

Norton Parish



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ST ALBANS

Living God's Love



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St George's, Letchworth



St Nicholas, Norton

A note on quotes:

Throughout this profile you will find quotes from members of our congregation and the community. These were collected during the consultation period that preceded the writing of the document. Some were given in person, others on feed-back sheets.



Introduction



Parish of Norton

Who we are

We are a Eucharistic based church which is liturgical in worship style and broad in our sympathies. Our congregation is diverse, vibrant, enjoys worshipping and sharing together and we have a Children's ministry.

As an active group, we encourage diversity and we are enquiring in our approach to faith. We are progressing as a teaching Parish, helping people to explore and become more secure in their faith. This is a training parish and normally has a curate in training for whom we are able to provide housing.

We have close links with all schools in the Parish including the Church of England Primary school, sharing events, leading assemblies as well as providing many governors. We also have an active presence in the community.

Our lively congregation, composed of most age groups, supports a broad range of activities. There is a base of volunteers and a PCC which is engaged and committed to God's work in the Parish.

Our heartfelt desire is to bring more people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ, the foundation of our lives, both individually and corporately.

Fellowship.
Congregation member





Our Vision

Parish of Norton



Our Vision

We, in the parish of Norton, believe our main focus should be to build our community on the teachings of Christ.

We are enthusiastic and engaged in developing our spiritual lives. Our vision is to be a place where people can come to know Christ.

What is Important to us

Being Christ centred is most important and everything emanates from our faith.

As believers, making Jesus central in our conversations and moving out of our comfort zone.

Work together, thinking outside of what 'I' want.

The church needs to be a place where people can discover God. Have a variety of services, as we do at present, which gives the opportunity for people to experience different types of worship.

Becoming a hub for good in the local community and have more active thinking about how we can encourage the unchurched into church.

Impressive building designed to show something important happens here.

Congregation member

Mission Action Plan (MAP)

Our MAP is in a period of transition and needs updating in line with the work done through LyCiG (Leading your Church into Growth - a national organisation helping churches to develop and grow).

We are aware of challenges not yet overcome and new challenges we need to face.





Our Vision

Parish of Norton



Areas for development

We are aware that there is work to do on prayer and mission. Following the work with LyCiG we have set up a prayer meeting each month. We identified people were happy in the Parish but need to reach out to all generations, making sure there is a good foundation in the faith.



We will work hard with the new vicar to engage with these issues.

- Accepting everyone, however often they come, and leave God to work within their lives.
- Having a larger profile in the wider community and bringing more people to faith
- Developing a stronger prayer life in the Parish
- Improving communication across all areas of the church in order to help the congregation to work together following Christ



Our next Vicar

Parish of Norton



What we are seeking

The Parish of Norton is an active community wishing to reach an even wider range of groups and individuals than we do at the moment. Our vicar needs to be a dynamic able leader who can minister to all our worshipping styles and traditions and support us in the light of Christ and guide us into an exciting future for the community and parish. Within this we are looking for:

A priest with an authentic heart for God and this community who will build on where we are and bring new ideas so that everyone, children and families, single people and those who are growing older, can be challenged to respond to our living God and learn how to grow in their faith.

A person of strong faith who has experience in leading a Parish, who is a good manager of volunteers and able to use peoples' strengths in the church.

A good communicator who will speak to people's hearts through God and the scriptures.

A person with a strong prayer life who can continue the development of prayer in the Parish

An approachable, energetic and realistic leader who leads by example and reaches out to the unchurched through making our church a community hub.

In meeting with members of the parish to prepare this profile some common desirable characteristics were expressed: a good **communicator across the whole community**, a person with **experience in leading a Parish**, a person **good at delegating**, able to engage and encourage **all ages** to participate and willing to work with **other churches** in the town.

Our Challenges

Hopefully you will have seen that the Parish of Norton is engaged in a lot of good work for the growth of the Gospel. Unfortunately, despite all the good things going on there are divisions among the congregation which need to be dealt with. We as a Parish want to work with our new vicar to address these issues. These include:

Heal divisions and help us to work together as a whole church;

An ability to reach out to the wider community and grow the church;

Growing the prayer life of the Parish.





Our next Vicar

Parish of Norton



What we can offer

Ministering in the Parish of Norton is a rewarding task for the priest God chooses. We believe we have a lot to offer.

The Church

- A strong team who are willing to develop new ideas
- A selection of volunteers
- An active and supportive PCC
- Varied and engaging congregations
- Two churches in good repair
- An active Parish Centre

The Vicarage

The vicarage is a modern, comfortable, four bedroom house situated opposite St George's church.

