



THE PARISH OF  
**ST MARY**  
BECONTREE  
*making Jesus known*

Charity Number 1157461

# PARISH PROFILE OF ST MARY, BECONTREE





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## **The Diocese: A message from Bishop Stephen**

In the Chelmsford Diocese we believe that God is calling his church to be a transforming presence. Our vision is that the church - that is the people of God here in Essex and East London - should be a transforming presence in every one of our parishes.

These are our priorities –

- To inhabit the world distinctively;
- To evangelise effectively;
- To hold ourselves accountable to one another and to God for the stewardship of the gospel; and
- To re-imagine the way we minister so that each ordained minister and each individual Christian discovers their part in God's ministry and so that each church flourishes.

To this end we are looking for priests who are excited by this vision of becoming a church which is itself transformed, and which is becoming a more visible and effective presence in the huge diversity of communities that make up this most exciting and energetic part of England. There are many challenges ahead of us.

- We are a diocese generously subsidised by the national church. We need to become financially self-sufficient.
- Leadership often seems distant. We are creating patterns of leadership that are closer to the parishes. And we are looking to develop missionary leadership at all levels of church life. Nearly half our clergy will retire in the next ten years. We need to find out how to minister with fewer stipendiary clergy and with a re-imagining of how stipendiary ministry works. We need to re-organise the way parishes relate to each other in what we are calling Mission and Ministry Units.
- Some of our congregations still think ministry is what Vicars do. We have a vision of ministry where the whole people of God are involved in the whole of God's ministry. We are also experimenting with new forms of authorised lay ministry.
- Church must be a safe place. All those in ministry will be expected to undergo training that will equip them to respond well in situations associated with safeguarding.
- Levels of church going are below the national average. We need to get evangelism on to the agenda and into the lifeblood of every church. We encourage and train churches to put on weekends of mission and outreach. One of our aspirations is that every benefice should have a trained lay evangelism enabler.
- We are developing missionary discipleship, so that every church in the diocese is a place where Christians are formed in order to be sent out in witness and service.

Despite planning for a future with fewer stipendiary clergy, we remain as committed as ever to the local church. And what is the local church, but that community of men and women gathered



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around Christ, and living and sharing the gospel in the networks and neighbourhoods of their lives? But we need priests to lead and to serve.

We know we need to change. We can only be a transforming presence when we have allowed God to transform us. Therefore at the heart of all we do is a longing for intimacy with God and a renewed life of prayer. First and foremost a priest is a minister of the word and sacrament. All ministry flows from this. But a priest shares the ministry of the bishop, therefore presbyteral ministry will increasingly be a ministry of oversight, guiding, nurturing and directing the mission of God's church in the communities we serve.

It is an exciting time to be part of God's missionary movement for the world, and the Diocese of Chelmsford is an exciting place to serve. We have a clear vision and we are looking to appoint clergy who will share this with us. In every parish we long to see each person and each community grow in faithfulness and ministry so that together we may serve in the world and Christ may be made known.

**+Stephen**



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## **The Deanery - Rev Martin Court, Area Dean**

The Deanery of Barking and Dagenham is an exciting place to work with challenge and opportunity in equal proportion. It is almost co-terminus with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, which contains the Becontree estate and the remnants of Ford Motor Company. Ford has moved out and we now have a rich cultural diversity that is truly global in make-up. The demographics of the area in terms of race, religion and age have altered dramatically and we now have many young couples and young people populating our communities.

The deanery has thirteen parishes served by eighteen clergy (made up of both stipendiary and Self-Supporting ministers) and five lay readers. Whilst we offer a variety of churchmanship and theological understandings, we pride ourselves on our collegiality and seek to work together towards shared visions. There is a rich mixture of styles of church within the deanery, including worship in other languages, and we continue to develop vocations for new ministries within our area.

Within the deanery, there is a rapid growth in housing development with the largest of these in the south of our deanery and various smaller projects dotted across the remainder of the parishes. We will have up to 45,000 new homes built in this area over the next few years, which endorses the potential for the growth of God's kingdom here.

We have numerous Primary and Secondary Schools within our borders many of whom have expanded their premises to encompass the growing population. Some of our churches have Children's & Youth Workers who support our local schools through delivery of lessons, assemblies and church visits, and we have recently secured funding for a Schools Chaplain. Incumbents are also encouraged to join their local school's governing body and be a presence in our communities through that outreach. Our Deanery Youth Champion, Rev Gemma Stock, works closely with our Area Youth Champion, Hannah Robinson, to help churches with their mission to children, youth and families both in school and in church run projects. We have also recently secured funding for a deanery minibus to help with and encourage youth work.

