

St. Mark's Church Barrow in Furness

Parish Profile



**St. Mark's is a Single Church,
Town Centre Parish in
Barrow in Furness, Cumbria.**

**“We are a Bible-believing
Orthodox Evangelical Church with
a friendly outgoing congregation,
who hold a passion to worship
and serve God.”**

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Welcome to St. Mark's Church

Welcome to St. Mark's Church, Barrow in Furness and thank you for looking at our Parish Profile and for considering joining us as our Vicar.

We have tried to share a picture of who we are, what we do, and where we are now, along with our facilities and resources.

St. Mark's is a lively, caring and welcoming Bible rooted evangelical Parish Church with a passion for worshiping God through the Holy Spirit and to reaching out into and engaging with our local community.

We are a friendly group of people with a wide mix of age groups, educational and social backgrounds and Christian experience, wanting to grow more like Jesus and to make a difference to people's lives by sharing His love.



Person Specification

We are seeking a person of God to lead us forward; someone who:

- ▶ can motivate and lead St. Mark's forward in its work in our Parish, Community and Barrow Deanery.
- ▶ is open to and reliant upon the prompting of the Holy Spirit to empower their ministry and the work of the Church.
- ▶ is grounded in the authority of scripture.
- ▶ has a passion for serving God.
- ▶ has a passion for serving people.
- ▶ is growing in their own discipleship and willing to share their experiences with others.
- ▶ has a clear calling to move the Church forward in its worship, witness and work for the advancement of God's Kingdom.
- ▶ is gifted with Biblical preaching and teaching skills.
- ▶ has pastoral skills across all generations and good communication skills.
- ▶ can identify and encourage the use of gifts in others.
- ▶ can subscribe to the 'Basis of Faith and Additional Declarations' of the Church of England Evangelical Council.

Part of a Wider Vision: St. Mark's, Rising Faith Barrow, and The Cumbrian Way

St. Mark's is entering an exciting new season of mission and revitalisation as part of *Rising Faith Barrow*, our name for the Barrow Deanery vision within Carlisle Diocese's Diocesan Investment Programme project, *The Cumbrian Way*.



In March 2025, Carlisle Diocese was awarded £6.8 million by the Church of England to support this project, including the planting, revitalisation and the growth of younger, more diverse and more missional worshipping communities across Cumbria. Over £2 million of this investment is being directed into Barrow in Furness. As a town centre church at the heart of Barrow, St. Mark's will play a crucial part of this vision.

Barrow itself is entering a period of major transformation and growth, with significant inward investment connected to BAE Systems, housing expansion, education, regeneration and infrastructure development. Alongside these opportunities, there remain deep levels of social deprivation, loneliness, addiction, family breakdown and spiritual need within St. Mark's parish and wider community.

As part of this investment and vision, St. Mark's is being particularly supported through:

- ▶ the appointment of an Associate Minister, Rev Simon Jones, in summer 2025, helping strengthen discipleship, leadership development and missional capacity for the Vicar;
- ▶ the planned appointment of a Youth & Children's Mission and Discipleship Enabler, shared with St. James' Church - to be recruited in summer 2026;
- ▶ a town-wide Operations Support Manager to increase ministry capacity across the Deanery for the Rising Faith Barrow project.

The previous incumbent at St. Mark's carried significant chaplaincy responsibilities within Barrow, and so we would welcome applicants who are excited by the missional opportunities this continuing area of ministry presents. As such built into the Role Description of the Vicar of St. Mark's role is town centre chaplaincy as part of their priestly presence within the parish.

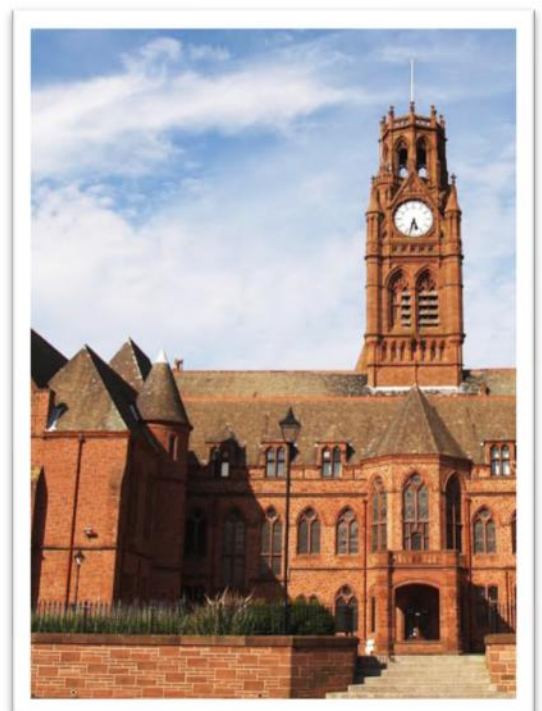
We do not see St. Mark's in isolation, but as part of a growing partnership of churches seeking to share the hope of Jesus across our town for the next generation.

“Carlisle Diocese offers a warm welcome to all traditions and gifts within our shared God for All vision. We provide a strong training experience across diverse contexts, with rich learning opportunities - helping people meet Jesus and grow as whole-life disciples in the 21st century.



I'm excited about what God is doing across our county and here in Barrow. We'd love you to join us - as we seek to join in with what God is doing...”

- Rt Rev Rob Saner-Haigh, Bishop of Carlisle



Word from Rev Robin Ham

Rural Dean and Rising Faith Barrow Local Project Lead



I'm really excited about this opportunity at St. Mark's. Right in the heart of Barrow, this town centre church is rooted in faithful gospel ministry and has a long history of seeing God make a real difference to the lives of those connected with Barrow's urban centre.

With additional resource from the Diocesan Investment Programme and Carlisle Diocese coming in, it feels like a season of hope and holy expectation as St. Mark's plays its part in the wider Rising Faith Barrow vision. We are praying for God's wisdom as you discern whether to apply for this role.



The Church

St. Mark's is a Single Church Parish. It is one of seven active Church of England Churches, grouped into nine parishes within the Barrow Deanery. We are blessed with faithful orthodox evangelical Bishops, Archdeacon and Rural Dean.

We have a worshipping congregation averaging 72 people at the Sunday Morning Service and 31 people at Wednesday Morning Communion Service. The Sunday Service is live streamed via YouTube.

St. Mark's is open five mornings a week and from Monday to Thursday serves the local community through a Clothes Bank, Café and Warm Space free of charge. This work is led by our church funded Community Pastor.

The Church itself is situated in Barrow's town centre and the parish encompasses around 1,800 homes along with half of the town centre shops and offices.

