

THE PARISH OF CROYDON



The Minster Church of St John the Baptist



Parish Profile 2026

Introduction

Our vision at Croydon Minster is to be a church that is welcoming and open to the whole community of which we are part, churched and unchurched, where people find life, joy and belonging in Christ. We seek to be a church at the heart of Croydon, faithfully offering worship and witness to God, growing in faith, and compassionately serving the human needs around us as Christ serves us.

While this profile focuses on the Minster, we serve the whole parish together with our sister church, St George's, at the heart of Waddon, whose profile is attached.

Our Mission

Our mission continues to be to reach out and celebrate God's unconditional love for our world with all the people of our parish and wider community, in the spirit of our Patron Saint, Saint John the Baptist. We seek to do this by:

- Offering affirming and inspiring Anglican worship in the open, liberal, catholic tradition of the Church of England, enhanced by a very strong choral tradition;
- Being a community of Christians in the town centre of Croydon, where all who wish to pray, worship, be still, or just look around are welcome;
- Supporting the Christian education of young and old through the preaching of the Word and the provision of creative worship;
- Sustaining strong links with local schools, especially but not exclusively the local Minster Church Infant and Junior schools and Whitgift School;
- Caring for the needs of the older community, especially through our relationship with the care homes of the John Whitgift Foundation and the Elis David Almshouses;
- Nurturing a strong Anglican choral tradition through our choirs of boys, girls and adults; and
- Continuing to fulfil our prophetic and pastoral role through our relationships with the civic and other partners and communities in Croydon.



To do this we look forward to being led by someone inspired to work with us in Christ in the coming years to share the love of God with the people of Croydon.

The Parish

The historic parish included the majority of what is now the Archdeaconry of Croydon, but as the town expanded new parishes were created out of this wider area, with the current parish boundaries largely established by the late 19th century. The area is well served by public transport, with good local bus services, direct rail links to London and much of the south and south-east of England including Gatwick Airport, and an east-west Tram from Wimbledon to Beckenham.



The parish contains a mix of residential accommodation (the Waddon estate served by St George's, the Valley Park Estate, Croydon Old Town, and several large self-contained apartment blocks); the civic centre including the Town Hall and council offices, the Clocktower and the Fairfield Halls concert and theatre venue; large commercial areas in the town centre and along the Purley Way; and an island area covering the grounds of Whitgift School. It has an ethnically and religiously diverse population of around 17,500 and a large non-resident populace during the working week. Much of the older housing is owner occupied, but there is a substantial quantity of rental accommodation in large apartment blocks in the town centre and on the Purley Way built over the last 20 years, some social housing, and Croydon's permanent Gypsy and Travellers' site. There are pockets of severe deprivation

and poverty and the parish is ranked within the most deprived 12% of parishes nationally (see attached census and deprivation dashboard). Unemployment in Croydon is around 6.3%, and around 14.6% of households are workless. The centre of Croydon is also a local focus for homeless people and rough sleeping.

The Minster serves as the primary civic church for Croydon and as a venue for Episcopal Area and Civic services, hosting Ordinations and Confirmations and other events such as the Croydon Windrush commemoration service for the Episcopal Area, and Civic Services, including the annual London Borough of Croydon Remembrance Sunday service, usually a Town Carol Service at Christmas, and other thanksgiving services and commemorations as requested. Together with the Bishop of Croydon, the vicar serves as a main point of contact with both the Executive and Civic Mayors of Croydon, the





Vicar has a significant personal ex-officio wider role, including Chaplain to the John Whitgift Foundation and member of its Court of Governors, on the Governing body of the Minster schools, and as chair or trustee of a number of local charities, some linked directly to the Minster and Parish. The administrative and pastoral demands of this wider role, and particularly of the John Whitgift Foundation, are reflected by the Foundation's part-funding of the

Associate Vicar post at the Minster.

