

Parish Profile

For the appointment of

Priest in Charge & Rector Designate

at

St Mary the Virgin Great Baddow



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](https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/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

Welcome!

Thank you for showing interest in the role of Priest in Charge and Rector Designate of St Mary's Great Baddow. We are on a journey of mission, ministry and mutual support and we are looking for a Rector who will continue to unite us and help us to grow spiritually and numerically.

We have a lot to offer a prospective candidate along with challenges to address too. Our new Rector will be supported in their ministry by retired clergy colleagues, churchwardens, a Licensed Lay Minister, Authorised Lay Preachers, a paid administrator and PCC. We hope and pray that God will help you to discern His call for your life and ministry.

With a history going back to the 12th century, St Mary's Great Baddow has long been an integral part of mission and evangelism in Chelmsford and in the wider diocese. As the 'mother church' of Great Baddow it has supported the growth of a new congregation on the Meadgate estate and the development of St Paul's Church on Beehive Lane. Since 1988 those three churches have operated as a team, each with its own PCC and church wardens, but sharing clergy and seeking together to offer different experiences of worship and mission with the same aim of proclaiming the gospel afresh in each generation.

St Mary's is now on a new adventure in the process of becoming a singular parish church again seven decades after planting, nurturing, and working with St Pauls and Meadgate. The three churches have together been prayerfully considering how best to move forward in a new season of ministry with three churches now with mature ministries and structures. We have decided that this is the right time to bring the team ministry to an end - allowing each Church to grow independently whilst retaining the desire to collaborate together to serve the people of Great Baddow and beyond. Our members are excited to see what God has planned for us and this appointment will be the first step in this journey.

We want to build on the strengths we practised in the old team -

- To be a community of faith which welcomes all.
- Learning together how to understand the Bible, what it says to us in our 21st century context, and how to apply its teaching today.
- Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ both in our words and in our actions
- To be the light of Christ in our community by providing practical and spiritual support.
- And in all of this to be powered by and led by the Holy Spirit.

But just building on the past is ignoring the future. If you were appointed as our new Rector, where would you lead us? How would you use the skills, energy, and love for Christ which you will find at St Mary's?

We hope you will be as excited as we are about the prospect of joining us for a new season of ministry at St Mary's.

The St Mary's Team

Retired Clergy with PTO

**Revd Sandy
Southee**



Revd Napo John



Licensed Lay Minister

Anne Heath



Staff Team and Wardens

Ryfka



Cliff



Steven



Priest in Charge & Rector Designate Person Profile

As Priest in Charge and Rector Designate, you'll be at the heart of a loving church family. You'll be working with, and supported by, retired clergy with PTO, enthusiastic lay leaders, experienced Lay Ministers, Lay Readers, a staffed office, and a caring congregation who are eager to work alongside you.

We are praying for a new Minister who:

- has a deep commitment to Jesus Christ with a passion for prayer, and a commitment to applying God's word in daily life.
- is a gifted and inspirational team leader, able to encourage and motivate others in ministry and nurture vocations for local and national ministry.
- can exercise leadership with a spirit of collaboration.
- has a heart for evangelism and mission, and will lead us in reaching out to the wider community with the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- is comfortable working with a range of styles of worship, including traditional hymns and contemporary worship songs.
- understands that the Christian faith has a breadth of interpretation of the Bible on some topics and is open to discussing, learning with us, and leading us forward as a Church. The current hot discussion is around human sexuality but as Christianity is a living and relevant faith we believe there will always be a need to look for how teaching should be applied, whilst being sensitive to varying viewpoints
- To lead us forward as a Church, congregation, and community in the direction the Lord is calling us to go.

St Mary's Church

<https://www.stmarysgreatbaddow.org.uk>



Our Prayer for 2026:

Lord Jesus, calm our hearts when they are anxious. Lead us as our shepherd to still waters, where we drink deeply of the life you give through your death and resurrection. When the path feels overwhelming, remind us that with you beside us, we have all we need. Amen.