The parish is situated in an area of urban deprivation with a wide mix of ages, cultures and nationalities and whilst it is noticeable that the Church is becoming more multi-cultural and diverse the emphasis of the teaching remains based upon the presentation of the Gospel message and proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

All current members of the PCC have adopted and subscribed to the 'Basis of Faith and Additional Declarations' of the Church of England Evangelical Council. New members will be required to read this statement and decide for themselves whether they too can adopt and subscribe to it.

Challenges to Face

Being ranked as one of the most deprived Parishes in the Carlisle Diocese and England, St. Mark's faces challenges associated with adult and child poverty and stresses associated with single parent families that impact significantly on the lives of many within the Parish. These circumstances will come with some obvious challenges for those ministering to and within the church and community. These challenges can also be viewed as outreach opportunities, and it is a joy to see lives changed through Jesus.

Whilst St. Mark's has always been able to 'pay its way', forecasting indicates that there will be potential for some financial realignment due to work on the fabric. The PCC are however, actively addressing this situation. (see Page 26, Finances).

St. Mark's has potential to improve links with the younger element through families, local schools, various organisations and clubs using our building.

We also look to extend our outreach work into the retail area of our town centre parish by supporting the establishment of a town centre chaplaincy.

Hopes and Aspirations for the Future

We are looking for a minister who will inspire us in our personal discipleship, enthuse and embolden us in our outreach and who will nurture and grow future leaders. So, equipping the whole body of St. Mark's in our witness to all ages, social groups and ethnicities.

To reach out to young families through the work of our Associate Minister, Youth & Children's Mission & Discipleship Enabler and the Barrow Network Youth Leader.

As a church family, we will love and support you and your family, encouraging your development and growth as an individual, a disciple, and as Vicar.

About our town of...

Barrow in Furness

Barrow in Furness (known as Barrow) is situated in the south west region of Cumbria. It is bordered by Morecambe Bay to the east, the Duddon Estuary to the west and the Irish Sea to the south boasting 60km of coastline. The Lake District is situated to the North. Predominantly a rural County, Cumbria is considered to be one of the most beautiful regions of the UK and includes the whole of the Lake District which is England's largest National Park.



There are few planned towns in the United Kingdom, and Barrow in Furness is one of the oldest. Its centre contains a grid of well-built terraced houses, with a tree-lined road leading away from a central square. Second only in size within the County to Carlisle and currently with a population of around 70,000, Barrow is a large industrial town; a town which grew from a tiny 19th Century hamlet to the biggest iron and steel centre in the world, and a major shipbuilding force, in just 40 years. Barrow is famous for its industrial innovation and built Britain's first submarine in 1886 and seaplane in 1911. It can officially boast the status of the Royal Port of Barrow.

Although the iron and steel industry is now long gone, BAE Systems, a leading national and international company in shipbuilding and engineering is still a major employer in the town being estimated at 15,500 personnel.



Steeped in local history, Barrow has two English Heritage Sites; Furness Abbey and Piel Island.

The ruins of Furness Abbey (c.1125) are well preserved. Furness Abbey was one of the richest Cistercian monasteries in England, exceeded only by Fountains Abbey in



Yorkshire. Just a short ferry trip from the mainland (or a walk at low tide), lies Piel Island, which boasts its own Castle and since 1487, its own King!

The website Visit Cumbria (see Appendix V - Web Links) has many interesting facts and pictures of Barrow today as well as an excellent account of its rich Heritage and colourful history. It also provides Links to the wealth of Activities within the area and places to visit.

In 2025 a partnership between the Government, Westmorland & Furness Council, BAE Systems, Businesses and Community Groups/Organisations was set up to transform Barrow-in-Furness. This partnership is 'Team Barrow'.

Team Barrow has produced a ten year plan and sets out how it will improve the lives and livelihoods of the community and its residents. To support this plan, £220m of Government investment has been pledged. This will target improvements in housing, transport, healthcare, education and skills, Town Centre, economic growth and diversification. The activities will sit under 3 key themes: -



- ▶ Town Centre and Housing
- ▶ Public Services and Reform
- ▶ Creating the Conditions for Growth

This is a very exciting time for Barrow as we witness the Marina Village taking shape to provide 800 new homes, a conservation area and new public spaces. A £5m Brilliant Futures Fund is to support our schools to ensure there is a sound foundation in place for our young people. A new Careers Inspiration Hub at 'The Bridge' has opened to provide the local community with education, outreach and recruitment services. This is a large complex situated in the heart of the town centre shopping area. Please see <http://www.barrowrising.uk/our-plan> for more information.

Education

There is a wide range of educational establishments in the Barrow area, which are generally rated as being 'Good', with 'Outstanding' in particular Curriculum disciplines. Establishments include: Nursery, Primary Level, Secondary, Sixth Form College. Furness College and the University of Cumbria. There are approximately 17 to 20 Nurseries, 26 schools at Primary Level, 4 schools at Secondary Level, a Sixth Form College, Furness College providing further and higher education and the University of Cumbria. All educational institutes are state funded.

Health Care

Furness General Hospital (FGH) in Barrow has a comprehensive range of general hospital services and a full Accident and Emergency Department, Critical Care Unit and Consultant led beds. FGH also provides a range of planned care including outpatients, diagnostics, therapies, day-case, and inpatient surgery. The hospital has recently completed a new, State of the Art Maternity Unit. As with most towns of this size there are a range of GPs and Dentist Surgeries.

Transport Links

Barrow in Furness has strong transport links, primarily via the scenic Furness Rail Line serving Lancaster/Preston and the Cumbrian Coast Rail Line serving Whitehaven/Carlisle.

Local Stagecoach buses operate throughout the area. The main arterial road (A590) connects the town to the M6 Motorway.

Worship

Sunday Morning Services are at 10.30am. They are varied, structured, yet relaxed and we remain open to the movement of the Holy Spirit within them as we try to focus on what God is saying and where He is leading us as His Church. This Service follows an alternate pattern of inclusion of Holy Communion. The principal form of liturgy used is that of Common Worship; other forms are used, stimulating variety and creativity. The leading and preaching is carried out by both clergy and laity. Over the years, the support of laity within the Services has grown.



Once a month there is a more informal All Age Service led by one of our Licensed Lay Ministers. During these Services we try to have elements which are relevant to all attending and although still having structure, they contain more visuals and less liturgy than other morning Services.

On Wednesday morning there is a short 30 minute Said Communion Service with a Bible based sermon which is ideal for encouraging people from the Clothes Bank and Café who may never have been into a church before to attend.



The Bible is central to each Service and traditionally we have had themed preaching plans. Services are 'book-less', where all spoken liturgy and sung words are projected onto a screen and displayed on Video screens which are strategically

positioned throughout the main body of the Church for optimum visibility.

We have also been trialling a system where whatever is projected onto the screen can be viewed on a mobile phone or tablet. This appears popular with those who have used it so far. There is a Loop System for those who are hard of hearing.