We try to work closely with our local schools, including through the Minster Educational Officer, who promotes awareness and knowledge of the Minster as an historic and living place of worship in the heart of Croydon including arranging school visits. The Minster Nursery and Infant School and Minster Junior School are both part of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education's Multi Academy Trust. They bear our church's name, reflecting our close relationship. The Vicar is always a member of the

Governing Boards, and the PCC nominates governors too. They are currently considering creating one school out of the two, still bearing the Minster name. They hold Collective Worship every day, and visit the Minster for end of term services and curriculum activities to enable children to be familiar with the environment of the church and provide them with a secure understanding of the Christian faith. Aerodrome Primary Academy and Harris Purley Way Academy are in the Waddon District of



the Parish and are served by St George's. The Minster Associate Vicar is Chaplain to Whitgift School, providing pastoral support, and the Minster Director of Music is a teacher there as part of formal links between the school and the Minster Boys' Choir. We also host the annual Founder's Day services for the Schools of the John Whitgift Foundation, for Archbishop Tenison's School and for Cumnor House School, together with services for other local schools as requested throughout the year.



The Minster also has a close relationship with the care homes of the John Whitgift Foundation, the historic Whitgift Almshouses in central Croydon founded in 1596 providing supported independent living, and Whitgift House in the grounds of Whitgift School, and Wilhelmina House, which provide care for those with greater medical needs. And we retain links with the Elis David Almshouses, now the Croydon Almshouses Charity (Croydon's oldest charity, founded in 1447), including through its annual Mynde Day

service to commemorate the death of its founder, who is buried in the church. The Churchwardens nominate a Board member and the Vicar is its chaplain.

Buildings and Assets

The parish owns a number of properties.

- The historic Grade I listed Minster Church;



- The Grade II listed St George's Church in Waddon;
- The Minster Hall, next to the Minster Church, largely unused since COVID and somewhat run down. The PCC has decided to bring this back into use through a sequential refurbishment programme to provide facilities for parish and wider community use building on the current Council work to refurbish the area around the Minster, and to generate income;
- Four residential properties, one a recent legacy in the course of being sold, two others within walking distance of the Minster housing the Minster Associate Vicar and the Director of Music, and one being prepared for commercial rental as it is not currently required for parochial use.



This portfolio inevitably requires a steady flow of day-to-day management by the Parish Administrator, overseen by the Churchwardens. As part of this we hold monthly maintenance mornings, supported by both members of the congregation and volunteers from the wider community. There is a steady income stream for maintenance of the Church fabric from the local Church Tenements Trust charity, supplemented by grants and appeals for more substantial projects, such as the pending final stage of Organ restoration. Our next quinquennial inspection is due in 2027.



During 2026 Croydon Council has taken forward the Minster Green redevelopment project to enhance the public space around the Minster, in close consultation with the PCC and Diocese. This has included installation of architectural lighting on the Minster, significantly enhancing its public presence at night.

The Vicarage, in South Croydon adjacent to Whitgift School, is provided and maintained by the Diocese. It was built in 2012 and is a modern 'eco' house with underfloor heating and solar panels, helping offset electricity bills. Downstairs is very light with a lounge and dining room overlooking the garden. There is a well-appointed kitchen, a study utility room and cloakroom on the ground floor, four upstairs bedrooms (one en-suite), and a separate bathroom. There is a garage and off-street parking for two cars. The Vicarage is hidden from the road and not overlooked, and is fitted with security lights and a burglar alarm.

History and Heritage



History and heritage we have plenty of! The earliest record of a church in Croydon is of a Saxon Minster in 809. The first priest whose name we know is Ælfsie in 960. Croydon was part-owned by the Archbishops of Canterbury from well before the Norman Conquest, and they built a palace next door to the Church (Old Palace, now a school). Six Archbishops are buried in the Church, in particular John Whitgift, whose foundation has been a central part of Croydon life since about 1600. The parish was part of the Diocese of Canterbury until 1985, and the Archbishop is still our Patron. The current Minster building is at least the fourth church on the site since Saxon times, mostly a sensitive late 19th Century rebuild of the medieval church by Sir George Gilbert Scott following a devastating fire in 1867, incorporating fabric from the previous churches. The Minster is a member of the Major Churches Network, reflecting its exceptional significance, size, listed status, and wider civic and cultural contribution. We seek to draw on this heritage as part of our outreach activity, including through research by our Minster Education Officer and others in the congregation into the story of the church and the people associated with it.



