

St Oswald's Church

PARISH PROFILE 2026





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1. Welcome



Welcome to St. Oswald's — a joyful, vibrant church where everyone belongs

We are a welcoming church family, enthusiastic about building friendships and making a positive difference. Rooted in worship, prayer, and community life, we are a church family drawn from diverse backgrounds and united by our shared faith in Jesus Christ.

At the heart of St. Oswald's is prayer, joy, and the freedom that faith in God brings—these inspire and strengthen everything we do. We are a welcoming church family, enthusiastic about building friendships and making a positive difference. We aim to be warm, friendly and open to the wider community, inviting everyone in to be part of our story and to 'sing with hope in our hearts!'

We are blessed with:

- A growing strong, supportive congregation of all ages, with long standing members.
- Newcomers drawn by our welcome.
- A PCC and lay leadership team dedicated to bringing a range of skills to enable consistent growth of the church.
- Steady blossoming of our Sunday school, ably led by devoted Sunday school leaders.
- A wonderful Choir and organ filling our church with music lifting our spirits each week, alongside a grand piano used for hosting music events and recitals, to raise vital funds for the church.
- Good strong connections with local schools and groups who use our church and hall.
- Volunteers who give generously of their time, skills and knowledge organising celebrations and other key fundraising events.

We are grateful for the strong foundations we have received. We look ahead with hope, faith, and the love of God to the next chapter of our life and witness in this parish.

Yvonne and Yemi
Church Wardens





2. What we are looking for

We are praying for a Vicar who is ...

*Welcoming to all,
regardless of age,
colour or gender*

*Reaching out to
the wider parish*

Led by God

Faith and leadership

- Prayerful and spiritually grounded
- A confident preacher and teacher
- Able to offer vision and help the church grow

Working with people

- Warm and approachable
- A good communicator
- Collaborative and team-oriented
- Happy to work closely with lay ministers

Looking outwards

- Community-focused and outward-looking
- A heart for children and young people
- Committed to inclusion
- Organised, fair-minded and approachable





3. What our children and young people hope for in our new Vicar

"Someone who listens, is fair, and includes everyone"

"Someone who is interested in Sunday School"

"More dancing and singing to celebrate Jesus"

Our children and young people hope for a Vicar who listens well, treats people fairly, takes an interest in Sunday School, and helps make church joyful, lively and welcoming. They would value someone who is inclusive and responsive to different needs, including making space and appropriate adjustments so that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can feel fully included in the life of the church.





4. The next chapter: our vision and the future

St Oswald's looks to the future with gratitude for strong foundations and a desire to grow further in faith, welcome and service. Recent years have included important moments for celebration and renewal, enabling us to give thanks for the life of the parish through worship, fellowship and community events.

We were blessed to welcome many visitors and supporters from across the parish and beyond to our *St Oswald's @ 90* anniversary celebrations which began in May 2024. These included joyful services of thanksgiving, the *St Oswald's Story* exhibition in church, open days to tour the church and gardens, talks from invited speakers and presentations from community groups, and a wonderful community afternoon tea with live music, singing and dance performances. Many visitors had connections to the church and it was a delight to hear their stories, and an opportunity to renew involvement with St Oswald's.

Many people choose St Oswald's for important life events such as baptisms, weddings, funerals and other special services. Throughout the year, regular events such as our Summer and Christmas fairs, Harvest celebrations, Black History Month programme, music events and community lunches continue to strengthen our sense of identity, hospitality and presence in the community.





4. The next chapter: our vision and the future

As we look ahead, we see clear opportunities for growth. We want to deepen prayer and discipleship, strengthen pastoral care, build belonging for newcomers and occasional worshippers, and grow our ministry with children, young people and families. We also want to continue developing our visibility and service in the local community, make imaginative use of our buildings and outdoor space, and build confidence in using technology and communications well.

Some of these hopes require practical development too: improving audio-visual provision, strengthening communications, encouraging new volunteers, equipping others to take on key roles over time, and turning community contact into deeper participation in the life of the church. We see these not simply as challenges to solve, but as opportunities for growth in mission, prayer and welcome.





4. The next chapter: our vision and the future

Like many parts of London, this parish includes both affluence and deprivation. Many people face modern pressures, including the impact of the cost of living, housing insecurity, homelessness, health inequalities and social isolation. At the same time, the area continues to welcome both long-established and newer migrant communities, including people who have come following conflict and upheaval. We see this not simply as a challenge, but as a clear opportunity to serve with compassion, humility and kindness, reflecting the love of Christ in practical and hopeful ways.