Music is an important part of our worship. We have a well-maintained pipe organ but in the absence of a full-time organist it is now only played occasionally.

As a result, we currently use digital music to accompany and lead the congregation singing.



Our long and well-established Music Group play worship songs in the Sunday Morning Service. The use of CDs or quiet moments of reflection may also on occasion, form part of our Worship. We have also invested in equipment to enable the live streaming of Services via YouTube and our Facebook page. Weddings and funerals are only live streamed on request.

There is opportunity for prayer ministry after Sunday Morning Communion Services where members from a trained team are available. A group meets to pray for the morning's worship and preaching before each Sunday Morning Service.

After Morning Services, refreshments are served in the Foyer, encouraging many people to stay and chat. This is considered to be a significant part of our fellowship together.



Ark Club is our small Sunday School for 3+ year olds. The children explore a Bible story meaning through interactive games, colouring and activity sheets. They learn the importance of prayer and regularly get involved in saying their own prayers. The children join their parents for the All-Age Service.

Along with the regular Wednesday Morning Communion Service we have additional midweek Services at Christmas and Easter.

A small Pastoral Team offers Home Communion to the sick and housebound.

People

We are from a fairly wide range of social backgrounds with the majority of Church Members living outside the Parish. We consider that we mix and work together well and there is a friendly family atmosphere in our Services.

As a congregation we are low in numbers for the younger age Groups. The varied Social Events organised are on the whole well attended.

Governance of the Church:

- PCC, consisting of 17 members
- Two Wardens: Lisa and Christine

Two Licensed Lay Ministers:

Liz: who was commissioned to be involved with Healing and Discipleship Training within the Barrow Deanery also leads the Prayer Ministry Team at St. Mark's and our monthly corporate prayer meeting 'Together in Prayer'.

Linda: who was originally commissioned to provide Pastoral oversight to Messy Marks (a Fresh Expression of worship) arranges the monthly All Age Worship Service.

Standing Committee:

Comprising Clergy, Wardens, Treasurer, PCC Secretary, two PCC members and Community Pastor.



Two Wardens, Lisa and Christine



Two LLMs, Liz and Linda



Members of the Parochial Church Council

Employees:

The Church has two part time employees a Cleaner, Elaine and the Community Pastor, Gill.

Safeguarding

St. Mark's has adopted the Church of England Safeguarding Policy. Jason our Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with the Vicar oversees our activities in respect of the policy.

Work

Foundations

In recent years St. Mark's has been involved in a number of initiatives, both in respect of the parish and town wide. In addition to the 'Believe in Barrow' Missions, St. Mark's was the catalyst in establishing Barrow Foodbank, raising the profile of the Homeless in the town and the appointment of the full-time leader of the Network Youth Church in Barrow for whom a new appointment is currently awaited.

In respect of St. Mark's alone

Community Pastor: a role which was initiated by St. Mark's in April 2014 to develop and enhance the Church's outreach and support for the local community and to help co-ordinate social support which is available in Barrow for the benefit of those in need.



As well as providing the desired support, both within and outside the membership of St. Mark's, the efforts of the Community Pastor have generated a substantial amount of goodwill in Barrow from various shops, charities and organisations that provide donations of items and signpost people to us therefore significantly increasing St. Mark's profile with the wider Community and where we are known generally as the Church 'who does stuff and who cares'; please see 'Wider community links'.

Clothes Bank: This was set up in 2015 as the result of an initiative by our Community Pastor. The Clothes Bank operates Monday to Thursday from 9.30am to midday, providing free clothing, shoes and accessories; toiletries/bedding/curtains, for anyone in need. The work has extended significantly, and it is now supported by Morecambe Bay NHS who regularly run a Pop-up Clinic at the Clothes Bank and we supply clothing and sanitary items to the local hospital when required.

Recently support has been given to numerous Asylum seekers initially placed in local hotels the majority of whom cannot speak English and who have arrived in this country without any adequate clothing or footwear. In addition to providing clothing, we were fortunate to be able to offer Bible Studies in Farsi together with Bibles in Farsi as well as in other languages. Whilst most have been moved on a few have settled with us and several keep in contact.



Clothes Bank items are available to all encouraging recycling and re-using of items that prevent them having to go to landfill adds to the Eco policies of the Church. There have been over 51,000 visitors who have used the Clothes Bank since it opened.

Café: Our Café operates at the same time as and in conjunction with the Clothes Bank and currently provides a friendly welcome to everyone seeking a warm space serving hot drinks and snacks free of charge. We are also listed as a safe space with the police. As part of the café area we have various games available ranging from table tennis and pool to board games and quizzes.

Activities organised alongside the Clothes Bank and Café throughout the year include: -

- Weekly chair exercise classes, ● Weekly Knit and Natter group.
- An annual Yarn Bomb, ● Eco fashion show, ● Annual Christmas giveaway.
- Occasional men's breakfasts and lady's afternoon teas. ● Local litter picking followed by a free lunch.

The Clothes Bank and Café are often visited by people attempting to overcome drink and drug issues and who see the Warm Space and café as a venue where they can come and socialise without the temptation of alcohol or other substances being available.

Approximately 20 volunteers help with the Clothes Bank and Café and we are very grateful for their service and care for others. The Community Pastor also supports the needs of the volunteers and we have seen a number come to Christ and become worshipping members of St. Mark's. Several have been baptised and one confirmed.

Some of our volunteers have come through other agencies seeking a safe placement for them and requesting that we help and encourage them. It is a joy to see them often grow in confidence and feel empowered and determined to help themselves and eventually some volunteers leave us because they now have the confidence to seek full time employment.

Opportunities for Mission and Growth

There is a good potential for continued Mission and growth from within the Parish of St. Mark's as well as in the wider community of Barrow;

- ▶ Through St. Mark's established Church Services, and programmed events
- ▶ Through establishing a town centre chaplaincy which the whole Church can support and get behind.
- ▶ Through links to the Community, established by the Community Pastor.
- ▶ Through membership and links such as Rising Faith Barrow.

Work with Schools

There is one school within the parish; Ramsden Infant & Nursery School who have held their Harvest and Nativity Assemblies in Church for over three decades. The Vicar and/or the Community Pastor regularly take part in school assemblies and are well known there.

The children attend our Yarn Bomb and Christmas give away events and take items and gifts away with them.

Last Christmas a visit from the Riding Lights theatre company performing Christmas Inn Trouble a fun performance of the Christmas Nativity was arranged for approximately 170 children and staff from 3 local schools



followed by an early evening performance for local parents and children with an attendance of approximately 130. This was funded entirely by the church at no cost for those attending. We have similar events planned for local schools for this year.