Governance

The incumbent is supported by a core team comprising:

- The full time Associate Vicar at the Minster (Fr Michael Walcott)
- The full time Associate Vicar at St George's (Rev Amy Sykes)
- The Lay Reader (PTO) at the Minster (Elaine Cooper)
- The Parish Churchwardens (Stephen Willmer and Hetty Ansong)
- The St George's District Wardens (Dave Milgate and Mark Mason)
- The Director of Music (Justin Miller)
- The Sub-Organist (Stephen Disley)
- Assistant Director of Music and Singing Development Lead (Sophie Garbisu)
- The Parish Administrator and Vicar's Secretary (Trisha Kiercek)
- The Verger (Hilary Barnes)
- The Sacristan (Susan Williams)
- The Parish Treasurer (Debbie Miller) and St George's Treasurer (Carol Milgate)

- The PCC Secretary (Tiffany Willmer) and St George's DCC Secretary (Lynne Kerwood)
- The Parish, Minster and St George's Safeguarding Officers (respectively Hilary Barnes, Getrude Kiute, and Anne Tanner)

In 2023 the Minster and St George's adopted a Scheme clarifying governance arrangements. Details are set out in the Annual Report and Accounts (see links), but in summary:

- The Parochial Church Council (PCC), chaired by the Vicar, is the body of trustees for the whole parish (Minster and St George's), with specified legal responsibilities under the Church Representation Rules. The PCC is the employer and has responsibility for finance, policies and overview of the whole mission of the parish. Between meetings routine business is managed by roughly monthly meetings of the Standing Committee.
- The Minster and St George's each have a District Church Council (DCC), chaired by their respective Associate Vicars. The DCCs have delegated responsibilities from the PCC and focus on the mission and oversight of the work of the two individual churches and congregations.
- The Parish Churchwardens are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, and are supported by two deputy wardens. At present both Churchwardens come from the Minster congregation, and the two Deputy Wardens therefore come from St George's.
- As part of the Croydon Central Deanery the Parish elects four representatives from the Minster and St George's to the Deanery Synod. These representatives also sit on the PCC and their respective DCC, bringing the wider perspective of the Deanery to the Parish and vice versa.

The PCC and DCCs set and review the core policies, including on Safeguarding, Financial processes, Data Protection, Health and Safety, Security, and Communications. The PCC periodically reviews the Parish Risk Register. There is also a detailed Staff handbook setting out individual roles and responsibilities. More detailed information is contained in the Annual Report and Accounts.

Worship

The Minster offers beautiful traditional worship and thoughtful preaching, which we see as very important. We stand firmly within the open liberal catholic liturgical tradition of the Church of England, affirming and supporting the priesthood of both women and men. The Eucharist is central, and it is celebrated daily in the parish, except Saturdays. On Sundays in term time at the Minster the Eucharist is enhanced by the choir singing from the English and European repertoire of sacred music. In addition to the Eucharist, Morning Prayer is said daily on weekdays, and Choral Evensong is sung on Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays in term time. Special services are also celebrated on major feast days throughout the year.





Following renewal in 2025 the Minster Electoral roll was 168 in May 2025, average weekly attendance in October 2025 was about 110 Adults and about 50 Children, and we celebrated and offered thanks to God at 10 baptisms and 2 funerals during the year. We also provide many and regular opportunities for local organisations to worship at the Minster, including two Civic Services, regular and occasional services for our own Minster Infant and Junior Schools and a number of other local schools, and for Elis David Almshouses. The ministry of welcome is performed by a team of Sidespeople who also ensure that people are safe in the building. And our loyal and committed team of Bell Ringers ensure the Minster's 12 fine bells peel out clearly from our tower across the centre of Croydon every Sunday morning.

