



Our mission is to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in our local community, and the wider world, in order to extend the Kingdom of God

# St John the Baptist Great Meols

## PARISH PROFILE

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Parish of St John the Baptist, Great Meols.

We are an inclusive church family, firmly embedded in the community of Meols, and recognised for our work both within and outside of our immediate location. Many of our activities, guided by faith, underpin our commitment to supporting those who are struggling with the everyday problems of life.

Our parish profile will provide you with an insight into our church, our community and the work of our volunteers. To really get to know and understand the warmth of our welcome we invite you to come and meet us to experience the love and Christian fellowship we offer to everyone.

## Contact Details:

**St John the Baptist Church**

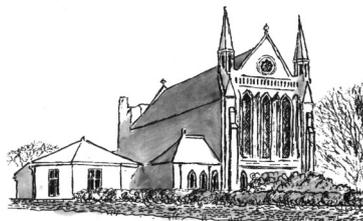
**Church Centre**

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## Our Vision

Our Mission is to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in our local community, and the wider world, in order to extend the kingdom of God.

Over the last 20 years we have been very active in our local community through a wide range of outreach projects which has developed our church into a beacon of light at the centre of Meols. Part of our vision is to continue this work, and to maintain our reputation as a caring and loving church family that supports all people, wherever we can practically do so. We were involved at the very start of “Everyday Faith” and have striven to carry this out in our interaction with the local community.

We have pro-actively built relationships with other local churches and seen the continued development of these relationships as a key part of our vision. In addition, our relationship with Great Meols Primary School is a source of great delight, and we are grateful for the support from the Headteacher and his team.

Like many churches we have seen a decline in Sunday congregations and also in the younger members of our congregation. It is a fundamental desire to reverse this decline and see our church family grow in the love of God and active worship, not just on Sundays but throughout our daily lives.

We see the St John’s of the future as a thriving and loving church with a growing family of members of all ages, coming together to work in the service of God to the benefit of all. We will continue to value our volunteers who do so much to enable the church to function and contribute to our wide range of community activities.

Underpinning this vision is the need for financial security and the integrity of our church buildings. This can only be achieved through the generosity and commitment of our church family.

One of our favourite hymns is “Let us build a church where love can dwell”, the final lines embody our outlook and vision:

“All are welcome, all are welcome, all are  
welcome in this place!”



## Our New Vicar

To help us achieve this vision we are seeking a full time priest who:

- Has a big heart for our people and community and is called to serve Meols as a vocation, in the service of God
- Is a follower of Jesus and a spiritual leader who makes time for prayer, study and contemplation
- Can inspire and teach us all to understand and think about our faith in Christ, and encourage us to live it out daily and grow as disciples
- Will help us to nurture and develop the relationships made through baptisms, weddings and funerals which take place in our church
- Will have a strong awareness of the importance of safeguarding and be able to foster an effective safeguarding culture in the parish.
- Will promote, actively support and encourage us in our work with children and young families within the context of Sunday worship, Little Fishes, and local schools
- Is a team player, willing to work effectively with, lead, and develop skills within the existing teams
- Understands the necessity of financial stability within a challenging and constantly changing environment
- Is able to motivate a diverse group of willing volunteers across all aspects of church and community life
- Will continue to develop our acceptance of a wide range of ages, disabilities, ethnic backgrounds and sexualities
- Can inspire and nurture new leaders to explore and exercise new ministries and vocations;
- Is able to take care of him/her self and understands their vulnerability, whilst also drawing on the support, strength and encouragement of the parish ministry team and community
- Has a keen sense of humour.

## Our Ministry

Our worship is based around our 10.30am Sunday morning service and on our “central” use of Common Worship using the NRSV Bible.

Occasionally we hold an evening Taizé service jointly with the local Roman Catholic church.

If the main 10.30am service is a service of the word, then there is a celebration of communion at 8.00am.

Communion is also celebrated on Thursday mornings with a small but dedicated congregation, and Morning Prayer is read in church, usually by a reader, each weekday.

Our Sunday morning services are recorded so that they are accessible to people at home via our website, Facebook and YouTube.