Verse for 2026:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. ***Psalm 23***

Who we are

St Mary's is a welcoming community where everyone is valued and encouraged to belong. We love to worship together, support one another, and share God's love in practical ways with our neighbours.

We are a church with a passion for Jesus whose purpose is to glorify and worship God, committed to growing each day to be more like Him. Our aim is to see others come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour and to see the Kingdom of God grow and develop in Great Baddow. We offer different styles of worship, from traditional to contemporary, with a clear focus on good preaching and teaching which nurtures faith and discipleship. We are a congregation where all are welcomed, respected and encouraged to be part of the church.

Early in our vacancy we asked our congregation what excites them about St Mary's. We had hundreds of replies, but cutting that back to just a few lines....

- "God is at the heart of our Church and He is shaping us."
- "St. Mary's is an outward facing church, trying to improve the life of our community."
- "St. Mary's is at the heart of the Baddow community."
- "St. Mary's people make things happen."

We have a busy weekly programme that includes regular home groups and prayer breakfasts as well as activities offered to serve our local community. Our established Pastoral Care team provide pastoral support and prayer for our congregation and community such as congregational hospital transport, visiting the St Mary's housebound, and home communion.

During the vacancy St. Mary's has thrived. Congregation members have stepped up to lead services, give talks and more. For example, we tried a new initiative last year by staging a successful Christmas Tree Festival, which will run again in 2026 and hopefully in the years ahead, and our Glitter and Glo, alternative Halloween event, has evolved to include a youth event aimed at key stage 2 children.



Our Buildings

St Mary's has wonderful buildings which we use to glorify God and bless our community.



It's a tremendous privilege to worship in this Grade 1 Listed 12th century building where Christian worship has been continuously taking place for almost a thousand years! This is the distinctive church on the hill in the heart of Great Baddow; its visibility makes it the obvious option for those seeking God or wanting to arrange a church service for one of life's events. It's surrounded by pedestrian thoroughfares, which are used by hundreds of people as they walk around the village. Our tower has eight bells, said to be the finest ring of eight in Essex.

The building was re-ordered in 1999 when the Victorian pews were removed and replaced with chairs. This allows us to seat up to 300 people comfortably in the nave, and to hold services and other events in a variety of combinations. It has underfloor heating, a fully fitted kitchen and toilets. The building is accessible to users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and we have a hearing loop system in place. We hold Quiz Nights, Barn Dances and the church is also used by external hirers for concerts.

The former village school which was built nearby in 1893 has been owned by St. Mary's since 1968 and is used as the 'Church Centre', from where we run Playschool, Toddlers, and is available to hire to community groups.

The church owns two other buildings, a second small hall and the former Chantry School, now a Parish Office where our Administrator is based. A project is currently being undertaken to review the use of our buildings, with the aim of modernising the Church Centre to better support our activities for the benefit of the local community. Our Rector will have the opportunity to shape this alongside St Mary's PCC.

Our buildings are kept in good condition by a committed team of volunteers and trusted historical builders who undertake regular maintenance.

Our Services

Coming together to meet with God through worship, prayer, and sharing the sacraments is the centre of our life at St Mary's.

Our services reflect a wide range of worship styles with a small weekly BCP Communion at 8am followed by our larger service at 10 am where 80 to 90 regularly attend. Our main morning service draws together people of all ages, with at least one communion service a month. St. Mary's is blessed with many gifted musicians who lead our sung worship each week. We enjoy a variety of music styles, including traditional hymns on the organ and worship songs led by a band. Once a month our choir leads us, incorporating music in a breadth of styles, including traditional hymns, contemporary worship songs, music from the Taizé community and from the World Church. We also hold a monthly Celtic Praise Service in the afternoon between March and October, which attracts 20 – 25 members of our congregation



We hold a mid-week communion on a Wednesday morning in which 25 to 30 members of our congregation are able to partake. Home communion is also taken to the Church Family members who are housebound.



On occasional Sundays during the year, our young people lead an alternative style service which is drama and music based.



