



The Parish of
West Cheltenham

PARISH PROFILE

RECTOR

“Communities and places buzzing with the extraordinary presence of Jesus.”

God is at work across our three churches, in our schools, and among the diversity of our communities. We are seeking a rector who will help us recognise, nurture, and extend that work.

WWW.WESTCHELT.ORG.UK

WELCOME TO WEST CHELTENHAM PARISH

Thankyou for prayerfully considering whether God might be calling you to be our next Rector.

We are praying that God will call a **visionary leader** who is **led by the Spirit**, has a **compelling love to preach God's Word** and with **a heart for supporting mission**, and enjoys **team building**, to join our parish.

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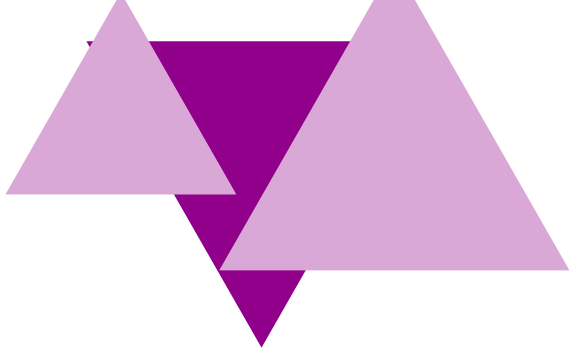
Cheltenham Deanery 21



Where is God working across our parish?

God is at work across the parish, bringing growth, and new energy:

- Welcoming and inclusive **Sunday worship**, catering particularly for children, young families, and the older generation.
- Three community styles aiming for **"unity not uniformity"**.
- Active links with **local schools**.
 - Experience' events held at Christian festivals of Pentecost, Harvest, Christmas and Easter.
 - 'Open the Book' Bible stories in school assemblies.
 - 'Messy Church'.
 - Alternative Halloween 'Light parties'.
 - Appointment of a Schools Connector/Youth minister to support discipleship of church youth and provide outreach into the local secondary school.
- Strong ecumenical links with **local charities** including, The Rock, YMCA and Youth For Christ.
- Hub groups, worship and pastoral care are helping people deepen faith and grow in **discipleship**.
- The parish values **friendship, prayer, fun, generosity** and a strong sense of **mission**.
- A stable **clergy, staff and leadership** structure working collaboratively.
- The **PCC** have a strong sense of purpose, working well together across different communities
- Exciting plans to transform St Aidan's site into a **community garden**. Well on the way to securing funds through grants and business sponsorship.
- exploring **pioneering mission** opportunities through the medium of performing arts, including annual holiday club.



Could it be you?

- We are seeking a **Spirit-filled Rector** to come alongside us as a “lead sheep”, acknowledging that Jesus is our shepherd
- Someone who is keen to see people come to faith in Christ and to grow as Christians, with experience of leading a church in **evangelism** and **discipleship**
- Someone who will help the parish to develop a clear **vision** for what God is calling us to do within the fellowship and in the wider community
- A **communicator** who preaches and teaches at the right level for our congregations with their mixture of long-established Christians and newcomers who may still be seeking a faith
- A **team leader** who doesn't try to do everything themselves but encourages all church members to use and develop their gifts in the church and in the community
- Someone who prioritises their own **spiritual, emotional and physical health and wellbeing**.
- A leader who will offer **oversight, direction and pastoral care** to clergy and lay leaders in the parish
- Someone with a heart for supporting mission at home and overseas

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Pastoral Care

As well as oversight across the whole parish, the Rector will have pastoral responsibility for the congregations at St Mark's and St Aidan's & St Silas' Churches.

Reordering at St Mark's

Following many years of consultation and planning, the parish has been granted a faculty for the re-ordering of St Mark's Church. Whilst the main oversight of this project sits with the PCC through its facilities action group, the Rector will have direct involvement in developing the church's ministry, utilising the new opportunities that the re-ordering will bring.

Schools and Youth

The Rector is an ex-officio member of the governing body of St Mark's Junior School. We are in the process of appointing a School/Youth Connector to work collaboratively within All Saints' Academy and the parish.

Land Development with St Aidan's

The rector will support and collaborate with the parish Pioneer Minister in the development of the 'garden project' on St Aidan's land.

Collaboration at St Barnabas

The Rector will support and collaborate with the Associate Rector based at St Barnabas' Church in developing a growing and thriving community hub, with a focus on intergenerational worship.

PCC Teamwork

The Rector will work with the PCC to support the development of all areas of ministry across the parish as we seek to reach the diverse community with the good news of Jesus in a relevant way.

