

Parish Profile 2015



The Benefice of
Saint Michael & All Angels Parish Church,
Victoria Road, Brighton
and
Saint Paul's Parish Church, West Street, Brighton



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Introduction to the Benefice

The Two Parishes

The two parishes that comprise the benefice are contiguous, sharing boundaries along the main shopping street of Western Road. Although each serves the city centre, and both are very dignified in their worship and fully welcoming to all of Brighton's diverse communities, there are marked differences. S. Michael's is rather more residential with some local shops and a number of pubs, whilst the parish of S. Paul's is largely non-residential, commercial and located in the heart of 'good-time Brighton' with its many clubs, pubs, bars and hotels. The two parishes together make for a rich, diverse and fascinating benefice, whilst also presenting considerable mission opportunities and ministerial challenges.

Pastoral reorganisation since World War II has led to S. Michael's parish incorporating the whole of All Saints, Brighton and parts of S. Stephen's, Brighton and S. Thomas', Hove; whereas S. Paul's has been enlarged by parts of S. Margaret's and Christ Church, Brighton. A further increase to S. Michael's parish is likely with the recent closure of S. Patrick's, Hove.

The links between the two parishes are historic. Fr Arthur Wagner - the first and legendary parish priest of S. Paul's - initiated the Catholic revival in Brighton and S. Paul's was probably the first such Church south of the Thames. Among his early curates was Fr Charles Beanlands who, after 11 years with Fr Wagner, founded (and became the perpetual curate of) S. Michael and All Angels, serving the Montpelier area of Brighton. S. Paul's developed a reputation for the quality of its liturgy and music and, ritually, became one of the most advanced churches in the country, attracting large congregations. It was also Fr Beanlands who commissioned G F Bodley, a churchwarden of S. Paul's, to build the first S. Michael's.

The last Vicar became incumbent of the newly created benefice of the two parishes in 2011, having previously had pastoral responsibility for S. Paul's, and then become its Priest-in-Charge.

The two parishes are firmly in the Catholic tradition using modern rites. Whilst S. Paul's is more formal and fully choral, which appeals to its many visitors throughout the year; an important aspect of its mission is as a central city parish. S. Michael's is dignified but relatively more relaxed liturgically and in the main the congregation joins the choir in singing the Mass setting, and, because of its more residential nature, more families and young children attend. Both parishes strive to be as welcoming and as inclusive as possible and consider well-presented liturgy to be a vital and unique aspect of their welcome.