Our Easter and Christmas services are well-attended, and we are joined by many from our local community who are not regular worshippers, with around 170 on Easter Sunday and over 100 on Christmas Day, along with another 70 to 80 at Midnight mass. We also hold an Annual Memorial Service, when we invite family members to remember the loved ones they have lost throughout the year.

A highlight at Christmas is our 'outdoor nativity' which starts at our local shopping centre before journeying, with Mary riding a real donkey, through the streets into the churchyard and finally into the church where several hundred people enjoy carol singing, mulled wine, and mince pies.

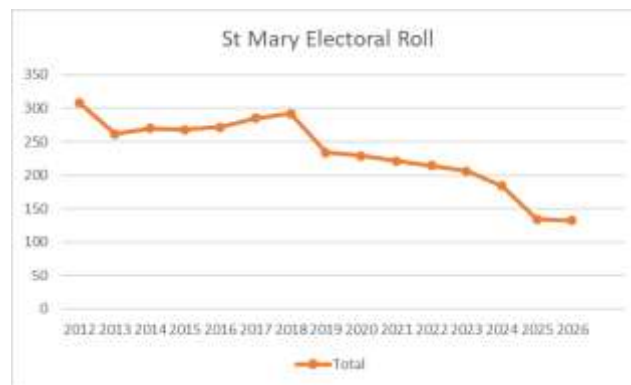


Our Candlelit Carol Service is led by an enthusiastic augmented choir. On Christmas Eve we hold a family-focussed Crib Service when children are encouraged to come dressed as one of the Christmas characters. Both continue to be a significant point of engagement with our community with over 200 attendees at each.

We hold a formal Remembrance Sunday service, when we are joined by members of the Royal British Legion to remember the fallen at the War Memorial located inside the church. There are also representatives from the Great Baddow Parish Council, the Fire Brigade, and the Ukrainian community.

We have an enthusiastic team of bell ringers who call us to worship one Sunday a month and for festivals, special occasions and weddings.

St Mary's unfortunately follows the general Church of England trend of reducing attendance. Our Electoral roll is frequently revised, accurate, and a true reflection of those who attend and play a role in our Church. We strive to understand why people join, why some do not stay, and why some leave. Currently our Electoral Roll currently stands at 132.



Our PCC

There is currently a full complement of members on the PCC of 20 lay people (including 2 Church Wardens, 2 Deputy Wardens, Treasurer and PCC Secretary). We also have one licensed lay minister. The PCC has six normal meetings each year in alternate months, plus extra-ordinary meetings if required. There are also sub-committees for looking at Finance, Mission, and a Standing Committee (2 Wardens, 2 Deputy Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary) that meets in alternate months to the PCC.

Our PCC members are active in discussions and we benefit from the diversity of gender, experience, and views which are held. We also benefit from the experience PCC members bring to Church life from their jobs and interests outside of church.

Children & young people

We cherish our children and young people and believe that they are not just the future of our church but also the present. We run groups which are fun to go to, where Christian life can be explored, and faith built up. Our young people are also encouraged to get involved in the ministry of the church and are often found in the worship band or sound team.

We have teaching for different ages in our congregation: Powerhouse (ages 3-11) and Pathfinders (ages 11-15) run regularly on Sundays. Historically all these groups have been well attended, however, numbers have recently fallen and we have relatively few children attending on a Sunday morning. This is an area we are committed to reviving at St. Mary's.



Outside Sunday mornings we run regular activities for children and families in the parish who we would love to see become part of our worshipping community.

Each month we run 'Messy Tea' after school, which attracts around 50 children and their parents/carers and we would like to offer this more often.





Twice a week we hold a Babies & Toddlers group in the Church Centre with 35 families attending.

In a long-running relationship called 'Open the Book', St. Mary's has established good links with our local Infant & Junior schools, who welcome a willing team from the congregation each week to bring Christian input for the school assemblies. We also host the Infant and Junior schools at Easter and Christmas for their annual services and other visits.

