



St Gabriel's
Church
Pimlico

Parish Profile

October 2013



ST GABRIEL'S, WARWICK SQUARE, PIMLICO

- A FLOURISHING CHURCH IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, WITH A DIVERSE CONGREGATION
- A LIVELY, BUSTLING, AND SOCIALLY MIXED PARISH IN THE HEART OF WESTMINSTER, CLOSE TO ALL THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AMENITIES OF CENTRAL LONDON AND WITH GOOD LOCAL FACILITIES
- A BEAUTIFUL GRADE II* LISTED CHURCH
- A SEPARATE PARISH HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE
- A STRONG MUSICAL LIFE
- AN EXCELLENT PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL
- COMMITTED TO OUR FUTURE AS A TEACHING PARISH, AND TO STRENGTHENING AND BROADENING OUR MISSION IN THE PARISH, BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION BUT WITH MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Part of the Diocese of London, the Parish Church of St Gabriel is situated at the west end of Warwick Square, Pimlico, in the City of Westminster. We celebrated the 160th anniversary of our consecration in May 2013.

St Gabriel's is a flourishing church in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England. Resolutions A, B and C have been passed and there is a Walsingham cell. The church has shrines to Our Lady and to our patron, St Gabriel.

We have an electoral roll of 124, drawn from a lively congregation of all ages which reflects the social and economic diversity of the parish, as well as a broad range of churchmanship. Our Patron is the Bishop of London, and we benefit both from his ministry and pastoral care and that of the Bishop of Fulham.

The celebration of Mass is at the centre of our parish life, and music is important in our worship. We have a number of choirs who help us celebrate the major Feasts and who lead weekly Choral Evensong and Benediction. Our eight-bell peal attracts a regular group of bell-ringers.

Recent years have seen significant growth in our regular congregation, as well as the establishment of a successful Friends organisation which, along with generous grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and others, has helped us finance the opening phases of an ambitious programme of renovation and repair of our Grade II* listed church.



In addition to our active life in worship, St Gabriel's provides a focal point for a wide range of community activities including a varied programme of concerts and other events.

We take an active part in Deanery and Diocesan activities. Members of the Parochial Church Council and congregation are also individually involved in the wider church in many ways: for example, the PCC includes a member of the editorial team of an international Anglican newspaper, a member of staff of a theological college, a lay examining chaplain, and a Ministerial Development Review consultant.

Our parish school, St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School – located on the Churchill Gardens estate in the southern part of Pimlico – is a vital part of the life of the church and parish, and the links between the school and the church are strong and diverse.

Our Parish House, a set of halls also situated on the Churchill Gardens estate, provides much-used rehearsal space for music and the arts, and – increasingly – a centre for mission activity in Pimlico and for meeting the social needs of the parish.

Under the guidance of the Revd Luke Irvine-Capel, and latterly our Curate the Revd Christopher Trundle, the parish has developed significantly over the last five years, and a solid foundation for growth is in place. Both the fabric of the building and the parish community have been strengthened, but we face many exciting opportunities for further development as we continue to build momentum.

We are particularly keen to enhance further the growing significance of the church in all parts of the parish's demographic spectrum and to secure its future at the heart of a thriving London community.

**WE SEEK A VICAR WHO WILL HELP US
TAKE THE NEXT CRUCIAL STEPS ON OUR JOURNEY.**



WHAT WE SEEK IN A PARISH PRIEST

St Gabriel's is a successful church and we are keen to build on that success in all aspects of our mission in the parish.

We are looking for a Priest who will:

- lead, support, encourage and develop our sacramental and prayer life
- work closely with the PCC and other lay leaders to set a clear direction for the future, and encourage and empower others to help build it
- be visible and active throughout the parish, engaging with all segments of the parish population, with a variety of modern communication techniques, so as to expand our outreach further
- provide joyful and energetic leadership for our mission work and other parish activities
- Show an understanding of, and sympathy for, the wide range of different faith experiences and church traditions represented in the congregation and parishioners
- Secure our future as a teaching parish within the catholic movement, and in the wider Church of England
- Ensure all ages and groups within the congregation are encouraged to play as full a part as possible in parish life, and that understanding and knowledge of the faith is strengthened across all social groups
- Enthusiastically support and encourage our parish school and its strong links with the church
- Develop a strong youth- and young-adult ministry



SPIRITUAL LIFE AND MISSION

Christ is at the centre of our life at St Gabriel's, and we try to follow in his footsteps with confidence and joy, knowing that he has called us to holiness. We work to realise this calling by celebrating the liturgy and reading and reflecting on the Sacred Scriptures, by prayer, and in mission.