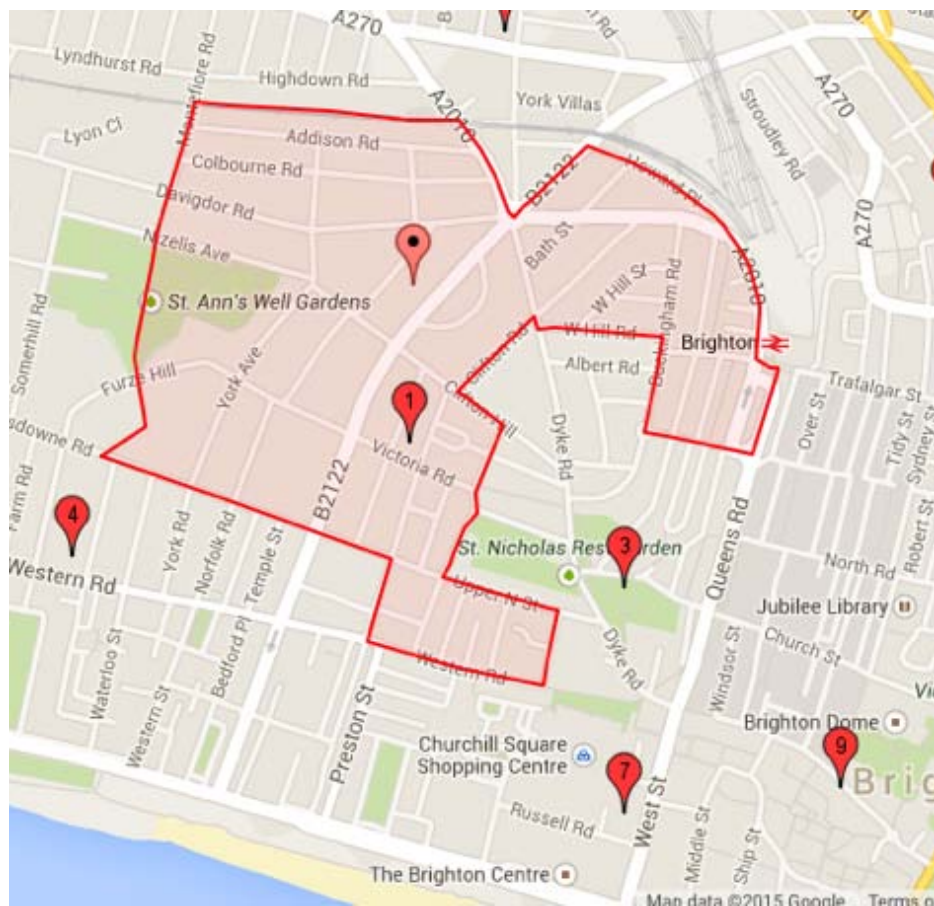
There are common social concerns and pastoral needs in both parishes and both churches seek to give support in the most appropriate ways. Ministry in Brighton city centre is stimulating, challenging and richly rewarding. Aided by worship and two very beautiful churches, the parishes have much to offer the right priest.



Parish Profile of
Saint Michael & All Angels, Brighton



The Parish of Saint Michael & All Angels, Brighton



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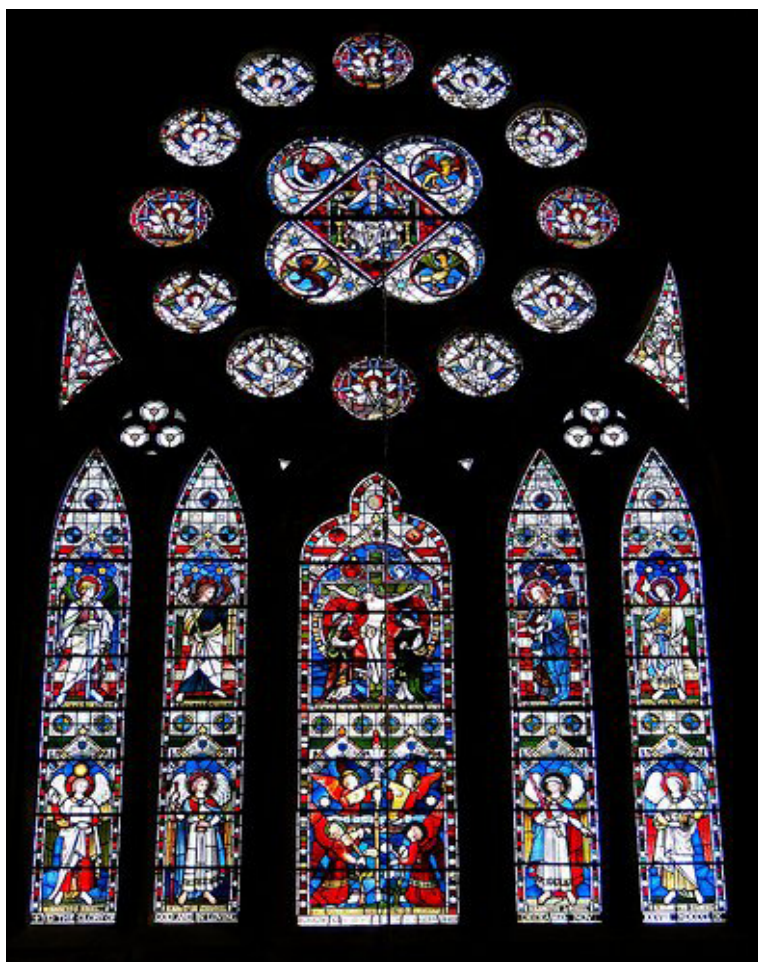
Introduction

