Warrington St Elphin
Parish Profile

Serving God in the Parish and in the Wider Community

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Section 1 – Overview

The ancient parish church of St Elphin has borne witness to the enduring truth of the Christian Gospel for hundreds of years and has been a central part of community life in Warrington.

It remains an important focus for the people of the town.

St Elphin’s is of liberal catholic tradition. Our worship is mainly Eucharistic and vestments are worn.

We are a friendly, open and welcoming parish with a strong commitment to all ages within both the local community and the Town.

We love God, one another, and our town. It is our desire to communicate the unchanging truth of the person and the work of Jesus Christ in a way that everyone in our town and culture can comprehend.

There are many positive aspects to our church life here at St Elphin’s but we recognise that there are still many people to be reached. We are particularly keen to reach out to children and young families in order to widen our appeal. We are seeking a leader of strong faith who will help us to grow both spiritually and numerically.
Section 2 – Person Profile

St Elphin’s is a parish with a ministry that is wide ranging and challenging. It would provide much fulfilment for an experienced, energetic and enthusiastic priest.

The person we seek will:

- We are looking for an inspirational leader who will bless the town of Warrington. Such a leader will be bold in seizing opportunities alongside lay leadership to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ. They will have an entrepreneurial spirit that will forward the mission in this part of Warrington.

- Have broadly traditional views on worship and doctrine – but we are open to the introduction of new ideas in worship

- Have an open and welcoming outlook and be a good communicator

- Have the experience and skills necessary to identify and develop new opportunities for ministry and leadership, and to encourage and support the parish through change

- Have the vision to help us grow through outreach

- Have the energy and enthusiasm to maintain and develop the many links that have been established with the Borough Council and a variety of groups across the town

- Be in complete empathy with the aims and objectives of church schools and be actively involved in continuing to maintain and develop strong links between the church and its associated schools

- Be willing to maintain the links with the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment
• Be a diligent custodian who will take good care of the church fabric with the support of the PCC

• Be willing to fully engage with other members of the Town Centre Cluster of Parishes, of which St Elphin’s is a member.

We are able to offer:

• A loyal and supportive congregation; albeit composed of mainly older people, who care for each other and their ministry team

• The support of one reader and one reader emeritus

• A range of lay teams who assist in worship, pastoral care and mission

• Some administrative support

• All clergy expenses

• Support and encouragement for personal training time and holidays

• A good place to live – both the Rectory and the Town.
The town of Warrington currently has a population of just under 210,000 (latest revision in 2017). The town has historically been an industrial town, with a settlement being located at the narrowest and shallowest part of the River Mersey where a ford crossing channelled north south traffic through the small settlement, growing into a commercial centre, particularly during Roman times and onward, and soon became a busy market town.

During the Georgian Period, the town centre was relocated to where it currently exists and St Elphin’s Church planted a daughter church, Holy Trinity, in the Georgian town centre. However, St Elphin’s remains the Civic Church of Warrington.

Warrington has always been at the centre of various transport networks, the River Mersey being the first, then the Bridgewater Canal, Manchester Ship Canal, the two rail networks through Bank Quay and Central Stations, then the M62, M56 and M6 Motorways and therefore remains a well-connected town. It is this good transport network that has enabled Warrington to grow and keep on growing economically, with good rates of employment and a variety of traditional and new businesses, drawing in new people to work and live here.

The town centre of Warrington is currently undergoing a massive refurbishment with a new £107m retail and leisure complex Time Square, with cafes, restaurants, cinema, multi-storey carpark and a new home for Warrington’s indoor market. This investment, along with numerous new town centre living developments, is part of the long term plan to regenerate Warrington and bring new life back into the town centre, reversing the plan during the 1960s and 70s which saw many of the tightly-packed terraced housing and factories demolished and families relocated to the spacious and greener New Town developments in the suburbs.

There is much in Warrington’s history and heritage to be proud of. Warrington has a Cultural Quarter with Warrington Museum and Art Gallery, the Parr Hall Theatre and the Pyramid Arts Centre, the magnificent Town Hall and its spectacular gates and many fine Georgian Period properties.
There are many popular restaurants and bars around this area, and the now well-established Warrington Street Pastors has had a significantly positive impact, particularly at weekends and during the night-time economy.

