



Parish profile for Hollinfare St Helen 2017



Hollinfare parish – a summary

Hollinfare is as pleasant a rural parish as one is likely to find in the predominantly industrial north Cheshire region.

Our church of St Helen is the focal point of one of the largest parishes in the Liverpool diocese but which is most probably the least inhabited.



We have a proud history dating back to 1497 and in this profile you will discover that we have a lively congregation of forward-looking self-starters of mixed age groups who are faithful, loyal and enthusiastic.

Our church organisations include an outstanding day school with pre and after school clubs, a well-attended Sunday School, a choir, a Friends group with a village history room within our premises and a weekly Chill and Chat group.

In essence, we have a congregation of many talents who have many times, and especially during many interregna (covering more than 20 of the past 50 years), displayed the ability to simply “get on with things.”

You will read here about many grass-roots achievements of which we are deeply proud - but it is our future that is mostly concerning us at this time.

Our principal challenge for the years ahead is to at least double our weekly congregation which will help towards securing our future both spiritually and financially and at the same time will support our bishops’ stirring calls for growth.

Hollinfare’s boundaries are the same as the civil parish which is called Rixton with Glazebrook – essentially the secularly-named Rixton and Hollins Green are the same place while Glazebrook village is a separate entity.

Mission statement

We aim to maintain a Christian witness in this community.
We seek to make the Gospel relevant to today’s world while acknowledging our own need of God as Lord and Saviour.

We gather in this place to worship God, to give thanks for his love

.
We offer ourselves and others time to stop and think in a busy world and to share our concerns for the local community and the world.

The person most suitable for our parish

It is clear that a small parish like Hollinfare is no longer able to have its own priest and vicarage. A united benefice with Glazebury has existed for 22 years but this is coming to an end as Hollinfare moves into the sphere of the East Warrington Grouping comprising Christ Church Padgate at the head, and the parishes of Woolston, Cinnamon Brow and Birchwood.

We have been offered a house for duty priest or curate arrangement giving an agreed time to the parish each week. That person will need considerable support from our congregation and this will be provided. We would expect a successful applicant would be a person eager to continue to serve the Lord in a practical way for many years to come but without having to cope with the many day to day cares inevitably experienced in any parish.

We have been served superbly well for the past five years by the Rev John Macaulay who fitted precisely that criteria.

We have a tradition of "middle of the road" worship. We prefer our priest to wear vestments but we do not have bells and incense – and we enjoy a sermon that will leave us both inspired and thoughtful. However, we are content to leave spiritual matters to the expert!

We were pleased that our PCC voted in favour of welcoming a female parish priest as soon as the Ordination of Women measure was approved in 1993 and a now-retired female curate took charge of our parish for nine years from 2003.

In a nutshell, we would hope that the successful applicant would lead our worship, take an interest in our long and distinguished history, in the work of the Sunday School and our day school and in village life in general.

About our parish

Bordered by the dioceses of Manchester and Chester, Hollinfare is as far away from the cathedral as any other parish in the diocese of Liverpool. While some might say that is an advantage (!) we are proud to be part of our diocese and have always endeavoured to maintain strong links with the cathedral.

The population of the parish is 1,800 and has remained static for 30 years though 36 new homes now being occupied in Glazebrook will increase this number.

Farms occupy most of the land area and among residents there is a complete mixture of the upper, middle and working classes and, accordingly, a selection of higher and lower priced homes.

Most of those who work have to travel outside the parish.

Our church stands at the epicentre of Hollins Green village which reflects the archetypal rural English community.



Across one parallel road stands one of our two old-world public houses which has undergone much refurbishment.

It provides high-class accommodation and is also home to our village pond replete with ducks and a playing field.

Opposite to the east stands the village community hall, a hub of activity which includes dancing classes, indoor bowls and much more.

In School Lane, the road where you will find our west door, stands the village's war memorial where we gather every second Sunday in November for the Remembrance service and close by are the smithy and the cemetery.

We are currently in the process of illuminating our memorial.

The cemetery is lovingly cared for by a group of volunteers led by members of our congregation – so much so that it has been awarded the Green Flag accolade.

