



*'Two churches in outer east London,
with one heart for Jesus.'*

The Aldborough Benefice

Parish profile



St Peter's, Aldborough Hatch

St John's, Seven Kings

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

The Redbridge Deanery:

A message from The Area Dean,
Revd. James Gilder

Redbridge Deanery contains all the parishes within the London Borough of Redbridge. It is one of five London boroughs which together form the Barking Episcopal Area of the Diocese of Chelmsford, and it sits within the West Ham Archdeaconry. London over the Border, as it is sometimes colloquially known, has its origins within the old county boundaries of Essex. However, nowadays much of Redbridge feels solidly part of London: a hugely diverse area with excellent food options, a good transport network, and of-course, a vast range of people in various stages of wealth and poverty, often living not much more than a stone's throw away from each other.

Perhaps more surprisingly, Redbridge is quite a green borough, and protected space and parks can be found in almost every parish. The Central Line connects much of the borough which means that commuting into the City from Redbridge is relatively easy – whilst the M11 and A12 make getting out of London by car a fairly painless task. Cycling is also a popular option amongst several of the clergy in the deanery! The Borough boasts a range of good schools, both at primary and secondary level, along with opportunities for



involvement in numerous clubs and activities. Music, drama and sport all abound here. Sadly, there also exists in Redbridge all the challenges of crime and social deprivation that one might expect from anywhere which seeks to pack 300,000 people into just a few square miles.

Our deanery is an active one, with 23 churches, the majority retaining their own incumbent, along with lay leaders and self-supporting ministers. Our youngest ordained member of Chapter is in their twenties and our oldest, in their nineties. Redbridge Deanery encompasses most traditions of the Church of England, and our churches have a good record of working together and supporting each other despite our occasional differences. The deanery also has a good rate of parish share payment and it is one of the largest annual contributors to Chelmsford Diocese's share collection.

We have Chapter meetings four times a year, plus a social event in the summer, whilst Deanery Synod meets three times a year. All clergy are encouraged to take an active role in the deanery. Smaller, informal groupings of clergy or parishes, exist to offer each other mutual assistance and new incumbents can be assured of a warm welcome from their colleagues, as well as support should they need it.

Statistics suggest Redbridge to be a religious borough. It is true that people here are used to seeing those of faith, albeit from a range of faiths, openly displaying their devotion to God. Faith is taken seriously here and although the Church of England may not be the majority religion in much of the borough, opportunities abound for the work of God to prosper.

I hope you will consider applying for this post within our deanery. Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you have any questions whatsoever.



Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Gilder".

Revd James Gilder,
Area Dean of Redbridge
jbilder@hotmail.com

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to this Profile for the Aldborough Benefice, which comprises the parishes of St John the Evangelist, Great Ilford, and St Peter's, Aldborough Hatch. We hope you find this document both helpful and encouraging, and that it offers a clear sense of who we are, where we are rooted, and where we hope to grow. Our aim is to give you a real insight into our life together, our vision for the future, and how your ministry might flourish among us.

We are friendly, enthusiastic congregations, committed to serving our communities with compassion and energy. We value our partnerships with local groups and organisations and are always looking for new ways to connect and collaborate. As a recently formed Benefice, we are embracing both the opportunities and challenges that this new chapter brings.

Our churches are supported by active PCCs and dedicated teams who assist in leading worship and maintaining the life of the church. We also have committed volunteers who lead fundraising efforts and ensure our premises are well cared for.

Thank you for your interest in the Aldborough Benefice. We hope this Profile inspires you and helps you to imagine yourself as part of our journey. We look forward to the possibility of welcoming you among us.



St Peter's Church, Aldborough Hatch



St John's Church, Seven Kings

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Introduction

Our Benefice came into being on 1st January 2022, joining together the two parishes of St Peter's, Aldborough Hatch and St John the Evangelist, Great Ilford (known locally as St John's, Seven Kings).

The process began with the full agreement of both PCCs and the greater percentage of our congregations. It took many months to organise and gradually those who had reservations began to see the advantages that a Benefice would provide. We are very grateful for the assistance that we received from the Diocese, and from our Vicar during that time.

St Peter's sponsor is The Crown (and is designated "A Royal Peculiar") whilst St John's sponsor is the Bishop of Chelmsford. It was agreed that, at each interregnum, the sponsor will alternate. The sponsor for this post will be The Crown.