We believe it is possible to grow our ministry; through deepening belonging, strengthening community connections, and sharing the hope of the gospel with people of all ages and backgrounds.

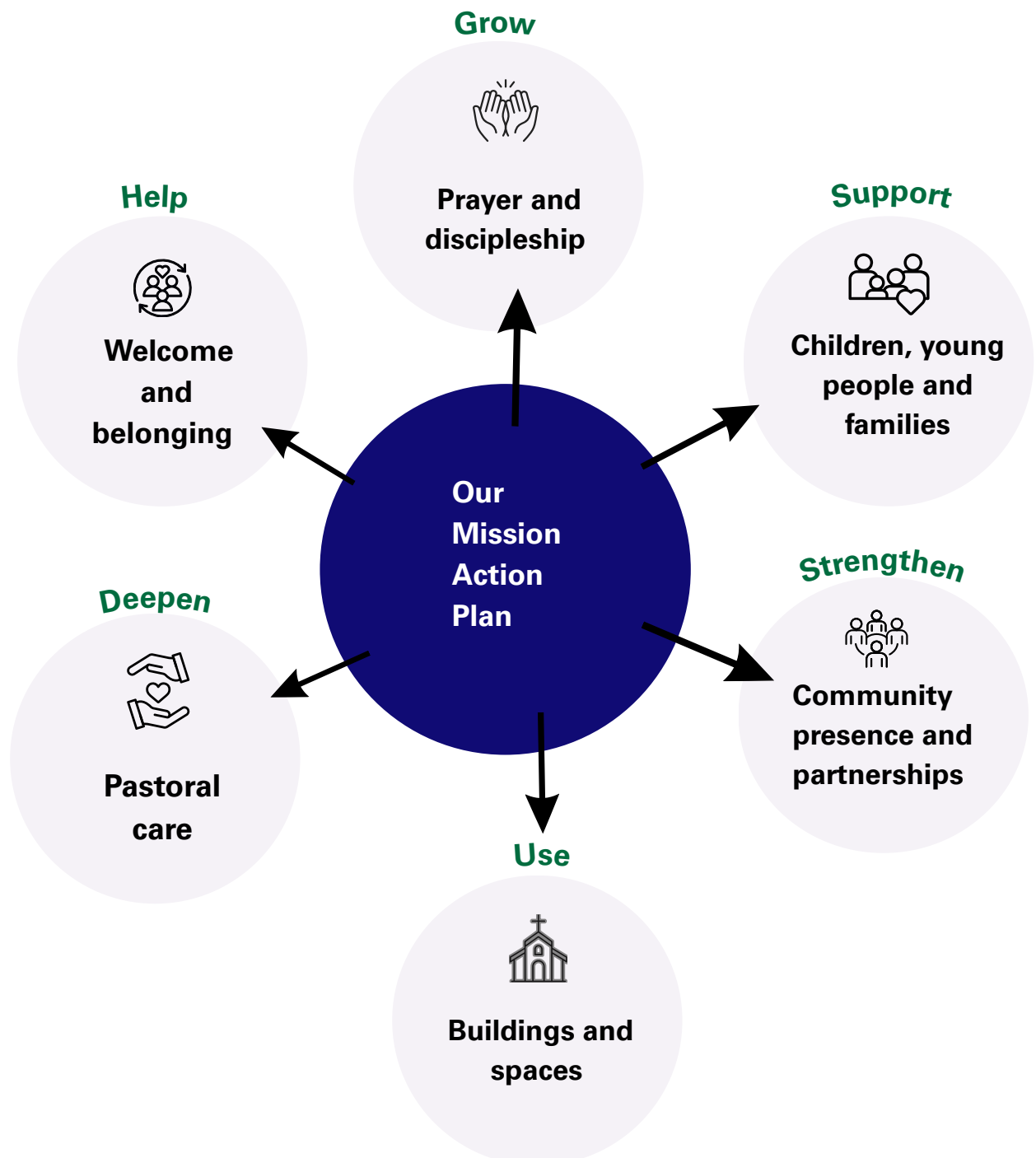




4. The next chapter: our vision and the future

Our Mission Action Plan reflects this desire to build on St Oswald's strengths as a welcoming, prayerful and community-minded parish.

It focuses on helping people feel welcome, growing prayer and discipleship, supporting children and families, deepening pastoral care, strengthening our local presence, and making good use of our buildings, outdoor spaces and communications channels.