The Parish is situated in the centre of the City of Brighton and Hove, with its current boundaries running north to south from the area of Seven Dials to Brighton's principal shopping street of Western Road and east to west from Brighton Station to St Ann's Well Gardens. The population is around 12,000, though this is likely to increase due to the closure of St Patrick's, Hove. It comprises the full range of socio-economic groupings, from professional and settled to unemployed and transient, with million pound homes and bedsits. The parish has its fair share of the social problems associated with the city centre, particularly homelessness and mental health issues, along with the joys and opportunities of a lively, cosmopolitan culture (including some 17 pubs and clubs!).

The Church of S. Michael & All Angels is Grade I listed, and in Simon Jenkins' highly acclaimed book, 'England's Thousand Best Churches', the author places it within the foremost one hundred and gives it a higher star-rating than any other church in Sussex.



S. Michael's is, in fact, two churches in one, with the first built in 1862 to a design by George Bodley (his first full urban commission) and the second by William Burges in 1895, for which the northern wall of the old church was demolished in order for it to be incorporated into the new. Bodley commissioned the firm of William Morris & Co to produce much of the stained glass and it is amongst their earliest and arguably their finest work. S. Michael's has been described as having some of the finest Victorian ecclesiastical artefacts in the country, and as being amongst the grandest and most beautiful churches of the period. Its Victorian vestments were among the first to be used in the Church of England since the reformation.



Tradition and Worship

From its beginnings, S. Michael's has stood strongly in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England. The PCC has passed A, B and C motions and a recent vote to join SSWSH as a parish was carried unanimously. Modern rites are used with contemporary Western ceremonial. The 10.30 a.m. principal Sunday Mass is sung at a permanent free-standing altar, enabling the celebrant to face the people, and the liturgy is celebrated.

S. Michael's has a tradition of daily Mass, although during the vacancy we have dropped them on Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday Mass is held at The Pines, a residential home for the elderly in the parish. The Friday Mass has a strong congregation of 15 to 20 people who enjoy coffee, cake and fellowship afterwards. A collection is taken at coffee on Friday and around £900 was raised last year which was donated to different charities on a monthly basis.



Holy Hours of Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction precede PCC meetings. Taizé Evenings are held on an occasional basis. Holy Week and the Easter Triduum are fully celebrated. Michaelmass is usually celebrated in style with other parishes and their priest joining us and a Bishop often presides and preaches. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved and the oil of the sick is available for the needs of the sick and dying.



A candlelit Christmas carol service is held on Advent 4 and has become increasingly popular with a usual congregation of around 250 to 300. Mince pies and mulled wine are served afterwards. At 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve an increasingly popular Crib Service is held, with attendance this year of just under 200. The candlelit Midnight Mass sees congregations of up to 250.

Study And Devotion

A Benefice Lent Course is held in the Fishermen's Vestry at S. Paul's and includes a shared meal, film and discussion. In past years we have joined with other Wagner Churches in Brighton for joint Stations of the Cross, held on a Saturday morning, with each taking it in turn to host.

Ordinands

S. Michael's rejoices that, over the last 20 years or so, it has produced 12 candidates for priestly ordination, of which one currently awaits deaconing and another is due to be priested.