The parish has a good ministry team. The Readers play active parts in leading worship and preaching. Intercessions and Bible readings are shared between Readers, pastoral workers and members of the congregation.

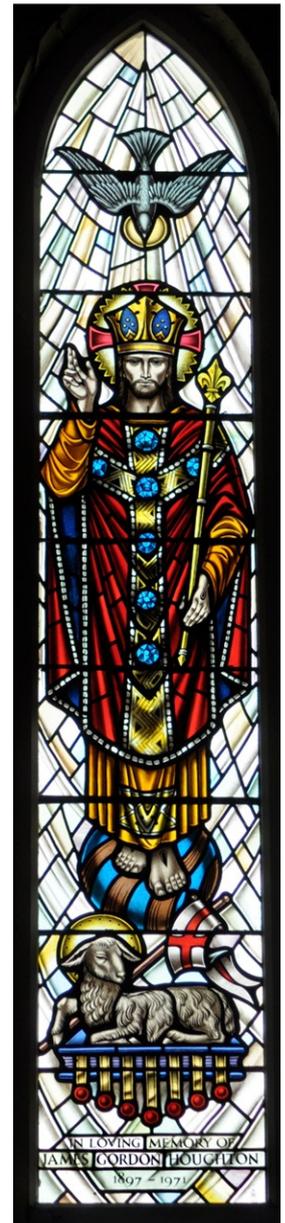
In addition to the incumbent, readers conduct funerals and do all the preparation work with the deceased’s family. We all try to feel to some extent, we know the deceased, even if we have never met them.

Bible study groups are organised during Lent. Home Communion is taken monthly to people in residential care or who are housebound, and many members of the congregation do home visits.

## Music

Our 10.30am Sunday Communion services are usually accompanied by our choir and the organ, played by Graham Jordan Ellis, a musician respected highly across the country. Services of the Word have piano and violin music, whilst family services are often accompanied by other musicians. Every effort is made to match our hymns and worship songs to readings and seasons.

The Meols Community Choir, who meet at St John’s, perform a Passion play on Palm Sunday in church, and during Advent visit local care homes. Annually, in October, the choir joined by the children of Great Meols Primary School, perform a concert to raise funds for a local charity.



## Children's Activities

Having lost our children's groups during Covid-19 there is a need to re-develop children's participation in church. While Messy Church is well attended our pre-school "Little Fishes" group remains small, as does our Sunday School.

The two Christingle services on Christmas Eve, which raised over £800 for the Children's Society last year, see an excellent attendance; for several families this is their "Christmas Service".

We do have strong links with Great Meols Primary School, and we hope to enhance this.



Ministry does not stop with church services. We are a "Place of Welcome" and the "ministry of the cup of tea" is well established and successful. Members of the congregation are happy to greet newcomers to church or to all of our other activities.

## Wirral North Deanery

The Deanery of Wirral North forms an L shape across the northern half of the Wirral, excluding Birkenhead and Wallasey.

There is no natural centre of gravity for the Deanery - it comprises of 14 parishes, covering nearly as many separate population centres, and with 21 churches each with a range of size, style and tradition.

There are good relationships in the Deanery particularly between the clergy, for whom it provides a valuable forum for fellowship and mutual support.

Synod meets three times a year, usually with a speaker on a topic of relevance, often one of the Diocesan team.

Because of the size and makeup of the Deanery we do not currently have Deanery-wide initiatives involving all the churches, but some churches partner with, and support one another, or are involved in joint events together on a local basis

## Our Community & Outreach

St John's is at the heart of the local community and together with our church family, the local community support us in all that we do.



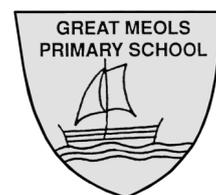
Our drop-in **Place of Welcome café** on Mondays 11:30am-1:30pm provides a hot lunch for our congregation, the local community or passing walkers.

**Soup at Home** takes home-made soup and lunch to folk in the community who are isolated, convalescing or are undergoing treatment.

