



# Parish Profile



St Paul's Finchley  
50 Long Lane  
Finchley  
London. N3 2PU  
Registered Charity No. 1131095

March 2024



# Our Church

St Paul's is a relatively small, warm and welcoming church that meets in a beautiful, large, Victorian building that we would love to fill! We follow an accessible liturgical evangelical style at our weekly Sunday services and enjoy a format and structure that can accommodate all ages (with separate children's groups most weeks). Our congregation would like to continue in that mould but prays for growth so we can perhaps offer more services and further differentiate our groups so they can better cater for different spiritual needs.

We are a fair-trade church, valuing sustainability and are considering eco-church status.

St Paul's shares a church school with St Mary-at-Finchley church (responsibilities have been held jointly since the planting of St Paul's out of St Mary-at-Finchley in the adjacent parish). Every Easter and Christmas we run events for St Mary's CE Primary school and two community primary schools – which our volunteers enjoy supporting.

A number of Christian organisations use our buildings regularly. In particular, the North London Iranian Church and Oastea Domnului use the historic church each Sunday afternoon and evening.

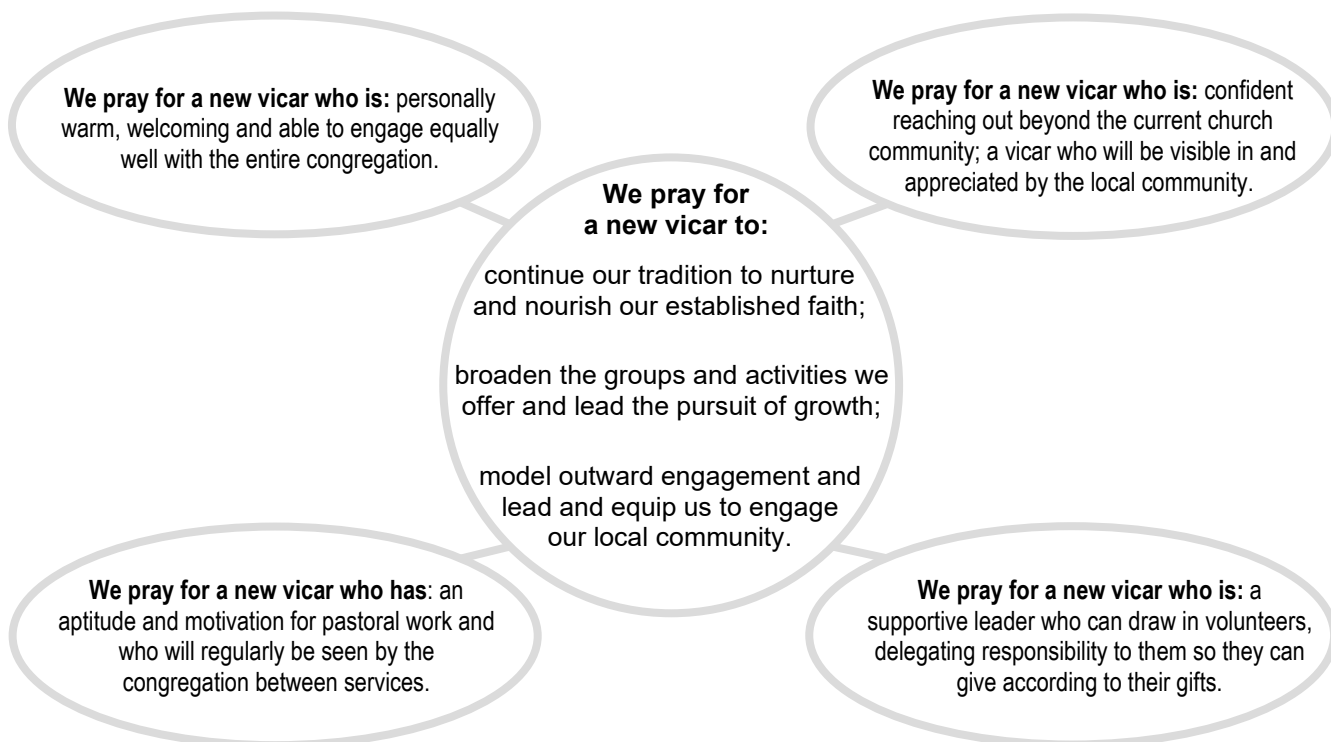
The St Paul's Church centre is a modern building that includes a large hall and several smaller meeting rooms. Regular users include a number of community groups, though we think it has the potential to support even more, ideally becoming a focal point for the community and drawing more potential church members towards us.

