

# CHRIST CHURCH PORTSDOWN



## Parish Profile

*May 2007*

### **Christ's life for the Community, through Celebration, Confidence and Compassion**

Christ Church commits itself to further extend the influence and benefits of the Christian faith within the community of Portstown and the wider world by its own example and through pro-active partnerships with other organisations.

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## Introduction

The parish of Christ Church, Portsdown, for which the Simeon's Trustees are patrons, is situated across the crest of Portsdown Hill. The church site is just within the boundary of the City of Portsmouth, as is half of the parish, although the remainder is within the Borough of Havant. The parish is part of the Deanery of Havant, within the Archdeaconry of Portsdown in the Diocese of Portsmouth. Christ Church is the only church of any denomination within the parish and the only provider of community facilities.



Figure 1 - Map of the area

The objectives of the church's life and work in the parish have been and continue to be:

- To effectively proclaim the message of God's revelation through the scriptures and the good news of personal salvation in Jesus Christ.
- To provide well run and effective opportunities for worship and spiritual growth in accordance with the needs of the existing and potential congregation especially young people.
- To encourage and develop the skills of the congregation in the service of others.
- To develop pastoral care programmes to serve those in need within the community.
- To seek the most appropriate ways to further develop our contribution to the work of mission through partners and organisations.
- To make more effective use of the church buildings for the benefit of the congregation and the wider community.
- To offer an annual social programme to provide fellowship for a wide variety of people.

## The Parish

The parish is predominantly residential to the east and farmland to the west of the A3 London Road. This main north/south artery is well served by public transport. A large new residential development is planned nearby. The nearest railway stations are at Cosham and

Havant. The sprawling aspect of the parish, dominated by this main thoroughfare means that there is no natural centre to the community.



Figure 2 - Aerial view of Christ Church and its Environs

The parish is best described as a dormitory area for commuters to the city of Portsmouth and environs, with a percentage of military (mainly Royal Navy) personnel; some based in the area but many working elsewhere in the country or on service overseas. The population numbers approx. 6,200 and is almost totally white, of a mixed age range and social background. Property types range from large detached houses on big plots to more closely packed semi detached and terraced housing. The figures available indicate that: 94% of households are owner occupied; 21% are single households the majority of these being elderly; 23% of household heads hold professional or managerial positions; 70% of women are in paid work and 40% of households own 2 or more cars.

We have one farm and there is a large (former direct grant) community secondary school (years 7 – 11; ages 11 - 16) within the parish with whom we would like to develop closer links. The Rowans Hospice, sited just within the neighbouring parish of Southwick, attracts much support from our church family, as does the large general Queen Alexandra hospital at Cosham; again just outside our parish boundaries. There are some small shops and commercial businesses within the parish, but no industrial sites.

The church electoral roll currently stands at 155<sup>1</sup>. Of the total number, 71 live outside the parish, either because they have moved from the parish and choose to continue worshipping with us, or others who choose to travel some distance because they particularly like our open evangelical style of worship.

Previous incumbents have been Honorary Chaplains to DERA (now Qinetiq) military research establishment, and also to the last remaining group in the country of the France and Germany Star Association, who have a special link with Christ Church and whose standard is laid up in the church.

The church has its own website ([www.christchurchportsdown.org](http://www.christchurchportsdown.org)) and a comprehensive guide to the environs and history of the Portsdown Hill area and the military links with the church can be found at [www.portsdown-tunnels.org.uk](http://www.portsdown-tunnels.org.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> 2007 figures

## The Church

The church was built in 1874 and together with the graveyard stands on a site of approximately three acres. Additionally there is a military cemetery of approximately one acre at the east end of the churchyard, which is managed by the War Graves Commission.

The church was constructed in Norman style of Portland stone and faced with headed black flint from the chalk of Portsdown Hill. Internally the roof is formed of stained open timbers and covered with tiles above.

The interior consists of a nave divided from north and south aisles by an arcade of four arches supported on circular columns, a spacious chancel in the form of an apse, a small entrance porch and vestry accommodation to the south east corner.



Figure 3 - Interior of Christ Church

The church has a maximum seating capacity of about 320 people in traditional pews (an exciting project for the internal reordering of the church has completed the initial planning stage and awaits commencement of the capital fund raising activities).

A circular stone stairway leads up inside the square tower where there is one bell.