Fabric

In recent years, a number of major repairs and improvements has been carried out at S. Michael's, including:

- Restoration of the west windows of the Bodley church.
- Restoration of the clerestory windows in the nave and chancel of the Bodley church.
- Installation of disabled access including a lift, ambulant steps, and a wheelchair-accessible WC.
- Restoration work to the south porch.
- Restoration of the north porch.
- Improvements to the kitchen and hall.
- Installation of a screen behind the altar of S. Thomas and All Saints.
- Conservation of some historic vestments.
- Conservation of wallpaper murals.
- Revised version of the History and Guide, and a new booklet on the church's history.
- Redecoration of the Sacristy.

The latest Quinquennial inspection (October 2013) did not raise any immediate concerns. We do, however, have some projects we would like to undertake (such as the restoration of the bell, and improvements to the lighting and heating) in the near future. We are fortunate to have a fund (The Mellor Fund) from which we are able to draw down the interest annually to pay for repairs and/or improvements to the fabric of the church.

Electoral Roll

In April 2014, the Electoral Roll stood at 120, with approximately 25% living within the parish. This is an accurate figure of the worshipping community.

Laity Involvement

S. Michael's is blessed with highly committed laity. We have a full serving team, co-ordinated by a very experienced MC. The Sacristy Team ensures that all necessary supplies are ordered and that the altar linen and frontals are changed or cleaned when necessary. A group of people ensures that the church is kept clean with a deep clean organised at Easter, Michael-mass and Christmas. We also have a very talented member of the congregation who arranges flowers for major festivals.

At present, we have eight Eucharistic Ministers. Readings and Intercessions at Sunday Mass are organised on a rota basis, as are our welcoming and providers of post-Mass coffee.

A small group of volunteer 'Church Watchers' - comprising members of the congregation and the local community - give up their time to keep the church open on Saturdays to enable visitors to enjoy our beautiful church.

At present, we have seven volunteers who lead 'Treasure Seekers', our Sunday morning worship for younger church members. The teaching runs alongside the Gospel reading of the day. Numbers vary from week to week, ranging from 5 to 25 children, of varying ages.



The parents are encouraged to join in the Mass whilst their children are in the hall.

There is a lively and committed PCC and sub-committees for finance, fabric and social events. The Treasurer reports to the PCC and Finance Committee, and we are fortunate to also have a book-keeper who deals with the day-to-day finances.

Child Protection

The parish strongly adheres to the guidelines issued by the Diocese of Chichester and the Church of England regarding the protection of children and vulnerable adults. DBS checks have been carried out on all members of the congregation who come into contact with children. The parish has a Child Protection Officer and two deputies so that someone is always available should the need arise.

Social Events

S. Michael's is a church that takes its faith seriously and celebrates its worship with reverence and dignity, but also, after Mass enjoys much fun and laughter! We have a small Social Committee that arranges various functions throughout the year, including three or four parish lunches that are always well attended. Other events normally include a summer barbecue, a coach trip and any other excuse we can find for a get together! Catering for special events throughout the year is normally arranged by members of the committee. A buffet supper is arranged for Holy Saturday and Michaelmass.



Ecumenical

We offer hospitality to the Syriac Orthodox Church with Mass occasionally celebrated by their Archbishop. For several months in 2010 we hosted the local Greek Orthodox Church on a weekly basis after an arson attack on their church.

There is a RC church and a Baptist church within the Parish, as well as a Buddhist centre.

Inclusivity and Community Outreach

One of S. Michaels' greatest strengths is its welcoming and friendly nature. It sees itself as a focus within the community and endeavours to welcome everyone and to be genuinely inclusive, irrespective of people's age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status or disability. This is reflected not only in the make-up of the congregation but also in the diverse groups that use our Church Community Hall which adjoins the church.

S. Michael's is very fortunate to have such a modern hall, which also has a fully equipped kitchen that has just been given a five-star rating under the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Every Saturday morning, S. Michael's provides cooked breakfasts for the local community,

a facility used by a wide variety of people, including the lonely, the homeless, newcomers, local residents and church visitors. The Saturday Breakfasts are definitely one of Brighton's best kept secrets! They celebrate their 25th anniversary this year and are staffed by members of the congregation with help from volunteers from the local community. We are particularly proud of the links we have established over the years with the First Base Day Centre, Off the Fence and the young homeless day centre, Clocktower Sanctuary, each of which is given vouchers to enable their clients to obtain a free breakfast with us.