Finchley is a cosmopolitan, suburban area with good transport links and local amenities including a popular park with a café, green space, sports courts and playgrounds. There are a number of good schools within the parish.

While the vicarage is not available immediately, it is spacious and has a large garden. In the short term, a smaller adjacent property will be available for the new vicar.

# Our New Vicar

We are looking forward to welcoming and working with a new male or female vicar to grow our church from its current low point, broaden our worship groups and increase engagement with our local community. Through prayerful reflection and consultation with our whole congregation we identified some of the characteristics that we believe would help our new vicar to lead our mission. A role description is provided in annexes A and B.



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# Ethos

St Paul's is an evangelical Anglican church in the Diocese of London.

Individually and as a community we long for renewal through the Holy Spirit, so that we can know and experience more and more of the amazing and unconditional love of God in Jesus, and be channels of that love to others. We seek to know and to share the joy and fullness of life that Jesus came to bring and to be partners with him in the transformation of his world. Our ministry and mission are shaped by an orthodox understanding of Christianity as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, set out in the catholic creeds and to which the historic Anglican formularies bear witness.

We are:

Committed to:

- the final authority of the Bible in all matters of belief;
- the uniqueness and finality of Christ, the Son of God;
- the free gift of eternal life for humankind only through his death on the cross and resurrection;
- the need for personal acceptance of Christ;
- the teaching of Scripture as the normative ethical framework and guideline in human relationships, upholding faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and abstinence for those not called to such marriage; and
- the mission-shaped calling of the church.

Open to:

- the insights of biblical scholarship;
- the renewing presence and power of the Holy Spirit;
- new patterns of worship, prayer and liturgy;
- learning from other Christian traditions, including those in the developing world;
- the ordained ministry of women; and playing a full part within the structures of the Church of England.

## Supporting Our Vicar

Our current staff team consists of: the vicar, Mavis Crispin (Assistant Minister – Self-supporting and Part-time), and Voni Wagner (Administrator & Facilities' Manager – 18 hours a week). Three year's funding has been earmarked for a part-time Children's and Families' Community Worker.

The staff team works with the church's lay leaders, especially the churchwardens. The PCC has a well-established track record of collaboratively developing new initiatives with the incumbent – an approach that prevents unreasonable demands being placed on any party and gently reminds participants of their commitments to the initiative.

The PCC has historically been keen to support the wellbeing of the incumbent by meeting reasonable expenses incurred exclusively in the discharge of duties associated with the incumbency in accordance with national Church of England guidance, affording appropriate breaks and funding an annual one-week retreat.

The Diocese provides support for new incumbents, including a one-week residential, appointment of a mentor and meetings with the bishop, archdeacon and Area Director of Ministry.

The PCC has also committed to supporting wellbeing and workload management type conversations with the new incumbent (should the incumbent wish to have them). These could take the form of identifying opportunities for new ways of working/ delegation or simply airing and discussing concerns and prayer, guided by the incumbent and his or her needs.

# The Future for Which we Pray

At our regular prayer breakfast, in our services and individually, we pray for growth in numbers and spiritual life, enabled by more visibility of the church in the local community and a wider array of organised worship and social events. This larger congregation will expand our volunteer base, making it easier to organise more activities during the week, to create more targeted children and youth worship groups alongside our main services and to make sure the church is always presented to visitors in the best possible light. We pray that musicians are drawn to us so we can improve our sung worship – which we all very much enjoy. Finally, we pray that the combination of a new incumbent and the opportunity to employ a new Children and Families Community Worker will give us all the impetus to play our part in growing St Paul's.

Considering our strengths and the facilities we have available, we are hopeful that with the right leadership and prayerful motivation we could be more proactive in drawing the local community into the church.

- Running more open and regular groups in the church centre such as over 65s, toddlers, café events and families.
- Providing themed community groups and supports, potentially in partnership with external bodies, such as cost of living guidance, advisory services and courses in Christianity.
- Equipping the congregation to engage with the local community more often, to identify as members of St Paul's and to "...give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15)
- In time, as we grow, creating a staff team to run self-funding community groups and activities that bring people into contact with our church.

There are several actions that we believe would help us consolidate new members within the St Paul's family.

- Our house groups which we call "connect groups" are few in number but strong, well attended and effective. Creating more would encourage fellowship. A particular challenge is finding a format and logistical arrangements to suit working families with school-age children (who are under-represented in our groups).
- We have excellent facilities, but seldom use them for our own social events (currently limited to post-service coffee and occasional bring and share lunches). Running more events would create more opportunities for strengthening social bonds and emphasising the support that fellowship can provide.
- It would be helpful to families to broaden our arrangements for children and young people including improved creche facilities and more targeted groups (which are currently constrained by low numbers of under-18s and low numbers of volunteers).
- Improving music, visuals and the presentation of the church buildings during services would make them more enjoyable and engaging.





