

# Parish of Esher

Growing together in faith, hope, and love

Christ Church, Esher and St. George's, West End



## **A Prayer for Our Churches**

May the doors of our churches be wide enough to receive all who come seeking God and fellowship.

May the doors of our churches be narrow enough to shut out pettiness and pride, envy, and enmity.

May the threshold of our churches be no stumbling block to young and frail feet.

May the threshold of our churches be too high to admit complacency and self-seeking.

May our churches be, for all who enter, safe places and doorways to a richer life in Christ.

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# Welcome to Christ Church and St George's

We love our churches - we love their history, beauty, worship, and music. We value the sense of belonging that comes from our shared faith. We cherish the familiarity and rhythm of our liturgy, and the reassurance of our long-held Anglican tradition.

We also recognise that what feels comfortable can, over time, make us less alert to the changes happening around us. Our congregations remain warm and loyal, yet we know that new ways of connecting are needed if our churches are to flourish in the years ahead. The time has come to look outward with fresh eyes and renewed purpose.

Our Parish has two beautiful and historic churches, standing as visible landmarks, reminding all who pass by that God is at work in this community. They are beacons of **faith, hope, and love**.

- **Christ Church** – at the heart of Esher, known for a strong community, choral music, and liturgical worship
- **St George's** - in the village of West End, offers a more intimate setting and a powerful sense of community



We are part of the Emly Deanery within the Diocese of Guildford. While Esher is often seen as the archetypal Surrey commuter town, our parish also embraces areas of real need - communities we are committed to serving with compassion and love.

Through this Profile, our aim is to capture the essence of our parish - **who we are, what we have achieved, where we are now, and our hopes for the future**. Our parish holds wonderful opportunities that, with the right leadership, can be brought to life as our churches flourish, grow, and share Christ's love more widely in our community.

## Our Identity and Values

Though distinct in character and worship style, Christ Church, and St George's share a deep heritage and a faith rooted in tradition and community. We are inclusive and

open-minded, welcoming everyone who walks through our doors. We live out our faith through care, service, and generosity, offering our time, talents, and resources to the parish and the wider world. Yet we also recognise the need to evolve. To engage more families and young people, we are exploring ways to include more contemporary worship alongside our traditional services.

The challenge ahead is to balance tradition with renewal - nurturing our heritage while growing into a church that is accessible, joyful, and relevant to all. Reconciling different preferences in worship is never easy; it touches each of us personally. But we remain united in faith, prayer, and our shared purpose of serving God together.



## Looking Ahead

Throughout this Profile, you will find voices from across our parish - reflections that embody our shared commitment to Christ and our community. Their stories reveal a spirit of generosity, faith, and hope - the very qualities that define who we are.

We are however at a turning point. The framework of a strong and faithful parish is in place; what we now need is renewal of spirit and imagination. With the right leadership - rooted in faith, open to change, and confident in the gospel - we can flourish again: serve more widely, give more freely, and become a brighter beacon of hope at the heart of Esher.

Are you the leader who will help us make that happen? Someone ready to build on firm foundations, to bridge ancient and modern, to speak God's truth into today's world, and to lead with energy, courage, compassion, and conviction. We believe that with the right leader, guided by the Holy Spirit, our churches can continue to stand at the very heart of community life - alive with faith, hope, and love.

We hope you enjoy reading this profile, if you would like more information or an informal chat, please get in touch with our church wardens, **Fraser McGuicken** or **Will Stevens** at [churchwardens@esherparish.org.uk](mailto:churchwardens@esherparish.org.uk)





# Statement of Needs

As a parish, we are blessed with strong foundations - a welcoming and supportive congregation, beautiful church buildings, dedicated volunteers, and a rich tradition of worship and music. We now seek leadership and vision to help us grow together in faith, hope, and love and extend beyond our regular worshippers.

We are praying for a leader who:

- **Embodies faith and wisdom** – someone with a deep and living faith, spiritual insight, and the gift of teaching, able to inspire and connect with people of all ages and backgrounds; to share the love of God, interpret Scripture clearly, and nurture a more prayerful and profound faith within our community
- **Communicates with warmth and energy** – an engaging preacher and communicator with enthusiasm and imagination, who can motivate and encourage others to live out their faith through action and service
- **Leads with integrity and care** – a compassionate and principled leader who works collaboratively as part of a team, and delegates wisely to empower others in ministry and mission
- **Is visionary, resilient and forward-looking** – eager to guide our parish, helping us to embrace new opportunities, use new communication tools and social media to reach the wider community
- **Is approachable and pastoral** – someone who is friendly, good-humoured, and welcoming to all, who listens with empathy, and responds with understanding and grace
- **Is visible and engaged** – willing to walk alongside us in the daily life of our parish and community, sharing in our desire to serve others and to fulfil our calling to be a vibrant, outward-looking church

With the **support and partnership of the parish**, we **pray that our new Rector will lead us in:**

- **Nurturing and expanding** our ministry **among children, youth, and families**, helping to strengthen and grow our younger congregation.
- **Growing as disciples**, meeting God **in worship and prayer, living our faith each day**, and walking together as a Church family in friendship and support.
- **Enriching and broadening our worship and service offerings**, ensuring they continue to inspire and reflect the diversity of our parish community.
- **Encouraging faithful stewardship** through a shared and **prayerfully discerned vision for the future**.
- Deepening our **engagement with both our local neighbourhood** and the **wider global community**, living out our faith in action and compassion.

**What we will offer you**

- A **resolute and supportive PCC, Parish Staff Team, and congregations**, committed to the life and vision of the Church
- **Two distinctive and welcoming churches**, offering opportunities for varied ministry within a friendly and engaged community
- A **spacious, detached rectory with a secure garden**, ideally located just two hundred yards from Christ Church and one mile from St George's
- A relaxed **village atmosphere within a historic and vibrant town**, boasting a strong community spirit and excellent transport links to London (24 minutes by fast train)
- Access to **high-quality local schools**, including Esher Church School and Esher High School, both connected with the parish

# Esher Parish - Vision and Ambitions

As a parish, we are actively progressing towards our vision of growing together in faith, hope, and love. A key expectation of our new rector will be to review our ambitions with us, help refine them where appropriate, and work collaboratively to bring them to life.

## Growing Disciples

<b>Diocese of Guildford</b> Transforming Church Transforming Lives	<b>Esher Now</b> What we do now	<b>Esher Parish Ambitions</b> Growing together in faith, hope, and love
<b>Growing Disciples</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening our own discipleship and growing new disciples is at the heart of Transforming Church, Transforming Lives</li> <li>That is because all Christians are called to become a church of missionary disciples, deepening our faith and service as followers of Jesus Christ, and going out into the world sharing that faith, growing and encouraging new believers.</li> <li>Everyone in the Church family is called to this, whatever stage in life, whatever background, or context - at work, in the community or as leaders in the church</li> <li>How each of us does that becomes clearer as we worship, read scripture, pray and share our lives with each other in congregation and smaller groups</li> </ul> 	<b>Worship, Prayer and Learning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular Sunday Communion Services at both churches</li> </ul> <b>Other Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Age Services and special School Services</li> <li>All Souls and Candlemas</li> <li>Remembrance Sunday</li> <li>Annual Pet Service</li> <li>Festival of Lessons and Carols</li> <li>Christmas Eve Midnight Mass and Christmas Crib Services</li> <li>Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, and Ascension</li> </ul> <b>Everyday Faith includes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly fellowship group</li> <li>Weekly zoom prayers</li> <li>Weekly intercessions</li> </ul> <b>Groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bell Ringers</li> <li>Choir</li> <li>Book Group</li> <li>Lent and Advent courses</li> <li>Sunday School</li> <li>Youth Group</li> <li>Confirmation Classes</li> <li>Pastoral Care</li> <li>Flower Arrangers</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All-inclusive baptism, wedding, and funeral policy open to all who live in our Parish</li> </ul>	<b>Christian Leadership</b> <p><b>Increasing All Age Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with our new Rector on options (time/place/format) with baptism families and other contacts</li> <li>Consider 6-month trial</li> </ul> <p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage vocations to authorised public ministry</li> <li>Investigate lay leadership training opportunities</li> <li>Develop list of projects and define the volunteer tasks</li> <li>Run Christian exploration evenings in church by showing series such as "Chosen."</li> <li>Consider a more reflective style service option once a month</li> </ul> 