Due to the housing shortage, changing population and increasing levels of poverty, local churches have become involved in compassion ministries and are committed to two local debt charities, a homeless project and a food bank. Some of our churches run successful 'drop-in' coffee shops and do other forms of outreach to help support our societies in various ways.

Because of the diverse nature of our community, we have growing links with the local Faith Forum and the Barking & Dagenham Council. We also encourage linking ecumenically with our brothers and sisters in Christ from other denominations as we seek to work in a multi-agency collaboration to provide for the inhabitants of our borough, sharing the love of Christ and helping them to be the best God made them to be.

We have an active deanery chapter, where clergy both support and pray for one another. The chapter is developing Mission and Ministry Units, to enable churches to connect and encourage one another creatively, and we would welcome clergy who have a collaborative working style.

St. Mary's lies at the heart of our borough, historically a strong church that has found the favour of its local residents. It has joined with three churches to its north, forming the North Dagenham



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Mission and Ministry Unit, and we would love a new colleague to come and serve St. Mary's church and its immediate locality, but also to explore ways to work creatively in that MMU. The parish is strong, but in need of direction. It offers an excellent opportunity for someone to come and lead it in growth.





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## Section One: Summary of the Profile

St Mary's is an evangelical church, committed to Bible-based preaching and an openness to the Holy Spirit. We are a family orientated church, made up of all ages and different backgrounds, seeking to come together as one body under Christ.

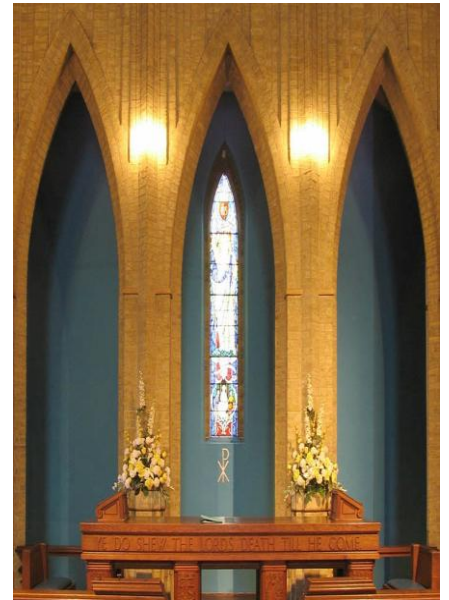
Our mission statement is 'Making Jesus Known'.

We are committed to outreach, building links and relationships, and serving our community. We are particularly committed to youth and children's work and serving the vulnerable.

We are a registered charity.

St Mary's has a long history of lay participation and encouraging every member to step out into their Spirit given gifts. We believe in the priesthood of all believers and that every Christian has a ministry and mission.

There is a significant building project underway that will need strong and inspirational leadership to continue and see to completion.



### *Priorities for the Future*

Funding is in place to fill our full time Youth & Children's Worker post. This has been, and continues to be, an important component of our outreach activities. The post-holder will be involved in delivering assemblies in our local schools and guiding our youth groups. The new Incumbent should value the importance of youth and children's ministry and be prepared to be part of the recruitment process.

We have been working on a project to redevelop the site, replace the Hall and renovate the church. We believe this new development will place the church at the heart of the community, with a refurbished Hall, offering up-to-date facilities to community groups. This project is led by the PCC, but the new Incumbent should share our vision for making best use of our buildings to serve the church and the community and assist in the re-development project.

Although the parish has two worship centres, currently only St Mary's is used for Sunday worship; Hartley Brook is used by the local Night Shelter once a week during the winter months. It is let to a church of a different denomination on Sundays. As a parish, we need to determine what God's vision is for Hartley Brook for the future.



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It is hoped the new Incumbent will bring a fresh and dynamic approach. He or she will enable us to meet our future priorities, whilst ensuring whatever we do is done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, glorifying God in this place and serving His people.

## Section Two: Who Are We Looking For?

We are looking for an Incumbent who is filled with the Holy Spirit and has mission at the heart of their ministry. Someone who will value our evangelical tradition and will empower us to continue to move forward under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He or she should be a person of vision who will help us to continue to fulfil our mission statement of "Making Jesus Known" within our local community.