## Regular Worship

Our Sunday morning worship service at 10am is called Open Door. It has a style that is liturgical but relatively informal and intentionally accessible to people who are not used to church. Annex C is an example service leaflet that we have provided to illustrate this format. Our services are designed to be child and young family-friendly with two high quality children's groups for those aged 4 to 13 and a creche area at the back of the church building. Sunday services are followed by tea and coffee.

We have a small, dedicated team of children's group leaders, including clergy and helpers. The children return from their groups to share in holy communion on the first Sunday of the month,

receiving un-consecrated bread and grapes in a 'banquet' or bread and wine if they have been admitted to holy communion before confirmation.

In terms of people, our regular average congregation consists of 26 adults and 9 children and young people. Our community is very diverse. We have members from some 10 countries who come from a variety of backgrounds and with differing levels of Christian experience. With a relatively small congregation, additional services that have been tried have not been well attended. We also do not currently have a musician at every service, but we are working on this during the vacancy. The congregation has a sense of joy and hope for the future.

During 2023, we conducted two funerals and one baptism. Our most recent wedding was in 2020. Each year we provide a service for the Children and their families as they move up from the church primary school to secondary school.

## St Mary's CE Primary School

St Mary's CE Primary School was founded in 1812 by St Mary-at-Finchley. Finchley was a fast growing area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and when St Paul's was planted out of St Mary-at-Finchley in 1886, the new church was given the same role as its mother church in the supervision of the school. The Rector of St Mary's and Vicar of St Paul's are ex-officio governors of the school. The Parochial Church Councils of both St Mary's and St Paul's appoint one additional governor each.

The school serves the local community and has a distinctive Christian vision rooted in the theological foundation of Luke 2:52, 'Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and all people'. In striving to live out its Christian vision, the school states that it benefits greatly from the partnership with the two sponsoring parishes and the incumbents are vital to this work.

The incumbent of St Paul's is an ex-officio governor of the school and provides pastoral and spiritual support to the children, staff and parents. Examples of this include planning, leading and monitoring collective worship; hosting workshops in the church to support the RE curriculum; praying for the school and supporting the school prayer group. In addition, the bereavement support and advice, and partnership in our charitable endeavours has greatly benefitted the school's work in these areas.

The relationship between the school at St Paul's is a positive one and we look to the new vicar to sustain it, capitalising on the school link as one way to grow our church. The partnership has been a blessing to the school and by God's Grace may it continue for many years to come. Shortlisted applicants are welcomed and encouraged to visit and to see the wonderful school in action. The school website is at [www.stmarysfinchley.co.uk](http://www.stmarysfinchley.co.uk).



## Additional Activities and Services

As a church, we want to pray and work with our new vicar to encourage growth. We understand that this will involve change and engaging in more activities. In the paragraphs below we describe what we do now to help give you a sense of our church as it is today.

We run a range of midweek activities, including adult Connect groups and occasional enquirers' courses. Eighteen church members, more than half our average adult congregation, regularly attend one of our connect groups to socialise, read scripture, complete bible-study courses, support each other and encourage one another's faith.

Every year we aim to run a range of RE workshops for primary schools on our premises. These include Christmas Experience for Year 3 pupils and Easter Experience for Year 5 pupils, to which some 300 children come from three primary schools (St Mary's, Tudor and Manorside). We also host the Year 6 Leavers' service for St Mary's CE Primary School, which is preceded by a Prayer Spaces workshop. In addition, we take acts of collective worship in the church and community primary schools.

In the event of national or local significant events, we open the church to the public for prayer, guided meditation and contemplation.

Another important feature of our church life is our commitment to world mission. We have mission partners in France and Finchley (the Christian Care Trust and the Foodbank) and channel our financial response to disasters through Tearfund and support Open Doors. Until recently we had mission partners in Peru and Rwanda but they recently retired so we are open to new links. We aim to give 10% of our unrestricted income to world mission.

To celebrate Christmas we run a Christingle service on the first Sunday of December and a Carol Service on the third Sunday of December. Our Christmas eve service is at 11 p.m. and we offer Holy Communion at 10 a.m. on Christmas Day. We also have a tradition of visiting Christ Church North Finchley for Ash Wednesday and they visit us for our Ascension day service. For Easter we generally have a meeting and shared food on Maundy Thursday, a service at 10 a.m. on Good Friday and our 10 a.m. Easter Sunday service.