St Mary's Playschool



The St. Mary's Playschool, established in 1968, is held in the Church Centre from Monday to Friday. It provides an affordable alternative to commercial nurseries and has an OFSTED rating of 'Good' with 12 employees and approximately 65 children. Our PCC is responsible for Playschool and employ an experienced and skilled manager to run the school. There are good links between the church and the playschool with the children attending regular services in church. The 'Open the Book' team also visit Playschool regularly.

We hold an annual alternative Halloween event, Glitter & Glo, which is attended by 80+ children and their families, the majority of whom are not part of our worshipping community.



Homegroups

We have a variety of home groups which meet fortnightly both in the day and evening. The groups use a wide range of materials to discuss from resources such as York Courses and the Archbishop of Canterbury's chosen Lent book.

Women's Prayer breakfasts

Our prayer breakfasts are open to any women in the church who would like to spend time in fellowship and prayer together - an opportunity to both connect with others and spend time with God. We start with breakfast served at tables so people are free to chat, and chat they do.... we have a short thought or reflection on anything from friendship, new beginnings, seasons, 'God on mute' to sustainability. Following this we break into groups for prayer - all topics local, national and global are covered. We have on average 25 to 30 women four or so times a year.

Annual Christmas Tree Festival

Our first Christmas Tree Festival was held in December 2025 with the intention of being a fun community event bringing together church and local groups, charities, schools, local businesses and individuals by each decorating a tree which were then displayed in church for the public to view. Over 400 visitors came on the day to admire the 32 trees, enjoy festive musical entertainment, refreshments, children's craft, lucky dip and chocolate tombola. The Christmas Tree Festival will be back in December 2026, and it is hoped will become part of our annual calendar.



Mission

“....I may have all the faith needed to move mountains but if I have no love I am nothing...” 1 Cor 13 v 2,

We currently tithe our church income and share it with organisations local, national and overseas which reflect the five Marks of Mission. In 2026 our giving was split between CMS, CPAS, CHESS (Churches Homeless Emergency Support Scheme), Embrace the Middle East, MAC (Mid Africa Concern), Prison Fellowship, Tearfund, Scripture Union, Arocha UK, Made for More, and Chelmsford Foodbank. We also donate the collection from the annual Christingle service to The Children's Society.

MAC, Mid Africa Concern, is a home-grown charity which was established by St. Mary's congregation. The group meets monthly responding to specific requests from our partners in Africa by sending clothing and other supplies to Potters Village and Kisiizi Hospital in Uganda.

We also have a yearly gift service in the weeks before Christmas, in which we currently support the work of Baby Basics - a local charity providing essentials for babies and their families.

Finances

St. Mary's has a strong tradition of sound finances, supported by a prayerful and giving congregation. This includes our Missionary Giving and our commitment to fully paying our Parish Share

Currently we have regular gift aided monthly giving from our congregation of about £7,700 per month (excluding Gift Aid claimed back). This comes from approximately 75 families and individuals. Our congregation since Covid has naturally shrunk and therefore giving has decreased over that time as a result. Our budgeted total offerings for 2026 is £130,000. We are currently running a little below our budgeted giving for the year when open plate giving is included, with a total budgeted income, including Weddings & Funerals, Use of Buildings and Sundry Donations of £187,000.

Our annual expenditure is mostly fairly fixed, with the exception of our Missionary Giving (which is a PCC agreed 10% of total offerings received), which is discretionary but has always been found and paid. Our Parish Share for 2026 is £101,000, which has always been met in full each year.

Income received by St. Mary's has not matched outgoings for the last few years, since Covid. The shortfall has been met by reserves and of course by additional prayerful giving received from the congregation. We are currently looking at the Cornerstone Stewardship materials from the Church of England and considering how we can work to put St. Mary's back into a more resilient financial position.