The churchyard was closed for burials in the 1890s but is also a most attractive and well cared-for feature with two trees that are illuminated on special occasions and at Christmas.

Hollins Green has a successful village shop and a post office and is served by a frequent bus service between Warrington and Manchester.

At one time there were claypits and these have been transformed into a protected area of natural beauty which can be visited.

The two roads from Hollins Green to Glazebrook are each festooned with seasonal flowers especially in springtime and Old Manchester Road is bounded by trees that are illuminated by night.

Glazebrook is much smaller than Hollins Green but has a rail station on one of the lines linking Liverpool and Manchester.

It also has a post office.

The River Glaze, the eastern boundary of the parish, flows into the greatly beautified Manchester Ship Canal, its southern boundary.

Both our western and northern boundaries are motorways, the M6 and M62.

Both Rixton and Glazebrook have Methodist churches with whom we enjoy cordial relations and which we hope in the future will be further strengthened.

Our close proximity to Irlam, Cadishead, Lymm and Culcheth means that a number of families and individuals who live in those areas are happy to worship here with us.

Our church



Because of our small population and at a time of clergy shortage we had to form the united benefice with Glazebury All Saints in 1994 and from 2004 to 2009 formed part of the first triple benefice in the diocese under the wing of Winwick St Oswald.

Seven interregna have meant that those in authority within our church have had to develop skills of leadership often as far as worship as concerned, show initiative, become adept at raising money, maintain pastoral care and have a working knowledge of the requirements of a church many centuries old.

We have people with the ability to do all of that and take the parish forward.

Attached to our church is Church House, once the home of the incumbent and which is now used for many of our parish activities and also by the community for such matters as local authority and police surgeries and village meetings.

Our Sunday morning service is supplemented by a well-attended worship and lunch on Thursdays.

We also hold coffee mornings in Church House once a month which are also attended by members of the two Methodist churches in our parish and frequent social events all organised by a vibrant and enthusiastic committee.

We have had an active Sunday school since at least 1820, a fine musical tradition led by our organist and choir, and a dedicated Friends organisation who have established a magnificent history room for the whole parish within Church House.

The Friends hold regular talks and exhibitions of the archives.

We are putting in place mechanisms to work towards Child Friendly status and the Church-School Partnership.

While providing the various rites of passage for our own parishioners our beautiful surroundings have encouraged brides to choose us for their wedding and the proximity of the cemetery means that we also provide services for the departed from neighbouring areas.

We have a garden of rest and this is currently being restored and enhanced by the provision of a framework for memorial plaques.

A book of remembrance is also maintained and opened on the appropriate days.

We like to think we are most supportive of those who come to us at such special times in their lives.

During 2016 we conducted 12 baptisms, four weddings and 15 funeral services. The number of baptisms is usually around 20 and the number of weddings and funerals the same as in 2016.

Our day school

Our day school repeatedly does well in Ofsted inspections, never being considered less than "good" and this status was maintained at the 2017 review.

The SIAMS inspection, also carried out this year, provided our school with yet another rating of "outstanding."

In the SATS tests in 2010 our school was the only one in Warrington to achieve 100 per cent level four ratings and despite small cohorts during the past six years the results have remained excellent.



The pupils attend church on many occasions during the year and as mentioned earlier. Major extensions were made to the frontage and administration area of our school in 2006 and opened by the Rt Rev David Jennings.

The heating system was replaced and a security fence installed in successive years and we have completed the complete refurbishment of the infant department and hall last year.

Our pre-school and after-school groups each have meeting rooms within our day school.

Community links

The strong links between church and school are complemented by links with the many organisations within our parish.

The annual parish council Civic Service and the village's Remembrance Day observance are always held here.

We strongly support the work of the Church of England Children's Society.

We were one of the first churches in the land to celebrate an annual Christingle Service and have now raised more than £5,000 from this service since 1974 and also collect money in home boxes.

We also support charities for the homeless at the Booth Centre in Manchester and the Salvation Army Citadel in Warrington.

The vicarage

With the formation of the united benefice in 1994 the Diocese sold our vicarage, we having conceded that a new joint vicarage should be in one parish or the other and not between them, where it would have been in Newchurch parish.