Grace House Residential Care Home is operated in North Finchley by the Christian Care Trust. The trust is in the course of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Institution and St Paul's will be one of its trustees, alongside Christ Church North Finchley. The PCC of each Church will appoint someone to act as its representative. Several members of St Paul's have stayed at Grace House.

In recognition of the reality that the health and future of the Church are in large part determined by its child members and our desire to be more effective in nurturing the faith of children and families, we created the role of Children and Families Community worker in 2010. For the first three years, it was full-time (40 hrs a week) and 50% funded by the Bishop of London's Mission Fund, and for the next three years it was part-time (31 hrs a week) and funded 100% by St Paul's. During this time, we experienced considerable growth in numbers, depth of discipleship and community engagement, particularly with primary schools. Since the first post-holder left in the summer of 2016 we have struggled to find a replacement. The PCC has designated funding from a legacy to fill the role again, but the recruitment has been put on hold during the vacancy so the new vicar can help shape the process.



# Buildings



St Paul's church was built over the period 1883-6. The walls are stone-facing on a brick core with a tiled roof. Its impressive stained-glass windows date from 1955 in most cases (they were replaced after WWII bomb damage). The older window is a 1921 memorial in respect of WWI. The church can hold up to 250 people. The heating and toilets have recently been upgraded, though the heating is not entirely satisfactory (the PCC is actively considering what can be done).

In September 2022 the quinquennial inspection found the building to be in generally good structural condition. Recommendations were made for minor repairs and longer-term improvements. Repairs are underway to damage caused by dry rot and rising damp.



In 1985, St Paul's and St Luke's Finchley were combined and St Luke's Church was demolished. In 2006 we sold the St Luke's church hall site for £1.4m and this provided the funding for the St Paul's Centre which opened in 2008. The Centre has an office, a large hall, toilets, a commercial standard kitchen and three meeting rooms. This is a much-valued facility, which is used by ourselves, the churches we host, and a wide range of groups and organisations. This footfall provides us with a lot of community contacts and missional opportunities as well as enabling us to make a significant contribution to the common good and providing us with substantial revenue to resource our work and witness.

The St Paul's centre is owned by the PCC. While it is a valuable asset to the Church and a powerful tool for its future mission, its management presents a challenge. The PCC looks forward to working with the new vicar to find an appropriate solution.



**Initial accommodation for our new vicar** will be in “the Glebe Property”, a self-contained residence which adjoins the vicarage. The entrance can be accessed from either the church car park or Claverley Grove. The resident will have use of a parking space in the church car park. This Glebe Property will be available to the new vicar and family until the main vicarage becomes available in June 2025. During this period the new vicar will be able to use one of the St Paul’s centre meeting rooms as a study. Further information is contained in Annex D.



The Glebe property was renovated a few years ago with a new kitchen, new bathroom, double glazing, new carpets and decor. The rooms are adequate but are not as generously proportioned as those in the main vicarage. They comprise kitchen and two reception rooms downstairs then three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs.

The **long-term accommodation for our new vicar** will be in the vicarage immediately next to the church, sharing a fence between its large lawned garden and the St Paul’s centre patio. It has five bedrooms and a generous study (the study is downstairs adjacent to the front door). The kitchen and bathroom were replaced in 2022 at the same time as one roof elevation was re-tiled, new double-glazing was installed and the electrical wiring was replaced. The main reception room downstairs is a generously proportioned combined dining/sitting room. It has a gas central heating and an immersion heater. A number of security features have been installed including high-performance locks, anti-climb paint on downpipes, security lights and a burglar alarm. The internal decor is in good order and the PCC maintains a fund for internal decoration, budgeting on the principle of one room being repainted per year. Further information is contained in Annex E.





## Hosting other Christian Organisations



The North London Iranian Church (NLIC) is a non-denominational, Protestant, and evangelistic institution rooted in Barnet since 2004, originating from the Iranian Christian Fellowship's dedication to the Iranian Christian diaspora in London. Catering primarily to Farsi and Urdu-speaking Christians, refugees, and asylum seekers, NLIC offers spiritual guidance and a sanctuary of hope. Their Sunday worship services, held from 2 pm to 4 pm, serve as a testament to their commitment to community and faith. Through its myriad of ministries and a heartfelt approach to service, NLIC stands as a beacon for Iranian Christians and those seeking refuge in North London.



Oastea Domnului “The Lord’s Army” world-wide organisation was founded in the New Year of 1923 by a Romanian Orthodox priest from Transylvania, Iosif Trifa. Being the editor of the Metropolitan weekly paper, at the impulse of the Holy Spirit, he issued a call for everyone to repent and enlist in the Army of Jesus. Today, the Lord’s Army is a lay-initiative mission movement within Orthodox Churches throughout Romania and across the Romanian diaspora.