St Gabriel's lives out the themes of the Diocese of London's Capital Vision 2020, by being Christ-centred and outward looking: we are confident in speaking and living the gospel of Jesus Christ; compassionate in serving communities with the love of God the Father; and creative in reaching new people and places with the power of the Spirit.

Our aim at St Gabriel's is to provide a welcoming, inclusive and teaching centre of **worship** and mission for a diverse parish, and for a congregation with widely-differing experiences of church life and worship.



Our worship is in the **Catholic tradition**, and we take pride in our liturgy and music. Mass is celebrated every day. Our usual Sunday services start with a low Mass in the traditional rite using the Book of Common Prayer. The sung Parish Mass is at 10.30 a.m. It includes a **children's church** in the Vestry Hall and is followed by refreshments. Sundays usually end with Choral **Evensong and Benediction** at 6.15 p.m. Mass is also celebrated at St Gabriel's Primary School every Wednesday morning.

Music is important to our life at St Gabriel's and we have attracted several excellent choirs of young singers, many of whom have current or recent experience in university college choirs. We are greatly blessed to have the expert support of David King as our resident organist and Director of Music, and we have benefited greatly from the services of Christian Stobbs (who is also a member of the PCC) as choirmaster and organiser.

We have a tradition of **cooperation** and joint working with our four neighbouring Anglican churches (who between them represent a wide range of churchmanship) and with the nearby Roman Catholic church of the Holy Apostles. Throughout Lent, joint Stations of the Cross are held in each local church in turn, and on Good Friday morning a joint Procession of Witness is held, which visits each of the local churches. The Vicar of the neighbouring Church of England parish of St Saviour's is celebrating the weekly masses at St Gabriel's primary school during the interregnum.

We have begun to establish St Gabriel's as a **teaching** parish, and we pray that it will become a centre of excellence for teaching, living and sharing the Word of God. We aspire to be a community of growing Christian faith – a parish that supports everyone in their Christian lives, including vocations to the Sacred Ministry of the Church. We have recently welcomed several pastoral assistants who have been exploring their vocations, and a number of ordinands on parish placements, as well as the first (in recent years) of what we hope will be a series of assistant curates. A member of the congregation has recently begun Ministerial formation. We wish to build on the Advent and Lent Courses we have run in recent years to provide more opportunities for growth and understanding in the Faith.

We know that Christian **Mission** means more than attending church, and we aspire to live out our faith in an increasingly wide variety of ways while meeting the **social and spiritual challenges** to be found in the parish. These include crime and gang culture in some of the local housing estates and the many people who live isolated lives in rented accommodation. We have laid strong foundations for further growth, and we are keen to build on them. We already provide regular opportunities for members of the congregation to socialise and relax with one another at the church, parish house and elsewhere and we want to expand the breadth and variety of these opportunities in future. We want St Gabriel's to be part of the lives of more and more of our parishioners from all economic and social groups.



As both a means of raising funds and providing a welcome amenity for the community, St Gabriel's is also an active centre for a wide variety of **concerts and live musical performances** of all kinds, involving visiting choirs and musicians from all over the country. Several recent adaptations have been made to the church (including new **lighting** and **sound systems** and a **new dais** in the Nave) making it a more attractive venue for the performing arts.

We also host many activities and events in the **Vestry Hall** (which is adjacent to the church building), including infant activities, yoga and ballet classes, residents' association meetings and many others. There is more for us to do in improving the attractiveness of St Gabriel's as a community venue, including by improving the external look of the church.





We take the spiritual care and nurture of our **young people** very seriously. We are also keen to continue building a young team of regular servers at Mass. In recent years we have collaborated actively with the youth team at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in activities both at Walsingham and in the parish. Our pastoral assistants have also been active in running youth-related mission activities including a series of successful “pizza and prayer” events.

We have an active parish **Scout Group**, the 16th Westminster. It comprises successful and growing Beavers, Cubs and Scout sections which take part in a wide variety of activities throughout the year including camping, hiking, boating, and orienteering. It participates in local events such as the local **SouthWest Festival**, and its members regularly attend Parish Mass at the church.

We also want to find ways of engaging with the large numbers of **young adults** living alone in the parish, and encourage them to see St Gabriel’s as an important part of their lives.

We are keen to build on the excellent work done by the last Vicar in fostering St Gabriel’s as a church for **families**. The children’s church we run as a regular part of the Parish Mass on Sundays is a good start and we hope very much to build on this in future.