We have worked hard to build up strong links with the community. With this in mind, we would like an Incumbent who has the drive and willingness to be involved in the local community, and be supportive of the different groups that link with the church.

We have a very strong prayer ministry and commitment to prayer. We consider it important that the new Incumbent be a person of prayer, who listens to, and acts upon, the Word of God.

The new Incumbent should be Christ-centred and believe in Bible based preaching, as we value the Word of God as a major part of our services. He or she should seek the help of the Holy Spirit in order to be an inspirational leader. He or she should be someone who can nurture and inspire others to develop and use their own gifts and show a pastoral concern for all in the parish.

The new Incumbent should have a passion for parish ministry and demonstrate God's love to all people. He or she should value discipleship as an important ministry, and give encouragement and space for all people to grow in their faith.

We are looking for someone who will be able to work with people of all ages. He or she should have a willingness to listen and be able to communicate effectively. We are looking for a strong leader, who is able to work with a team of lay people. They should be able to manage their own workload, be able to delegate and be able to accept help and constructive criticism.

We would like our new Incumbent to demonstrate:

- Patience
- Tolerance
- Reliability
- Honesty
- Creativity
- Sense of humour





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The PCC agrees with the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 and are open to female priests. The new Incumbent must be willing to work with females in all areas of church, including leadership and preaching.

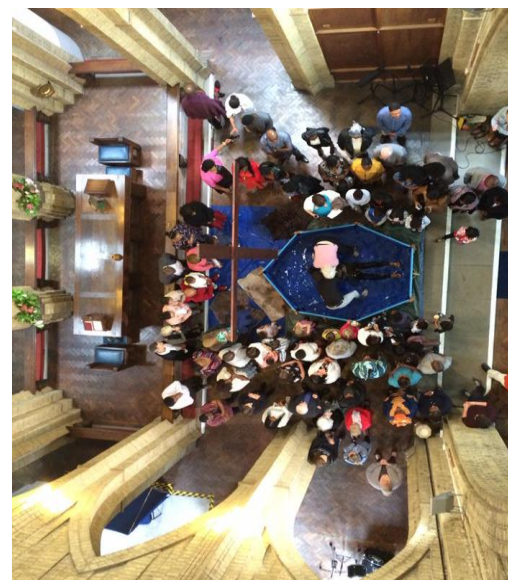


### Section Three: About Our Church

St Mary's is a warm and welcoming family church centred on Jesus Christ and working with the Holy Spirit to bring glory to God in our local context. We are of an evangelical tradition. We are a fun and dynamic church and our mission statement is 'Making Jesus Known' and this is at the foundation of all we do and all we seek to be as a family. We are open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit to equip us individually and corporately, so that we may serve Christ in every area of our lives.

We are an 'inward' and 'outward' church. We believe in building the 'inward' church, the family of God at St Mary's. The church family is important and we seek to build each other up, encourage one another and live as a family, as one community. However, we also believe in the 'outward' church and are committed to our mission to 'Make Jesus Known'. Mission and outreach is important to St Mary's community in proclaiming the gospel of Christ and sharing His love. We undertake different types of community engagement in the hope that we are a visible community in our parish and are a welcoming and transforming presence in Dagenham.

We are a church who believes in the priesthood of all believers and encourage every member to understand their personal mission and use their individual gifts and talents wherever







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God calls them. We have a strong history of lay involvement, of building up the church body, and encouraging all to step out into the gifts we have all been given.

Our priorities are:

- Strong Bible based preaching to build up and encourage the body of Christ;
- An active prayer ministry;
- Lay involvement in all areas of ministry and mission; and
- Mission and outreach, particularly work amongst the children and young people of the parish.



## *The Church and Our People*

Our usual Sunday attendance is an average of 70 adults and 25 children. We hold two morning services on Sundays, one at 9.30am and one at 11am. Our 9.30am service is a smaller, traditional service. Our 11am service is our larger service; it is family orientated, with children's groups. Our usual pattern of Communion services is to have three per month within the parish (normally the first Sunday of the month at 11am and the second Sunday of the month at 9.30am, and a mid-week service held in the community at a local centre for older and vulnerable adults). Previously, there has been another mid-week Communion held in church but this has not been possible during the Interregnum. We also hold one all age service (normally the third Sunday of the month in term time), which our Scout group attends (see below).

