

# St Mark's North Road



## Parish Profile

## St Mark's North Road

Our church community is housed in a truly beautiful 140 year old church which is located at the top of a hill looking over the town centre. Though we are a town steeped in industrial heritage, the town and parish has recently seen lots of new housing developments and there is a multi-million pound town centre development starting shortly.

While our parish faces some challenges with a fast growing population and some areas of deprivation, St Mark's strives to continually widen it's reach with a dedicated, hard working family of volunteer mission leaders.

### Our Buildings

Our three buildings, (Church, Gamble Hall and Parish Hall) help us to reach and support many diverse groups in our community both socially and spiritually. The church building was consecrated in 1886 and the fabric is well-maintained. We have recently completed works on roof repairs, installed under pew heaters, upgraded our electrical system, installed an audio-visual system and are in the process of decorating and updating our furniture.



The parish hall is adjacent to the church and is currently let out to a pre-school. This provides a good source of income to fund our mission and ministry. We also own the house next to the church (originally the Verger's house) which is now rented out privately to support church finances.

The Gamble Hall is located further down the road, opposite Victoria Park, and incorporates a meeting hall, kitchen, a well kept garden (with green houses and sheds) and a large field for events and services. This is a significant asset to the local area and the building is used by lots of groups.





## About the Parish

We are a church in the north of St Helens with a growing population. Our parish consists of residential and industrial properties. It includes Haresfinch Park and Victoria Park, both of which are beautiful assets to the community.

The parish is an urban district with a moderate percentage of the population on a low to middle income. The parish is home to approximately 6500 people and 2500 homes. These are a mix of private housing, social housing and sheltered accommodation. This is expected to grow with a large new housing estate being built just behind the church. Our hope is that our church can make the most of this exciting opportunity and reach many new families in the area.



St Mark's seen from Victoria Park



The Lake at Victoria Park



Haresfinch Park

Within the parish there is a URC church and a large Roman Catholic parish, with whom we would like to develop a better relationship. The post-holder will work with our church and the Eccleston Team, and we're looking forward to collaborating with them closely in mission and ministry to better reach St Helens with the good news of Jesus. The town boasts a highly respected industrial history with the Gamble and Pilkington families playing a considerable part. One of our church halls (the Gamble Hall) is named after the Gamble family who famously set up works in 1828. The family gifted the land and paid for the Hall's construction and gifted it to the parish of St Mark's.

## Our Congregation

We're a congregation with a strong evangelical history. We're 'middle-Anglican', using common worship to give our services structure. Music is important to us at St Mark's, and our experienced organist leads us in hymns and contemporary songs at morning services. We celebrate communion together once or twice a month depending on clergy availability, and other services tend to be a service of the word. Our congregation size is approximately 40 worshippers on Sunday morning, and like many parishes we are predominantly of middle and retired age.

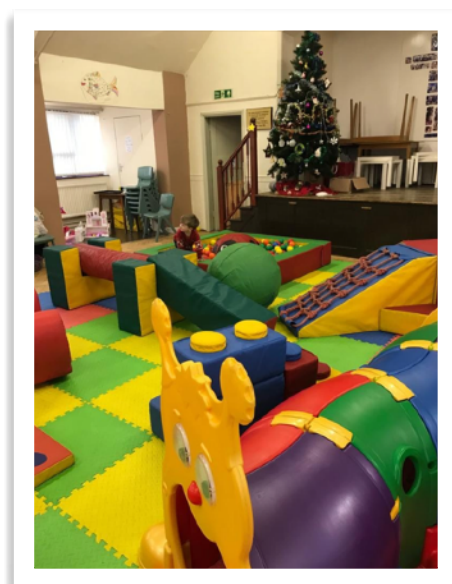
In the recent past we have hosted Messy Church style services in our Gamble Hall for young families in the area. We'd like to expand our reach towards young families, and would like a leader who can help us in this area.

## **Mission and Outreach**

We run a very successful toddler group on Friday mornings at the Gamble Hall. This allows us the chance to get to know local families, who can start to feel part of our community. We invite these families to special events and we would like to do more to bring young families into the worshipping life of the church.

We also offer an opportunity to connect with the community on a weekly basis, at our Lay led group called SMASH (St Mark's Activities and Social Hub).

This is attended by people of varying ages, some having been signposted to us by other agencies. We provide lunch and also the opportunity to do a variety of arts and crafts, play board games or to just chat. This is a venture which has been running for almost four years and has the potential for further development - perhaps the foundation for another worshipping community as an extension of the existing church. Throughout the year we run a number of events and community activities which are always well attended and supported by the local community, including garden parties, summer fairs, car boot sales and plant sales. Recently we secured grant funding to offer a 'breakfast with Santa' for the local community at the Gamble Hall which was attended by around 50 children demonstrating the community spirit in the area and the goodwill people have towards the church. We have many ideas about what we can achieve in the future and are firmly committed to finding ways to grow our church community, in formal and informal worship. We seek a Priest who can lead the way and develop the opportunities in our parish.



Christmas at "Tot's and Toys"

## **Our Finances**

St Mark's is up to date with its parish share (approximately £25,000 per year) and has a good payment record. Our total income last year was approximately £60,000 and our expenditure was £90,000 owing to building improvement works/repairs and Project Management costs. We're currently renewing our contracts with all our hall users and renters to help ensure the longer-term financial viability.



Music social at the Gamble Hall