ST GABRIEL'S SCHOOL

Our relationship with St Gabriel's **School**, situated on the Churchill Gardens Estate at the southern end of the parish, is very important to us. The school reflects the socially, religious and ethnically diverse community of the parish and now has many **Muslim** pupils. Parents and children from the school regularly attend St Gabriel's. Of the **208 pupils**, the vast majority live within walking distance of the school, whether on Churchill Gardens, in neighbouring streets or in local bed & breakfast accommodation.

The Governors of the school include the Vicar and two other representatives of the PCC. The last Vicar was elected as Chair of Governors, and David King, St Gabriel's Director of Music, provides musical support to the school.

Through weekly corporate worship, the church supports the **strong Christian ethos** of the school, and helps to foster an awareness of spiritual values. The weekly **School Mass** is attended by different classes in rotation. Special school services are held at Christmas, the **School Choir** sings at the Parish Carol Service, and children are regularly prepared for Confirmation.

Pupils also participate in a wide range of **charitable activities** and have recently raised money for Children in Need, Good School Dinners, the Poppy Appeal, Pimlico Toy Library and the Royal Marsden Hospital. School Harvest Festival gifts are donated to The Passage homeless charity. **After-school clubs** include drama, art, gardening, chess, books, music-making of various kinds and many others.

When children start at St Gabriel's School their attainment is generally well below national expectations. When pupils leave the school at the age of eleven, they are **significantly above** the national average. In October 2012, a statutory inspection of Anglican Schools judged the school to be **outstanding** in all areas. In March 2013 a further review of the school by Ofsted inspectors noted the school's very **effective leadership** and continuously and **sustainably improving** results. The inspectors recorded that St Gabriel's children were **successful learners** and showed **high standards of attainment** in the core areas of reading, writing and maths. In 2012 St Gabriel's overall "value-added score" was in the **top 20% of schools** in the country. Mathematics results were in the top 16% and English in the top 32%. In 2012, the Headteacher was awarded the **St Mellitus Medal** by the Bishop of London for her service to the Diocese in the field of education.

Many of the children at the school go on to local secondary schools including the newly-established Pimlico Academy in the neighbouring parish of St Saviour's.



OUR PARISHIONERS

The Parish of St Gabriel is in central London, situated between Victoria Station and the River Thames. It is **densely populated**, and **highly diverse** socially, ethnically and economically. The light industry which used to characterise the area until well after the Second World War has gone, and the parish now includes a wide variety of shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs, many of a very high standard and some serving niche ethnic markets. Pimlico is **vibrant, welcoming and fun**.

The parish is now largely **residential**, including the mid-Victorian squares and terraces constructed by Thomas Cubitt in the 1850s as part of his “South Belgravia” development, as well as more recent social housing schemes. Some of the Victorian terraces are owner-occupied and others are in the private rental sector. There are numerous small private **hotels and guest-houses**, concentrated to the south of Victoria Station. There are a number of **sheltered accommodation** units for the elderly, as well as some day-centre facilities. There is a drop-in centre for mental health service users, and associated sheltered housing.



SOCIAL MIX

Pimlico contains pockets both of considerable **affluence** and of considerable **poverty**. There is something of a North-South split, reflecting the fact that the northern portion is in close proximity to the business and commercial centres around Victoria station. We hope that more can be done to encourage a connection with the church among the more transient **daytime population**.

In the South of the Parish, the Victorian terraces were cleared after the War to build the **Churchill Gardens estate**, a post-war blueprint for a medium-rise reconstruction of all of London's ageing housing stock. In addition, there is an earlier **Peabody Estate** in the West of the parish. These estates include a significant number of privately-owned dwellings. About a third of parish households are owner-occupiers, with 20% private renters and the rest in social housing. 89% of the parish's population lives in flats of some kind.

The last national census (2011) showed a parish **population** of nearly 14,000, including around 2,300 children. The age distribution runs from infants to the over-nineties, and roughly reflects the Diocesan average (over 60% of the population are between 25 and 65 years old), although the parish has relatively more people in **middle and older age** than the Diocese as a whole.

The parish also has relatively more **single people** than the Diocese as a whole, and **relatively fewer married people**. The level of lone parent households is about the same as the Diocesan figure, but there are proportionately more **unemployed females**.