We currently have one Reader, one lay person with Permission to Officiate and two locally licensed preachers, of which one is in the discernment process for ordination. St Mary's has a long history of lay preachers and the new Incumbent should be willing to work with a lay preaching team, including women, and encourage others as gifts are recognised. We also have a Lay Evangelist who has taken the lead on mission and outreach during the Interregnum.

## *Prayer*

We are a church who believes in prayer. Praying both individually, and together as one family, is encouraged and promoted. We currently hold a Morning Prayer session on Wednesday mornings and Church@Prayer every other Thursday evening. Before Advent and at the start of Lent (and occasionally before other significant events), we hold a Half Night of Prayer to offer up these



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periods and the planned events and activities to God. During Lent, we open the church as much as possible for prayer; this is for everyone to come and use church space for personal prayer.

A prayer team is available every Sunday to pray with people in our prayer corner.

### *House Groups*

We promote the importance of small groups as a way of building up friendships and fellowship and as space for open discussion and to ask questions. Discipleship is an important aspect for St Mary's. Some small groups meet in member's homes and one group meets in the church. All the house groups have lay leadership.

We believe in the small group model as a means of building up the body. The value of fellowship and peer support cannot be underestimated in enabling us to grow as a family of God. We would like to see a growth in our small groups and development of these as a means of discipleship in the future.

The church did have a regular Bible study group specifically for the older teenagers. This has been discontinued for a time until the Youth & Children's Worker post is filled. We are keen to reinstate this as soon as possible.

### *Mountains & Mysteries (M&M's)*

M&M's is an informal group which meets every other Thursday evening (alternate to Church@Prayer) and is a group for those seeking or those who have questions about the Christian faith and God. It is a space for members to bring along friends who have questions or indeed for anyone who just wants to ask questions! It is currently lay-led and forms part of our discipleship commitment.

### *Start Course*

We run a Start Course for those who wish to be baptised or the families of infants who are seeking baptism. This is a short preparation course run over 3 sessions that explores the Christian faith, who God is and what baptism is.





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### *Church Café*

We have a café area in church which is opened one afternoon a week. This is a drop-in café open to everyone. Previously, the Church appointed a Heritage Officer who ran the café as part of the Heritage role. This enabled the café to be opened more regularly and to offer lunches. This may be something the PCC will seek to look at again as part of the building project (see details below).

The cafe area is a space that could be utilised more for community use and has been used to provide refreshments during other events and to host events such as Afternoon Teas. At present, this is run by volunteers.

### *Youth & Children*

We believe children are precious to God and they are capable of learning Scripture and have a significant place within the family of the church. Our aim is to encourage our young people to grow and mature in their faith, so that they can effectively communicate the Word of God to others and 'Make Jesus Known'. St Mary's currently offers two groups for our young people (known as Ignite), during our 11am service. However, every third Sunday during term time, the young people stay in the main service to join our all age family service.

Primary school age children (Reception to Year 6) meet in our hall, next to the Church. This group currently has around 12 children. Attendance increases during special services when new families visit. Our secondary age children (Years 7 to 11) meet in a separate space in the Church. This group is currently around 15 young people. For our pre-school children, there is a crèche area at the back of church for parents to look after their children with toys and space to move, whilst still being able to listen and take part in the service. The Ignite leaders come together to pray for the children and young people in their groups. They meet termly to discuss and plan sessions, which sometime follow the weekly themes in the main service.

It is the policy of the church to admit children to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation, with the agreement of parents/guardians and the Vicar. From Year 4 (8-9 years), we offer Holy Communion preparation for those children who wish to take Communion, in consultation with the parents/guardians and the Vicar.







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Previously, the children were prepared through attendance at a short course run by the Vicar and the Youth Worker.

### *The Church and Our Community*

Our mission statement is "Making Jesus Known" and this is the foundation for all our outreach activities. We are seeking to be a people who reflect Jesus, who serve our community and share Jesus' love. We aim to be salt and light in our community and a place that is welcoming and open to all, above all a place where Jesus is present and can be found by those seeking Him.

Youth & Children's outreach is a priority for St Mary's. We have previously employed a Youth & Children's Worker for the past 9 years, with three different people filling the post at different times. This post is vacant at present but the PCC will be seeking to recruit a new Youth & Children's Worker once a new Vicar is in post. Funding is available.