The University of Chester has a campus in Warrington and the town is home of the Rugby League team Warrington Wolves and sport features a lot in the recreational facilities in the area. There are several amateur football clubs, cricket clubs, golf courses, an athletics club and a rowing club on the River Mersey, as well as parks and nature reserves. With its outlying picturesque villages, attractive canal walks and the popular Walton Hall and Gardens, Warrington has a lot to offer to those who enjoy the outdoors.

North Wales, Snowdonia and the seaside resorts of the North West, the Lake District and the historic cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Chester are only a short distance from Warrington and are easily accessible via the motorway or rail networks.

The now fairly unique and historic annual event of Warrington Walking Day (the Friday nearest to 1st July each year) is a huge undertaking of which the Rector is Chair of the planning group, and which involves all of the Trinitarian Churches in Warrington in a walk of witness from the Town Hall, around the streets of the town and then back to their own churches, sees approximately 3,000 church members walking, along with their Church Schools, with banners, flags, musicians and bands and approximately 7,000 people lining the streets to watch and support. This provides another fantastic opportunity to share our Christian faith in a visible, spectacular and colourful way.
Section 4 – The Parish

St Elphin’s is a Grade II* Listed church with a spectacular 281 foot central tower and spire, a landmark for miles around. It is situated to the east of Warrington centre, just off the A57, in the area known as Howley. The parish has a population of approximately 10,000 and stretches from the middle of the town to the north and east. There is a mix of industry, shops, offices and housing; where there used to be large factories there are now large supermarkets, smaller shops, service units and offices. New houses and apartments have been built along the River Mersey and on the old Ryland’s Wire Works site. It is a town centre parish with a mix of privately owned houses and rented accommodation. There are a number of Housing Association developments, Care Homes and a Retirement Village. Whilst the population of the parish has been fairly static it is now rising and young families, including a range of ethnic minorities, are moving into the area.

The parish has a Church Primary School, St Elphin’s (Fairfield) Voluntary Aided Primary School. The school was rebuilt on St Elphin’s Park during 2008 to replace the building in Fairfield Street which was over 100 years old. That building is now the Howley and Fairfield Neighbourhood Project, and church representatives are amongst the trustees.

Beamont Community Primary School is also situated within the Parish as are Oakwood Avenue Community Primary School and St Benedict’s Roman Catholic Primary School. Although it was relocated in 1940, the Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School was founded in the parish and has continued to have strong links with St Elphin’s.
Section 5 – Buildings

The Church

Approached from the main road by a short cobbled street, three houses and a pub flank the splendid 18th century gates. There has been a church on the site since c.650AD but the present building has grown from a 14th century core. The eastern two bays of the chancel and the basic form of the crypt below are all that survives of the mediaeval work. Most of the church is the result of early 19th century remodelling. The churchyard is closed and maintained by the local authority.

The church is traditionally orientated and there are north and south transept chapels, a south sacristy and north vestry. The north and south aisles are fitted with galleries. Seating for up to 1000 people is provided by fixed dark wood pews.

In 2010 several pews at the west end were removed to create an open area with a small kitchen and accessible toilet with baby changing facilities. The change has provided an excellent area for social interaction and it also has the potential to be used, on occasions, for alternative expressions of worship. More recently pews were removed at the front of the chancel to create a nave altar and raised dais.

The building is rich in history and reflects much of the history of the town. We endeavour to keep the building open as much as possible for private prayer or for people just to look around. From May to September the church is open on Wednesdays from 2.00 to 4.00pm and from 9.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays. A team of volunteers is on hand to provide help and information. Guided tours for groups are arranged by appointment.

We are proud of our heritage and use it to provide opportunities to promote our mission.

The responsibility for its upkeep is a privilege – and a challenge!
The Rectory

The Rectory is a comfortable family sized home. Built in 1965, it is a six-bedroomed detached house set in spacious grounds, close by the church and with access from the garden to the churchyard.