5. Our worship and church family

Our congregation reflects the diversity of our neighbourhood, bound together by a shared commitment to Jesus Christ. The congregation is made up of all age groups, and in common with many other churches, has an ageing profile. Our average Sunday attendance is around 50 to 70 people, and our worship is marked by warmth, reverence and a strong sense of welcome.

Services

Worship and the Eucharist are at the heart of our life together. Sunday services begin at 8.00am with Holy Communion, followed by our main all-age Sung Eucharist at 10.00am. We also hold a short midweek Holy Communion service on Wednesdays at 10.30am. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are said online during the week, and music is an important part of our worshipping life, combining traditional and modern hymns, led by an all-age choir and our Director of Music.





5. Our worship and church family

Children and young people at St Oswald's

Children and young people are a valued and growing part of ministry at St Oswald's. We warmly welcome families, especially those with young children, and provide a dedicated space at the entrance to the church where children can draw, read, play and take part in quiet activities during services.

Sunday School takes place during the 10am service and welcomes children and young people from toddlers to older teens, supported by a committed team of volunteers and parents. Younger children hear Bible stories, sing, play and take part in creative activities, while older children and teenagers explore the Gospel together through discussion and reflection.

All-age worship takes place once a month, and children and young people enjoy taking an active part, especially at key festivals such as Easter, Mothering Sunday, Harvest and Christmas. They are encouraged to grow in faith, develop their gifts and contribute to church life, including through singing, serving, reading and taking on leadership responsibilities.

One of St Oswald's strengths is the sense of belonging across generations. Many families have worshipped here for many years, and children and young people are known, encouraged and supported as vital members of the church family. We are grateful for their enthusiasm, energy and ideas, and we see this as an important area of growth for the future.





5. Our worship and church family



Yvonne
Church Warden



Yemi
Church Warden



Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The Team

St Oswald's is supported by a committed lay ministry team, including Readers, Commissioned Pastoral Lay Ministers, Churchwardens, PCC members, a Director of Music and a Safeguarding Officer. Sub-committees support the overall governance role of the PCC including the Mission Group, Standing, Hall, Treasury, Fundraising and Events committees. Several other teams and individuals from the congregation perform vital roles such as hall management, cleaning, flower arranging, maintaining the church, hall and gardens, and supporting at events. All give their time generously and serve faithfully in worship, welcome, pastoral care and the practical life of the church.

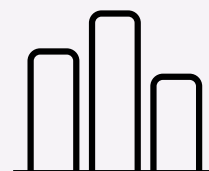
Safeguarding is taken seriously and remains a standing item in PCC life.



5. Our worship and church family

The total membership following the full revision of the 2025 Electoral Roll is 140, of whom 72 live within the parish and 68 live outside it.

At a glance: Our church family



- Electoral Roll: 140
- Sunday attendance: 50-70
- Children's church during term time
- Daily online prayer
- All-age choir and music in worship

Data source: Electoral Roll 2025

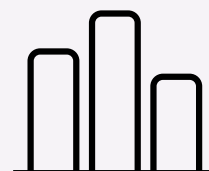




6. St Oswald's in the community

St Oswald's serves a parish of just under 10,000 people in around 3,400 households. It is a diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-faith community, with a broad mix of ages and more than 1,100 families with dependent children. This gives the parish a rich context for ministry and a significant opportunity to build relationships across generations, serve the local community, and grow our engagement with children, young people and families.

At a glance: The Parish



- Just under 10,000 people
- Around 3,400 households
- Over 1,100 families with dependent children
- Nearly 1,800 children aged 15 and under
- An ethnically diverse and multi-faith parish