It has an office by the front door allowing the family areas to remain relatively private when dealing with parish business.



The Town

Letchworth is the world's first Garden City and is in many ways a pleasant, sociable place to live and work.

It has:

- Connections with other churches
- Good transport links
- Friendly community.



Our next Vicar

Parish of Norton



The Team

Our next vicar will not be expected to work alone and unsupported. The parish has a team of individuals who help in the everyday running of the church. Some key figures include:

2 Wardens, and 6 Sunday wardens

3 Readers

1 Discipleship Enabler

1 Lay Leader of worship

PCC secretary

PCC of 15 members

Treasurer

Cleaner

Director of Music,

Ladies Choir Leader,

1 retained Organist and 3 volunteer organists

Church Committees

Norton is a training parish, and we would expect in future years to have a curate to assist in this work and to be able to hone the skills of a developing minister.



Churchwardens



Readers

Lay leader of worship/
PCC secretary



Discipleship Enabler





Worship

Parish of Norton



Worship in the Parish of Norton

Praising God is at the centre of what we do as a Parish, with the Sunday morning services at the heart of this. The services are traditional and eucharistically based with full vestments being worn.

We follow the seasonal worship of the Church of England and celebrate significant feast days. We normally transfer major festivals to the nearest Sunday.

The church has services during the week so the worship of God can continue and to provide opportunities to people who are unable to attend the Sunday morning services.

A well led church with inspiring sermons.

Congregation member

The church is welcoming - It has services for all ages and preferences.

Congregation member





Worship



Parish of Norton

Seasonal Worship

Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter are busy times for the churches with services to both allow reflection and be significant events for the community.

During Advent, both churches are used and we see a number of members of the wider community attending these services. Several carol services take place with the Nine lessons and carols and Crib services being particularly popular.

A service is held on Ash Wednesday to start Lent. Services are held every day during Holy Week which are well attended, particularly the Maundy Thursday service. Easter is bright and powerful with a service of the new light and a well attended Eucharist.

Harvest is celebrated at the end of summer both as a church and with some of our local schools.

Another popular, though more reflective service is the All Souls Service. Families who have lost loved ones in the last year are invited to a service to remember the departed.





Worship

Parish of Norton



Regular Services at St George's

Sunday morning

The main Sunday morning Eucharist at St George's has a typical attendance of between 40 and 60. It is normally supported by a choir and the congregation is involved in many parts of the service. This traditional approach is enjoyed by most members of the congregation across all age ranges.

In addition to this there is a service aimed at young families on the second Sunday of each month

On the other Sundays after the main service there is a second eucharist, in the Anglo catholic tradition.

Weekday Services

Morning Prayer is said every day, often via zoom. On Wednesday mornings there is a Eucharist service. Whilst this service does not have large numbers attending it gives time in the week for members to worship God and allow those who are unable to attend the Sunday services to receive Communion.

Once a month there is a prayer meeting where we can bring the needs of our world before the Lord.

Services are familiar enough to be comfortable but challenging enough to give inspiration.

Congregation member

It's an absolute honour to sound out the eight bells at St Nicholas .

Bellringer

Regular Services at St Nicholas'

Sunday Morning

The Sunday service at St Nicholas is a quiet service, enjoyed for its stillness and time for reflection. It is attended by 10 to 20 people each week with a range of ages.



Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

Both churches are used for baptisms, weddings and funerals, however St Nicholas has a multi-generational association with local families and so is often the chosen venue for these events. It is also used for interment of ashes. These all give a link from the Parish into the community.



Worship

Parish of Norton



Music

Music is a great way to praise God and help us to focus on His word. The Parish is fortunate to have three choirs to lead us, the Parish Choir, the Ladies Choir and the Children's Choir.

Parish Choir

The Parish Choir is a traditional robed choir which sings in four part harmony. The choir sings three Sundays each month during term time and also at special services including the Advent & Christmas carols, Ash Wednesday & Holy Week services. The choir also joins forces with choirs from other parishes in the area to sing Choral Evensong in local churches and also cathedrals.

Ladies Choir

The ladies choir is the longest running of the three choirs, originally starting out as a summer choir, they took on more responsibilities when the original mixed choir folded. They currently sing on the fifth Sunday of each month and during the summer holidays.

Children's Choir

The Children's choir is newly formed to encourage children to learn to read music and sing together. The aim for the children's choir is to sing regularly at the Altogether services and on occasions with the parish choir.

The Organs

Both St George's and St Nicholas' have well maintained organs to help with the accompaniment of the singing. The St George's organ is a two manual organ with pedals situated in the choir gallery and the St Nicholas organ is a single manual organ which was originally built for Lambeth Palace chapel.