Each Youth & Children's Worker has continually built up relationships within all our local schools and during the last Youth & Children's Worker time, he was present in every school within the parish, leading assemblies, drop-in sessions and some RE teaching lessons. We previously held drop-in sessions during the week and a Youth Bible Study for the older teenagers. Our local primary schools have been invited into church at Easter to explore the church building and we host Carol services for the schools where possible.



For the last 9 years, we have run a popular Holiday Club for one week in the summer. These have been well attended weeks with the majority of children being from non-church families. Lots of fun, games and mess!

We also hold a Light Party and Easter event each year, again traditionally well attended. For the last three years, we have held a Live Nativity event at Christmas, where visitors travel around the church site, meeting characters from the Christmas story and with a few surprises along the way. Church members acted as characters from the Gospel, who visitors could interact with. We have also been blessed to be involved with a local farm who brought live stock along to make the story as authentic as possible. This has quickly become a favourite Christmas event for both visitors and church members!



We have also held successful one-off events that have connected well with the community and opened up the buildings. For example, we held a wedding fair to celebrate weddings, marriage and love. We have held a number of open prayer events to encourage people to use the quiet church space to reflect. We have held quizzes and evening dances. We have hosted 'Film





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Nights', some aimed at children and families and some aimed at adults, including time for discussion afterwards.



As well as being great fun, this gives non-church people an experience of coming into the church building and helps build relationships.

Our aim is to plan to offer a variety of events that will connect with all age groups and different demographics of people from the wider community.



St Mary's has links with Scouts, Cubs and Beavers. Leadership for some of these groups come from regular members of the church. St Mary's holds an all age service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month (excluding August) which the Scout groups and leaders attend. The scouts carry the flags to the front of church and hand them over to the service leader at the beginning and then collect them at the end. The children and their parents are encouraged to attend and take part in the different aspects of the service. The children have taken part by leading prayers, taking the offering or reading the Bible passage in past all age services.

### *The Church and Our Buildings*

There are six buildings in the parish.

St Mary's church is a grade II listed brick built and rendered building. It has a large tower which houses a bell, which does not work. The main body of the church houses a stained glass window and has wooden pews. The PCC currently hires the church building to a Seventh Day Adventist church on Saturdays on a six-monthly rolling agreement. Whilst this is the current situation, the PCC are not committed to this continuing going forward.

The hall, on the Church site but at present separate from the Church building, is a 1930's building which consists of one main hall, a small meeting room and a kitchen.



Hartley Brook building is situated across the parish from St Mary's church. It has previously been used as a



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worship centre but at present there are no services or church activities held at Hartley Brook. It is used periodically by the Night Shelter (run by the charity Hope4BarkingDagenham) and is available for general hire. There is currently a long term let to another church on Sundays. Hartley Brook is a 1950's brick built building. The building has a main hall, a kitchen and three side rooms. There is also a portacabin, which is linked directly to the main hall.

The vicarage is a large detached 4-bedroom house, which is adjacent to the main church. It includes a study, a kitchen and two reception rooms. The windows benefit from double glazing, and there is a large garden and a garage. There is a path alongside the Vicarage that gives access to the church and Hall.

The parish also owns two houses at either end of the parish. One is currently vacant and has been offered as part of the Youth & Children's Worker package. The other house is let and provides an income stream.



### *Building Project*

Our building project is named the 'Beacon Project' because we aim to be a beacon in the community. The church is grade II listed because it is an important building by the renowned architect Cachenaille-Day. We have worked closely with the National Heritage Lottery Fund and are working our way through the funding process for the renovation of the church and integration of the new Hall into the main building. They have match funded us up to planning with the next stage being funding for completion.

### *Initial Architect's Concept*



### **St Mary's Community Beacon**

#### **Project Business Plan for St Mary's Church Becontree**

March 2016

**SPIRES HERITAGE**  
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We have progressed the whole project through to, and have achieved, planning permission. We work closely with and are advised by the diocese recommended company, Ten Spires. The waste ground at the rear of the church is designated for vulnerable persons housing and for a Nursery provision. Prospective partners have been found to fund the housing section of the project but



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await the local authority to commit to arranging tenants. We are also waiting for local authority commitment on Nursery funding.

## *Finances*

The church has a single treasurer for the PCC. We believe it is important to pay the diocesan quota payment on a regular basis and have not defaulted for many years and hold the diocese awarded 'Platinum Certificate'.