# Esher Parish - Vision and Ambitions

## Growing Diversity

<b>Diocese of Guildford</b> Transforming Church Transforming Lives	<b>Esher Now</b> What we do now	<b>Esher Parish Ambitions</b> Growing together in faith, hope, and love
<p><b>Growing Diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For many parishes, this will mean increasing the number of younger people engaging in Church in some way, so plans to increase our contacts with children and young people is critical</li> <li>• We also want to ensure we better reflect the communities we serve, recognising that whoever we are, wherever we have come from, whatever we have done, we are all loved, welcomed, and valued in God's house</li> <li>• It also means having the courage to experiment with new ways of being Church, physically, and digitally. What might these new worshipping communities look like in our context?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Youth Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Families Worker</li> <li>• Weekly Sunday School</li> <li>• All Age Services</li> <li>• Youth Group</li> <li>• Regular school assemblies</li> <li>• Links with Esher High School Hub Leader - services and other activities</li> <li>• Support school RE teaching by ministry team</li> <li>• Claremont Fan Court School Carols</li> <li>• Act of Remembrance – incl. Air Cadets, Scouts, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, and Beavers</li> </ul> <p><b>New ways of being Church</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly zoom prayers</li> <li>• Live streaming and recording of Parish Communion Services</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/@EsherParish">https://www.youtube.com/@EsherParish</a></li> </ul> 	<p><b>Growing Youth</b></p> <p><b>Increasing All Age Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore increasing All Age Services from monthly to a more regular basis aligned to our CDP</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for parent/toddler events - Lower Green Community Centre</li> <li>• Increase our engagement with Elmbridge Multi-Faith and forge links with Christian worshipping communities in our parish</li> <li>• Refresh and modernize Parish website</li> <li>• Progress development of church logo to enhance our identity</li> <li>• Run Christian Exploration evenings in church</li> </ul> <p><b>Global Outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a link with an overseas Parish</li> <li>• Explore existing overseas links at Esher Church School and Esher High School and consider opportunities to contribute</li> </ul>

# Esher Parish – Vision and Ambitions

## Growing Community

<b>Diocese of Guildford</b> Transforming Church Transforming Lives	<b>Esher Now</b> What we do now	<b>Esher Parish Ambitions</b> Growing together in faith, hope, and love
<p><b>Growing Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the global Covid-19 pandemic, refugee, and fuel crises, we are more acutely aware than ever before of our need for strong, caring partnerships within and beyond our communities</li> <li>• Many churches have been right at the heart of building these relationships, recognising that by working together for the common good, there are mutual benefits.</li> <li>• Growing community helps us connect with new contacts, share resources, and amplify our efforts to transform lives for the better</li> <li>• Churches that build community outside their four walls are churches and communities that thrive and survive</li> </ul> 	<p><b>In the Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rector, Honorary Asst Priest and Children &amp; Families Worker take assemblies at Esher Church School to engage children and staff</li> <li>• Rector, PCC members, and our Children &amp; Families Worker serve on the Governing Board at Esher Church School, including the Christian Distinctiveness Committee</li> <li>• Rector, PCC, and wider community serve on Governing Body at Esher High School, with one chairing the Board of the Enlighten Learning Trust</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnerships in the community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music on the Green, Music in the Tower and Carols in the pub</li> <li>• Christmas Tree lighting</li> <li>• West End Carol Concert</li> <li>• Peace and Contemplation</li> <li>• Crazy Crafts at Lower Green Community Centre</li> <li>• Food Bank collections</li> <li>• Esher Chamber of Commerce breakfast meetings</li> <li>• Esher Planters Club</li> <li>• Christ Church for the May Fair</li> <li>• West End Flower Show - St George's open and Tea and Cake in the Village Hall</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expand Outreach</b></p> <p>Action points from our Church Development plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with our new incumbent to develop our discipleship and Spiritual depth by exploring and running regular discipleship programs</li> <li>• Research existing overseas links at Esher Church School and Esher High School and consider opportunities to build on them</li> <li>• Funding already pledged for a much-needed lighting project in Christ Church - to enable us to offer the church as a suitable venue for wider community use</li> </ul> 



# Foreword from the Bishop of Guildford

The Diocese of Guildford is a warm and friendly place to be, with a strong cohort of gifted and committed laity and clergy, some excellent church schools, and plenty of beautiful countryside to enjoy on a day off! Our vision as a diocese is to see lives and communities transformed through the love of Christ; and, to that end, we have refreshed and simplified our Diocesan strategy, Transforming Church, Transforming Lives, with a particular focus on Growing Disciples, Growing Diversity and Growing Community.

Although we have made a steady recovery since the pandemic, there has been a considerable decline in the number of children engaged in our worshipping communities; and we recognise the need to embrace a mixed ecology in all our parishes and to renew our commitment to becoming a diverse and inter-generational church. Congregations want to 'grow younger' in theory but in practice can be reluctant to embrace the sacrifice involved in passing on the baton of faith to younger generations.

Vocation is another key theme in the diocese right now, and here we have been much encouraged by a considerable growth in vocations for lay and ordained ministries through the broadening scope of our Local Ministry Programme, recently renamed the College of St. Martha. This has sought to raise up a new cohort of confident, theologically articulate assistant ministers in many of our parishes to support our incumbents and lead fresh initiatives, especially in the areas of discipleship and evangelism.

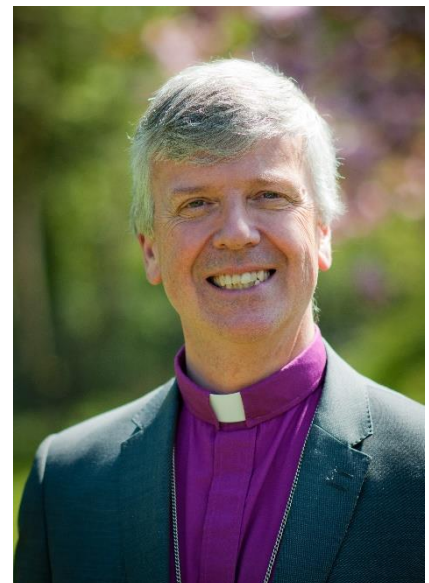
Our team of Mission Enablers is committed to working with every parish in fleshing out its vision in an appropriate way, going with the grain of the church's history and tradition, whilst equally suggesting new approaches to 'proclaiming the gospel afresh in each generation.' This is just one of a number of ways in which we aim to support our clergy; and newcomers to the diocese regularly speak favourably of the welcome they receive and the strong sense of mutual interdependence – 'us and us' rather than 'them and us' – between the parishes and the support services at Church House Guildford.

We are therefore looking for clergy with a proven ability - or at least the clearest potential - in leading change, fostering a vocational culture, and growing the church younger, so that our vision of a Transforming Church, Transforming Lives might be more fully realised.

Do please put in an application if that might be you!

Every blessing,

+Andrew



# Letter from Venerable Martin Breadmore

## The Archdeacon of Dorking

There is much to celebrate across the parish of Esher with its two worship centres at Christ Church in the centre of Esher and St. George's West End, which include faithful congregations committed to grow in discipleship, diversity and community as they live for Jesus wherever they find themselves every day. In recent years there has been a renewed emphasis in establishing a Sunday School and youth work, forging closer links with the Community Centre in Lower Green and the establishment of a new choral scholarship scheme. Emly deanery is also a very supportive and active deanery.