We are an equal opportunities Benefice; our previous incumbent was female and both churches have welcomed female incumbents and deacons in the past.

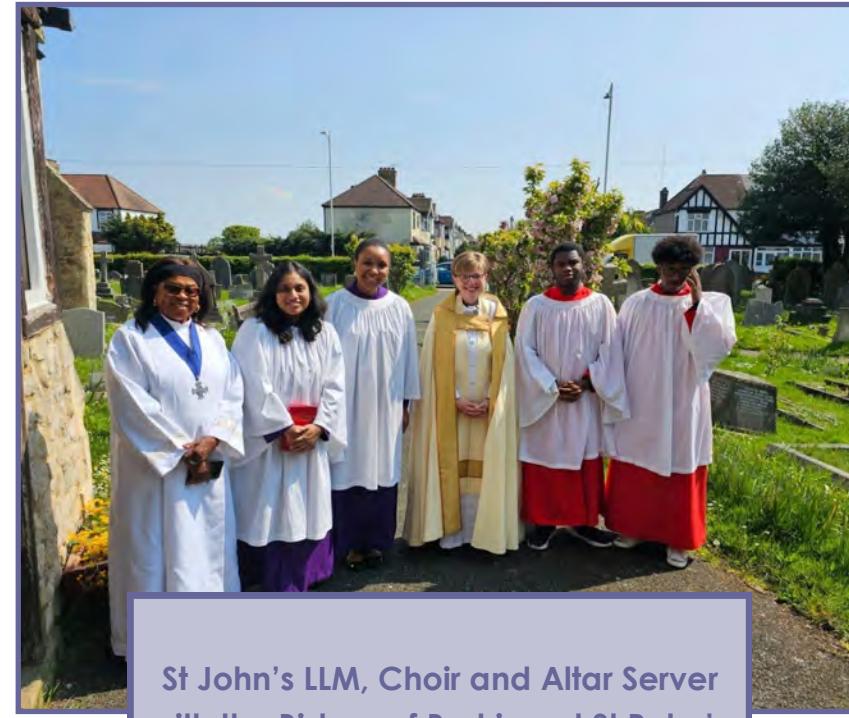
Church Services and Worship

Both St John's and St Peter's can be described as 'middle of the road' in churchmanship.

The main Sunday service at each church takes place at 10:30am, with services alternating between Holy Communion and Morning Prayer, using the Common Worship liturgy. St Peter's continues to offer an 8:00am service of Holy Communion using the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), Choral Mattins, and a Choral Evensong service, all held on the first Sunday of each month, also following the BCP tradition. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, both churches held midweek Eucharist services, and there is a strong desire within the congregations to see these reinstated.

Vestments are worn by officiants in both churches, and Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) also robe. Several members of the congregations are authorised to assist with the administration of the Communion Chalice during the Eucharist. Our Lay Ministry Team is collaborative and work together to ensure that services are offered to our congregations, even during periods of holidays or sickness of our Rector.

Music plays an important role in worship. St Peter's benefits from a resident organist, whilst St John's is supported by two visiting organists who play at Morning Prayer services on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. On the remaining Sundays, the resident pianist provides music.



St John's LLM, Choir and Altar Server with the Bishop of Barking at St Peter's

The Benefice enjoys a vibrant and enthusiastic Ministry Team who lead services, read scripture, and prepare intercessions across both churches. Those who wish to participate are encouraged to try new things and 'step up'. Coordination of the rota is managed by a churchwarden at St Peter's.

Hymn selection varies between the churches: St Peter's uses 'Hymns Ancient & Modern' and 'Mission Praise', while St John's draws from 'Hymns Old & New' and 'Songs of Fellowship Volumes 1-3'.

Bibles are available in the pews at both churches: St John's uses the Good News Bible, and St Peter's uses the Revised Standard Version.

While St Peter's does not have a formal choir, St John's has a group of five robed young people who help lead the singing. They are also given the opportunity during services to share something about their faith, bringing a valuable youth perspective to worship.

At present, neither church offers a Sunday School or a Uniformed Youth/Family Service. However, there is a shared aspiration to welcome and engage more young people and families from the community.



**St John's Choir and St Peter's Singers at
the Nine Lessons and Carols Service**



St Peter's Verger

High Day services are celebrated jointly, alternating between the two churches. These occasions are joyful and well-supported events in the church calendar.