At present, the hall is let during the week to a nursery school and it is rented to various groups who use the hall in the evenings.

The Clifton, Montpelier & Powis Community Alliance (CMPCA) hold a regular 'pop-up' cinema event in the hall and use the church and hall for meetings (and in recent years, an impressive local arts festival). Montpelier & Clifton Hill Association also uses the church and hall for meetings and events, and the nearby Brighton & Hove Girls High School has used the church for concerts, drawing classes etc. The last parish priest was a governor of the High School for several years.

Music at S. Michael's

A small, talented and faithful choir enhances the worship on Sunday mornings and festivals and is sometimes augmented on special occasions. The choir is led by our Director of Music who also organises regular 'Music at S. Michael's' events, such as concerts in the warmer months. The church is used extensively for the Brighton Fringe and the Brighton Festival in May.



The Parish Office

The Parish Office, situated on the first floor above the servers' vestry, is staffed 12 hours per week by our Parish Administrator. It is fully equipped with computer, telephone, broadband etc, and a colour photocopier is kept in the downstairs office in the hall. The weekly service booklet (comprising the liturgy, hymns and bulletins), rotas, hall bookings etc. are all dealt with from the office, as well as most of the 'day to day' running of the church. The Administrator is available to deal with the tasks allocated by the parish priest.

Friends of S. Michael's

The Friends of S. Michael's, a group set up to contribute to the care of the Church's fabric, fixtures and fittings and to promote the use of the building for cultural and community events, is going from strength to strength. It organises some very notable social functions and talks to raise funds, and in so doing, has become a pivotal part of the local community. Some of the events in recent times have included Annual Dinners in the Nave, Spanish Nights, Fashion shows and talks by prominent speakers such as Sir Roy Strong and A. N. Wilson.