Children and Youth



Parish of Norton

Sunday School – known as Sunday Dragons

Sunday Dragons

Sunday Dragons meet at 9.15am on the 4th Sunday of the month, just before our main service at 9.30am. It is a fantastic opportunity for pre-school to Year 8 children to have fun and make new friends whilst learning more about God, the Bible and faith. We do this together in creative ways with stories, songs, crafts and activities.

Dragonflies

Our 0-3 years Dragonflies meet, with their parents, in the Lady Chapel as the service begins at 9.30am, on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays. We play, do crafts and colouring, listen to stories, sing and pray together, as well as making new friends. On the 4th Sunday Dragonflies meet together with Sunday Dragons, in the Hall at 9.15am.

If children over 3 wish to join Dragonflies when Dragons is not running, they are welcome, accompanied by their parents. For school age children, there are activity bags at the back of church, which children can use.



Communion

We prepare children for Communion before Confirmation at our churches.



Children and Youth

Parish of Norton

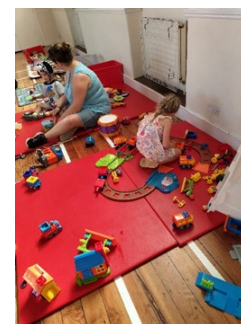


Aspire

Aspire is a group for Year 5 and above. It is a fun, active group of young people, who enjoy activities ranging from cooking to high ropes. They meet monthly on the 3rd Friday of the month, from 7pm to 8.30pm in the Loft, to talk about faith. There are also opportunities for them to be in a Music Club, a Drama Club and a Puppet Team.

Messy Church

Messy church is run once every school holiday. We run it with Norton Methodist church, alternating venues, as part of Churches together. This is very popular with the local community; parents often book a place for their child immediately after an event they have attended for the next one. This is aimed at school-age children although we do have many pre-school children attending as well.



It's exciting
Toddler at Nippers

Norton Nippers

Norton Nippers is a Toddler group which meets in the Parish Hall on Thursday afternoons, during term time. We cater for pre-school children between 0 and 4 years and their carers. In fact the youngest baby we have had was just 3 weeks old!

We have a variety of toys available, catering for the interests of all our young visitors. Alongside this we provide craft activities. In addition there is time for the carers to chat and relax, getting to know each other and the team, over a cup of tea and cake. Snacks are also available for the children.

At the end of the afternoon, we have a short time of singing and celebrating any birthdays that occur. Before we go home we say a short prayer with our 'prayer bear' and sing 'Jesus' love is very wonderful.'





Church Community



Plenty of activities which are fun.
Congregation member

Parish of Norton

Pastoral Committee

The Pastoral Committee has been running for several years. We meet every two months to discuss areas of concern in the parish and have a confidential list of people who need our help and support. Home Communion is available to those who are unable to come to church on a regular basis. There are a few of us who have been trained to take 'Home Communion' to these people. We also make regular visits to St Catherine's Nursing Home twice a month. There is a list of people who are able to give lifts to people for hospital visits and for other medical appointments. The Committee also oversees the running of Norton Coffee Shop and Friday lunches. Money raised from these ventures is part of our charitable giving.

Coffee Shop

Norton Coffee Shop is held once a week. Tea and coffee are served with cakes and scones (generally homemade) by volunteers. People from church attend as well as some from the local community. Profits go to charities agreed by the Pastoral committee and PCC.



Friday Lunch

A social event with warm soup, fresh bread, tasty cakes, tea and coffee, in a friendly atmosphere, at lunch time on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month.

Warm Welcome

This has been running since 2022 in response to the cost-of-living crisis, showing the love of Christ. Although only a few people attend we are going to keep it open for this coming winter.

Social Committee

This committee plans an annual calendar of events which are well supported and appreciated. It is self funding and monies taken at events via ticket sales, raffles and donations



fund each subsequent event. In the coming year the events arranged include everything from Beetle Drives, and Quizzes to Harvest Lunch, Christmas Cheer, and an Alice in Wonderland Afternoon Tea. The aim is to create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and provide something for everyone.



Teaching



Parish of Norton

Teaching

Learning about and exploring our Christian Faith has been a significant growth area in our church over a number of years. We have on occasion used both Alpha and Christianity Explored to help people understand our faith and how to live it.

Preaching

Our church is served by a number of people capable of bringing a variety of styles to the preaching within the services. These include 2 retired Clergy, 3 Lay Readers and a Discipleship Enabler.

Our weekly Sunday sermon and main service intercessions are put on our website to enable those who cannot get to church to benefit from the teaching and prayer.