St John's also hosts a monthly House Group for Bible Study, a newly established monthly Bible study group meeting in church, and a well-attended fortnightly afternoon Fellowship Group.

Occasional Offices

Both churches hold baptism, wedding and funeral services.

Last year, at St Peter's, there was 1 marriage blessing and 1 baptism. There were 6 burials in the churchyard and 6 internments (ashes), making a total of 12.

Last year, at St John's, there was 1 marriage blessing and 4 funeral services.

Our Congregation and Talents

St John's and St Peter's are united in faith and mission, yet each brings its own character and strengths to our benefice.

St John's is a vibrant, ethnically diverse congregation, enriched by members from a wide range of professional and cultural backgrounds. This diversity brings vitality and a wealth of experience to our community life and worship. In contrast, **St Peter's has a more homogenous and largely** retired congregation, but one that is deeply rooted and exceptionally skilled, with members drawing on a lifetime of professional and personal expertise.

Despite these differences, both congregations work closely together. Each parish has two churchwardens (St John's has also elected a deputy), and these wardens meet jointly to address benefice-wide matters. Each church maintains its own PCC, but regular joint meetings allow for shared decision-making, especially on major issues. Furthermore, wardens from one parish act as deputies for the other, and a warden representative from each PCC sits on the other's council. We also share a single safeguarding officer across the benefice, reflecting our unified commitment to care and responsibility.



St John's Congregation at a
Tea Afternoon



St Peter's Congregation, after service
tea & coffee



St John's Hall
used for a
child's birthday
party

We actively harness the diverse talents of our congregations through various sub-committees, such as those focused on fabric and maintenance, and social and fundraising. At St John's, **the hire of church halls is a key outreach and income**-generating activity, managed by a committed team of volunteers. Meanwhile, **St Peter's emphasizes social events** for both outreach and fundraising, with its halls hired out to a smaller number of regular groups, including a nursery.

St Peter's churchyard, the last open one in Ilford, continues to serve the local community for burials and interments. It is lovingly maintained by volunteers, many of whom do not attend regular services but regard St Peter's as their church. Regular Work Days ensure it remains a peaceful, well-kept place for all.

Our parishioners contribute in countless ways: welcoming people at services, arranging flowers, cleaning, sewing curtains, repairing vestments, handling administration, baking cakes and making jam, to name just a few. Their efforts ensure that the church continues to function smoothly, including during the incumbent's annual leave.



St Peter's Garden
Work Day

Looking ahead, we are eager to expand our outreach through social events and warmly welcome new ideas and fresh energy to help us grow in service and community engagement.

Fundraising and Outreach

Fundraising plays a vital role in the life of our Benefice, supporting both the upkeep of our church buildings and the wide range of activities within our congregations and communities.

A small but dedicated joint Social and Fundraising Committee works hard throughout the year to organise a variety of events. Equal importance is placed on both the social and fundraising aspects, ensuring that these gatherings are enjoyable, inclusive, and purposeful.

Our regular events include coffee mornings—some featuring guest speakers or activities—our lively May Day Fair, Patronal celebrations, a well-loved Christmas Market, and periodic furniture sales. These occasions are made possible by the generosity and involvement of people from both parishes and the wider community.

Many of our events also support charitable causes, such as Water Aid and the Redbridge Food Bank, extending our outreach beyond the local area.

A particular highlight across both parishes is our series of Sunday lunches, held regularly throughout the year and alternating between the churches. These meals attract between 50 and 60 attendees and include home deliveries for our housebound members, reinforcing our commitment to fellowship and pastoral care.



Afternoon Tea at
St Peter's

Collection for
Ukraine at St John's



These events are more than just opportunities for socialising—they are an essential part of our outreach and mission, strengthening the bonds within our community and offering hospitality and care to all.

Our aspirations are to welcome more supporters from both parishes and the wider community to join us for worship and to explore the teachings of Christ and to explore and develop new activities and events that will help us reach more people and grow together in faith and fellowship.

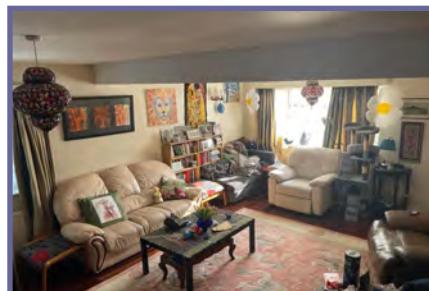
The Benefice and Parishes, including location, transport, facilities

THE VICARAGE

As part of the process of forming the Benefice, the vicarage in St John's Parish was sold and the existing vicarage adjacent to St Peter's became the Benefice Rectory serving both parishes.