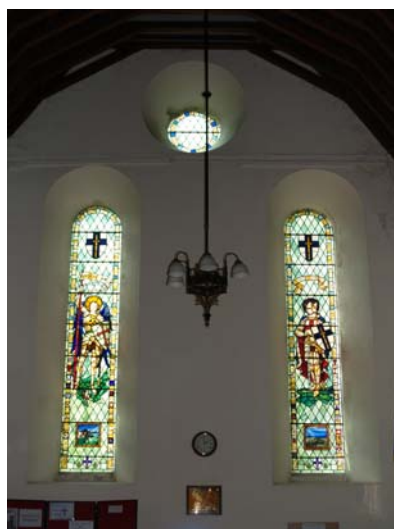


Figure 4 - D Day Windows (left) and Light of The World Window (right)

The windows are mainly of stained glass. Of particular significance is a pair of windows dedicated by the High Command of the British 2nd Army after World War 2 to commemorate

the successful outcome of the 'D Day' invasion of France and in remembrance of those who gave their lives. In 2008 it is intended to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their commemoration. The 'Light of the World' window at the east end is also regarded as a particularly important feature of the church. The church is one of the destinations on the 'Walk the Story' route established by the D Day Museum in 2004.

As part of our 125th anniversary in 1999 and Millennium celebrations floodlighting was installed around the church. The whole building is in generally sound condition, although the roof is in need of repair.

The churchyard is regarded as a good example of the Victorian style, has many trees and is rich in flora and fauna; indeed it is home to one of the largest rookeries in Hampshire. The churchyard is managed in order to protect the natural wildlife habitats, which allows grasses and wildflowers to flower and set seed. The plan has been put together in conjunction with the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and is implemented by our "Rusty Cutter" churchyard maintenance team. The military cemetery contains a war memorial, and with the churchyard, is regularly visited by members of the public.



Figure 5 - Church Yard (left) and War Graves Commission Cemetery (right)

## The Vicarage

The vicarage is situated about a five minute walk from the church on the opposite side of the A3 London Road. The house has 4 bedrooms and is of modern style being only a few years old. It has roomy accommodation on the ground floor and the separate garage has been converted into the Vicar's study. There is a small garden at the front and the rear of the property.



Figure 6 - Vicarage

## The Parish Hall

The Parish Hall is a separate brick building adjacent to the north of the church and stands on a further one-acre site. The hall was constructed in 1931 and comprises of a large main hall with three smaller rooms adjacent, a refurbished and well-equipped kitchen and toilet facilities. It is well used by the community.

The Parish Hall is in a care and maintenance phase, which will move into a further refurbishment programme when the reordering of the church is complete.

A substantial brick built Scout and Guide hut is sited to the east of the hall and a small ground rent is paid to the church. The land between the site and the church hall is used for car parking, which is currently the focus of an upgrading project.

## Worship

The annual pattern is based on the liturgical calendar with popular special services or commemorations typically for 'D' Day (the second Sunday in June), a Thanksgiving Memorial service, a Good Friday Walk of Witness, Harvest Festival and a Christmas Toy service. There are some joint acts of worship with churches from surrounding parishes. Common Worship is used extensively as a basis for the series of weekly service sheets.

The average Sunday attendance for 2006, taken over the year but excluding major festivals and events is about 85 adults.

The current monthly pattern of services is as follows:

08.00 Holy Communion - a said service each Sunday, alternating between Common Worship Order 1 and Order 2. This is a quiet, said service, with sermon, attended by approximately 15 people.

10.30 Holy Communion - 1st and 3rd Sundays. This service follows the Common Worship Order 1 format, with up to five hymns and choruses or religious songs, usually accompanied on the organ. The Junior Church joins the congregation after the Peace.

10.30 Parade Service - 2nd Sunday. This service is an informal service, which includes the uniformed organisations. For the October 2006 Parade Service, which was also our Harvest Festival, the uniformed organisations decorated the church with a variety of artwork. In February 2007 the Parade Service was conducted by the Scouts as part of their centenary celebrations.

10.30 Family Service – 4th Sunday. This is an informal service aimed at our younger members of the congregation. It is also the service in which Baptisms are held. It is not unusual to have at least one baptism each month, and often there are two. The musical accompaniment at Parade and Family Services is usually by a small instrumental group and keyboard.

10.30 Morning Prayer - 5th Sunday. This follows the Common Worship format.

10.00 each Wednesday - Holy Communion or Morning Prayer, depending on the availability of clergy. The last Wednesday of each month is a Mother's Union Corporate Communion.