The Lord's Army in the UK was founded in 2002 and has several hundred members in London and its surroundings. All its members are also members of the Orthodox Church.

Since 2014 the Lord’s Army has held a Romanian-speaking program every Sunday evening at St Pauls church where everyone is welcome to come in and join an authentic and friendly Orthodox Christian community where adults, young people and children worship together. The Lord’s Army encourages and seeks to enliven its members to grow in faith and live evangelically and in obedience to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



## Regular Hirers

The PCC has a policy of hiring our facilities to groups that make a positive contribution to our community and that do not conflict with our Christian ethos. We offer discounted rates to registered charities. Our regular hirers are listed below.

- A group that provides support to people with problems with gambling has been meeting in the St Paul's Centre weekly since it opened. The group supports its members in abstaining from gambling and avoiding situations in which they might be tempted.
- The Redeemed Christian Church of God meets in the St Paul's Centre once per month.
- There are two music teachers who use the premises. A wind instrument teacher who uses a room weekly and a keyboard teacher who runs six lessons a week for different groups of students.
- A weekly ballet class takes place during term time.
- A music-based group for pre-school children meets in the building twice a week.
- Groups supporting families and people with learning difficulties use our facilities regularly, as and when they need to hold a meeting.
- A group for vulnerable adults meets three times per week.
- The University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age (U3A) runs a history group fortnightly.
- The hall is also used as a polling station.
- The Local MP has used the church facilities to host an annual over 50's fair.
- A group that helps young people with complex behavioural needs uses our facilities reasonably frequently, as and when they need them.
- We also accept ad-hoc bookings for children's parties and family or community events.

The Church used to run a toddler group in the hall, but this stopped during covid and was not reinstated due to a lack of volunteers.

While these activities undoubtedly bring a large number of people into the building and into contact with our Church, it has not recently led to many people actually joining us in worship. This is an area where the PCC would be happy to work with the new vicar to improve engagement or possibly reach out to other potential hirers where there may be greater potential for welcoming new people into our church family. We have a budget set aside for a new Children and Families Community Worker; this additional pair of hands will provide an opportunity to use our church facilities to grow our church.



# Finances

The finances of St Paul’s Church are generally stable, with the predicted slight decline in Church member giving likely to be offset by increased income from the hire of buildings and facilities. The outcome of the 2024 cash budget is a slight deficit that could be covered from reserves. The experience of the last few years is that hire income will exceed the budgeted figure, so we would expect there to be a slight surplus at the end of 2024.

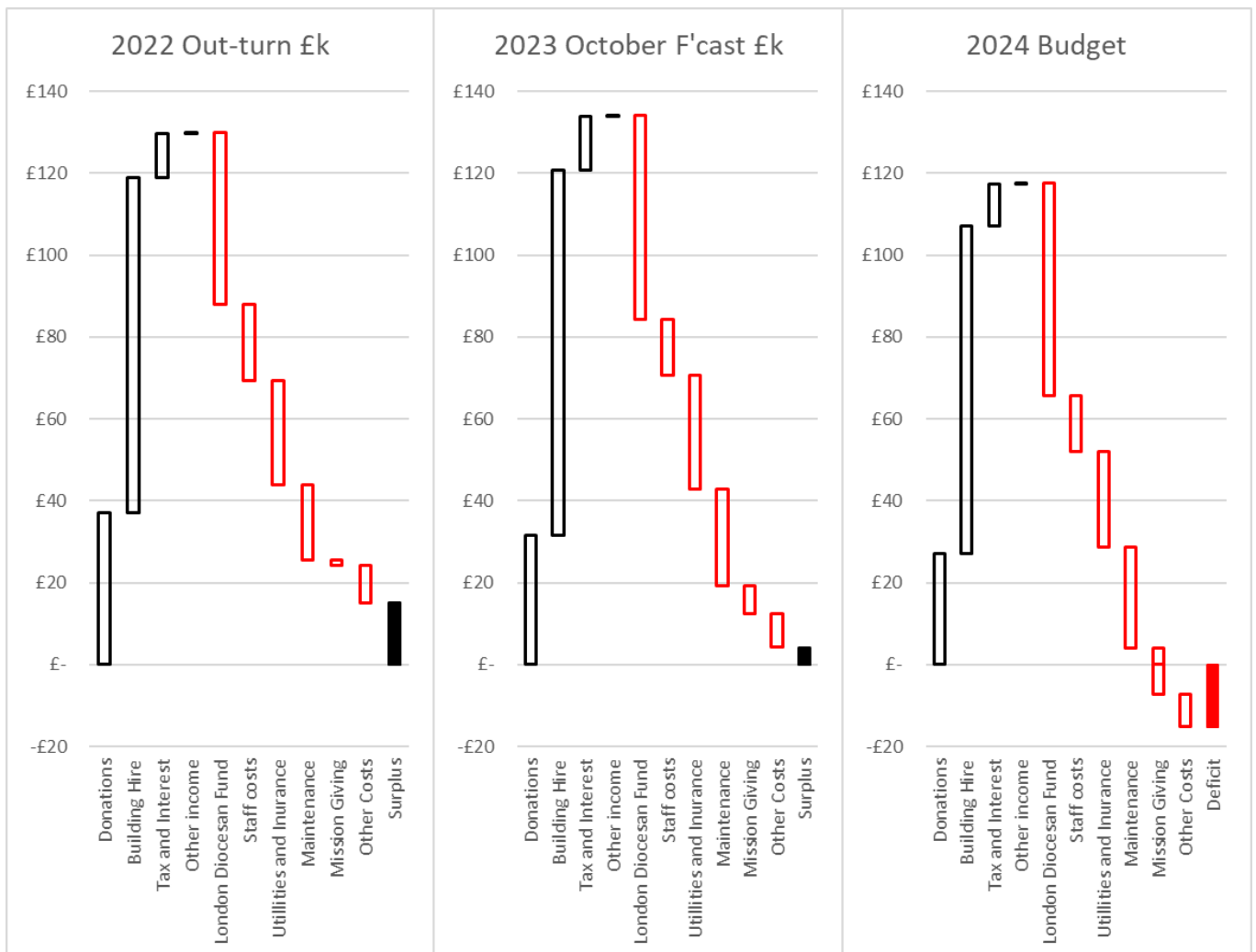
Church member contributions have decreased significantly since the start of the pandemic, and we are still not able to make contributions to the London Diocesan Fund sufficient to cover the estimated total cost of supporting a vicar and training the cadre of new vicars (“Standard Cost” stated by the LDF is £91,300 for 2024). The PCC is committed to remedying this as soon as the annual income makes it possible.