House Groups

There are four small house groups who meet at various places and times in the parish together with a group who meet online through Zoom. They use a wide range of materials and vary from discussing DVDs to bible study activities. All are concerned to learn together and from each other how we can grow as Christians through learning more about our God and how he wants us to live for Him in the 21st Century.



Varied groups for different needs.

Congregation member





Our Buildings



Parish of Norton

St George's Church



St George's Church is the parish church for Norton and is situated on one of the main roads through Letchworth. It was consecrated in 1964 and enjoys a unique design. The most striking features include the 120 foot spire and the sculpture of the Ascending

Christ in the Sanctuary.

It is used regularly for Sunday and weekday worship, baptisms, funerals, and festival services. It is rare for weddings to be held in this church. The church is also used by the parish schools for services as its size enables all the children and their parents to attend. Services have been held in the main part of the church which have included over 300 people. The church also has a Lady Chapel which is used for smaller services and meetings.



Stunning building offering inspiration and calm.

Congregation member

St Nicholas is my safe space. It's a very friendly, welcoming congregation. There is a strong family connection and a feeling of belonging.

Congregation member

St Nicholas Church



Now designated a Chapel of Ease, this is the historic village church and the oldest building in Letchworth with a strong cultural presence to build on. It is used for regular Sunday Worship, baptisms,

weddings and funerals throughout the year, and special services at Christmas and Easter. The church is also used by the CofE school for both teaching and services to mark significant events.

As the Church dates to at least the 12th Century, maintenance is regularly needed. Fortunately the church is well supported by four groups/organisations. The Friends of St Nicholas work to maintain it as a place of worship. The St Nicholas Norton Preservation trust, a registered charity, has funded all major restoration work over the last 50 years. The Letchworth Heritage Foundation are the active Lay Rectors and fund the upkeep of the chancel.

A dedicated group of bell ringers have funded the bells for the past 40 years and regularly ring on the eight bells in the tower.

A Serbian church uses the building on a monthly basis.





Our Buildings



Parish of Norton

Norton Parish Centre



The Parish Centre is situated across the car park from St George's church and has three main rooms: the main hall which has a capacity of 300, the Clulow room with a capacity of 140 and the Loft with seating for up to ten. It has a fully equipped kitchen with serving access to both the hall and the Clulow room.

Many community organisations have regular bookings including a pre-school, yoga classes, kick boxing, bridge and badminton. Additionally nine church groups have regular bookings. The hall is well utilised during weekdays and weekends.

The Parish Office is situated in the Centre by the main entrance. There is a cleaner for the building.

There is a car park with 28 spaces (including 3 disabled access spaces) and bicycle racks which services both the Church and the Parish Centre.

Church is where we find many friends and strangers that become friends.
Congregation member



2 Common View

The Parish also has a parsonage with three bedrooms. This is located behind the Parish Centre and has easy access to the Parish Church. This house provides accommodation for the curate when we have one and a supply of income when we do not. It is ideal accommodation for a medium sized family.



Our Community

Parish of Norton



Parish Community

Who are we?

Whilst we are all here to worship God, people choose to attend our churches for a range of reasons, some have recently moved to the area whilst others have been worshipping here all their lives. Some key facts about our congregations are:

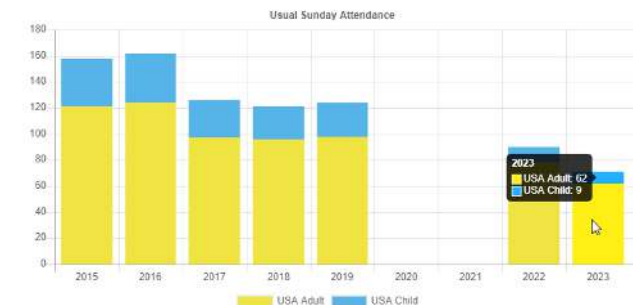
Our parish is slightly more deprived than the average for the diocese. It is also slightly less ethnically diverse than the locality.

Letchworth Group of Churches

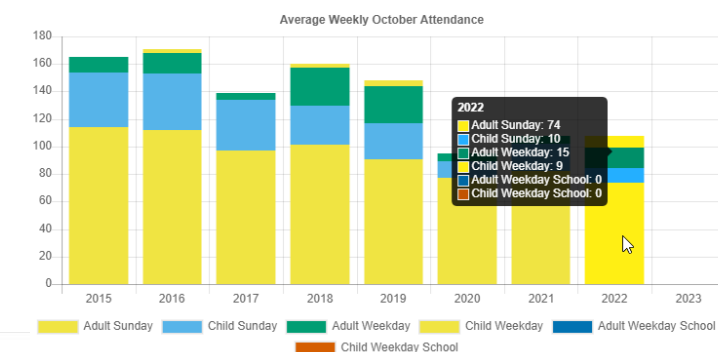
The Parish is within the Letchworth Group of Church of England Churches. This group maintains links between the priests.