The ground floor comprises a large lounge, dining room, study, kitchen, utility room and a small cloakroom. There is also a detached garage. The house is alarmed and there is some CCTV coverage.
The Schools

St Elphin’s (Fairfield) Voluntary Aided Primary School is a short walk away from the church.

It has an excellent reputation and works exceptionally well to serve their families and children as valued members of the St Elphin’s family. Ofsted recognised St Elphin’s as a Good school in March 2017 and the SIAMS inspection in January 2018 found the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Elphin’s as a Church of England school Outstanding.

In 2008/09 the pupils moved into a beautiful new eco-friendly building which was formally opened by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu. A new Headteacher was appointed in April 2017 and she is eager to further develop close links with the church and across the community.

I very much look forward to continuing to build a strong and effective partnership between our school and church communities. I hope that our shared celebrations and events reflect our school mission statement that Together, in faith we learn, care, serve and share throughout the year. We are excited to work together to develop as a strong church community, enriching our parish and jointly serving and supporting the families and young people within it.

Alison Bennett

Our last incumbent went into school on a regular basis to participate in class and whole school collective worship. PCC members are also involved as Foundation Governors. On reaching eleven years of age almost all of the pupils move on to Sir Thomas Boteler CE High School.
Sir Thomas Boteler CE High School

Since the 16th Century the parish church has had close links with the school. Within the last 35 years the school has changed from being a Boys’ Grammar School to a Co-Educational Comprehensive and then in 2002 to a CE High School sponsored by both the Liverpool and Chester Dioceses. It is expected that the new priest would take an active part in maintaining the strong links with the school and eventually become a member of the governing body. Close links with the church are supported by the Headteacher of the school.

Previous Rectors have also been Chairman of the Warrington Church of England Educational Trust which support all Church of England Schools within the Borough of Warrington. Each church that has a school has an elected Trustee on the Board.

St Elphin’s Community Centre

This was originally the chapel to the School for Clergy Daughters which stood nearby. It is owned by the Church and leased to the Community Centre Association by the PCC. The church has priority use on Sundays and 12 other occasions a year free of charge. Members of the congregation are on the committee. The Centre building is maintained by the Association and is no burden on the finances of the parish.

Serving God in the Parish and in the Wider Community
Section 6 – Our Worship

The parish is of liberal catholic tradition and our worship is mainly Eucharistic. Vestments are worn.

Services are as follows:

Sundays:

8.30am   Holy Communion (said)
10.30am  Parish Communion
         (All-Age Service on 1st Sunday of the month – currently under review)
         Junior Church in the Vestry
         (during term time; resources available at all services during the year)
12.30pm  Baptisms (1st and 3rd Sundays only)
4.00pm   Together@4
         (1st and 3rd Sundays in the Community Centre)
6.30pm   Evensong (BCP)

Wednesday’s:

10.00am  Holy Communion (said)

Matins and Evening Prayer are said daily in the church at 8.00am and 5.00pm respectively.

Other Holy Days 7.30pm Holy Communion

Music to enhance the services is provided by our organist on a three manual Phoenix digital organ.

A choir of adults, mostly ladies, sings at the parish communion and at special services as well as at weddings if requested.

The hymn book we currently use is Ancient & Modern – Hymns & Songs for Refreshing Worship.

Serving God in the Parish and in the Wider Community
Over the years we have developed a series of special services for Lent, Holy Week, Christmas and Easter.

On Wednesdays in Lent there is Holy Communion at 7.30pm with themed sermons delivered either by the clergy team or by invited speakers.

On Palm Sunday we meet in the Community Centre for the distribution and blessing of palms and then process to church for parish communion.

In Holy Week:
Tuesday Evening
Stations of the Cross
Wednesday
Meditations and music followed by Taize style Eucharist
Maundy Thursday
Commemoration of the Last Supper
Good Friday - 2.00pm
‘The Last Hour’ – a service at the foot of the cross
Holy Saturday
The lighting of the new fire and Paschal candle with renewal of baptismal vows.