**Fellowship Lunches** are offered alternate months, to about 40 people who are recently bereaved or who would benefit from company and having a meal made for them. In December this becomes a Christmas meal with festive entertainment.

The **Young at Heart** group of older congregation members meet monthly to share fellowship, refreshments and a quiz

We have an excellent relationship with **Great Meols Primary School** who have visited the church for a Christmas Experience, organised by our church volunteers, and Harvest Festival and Christmas Concerts organised by school. The year 6 School Ambassadors have helped with our Soup at Home deliveries and wrapped pyjamas in December for Swap Shop.



*Great Meols Primary School enjoys a strong and valued partnership with St Johns, fostering a close relationship that enriches both the church and the school community. Our collaboration includes shared Harvest and Christmas services, where pupils actively participate in worship and celebration. The Reverend serves as a school governor, providing pastoral support and strengthening the connection between the community and education. We are proud that the school's ambassadors visit St John's, where they contribute to community outreach by helping to pack lunches for those in need and wrapping Christmas pyjamas for local families. Additionally, the church opens its doors to pupils as part of their Religious Education curriculum, offering them the opportunity to explore the church's history, traditions, and role in the community. Through these joint efforts, St John's continues to nurture a spirit of service, learning, and faith within the heart of Meols.* **Mr R Brown, Headteacher**

## Children's Activities

Only a small number of families attend Sunday services on a regular basis, however, we do have a wide range of activities and all children from our community are welcome.

Children have enjoyed an evening of Pancake Fun on Shrove Tuesday, Messy Church events, a week-long Holiday Club based on 'Beauty and the Beast', a 'Light Party' in October, and a Christmas Fun Day. This year also saw the relaunch of our Sunday School and although numbers are small at present, we hope to see them grow in 2025.

**Swap Shop** arose in September 2014 from our pairing with St Chad's church in Leasowe as part of the Diocesan Life Expectancy project. To the end of 2024 we have been visited by 7,531 adults taking free, good quality clothes for 13,649 children. Swap Shop also offers a safe space and a place to be heard and, when necessary, signpost and support families who are often living with great challenges. Surplus clothing from Swap Shop goes to Asylum Link Liverpool.

**Refugee Support** and links with Asylum Link Merseyside arose from our art exhibition called Heart4Refugees, helping to put faces to the word refugee; closely followed by three refugee families turning up at Swap Shop in February 2018. Helping these families was the start of our real refugee support work which continues today. Through 2020 we helped, with other local churches, to feed, clothe and advocate for over 100 young men housed in Hoylake. It was a huge undertaking, from which the CIC Heart4Refugees was formed. We continue to support their work.

Our **Big Shed Project** (funded by a Lottery grant in 2023) provides furniture, collected and delivered by us, to families coming out of emergency housing or Home Office supported housing when they have been granted a 'right to remain'.

The **Early Years team** at **Heart4Refugees**, also benefit from our store of baby equipment which is available to any family in need.



## Meols: Our Village & Local Area

Meols is part of the Diocese of Chester and Wirral North Deanery and is situated on the north coast of the Wirral Peninsula, with its wide mixture of urban, suburban and rural areas.



The Wirral is a beautiful area which offers woodlands, sandy beaches and many facilities, that many people who come here don't want to leave. Whether you want to explore Cheshire Oaks Designer Outlet or enjoy an excellent ice cream in New Brighton there are many things for all ages to enjoy close at hand.

The village of Meols, which is mainly residential, has a primary school (Ofsted overall rating: Good. Early years: Outstanding) with both grammar and secondary schools nearby.

A small parade of shops, including a pharmacy and health centre, are close to Meols railway station. Trains into Birkenhead and Liverpool run every 15 minutes, with connections to the historic city of Chester and North Wales. In addition, there is an excellent bus service and easy access to the M53. The village pub has the distinction of having a Viking boat under its carpark.

The larger town of Hoylake is within walking distance, and offers a wider range of shops, eateries and other independent businesses.

Hoylake and Meols offer many opportunities to get involved in community life. The Open Golf Championship is held in Hoylake at the Royal Liverpool Golf Course every few years; a real boost for tourism.