We are seeking to appoint a full time Rector for this parish, who will embrace the mainstream Anglican choral tradition, and will prayerfully build on the strengths of this faithful community as well as further develop the existing ministry amongst children and families and outreach to the community. The new minister should have a passion for seeing people come to a living faith in Jesus and growing disciples, have strong pastoral and teaching gifts, have the ability to inspire others to reach out, and have a passion for engaging with children, families and schools, as well as bringing gifts and evidence of vision, strategy and collaborative leadership. The hope is that the new Rector will also be fully engaged with Deanery colleagues.

This appointment is perfect timing for receiving resource and support from the wider diocese. 2026 marks the beginning of our third cycle of our Parish Needs Process, which is a tried and tested way of working whereby the diocese will seek to walk alongside each parish to help them with vision and whatever needs they might have arisen out of this.

I am very enthusiastic about this post. For the person that God calls, there is so much to offer here: the warmth of a great church family; the opportunity of leadership in a parish, deanery and diocese which offers considerable support and resources; the challenge of discerning with these communities what God is doing and how we might join in; the privilege of living and working in a part of the country with so many opportunities for clergy and families.

If you'd value an informal conversation about this post, I would be keen to speak with you, so please do not hesitate to be in touch with me via: [archdeacon.dorking@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:archdeacon.dorking@cofeguildford.org.uk)



# Parochial Church Council



Fraser McGuicken\*  
Churchwarden



Will Stevens\*  
Churchwarden



Sandra Argent\*  
Deputy Churchwarden



Charles Hawkshaw-Burn\*  
Deputy Churchwarden



Martin Fuller\*  
Treasurer



Peter Bedford\*  
Secretary



Helen Coulson\*  
Safeguarding



Bridget Williams  
InSpire Newsletter



Ann Battensby  
Tower Captain



Michael Banks  
Community Affairs



Teresa Allen  
Live Streaming



Bob Lonnon  
ECS Governor



Sia Marshall  
Deanery Synod



Kath Mahale  
Youth & Families



Valerie Msoka  
Global Outreach

\* Denotes member of the PCC Standing Committee



# Parish Staff and Honorary Priest



Melanie Williams  
Parish Administrator



Kath Mahale  
Youth & families



Stuart Whatton  
Director of Music



Jonathan Andrew  
Honorary Asst Priest

Our amazing and proactive Parish Staff team – Melanie Williams, Kath Mahale & Stuart Whatton as well as Jonathan Andrew, our ‘somewhat retired’ Honorary Assistant Priest.

**Melanie Williams** – manages our vibrant parish office with exceptional skill and care, providing invaluable support to the Rector and Churchwardens. Her responsibilities range from staffing the office and preparing the weekly pew sheet to producing orders of service, opening, and closing the church, and coordinating essential maintenance—including piano and organ tuning and consulting with heating engineers. She also plays a crucial role in supporting funeral services and many other aspects of parish life. Melanie’s dedication, professionalism, and steady presence ensure the smooth running of the parish and enable our clergy to focus fully on leadership, teaching, and pastoral care.

**Kath Mahale** – role and responsibilities are outlined in detail under the *Children, Youth & Family* section.

**Stuart Whatton** – contributions and responsibilities are detailed in the *Music* section

**Jonathan Andrew** - although officially “retired,” our Honorary Assistant Priest, Jonathan, continues to be a deeply cherished and invaluable member of our clergy team. Throughout the current vacancy, he has offered his time and ministry with unwavering dedication and care. Under our previous incumbent, Jonathan regularly presided and preached at services, supported funeral and wedding ministry, contributed to Christian development courses, and provided ongoing pastoral support across the parish. He remains a much-loved presence in both our parish schools—leading services, guiding in-school activities, and playing an important part in the Christian Distinctiveness initiative. His steadfast commitment, warmth, and generosity of spirit have been a true blessing to the whole parish.



# Music in the Parish

Our parish maintains a rich musical and choral tradition, led by our Musical Director and renowned organist **Stuart Whatton FRCO**, supported by an experienced Assistant Organist, an Associate Organist, and two teenage Organ Scholars. Since his arrival in 2011, parish music has flourished. Stuart has balanced innovation with tradition, broadening our musical life while sustaining the deep roots of Anglican worship.

## Choir and Worship

The **choir**, with around a dozen singers, plays a leading role in our worship at Christ Church, where they perform an anthem and lead the congregational music. The choir also offers special evening choral services for Candlemas and All Souls and has performed larger works on Palm Sunday and All Souls tide. Their reputation extends well beyond Esher, having sung at **Coventry, Southwark, and Guildford Cathedrals**, and joined the choir of **Wadham College, Oxford**, our parish patrons.

A highlight of the year is the **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols**, one of Surrey's finest traditional carol services, drawing large congregations. In 2024, to mark Christ Church's 170th anniversary as parish and civic church, an expanded choir of thirty performed **Bruckner motets** and **Fauré's Requiem** to great acclaim.

## Music Outreach and Community

**Music on the Green** is our thriving outreach programme, bringing live music to the wider community. On the third Wednesday of each month, it begins with a light lunch followed by a concert featuring an eclectic mix of performers and genres - from Baroque to Big Band, from "Brazil to Broadway." With audiences of 80–90 people it is a much-loved community event, combining music, fellowship, and hospitality.



During Holy Week, **Music in the Tower** provides an intimate, reflective experience in the atmospheric tower room of Christ Church. With exceptional acoustics and space for just twenty attendees, these performances are a highlight of Esher's cultural calendar. Over the years, listeners have enjoyed an extraordinary variety of instruments from accordion to zither, together with a full range of themed readings and poetry.

## Music Scholarships and Young Musicians

Our parish actively supports young musicians through **Organ and Choral Scholarships**, offering valuable opportunities for learning and participation.

The Organ Scholarship Scheme has nurtured several talented young organists. One recent scholar won his school's composition competition with "Radiance," later premiered by the **Guildford Cathedral Choir** at Evensong. In June 2024, four of our young organists joined the national "**Organothon**" at London Bridge Station, performing on the UK's only station organ.



The **Choral Scholarship Scheme**, introduced more recently, welcomes three university-age singers (soprano, alto, bass, or tenor) who enrich the parish choir during term time. Their enthusiasm and musicianship are already enhancing our worship and community life.

## A Thriving Musical Life

Music continues to be at the heart of parish life in Esher—uplifting our worship, strengthening our community, and offering a joyful expression of faith that reaches far beyond our church walls.

# Youth, Children and Families

Our Children & Families Worker, Kath Mahale, has brought new energy and vision to the Children and Families Ministry, revitalising this area of our church life. Successfully establishing a growing Sunday School, a monthly Youth Group, and strengthening connections with local schools. We now have firm foundations for future growth, ensuring that children and families continues to be a vibrant and integral part of the Parish of Esher's mission.

Sunday School runs weekly (pausing only during August, between Christmas and New Year, and for our three All-Age services - Harvest, Christingle, and Mothering Sunday) during the 10.30am service at Christ Church with twenty children currently registered and core group of ten to twelve attending weekly. The children experience a nurturing environment in which faith is explored through creativity, storytelling, and participation in worship. Together they have reflected on the Parish's core values and developed their own two additions, establishing the vision for "The Parish of Esher Sunday School – where curiosity and service meet faith, hope and love."



Children engage in imaginative, direct activities inspired by the weekly Gospel readings, creating both individual artworks and collective installations. Recent projects include a stained-glass effect window for the Sunday School room - "so it looks more like a church," as one child put it - and a vibrant Beatitudes artwork displayed at the Beehive Café in the Lower Green Community Centre.