Work with Elderly

There are three Sheltered Housing Units within the Parish. We currently have no structured visiting arrangements to the elderly, other than for Lay members taking Home Communion to some Church Members who may be ill or house bound.

Prayer and Bible Study Groups

St. Mark's has a number of Church Groups operating, both in the Church Building and in Members' homes.

Other aspects of the work

The Church Building is also used by a number of non-Church Groups and Societies. (see Appendix IV)



Links

Parish links

Barrow Deanery

Is one of eleven deaneries in the Diocese of Carlisle, the deanery is the smallest geographically and covers the whole of Barrow in Furness but is the second largest numerically with around 70,000 population.

It consists of the following seven Churches: St. Mark, St. Mary, St. John, St. Paul, St. James, St. Aidan and St. George.

Ecumenical links

Rising Faith Barrow

Led by the Barrow Deanery it's a town-wide vision for planting new faith communities, reviving faith across the town and raising up faith-filled leaders.



Firepit is a monthly gathering held on the fourth Sunday evening to promote mission and worship. The venue rotates around each of the various churches involved and features worship, prayer, and guest speakers.

Barrow Mission Community

The Barrow Mission Community is a partnership between various Churches URC, Salvation Army, Church of England, Baptist and Methodist, in Barrow. It is led by Robin Ham, the present Rural Dean and Martin Cooper, the Barrow Baptist Church Minister.

Network Youth Church



A Church for young people aged 11 to 18+. The process has started to appoint a new leader after Andy Ward stepped down to begin full time ministry in the Diocese. The group is supported by St. Mark's members along with members of other local Churches within Barrow.

Network Youth Church seeks to connect a new generation of young people with God.

Mission Partners

St. Mark's has a strong outward looking commitment to mission, expressed through both global partnerships and local outreach.

Internationally, we actively support long-standing mission partners through the Church Mission Society, including M and H serving in North Africa, and through Wycliffe Bible Translators, supporting Janet and Andrew Sweet's Bible translation, literacy and volunteer development work in Kenya and beyond. We also support The Leprosy Mission who serve some of the world's most marginalised communities.



Alongside our local, Community Pastor-led outreach and community work, these missional partnerships reflect our desire to serve both Barrow and the world with the good news of Jesus.

Schools

We don't have a linked Church School but have a long association with the nearby Ramsden Infant and Nursery School, through previous Vicars and Community Pastor going into the school to participate in their school assemblies. Also, through the School holding their annual Harvest and Nativity in St. Mark's, the School Nativity in particular is well attended by parents and guardians!

Last Christmas we were able to renew a link with Greengate Juniors when they attended, along with Ramsden Infants, our schools only performance of Christmas Inn Trouble by Riding Lights.



Wider Community Links

St. Mark's has long been well respected within the Community in its own right, more recently by association through the Community Pastor, it now has an increased profile within the Community.

The Community Pastor leads an active community programme and has established and fostered direct relationships with a broad spectrum of local and national organisations, including: Action for children, Barrow Foodbank, Furness Homeless Support Group, CADAS, Imagine (employing people with learning difficulties), Inspira (help the unemployed to find suitable employment), The local MP's office, Local Churches, Local schools, 'Love Barrow' Families, Mind, My Space, the Police service and PCSO's, PHX Training, Project John, the Salvation Army, Furness Community Network, Homeless Support Team, The Well and the NHS who regularly attend Clothes Bank / Café.

Openness to Change

St. Mark's is, and has been over many years, open to change. The emphasis has always been a balanced approach accepting that change is inevitable whether it is foreseeable or not.

What's certain is that change, irrespective of its origin, will be challenging and will require a greater dependence on Jesus as we move out of our comfort zones.

St. Mark's also recognises that there are also 'non-negotiable' changes. The core theological and Biblical truths are unchangeable.

Above all, the recognition of our task to reach out to the lost, means that we do not hold dear to past practice, but readily await and embrace God's direction for our future.

In material terms, the extent to which the building has been maintained and its design changes is testament to its members both recognising and embracing the need for change in order to provide optimum flexibility in its use to achieve its mission.

Word from Rev Simon Jones

Associate Minister

There is something distinctive about walking into St. Mark's on a weekday. The café is open, the Clothes Bank is busy, conversations are happening at every table, and there is a steady stream of people coming through the doors. Many of the most vulnerable and needy people walk through those doors, including the homeless, the mentally ill, those carrying complex needs, and many who might never otherwise step into a church. St. Mark's genuinely feels like living, breathing hub at the heart of the community.



This is certainly helped by the fact that we are blessed at St. Mark's with the diligence and pastoral instincts of our part-time employed Community Pastor, Gill, alongside the quiet faithfulness of a large team of lay volunteers.

Stepping into the role of Associate Minister has felt like a natural continuation of my time as a Curate at a neighbouring church - when I used St. Mark's to host my ministry to Iranian asylum seekers. What excites me most about this new Associate role is the opportunity to help shape the spiritual depth behind all that activity so that we can continue to ensure that St. Mark's is not only busy and visible, but also rooted in Jesus, growing, and increasingly confident in its gospel witness.

There are significant opportunities ahead. The town centre location and high footfall through the café and Clothes Bank offer daily points of connection for mission and evangelism. There is huge potential to deepen pathways from welcome to belonging, and from belonging to discipleship.

Alongside this, I am particularly committed to raising and supporting new leaders from within the congregation so that we can help people recognise their gifts and grow in confidence. There is also an important season ahead in revitalising our children's and youth ministry, with the hope of appointing a new Children's and Youth Worker.

At the heart of it all is a desire to see St. Mark's become a community where people are not only served but formed as disciple-making disciples. I'd love to see it as a place where faith grows, leaders emerge, and lives are shaped by Jesus.

St. Mark's is a place of real energy and real need, but also real possibility. For the right person, it offers the privilege of joining a church that is already deeply engaged in its context, and the opportunity to help it grow into all that God is calling it to be.

Parish Mission Action Plan

We very early on, adopted the principles and practice of Mission Planning. We have seen the undertaking of significant actions including the establishing of a Community Programme, facilitated via the appointment of our Community Pastor and volunteers.

We have also seen town wide Mission actions as evidenced by the level of St. Mark's resources (financial and people) in serving the needs of the community. Chaplaincy work has also been active with BAE Systems and the Rugby Club.

We recognise that now, as a consequence of: -

- ▶ This interregnum and the forthcoming appointment of a new Vicar
- ▶ Appointment of an Associate Minister
- ▶ Forthcoming appointment of a Youth and Children's Mission and Discipleship Enabler
- ▶ Increase use of the Clothes Bank and Café
- ▶ Diocese, Deanery and Government initiatives

Although we don't have a Mission Action Plan at present, we see this as an opportune time with our new Vicar to take stock of where we are, where we see God is leading and to open these up to prayer and consultation.