At the end of October 2023, the Church balance sheet showed fixed assets of £946,396 composed of the St Paul’s centre, its furnishings and the Grand Piano that is in the Church. Current assets were £266,017 which was mostly cash held in various savings accounts. Liabilities were £2,633.

The PCC has a policy of covering the incumbent’s expenses in line with national Church of England expectations and policies. This includes covering the costs of retreats.

The PCC has a policy of supporting world mission.

The graphics below show unrestricted funds under the control of the PCC. They exclude restricted donations, expenditure related to those restricted donations and depreciation. A fuller historic financial summary is included in Annex F.





# Where We Are Now (results of a PCC workshop and congregation-wide survey)

## Perceived Strengths

We see ourselves as welcoming and friendly.

Our house-groups are successful and much appreciated.

The parish is compact, well-populated, well-connected and has good public facilities.

The church has excellent facilities, enabling us to host a variety of different events and groups.

We have good connections with other Christian denominations, in particular the North London Iranian Church and Oastea Domnului.

We have strong links to local primary schools through the Christmas and Easter events we organise for them.

Our liturgical, evangelical service format is much appreciated and welcoming to children.

## Opportunities for the future

The PCC has set aside funds for a Children and Families Community Worker who could bring new families to our church through outreach and improved provision for families and children alongside services.

We could organise more community events using our facilities to raise awareness of our church (meaning is people) in the local community.

Further our holistic mission and outreach by undertaking projects within themes such as racial justice and the environment.

## Perceived Weaknesses

As a relatively small congregation the pool of volunteers is small, even of fewer of whom are able to devote significant amounts of their time and effort to running the church.

Our musician has had to retire from supporting our regular services and the live music to guide sung worship is sorely missed.

While we have use of state-of-the-art sound equipment, our service material is displayed on a screen using a projector. The visual presentation could be improved.

Our church offers relatively few organised events and services.

As a church, we do not have a particularly high profile in the local community.

Our members feel that the St Paul's pastoral offering could be improved.

## Threats to growing our church

Our small team of volunteers may dwindle making running the church even harder.

Wider use of video streaming gives people more options for worship other than in church.