Eco Church

St. Mary's is fully committed to being an 'Eco-friendly' church and we have successfully achieved the A Rocha Silver Award. This is championed by one of our Deputy Wardens who heads up our Eco Church initiative, making sure everything used in church is recycled where possible, and each month shares 'Mary's Tips' with us on how we can live in a more eco-friendly way. In addition we have fitted LED lighting and are currently investigating a more eco-friendly heating system.

Social activities for the Community

The re-ordering of the church building allows us to host social events, when the chairs are pushed to one side and are replaced with tables set out in 'café' style. The local Community Luncheon Club host a lunch each Tuesday, inviting and providing lunch for the elderly in our community. On Wednesday mornings we hold 'Coffee Pot' when coffee and biscuits are served; this attracts between 30 and 40 each week, around half of whom have no other connection to the church.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is taken very seriously, and we have a Parish Safeguarding Officer in place who, with the full support of the PCC, works closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team as the need arises. All Safer Recruitment processes are followed.

This extends to our congregation's attitude. Many of our members have roles which require them to take the prescribed training and, if required, to submit to DBS checks. This is undertaken willingly and the feedback on the training is generally positive.

Prayers of Love & Faith

We are a congregation with a range of views on the topics discussed in Living in Love and Faith and are looking forward to our new Rector being sensitive to these views, leading with wisdom and care, and helping all to flourish with grace, whatever their views may be.

Challenges

We want our new Rector to come and work with us in our desire to enable a fresh vision for St. Mary's to better serve the community in which we are set, by helping us to grow spiritually and numerically:

- Bringing our 'non-Sunday' contacts more fully into our Church Family.
- Attracting younger people and families.
- Encouraging the young families who have recently joined us and attracting more to join.
- Helping those we meet in our external activities to grow in faith and to become active disciples of Jesus.
- Helping us to engage with teenagers not currently part of our church family.
- Encouraging us to being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit so that by the power of private and organised prayer we see more of the Holy Spirit's power.

Great Baddow

We love our village of Great Baddow, and we hope you will too!

The village of Great Baddow is a lively suburb of the City of Chelmsford where neighbours truly care for one another. There is a strong sense of community with a range of local shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants, two shopping parades, and our three churches. Our churches are more than places of worship—they're homes for friendship, support, and shared purpose.



Great Baddow has good public transport links with buses into Chelmsford mainline station from where it's easy to get to London and all the London airports. There are also excellent road links.

Great Baddow and Chelmsford have excellent educational facilities. As well as our own St. Mary's Playschool there are several day nurseries, three primary schools and two comprehensive schools in the village. In Chelmsford there are two grammar schools, several colleges, and Anglia Ruskin University.

Chelmsford itself is a rapidly growing city offering a comprehensive range of shopping facilities with its busy pedestrianised High Street, shopping precincts, hugely popular Bond Street, and a wide range of independent and chain cafes and restaurants. There are many opportunities to pursue sports and leisure. Wooded Essex countryside is on your doorstep and many miles of coastline. There are also sports and leisure clubs, playgrounds, in fact almost every leisure activity is available locally.

The Sunday Times in 2025 rated Chelmsford as the regional winner for the 'Best Place to Live' in the Eastern Region.

The Rectory at St Mary's



Designed by a former Rector this is a detached 1980s purpose-built house situated on a large plot opposite St. Mary's church. The front and south facing rear gardens are mainly laid down to lawn, with parking for 4 cars and a large garage. A substantial wall at the front shields the house from the road. Inside there is a large fully fitted kitchen with separate utility room, a lounge with access to the rear garden and an open plan dining room, which leads to a conservatory. There is a large study and downstairs toilet by the front door, which can be shut off from the rest of the house to allow for family privacy.