Christmas:
Christmas Eve: 3.00pm Christingle Service
11.30pm First Communion of Christmas

Christmas Day: 8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Parish Communion

St Stephen’s Day 10.00am BCP Holy Communion
Regarding pastoral care, the congregation hold the fervent belief that it is our duty to share the love of God with all His people, hence our policy of openness, welcome and nurture.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals are times when people often want to connect, or reconnect, with God and with the Church. It is our aim to help and support those who wish to celebrate an important occasion in their life.

We have always maintained an open baptism policy, with which the congregation is happy, believing that the traditional role of the church is to open people to the grace of God. We would welcome the development of any suitable ministry around this area. Mothers’ Union members currently supply a gospel to each baptism candidate, are present at all Baptism services and send an anniversary card for the first year following their baptism.

The church has a number of weddings each year. Currently there is no lay involvement in wedding preparation.

St Elphin’s has a fairly widespread funeral ministry and a good reputation for supporting the bereaved. However, we believe there is still room for further development in ministering to the bereaved.

A Parish Care Team of lay people is available to visit the sick and housebound when asked by the parish priest. Some of the team are also licensed to take out Holy Communion.

Mothers’ Union members also visit ‘indoor members’.

Junior Church meets weekly during term time, during the 10.30am service, and uses the Living Stones (Pebbles, Rocks and Boulders) resources which follow the lectionary. During holiday time resources are available in church for children.

Toddler Group meets each Tuesday 9.30 – 11.30 during term time for babies to preschool with their parents or carers for singing, stories, crafts and free play.
Serving God in the Parish and in the Wider Community

Special Services Held Annually

April
Sir Thomas Boteler Commemoration Service – a service of BCP Holy Communion held in the Boteler Chapel

June/July
Thanksgiving for the work of St Rocco’s Hospice
Service for the new Mayor of Warrington – first act of public worship
Warrington Walking Day – an ecumenical procession of witness through the town with approximately 7000 walkers founded by the Rector of Warrington in 1834

September
Service of Inauguration for all Year 7 pupils attending Sir Thomas Boteler CE High School attended by pupils, feeder school representatives and parents

October
Service of praise and thanksgiving for the Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment – with regimental representatives, veterans and civic dignitaries from the town

November
Service commemorating the recently departed – bereaved families of those whose funerals have been conducted by the clergy of the parish over the last year are invited to attend
All Soul’s Service commemorating departed loved ones
Patronal Festival
Ecumenical Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph – civic dignitaries in attendance

December
Advent Carol Service
Bereaved Parents Service
Light Up a Life Service (one at St Rocco’s Hospice and one in Church)
St Elphin’s Fairfield School Carol Service
Warrington Girl Guiding Carol Service
Scouts Carol Services (East & West Districts)
Schools’ Musicians Carol Service
Sir Thomas Boteler Carol Service
Oakwood Avenue Community Primary School Carol Service
Christingle Service

In addition the church is also used as a venue for Warrington and Vale Royal College Awards Evening, Priestley College Awards Evening, Sir Thomas Boteler Awards Evening and Children’s University Awards Evening.

Serving God in the Parish and in the Wider Community
The well-established role of Rector of Warrington will give many opportunities to help shape and nurture the lives and wellbeing of the people of Warrington as a whole through connections with the Town Hall, Warrington’s Mayor (regularly asked to be Mayor’s Chaplain) and Warrington Borough Council (invited to attend Full Council meetings and acting as Faith Advisor to the Council and Town Hall), a Civic Link Officer for the Bishop, attending and supporting the monthly Citizenship Ceremonies at the Town Hall, as well as playing a significant part in recommending the appointment of a number of clergy where the Rector is either sole or joint Patron (Patron to 10 parishes).

Within the wider role of the Rector of Warrington are also the opportunities and responsibilities to be involved with the Warrington Mission in the Economy (MitE), working alongside and encouraging Warrington’s workplace and retail Chaplains, as well as sharing ministry with Ecumenical colleagues in the town.

The Rector is Chair of the planning group for the huge annual Remembrance Sunday Service at Warrington’s Cenotaph, in 2018 seeing over 2,000 people present at the service.

The Rector is also invited to be one of the three Christian Representatives of the Warrington Council of Faiths and be involved in planned shared inter-faith events throughout the year.