The Diocese had already sold Glazebury's vicarage. A new house was bought as a shared vicarage in Glazebury.



We also had to agree to start our Sunday morning worship and Sunday School at 9.30am with Glazebury's at 11.0am.

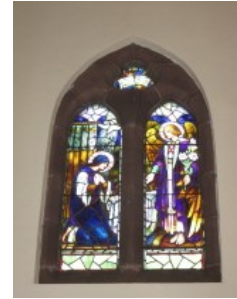
Together with the static population, some members feel that both factors may have mitigated against our growth.

Our last vicar and curate did not find it possible to provide the all-important regular presence in our parish and one can see from our records the considerable fall in attendances – from around 60 to 30 adults on Sundays.

However, our recovery has been continuing for the past five years and we had 66 worshippers in church on Easter Day 2017. There are around 50 on the electoral roll and more than 80 people who can count themselves either as attending each week or infrequently.

An ancient church lovingly cared for

Because worship has been taking place on our site since the 15th century and most of our present building being completed in the 18th we have to cope with all the problems from which ancient churches suffer.



However our congregation contains many skills and talents and we have maintained the building so well that our most recent Quinquennial Report provided no surprises. The central feature of the church, our 250-year-old cupola, was refurbished in 2006 at a cost of more than £40,000 which we raised ourselves.

The church roof was re-slatted as part of a major refurbishment in the 1980s, decoration is in good order and most recently we have laid a fine new path to the west door.



Our Church House building was completely refurbished in 2015-16 with a new choir vestry being created and new tables and chairs acquired. Two of the roofs were re-covered.

Again the cost, more than £14,000 in total, was raised by ourselves.

Annual inspections are all up to date as are our

terrier and log books.

Our parish share payments are also up to date. We also maintain a building fund ready for most contingencies.

We have always encouraged our clergy to take time off when necessary or desired and supported their ongoing training.

The parish has no paid-for staff.

Pictures contained with this profile hopefully reflect the truly unique character of Hollinfare St Helen with its colourful stained glass windows, beautiful carved reredos, magnificent pipe organ and superb chandeliers – and also the commitment of the congregation.

On an historical note, the most famous pop singer of our time, Gary Barlow of Take That fame, performed as a youngster one Christmas morning in our church and later performed a concert in our day school.

Among those who have preached at Hollinfare in recent years are the present Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, two



Archbishops of York, the Rt Rev Stuart Blanch and the Rt Rev David Hope, two bishops of Liverpool, Lord David Sheppard and the Rt Rev James Jones, the Rt Rev Richard Blackburn, the suffragan bishop of Warrington and his predecessor the Rt Rev David Jennings. Bishop Richard described our church as "a gem."

Church House was at one time occupied by the Byrom family whose most famous son, John, wrote the Christmas carol "Christians Awake."

The son of one of our former vicars was Tim Bobbin, the celebrated Lancashire dialect writer.



There are a host of local history books and we have recently published a new history to our church. Our website contains much information on our past as well as providing a pen picture of every aspect of our church and an extensive listing of everyone who does anything both for church or in our school.

On the northern border of the parish stands Holcroft Hall.

One of British history's most infamous characters, Colonel Thomas Blood, the man who attempted to steal the Crown Jewels, married the daughter of the house and lived there.

The congregation

Raymond Shaw and his wife Beryl have three children. Ray has been a warden for 42 years. Before retirement he worked as an industrial draughtsman with Metropolitan Vickers, later Alstom, one of Britain's largest companies in Trafford Park and spent considerable time in China contributing to that country's dynamic industrial growth. A keen cricketer, he has played for Lancashire county colts, in the prestigious Lancashire League and appeared at the Oval in the national village competition final. Beryl is our electoral roll officer and with Ray is a deanery synod representative.

Alan Domville and his wife Irene have four children. Alan has been a warden for 31 years and has run the Sunday School for 45 and has been associated with the movements since he was four. Alan contributes the prayers and notices for Sunday and Thursday services and is also our covenant secretary.