Coffee and refreshments are served after the 10:30 services to provide opportunities for fellowship. A bookstall and Fair Trade stall are also available.

## Junior Church

Junior Church meets on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays in the Parish Hall, joining the church congregation part way through the service. The register for 2007 shows there are 27

members in this bright and energetic group. Currently they use Roots resource material to help them discover what God is saying through the Bible and the events of the church calendar. The Junior Church team also enjoys a number of social activities each year, including an All Saint's party, Christmas party, Pancake breakfast and Easter craft workshops, and every Christmas they enchant the congregation with their nativity play. The ages of members range from 3 years up to 18. During the school holidays the Junior Church try to organise a family outing.

YOOF2 and the Hall of Sound, initiatives to give teenagers (not just members of the Junior Church) opportunities to enjoy a varied programme of activities and interact through music making, have had to be suspended due to the prolonged illness of the previous incumbent.

## **Ministry and Lay Participation**

During the two year period of the previous incumbent's absence through sickness, the bulk of the services fell to the NSM Curate (under training) and a single Lay Reader, with support from other local or retired clergy. We anticipate this pattern will continue during the interregnum.

Christ Church is an inclusive church in which members of the congregation are encouraged to participate and take on key pastoral and organisational roles. At present we have a large number of lay members supporting Sunday services by leading intercessions, reading lessons, assisting with communion, carrying out sidesman duties and welcoming the congregation.

A programme of home visiting is carried out within the Parish. This covers giving communion to those who are housebound, visiting those who are ill, at home, or in hospital and the bereaved.

Marriage preparation programmes have proved very successful and many couples married in the church are now bringing their children for Baptism. This is an area of our ministry that we feel is particularly important - our congregation is lacking in young adults although the number of families attending is growing. Marriage and Baptism preparation takes place in the church.

There were 8 weddings, 26 funerals and 20 baptisms during 2006.

Normally each year confirmation classes are run for a group of young people and separately for a group for adults, but in 2006 no members of our church family could be presented to the Bishop for confirmation.

An affiliated Toddlers Group meets weekly in the Parish hall. To provide them with support, a team of people from the church help serve refreshments.

## **Music in Worship**

As we have neither a robed choir nor a permanent organist, the music is led in a number of different ways depending on the type of service. Music can include the use of organ, piano, other instruments, recorded music, the enthusiastic voices of about 14 singers from our congregation and on occasion, the Junior Church. At Parade and Family services our established band lead the music worship. Our choice of music is extremely eclectic, and is mainly based on Mission Praise with occasional use of Junior Praise, Hymns Ancient and Modern (Revised), Carols for Choirs, anthems and Taizé.

## **Kairos**

In 2006 the Bishop of Portsmouth launched the Kairos initiative which requires the various church clusters in the diocese to review areas of mission and engagement with the

community, the ministry the Church offers to its congregations and the wider world. Christ Church belongs to the Waterlooville cluster. Kairos is a Greek word which suggests a watershed, an opportune moment for change, a decisive turning point, a season which God has given us to think afresh about all we do.

Within our cluster, a set of plans have been agreed and include using the strength of our core ministry teams to grow people at all levels. The aim is to have more Christians for our later work, specifically at the level supporting our clergy teams, and to develop and share worship and ministry experiences and to construct a semi formal model for operating the cluster, including social events. There are also plans to work with community services, including a current initiative working with the Hampshire Police to introduce newly trained police constables to the work of the cluster parishes.

## **Mission at Home**

On the first Tuesday morning each month there is a parish Prayer Meeting, and on the first Wednesday evening a Parish meeting is held in church to prepare for the Home Groups. These five groups meet monthly for Bible study and discussion and are attended by about 40 people. Groups have remained steady and this is an area of development that we are keen to nurture.

Every year we hold a Lent course for additional teaching, prayer and support. This year (2007) the Lent Course was designed by the churches in the Kairos cluster, which offered the opportunity to join another church's Lent Group. On each Sunday evening during Lent each church within the cluster held a service, the aim of which was to introduce the next week's course content. Services are held every day during Holy Week.

A Day of Prayer is held on the day of the APCM.

The Pastoral Care Group is an initiative set up by our Curate in 2006. Following a six week training course, fifteen volunteers were commissioned at a special service and now undertake a variety of pastoral visits to the bereaved, sick and housebound. They are also helping a family with very young children. All the volunteers have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau. Their vision for the future is to develop and grow and to be able to join together with other churches in our Kairos cluster for both visiting and training.