Description of the Benefice Vicarage,

89, St Peter's Close, Ilford, IG2 7QN



The Vicarage is a detached four-bedroom two-storey house with a linked single-storey study.

The ground floor comprises a reception room, a dining room, kitchen, shower & toilet, entrance lobby and study.

The first floor comprises; separate toilet and bathroom, four bedrooms, two with handbasin and built-in wardrobes, landing and storage. At the rear, there is a large private garden which has separate access for cars.

Approximate dimensions of main rooms are:

Reception	4.590m x 6.820m	15'0" x 22'4"
Dining Room	3.630m x 5.080m	11'10" x 16'8"
Kitchen	4.850m x 4.360m	15'10" x 15'2"
Study	4.920m x 3.050m	16'0" x 10'0"
Bedroom 1	4.600m x 3.050m	15'0" x 10'0"
Bedroom 2	3.930m x 3.630m	12'10" x 11'10"
Bedroom 3	2.750m x 3.780m	9'0" x 12'4"
Bedroom 4	3.300m x 2.620m	10'10" x 8'7"

LOCATION

The Benefice is located in the London Borough of Redbridge. St Peter's Parish is north of the A12 (Eastern Avenue), and St John's Parish is to the south. The churches are linked by Aldborough Road North and Aldborough Road South and are roughly one mile apart.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Benefice is home to a diverse and evolving population. Age distribution is varied, with a noticeable increase in the mobile and working-age population. According to the Family Purse assessment, the area's economic classification falls under category 'C'.

Both parishes within the Benefice are notably multi-faith, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic. There are significant Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities, alongside a smaller but established Jewish population. All these communities have places of worship either within or in close proximity to the Benefice. The Asian community now forms the majority population, with the Muslim community marginally surpassing the Christian community in size. Most of the Benefice is densely populated, featuring a mix of owner-occupied homes and long-term rental properties. In contrast, the northern part of the area, particularly within St Peter's Parish, becomes more rural, with open countryside and lower population density.

TRANSPORT

Trains: The Benefice is well-connected by rail. The Elizabeth Line serves Seven Kings Station, offering a direct journey to central London in approximately 25 minutes. Additionally, the Central Line is accessible at Newbury Park Station, providing further connectivity.

Buses: Several local bus routes operate along the Eastern Avenue (A12) and Seven Kings High Road. A dedicated route also passes through the centre of St John's Parish, conveniently stopping near the church.