Our server team, including children and young adults, overseen by the Sacristan, receive regular training and perform their duties with skill and dignity, and a children's area in the Church facilitates younger children and their parents / guardians attending Sunday worship. We recognise, however, a need to strengthen our mission to and provision for children and young people beyond our current focus on singing, serving and catechesis.



As with many churches, the question of how the whole congregation participates in worship is a sensitive issue which requires an understanding of and sensitivity to a broad range of liturgical traditions, and an openness to operating through them in a way that recognises and respects differing approaches. There is also a clearly articulated interest in and appetite for opportunities to deepen spiritual engagement among the congregation, but finding the right balance of provision, availability and approach remains a continuing challenge. We seek to provide Christian teaching through a variety of approaches. The Sunday sermon is central to this, reflected in the importance we attach to preaching.



Other methods have included Lectio Divina, periodic 'catechesis' sessions on particular topics, and occasional study groups, particularly during Lent.

Music

Music is an integral part of the worship and life of Croydon Minster, and is much valued and supported by the PCC, the congregation and the wider community. Our Cathedral-standard choral music tradition is sustained by four choirs, of Men and Boys, the Girls' Choir, choral scholars, and Lay Clerks. Between them they sing four full choral services each week, give regular concerts through the year, and broadcast periodically for the BBC, including the BBC 2019 Christmas Midnight Mass.



The Minster provides young singers with a unique religious musical education, which is an important part of our work with children and young adults, giving them and adults the opportunity to sing the finest works of the sacred choral repertoire. We enjoy a fruitful partnership with Whitgift School. Our Director of Music is also the school's Director of Choral Singing, and Graduate Music Assistants from the school sing in the Choir and support our musical life. Our Singing Development Leader provides vocal training and leads a singing outreach programme with local schools. In termtime we hold lunchtime recitals every Friday, open to all. These are of a high musical standard and particularly provide a showcase for young students at music colleges and local schools. We host a range of other concerts, including in recent years an annual concert by The Sixteen, one of the world's most renowned choral ensembles. And we are blessed with a fine cathedral quality 4-manual organ by the celebrated 19th century organ-builder, William Hill, supported by a distinguished organist, and have a strong track record of sending young organists to Oxbridge and music colleges.



Church Community

Croydon's very diverse social and ethnic mix is fully reflected in our congregation, many of whom come from beyond the parish boundaries. The presence of a full-time Parish Administrator means we are able to keep the church open during the working week and facilitates access to pastoral support for those with immediate needs. Our ministry includes those sleeping rough in Croydon, often including those with mental health problems and addictions. This is an important part of our commitment to serve our local area and human need in the centre of the town as Christ serves us. It is not without its challenges, particularly in striking the balance between ensuring a safe and secure but also an open environment in and around the Minster. As part of this commitment we provide continuing support to the local Nightwatch charity which provides food for people without shelter, and to the local Crisis centre. We also seek to support evolving local arrangements to provide shelter for the homeless during the winter months.



In recent years we have been working with the Separated Child Foundation to assemble and store packs for unaccompanied children arriving in the UK. We hold regular packing sessions throughout the year, well supported by the congregations of the Minster and St. George's, and intend to continue with this partnership.

As with many places, our social engagement during the week was heavily disrupted by Covid and has not fully recovered since. This is something the congregation and PCC wish to rebuild, to strengthen our sense of community and communion outside Sunday services. This will require drawing on a wider cross-section of the congregation, supported by bringing the Minster Hall back into a usable condition. We also see it as an important opportunity to bring our two parish communities at the Minster and St George's closer together.



Stewardship and Finance

Good stewardship of the resources entrusted to us is a fundamental Christian responsibility. The parish receives no State support, or from the Church of England nationally, but benefits from a number of sources of support beyond its own resources. In particular, the Diocese of Southwark provides more clergy than we can resource through our contribution to the Parish Support Fund. We also benefit from substantial indirect support from the John Whitgift Foundation in recognition of the contribution the Vicar and Associate Vicar at the Minster make to the work of the Foundation, from a steady income from the Church Tenements Charity for the maintenance and upkeep of the fabric of Croydon Minster, and from grants from the St Edmund's Charity for educational work in the parish. Following a recent very generous legacy from Martin How, our previous and much-loved Organist Laureate, the parish finances are healthier than they have been for decades.