Policies

Baptism

- ▶ The Baptism of infants or adults is at the Vicar's discretion.
- ▶ Families have the option of either a Baptism Service or a Thanksgiving Service.
- ▶ Preparation sessions for Baptism families and adult candidates are arranged at the Vicar's discretion.
- ▶ The candidate is welcomed into the Family of the Church during Sunday or Wednesday morning Services.

Marriage

- ▶ Marriage and Remarriage is at the Vicar's discretion.
- ▶ Marriage Preparation sessions are arranged by the Vicar.
- ▶ St. Mark's approach to marriage is in line with the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC) Statement on Marriage.

Confirmation

- ▶ Preparation sessions are arranged by the Vicar
- ▶ Confirmations are often shared with other Churches within the Deanery and are stand-alone Services.

Lettings

- ▶ All bookings to comply with St. Mark's Lettings Policy and Procedures.
- ▶ Activities must not conflict with the Christian Gospel, promote political parties or acts of non-Christian worship.
- ▶ Any letting of Church rooms is not out of a need or desire to make a profit to aid Church funds. The Church neither seeks nor is willing to accept any commercial or private lettings from either companies or individuals.

Finances:

Carlisle Diocese operates a Ministry Offer System in which each Parish and therefore each Deanery pledges an amount to the diocese for the coming year. We pay this Ministry Offer to Carlisle Diocese Board of Finance via The Ephesian Fund.

St. Mark's has each year, pledged as a minimum the stipendiary cost of a vicar, the exception being 2025 when we took the difficult decision to reduce our Ministry Offer by £20,000 due to unforeseen major structural work to the fabric of the building.

St. Mark's Yearly Ministry Offer to Carlisle Diocese

2023	2024	2025	2026	Proposed 2027	Proposed 2028
£51,000	£53,040	£34,631	£35,673	£36,565	£37,479

We operate two freewill giving schemes which gives individuals the opportunity to give weekly or monthly through envelopes, directly by standing order to St. Mark's bank account or by Credit/Debit Card after a Sunday or Wednesday Service. The first scheme is general funding for the work of St. Mark's and the second goes to six mission societies we support. Encouragement is regularly given to use the Gift Aid scheme.

Generally at harvest our monetary gifts go to Tearfund and food donated given to the Furness Homeless Support Group. We support The Children's Society through the Collections at our annual Christingle and Carols by Candlelight Services.

St. Mark's doesn't run money raising events to support it's general funding but for example, money left after running costs from social events would be given to a charity or project we support.

Please refer to Appendix III for Accounts information

Church Registers

Electoral Roll

Number on Roll - **113**

Male – **40%**

Female – **60%**

Percentage of Electoral Roll Members who live in the Parish – **13%**

Numbers at worship using data from April 2025 – March 2026

Average Attendance at Sunday Service

10.30am Adults: 72 Under 16's: 6 Communicants: 69

Average Attendance Wednesday Communion

10.30am Adults: 31 Under 16's: 1 Communicants: 31

Attendance on Christmas Day

8.00am Adults: 13 Under 16's: 0 Communicants: 13

10.30am Adults: 72 Under 16's: 8 Communicants: 72

Attendance on Easter Day

8.00am Adults: 8 Under 16's: 0 Communicants: 8

10.30am Adults: 81 Under 16's: 9 Communicants: 80

Weddings 0

Marriage Blessings 0

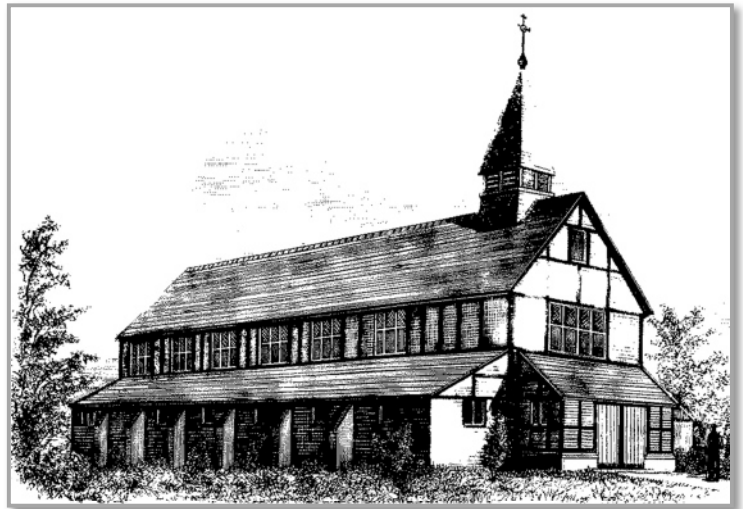
Funeral Services 7

Home Communions 12

Baptisms Child: 5 Adults: 3

The Church Building

St. Mark's is a Victorian, timber framed red brick panelled structure. It was originally designed as one of four temporary Churches to meet the Spiritual needs of a rapidly growing industrial town of the late nineteenth century. St. Mark's was opened in 1878 and consisted of a Main building, Vestry Office and Vestry Hall.



During 1987, a major refurbishment of the Church building took place, which externally, saw the front Porch and Bell Tower removed and by the innovative design of a new Entrance and internal glazing of the Foyer, the main body of the Church has become visually open to the outside world. This resulted in the physical concept of a 'Church without Walls', reinforcing St. Mark's spiritual and physical openness to all and a sense of welcome.



Internally, a Lower Meeting Room was created to seat fifty people, a Foyer of equal size, Kitchen and Toilet facilities and a further Large Meeting Room above, which is accessed from the Foyer. A new roof was provided to the whole of the St. Mark's estate during this re-ordering. With the pews removed, two hundred cushioned chairs were installed.

The chairs may also be re-arranged or completely removed when necessary to facilitate hosting different events requiring a large open floor space. A raised Dias was designed to bring a sense of togetherness of the church family during our worship.

A further one hundred chairs can also be added to the main Worship Area and the Foyer for larger services and events. The cost of this refurbishment was met partly from the sale of the redundant Church Halls and grants but mainly from the giving of Church Members themselves.



From 2014 to date, the Church, having received generous legacies, has undertaken major programmes of updating and refurbishment of the Church and Vestry buildings, including replacement of Doors, Windows, Toilet areas, Flooring, Heating, Lighting and Seating. The Kitchen area was extended to improve the provision for larger social and community events and it holds a Food Hygiene Rating 5 Very Good. It has been the intension of the PCC to ensure that the church buildings are flexible, fit for purpose and future proofed as much as possible. This work has added further to opening up the visibility of the Church within the community. The use of modern UPVC windows, doors, triple glazing, heating and lighting systems etc. has reduced maintenance and running costs. An Energy Efficiency Audit was carried out in 2025 and the PCC are adopting their recommendations where practicable.