The Regimental Association of the Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment look to the Rector of Warrington to support, advise and lead their various services throughout the year:

- **February**  Pieter’s Hill Parade in Queen’s Gardens
- **April**  ANZAC Day Memorial at Warrington Cemetery
- **July**  Formal Regimental Association Dinner
- **October**  Regimental Sunday Service in St Elphin’s Church

The Rector is invited to be a member of the Warrington Crematourem and Cemeteries liaison group, helping to improve facilities and procedures for staff, clergy and the bereaved.

St Rocco’s Hospice look to the Rector to advise and support them in their work and in planning and delivering two services for bereaved families in December each year, one at the Hospice and the other in St Elphin’s Church, along with the Hospice Chaplain.
Section 8 – Different Expressions of Church Life

The Mothers’ Union meets on the second Wednesday evening each month in St Elphin’s Community Centre for an act of worship and speaker / fellowship time.
The Ladies Group meets on the first and third Wednesday evening each month in St Elphin’s Community Centre for fellowship, fun and fundraising.
The Men’s Group meet occasionally on a Thursday evening for fellowship in their ‘Parish Office’ (otherwise known as the Ring ‘O’ Bells pub!)

Parish Care Team – a team of Eucharistic Ministers who administer the Chalice at the Eucharist and take Holy Communion to the sick, housebound and elderly at home or in care homes on a monthly basis or as the need arises.

Bible Study Group sessions have been led by one of our Readers. Several members of the congregation have taken part in Deanery events including Alpha.

Community Outreach

- Afternoon Tea – an occasional meeting for the lonely, the aged and those who are housebound, organised by the MU
- Church Opening – May to September on Wednesdays and Saturdays
- St Elphin’s Chronicle – a monthly magazine covering parish matters
- Parish website – www.warringtonparishchurch.org
- Parish Facebook page - www.facebook.com/warringtonparishchurch
- A church near you -
- Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers meet regularly during term time
- Toddler Group – Tuesdays during term time
- Cubs and Scouts meet in the Howley and Fairfield Community Project
- Ecumenical links via Town Centre Ecumenical Group / Council of Faiths
- Civic and Regimental Links

Charities Supported

- Christian Aid
- Water Aid
- Toilet Twinning
- Children’s Society
- St Rocco’s Hospice
- The Verve
  (supervised independent accommodation for young people)
- Y-Project / Room at the Inn Homeless Project
- Mothers’ Union Charities
- Warrington Foodbank
- Operation Christmas Child

Serving God in the Parish and in the Wider Community
Warrington Parish Church of St Elphin lies within the Diocese of Liverpool and is part of the Deanery of Warrington. The church is part of a group known as the Town Centre Cluster which comprises of:

- St Elphin’s
- St Barnabas
- Holy Trinity / St Ann’s

All work towards fulfilling the Deanery Mission Plan but each church has its own PCC and is fully autonomous. There are differences in churchmanship and each church worships in its own way while understanding and respecting the differences. There have been several pulpit exchanges and parishioners are encouraged to visit other churches in the cluster and share in their worship. In 2010 we had our first Cluster outing, which was a trip to Coventry Cathedral. The day out has now become an annual event and in 2019 we visited the National Memorial Arboretum. This is an area in need of nurturing — parishes are by nature parochial and somewhat inward looking — we would expect the priest to engage fully in the ongoing development of the cluster.

Our aims for mission are:

- To support the Deanery Mission Plan (see appendix 1)
- To continue mission in our church school by attending assemblies and encouraging children to attend Junior Church
- To demonstrate our Christian witness in the town by taking part in Warrington Walking Day along with the other churches of various denominations
- To continue to engage with the local civic community and the Duke of Lancaster’s Regimental Association
- To Continue to open the Church on Wednesdays and Saturdays for private prayer and for visitors
- To take the Gospel out to the new private housing developments within the parish
- To consider administering Holy Communion to children prior to confirmation following appropriate preparation.
St Elphin’s Involvement in the Deanery Mission Plan