*'My two girls love Sunday School - it is relaxing, fun, and engaging. Kath makes the Bible come alive- she helps us see how the stories connect to our lives today and we regularly discuss how God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things.'*  
Sunday school parent

*'Kath has provided a safe and inclusive space for my daughter to explore and grow her faith. She helps her understand her faith in a way that she can understand and is interesting and fun. She also said she loves how kind she is. Watching my daughter grow in confidence since she has started to attend Sunday School has been heartwarming, and forever grateful for the team at Christ Church.'* Sunday school parent.

The Youth Group provides a welcoming and inclusive space for 10–13-year-olds with a core group of ten young adults attending on a regular basis to explore questions of identity, spirituality, and friendship through discussion, creativity, and prayer. The group is open to all - whether they are regular churchgoers or not. Meeting the first Friday of each month at Christ Church, with up to twelve young people taking part.



Each session centres on a different theme, such as spirituality, mindfulness, justice, self-care, or future aspirations. One memorable session on "Planning for Our Future" invited participants to imagine their lives in ten-year intervals - prompting reflections such as:

*“I want to keep fit into old age.”*  
*“As I get much older, I’ll be reflecting on past decisions.”*  
*“I want to remember the good times in my life.”*

Sessions conclude with the group’s much-loved tradition of biscuit decorating and prayer, embodying the spirit of community, acceptance, and joy that defines this ministry.

*‘I like how we get to talk about stuff and have long, deep conversations and discussions with everyone in the group. I discover things about myself that I wouldn’t normally study at school.’* Youth Group attendee.

*‘I like going to Youth Group because every month Kath comes up with fun and new ideas of how to explore different topics. I learn a lot about myself, and I use that knowledge every single day. I can’t wait for the next session.’* Youth Group attendee.

Crazy Crafts is a free, family-friendly community event launched in December 2023 at the Lower Green Community Centre. Aimed at primary-aged children, each three-hour session offers a range of creative craft activities, seasonal refreshments at the Beehive Café, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Three events are held annually, celebrating Easter, Harvest, and Christmas.



*‘These events have helped to improve our connection with the local community and church. My daughter really enjoys volunteering and helping. They are fantastic events that local families really love and benefit from. Families take part in activities they may not usually do. Kath is an extremely creative and inspiring woman who the children are lucky to meet and learn from. These events are a real asset to the local community.’* Crazy Crafts, helper, and participator ‘

*‘Huge thanks to Kath Mahale for two years of fantastic Crazy Crafts! Her creativity and warmth have brought families together each Easter, Harvest, and Christmas for fun-filled craft sessions where children beam with pride over their creations. These events have become a joyful tradition, full of laughter, connection, and community spirit. We can’t wait for the next one!’* Lower Green Community Centre Manager

Our Children & Families Worker also coordinates Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist Preparation - working closely with families and individuals, she organises preparation sessions providing pastoral support throughout each step of their journey. Around fifteen baptisms take place each year, with families warmly welcomed by the congregation. In June 2025, five of our young adults were confirmed by The Rt Revd Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford and in November Kath ran the first Eucharist Preparation course for the Parish.

Our Honorary Asst. Priest, Esher Church School Christian Distinctiveness Governor Committee Chair and Youth & Families Worker are key figures developing relationships with our Parish schools and the Lower Green Community Centre. Our Children & Families worker is a governor at Esher Church School, works closely with the Esher High School Hub Leader, is an attendance member of the PCC, and after completing the Diocesan First Timers course, was invited to be a regular guest speaker/facilitator for subsequent cohorts.

Looking Ahead the Parish is excited to build further on these strong foundations, deepening relationships with children, families, schools, and continue to grow this flourishing ministry in partnership with our new incumbent.



# Our Schools

We are privileged to have two Church Schools within our parish - both schools are central to our ministry with children and young people, and our shared faith enriches the life of the parish community.

**Esher Church School** ([www.esherchurchschool.co.uk](http://www.esherchurchschool.co.uk))

Esher Church School is a well-regarded and popular two-form entry Church of England Primary Academy, fully inclusive and welcoming of children from all backgrounds, faiths, and abilities. With a maximum of four hundred and twenty students, the school celebrates the diversity of the Esher community and surrounding areas.

Our Honorary Assistant Priest and Children and Families Worker are actively involved and lead twice monthly assemblies supporting the spiritual life of the school. Pupils contribute to parish worship, reading prayers and scripture at our All-Age services alongside contributions from the school choir. In 2024, pupils produced a collection of “Our Prayers and Reflections”, supported by Senior Leadership, staff, and school community. Our Rector wrote the foreword, and it was launched at a service at Christ Church.



Ofsted and SIAMS inspections have praised the school’s excellent pastoral care, strong Christian ethos, and commitment to the holistic development of each child. The curriculum focusses on encouraging everyone to realise their academic and personal potential, while also developing a sense of responsibility for themselves and others - every child’s talent and achievement are celebrated.

- Ofsted (May 2024): Good
- SIAMS: “The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school are outstanding.”



The school’s Christian Distinctiveness Trustee Committee is a Diocesan front-runner in establishing a formal process to ensure Christian values and ethics underpin the life of the school. The Rector is an ex-officio member of the Trustee Board and sits on the Christian Distinctiveness Committee. This group is further enhanced by having Religious Education and Faith Leaders in attendance, both with strong Christian Faiths. They have orchestrated stunning artworks that have become a regular display feature in Guildford Cathedral.

The school and local churches have a strong and ever developing engagement with one another. Christ Church, Holy Trinity Claygate, St Christophers in Hinchley Wood and Esher High School Hub are all involved in contributing towards the schools’ daily Collective Worship assemblies. The School Senior Leadership Team have been proactive and supportive of joint initiatives across the year including Harvest and Remembrance Day, the latter where the children lay a wreath (alongside students from Esher High School) at the war memorial and attend the service.

Esher Church School appoints roles for Faith Prefects; Prayer Ambassadors and Ten x 10 faith leads - an edifying moment occurred when the Faith Prefects from Year 6 talked of the amazing impact of their roles





- ‘Being a Faith Prefect makes me feel that my faith is important. It makes me feel closer to God.’
- ‘We make sure everyone is kind to each other, whether they have a faith or not, and that no one is made fun of for what they believe.’
- ‘It’s important because it makes me feel good inside—and that you’ve done something nice.’

**Esher Church of England High School** ([www.esherhigh.surrey.sch.uk](http://www.esherhigh.surrey.sch.uk))

Esher High School is a member of the Enlighten Learning Trust (ELT) and is an eight-form entry school for Years 7–11. Its vision, “Belong, Be More and Be Esher,” reflects a commitment to inclusion, aspiration, and community.



Our Honorary Asst. Priest and Youth and Families Worker collaborate closely with the school’s new Hub Leader. Initiatives such as the Monday lunchtime drop-in and Collective Worship sessions have strengthened relationships, while shared activities at Christ Church - such as the Year 7 Welcome Service, Year 10 Mock Wedding lesson and the Year 11 Leavers Service – helping to bring faith to life in creative and engaging ways.

The church has strong representation on the Governing Body, with the Rector serving as an ex officio member when in post and a member of our parish chairing the school’s Christian Distinctiveness Committee. Additionally, a member of our PCC has supported the school as a Governor for 11 years, including during its transition from a Voluntary Controlled school to an Academy. She now serves as Chair of Enlighten Learning Trust.

- Ofsted (May 2022): Good
- SIAMS (2022): Good

**Shared Vision and Future Aspirations**

The two schools enjoy excellent reputations within Surrey and beyond. We are deeply grateful for the close partnerships we share and are eager to build on these foundations - finding new ways to engage with pupils, families, and staff. We welcome ideas and initiatives that encourage young people from both schools to connect more deeply with the life of our churches.

# Volunteers

## In Praise of Volunteers

No parish can flourish without the dedication of its volunteers — and **Esher is no exception**. The smooth running of our church life depends on the generous service of many individuals who freely give their time, skills, and care to support the life and mission of the parish.