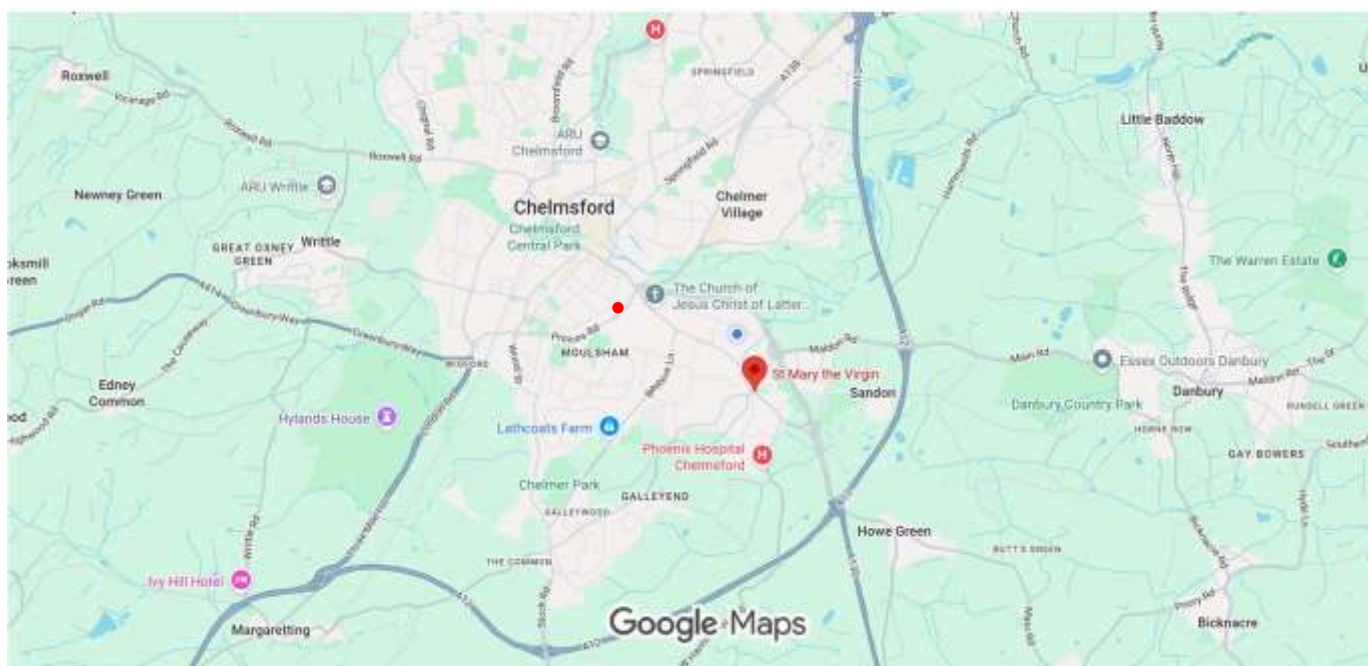
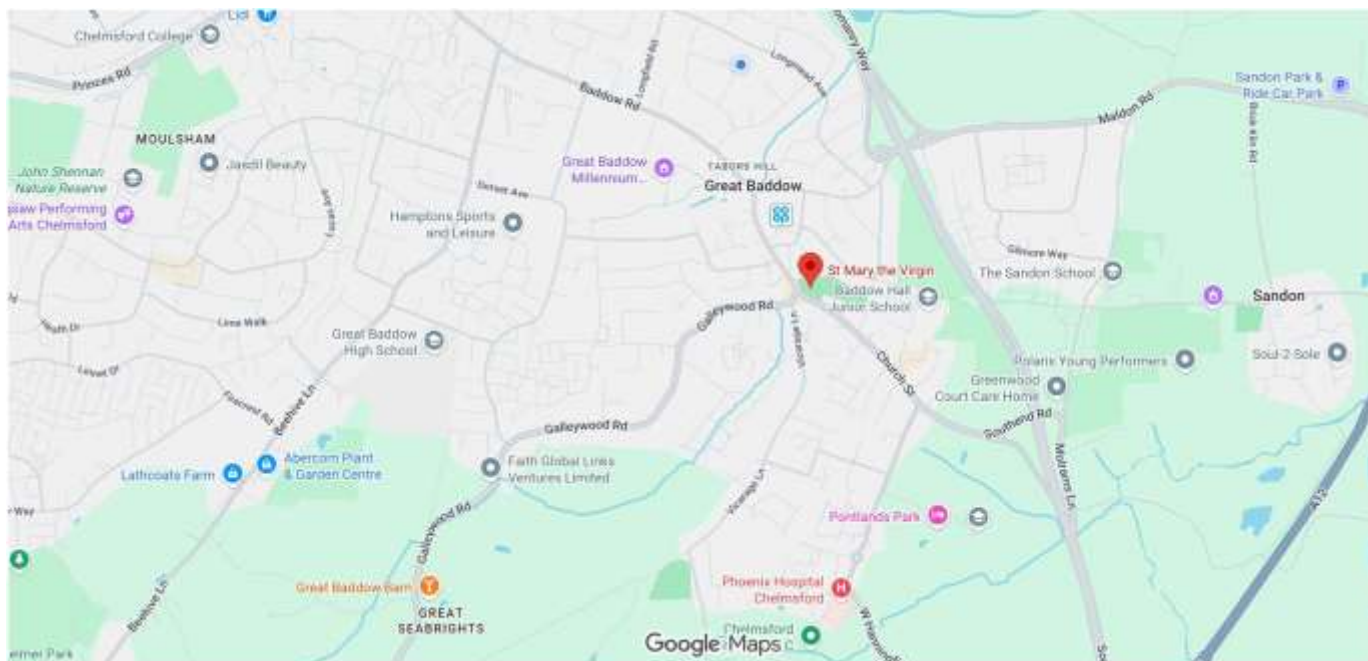