- Continuing and supporting the wider ministry of the Parish Church (St Elphin’s) and to develop its use as a resource within the Deanery and town for larger inclusive gatherings for the mission of / to all God’s people
- Maintain the ministry within the local civic community and regimental connections
- Mission to schools and parents through regular visits by clergy and lay people
- Develop local community facilities for mission within the new school, community centre and the new development project (old Fairfield School) and continue to develop an inclusive mission
- Maintain the witness of Walking Day as opportunities of mission

Over the last six years or so the Deanery of Warrington has seen some change with the appointment of new stipendiary clergy resulting in some excellent colleagues with whom Deanery responsibilities for mission, growth and discipleship are shared and acted upon. The Deanery now has a new Area Dean, two Assistant Area Deans and an experienced and capable Deanery Lay Chair and Deanery Lay Secretary.

Ecumenical Links

There are good relations between all the Christian churches in Warrington. The Town Centre Cluster has particularly strong links with the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches in the area. The cluster is part of the Town Centre Ecumenical Group and the clergy meet together each Tuesday morning for prayers.

Warrington is proud of the harmony that exists between the different faiths represented in the town and a Council of Faiths has existed for many years. The previous incumbent was an active member of the Council and we would hope that the priest could maintain, and if possible, build on these close ties.
Serving God in the Parish and in the Wider Community

Statistics
There are currently 135 people on the electoral roll. 30% live within the parish.

On Sundays 80 – 90 people attend the Eucharist services and 12 – 18 people attend Evensong

On Wednesdays 12 – 18 people attend the Eucharist Service

In 2018 there were 71 baptisms, 15 Weddings and 40 Funerals conducted by the clergy of the parish

9 children and 2 adults were confirmed by the Bishop of Warrington in 2018

Finance
We are in the process of revisiting the Giving in Grace Scheme. The vast majority of parishioners participate and good use is made of Gift Aid as we are a registered charity. Although we are by no means a wealthy parish, we are financially solvent and able to meet our parish share.

A Summer Craft Fayre, Autumn Fayre and Grand Prize Draw are our big fundraising events but we also have several smaller social events and concerts to raise money.

A set of parish accounts for 2018 is available for inspection on request.

The church is a Grade II* Listed building and over the last five years a good deal of maintenance work has taken place:

- Pews at the chancel end were removed, the floor raised and a nave altar added
- New interior doors were fitted in the north porch and work has currently taken place on the south porch door to make an emergency exit
- In 2018 interior lighting was upgraded to LED
- The west end wall has had stonework replaced and repointed at a cost of £60,000 which was paid for by the Parish Fabric Fund
- An intruder alarm has been installed together with CCTV cameras

The next quinquennial inspection is in hand and we await the outcome.

Serving God in the Parish and in the Wider Community
Our Hopes for the Future

St Elphin’s has been well-supported by past generations and it is now up to us to celebrate the past, make our presence and beliefs known, and preserve its future for generations to come. We need to continue to reach out and engage younger people. We seek a priest who will provide direction and leadership and enable us to use our strengths and talents to help us grow both spiritually and numerically. We want to maintain our traditional churchmanship along with our commitment to prayer and pastoral care.

The parish has traditionally provided training for curates and we would like to see this continue, as it is seen as a support for the mission to the parish and the wider town.

St Elphin’s is a community following Jesus, seeking renewal in our town of Warrington.

It is our desire to see the Gospel of Jesus transform Warrington into something even greater than it is.

So for someone looking for a stretching challenge amid the setting of a growing, prosperous town with much history and heritage yet also looking to the future, in the context of traditional Anglican ministry and with the additional and fascinating ministry to the town of Warrington, the role of Rector of Warrington could perhaps meet those needs and that call.

If you feel that God is calling you to be that person please come and visit us, take a look around and ask for more information.

Opportunities for Growth

- Participating in the Diocesan ‘Rule of Life’, the Mission Growth Agenda and the Eco-Diocese initiative
- Making contact with families on the new housing estates
- Furthering our Youth Work especially in our ministry to secondary school pupils
- Making better use of social media
- More involvement with Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

Our Strengths

- Our traditional worship
- Our willingness to try different styles of worship
- Our wonderful building which affords us the space to host large scale events and services
- The opportunity to provide stillness in a busy world

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