Data source: 2021 Census



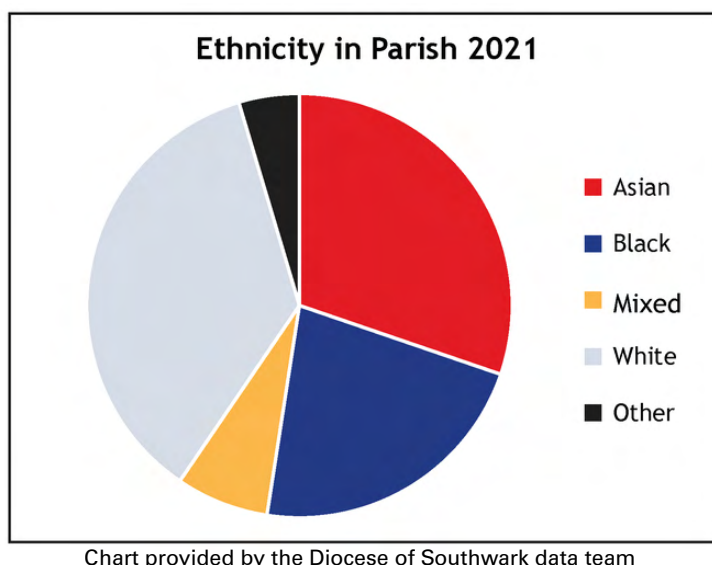
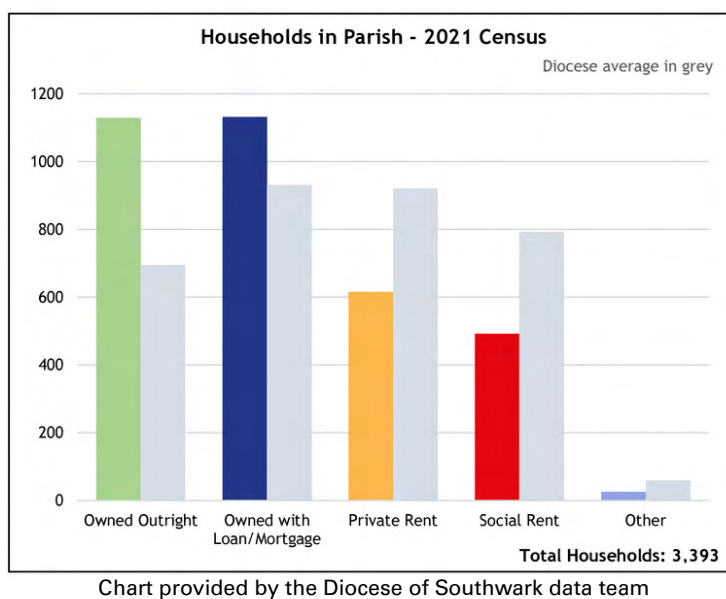
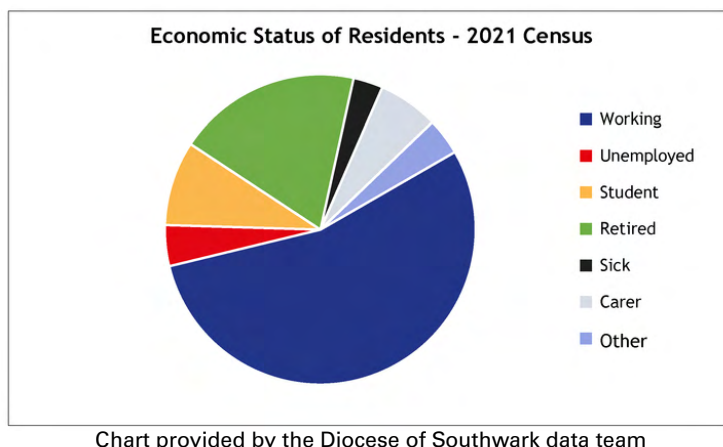


6. St Oswald's in the community

The local picture

Reflective of many parts of London, the parish is an area of contrast, with both strengths and pressures. Housing affordability, deprivation, health inequalities, disability and social isolation all shape the context in which we live and minister. We see this as part of the mission opportunity God has given us.