The Mothers Union is a very active group with a steady membership. Christ Church is one of the largest branches in the Portsmouth Diocese, and one of their members has recently become the Portsmouth Diocesan President of the Mothers Union. They play a considerable role in the pastoral work of the parish. Their activities include making up toilet bags for use in the Accident and Emergency Department of Queen Alexandra Hospital and maintaining the 'Happy Bags' for use by young Church members and visiting children. They also send 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary Baptism cards and wedding cards to couples marrying in Christ Church.

In addition to the Mothers Union who meet twice monthly on a Tuesday afternoon, an Evening Wives group meets socially once a month.

The Friday Fellowship meets fortnightly on Friday afternoons in the Hall and provides a congenial meeting place for over 20 older people. This is another well supported and appreciated activity run by church members.

The Men's Early Bird breakfasts are held about every six weeks on a Saturday morning and have been running for five years. About twenty men enjoy a good cooked breakfast followed by a short talk from a guest speaker.

The church website continues to be a valuable source of information for both church members and the wider community, imparting information about activities (e.g. exhibitions or

Bible Reading Marathon) and assisting those searching for family graves or interested in the D Day landings.

## **Mission Abroad**

There is a strong history of mission in the parish dating back to a previous incumbent - Canon Vernon Herbert - who initiated the link between our Diocese and the Diocese of West Africa known as IDWAL (Inter Diocesan West African Link) and through which we have a link with the Cathedral Church of St Peter in Koforidua in Ghana. We have several overseas link mission partners (who in the past included some from our own congregation) to whom we correspond monthly and we maintain a high level of support for overseas and home missions especially the Church Mission Society, TEAR Fund, Christian Aid, The Children's Society, Leprosy Mission and Scripture Union.

Our Mission Support Group plans and initiates a variety of activities throughout the year. One of their main tasks is to organise our monthly mission giving programme which includes a tithe of our parish budget.

## **Young People**

Our affiliated uniformed organisations – Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts - meet regularly in their own building behind the Church Hall. A member of the PCC acts as a liaison between these groups and the church, and is on their committee.

The local group of Sea Cadets play an important role at our Remembrance Day service and lay crosses and poppies on each of the graves in the military cemetery.

Our local secondary school have held their annual Carol services in the church over a period of three days. Members of our church have also sat on the board of governors, and we would wish to look at other ways to improve our support for the school. Our Summer Fete, which is held on the first Saturday of July, is held in the school grounds.

In the last few years Christ Church has hosted an annual classical music concert performed by students, aged 16 – 18, from South Downs College. The concert, which is usually a mixture of instrumental and choral music, gives the students valuable performance experience and is always well supported. The concert is also a useful fund raising event for the church. Christ Church hopes to build a closer relationship with South Downs and its students in the future by encouraging other similar events.

# **Administration**

## **PCC**

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation rules. The PCC meets on the second Tuesday of each month and discusses and agrees matters of policy by consensus. The PCC operates a number of sub-groups (see following list) who report regularly. Some of these groups are set up for specific projects and therefore have limited life.

The current PCC sub groups are:

Standing Committee - meets as and when required. Members are the incumbent, church wardens, treasurer and PCC secretary.

Worship and Music Committee - meets as necessary to plan and organise all aspects of our worship activities.

Stepping Out Group - formed and meeting as necessary to organise an exciting forward rolling home mission plan. Initiatives include the Men's Breakfasts and Friday Fellowship.

Mission Support Group - meets occasionally to plan our monthly mission giving programme, support activities and visiting speakers.

Property Management/Health and Safety Committee - meets as necessary to deal with the management of activities, financing and maintenance of the buildings.

Junior Church and Young People - is made up of all those involved in teaching the various groups and as well as managing the content of classes, plans other social and learning events.

The Christ Church Year Book is prepared annually for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and in addition to the financial and wardens' reports contains reports from each of the groups operating during the previous year. A copy of the yearbook is provided for everyone on the church electoral roll.

The Church Terrier was completely rewritten over the winter of 1999/2000 by an enthusiastic team of volunteers. The outcome is a completely comprehensive inventory prepared on computer, which can be updated annually. A photographic record of the church and its contents was carried out in 2006.

The Parish owns a set of office equipment including a PC and bulk copier. A Parish Administrator is available to support the work of the vicar.