The Parish of Norton works with churches in the area to support the local foodbank and uniform bank.

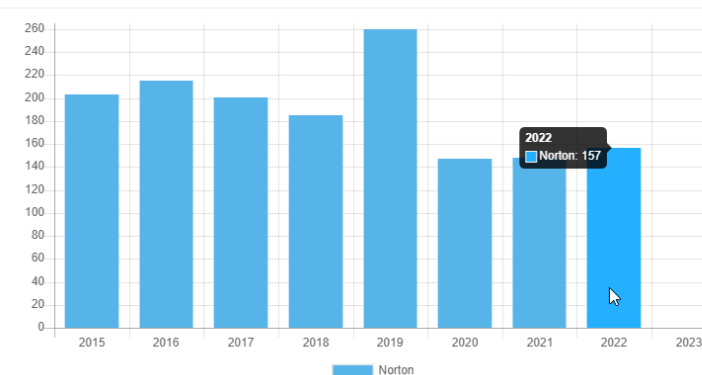
Usual Sunday Attendance



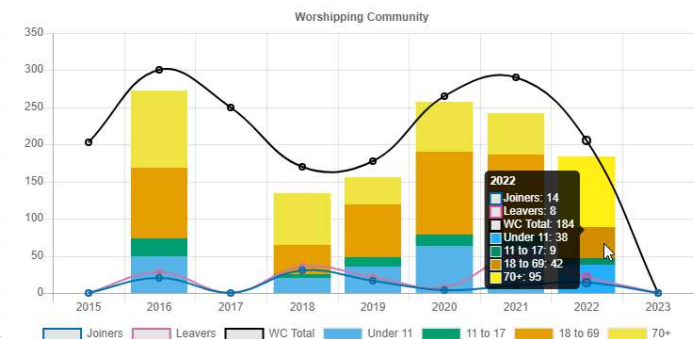
Average October Weekly Attendance



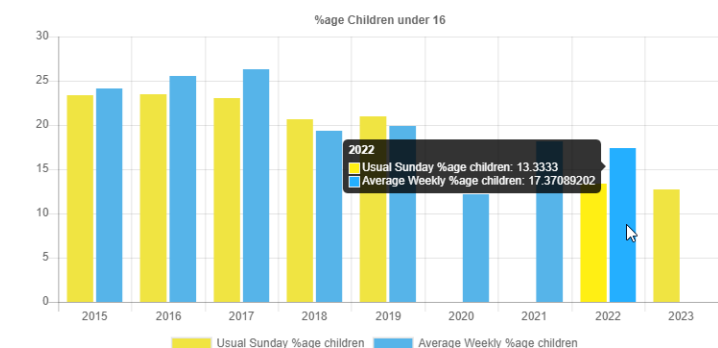
Electoral Roll



Worshipping Community



%age children under 16





Our Community



Parish of Norton

Parish information and changes

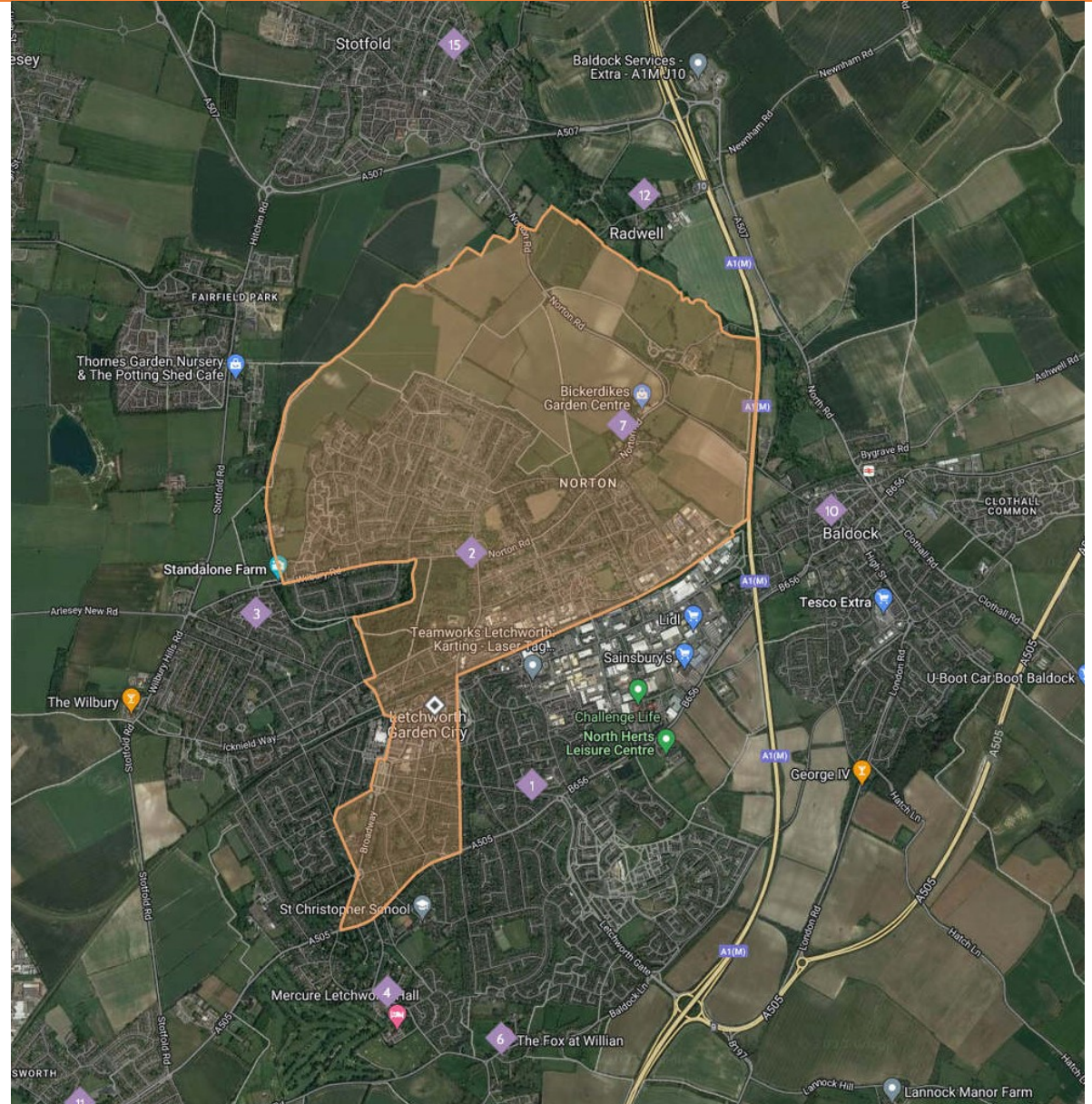
The Parish of Norton is located on the northern side of Letchworth Garden City. It is primarily suburban with some agriculture.

Since the closure of St Michael's (the Parish of Letchworth) there are now three Church of England parishes within the town - St. Paul's, Wilbury and Norton. Therefore our Parish boundaries have recently been reorganised. Although some data websites have updated their information to reflect this, many are still catching up.

The population of our parish was listed as 9055 but with the enlargement probably now 12,000+. This brings fresh challenges to reach out with God's word to the additional people now living within our boundaries.

In terms of diversity, 93% of the population is white British and 96% have English as their first language. 44% describe themselves as Christian, compared with 22% describing themselves as having no faith.

The parish does have some issues with deprivation. Rated against other Church of England parishes it is rated 4,503 out of 12,559 for deprivation (1 being the most deprived) with 36% of the Parish residents living in social housing.





Our Community



Parish of Norton

Norton St Nicholas VA Primary School