Data source: 2021 Census Charts provided by the Diocese of Southwark data team



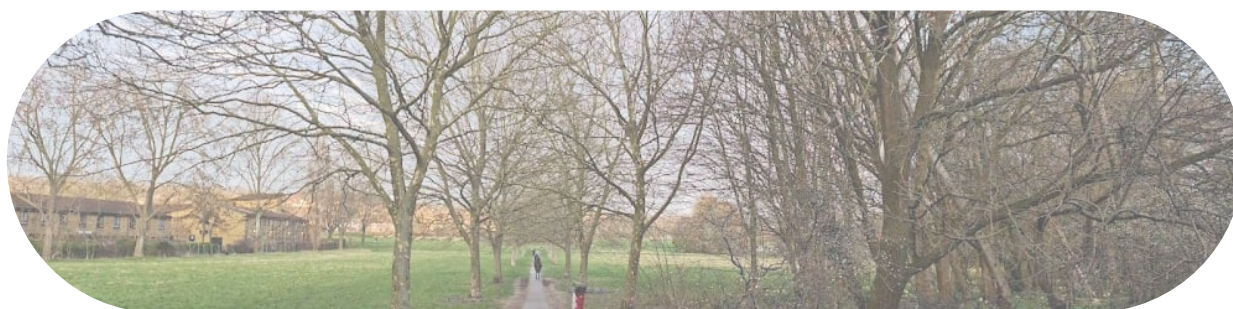


6. St Oswald's in the community

The parish is part of North Croydon in the Diocese of Southwark and includes a mix of residential streets, local amenities and accessible transport links. The church is located on a main road which has frequent bus services and there are train stations nearby at Norbury, Streatham and Thornton Heath. The area is well-served with shops, schools, health, outdoor and leisure resources, and other centres in Croydon and towards London provide additional facilities.

St Oswald's values its links with local schools and the opportunities these provide for welcome, service and witness. Nearby primary and secondary schools such as Kensington Avenue Primary School and Norbury High School for Girls have used the church for seasonal services, and school visits have helped children engage with the building and the Christian faith. These relationships are an important part of our presence in the parish and offer scope for the new Vicar to build further connections with children, young people and families.

We also value our relationships with neighbouring churches, deanery partners and local organisations. St Oswald's shares in ecumenical activity, including an annual Good Friday service with Downsview Methodist Church, and members of our lay ministry team are involved in wider deanery and community engagement.





6. St Oswald's in the community

St Oswald's Hall is a lively and welcoming space at the heart of community life. It is used by a wide variety of groups, including activities for older people, families with young children, young people, community organisations, prayer and fellowship groups, and regular dance, fitness and martial arts classes. Alongside church events and celebrations, the hall also hosts civic and private occasions, helping it to serve as an important point of connection between the church and the wider community.

Hall users consistently describe St Oswald's as a warm, welcoming and supportive place, and value the flexibility of the space for a wide range of community activities.



"We feel well accommodated and blessed to be here!"

"Very helpful hall manager who is always on hand to answer any questions and very welcoming to the parents."

"I've been teaching groups of children and young adults here for 40 years. Good access for parking and lovely outside gardens. Good area for parents to wait with nice bright lighting."

"St Oswald's is a place of warmth and welcome."

"Our exercises encourage movement and we find St Oswald's hall homely"

"We find St Oswald's a place of warmth. We are preparing some of our Martial Arts teams for Olympic trials and we may have some TV crews filming at the hall!"



6. St Oswald's in the community

We support a range of charitable causes through donations, collections and practical partnership, including work with the local food bank at St Alban's Church, South Norwood and other organisations at home and overseas.

We want to continue growing as a parish that serves the wider community with compassion, creativity and hope.







7. Buildings and heritage

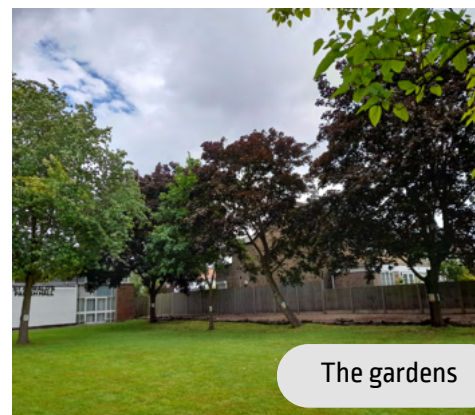
The Parish Church of St Oswald's, Norbury was consecrated on 16th May 1934, formed from the existing parishes of All Saints, Upper Norwood and St Paul's. Thornton Heath, and is dedicated to the 7th Century King Oswald of Northumbria.

The beautiful church grounds and gardens are a valued part of parish life. Volunteers help to maintain the lawns and flowerbeds so that the area around the church remains a welcoming and restful green space for the community.

The modern purpose-built Vicarage stands adjacent to the church and hall. It is a spacious detached four-bedroom family home with garage, private garden, study and practical family accommodation. It offers a comfortable and settled base for ministry.

The parish hall and associated spaces are also important assets, supporting worship, hospitality, outreach and community activity across the year.

St Oswald's seeks to be a good steward of its buildings and resources. Our finances section includes a summary of the church's financial position.



The gardens



The Vicarage



The parish hall



Caring for the gardens



8. Finance summary

The church is financially stable, supported by committed parishioners through planned giving, generous donations, and fundraising initiatives. The finances are well run by a dedicated Finance Team which works closely with the PCC to balance the need to meet the parish share request, maintain the church and serve its local and international mission commitments.