From our **Churchwardens and PCC members** to the **flower arrangers, pastoral visitors, and refreshments team**, every aspect of parish life is sustained by people whose quiet commitment enables worship, fellowship, and outreach to thrive.

The **Pastoral Care Team** offers a compassionate presence to those who may be lonely, housebound, or recently discharged from hospital. A simple phone call is all that is needed to arrange a friendly visit, a small shop, or even a short drive through the countryside. Sometimes, sharing a cup of tea or enjoying a change of scenery can be the highlight of someone's week. Their work ensures that the love and care of the church extends well beyond the walls of Christ Church and St George's.

The **Fellowship Group**, which began as a small prayer gathering in 2010, now meets monthly in the Lady Chapel. Members come together in friendship to share faith, reflect, and pray for the community. Through worship, Bible readings, and open discussion — often touching on topical themes — they find renewed strength and deeper understanding. Their guiding motto beautifully captures their spirit: *"We go where the Spirit leads."*

The **Flower Teams** at both Christ Church and St George's enhance our worship throughout the year with beautiful, seasonal arrangements that reflect the church calendar. Particularly moving is the display of silk poppies for **Remembrance Sunday**, and the joyful preparation of daffodil posies for **Mothering Sunday**, lovingly presented to everyone attending worship.



Across both churches, we are also blessed with a dedicated rota of **readers, intercessors, sidespeople, welcomers, and refreshment hosts**, each playing a vital role in the warmth and order of our services. Their commitment ensures that everyone who walks through our doors feels both welcome and cared for.

One distinctive aspect of parish life is our **Book Group**, which has now been running quietly and faithfully for five years. For some, it provides a **much-valued opportunity to connect with others** in a relaxed setting outside of our more explicitly religious gatherings. This simple but meaningful group continues to enrich our community life in its own gentle way.

## A Celebration of Service

Each year, we take time to express our gratitude to this remarkable community of volunteers through a **special service of thanksgiving**, followed by a joyful **Parish Supper** (with wine!). It is a much-loved occasion — a moment to celebrate all that they contribute, and to recognise the countless unseen acts of service that sustain and enrich the life of the **Parish of Esher**.





# Belltower

Ascending the fifty-six uneven and winding steps to the bell tower, visitors encounter the **dedicated members of the Esher Bell Ringers**. Though often unseen within the belfry, they are ever present through their resonant contribution — the **most audible and spirited group of volunteers within the church**.



The **tower houses a distinguished peal of eight bells**, originally cast in 1853. The metal from three earlier bells, which once hung in Old St. George's, was incorporated into a newly augmented peal in 1951, **when two additional trebles were added to create the present octet**. Together, they form a fine and balanced ensemble, whose sound has long marked significant moments in the life of the parish and nation.

The bell ringers comprise a dedicated and welcoming group, always eager to receive visitors and to encourage new participants in the ancient art of change ringing. This enthusiasm was exemplified when eight new ringers undertook several weeks of practice in preparation to **“Ring for the King”** — a joyous occasion celebrating the Coronation. On that day, the Esher ringers performed a specially prepared series of call changes first heard during the **Coronation of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**.

The bells continue to be rung on numerous occasions: for **weddings and funerals, on St. George's Day, and for significant national events such as royal weddings and anniversaries**. Particularly memorable was the day following the death of Queen Elizabeth II when the bells were solemnly muffled. The process of muffling — requiring the attachment of leather pads to each clapper by ascending above the bells — has been described by one ringer as “rather like milking a very fat cow.” At the appointed hour, a single bell tolled, signalling to the community that the church was open for prayer and reflection. It was a moving reminder of the **centuries-old role of church bells in communicating with and gathering their communities**, in both sorrow and celebration.

Committed to continual improvement, the **Esher Bell Ringers have recently achieved success in a Striking Competition within the Chertsey District** and participated in a “Call Challenge” designed to refine the essential skills of bell handling and call leadership. They also maintain close associations with neighbouring towers, exchanging visits for practice sessions and to assist in the training of new ringers.

Through dedication, fellowship, and tradition, the Esher Bell Ringers uphold a heritage that continues to resonate — quite literally — throughout the parish and beyond.





# Community Outreach

The Parish of Esher serves two distinct but complementary communities. **St George's, West End** sits at the heart of a close-knit village, while **Christ Church, Esher** is within a vibrant commuter town characterised by its diversity of age, culture, and circumstance. Together, these two churches offer a unique opportunity to serve both traditional and contemporary communities through varied expressions of worship, service, and outreach. Recognising the breadth of the community around Christ Church, we seek to offer a **broad and engaging programme** that appeals to a wide range of people and provides multiple entry points into church life.

## Peace and Contemplation Evenings

More recently, we have introduced **Peace and Contemplation Evenings**, offering an hour of readings and music based on central spiritual themes such as *Light, Peace, Joy, and Gratitude*. Interspersed with periods of reflective silence, these evenings provide space for stillness and renewal and have proved particularly meaningful to those in our community who might not otherwise attend church.

## Engagement with the Lower Green Community

Our parish has developed a close and valued links with the **Lower Green Community Centre**, which serves one of the more deprived areas of Esher. The Centre's **Beehive Café** operates a *Pay It Forward* scheme, enabling families to enjoy free food and drinks during school holidays when children are unable to access free school meals. Both churches have raised funds and retain collection boxes for regular food donations to support this vital initiative and plan to continue doing so during **Harvest, Advent** and beyond.



## Partnerships and Local Involvement



Christ Church is also linked to the **Esher Chamber of Commerce**, hosting their breakfast meetings and forging strong local connections. This partnership has led to the Chamber, alongside the **Mayor of Elmbridge**, joining our congregations and community for the **annual Christmas Tree Lighting** at Christ Church. The evening brings together families, business leaders, and parishioners for carol singing, Christingle-making, and the sharing of **mulled wine and mince pies** - a joyful celebration of community and faith.

Our parish is also represented in the **Esher Planter's Club**, a volunteer initiative that designs and maintains the flower beds along Esher High Street. This visible contribution is a simple but powerful way of demonstrating care for our shared environment and community spaces.

In partnership with **Save the Children** an event was held at Christ Church, titled "*The Case for Aid*," featuring our local **Member of Parliament** and a **senior director from the charity** – it drew over a hundred attendees from Esher and neighbouring communities.



## Future Initiatives

Looking ahead, we continue to seek new opportunities for outreach and dialogue. As part of our ongoing **Vision for the Parish**, we also plan to host **Christian Exploration Evenings**, beginning with screenings of "*The Chosen*." In addition, we aim to deepen our engagement with the **Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum**, encouraging reciprocal visits to various places of worship to strengthen understanding, dialogue, and mutual respect.

# Global Outreach

Building Bridges of Faith, Hope and Love – a proposed Twinning between the Parish of Esher and the Anglican Church in Kongwa District, Dodoma region, Tanzania. The aim is to build a relationship of mutual encouragement, shared learning, and Christian fellowship that connects our two congregations through prayer, culture, and service.

Our parish has long believed that the church is at its strongest when it reaches beyond its own walls. Through music, community connection, and shared service, Christ Church and St George's continues to bring people together locally, and now we are looking outward to form new friendships across continents.

In the first phase, the partnership will focus on relationship-building. Our friends in Kongwa will share photos and short videos introducing their church, worship life, and local surroundings. At Christ Church and St George's, we hope to display these materials to help our congregation get to know the community and its setting. Locally made fabric wrappers and crafts from Tanzania will also be available for sale, with proceeds supporting projects identified by the Kongwa church, an early act of solidarity and shared mission.



Looking ahead, we plan to involve the Youth Group and ECS in letter and card exchanges with young people in Kongwa. This will help nurture friendships and deepen understanding of what it means to live out faith in hugely different settings. Over time, we hope these early exchanges may lead to visits between church members, experiences that will no doubt shape hearts and broaden horizons on both sides.