We are deeply grateful for the generosity and prudence of past generations which enable us to serve the mission of the Church in Croydon. But our regular planned giving is well below the level required to cover our day-to-day running costs, and we are committed to several major capital projects that will require external fundraising, in particular the final stage of restoring the Minster Organ, the refurbishment of the Minster Hall as a functioning wider Minster Centre, and pending work on the high-level dormer windows at St George's Church. The PCC has also identified a number of other projects it would like to take forward when opportunity allows. Stewardship and giving in respect of both committed, planned and regular financial giving and the offerings of gifts and talents through time and skill therefore remain a significant continuing challenge for the PCC and congregation.



Mission, Vision and Challenges

The Minster's open, liberal, catholic tradition is at the heart of who we are and what we do, underpinned by the work of our musical foundation. We see this as providing a strong foundation for the future. Our new Vicar will need to be comfortable with and able to draw on the breadth of this tradition in our calling to be a church at the heart of Croydon, worshipping and witnessing to God, growing in faith, and serving the human needs around us as Christ serves us. But we face a number of continuing challenges which we would wish our new Vicar to engage with, and where evidence of previous experience and new ideas would be welcome. In particular:

- Christ tells us to safeguard children and the vulnerable. Mindful of this fundamental responsibility towards our children and young people, including in our choirs and server team, and to our local homeless community, we look for leadership to ensure we continue nurturing and sustaining strong safeguarding culture and practices that ensure all those who engage with our Churches experience a Christ-centred welcome in which they are known, valued and safe.
- Building a stronger sense of community within the congregation and with our sister church of St George's, nurtured by an emphasis on social activities.
- Developing further our mission to and provision for young people and children.
- Building a stronger commitment to financial and non-financial stewardship, including a sustained increase in planned giving as part of developing a broad and stable stream of income and partnerships.
- And taking forward a range of improvements in our facilities, in particular refurbishing the Church Hall as a Minster Centre which can both provide facilities and income for the church and a community focus.

Person Specification

Taking all of this into consideration, we hope that the next priest to lead us in our mission and ministry will be:

- a compassionate and attentive pastor, with extensive parochial experience; an interest in thought-provoking and engaging preaching; broad liturgical sense, and sensitivity; and effective administrative skills
- collaborative and unifying, able to develop a rapport with people of all ages and backgrounds, who listens well and shows they have listened
- collegially minded in leading a close-knit team of 'one parish, two churches, and three priests,' able to prioritise key issues and delegate effectively while managing their own time
- confident in decision making, and inspirational in leading the congregation into active discipleship
- passionate about developing creative and nurturing youth and children's ministries; and able to work well with children, young people, and families
- comfortable working in partnership with other churches, faith communities, local groups, charities, and civic organisations; and
- resilient, energetic, and possessing the spiritual stamina to grasp the opportunities and cope with the challenges of this unique and demanding role.

We know it sounds like a lot, but we are here to work together, guided and strengthened by God. If you think you might fit this description, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Links

[Croydon Minster](#)

[Croydon Minster - Facebook](#)

[Charity Commission: Annual Reports and Accounts](#)

[John Whitgift Foundation](#)