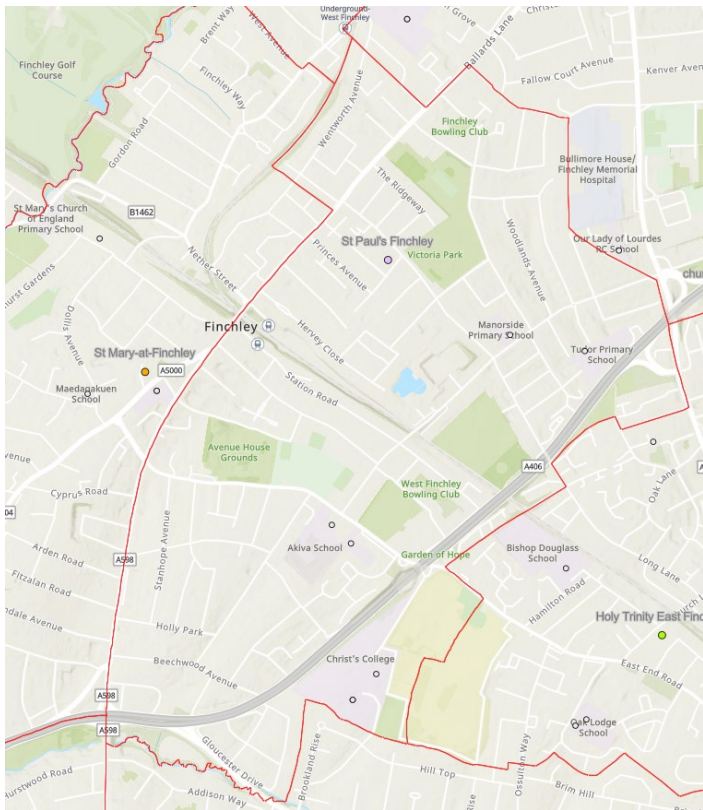
Maintaining our historic building to modern standards requires significant ongoing investment and maintenance.

Unavoidable delays to much needed repairs may cause hirers to leave.

Our regular congregation may dwindle below the critical mass for a healthy church.



# Information About the Area



St Paul's Finchley is in the Barnet Deanery of the Edmonton Area of the Diocese of London ([www.london.anglican.org](http://www.london.anglican.org)). It was founded in 1886 and was combined with St Luke's Finchley in 1985 at which point St Luke's Church was demolished. The formal name of the Parish is "St Paul and St Luke Finchley."

Finchley is set in the southern part of the London Borough of Barnet. The local community has a broad cross-section of household types, is cosmopolitan in character and contains a considerable number of ethnic groups. Based on 2011 census data, 36% of the population self-identify as Christian (national average 59%) with 36% being other faiths and 28% none/not stated.

Finchley started growing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and much of the housing stock originates from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. While many houses remain as self-contained dwellings, a significant proportion have been divided into maisonettes and there are some houses of

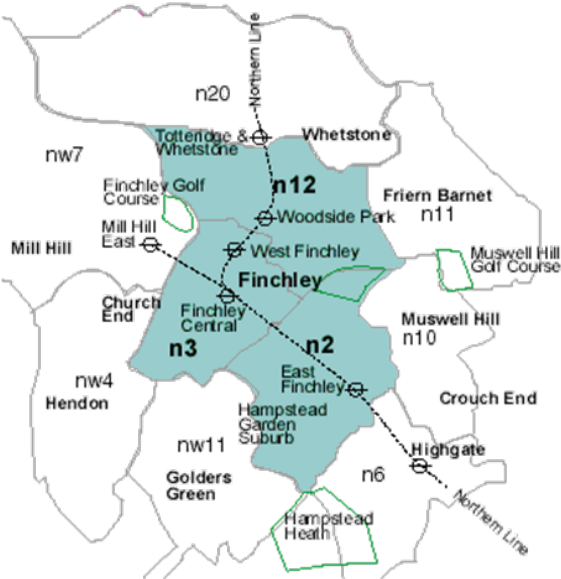
multiple occupancy. In common with much of London, renting is prevalent, and people move into and out of the area as jobs and economic situations dictate. The local population includes a mix of single adults, co-habiting couples and single-parent families as well as traditional nuclear families. A high density of churches in the area enables Christians in the parish to worship elsewhere.

The crime rate in Barnet, measured as the number of recorded crimes per 1000 population, is lower in Barnet than the average for areas in the Metropolitan Police force area. According to the Office for National Statistics 2021 and 2022 data, the Median Gross Weekly Pay in Barnet is 117% of the national median, equal to the median for Outer London and 97% of the median for London. The Employment rate is 94-96% of the rates for the UK, London and Outer London. The rate of additions to the housing stock is 10% of the national and London rates. The under-75 mortality

