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Preface

Bishop's Statement

This is an opportunity which I am happy to commend unreservedly to a person suitably called and equipped for the role. St Mark's has benefited over the years both from excellent clergy leadership and from well-developed lay ministry. It is a church which has a strong sense of togetherness and team-working, with everyone working hard to further the church's mission.

It is a church without secrets, with a congregation which is very faithful, down to earth and open to change. St Mark's is outward facing, with strong community ties and sees its mission in terms of service and witness to the wider community of the parish.

This post would suit a person comfortable in an urban environment, who enjoys the pastoral opportunities provided by the occasional offices and schools' ministry and who is genuinely committed to collaborative working within a team culture.

St Mark's has a very good relationship with its neighbour church of St John's, Walsall Wood and is also committed to strengthening partnership working within the four churches of the Walsall North Cluster. This offers a significant and exciting opportunity going forwards.

In 2018 a 0.5 interim minister was appointed, who served the parish very well until health reasons led to his recent resignation. This appointment is on the same basis, in line with many current appointments within the Diocese of Lichfield. So it is being offered as a three year interim position, potentially renewable for a further three years. The decision re renewal will depend on both congregation and minister desiring that to happen and the church being financially healthy enough to meet its Common Fund payments for a further term. After six years a decision would need to be made as to whether the post would then become permanent. Within the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area there has been an example of a parish being able to convert an interim post into a permanent one due to the fruitfulness of the ministry and this would be our aspiration for St Mark's.

There is a vicarage provided with the post but it would not be essential for a successful applicant to live there.

The person appointed would be well supported within the Deanery which, though large, is close knit, with mutually supportive relationships across its breadth of traditions. You would also be supported by the Archdeacon of Walsall and by your Area Bishop.

If you would like an informal conversation about this opportunity please contact my colleague, Archdeacon Julian Francis.

+Sarah

The Person

We are looking for a minister who has a depth and breadth of spirituality that will respect our sacramental tradition, yet offer new ways into prayer and worship.

- Who has pastoral gifts
- Who values both individual and corporate prayer
- Who can provide leadership, manage change and inspire for the future
- Who has an interest in continuing the musical aspirations of our church
- Who will continue the wearing of vestments at traditional services

The Role

Mission and Outreach

- Supporting existing Christians in discipleship so that members of the parish are encouraged to show God's love in action.
- Developing relations with community and external organisations to promote positive links with the church including strengthening existing strong relationships with our local care home (Mill Lodge)

Leadership

- Inspiring, motivating, challenging and empowering members of the church, individually and collectively, to achieve that vision.

- Sharing ministry as appropriate and working collaboratively with others,[including clergy colleagues, churchwardens, PCC, staff and volunteers], so that individuals 'gifts and talents are identified and used effectively.

Worship and Preaching

- Planning, organising and conducting a programme of worship that supports the church's vision and needs for ministry including appropriate use of resources, music, teaching and preaching.
- Reflecting, interpreting and preaching the gospel in a way that will encourage faith development, adapting content and style for different audiences, occasions and purposes

Pastoral Care

- Giving support to those in need of pastoral care as appropriate, including baptism and marriage preparation, care to the sick and dying, bereavement, individual support and visiting.
- Communicating effectively and appropriately in both written and verbal form with people of all ages, needs, abilities and situations in society, inside and outside church.

Stewardship and Parish Organisation

- Working with the PCC and churchwardens to ensure that structures and resources for parish organisation are appropriate and that policies and processes in relation to services, weddings, baptisms and funerals, health and safety, financial, fabric, staff management, etc. meet diocesan and legal requirements.
- Following an appropriate pattern of work that enables a full spiritual and personal life, as well as meeting the demands of ministry

Personal Development and Spirituality

- Continually developing personal skills and recognising that s/he is on a life journey involving development of theological understanding and spiritual reflection.
- Care and development of themselves and their personal relationships, including adequate time for family life, friendship, recreation, renewal and personal health, through taking a weekly day off and their full holiday entitlement.