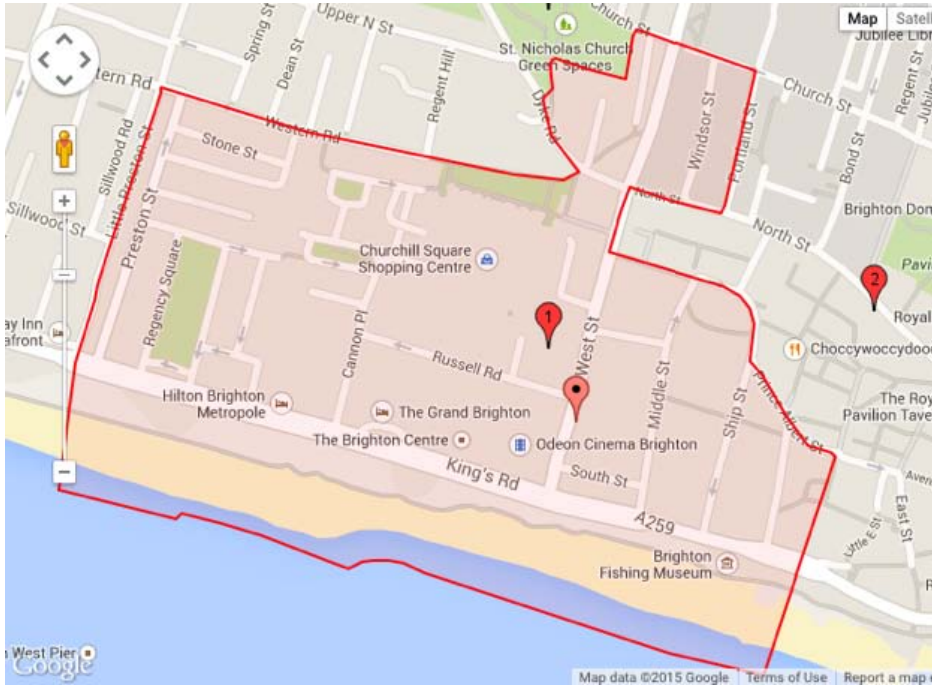
Finances

S. Michael's finances have steadily improved after a lengthy period of declining income and rising costs. Although the 2014 year-end financial figures were not available at time of writing, they are expected to show a small surplus for the first time in many years. This can be attributed to a range of factors such as the setting up of an effective Finance Committee to scrutinise income and expenditure; the rental of the hall to a full-time nursery and a couple of generous bequests.

Parish Profile of
Saint Paul's, Brighton



The Parish of Saint Paul's, Brighton



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Introduction

The church was completed in 1848 and is an important example of the Gothic revival in art and architecture, and of the 19th century Catholic Revival in the Church of England. Some notable features include a series of stained glass windows designed by A.W.N Pugin. The church interior suffered severe smoke damage from a fire in 2010 during the installation of a new floor, which necessitated complete renovation and re-decoration, financed by the builder contractor's insurers. In recent years in addition to the new nave floor and refurbishment, engraved glass doors between the nave and narthex have been introduced and comfortable chairs have replaced the majority of the old pews. This has enhanced and modernised the beauty of this Grade II* listed building.

The building is located in the heart of the city, on the main thoroughfare between the railway station and the seafront, and is close to the city's most prestigious hotels. The church is a sacred space with its peacefulness and tranquillity, contrasting that of the hustle and bustle of the street outside, and draws more than 20000 visitors each year to prayer, some of whom attend Sunday and weekday worship.



The parish itself is an interesting challenge, comprising mainly of pubs, shops and restaurants, with a residential population of less than 2000. A dedicated congregation attend S. Paul's for its excellence of liturgy and music, and its friendly and welcoming approach. Most come from across the city and beyond, only a handful live within the parish.

We see our service to both tourists and to the wider community as a key part of our mission. The building provides a resource for the Safe Space project. Safe Space, run by the YMCA, is open from 11 pm to 3.45 am on Fridays and Saturdays, helping those who are distressed on the streets, many of whom have become vulner-



able due to alcohol or drug abuse. Street Pastors also operates out of S. Paul's on Friday and some Saturday nights.

Our city centre location, close to bus, train and the shopping centre car parks, makes S. Paul's an attractive location for meetings, conferences and concerts. As well as being a resource for the Deanery and the Diocese, S. Paul's has been much used as a fringe venue for the Brighton Festival and more recently for the Brighton Early Music Festival.

Providing a resource for the centre of Brighton is an area of work that we are very keen to further develop. We are blessed with sizable areas that can be available for social, community and commercial use. These are very much in need of renovation and modernisation and need an overall vision of development. The PCC recognises this as an important aspect of any future mission potential to the parish and are fully behind this exploration.

Tradition and Worship

The principal act of worship is an 11am Solemn Mass, with the Choir singing from a wide repertoire of classical settings. Mass is said daily at 11:30am other than Tuesday when the time of Mass is currently being trialled at 12:30pm followed by a light lunch, which also raises about £400 a year for charitable causes. Within the Church there are two confessionals and advertising advises that a priest is available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation after every Mass, the location of S. Paul's makes this an important aspect of our ministry to visitors.

One of the key areas of S. Paul's' mission is providing a space for the lighting of candles and the offering of intercession at the various shrines throughout the church, this is especially valued by the visitors from this country and the many who come from overseas. The Wednesday Mass has the particular offering of all the intercessions requested throughout the week.



Electoral Roll

In April 2014, the electoral roll stood at 54, with approximately 90% living outside of the parish boundary.