## **Reordering of the Church**

After 130 years the church remains relatively unchanged and we feel the time is right to look to the future and respond to the changing needs and expectations of the congregation and our local community. Following a period of reflection and consultation with the parish, a vision for the future of the church was agreed with the PCC. An architect has prepared numerous options for the implementation of the vision and a Project Leadership Team formed. The Lorica Trust were appointed project consultants and the PCC approved the raising of a budget of £500,000 for an initial project for the development of the church building to provide improved facilities for the congregation; to provide limited shared use of facilities for community purposes with existing and new partners. A professional fundraising company, Action Planning, was commissioned to carry out a Capital Appeal Feasibility

report. Consultation with the DAC, the Council for the Care of Churches, the Victorian Society and English Heritage has resulted with all approving the initial designs.

In September 2006 the Portsdown Centre Trust Company Limited by Guarantee was officially registered and an application for registration for charitable status has been approved. Currently the company is dormant and the project funds are frozen.

In January 2007 the PLT were stood down and the project put on hold due to the long term sickness of the incumbent and the resulting lack of priestly leadership authority.

Our intention for the reordering project is to change the geometry of the worship space in order to provide a coherent and more focussed worship experience. The lighting, ambience and lines of sight will all be improved. We are particularly keen to provide pleasing vistas from the outside of the church to the inside and from the inside of the church to the outside whilst improving our entrance. Toilet, kitchenette, audio-visual and meeting facilities will be included in the plan. This vision will completely lift and enhance the experience of worship in our church whilst providing the flexibility we need for different sizes and types of gatherings.

## Communications

Pew Sheet - this weekly Sunday publication provides the psalm, collect and readings for the day and also notices of current and future events or any other matters to bring to the attention of the congregation.

Monthly Magazine - is distributed widely throughout the Parish and contains details of the monthly services as well as a variety of news items and articles; for example mission matters, social activities and input from the various groups.

The magazine was redesigned in 2006 when the current editor took over. It is also available on line, accessible through the church website.

Year Book - is prepared for the APCM

Website - is available at [www.christchurchportsdown.org](http://www.christchurchportsdown.org)

## Finance

The PCC runs and reports the financial affairs of the Parish in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and section 43 of the Charities Act 1993 (and amendments). Christ Church's financial situation has become noticeably more restrained in the absence of a Vicar and with some diversion of funding for the Portsdown Parish Centre. While all statutory fees have been met and the mission donation programme maintained, a stewardship programme will enhance the financial strength of the Church. Full financial reports can be found on the Church website from the PCC page; follow the link to Annual Reports: <http://www.christchurchportsdown.org/pcc/thepec.htm>

# Summary

## Our Vision

Our vision for the future of Christ Church Portsdown is:

**“Christ’s life for the Community through Celebration, Confidence and Compassion”**

Christ Church is a friendly and supportive group of people who are welcoming and are willing to help and be involved as time and circumstances permit. We seek to inspire individuals so that they can energise their faith and encourage others.

We have struggled with a sense of weariness and have coped over a long period with our incumbent’s illness. While this has inevitably taken its toll, it has also revealed gifts and skills in others that have been well used in this period. However we are conscious that we need God’s help to move forward to engage and serve the community and encourage them to join us in our activities.

We are evangelical in outlook but embrace a wide range of backgrounds. We have a strong home group structure and pastoral care group. We are committed to mission at home and overseas.

## Our New Incumbent

We are looking for a person of distinct personal faith and clear calling to this parish, who can effectively proclaim the message of God’s revelation through the scriptures and the good news of personal salvation in Jesus Christ, and who can help us to apply the scriptures to our everyday lives. We need a person who has a proven track record of working collaboratively and successfully alongside other gifted and talented people; a person who is practised in communicating and skilled at encouraging and equipping people of all ages to use their gifts in the service of God and others.

We are also looking for someone who will provide well run and effective opportunities for worship and spiritual growth in accordance with the needs of the existing and potential congregation especially young people; in particular will participate fully in an open, ongoing search for understanding of what it means to be individuals, and a community, of faith today. We long to have more confidence, energy, joy and passion in our faith and look to the new incumbent, with God’s help, to lead, direct and inspire our efforts to achieve this through enthusiasm, encouragement and empowering leadership.

We need someone to lead and coordinate our efforts; to give us focus and develop the skills and talents we have already, and to help us work on our weaknesses and build our strengths in order to make God known in our worship and the wider community. We also need a person of vision who will guide our reordering project to a successful conclusion.

Most of all we are looking for someone called by God to come into relationship with us and who will respond to that call.