Parish – A General Synopsis

St Mark's Parish Church of Shelfield and High Heath, became an independent parish in 2008 having previously been a District Church within the Parish of Walsall Wood . Our style of worship is best described as relaxed, user friendly, but still prayerful and serious. Services are based upon Common Worship, using the flexibility it offers to vary liturgy depending upon the season. During services there is much lay involvement including as servers, chalice assistants, readers, intercessors and sides people.

The congregation are openly welcoming to all who come through the door, from the Bishop to a stranger. Though no formal arrangement exists, someone is always there to ensure a gentle welcome and to provide assistance, as required, before, during and after a service.

The challenge to the person becoming Vicar of St. Mark's is to bring their own personality to the role, integrating it with the existing congregation, enabling those within the Church family and those in the wider community to grow in knowledge and understanding of faith.

The Mission Plan

St Mark's Church, Shelfield and High Heath is an inclusive Parish who welcome and value all who come here, regardless of age, colour, gender or sexuality; whether single, married or partnered; able bodied or disabled in any way; to explore with us the good news of Jesus Christ and to share the fun and friendship of each other's company.

To achieve that we aim to.....

- Joyfully worship God and to work together to deepen the faith and spirituality of the whole worshipping community enabling each member to be confident to share their faith when the opportunity arises.
- Build on the contacts we already have through social activities, school visits and occasional offices and to share the good news of Christ in all our relationships
- Reach out into the community, making contacts whenever and wherever possible, welcoming people into the church family and helping them to find a spiritual home.
- Prioritise making new and building on existing contacts with children, young people and families to help them to belong to the Christian family.

Church Leadership

We have operated for many years a committed and successful Ministry Leadership Team which supports the incumbent

Our two Churchwardens play a key part in both maintaining and growing the church within our parish.

We have one Licensed Reader and one Reader who has Permission To Officiate (PTO)

The present Parochial Church Council consists of 9 elected members, including the two Churchwardens and two Deanery Synod representatives, most of the PCC members are also involved in other aspects of Church life.

The Parish

The Parish lies 3 miles north of the town of Walsall, 7 miles from our Cathedral city of Lichfield, 14 miles from Birmingham and 8 miles from Wolverhampton, all of which offer extremely good shopping facilities and are easily accessible by public transport

The area also has good road, rail and air links, being close to the Midland motorways, rail services to all parts of the country via Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Birmingham International Airport is approximately 20 miles away and easily reached by road and rail.

The area is mainly residential, a mixture of private and social housing although many of the latter are now privately owned, with approximately 8000 residents.

We are well served by local shops, providing for day-to-day needs, together with fish and chip shops, restaurants serving Indian cuisine and two local public houses, larger supermarkets are within easy reach.

The services of Doctors, Opticians and Dentists are adequately provided for in the neighbouring areas of Walsall Wood, Rushall and Pelsall. Walsall is served by Walsall Manor Hospital, which has recently seen a significant upgrading of buildings well as St. Mark's there are three other Churches in the Parish; St. Francis' Roman Catholic Church, Shelfield Methodist Church and Shelfield Pentecostal Church. St Francis has a primary school and there are two other schools in the area, Greenfield Primary and Shelfield Community Academy.



Sheffield Pentecostal Church

St Mark's has close links with the Sheffield Methodist Church, sharing and running occasional services..

Sheffield Methodist Church



The Fellowship

St. Mark's has an Electoral Roll of 55, with an age range of 18 to 100, the average age being an estimated mid-sixties.

Our Sunday congregation averages over 30, spread over the two morning services, and reflects the mix of the electoral roll. Nearly all of the congregation are white, but other ethnicities are also present amongst our congregations and electoral roll. This demographic mirrors the general population mix within the parish.

As will be seen from the average age, the majority of the congregation are retired (all professing to be growing old disgracefully !!) but we have members or are (were) working in education, health, the construction industry, transport and logistics, and training in industry.

