the overall increase for England in that period of 6.6%.

In 2021 the population of the parish was 21,007 out of the 93,300 Harlow total. [Parish code 580047; Benefice ID 08/208BF]

Parish area: 2.5 square miles

Deprivation rank 2,191 (1 = most deprived / 12,239 = least deprived)

Parish age distribution 2021

Aged 0-4	6.9 %
Aged 5-19	19.6 %
Aged 20-29	13.6 %
Aged 30-44	25.4 %
Aged 45-69	26.2 %
Aged 70 and over	<u>8.3 %</u>
	<u>100 %</u>

Parish ethnicity distribution 2021

Asian ethnicity	11.8 %
Black ethnicity	7.7 %
Mixed ethnicity	3.4 %
White ethnicity	74.9 %
Other ethnicity	<u>2.2 %</u>
	<u>100 %</u>

Parish religion distribution 2021

Buddhist	0.5 %
Christian	44.2 %
Hindu	1.8 %
Jewish	0.2 %
Muslim	6.2 %
Sikh	0.1 %
Other religion	0.7 %
No religion	40.9 %
Religion not stated	<u>5.4 %</u>
	<u>100 %</u>

[Source: 2021 ONS Census data]

Links

Website: <https://stpaulsandstmarysharlow.co.uk>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsharlowstmaryslittleparndon>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulsstmarysharlow>

Church Office email: office@stpaulsandstmarysharlow.co.uk

Credits

Book icon made by Good Ware from www.flaticon.com

Construction and tools, The good shepherd, High five, and Happy icons by Freepik from www.flaticon.com

Deaf icon by Us and Up from www.flaticon.com

Handshake icon by Pixel Perfect from www.flaticon.com

Pointing right by juicy fish from www.flaticon.com

Accessibility by Smashicons from www.flaticon.com