Upstairs are 4 bedrooms and a family bathroom.

Heating is provided by a gas boiler and there is a substantial array of PV solar panels on the south facing roof.

Location Maps

Great Baddow is on the outskirts of Chelmsford, and Chelmsford is 30 miles North-East of London, and has a regular 35 minute train service into London Liverpool Street. There are also good road links with the A12 dual carriageway linking Chelmsford to the M25 in 15 minutes.



The Archdeaconry of Chelmsford in the Bradwell Episcopal Area



Dear friend,

The Bradwell Area is beautifully diverse. The nine deaneries of the Episcopal Area cover south and mid Essex, from Epping Forest and Ongar, Brentwood and Thurrock on the M25 out to the coast with the River Thames as the southern border and the Blackwater in the north. Our two cities are Southend and Chelmsford. Significant new housing is being built across our area. We serve the 20th century suburban populations of Basildon and Hadleigh as well as a spread of rural situations including Rochford and Maldon & Dengie where St Cedd's 7th century Bradwell Chapel still stands as the bridgehead of 'mission to the East Saxons'.

My team and I, with each deanery, are trying to help one another bring about positive changes and establish ways of mutual support in each local context. Some of this counts as 'innovation', some is in sharing learning and ideas, some are expressing our being in ways we've been called to for generations.

There is a changing culture in the Bradwell area with a focus on equipping each church with tools for renewal and the means to foster a sense of abundance. We welcome innovators and leaders of change who are led by the Spirit. We welcome those who show and tell the good news of Jesus afresh among each generation and context.

Most of all we welcome priests to apply for posts who are people of prayer, who call upon our loving Heavenly Father for the ways and means to display his love and win people into his Kingdom.

I would warmly welcome you to listen out for the prompting of God in respect of this post in Great Baddow as we support St Mary's moving into a new season of mission and ministry as a single parish, working alongside our other congregations in Great Baddow but without formal benefice links. Ask him in prayer to bless the people you read about here; ask for love to abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best. I hope that what you will contribute towards, along with the saints of God in this place, is the development of a loving, caring and nurturing environment in which everyone can do their very best and have a good time doing it! That is, under God I humbly submit, what we are here for in support of you were you to join the team.

Do be in touch with me or Archdeacon Jonathan if you want to know more detail on any of this.

With my blessings,

The Right Reverend Adam Atkinson, Bishop of Bradwell