The age and employment of our Church members may seem a little vague. This is because their exact age and employment is not always known. At St Mark's people are valued for who they are and no matter what their age or ethnicity, they all contribute to the life of the family.

The Church Building

The building was new and dedicated in 1965 and is of a multi-functional design with a seating capacity of 120 in the main hall. The facilities consist of a sanctuary, multi-purpose church/hall and attached large meeting room. A kitchen is part of the main building along with vestries and store rooms. Full disabled access is provided including a loop system. There is a car park to the rear of the building



A recent quinquennial has shown the need for repairs to flat roofs and the upgrading of our universal access. External funding is being sought for both projects. The facilities are in a good state of decoration.

Church House

Built at about the same time as the Church. It is a 5 bedroom detached house adjacent to the church and has its own secluded garden to the rear. A detached garage lets onto the church car park.





There are ample facilities for entertaining having a large kitchen, utility room, large dining room and family sitting room. An extension to the front provides an office and study with its own entrance and toilet facilities

Church Grounds



A small commemorative rose garden and the High Heath war memorial is to one side of the church. The rest of the surrounding grounds are laid to grass.

Upkeep of the grounds is, assisted by informal arrangement - by members of the congregation.



Church Finances

It has always been and remains the policy of our PCC to give priority to the regular payment of our Parish Share (now called 'New Common Fund') A Standing Order is in place for approximately 60% of the Share to be paid through our bank each month. Payment of the remainder is by cheque.

Our reserve funds are in the C.B.F. Deposit A/C amounting to £32k

The Envelope Scheme used by most members of our Church, along with plate collections, one standing order and one off Gift Aid envelopes raise about 25% of the Parish Share, while Special Events raise another 20%. This is generated by 2 Fairs, Fish & Chip Suppers, Tea Dances, Line Dancing, Skittles Evening, Suppers and Catering for Funeral parties and Birthdays. These events are not restricted to St. Mark's members and we try to encourage other churches and members of the Community to join us. A further 50% of our income is derived from lettings.

We use the Hall and Annexe for activities for several church based groups e.g.: Ladies Friendship Group. A Beavers and Cub pack pay a minimal rent. The facilities are also used for Walsall Adult Education Classes and Election Polling Station. An after school club is also accommodated, which contributes to the income from lettings.

We offer financial support through donations to various local charities
We hold fundraising events and have collection tins, supporting local charities

We have one person who receive a remuneration for their services: a cleaner.
All other services are given voluntarily.

Parish Activities & Programmes

Regular Group Activities (many led by members of the congregation):

- Tea Dance - most Mondays including Bank Holidays
- Ladies Friendship - alternate Mondays
- Craft Club - alternate Mondays
- Beavers and Cubs – every Wednesday in term time
- Choir practice - every Tuesday
- Bible Study & Service of the Word - alternate Wednesday mornings
- Prayer group - once a month following the Sunday morning services
- Circle of Friends
 - ◆ a social group aimed at adults with special needs and their carers, Thursday evening

Social Activities (of which we are proud and for which we are renowned):

- Regular fish, chips and bingo evenings.
- Bring & Share Suppers, following some services
- Social events – always involving food! – at any time and not necessarily for any reason

Seasonal Activities:

- Harvest Supper and Sale
- Craft Table Top Sales
- Christmas Fair
- Spring Fair
- Strawberry Teas
- Summer BBQ
- Lent Groups

Children & Youth Engagement

We recognise this is the area where our major challenge lies. The neighbourhood in which the church lies has relatively small numbers of resident young people. Our challenge lies in engaging with these young people.