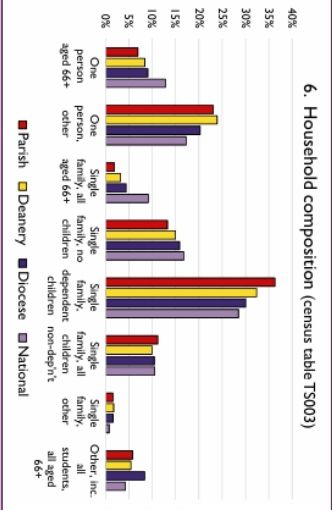
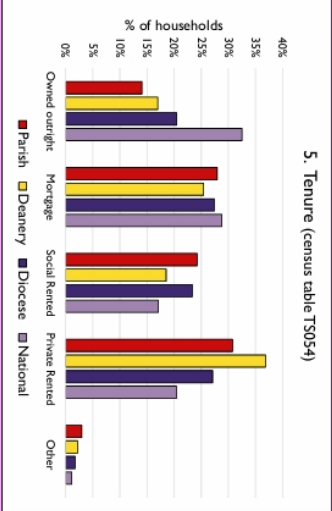
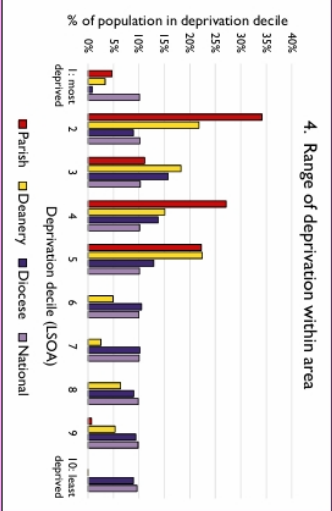
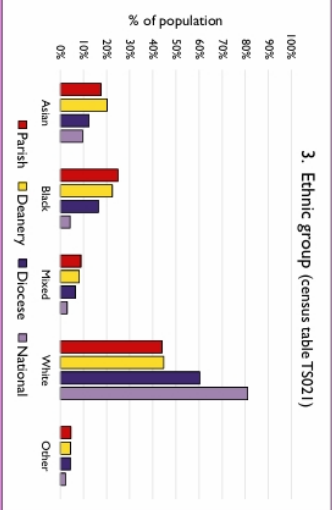
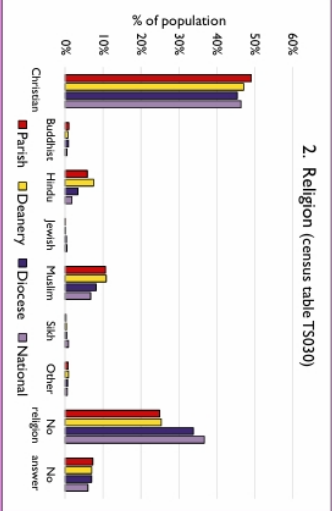
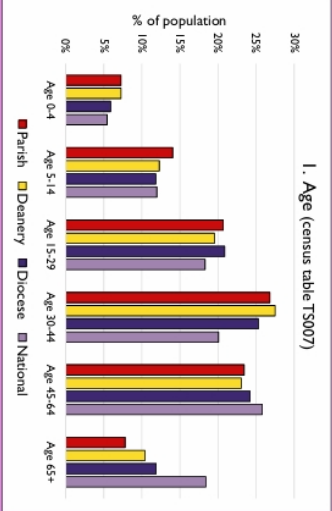
[Minster Junior School](#)

[Minster Nursery and Infants School](#)

[Croydon Almshouses](#)

[Croydon Council](#)

Census & deprivation dashboard for the Parish of Croydon in the deanery of CROYDON CENTRAL



7. 2025 Deprivation Statistics

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), domains, and subdomains

IMD - overall deprivation 12%

Employment 12% Crime 8% Health 23%

Income	8%	Education	28%
Income: Children	10%	Children & Youth	36%
Income: Old people	4%	Adult Skills	20%
Housing & services	62%	Living Environ't	42%
Local services	96%	Indoors	64%
Affordability	4%	Outdoors	4%

Shading shows severity of deprivation compared to other parishes, colour-coded by decile. E.g. a figure of 25% means that 25% of parishes are more deprived than this parish.

Parish deprivation statistics in figure 7 are colour-coded by parish deprivation decile

<---Most deprived ----- Medium ----- Least deprived-->

Coding 5% 15% 25% 35% 45% 55% 65% 75% 85% 95%

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