Wheelchair access is available to all parts of the building excluding the Upper Meeting Room. Disabled Toilets are included in both the Church and the Vestry Hall Toilet facilities.

The two manual keyboard Pipe Organ has been well maintained and is considered as being one of the better examples in the area. A flexible Sound Reinforcement System with Induction Loop and Simple Portable/Wall mounting Stage Lighting Equipment are installed in the main worship space.

The building is welcoming, warm, light, maintained, updated to modern standards, incorporating designs to facilitate maximum flexibility in its use and a place of Worship in which, and from which, we serve our God.

St. Mark's does not have a graveyard and is not a Listed building. Please refer to Appendix I - Building Plans.

The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a detached two storey property situated next to, and to the north of the Church. It is a modern designed building of brickwork with a pitched slate roof. The construction of the vicarage was completed on behalf of the Carlisle Diocese in 1988 and is on the site of the original vicarage. The house is set back from the Street with mature gardens to the front and the side. To the rear of the house is a Garage and a large parking area with gates which open out onto Carlisle Street. The vicarage has double glazing with full central heating and provides security and seclusion.

The vicarage comprises:

Ground floor

Porch, toilet, study, lounge, hall, dining room, large kitchen diner, utility room and garage.

First floor

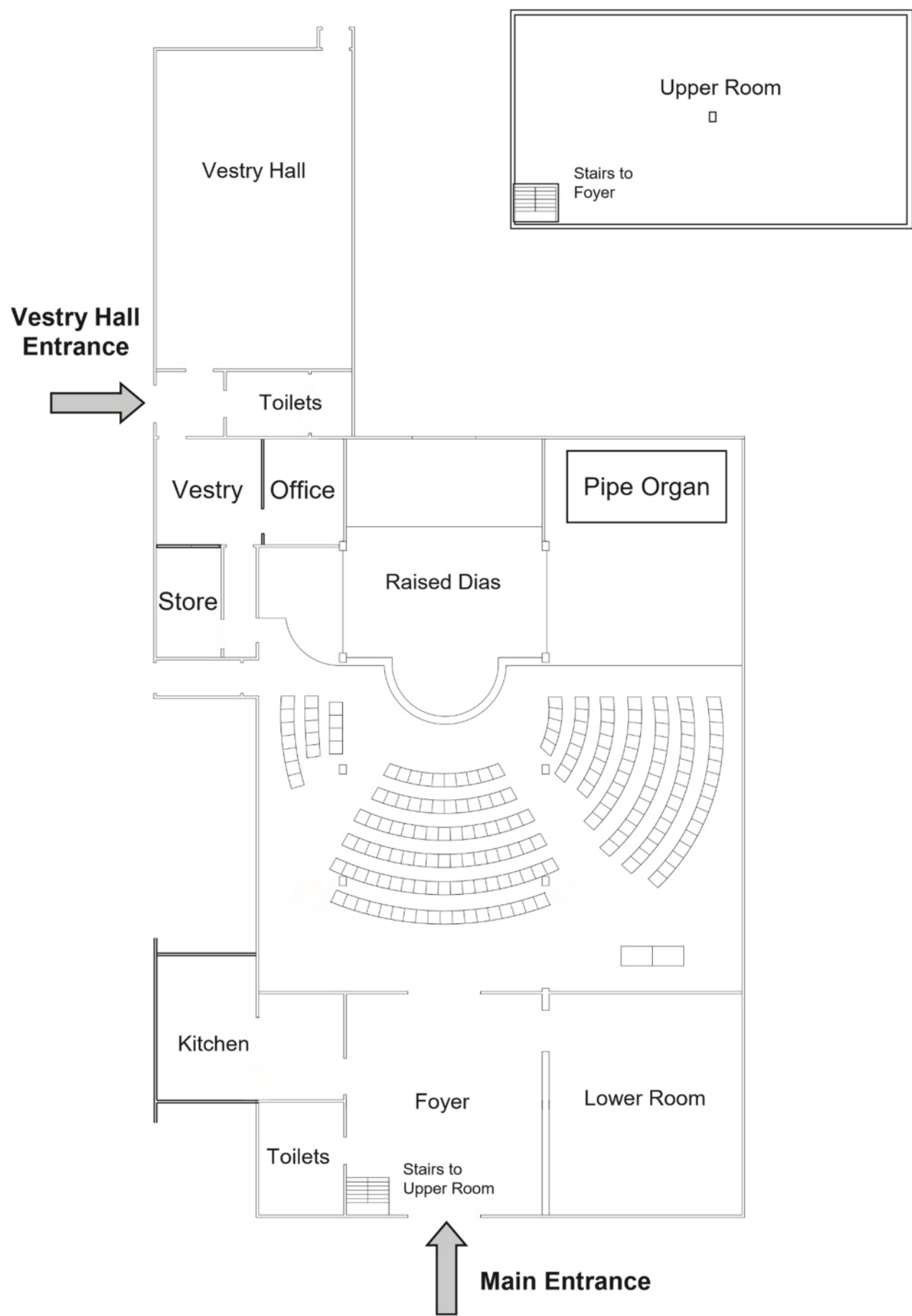
Four bedrooms (two of which have wash hand basins), bathroom, separate toilet, shower room and walk in loft above the garage