The twinning builds naturally on the strengths of our parishes local outreach. Events such as Music on the Green, Peace and Contemplation evenings, and our partnership with the Lower Green Community Centre demonstrate how faith flourishes when it reaches into the community. The same spirit will guide our global connection with Kongwa: small steps rooted in relationship, curiosity, and shared hope.

The benefits of such a twinning are mutual and lasting. For Christ Church and St George's, it offers an opportunity to live out our calling as part of a global Anglican family, to learn from another culture's expression of faith, and to remind ourselves that the Gospel knows no borders. For the Kongwa congregation, it could offer companionship, encouragement, and the chance to share their gifts, music, and stories with a sister church in another part of the world.

This partnership reflects what it means to belong to the universal church: diverse communities bound together by a shared love of God and neighbour. As the relationship grows, we hope it will enrich worship, inspire generosity, and remind us of all that we are part of something far greater than ourselves, one body, many parts, connected through Christ.

# Communication

We use a wide range of channels to communicate news, events, and worship opportunities, both within the church community and across the wider parish.

## Internal Communication

The **weekly pew sheet** plays a vital role in keeping parishioners informed about current and upcoming activities. Distributed using ChurchSuite to subscribers and handed out at all services in both churches, it includes the week's readings, notices, a calendar of forthcoming events, and the names of those on our prayer list. It remains an essential tool for ensuring everyone feels connected and informed.

Our **quarterly newsletter, InSpire**, provides a more in-depth look at parish life. Published to mark the key seasons of the liturgical year — **Christmas, Easter, Harvest, and Summer** - it is available via email or the Parish website. It shares news, reflections, and photographs from the wide variety of activities and events taking place across the Parish. Now celebrating its **10th anniversary** with its **40th edition** published at Christmas, it continues to be a much-valued record of the life and spirit of our church community - **InSpire Christmas 2025**



## External Communication

The **Parish website [www.esherparish.org.uk](http://www.esherparish.org.uk)** serves as an important public-facing platform, providing information about who we are, our services, upcoming events, and the latest news. While it is regularly updated, plans are in place for a comprehensive refresh to ensure the site reflects a more contemporary design and user experience, making information easier to access for both parishioners and visitors



We **live-stream Sunday services** from Christ Church, as well as other special occasions, on YouTube supported by a team of volunteers. Each week, between 45 and 75 people view the recordings, making this an invaluable resource. It enables parishioners not able to participate in worship while also offering newcomers a welcoming insight into our church community and worship style.

Our presence on **social media - [Esher Parish Instagram](#) and [Esher Parish Facebook](#)** allows us to share updates and promote events such as the Crazy Crafts sessions and other community activities. These platforms also help direct people to our online worship services, offering a valuable way to connect with those who may be exploring faith or new to the area.

The **Parish Administrator** supports communication by producing leaflets, posters, and online materials to promote concerts, special services, and community events. These are displayed on internal and external noticeboards, shared digitally, and featured on the website.

Each year, **Christmas and Easter Parish Cards** are produced and delivered to every household within the parish. Including a message from the Rector, details of all seasonal services, and an introduction to parish life, these cards are distributed through a remarkable volunteer effort - a tangible expression of our commitment to outreach.



# Safeguarding

The Parish of Esher has adopted the Church of England's **Promoting a Safer Church** Policy Statement for safeguarding children, young people, and adults. A copy of the policy, approved by the House of Bishops, can be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

The Parish Safeguarding Officer, **Alison Mohamed**, can be contacted via [safeguarding@esherparish.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@esherparish.org.uk) or via the **Parish Office**.

**Our safeguarding arrangements** include:

- Clearly displayed safeguarding posters in both churches.
- Contact details for the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, and relevant helplines displayed in both churches.
- A dedicated safeguarding email for the Safeguarding Officer that are easy to access.
- Safeguarding as a standing item on every PCC meeting agenda.
- A prominent **Safeguarding** tab on the parish website with additional details.
- Continued progress in achieving full compliance with safeguarding training requirements.



## First Aid

- In **January 2024**, we hosted an **Emergency First Aid at Work Course at Christ Church**, delivered by **Surrey First Aid**. Training was attended by twenty-four participants who developed valuable first aid skills while enjoying a day of fellowship and teamwork.
- Funds raised during this time enabled the purchase, installation, and maintenance of a **Mindray C1A Defibrillator (AED)**, suitable for both adults and children. The defibrillator cabinet is installed externally on the church wall (Church Street entrance, car park side).
- The defibrillator is registered on **The Circuit** and connects directly with the ambulance service. In an emergency, the 999 operators can provide the access code and direct callers to the device.
- While no prior training is required to use the AED, in **January 2025**, we hosted a **Basic Life Support (BLS)** and Automated **External Defibrillator (AED)** training session, attended by thirty-five of our volunteers.

Our goal remains to keep our churches as safe as possible, prioritising the wellbeing and protection of our more vulnerable members. The PCC continues to make meaningful progress in prioritising **Safeguarding** across our churches and ensuring compliance with the House of Bishops' *Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidelines*.



# Church Development Plan

The Church Development plan was ratified and adopted by the PCC on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 with the next review date targeted for post May next year. We will however **look to extend the review date until we have a new Rector to ensure that we bring together innovative ideas and work together to build for the future**

#	Esher Priority	Diocese Priority	Action Points	Owners	Proposed Start Date	Resources Required
1.	Extra All Age Service	Growing Disciples & Diversity	a. Research options (time / place / format) with families and other contacts b. Six month trial	a. and b. Children and Families Worker	a. <del>Q3 2025</del> b. <del>Q3 2025</del>	a & b minimal
2.	Christian Leadership and Spiritual Development	Growing Disciples	a. Encourage vocations to authorised public ministry b. Investigate lay leadership training opportunities c. Develop list of projects and define volunteer tasks d. Run exploration evenings in church by showing series such as 'Chosen'	a. Ministry Team b. Ministry Team c. CWs d. Lay leader (tbc) & Ministry Team	a. Ongoing b. <del>Q2 2025</del> c. <del>Q3 2025</del> d. Q4 2025	a, b, c & d minimal
3.	Global Outreach	Growing Diversity	a. Establish link with overseas parish - identify suitable partner b. Research existing links at ECS & EHS and consider opportunities to extend	a. Msoka, Tyrrell, Coulson & Fuller b. Children and Families Worker	a. Q1 2026 b. Q2 2026	a. minimal b. minimal
4.	Community Outreach	Growing Community	a. Investigate & launch seasonal parent / toddler events (Lower Green) b. Interfaith engagement / visits c. Refresh website	a. Children & Families Worker b. Banks c. Coulson	a. Q4 2025 b. Ongoing c. Q1 2026	a. minimal b. minimal c. TBC
5.	Lighting & Internal Work at both CC & SG	Growing Community	a. Progress lighting project b. Flexible space at CC c. Floor remediation at SG	a. CWs & Coulson b. CWs c. SG Fabric Team	a. Q3 2026 b. <del>Q3 2025</del> c. <del>Q4 2025</del>	a. ~£85k b. TBC c. TBC

Note: Strikethrough date represents action paused through vacancy

## Key CDP questions

- Question 1 - What do you value most about your Parish?
- Question 2 - What would you love to see happen to make your Parish flourish even more?
- Question 3 - How would you like to help to make your vision a reality?

# Esher Parish Finance and Stewardship

The Parish of Esher has maintained a sound financial position over the years. However, as with many parishes, meeting ongoing operating costs remains a continuing challenge. The Parish has faithfully honoured its annual Parish Share commitment to the diocese in full; in 2025 this amounted to **£93,575**.