We actively encourage those who can to gift aid any monies they give to maximise our tax efficiency. We also effectively use the GASD scheme to maximise our cash donations. We comply with both Charity Commission and HMRC regulations in all financial matters. We have an annual budget, full accounts and provision set aside for new building and youth work, with both designated and restricted funds. A comprehensive report is given at each PCC meeting. We have a small finance committee which meet on an ad-hoc basis to discuss changes, needs and requirements and then make recommendations to the PCC.

As with most churches, in this time of austerity, our finances are constantly under pressure from lower giving levels and increasing utility bills. We rely on income from rental properties and the church halls to support our mission work and, increasingly, our normal running expenses. We also get support from the diocese for specific events, projects and our youth mission.

St Mary's value the importance of giving and have chosen to support four charities throughout the year. Currently these are:

- CMS
- Hope4BarkingDagenham (who run the Night Shelter)
- CPAS
- Barking Debt Advice Centre
- We also make one off payments for disaster relief etc.

## **Section Five: The Wider Context**

St Mary's is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford, the deanery of Barking & Dagenham. We have an active deanery synod and Chapter that meets regularly. We are part of a Mission & Ministry Unit (MMU) with St Chad, St Thomas and St Mark and are beginning to build on these links to the mutual flourishing of all the church communities represented.

St Mary's parish is in the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham. The borough is an outer London borough to the east of London. Social deprivation and unemployment are borough-wide issues.

The Becontree estate was once the largest housing estate in the world (and the first house to be built at 26 Chitty's Lane has a blue plaque to mark its history!). It was largely built in the intra-war period to ease the housing issues of the east end of London and was originally council-owned housing in the majority. Whilst there remains a proportion of council owned and let properties, this has decreased since the 1980's.





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The borough was listed as the 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived authority in England in 2015. From the 2011 census, the borough has the highest percentage of lone parent households with dependent children in the country and the borough's average unemployment figure is higher than the London average figure. The borough used to have two big employers in Ford and May & Baker, but this is no longer so. Ford has significantly cut its local presence and May & Baker, after changing hands a number of times, has closed completely. Recent years, probably linked to the decline of the major employers, have seen a more migrant population, more fluid in residents moving in and out of the borough, and those travelling outside the borough for employment.

We have four primary schools and one secondary school within the parish. We have previously built up strong links in each of the schools, but this is likely to decline with the Youth & Children's Worker post being vacant. The proportion of those with higher education in the borough is low.

Homelessness is an issue in Barking & Dagenham. There is a local charity called Hope4BarkingDagenham that run a Night Shelter in the winter months and has a shop in Barking where support services are offered. Hartley Brook hosts the Night Shelter on Friday nights during the winter months. Some members of St Mary's volunteer at the shelter, including cooking a meal. We also support the local food bank.

Barking & Dagenham performs poorly across the indicators of health.

The cultural and ethnic make-up of the borough is diverse.

There are two housing developments under construction within the parish, that will significantly increase the parish population. The area will also be affected by Cross-Rail, which is expected to increase house prices and population.

### *Out and About*

Barking & Dagenham has a surfeit of amenities that are available either by car, foot or local transport, located near the vicarage.

There is a large supermarket nearby and several others a short distance away by car with a major retail park, Lakeside, approximately thirty minutes away. Valance House Museum and recreation ground are close by. Also, located nearby is Coventry University's London campus.

Close to the parish border is Central Park which joins seamlessly with Dagenham Chase Local Nature Reserve; this is one of the best urban nature reserves in the south east of England. Combined with Eastbrookend Country Park, it has a number of different habitats that attract all sorts of wildlife.

Sport facilities, including a public swimming pool and fitness facilities are nearby; these are run by the local authority and are good value. A short car drive away is Hainault Forest, giving access to an old part of Epping Forest.





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A short bus ride takes you to London underground stations, National rail networks, retail parks, multiplex cinemas and town centre shopping. Once at the stations, we are approximately twenty minutes by train/tube into London.

By car, you can quickly pick up major trunk roads (A13) and motorways (M25).

The local hospital, Queens in Romford, includes an A&E and Maternity Department and is served by many bus routes. Another hospital, King George's, also serves the Borough.



We look forward to this next phase in St Mary's history and we look forward to working with the person God provides as we all continue to Make Jesus Known in this place.