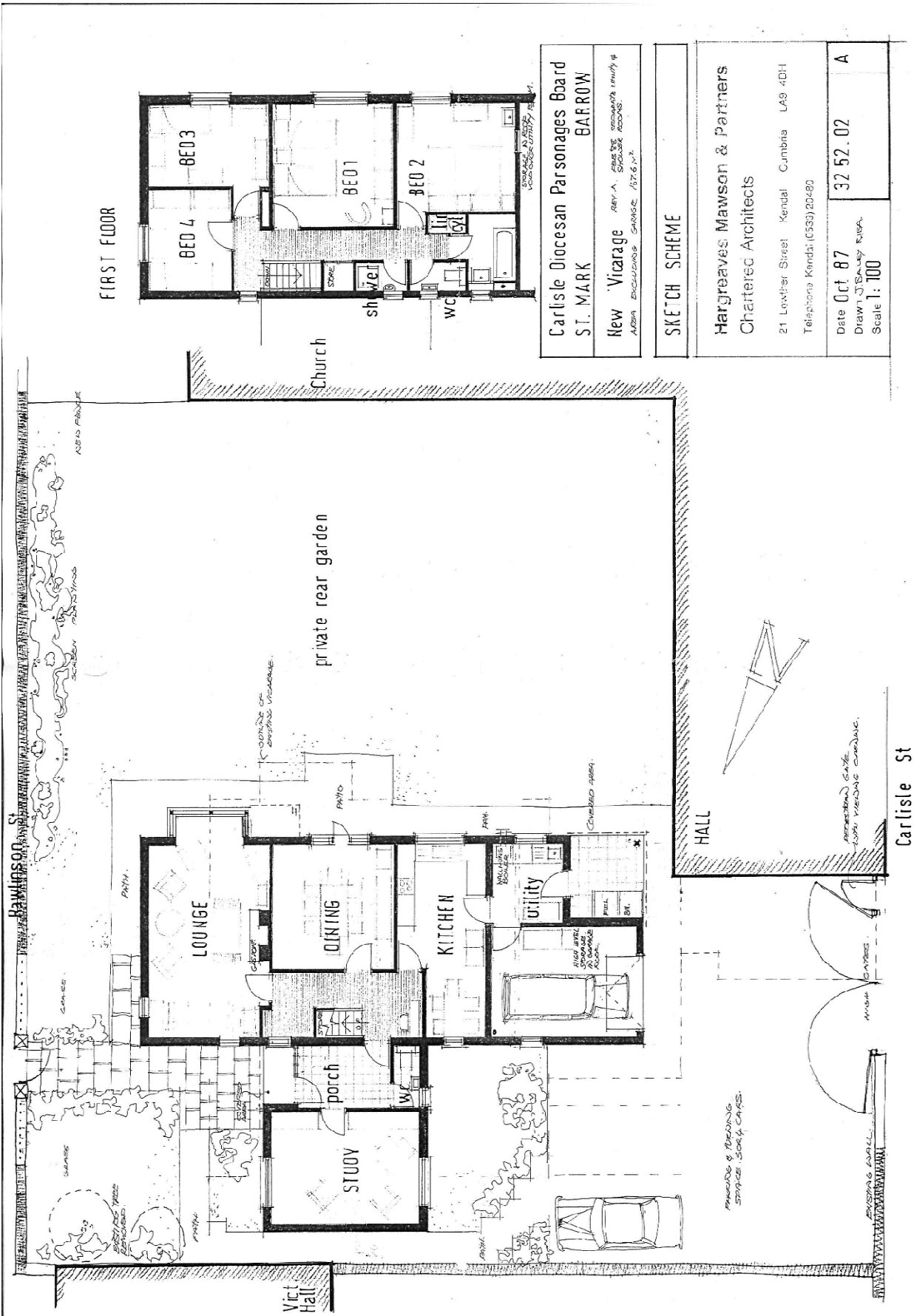
Appendix I

Church and Vicarage Floor Plans

Appendix I – Church Floor Plan



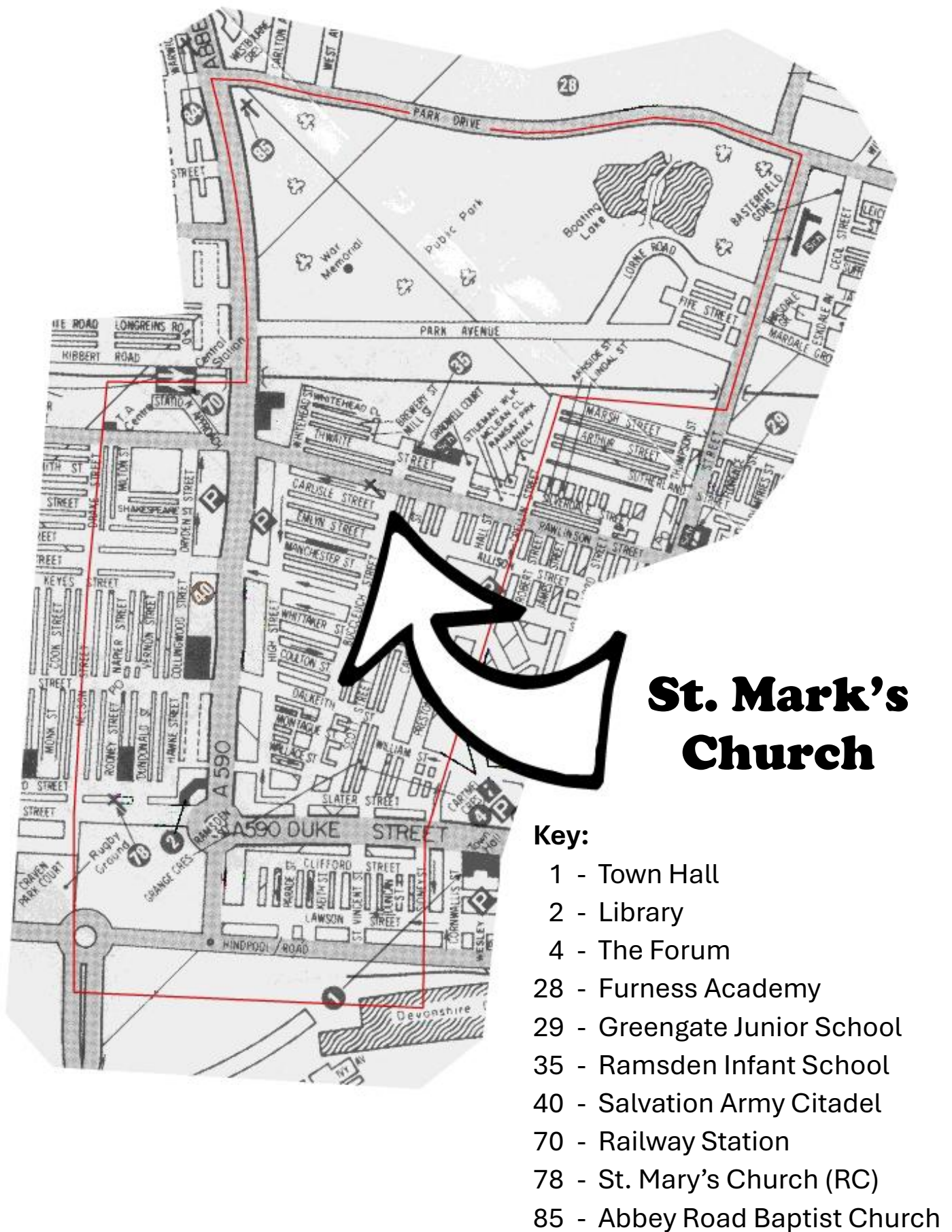
Appendix I – Vicarage Floor Plan



Appendix II

Parish Boundary Map

Appendix II - Parish Boundary Map



Appendix III

Financial Report

Appendix III – Financial Report

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31st December 2025

Monetary Assets		
General		-£1,636.59
Restricted		£20,514.48
Total 2025		£18,877.89
Investment Assets		
Designated		£14,583.26
Restricted		---
Reserves		£79,357.15
Total 2025		£112,818.30

Mission and Charitable Giving by Church Members

Overseas Mission Fellowship (OMF)	£2,170.97
Wycliffe Bible Translators	£2,170.98
Church Mission Society (CMS)	£2,170.98
Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS)	£930.42
Church Army	£930.42
Bible Society	£930.42
Leprosy Mission	£25.80
Total 2025	£10,035.44

The last Annual Report and Financial Statements filed with the Charity Commission is for the year ending 31st December 2024 and can be found on their [website](#).