Our church has made many efforts recently to achieve this by means of:-

- Youth Club
- A successful Cub and Beaver Pack
- An after school group – operating as a commercial body
- Messy Church

Outreach

- Home Communion
- Open The Book (Bible Society Initiative), at the local Primary School
- Messy Church
- Regular Contact with the local care home (Mill Lodge)

Regular Services

Sunday	08.30	Said Eucharist
	10.00	Sung Eucharist *

*one per month is an 'All Age' none-Eucharist service

Holy Week Services (including Tenebrae Supper)
Harvest Festival
All Souls
Blue Christmas
Service of 9 Lessons and Carols
Christingle
School Carol Services
Christmas Eve – Midnight Eucharist
Christmas Day – Family Eucharist service

Communication and Policies

St Mark's policies on Baptism, Marriage and Funerals are:

Baptism – All parishioners, or their dependants, that wish to be baptised should be able to do so with no conditions attached.

Families are visited before the date of the baptism and most Baptisms take place at 1pm or 2pm on Sundays by a priest (who is robed accordingly)

We have an open policy however, if a family lives outside the parish, they must first obtain a letter of consent from their parish priest.

Marriage – All parishioners who are legally able to marry will be permitted to do so. St Mark's historically allows divorcees to be married in the Church at the discretion of the incumbent

Funerals – Some funerals take place in church. However, most funerals from the parish take place in the local crematorium.

What the Area has to Offer

The area around St Mark's has a lot to offer for leisure activities. There are good transport links to Walsall, Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Lichfield, with more excellent facilities further afield. Each has good shopping facilities, restaurants, museums, theatres and other places of entertainment.

Walsall Art Gallery

Walsall's main attractions are the Art Gallery, Leather Museum, Walsall Arboretum, Jerome K Jerome Birthplace Museum and its outdoor market.



It has numerous pubs/clubs, good restaurants and also offers amateur dramatics at the Grange Theatre and the Aldridge Youth Theatre.

Dudley has the famous Black Country Living Museum

Wolverhampton boasts the Grand Theatre, the Civic and Little Civic Events Centres, Art Gallery, Bantock House and Park, Bilston Craft Gallery to name just a few. Nearby Bilston has the Robin 2 Arts and Music Centre that produces a vast array of acts performing all types of music.

Birmingham's facilities are legion and include the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham & Midland Museum of Transport, a Railway Museum, Birmingham Cathedral, St Chad's Cathedral, National Sea Life Centre, Botanical Gardens, three theatres (Alexandra, Rep and Hippodrome), Birmingham Royal Ballet, CBSO, NIA, NEC, Symphony Hall – the list really is endless!

Lichfield is an undiscovered gem of a city, it has the Samuel Johnson Birthplace museum, Erasmus Darwin House, Wall Roman Site, the Garrick Theatre and, of course, the Cathedral. It's full of small shops and cafes/restaurants and is definitely worthwhile visiting.

Further afield you have:

- Tamworth, with its castle, the Snowdome and Drayton Manor Park and Zoo.
- Sutton Coldfield, with Sutton Park (the largest urban parkland outside London) and Kingsbury Water Park.
- Alrewas and the National Memorial Arboretum.
- Alton Towers Amusement Park.
- Cannock Chase Park and Nature Reserve.



National Memorial Arboretum

- National Trust properties, including Shugborough, Packwood House, Moseley Old Hall, Charlecote Park and Carding Mill Valley/Shropshire Hills.



Cannock Chase

Added to this, there are 5 professional football clubs - Aston Villa, Birmingham City, Wolverhampton Wanderers, West Bromwich Albion and Walsall; Warwickshire cricket at Edgbaston, rugby at Moseley and minor league football throughout the area.

The Peak District, Shrewsbury, Llangollen, Derby, Nottingham are all within a comfortable days outing. There are hundreds of miles of canals to explore by boat, foot or bike. There is no such thing as having nothing to do in this area, just not having enough time to do it!

Profile of the Walsall Deanery

The Walsall Deanery is interesting because of its many expressions of worship and spirituality.

- Urban Priority Areas
- Parishes which seem to have much and parishes which seem to have little
- Open Evangelical
- Modern Catholic
- Forward in Faith

They all add to the active and vibrant life of this community and, numerically, Walsall forms the largest single Deanery in the Diocese of Lichfield.