St Nicholas School is a Church of England (VA) Primary school which has 236 students aged 4 to 11. It enjoys close links with the Parish of Norton and the Diocese of St Albans. It is rated as 'Good' by OFSTED and 'Outstanding' by SIAMS. The school places a strong emphasis on teaching Christian values.

Being 150 years old, it is housed in a mix of modern and traditional buildings; the school is well equipped and resourced to teach a modern and creative curriculum; externally the school has an environmental study area and a large playing space with a field, a playground with an activity trail and a dedicated Willow Chapel as an outside space for reflection.

The Parish supports the school in a number of ways. The vicar takes a child friendly Eucharist service and church members deliver assemblies. Six of the governors are PCC elected, the vicar is also normally an ex-officio governor.

The school holds Christmas, Easter and Leavers' services at both churches.

Other schools in the Parish

There are four other schools in the Parish - Northfields Infants and Nursery, Grange Academy (KS2), Stonehill (Primary and Nursery) and St Francis' College, which is a private school with children aged from 3 -18.





Our Community



Parish of Norton

Local Community - Letchworth Garden City



Letchworth Garden City is the world's first Garden City and was founded in 1903. It also boasts the oldest roundabout in the UK (circa 1909)!

Originally founded on the principles of Ebenezer Howard, the town has developed considerably over the last 120 years. It is now larger, with housing estates developing around the town including in the Parish.