He has been a journalist for more than 50 years and for most of those as a newspaper editor and winning a British Press Award in 1993. Irene is a retired midwifery sister and our deputy organist and a teacher in our Sunday School.

Veronia Prowting has been our church secretary for many years and leads our active social committee. A retired school teacher, she assists with maths lessons in our day school and represents the governing body on the Warrington Educational Trust. Veronia is also editor of our parish magazine.

Janet Barcroft is our head of music and church organist. She is also a retired school teacher.

Jim Hall is married to Shirley and they have two children. Jim was for many years a manager with Royal Ordnance Factories. He is a member of the standing committee.

Christine Smith is married and has been head of our day school since 2009. The daughter of a vicar she has achieved excellent results and has worked hard to foster the strong relations with our church.

Choir member Doreen Herridge was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2012 for her services to our community.

Another member of our choir, Joan Lewis, also sings with Salford Royal Hospital choir.

Susan Lowndes is the District Commissioner for the Scout movement with whom we also have close ties.

Brenda Earl served for many years as a churchwarden at her former church in Irlams o'the Height, Manchester.

Irene Collins along with Alan, Sue and her husband Colin (our safety officer) are all licensed by the bishop to assist with Holy Communion. Margaret Hornby, a retired nurse, is our Vulnerable Persons Officer. Ken Baglee, former school headteacher, has just retired as chair of our Friends Group; he has been succeeded by Mike Kenwright who is also a member of Latchford History Society.

Links with all community organisations have traditionally been deep in Hollinfare with church people taking a full part in local activities and vice versa.

In addition to our monthly parish magazine there is a quarterly newsletter distributed throughout the village.

A highlight of village life is the annual safari when community centres including our church and many private gardens are open for everyone to enjoy.

Another is the annual carnival; both events are supported by our church.

The wider context

We have expressed our delight to return to the Warrington deanery and we intend to play a meaningful role in the aims of our deanery and diocese in the years ahead.

All of us at Hollinfare St Helen are greatly looking forward to a new and stimulating period of growth and achievement – with the help of yourself and Our Lord.

What they say...



Margaret Hornby, retired nursing sister... Bishop Richard described our church as a "gem." And it sparkles with the enthusiasm of our parishioners.

Brenda Earl, former church warden...We concede that it is not practical to have one priest for our church any more. What we need most all to secure our future is a clergy presence in the village – something we have lacked for many years.

Beryl Shaw, electoral roll officer...With no benefactor in our parish we have done so well to keep our financial head above water over many years.

Jane Hardman, school teacher and Beavers leader...St Helen's is so special. Young and old all pull together – there is such a strong comradeship.

Muriel Berry, farmer's wife and writer of six books...Our church is at the very centre of our lovely village both spiritually and secularly

Sue Lowndes, school teacher...We have never felt so welcome at any church we have ever attended.

Elizabeth Rainford, dance instructor... St Helen's is so welcoming to families. A lovely church.

Leslie Edwards, airline employee...The church is its people – and since coming to worship at St Helen's some years ago I have found its parishioners to be so welcoming to newcomers. Starting at 9.30am has been a problem however.

Ken Baglee, retired school head teacher...My wife and I have found our spiritual home at St Helen's. Its history is simply awesome.

James Hall, retired manager with Royal Ordnance...Our day school is so important to us – the children are our future. Strong, ongoing links are vital.

Irene Domville, retired midwifery sister...My husband's family is linked to those who established St Helen's in the 15th century; my own family's links here also go back hundreds of years. Our own family continue to worship here – that's special.

Emily Lowndes, teenager recently returned from Bangladesh where she worked with Y Care International...The Sunday School activities are really good – there's always something different to do.

Christine Smith, head teacher...Church and school links are truly strong – the children love to go into church for many activities.

Joan Hill, former shopkeeper...The history of St Helen's is truly special – but the people who worship here are far from old fashioned. If they see there's a job to be done they simply get on with it.

For more information on our parish we have a lively website
www.acny.org.uk/WA36LL as does our day school
www.sthelensprimary.co.uk

Profile compiled by parish representatives Raymond Shaw and Edward Alan Domville and approved by the Parochial Church Council