Lay Involvement

S. Paul's are fortunate in having a group of very faithful and committed lay volunteers who between them keep the Church open for about 2 hours per day and more extensively on 2 days per week and every day during the Brighton Festival, Summer Period, Christmas and Easter Octaves. It has a team of servers, readers and more recently introduced intercessors who assist in the liturgies throughout the year. In addition it has a small number of Eucharistic Ministers who assist with the Chalice and occasional sick communions.

Child Protection

Although S. Paul's has only one child within its congregation, full Child Protection and safe guarding procedures are in place and up-to-date within current Diocesan guidance.

Social Events

S. Paul's has a tradition of having parish lunches approximately 6 times a year. It organises a tea party during the month of August where it offers hospitality to S. Silas Kentish Town and their neighbouring north London parishes on their annual day trips to the seaside. Refreshments are provided after services to which the wider public are specifically invited.



Music

The music led by the accomplished Musical Director and Choir is an integral part of the worshipping life of S. Paul's. They assist at all sung masses and the intention is to offer concerts and recitals throughout the year.



Finances

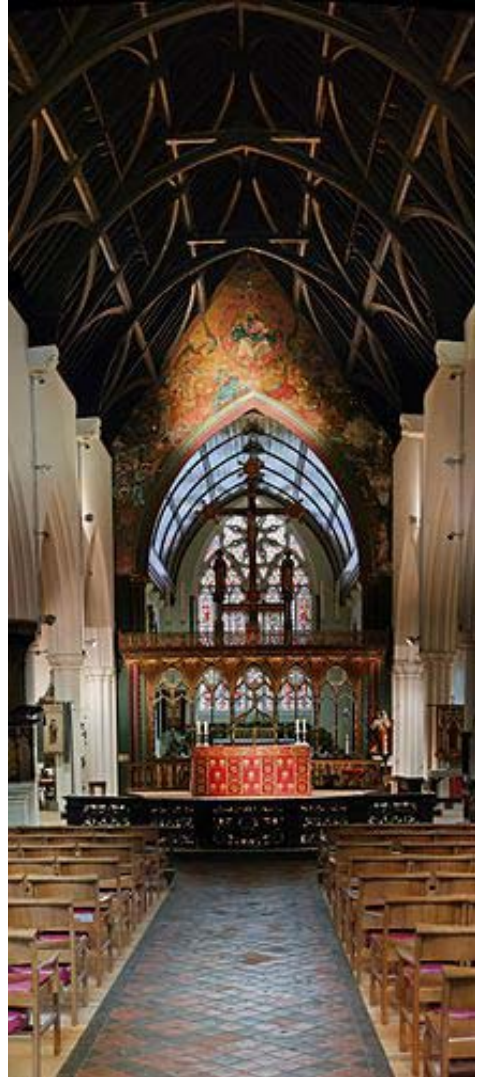
Finances are not great at the present time, and we are currently running an annual deficit. Therefore we seek to improve our financial stability by:

- Building up our regular congregation and therefore increasing the amount we can raise through planned giving
- Continuing to keep the church open as much as possible during the week, to maximise our tourist income
- Continuing to seek new sources of funding, to ensure that church is preserved for future generations, and that the building can be used as a resource by the Brighton community

Challenges and Opportunities

There are many challenges and opportunities in serving this part of the centre of Brighton. We would see these being our particular challenges needing to be addressed.

- The 'non-residential' nature of S. Paul's parish
- Our congregation are ageing and many are retired and new blood is desirable.
- Repairs and refurbishments to the non-worship areas of the church in varying degrees of need.
- Make fresh approaches with the LA Middle Street Primary School in the centre of the Parish.



The Benefice of Saint Michael & All Angels and Saint Paul's, Brighton

Study and Devotion

In recent years, the Lent study course has taken the form of a joint shared meal, film and discussion around the Lenten themes of forgiveness, growth in faith, and wider social issues. This attracts large numbers from both parishes and has strengthened the links between them. In addition, there has been the occasional joint quiet day and this is something that both parishes would like to see continued.