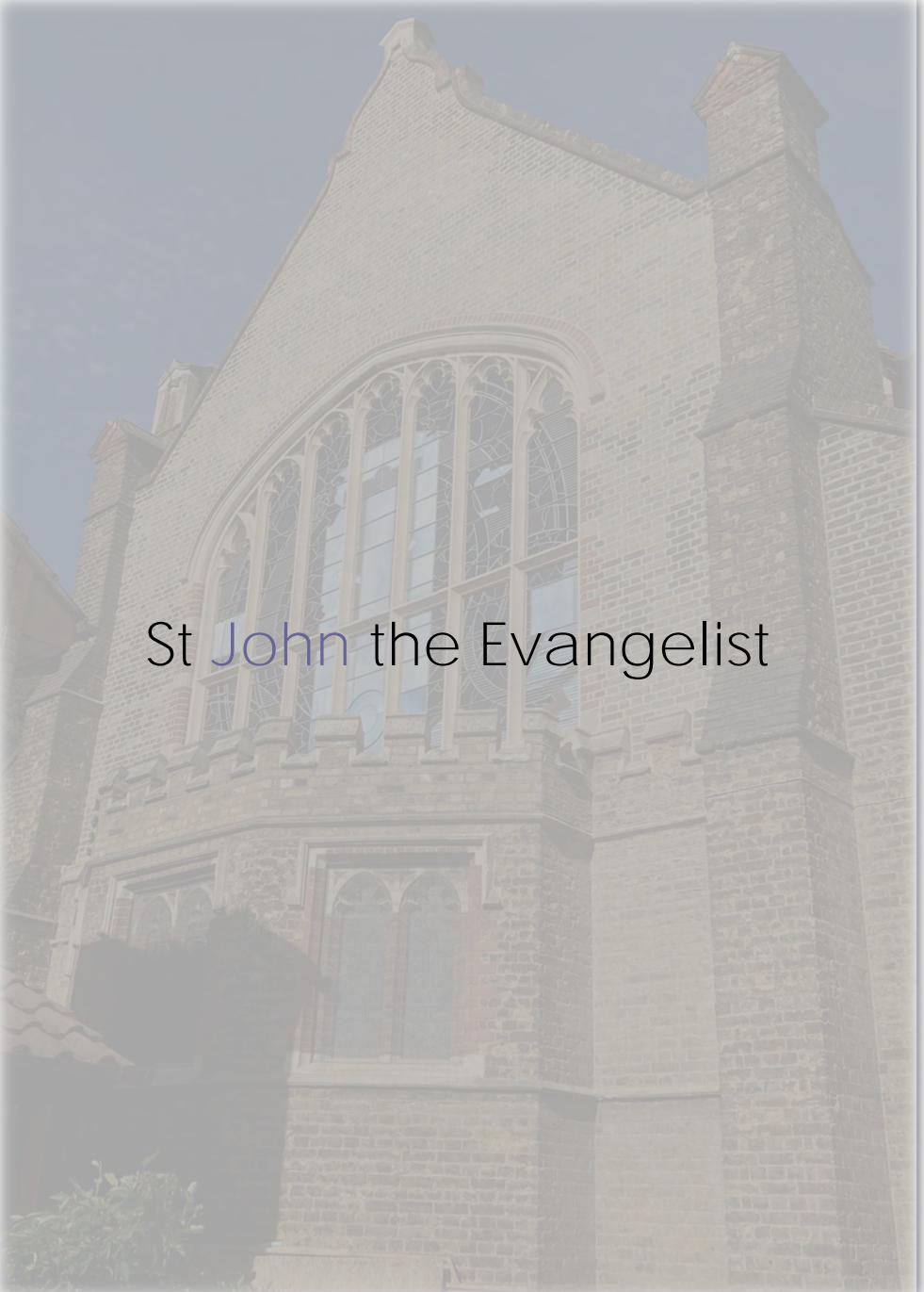
LOCAL FACILITIES

Shops: The area features various local shopping parades. Central Ilford serves as a medium-sized shopping hub, offering amenities such as banks, a library, cinemas, and a large NHS health centre. Larger retail centres can be found nearby in Romford and Stratford.

Parks: The Benefice includes two main parks—Seven Kings Park and Westwood Recreation Ground—both equipped with children's play facilities. To the north lies Fairlop Waters Country Park, offering a lake and a range of leisure activities. Hainault Country Park, located a short drive away, provides extensive recreational options including walking trails, a craft centre, petting farm, shops, and a restaurant.

Schools: A variety of primary and secondary schools are situated within or near the Benefice, providing accessible education for families in the area.

Hospitals: King George Hospital is located immediately adjacent to the Benefice, ensuring convenient healthcare access. The main hospital for the wider area is Queen's Hospital in Romford.



St John the Evangelist

THE CHURCH & PARISH CENTRE

The building was consecrated in 1904. In 2004, as part of our centenary celebrations, we commissioned a stained glass window for the west end of the building.



The building was substantially redeveloped and was re-dedicated in September 1990. The redevelopment comprised forming a new worship area at the west end of the building with a new central entrance, lounge, parish office and vestry. The east end of the building became the new Parish Centre comprising three halls, kitchen and toilet facilities. The entire ground floor of the building is accessible to wheelchair users and those with physical impairment. An accessible toilet is located centrally adjacent to the lounge. We also have an Upper room accessed by a staircase only.

We have our own website, www.saintjohnschurch.co.uk and FaceBook page.

OUR FINANCIAL POSITION

St John's benefited from a substantial legacy in 2021 which improved our financial position considerably. Our strong financial position enabled us to embark on a number of capital projects including renovating the West Wall, replacing the floor covering in the lounge area and offices and improvements to the heating system. It was also decided that we should help our sister church of St Peters and to pay our full Parish Share and it was anticipated that this would mean we would run at a year on year deficit. St. John's employs two regular staff (an office administrator and the hall's cleaner) who along with those people who cover the caretaking for outside events are paid the London Living Wage. We have a number of regular renters of our halls including a playgroup, several lunch clubs, yoga groups, dance groups, Karate, and the Scouts.