In 2024, the Parish reported an **income of £211,524** and an **expenditure of £264,183**, resulting in a **deficit of £52,659**. This shortfall was primarily due to a single exceptional item - refurbishment of the curate's house. The property, which represents the Parish's principal tangible asset, had been tenanted during a vacancy in the curacy. Following rent arrears and subsequent eviction in 2023, the house required extensive refurbishment and modernisation. The total cost of this work was approximately **£100,000**, of which **£37,000** was incurred in 2024.

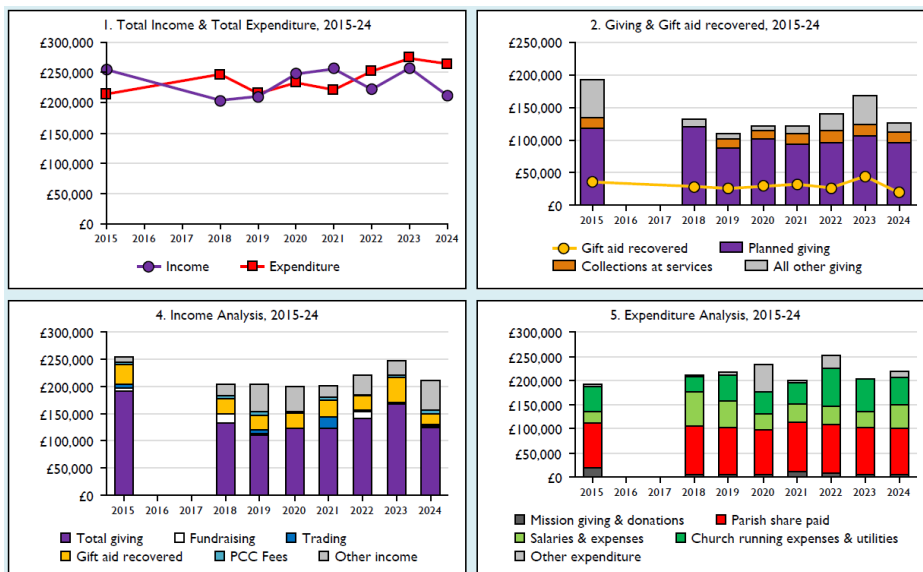
Regular giving from parishioners continues to be the Parish's principal source of income, though the number of regular givers has declined slightly in recent years. Additional income streams include church collections, service fees, legacies, donations from concerts, rental income from the curate's house, and dividends from investments.

The Parish also benefits from the **Few's Cottage Trust**, which provides vital support for youth and family ministry, including the employment of a **Children and Families Worker**.

At **Christ Church**, recent major projects have included the installation of a new **CCTV system** to enhance security, the installation of a new boiler system and organ maintenance. A significant new initiative currently in the pipeline with a request being submitted for faculty approval is the **complete replacement and upgrading of the church lighting system**, for which full funding has already been secured.

At **St George's** the congregation fundraise for special projects focused on maintenance & renovations, while general running costs are met from central Parish funds. Current initiatives include the creation of a **memorial** and essential **remedial work to the foundations and flooring**.

Across the parish, we have recently upgraded the **IT infrastructure** and systems that will ensure we remain fit for purpose.



# Esher Parish Trusts and Charitable Funds

There are **five charitable trusts** associated with the parish, outlined below. The first four are administered by **three Trustees** - the Rector and two Churchwardens - while the fifth has a broader board of Trustees, as described.

*(All figures quoted relate to 2024 and apply to people living within the Parish of Esher.)*

## **Edward George Broad Trust**

Purpose: Providing Christmas grants, where needed, to those over sixty-five and to families with children

Activity: In 2024, Christmas grants of £1,400 were distributed locally to individuals in need

## **Mary Ploughman's Gift**

Purpose: Providing grants for the benefit of older residents

Activity: In 2024, Christmas grants of £600 were distributed locally to individuals in need and a local club for over-sixties received a grant of £750

## **Few's Cottage Trust**

Purpose: Supporting the work of Sunday Schools

Activity: This fund contributes towards the salary of the parish's employed Families and Youth Worker

## **Day School Trust**

Purpose: Providing grants to Esher Church of England First and Middle School for educational purposes.

Activity: The school receives rental income from the Trust-owned caretaker's bungalow and has been awarded occasional grants — notably funding the renovation of the school hall in 2016.

## **Henry Smith Charity (Esher Branch)**

Trustees: Rector, Churchwardens, two Esher Councillors, and two parishioners (serving as Clerk and Treasurer).

Purpose: Providing grants for those who are poor, sick, disabled, or elderly.

Activity: In 2024, Christmas grants of £1,800 were made – the Trust also distributed an additional £120 during the year to meet specific needs, such as providing a broadband service for an autistic adult.

Most grant recipients came to the Trustees' attention through direct requests for assistance, through the Lower Green Community Centre or the Esher CAB reflecting the charity's personal and responsive approach to local need.

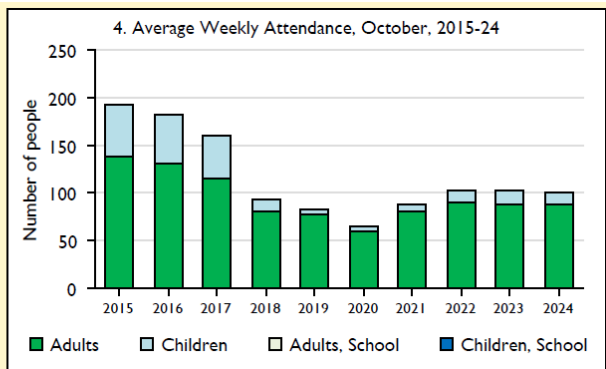
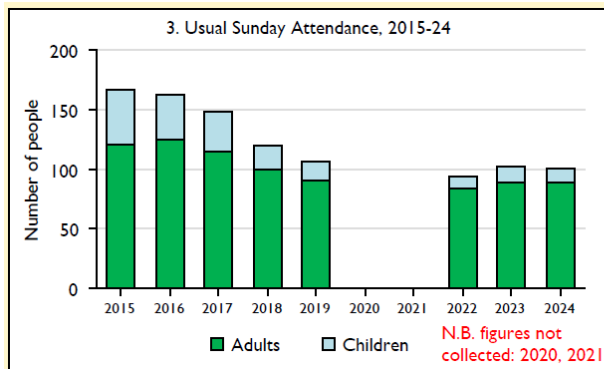
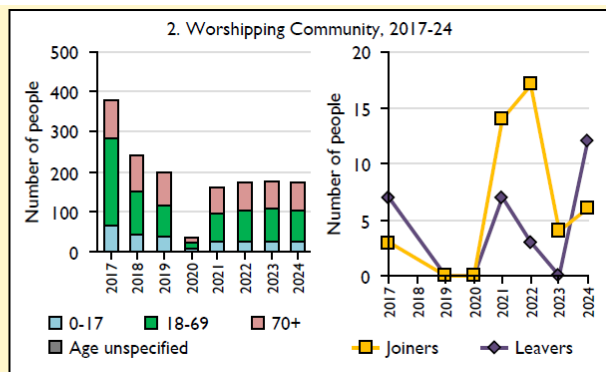
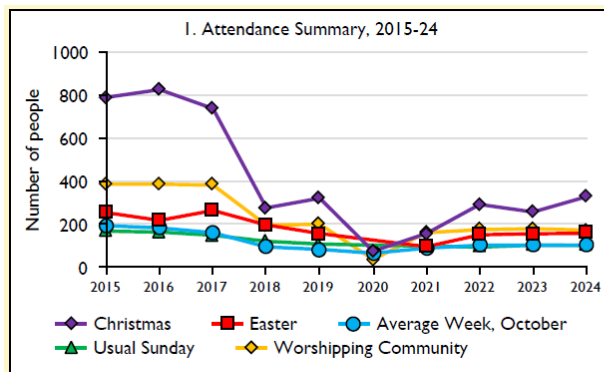


# Esher Parish in Numbers

The numbers below highlight and reflect the size and impact of our Parish across both Christ Church and St George's as well as in the broader Esher community – data is 2025 year to date.