Over the last few years, the church has had major outgoings including for essential Quinquennial work in 2024, repairs to the Church roof, organ maintenance, hall repairs, and high utility bills. The congregation numbers have also been reducing. Sadly, we have lost a few long-standing, faithful members and this has had an impact on our regular monthly collections.

In 2018 The Parish Support Fund (PSF) contribution was £47 500, rising to £50 000 in 2019. There were decreases in PSF contributions from 2020 – 2023 due to the impact of Covid, reduced giving and other cost of living challenges, we paid as much as we could towards our parish share for this period. However, we were able to increase PSF contributions once more to £50 000 in 2024 but due to high expenditure, coupled with rising costs, we could only afford for the parish share to remain at £50,000 for 2025.

We currently do not meet the cost of having a Vicar and need to increase our parish share as a priority. We are working hard, with the assistance of the Diocese, to achieve an increase in the pledge in 2026 through a clear fundraising strategy. The Finance Team are also collaborating closely with the Fundraising Committee to establish ways of generating additional revenue, with a percentage going towards the Parish Support Fund.

We are looking to establish the Parish Giving Scheme at St Oswald's and will encourage the congregation to join as a way of securing regular contributions. We have recently introduced 'digital giving' facilities at St Oswald's to provide an alternative to physical cash giving. We will also prayerfully consider how we can increase our giving, to support our mission and ministry.

Note: The latest available 2024 and previously published accounts and other trustee information can be found on the Charity Commission website and searching for charity number: 1186034.



9. Parish finances - Figures for the Year End December 2025

(a) Total Annual Parochial Income		£94,504	
(b) Annual Income from Direct Giving Stewardship Donations & Legacies	Stewardship Donations & Legacies	£66,843 <u>£1,993</u>	£68,836
(c) Annual Income from Investments Property Hall Hire Other	Property Hall Hire Other	Nil £24,468 <u>£1,200</u>	£25,668
(d) Capital Debt		Nil	
(e) Arrears in Parish Share Payments Current Year Previous Year		Nil Nil	
(f) Parish Share Payments to the Diocese in 12 equal payments:		£4,167	£50,004
(g) The Church practises Christian Stewardship with the number of freewill offering envelope scheme currently standing at:			45
(h) Number of giving to the Church by covenant using Gift Aid The PCC fully reimburses the actual cost of Clergy Expenses according to the Diocesan Policy.			40





10. Our offer: What we can offer our new Vicar

St Oswald's offers a prayerful, welcoming and collaborative setting for ministry. We are looking forward to supporting our new Vicar as, together, we continue the next chapter of our life and witness in this parish. Ours is a church family rooted in faith, open to growth, and committed to serving the community around us with warmth, hope and generosity.

A warm and prayerful church family

A welcoming and inclusive congregation who will care for you and your family, pray for you, and encourage you in ministry. St Oswald's is rooted in faith, eager to grow, and ready to embrace the next chapter of its journey.

Shared ministry and practical support

You will be supported by people with dedication, experience and a genuine sense of calling. Committed lay leaders, including Readers, Commissioned Pastoral Lay Ministers, Churchwardens and PCC members, who value collaboration, shared responsibility and mutual encouragement.

A parish full of opportunity

The opportunity to serve in a diverse and changing community, building on existing relationships with local schools, community groups, churches and other partners. St Oswald's offers a rich mix of worship, community engagement and parish life across all ages.

A welcoming home and good local amenities

A comfortable modern vicarage with off-road parking, offering a settled and practical home. The area provides access to good schools, local services, parks and green spaces, with wider shopping centres and central London within easy reach.

Space for community life and future growth

A well-used church hall, attractive grounds and a striking church building which together offer excellent opportunities for worship, hospitality, outreach and community activity. St Oswald's is served by people of goodwill and humour who are keen to grow, move forward and make the most of these strengths.

Healthy boundaries and encouragement

A congregation that understands the importance of supporting its Vicar not only in ministry, but also in rest, time off and ongoing personal development.



THANK YOU

Thank you for reading about St Oswald's. We hope this profile has given you a sense of our faith, our people and our hopes for the future. We are praying for the Vicar God is calling to share in the next chapter of ministry here, and we look forward to welcoming the person who will join us in worship, witness and service.

 St. Oswalds Road, Norbury, London SW16 3SB

 www.stoswalds.org.uk