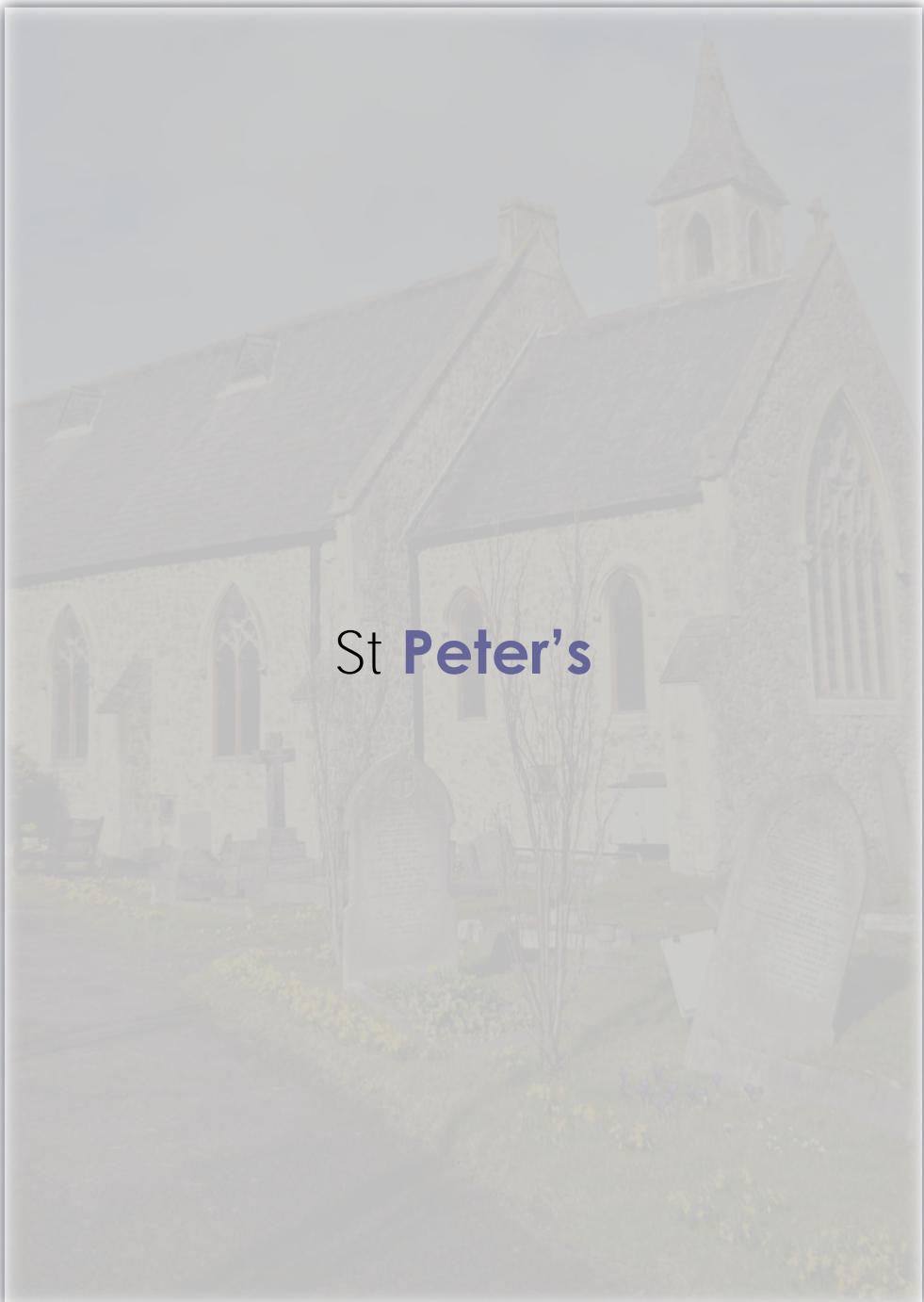
THE PARISH IN NUMBERS

There are currently forty members on our electoral Roll, nine of whom live outside the parish.

Sunday Services average 20 - 35 attendees, which increase to 40 - 60 at seasonal services.

We often accommodate large funeral services. Our worship area can seat about 200 people, which can be enlarged by opening sliding folding doors connecting the worship area to the main hall through the lounge.





THE CHURCH AND HALLS

The Church itself, consecrated in 1863, is built from Portland Stone from the old Westminster Bridge, situated in an open churchyard. The church building and layout is traditional, with pew seating for approximately 120 people. The organ was built for the 1862 International Exhibition and was donated by a local family after it was purchased from a pub in the East End. It also has an electronic piano.