This provides another of the challenges for St Gabriel's, which we would like to address in future: how best to engage the large population of **young adults** in the parish, including **young professionals** and the many people who **live alone**. We want to find ways of helping more of these parishioners to encounter Christ and make St Gabriel's part of their lives.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

The parish had a larger influx of **foreign nationals** in the 1990s than the Diocese as a whole, and then closely tracked London-wide patterns in the first decade of the current century, when something like 20% of the current population arrived from abroad. Most immigration into the parish has been from Asia, Africa and Europe.

Ethnically, the parish is now about half British and half non-British in origin. Relative to the Diocese, the parish has rather more people of Western European and Arab origin. A quarter of the current parish population do not have English as their main language. The main non-English languages include Arabic, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, Bengali, and a variety of others from Eastern Europe and Asia. In almost every category, the proportion of the population speaking these languages is significantly greater than in the Diocese as a whole.

In the 2011 census, 55% of the population was registered as Christian, 28% as “none” and 17% as “other”, the majority of the latter being Muslim. There are relatively fewer people of the other main faiths than in the Diocese as a whole.

Recent immigration has had a major impact on, for example, the ethnic and social make-up of St Gabriel’s School. The old and long-established working class families in the parish are increasingly in a minority on the large estates, and this brings with it occasional tensions.



DEMOGRAPHY

Around 60% of the population was registered as employed in the 2011 census, around 4% unemployed, and the rest retired, raising a family or studying. Within the standard census employment categories, the parish has relatively more people in the professional, scientific, financial, and administrative professions than the Diocese as a whole. 63% of the parish population was classified as “**deprived**” in the 2011 census, with 34% in the “low deprivation” category, 19% experiencing “medium deprivation” and 10% “high” or “very high”. The parish has rather more high and very high deprivation than the Diocese as a whole.

There are some problems with drug gangs on the estates, and occasional violent incidents. Because of the proximity of several major transport hubs, the small population of rough sleepers (often from Eastern Europe) varies from year to year.

Given the diversity of the parish, there are relatively few places besides the church and school where all the parish’s demographic and ethnic groups can and do encounter each other on equal terms.



GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

St Gabriel's is governed by the **Parochial Church Council (PCC)**, registered with the Charity Commission as charity number 1133969. The PCC works closely with the incumbent in support of the Church's mission in the parish. It also has maintenance responsibilities for a small residential property at 66, Warwick Way. The members of the PCC are the managing trustees for the Parish House, which is a separate charity.

The PCC carries out its work through a number of committees. The **Standing Committee** (the incumbent, a warden and any two other PCC members) takes care of business between formal meetings. The **Finance Committee** works with the Incumbent and Treasurer in managing the finances of the Parish, and in preparing the annual accounts and budget. The **Friends of St Gabriel's** (see below) is also a sub-committee of the PCC and its Chairman (when not a member of the PCC otherwise) is co-opted as an *ex officio* member of the PCC and Standing Committee.

The PCC takes its governance responsibilities very seriously. In addition to the Churchwardens, the Secretary, and the Head of St Gabriel's Primary School, designated members are responsible for finance and business management, stewardship, safeguarding and championing children, and health and safety issues.



A **Parish Administrator** is employed on a part-time basis and David King (Director of Music) is also Administrator of the **Parish House**, which is a separate charity, and raises income from rehearsal lettings. Members of the PCC and congregation carry out a wide variety of other important duties for St Gabriel's, including by acting as sidesmen, cantors, crucifers, thurifers, and eucharistic ministers, and by organising the children's church, reading lessons, representing the parish at the Deanery Synod, running the Friends of St Gabriel's, and organising choirs. In addition, many of our children serve at the altar. We would like to strengthen our **serving team**.

St Gabriel's has worked hard in recent years to improve its **financial and business management** and has paid its full share of the Diocesan **Common Fund** in three of the last four years. We have put the church on a more secure financial footing by improving our income-raising from a variety of sources. With the approval of the Charity Commission we have also clarified and simplified the church's previously complex relationship with the Parish House as a separate charity.

THE BUILDINGS AND THE FRIENDS

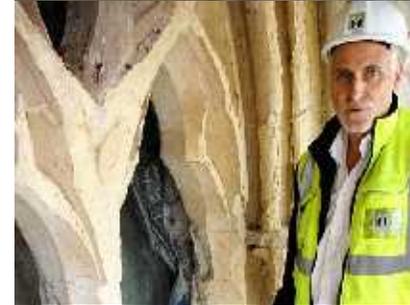
St Gabriel's Church is a magnificent **Grade II* listed** building, designed by Thomas Cundy Jr, and built in the early 1850s. It has suffered over the last twenty years from a number of problems which damaged the interior, mainly as a result of the ingress of rain water. The main sources of these problems have now been addressed, and we have launched a programme of restoration and refurbishment covering the interior and exterior of the church fabric, as well the interior adornment and fittings.