Parishes are divided into six clusters with the idea of each group working closer together and sharing each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Synod meets five times a year to discuss local, national and, sometimes, international issues. We make a point of meeting for prayer twice each year at a Deanery Eucharist and Social in July and an evening of Spiritual Reflection in Advent. Both events are always well attended.

There are excellent Church of England Primary and Secondary Schools in the Deanery.

Clergy Chapter meets every month and is generally well supported. Meetings vary from having invited speakers to informal sharing of each other's ministry, and to share prayer together for both the joys and sorrows of ministry.

As required by Canon Law each church receives a three yearly Visitation from the Rural Dean and Lay Chair. This provides the opportunity to meet each Parochial and/or District Church Council to discuss their vision under the Diocesan initiatives.

There is a multi-denominational Hospital Chaplain at the Manor Hospital in Walsall who both take an active part in the life of the Deanery.

An active and faithful deaf community and their families meet to worship at one of the churches and The Black Country Industrial Urban Mission Ministry is active in the Wolverhampton Episcopal area. Within the Deanery are two thriving Asian Christian communities who worship at St Matthew's and St Peter's. As a Deanery we believe that we listen to each other despite the fact that we serve in very diverse places with diverse traditions.

Walsall Deanery Contact Details

Website:

www.lichfield.anglican.org/walsall/walsall/

Area Dean:

Fr. Mark McIntyre
St. Gabriel's Vicarage, 85 Walstead Road, Fullbrook, Walsall, W55 4LZ
Telephone - 01922 622583
Email – stgabriels.frmark@gmail.com

Lay Chair:

Mr Nigel Beck
100 Lazy Hill Road, Aldridge, Walsall, W59 8RR
Telephone – 01922 452830
Email – nigel.beck@live.co.uk

Secretary:

Mrs Valerie Benford
1 Mansion Drive, Hammerwich, Staffs. W57 0JD
Tel. 01543 684641
Email – valeriebenford1@ntlworld.com

Treasurer:

Mr. Steve Harrison
40 Norfolk Crescent, Aldridge, Walsall, W59 8R
Telephone – 01922 866613
Email – annandsteve@blueyonder.co.uk

A MAP OF WALSALL DEANERY



OUR VISION



The vision, mission and ministry of the Diocese is focused around the three priority areas of discipleship, vocation and evangelism (DVE) - following in the footsteps of the first bishop of Lichfield, St Chad.

Our shared diocesan vision, is as follows:

"As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God already at work in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope."

Please see the "Our Vision" video on our website

<https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/>

Shaping for Mission

This is our programme of change across Lichfield Diocese to strengthen our life of discipleship, vocation and evangelism in the context of our vision. We are working together as people of hope to make our mission sustainable, by shaping deaneries to be effective bodies for developing discipleship, encouraging vocation and inspiring evangelism.

Our vision is being worked out in parishes, fresh expressions of church, schools and chaplaincies. People across the diocese are invited to reflect on our vision in their local context. Please see the following video on our website:

<https://youtu.be/LHaRes3VafQ>

COVID-19 Pandemic

In common with most groups who meet regularly (be it community, interest, religion or sports), the Covid 19 Pandemic has severely curtailed many of our activities.

However, in the spirit of our community and the modus operandi of the Parish, we have been able to partially mitigate the closure of our place of worship by:

- a) Joint on line services in partnership with a neighbouring parish and the local Methodist Church by producing a weekly on line Sunday service and festival services (e.g. Easter and Christmas)
- b) Providing door-step delivery of pre-consecrated communion wafers (sanctioned by our Area Bishop) to our housebound and vulnerable members.

On a more positive note, we are blessed with the steady return of our congregation to our in-person Sunday worship services. The steady return to pre-Covid attendances are also being experienced throughout the other activities that centre in and around our church.