Appendix III – Financial Report

General Fund – Receipts

Incoming resources from donors	£73,215.20
Legacies	£53,472.40
Other voluntary incoming resources	£1,247.12
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	£2,786.00
Other ordinary incoming resources	£48.92

Total Receipts – Unrestricted Funds **£130,769.64**

Restricted Income **£46,587.48**

Total Receipts, 2025 **£177,357.12**

General Fund – Payments

Ministry Offer	£34,631.00
Working expenses of Clergy	£2,702.16
Church running expenses	£24,610.45
Church Maintenance	£2,070.61
Upkeep of Services	£2,518.55
Support costs	£594.27
Building work	----
Special events expenses	£2,080.47
Ancillary trading	----
Church management and administration	£1,009.85

Internal Transfers

Designated Funds	£3,000.00
General Reserves	£2,000.00
Fabric Reserves	£2,000.00
Legacy Reserves	£53,472.40

Total Payments - Unrestricted **£130,689.76**

Payments of Restricted Funds **£42,004.67**

Total Payments, 2025 **£172,694.43**

Appendix IV

Summary of Services and Building Use

Appendix IV - Summary Services and Building Use

St. Mark's Services

Event	Detail	When	Where
Sunday Service		10.30am	St. Mark's
Mid-week Service	Said Communion	Wednesday 10.30am	St. Mark's
ARK Club (Sunday School)	Held during Sunday Morning Services with the exception of the monthly All-Age Service	Sunday 10.30am	St. Mark's
Home Communion	Home Communion for the sick and elderly	As required	Member's homes

St. Mark's run Activities

Event	Detail	When	Where
Lent Course	Teaching Course with weekly meetings during the period of Lent	Both daytime & evening	St. Mark's
Preparation Courses	Baptism, Marriage and Confirmation led by the Vicar	As Required	
Concert / Theatre evenings	Includes large scale performances by local and professional performers. For example Jonathan Veira, Out of the Ashes, Riding Lights, Watoto Children's Choir, Roger Jones and CMM supported by Furness Churches United Choir	Mainly evening events	St. Mark's
Social Gatherings	Quizzes, Knit & Natter, local Walks, Chair Exercise, Film Evening, Art & Craft Sessions		St. Mark's
Together in Prayer	Corporate Prayer Meeting	Monthly, daytime & evening	St. Mark's & Member's home

Community Groups using St. Mark's Premises

Event	Detail	When	Where
Narcotics Anonymous		Monday 5.30pm	St. Mark's
Al Anon		Wednesday 5.45pm	St. Mark's
Rainbows, Brownies and Guide Units	Girls - 4 to 14 year old	Tuesday & Friday	St. Mark's
Local Choir, Furness Churches United Choir	Mainly perform musicals written by Roger Jones.	Thursday 7.00pm	St. Mark's
Local Residents Meeting		As Required	St. Mark's

Appendix V

**Revitalising Mission:
Rising Faith Barrow,
Barrow Deanery**

Appendix V: Revitalising Mission:

Rising Faith Barrow, Barrow Deanery

Having endured years of challenge and downturn, Barrow is on the cusp of dramatic change, scheduled for substantial growth as a result of central government plans to massively expand the work of BAE Systems and an education plan which includes the development of a new learning campus for the University of Cumbria, on 2.76 hectares of quayside land on southern edge of the town. As a result of this we expect to see the town quickly regrow by up to 30,000 in the coming years.

As a Deanery and Diocese, we sense God's call to re-engage with our community by investing in missional leadership in order to create new disciples through planting, church revitalisation and pilot work to develop missional chaplaincy.

The renewal of the missional energy of St. Mark's situated in a high-density housing, retail and commercial town centre parish is a key element of this.

St. Mark's is identified as a church in our £2m Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) funded Diocesan Investment Programme (The Cumbrian Way).

The Bishop and Congregation are seeking a Priest in Charge (Vicar) with experience of growing congregations and to help lead a revitalisation team consisting of an Associate Minister, Youth and Children's Mission and Discipleship Enabler (to be appointed) and a Deanery wide post of a Network Youth Church Leader in helping our church community discern a missional strategy and move into a new season of missional and spiritual renewal.

As a partner church in the Rising Faith Barrow element of the DIP, the Vicar will be supported by our Deanery and Diocese consisting of the Rural Dean, Archdeacon and Bishops.

The Chapter and Deanery Synod have a long-standing commitment to collaborating together in mission and discipleship.

Revitalisation of St. Mark's will enable us to increase the missional potential of the parish's heritage.

With support from the Rising Faith Barrow/Deanery, Operations Manager, and SMMIB funding the Vicar will work with the local team, congregation, Rural Dean and Archdeacon to develop the capacity of the church through growing its missional strategy, growing new leaders and working to grow giving and financial sustainability. Together with 'sister' projects at St. James, St. Aidan's Newbarns (on the western side of the town), St. Georges and some Deanery wide capacity building we are aiming by 2031 to have –

- ▶ Revitalised congregations with lasting missional capacity
- ▶ Positioned to grow with and in the community
- ▶ New resources and developing worshipping communities for new growth
- ▶ More missional leaders, more mission, more missional disciples
- ▶ Generated 'sending capacity' so as to resource the wider diocese with new leaders to support church planting and revitalisation elsewhere.

Appendix VI

Web Links

Appendix VI - Web Links

St. Mark's Church

 www.stmarksbarrow.org.uk

St. Mark's Church Facebook

 www.facebook.com/StMarksBarrow

Barrow Deanery

 www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/barrow-deanery

Carlisle Diocese

 www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk

God For All

 www.godforall.org.uk

The Cumbrian Way

 www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/thecumbrianway

Rising Faith Barrow

 www.facebook.com/risingfaithbarrow

Barrow Mission Community

 www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/barrow-mission-community

Network Youth Church

 www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/network-youth-church

The Church of England Evangelical Council

 www.ceec.info

The Ephesian Fund

 www.ephesianfund.org.uk

Visit Barrow-in-Furness

 www.visitbarrow.org.uk

Visit Cumbria

 www.visitcumbria.com

Barrow Rising

 www.barrowrising.uk

Charity Commission

 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission



*"We commit ourselves totally to do
the will of the Father, as the body of Christ,
in the power of the Holy Spirit."*