Around **£750,000** has been spent in the last 15 years on roof and stonework repairs. The North and South Aisles, Vestry Hall and Lady Chapel have been re-roofed, and some stonework on the West Porch, South clerestory and Vestry Hall has been repaired. Some interior repairs have also taken place to the Vestry Hall and Lady Chapel.

We have now almost finished a complete repair and refurbishment of the **tower**, which has been funded partly by money raised by St Gabriel's and partly by grants from the English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Churches Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Hyde Park Place Estate Charity, the London Diocesan Fund, the Heritage of London Trust and the Allchurches Trust. This project is expected to have cost in total around **£800,000**.

We have also recently completed a major project, part-funded by a grant from the Area Finance Committee, to replace the **lighting** in the sanctuary and nave, while renovating the **electricity points** throughout the church. The new system has proved a great success and provides a range of pre-programmed lighting schemes which can be used for services, concerts and other events.

To help fund this programme of works we launched the **Friends of St Gabriel's** in September 2009. The Friends work under the guidance of the PCC and share its charitable status. The Bishop of London is Patron of the Friends in addition to his role as Patron of the church, and membership is open to anyone who supports the Friends' aims and objectives. Since its launch, the Friends has grown to include around **120 people** and has raised **around £120,000**. This money has contributed to the restoration of the tower, the new nave dais, the new lighting system in the sanctuary and nave, new altar candlesticks, the repair of the floor of the Chancel, new altar reliquaries and a new sound system.



There remains much to do, not least the complete repair and restoration of the **interior** of the church, and the development of St Gabriel's currently under-utilised – and very large – crypt. We are currently due to have our next quinquennial inspection, and have appointed a new **Architect** to carry it out, probably soon after the completion of the current work on the tower. We hope to use the inspection to help us set priorities for the next few years.



The **vicarage** stands opposite the church at 30 Warwick Square, and dates from the same period. It is one of the few substantially unaltered houses from Thomas Cubitt's original design for the square. It consists of five stories, plus a basement which has been converted into a self-contained flat and is used by resident pastoral assistants and assistant clergy.

The rest of the vicarage comprises a ground floor containing a hall, study, dining/family room, a small kitchen and a paved external terrace. The first half-landing contains a lavatory and a small gazebo/conservatory. The first floor comprises a large L- shaped reception room. The next half-landing includes a bathroom. The second floor includes two rooms, the next half-landing a second bathroom, the third floor another two rooms, and the fourth floor two small attic rooms.

St. Gabriel's **Parish House** is situated near the parish school on the Churchill Gardens estate. It was built in 1901 to provide a venue for a variety of parish activities including many social services. It includes three large halls and one smaller hall, plus offices and a flat for the resident administrator. It is a separate charity in its own right, and, following a recent governance review, the members of the PCC are now the managing trustees.

A recent major programme of renovation has been carried out at the Parish House, using money raised by lettings to arts and music bodies as rehearsal space. It is increasingly being used for a range of parish activities consistent with its original charitable objectives. It is planned to seek an amendment to these to allow money generated from lettings to be used for a wider range of purposes in the parish.



The parish also owns a **maisonette** at 66 Warwick Way. This consists of the basement and most of the ground floor and comprises a reception room, three bedrooms (one very small), a kitchen and bathroom. It is currently let out as a source of commercial income, and has recently been renovated by the current occupants.



IN SUMMARY

STRENGTHS

- Lively and committed congregation, which has grown significantly in recent years
- Large and beautiful church, which has become a centre for the performing arts and other community activities
- Flourishing parish school with strong links to the church
- Parish House providing a base for future community and mission activities on the largest local estate
- Central London location with attractive local amenities, and excellent local facilities and transport links
- Active musical life
- Successful Friends organisation which has raised around £120,000 in four years for the renovation of the church

CHALLENGES

- Spreading our mission wider, and increasing the size of the congregation in a socially, ethnically and economically very diverse parish which includes many young adults living on their own
- Securing St Gabriel's future as a flourishing teaching parish
- Balancing the needs of a diverse congregation with a very wide range of different experiences of church
- Ensuring a larger group of people play a full part in the life and running of the church
- Helping St Gabriel's School meet the challenges of the future
- Increasing our stewardship income
- Financing and completing a substantial programme of renovation works on the Grade II* listed church