Meols promenade, with its constant stream of visitors, leads onto the North Wirral Coastal Path, stretching between the popular resorts of New Brighton and West Kirby. The Parade Gardens with their colourful Waders' Walk art display on the seafront, reflect the variety of seabirds that frequent our sands.



At low tide, the Hilbre archipelago, accessible by a 45 minute walk from West Kirby, is well worth a visit. Early on Easter Sunday, there is a regular pilgrimage out to Hilbre island and a short service led by St John's.

The city of Liverpool offers much in the way of entertainment, culture and cuisine, along with the famous 'Ferry Cross the Mersey' river cruise, and can be reached in less than half an hour by train.



## Our Church Buildings



The church of St John the Baptist, which is just over 100 years old, is a prominent local landmark in the area and has recently undergone extensive maintenance work to the external walls. Generally, the building is in good condition, although part of the roof may may soon need some work.

The Church Centre, completed in 1989, is at the heart of the village community and is used by both church groups and the community for regular bookings along with one-off events and parties. It consists of a large hall, fully fitted kitchen, meeting room, parish office and toilet facilities.



The church buildings have all main services, with gas fan-heaters providing heating for the church and a traditional gas boiler and radiators servicing the church centre. We have recently achieved an ECO-Church Bronze Award.

Wi-Fi is provided throughout the church buildings and there is a comprehensive sound desk, also serving an offset projector. The church has a classical organ in the nave. To give maximum flexibility, traditional seating in the church has been replaced by comfortable independent chairs, with a maximum seating capacity of 200. There is good access for those with additional needs.

The church buildings sit within well maintained gardens together with a car park and two wooden, storage sheds.



The parish vicarage, which is opposite the church at 142 Birkenhead Road, is a semi-detached property built in 1910.

The ground floor has two large reception rooms and a family kitchen whilst on the first floor there are four large bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Outside there are easily managed gardens to three sides and a detached garage with a long drive for additional parking.

# Our Strengths & Weaknesses

## Strengths

- Regular and faithful congregation
- Experienced and dedicated leadership team
- Active Readers and Pastoral Workers
- Good Standing in the community
- Number of volunteers from outside of the church community
- Full payment of Parish Share
- Wide range of activities to include all
- Strong relationship with Great Meols Primary School
- Church Centre is practical and in good condition, and a useful source of income
- Good links to other local churches
- Café, coffee mornings and community choir all engage with community
- Communication with the community through Meols Matters

## Weaknesses

- Ageing congregation and leadership team (Majority in their 70's)
- No clear succession for Readers and Pastoral workers
- Planned giving does not meet Parish share
- Lack of young people at services and in general.
- Church volunteers are thinly spread, and many are tired and need support
- Low take-up for spiritual development
- Main church building is over 100 years old and requires regular maintenance which can be costly
- Rising everyday costs e.g. energy, insurance etc.
- Rising Parish Share
- General view of the Church of England as an out of touch organisation
- Competition on a Sunday with other activities especially among young people

## Our Finances

The parish of St John the Baptist has the distinction of always paying its full Parish Share. That is despite the fact that the charge is 135% of the standard rate per parish under the socio-economic weighting adopted in the Diocese of Chester, through which parishes in more affluent areas support the ministry in those which are more deprived.

The PCC's aim is to match the Planned Giving voluntary contributions to cover the Parish Share, at the least, but also hoped to cover the Church running costs of heating, lighting and water bills. As is evidenced by the 2024 financial accounts, we have yet to achieve this goal, although income from the hiring out of the church centre does help.

Our congregation is generous when funding specific events and this alongside recent bequests have allowed our bank balance to remain, at least superficially, in good order. Over the past 5 years, through Prayer and the Grace of God, together with the generosity of our congregation and local residents, we have been able to pay for significant repairs to our East and West walls, costing in excess of £90,000.

Great care is taken in managing our finances, especially in these trying times. More is being done to increase our planned giving options and we now have opportunities to give via our website, Facebook and Instagram accounts. We also have a contactless facility and a Just Giving page. We have actively sought out grants with success in funding specific projects.