It is currently working towards being a more environmentally

friendly town.

Nowadays its population is 33,986 (2021 figure),

Norton Common Nature Reserve

There is a lovely Common within the parish which provides access to wildlife and is popular with dog-walkers and walking groups





Our Community



Parish of Norton

Letchworth Garden City

Entertainment

Letchworth has a restored cinema and theatre, a number of restaurants and some pubs. The Settlement puts on a range of events for the local area. Further afield there are theatres in both Hitchin and Stevenage as well as Stevenage Leisure park with a range of facilities.



Shopping

Like most towns the centre has struggled with the problems of the decline of High Street footfall but our town centre continues to have a range of small shops including a particularly good



independent book shop. Most major supermarket brands are available within the town area, including Morrison's in the town centre and Sainsbury's, Aldi and Lidl on the edge of town.

The surrounding area has a good selection of shopping centres easily accessible from the town.





Our Community

Parish of Norton



Health Care

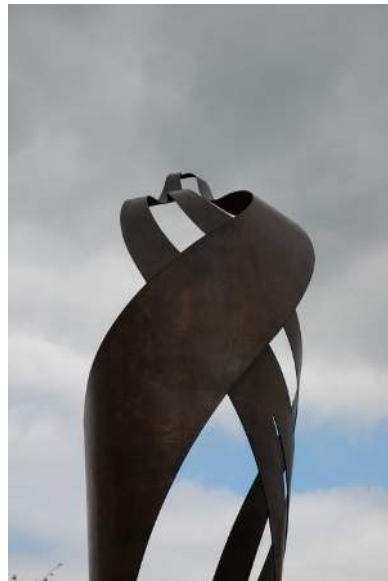
Letchworth is close to Stevenage where there is the Lister Hospital and the town itself has a range of doctor's and dental surgeries. There are a number of gyms locally.



Schools

There is a range of primary schools in Letchworth including 4 in the Parish.

There are two state secondary schools, The Highfield School and Fearnhill School. There are also two private secondary schools, St Francis' College (girls), which is in Parish and St Christopher's School (mixed sex)

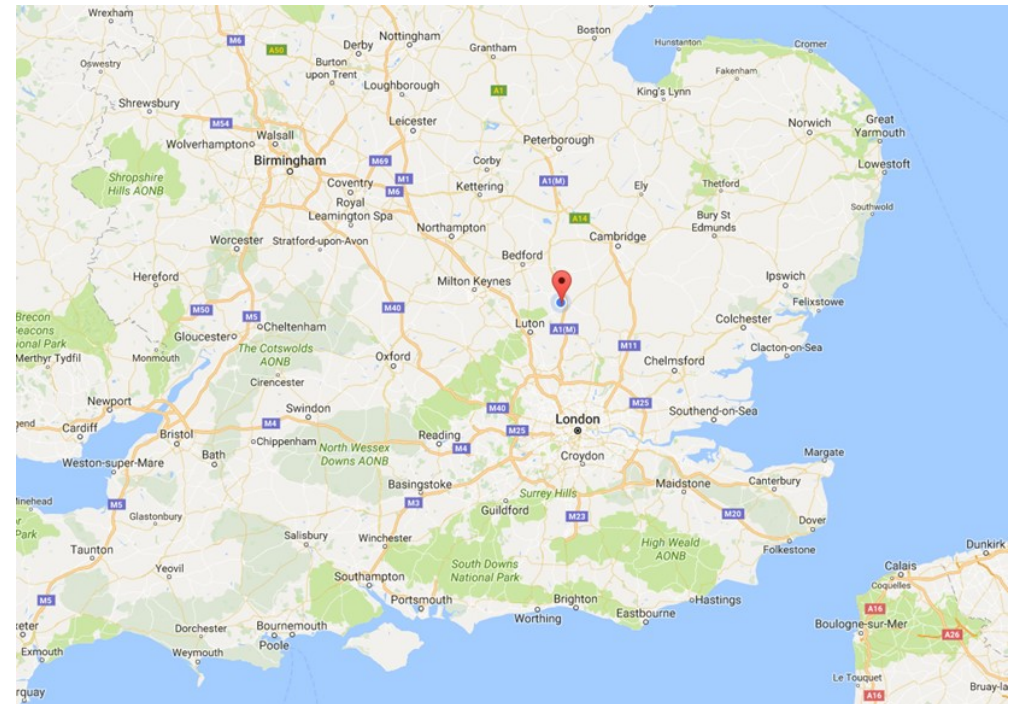


Transport

Letchworth is on the A1(M) accessible at Junctions 9 and 10.