The two church halls, kitchen, and choir vestry are in a separate complex a few metres across the churchyard and these are in good order.

We do not have a current website, providing information via our FaceBook page.



St Peter's Altar
at Easter

OUR FINANCIAL POSITION

Our income is raised through donations from the congregation via regular payments into our bank account or collections at our services. We also rent our halls to various organisations.

All bills are paid regularly, we also repair the church and halls as required. Our church is a Grade II listed building and therefore costs more to repair. We also have a 'reserve' fund in case of emergencies that might arise.

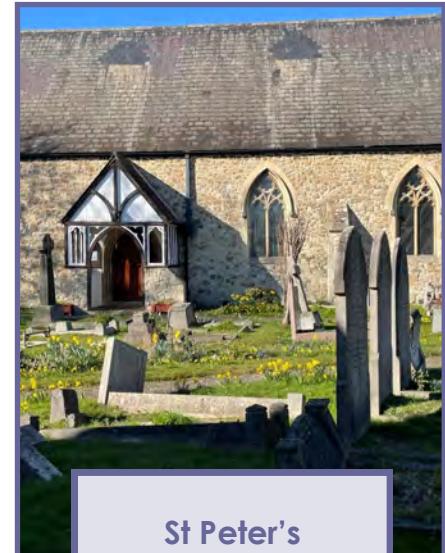
We pay only a limited amount towards our family purse due to heavy repair bills over the last 6 months. The PCC will continue to look at increasing this as our finances improve.

THE PARISH IN NUMBERS

At the time of the APCM 2025, there were 28 members on our Electoral Roll, this has since risen to 31 members. Approximately half of that number live outside the Parish and this is believed to be because of the demographic changes in the wider community. Sunday services average between 11 - 25 attendees, which does increase at seasonal services to between 40-50.

We can accommodate 120 people for large funerals or weddings.

A
wedding
set up



St Peter's
Churchyard



Inside St Peter's



Fundraising
Event

THE PERSON WE WOULD LIKE OUR NEW PRIEST TO BE :

We would like a person with a pastoral heart and a true love for people, who can and will work and seek to build upon the faith of those within the benefice.

Our new priest will need to be a listener and an encourager to those who hold back. We have supportive congregations with much to offer spiritually & practically who look to our Rector for guidance.

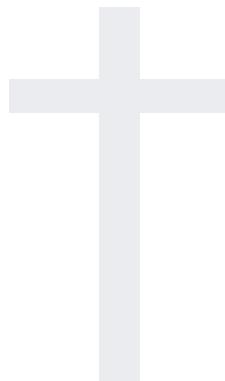
Someone who can lead and delegate in equal measure and can recognise and use the varied talents of the members of our congregations, seeing the potential in everyone to share in the ministry of the benefice.

Someone who helps us to explore faith in light of the Bible, tradition and lived experience.

A minister who can see across the church's traditions to draw down the best spiritual lessons / examples and teaching to inspire the life of the benefice.

A priest who will play an active part in the wider deanery and diocese.

Someone who has a sense of humour.



IN RETURN WE CAN OFFER:

Two churches which have been proactive in working together as one benefice, and have embodied the principle of mutual support.

A good team of active lay people who are able and willing to assist in ministry.

Buildings which are actively used by the community and which assist in bringing in revenue.

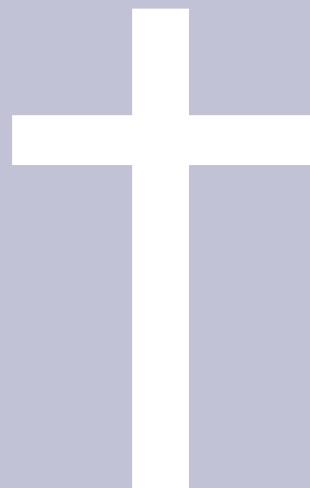
A pleasant vicarage in a quiet and peaceful part of London, yet simultaneously on the doorstep of excellent transport links and much multicultural vitality.

Congregations who understand the pressures of modern life, who are not expecting their priest to be super-human.

*'Two churches in outer east London,
with one heart for Jesus.'*

The Aldborough Benefice

Parish profile



St Peter's, Aldborough Hatch

St John's, Seven Kings