	Christ Church	St George's	Esher Parish
<b>Demographics</b>			
Electoral Role	86	22	108
October Count (Children)	56 (9)	20	76 (9)
<b>Occasional Offices</b>			
Baptisms	12	1	13
Confirmations			5
Marriages	3		3
Funerals & Memorials	9	3	12
Crematorium (service only)			2
Interments	9		9
<b>Community Impact</b>			
Schools			4
Community Centres			1

## Mission Data



**Note:** Attendance figures above are impacted by Covid and change in how School Services were counted over Christmas - happy to discuss underlying trends with interested candidates.

# The Rectory

The Rectory is a beautifully maintained home, just two hundred yards from **Christ Church**, across the peaceful **Esher Green** in the private estate of **Esher Place** and just over a mile from St George's in the West End. It is a spacious and characterful detached house that combines comfort, practicality, and a real sense of home.



Upstairs, the **primary bedroom** has an ensuite bathroom, with **two further bedrooms** featuring washbasins, **two additional bedrooms**, and a **family bathroom** with separate toilet—ideal for family living or visiting guests. Downstairs, the **recently refurbished kitchen**, and **utility room** provide a bright, modern space at the heart of the home. A **refurbished study**, **welcoming dining room**, and **large living room** with a beautiful **Claygate brick fireplace** make it perfect for work, family life, and entertaining.

The **garden** is generous, secure, and full of life—enclosed by a sturdy fence and filled with well-established shrubs and a beech hedge lovingly tended by previous occupants. There's ample room for children to play, and space for **summer barbecues**, **quiet relaxation**, or **hosting friends**. It is a haven of peace and greenery just moments from the church and village centre.

**Kitchen**



**Living Room**



**Dining Room**



# Our Churches and Buildings

## Christ Church, Esher

Standing on Esher's highest point, **Christ Church** is a distinguished **Victorian Gothic** landmark whose tower and spire are visible for miles. Built in **1854** to replace the smaller **Old St George's**, it served a growing parish and visitors to nearby **Claremont House**.



The **Organ Loft**, once a **Royal Pew**, was used by **Duke Leopold** and **Princess Alice**, Queen Victoria's son, and granddaughter. The fine **Walker Organ**, installed in **1886**, was beautifully restored in 2006. A **1990s west-end extension** added meeting rooms, a kitchen, and accessible facilities, now widely used for church and community activities. Christ Church remains a welcoming and vibrant place of worship.

## St. George's, West End

Nestled beside the village green, **St George's, West End**—affectionately known as the **Tin Tabernacle**—was built in **1879** on land donated by **Queen Victoria**. Intended as a chapel for servants and labourers from the **Claremont Estate**, it also served the elderly and infirm who found the climb to Christ Church difficult.



Today, St George's continues to embody a spirit of **welcome, inclusivity, and community care**. The church is a cherished setting for **baptisms, weddings, and funerals**, marking life's milestones for many



local families. Worship is followed each Sunday by fellowship at the **Prince of Wales** pub - an expression of the warm, communal life of West End.

## Current Services

- St George's – Parish Communion at 9.00am
- Christ Church – Parish Communion with Sunday School at 10:30am
- Christ Church – All Age Service at 10:30am (instead of parish communion first Sunday of the month)



### **‘Old’ St George’s, Esher**

The original **St George’s Church**, built around **1540**, stands on a site that has been a place of worship for over **nine hundred years**. The Tudor building was later adapted during the Stuart and Hanoverian periods and remained Esher’s parish church until the mid-nineteenth century. It is the **oldest surviving building** in Esher.



By permission of the Trust and the Bishop, the parish holds up to **two services a year** at Old St George’s - including a **Candlemas Evensong** illuminated by candlelight and a further **Evensong** later in the year - taking advantage of the church’s remarkable acoustics and atmosphere.

### **Other Parish Properties**

**West End Village Hall** - formerly the village school, now leased to the community on a peppercorn rent for local activities



**West End Sports and Social Club** - adjacent to the Hall and home to West End Cricket Club and AFC West End, it serves as a key village social hub, also leased to the community on a peppercorn rent

**Cranbrook Drive** - a parish-owned three-bedroom house currently let on a commercial basis

# Esher – Past and Present

## History

Esher, part of the **Saxon Elmbridge Hundred**, was first recorded in the **Domesday Book of 1086**. In the sixteenth century, Henry VIII annexed several manors to the Honour of Hampton Court, creating a royal hunting ground and attracting noble residences. The town **developed as a coaching stop on the London-Portsmouth Road**, now the Esher High Street.



Two great estates shaped Esher's growth: **Claremont House** and **Esher Place**. Sir John Vanbrugh designed the original Claremont House, later expanded by Lord Clive of India. It became a royal residence under Queen Victoria and was home to Prince Leopold, later King of the Belgians. Today, it houses **Claremont Fan Court School**, while its **Capability Brown** gardens are maintained by the **National Trust**.

## Esher Today

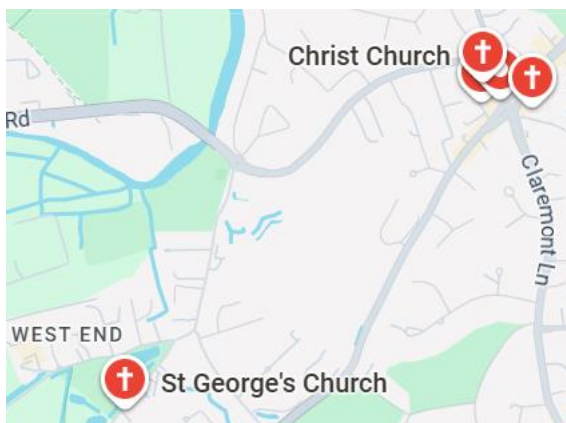
Located in the Borough of Elmbridge, about eighteen miles south-west of London, Esher has a population of around 6,600. The town includes **West End** village and is surrounded by green belt and wooded common land. Esher's housing reflects both affluence and diversity, with larger homes, newer developments, and social housing in the Lower Green area.

The town **supports a broad mix of residents**—commuters, professionals, retirees, and families—and a range of local businesses and services. The **Lower Green Community Centre** provides valued facilities, while the **Princess Alice Hospice** in West End serves the wider North Surrey area.



## Life in Esher

Esher offers a vibrant community life with numerous restaurants, public houses, and the **Everyman Cinema** on the High Street. **Sandown Park** hosts horse racing, concerts, and exhibitions, as well as golf and leisure facilities. Nearby **Sandown Sports Club** provides a gym, squash courts, ski slopes, and social events.



The town is home to several sports clubs and remains popular with cyclists following the 2012 Olympic routes. Excellent transport links connect Esher to London in under 25 minutes, while attractions such as **Claremont Landscape Garden**, **RHS Wisley**, **Hampton Court Palace**, and **Brooklands Museum** lie close by. Surrounded by woodland and common land, Esher combines history, accessibility, and community spirit in an exceptional setting.



# Acknowledgements

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed to the preparation of this Parish Profile.

Our gratitude goes to the Parochial Church Council, the InSpire Team, the Parish Team, and members of both Christ Church and St George's, whose insights, reflections, and prayers have shaped this document. Special thanks are also extended to those who gathered information, wrote and edited sections, and helped capture the life and spirit of our parish through words and images.

We would also like to give photo credit for the wonderful images include in our parish profile to Peter McClintock, Melanie Williams, Angela Stockbridge, and Kath Mahale.

We are deeply grateful to everyone in our church family and wider community who took time to share their thoughts, hopes, and vision for the future as part of this process. Your contributions have helped us articulate who we are, what we value, and where we believe God is calling us next.

We give thanks to God, whose guidance and grace continue to lead us as we seek to grow together in faith, hope, and love.

Fraser McGuicken and Will Stevens