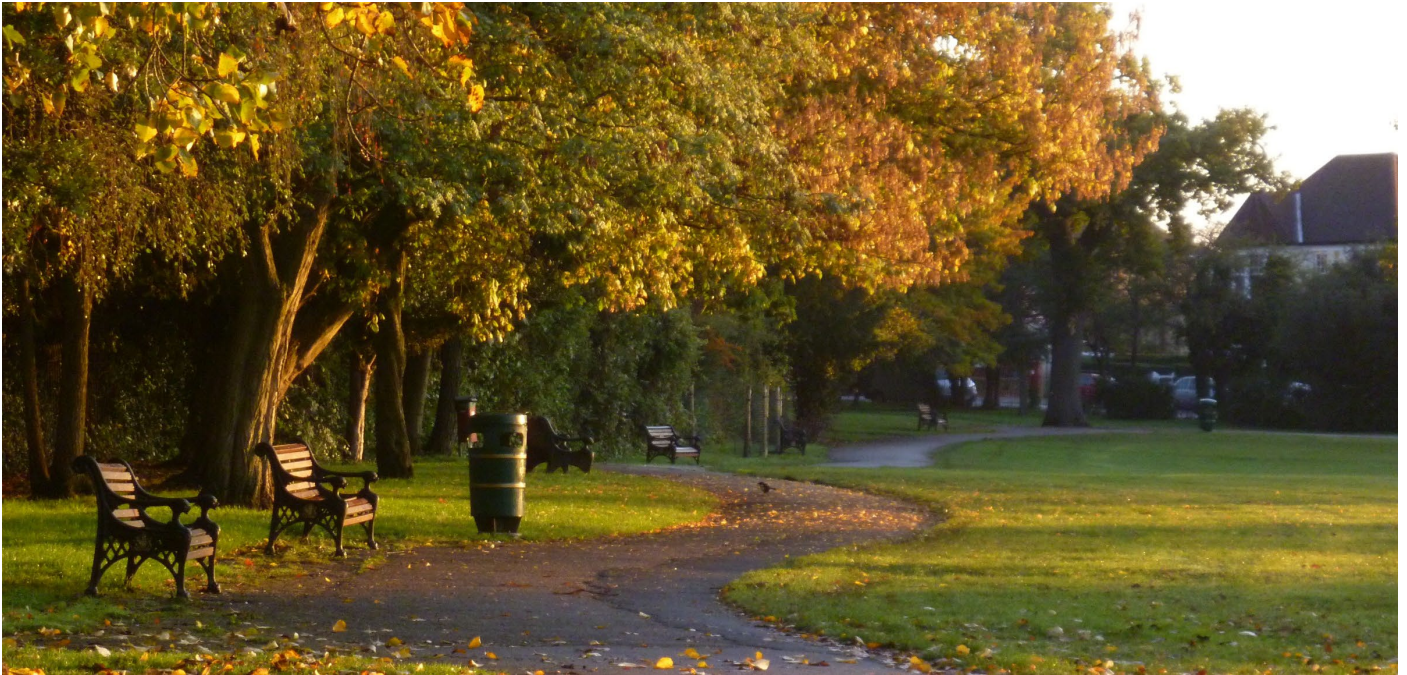
rate for preventable cardiovascular diseases is approximately 80% of the rates for England and London.

St Mary's CE Primary school was rated as Good Ofsted in March 2023. Secondary schools in the general area include Bishop Douglass [Roman Catholic] school (Good 2022), Christ College [secular] school (Good 2020), Archer Academy (Outstanding 2019), Wren Academy (Outstanding 2018), Compton (Outstanding 2018).

Finchley has excellent transport links from Finchley Central tube station (Northern Line, High Barnet Branch) and many bus routes including the new "super-loop". The North Circular, the M1 and the A1 are nearby and we are 6 miles south of the M25.







We are located in Church End (near Finchley Central). It is the oldest part of Finchley and popular with families. Our premises are directly opposite Victoria Park, a 17-acre area of grassland with playgrounds, an outdoor gym, a basketball court, ornamental gardens, public tennis courts, a bowling/ croquet club and a cafe.

Ballards Lane is a short walk from the church and includes a variety of cafes and restaurants, a large supermarket and a range of small shops. A leisure complex including a bowling alley, restaurants and cinema is approximately 15 minutes away on foot. Further shops and supermarkets are a short bus or car ride away in North Finchley. Brent Cross is a large shopping centre approximately 20-30 minutes away by car or bus and various other retail centres are a similar distance away.

Central London is 30-60 minutes away by the London Underground. This affords easy access to London's cultural and spiritual hubs – church members organise trips to Christian events in town a few times a year.

St Paul's Church Finchley is at the heart of a relatively comfortable suburban area with good schools and ready access to the best that London can offer for its residents' spiritual, cultural and physical needs.







We thank you for reading our Parish Profile and pray for your success on your journey. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

*Matthew 7:7*