During Lent, the Wagner Group of Anglo-Catholic churches in Brighton joins together for Stations of the Cross on Saturday mornings, taking it in turn to host.



Walsingham

An annual parish pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham is usually well supported by members of S. Michaels, but a few from S. Paul's also join. Several individual members of the congregation make their own pilgrimage during the year and a group from S. Michael's also helps with the logistics of the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage.

Occasional Offices

Baptisms: S. Michael's has several baptisms in the course of the year whereas S. Paul's more urban location has meant baptisms are much less common.

Weddings: Although the number of weddings fluctuates year on year, there are generally few.

Funerals: Whilst there has been a general decline across the City in the number of funerals requiring clergy involvement, we have recently seen a slight increase for the two parishes. Mercifully, funerals for people within the church community are infrequent but would ordinarily take the form of a Requiem Mass preceded by Vespers of the Dead the night before.



Schools

We have governor representation at S. Paul's Primary School and Nursery (shared with S. Paul's and S. Nicholas, and with S. Michael's having the same pupil entry rights), and a number of children from our congregations and the wider parishes attend the school. S. Paul's School has a



good Christian ethos, and aims to give all their 235 pupils 'the opportunity to develop Christian values'. The pupils visit both churches for guided educational tours and occasional Masses. Our clergy are on the governing body (the parish priest is ex-officio as a foundational governor); take school assemblies, sit on sub-committees and celebrate Masses in the school.

Staffing:

Currently there are two Assistant Curates, one full-time stipendiary (although he should have moved on by the time a priest is appointed) and one non-stipendiary. There are two honorary assistant retired clergy who help with the occasional Sunday Mass and weekday masses. Since 2003, there has been a series of pastoral assistants at S. Michael's, and more recently these have been shared across the benefice. The last one left at the end of December and the new incumbent, if he wishes to continue the practice, will make any future appointments.

The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a Grade II listed building located in Montpelier Villas, a few hundred yards from S. Michael's Church. The accommodation is arranged over four floors as follows:

- **Lower Ground Floor/Basement** comprises a one-bed self-contained flat, arranged as living room (previously used as the Vicar's study), bedroom, kitchen and bathroom.
- **Ground Floor** comprises sitting room, dining room, kitchen and WC.
- **First Floor** comprises 3 bedrooms, 1 being en-suite bathroom and separate WC.
- **Second floor** comprises a large bedroom.

There is a garage to the side of the house, with parking on the drive for one car. Further parking is available 'on street' but would require a local Residents' Permit.

There is a small, mature, east-facing garden at the back of the property.



STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

What we are looking for in a new Priest:

- As both parishes have upheld Resolutions A, B & C recently, we require a male priest who shares our theological position, firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England.
- A priest with energy and enthusiasm, who will take us further in our 'Mission Outreach' and who will happily work with the various Community Associations, and be a strong presence and influence within S. Paul's School.
- A priest who will work with our young families and encourage our children and young people.
- A tolerant individual who is comfortable with Brighton and Hove's diverse and eclectic nature, who would be inclusive in his approach to ministry and enthusiastic about building bridges with the City's many communities.
- A strong leader who will work with the laity to encourage and develop their many skills, and identify and develop individual strengths and spiritual gifts.
- A priest who will help us form and implement a vision for the future in both spiritual and practical ways.
- A priest who is able to build on the work we have already done to bring the congregations of the two parishes together, and who will be committed to creating a truly 'united' benefice.
- A first-class communicator and listener and most importantly, someone with a great sense of humour!

What we can offer a new Priest

- A strong and committed church community at S. Michael's.
- A smaller but very faithful and committed community at S. Paul's.
- Great encouragement and support to grow the two communities in both numbers and faith.
- *A very warm welcome and supportive congregations.*



The Benefice of
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and
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www.saintmichaelsbrighton.org • www.saintpaulschurch.org.uk