Letchworth Station provides fast train access to London, approximately 30 minutes to King's Cross station. Cambridge is also easily accessible from Letchworth. Gatwick Airport and Brighton are also accessible with straight through trains.

There is also quick access to Stevenage to transfer to trains heading in other directions.





Finance

Parish of Norton



Financial Position

The Church aims to use the resources God has given us to their best effect for the work of Christ.

Over the last 4 years we have maintained an average income of some £144,000 compared to outgoings of £134,000, paying our Parish share in full each year and have added a modest sum to our reserves for maintaining the Parish properties and to support our desire to grow our presence within the community.

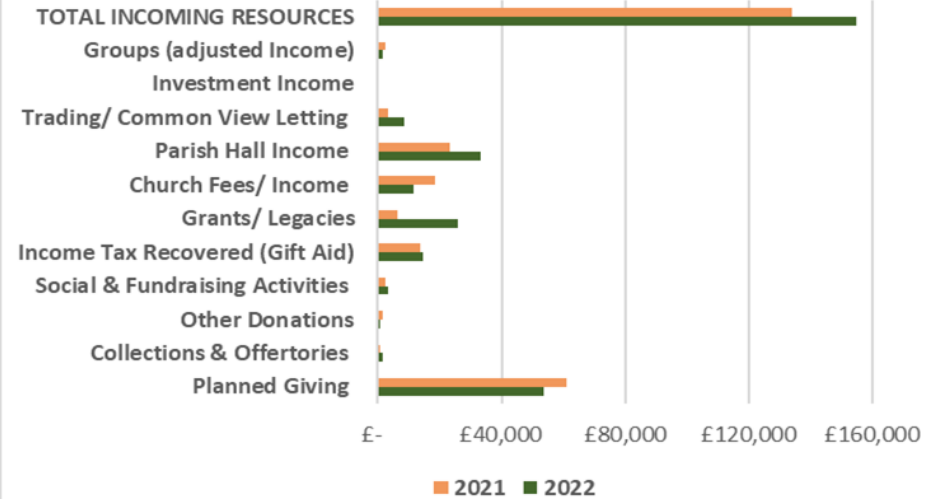
We have some 75 regular planned givers, and we receive around £25,000 income each year from regular hirings at the Parish centre.

Fund raising and Charity Support

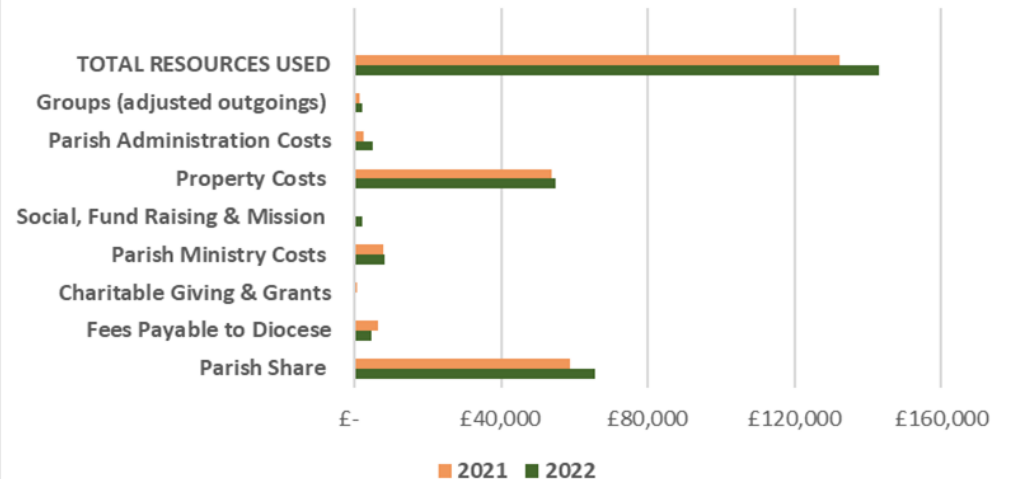
Events

Events which raise funds for the church are an essential part of our income. Some social events and activities are also carried out to support other charities.

Income



Outgoings





Afterword

Parish of Norton



Thank you for taking the time to read this profile. Please take time to pray for the Parish of Norton and if you feel God is calling you to be our new vicar you are welcome to apply.

If you have any questions please contact:

For an informal conversation or to apply: the Archdeacon of

St Albans Office at archd@stalbans.anglican.org

tel: 01727 818121

The Parish Representatives:

Neil Greatorex at neil.greatorex@virginmedia.com

or 07818413380

Ros Pratt at j.a.pratt@btinternet.com

or 07956697656