ST MARK'S CHURCH



St Mark's worship life is varied, with a lively contemporary service on most Sundays with children's and youth groups, a traditional monthly service with organ, a monthly Messy Church congregation for families of all ages and a traditional midweek Holy Communion service.

Through varied styles of worship we aim to meet the needs and preferences of a range of people both within the congregation and those visiting. We aspire to be friendly, open and accepting of everyone.

We are also committed to serving our local community through schools' work, a Mothers and Toddlers group, Messy Church, picnic days and other social events.

Carol services for both the local community and St Mark's School are always very well attended.

The hall is well equipped and used extensively by both church and community groups, including a local dance school.

We are looking forward to the opportunities for mission which the re-ordering project will bring.

ST AIDAN AND ST SILAS' CHURCH

St Aidan and St Silas fellowship are a small but dedicated group of Christians who currently meet in the Oasis Community Centre each week, the lease of which is up for renewal in 2028 and the parish will be exploring options for a building. The congregation are well rooted in, and have a heart for their local community of Hesters Way and are keen to rebuild relationships and offer hospitality to neighbours and the wider community.

Services are usually lay led and are welcoming and informal. They may follow a simple liturgy or sometimes use more creative material. Bible teaching is also often lay led, encouraging participation through discussion. The preaching and teaching rota is supported by licensed Lay Readers and other visiting speakers. Once a month a member of the clergy team leads a Common Worship Communion Service.

There is a strong musical tradition at St Aidan's and St Silas and singers and musicians meet regularly to practice accompanying worship on an array of instruments.

Prayer has always been at the heart of the St Aidan and St Silas family providing a supportive network within the small fellowship, practical and pastoral.



ST BARNABAS' CHURCH

St Barnabas Church is overseen by Rev James Faragher, Associate Rector. All services at St Barnabas are intergenerational including the fifth Sunday, when there is a more relaxed café-style service. We enjoy live music as well as projected worship songs. Prayer Ministry is available after each Sunday service.

We have a good relationship with the local primary school where we have involvement through assemblies, Open the Book and Experience programmes.

The halls are an important part of ministry and community life. They are used daily by a YMCA-run pre-school, Rainbows, Guides and Brownie groups, and rehearsals for Cheltenham Silver Band.

A kitchen and toilet were recently installed in the church building which enables more flexible use including a weekly Stay & Play session run by Family Space (YMCA), and various other outreach activities.

We are a growing church with people of all ages in our worshipping community.



PIONEER MINISTRY

Potential for new worshipping communities

- **St Aidan's Garden:** The Pioneer Minister has partnered with Gloucestershire University to develop plans for this site. The vision is to create an accessible public space, inspired by Seven Sacred Spaces, that serves both the local community and the wider parish: a place where people can encounter God through prayer, reflection and hospitality. We've already begun to mark the Christian festivals through the year with community events and to host a community gardening group in season. The hope is to develop more regular outdoor worship.
- **Performing Arts:** Following the 2024 Community Passion Play and dramatised Nativity, we welcomed children and families to our Miracle Mystery Tour, a performing arts holiday club. Building on this we are considering how we might use this media as the basis for a worshipping community in Springbank.
- **Golden Valley Development:** We are one of the main stakeholders involved in the consultation process and hope to offer community building skills in welcoming new residents. There is potential for new worshipping communities amongst the residential community and/or the CYBER business park.



St Mark's CofE Junior School

We are a Voluntary Aided Church of England junior school serving Benhall, St Marks and neighbouring communities with two forms of entry for children aged 7–11. Most pupils join us from the neighbouring Benhall Infant School and we are working closely to ensure a smooth transition between the schools, including shared leadership from January 2027.

We are committed to a distinctively Christian ethos, working closely with the Diocese of Gloucester's education team, and are exceptionally proud of our 'Excellent' rating in our most recent SIAMS inspection. We recognise a strong mission opportunity in our community and seek to offer an inclusive, Christian education, rooted in the national Church's vision of being "Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good".

St Mark's was judged Good in all areas at its last Ofsted inspection, with the next inspection expected within 18 months. Our Headteacher, Angharad Fitch, has been an active member of St Mark's Church for over 20 years, fostering the important links.

St Mark's Church is central in fulfilling our mission:

Participation We welcome an active Rector to our school life. Previous Rectors regularly led Collective Worship which was much valued by pupils. We engage with church through the Christian festivals such as 'Experience Harvest' and 'Experience Easter', with jointly led services at Christmas and Easter.

Governance Most governors are Diocesan appointments recommended by West Cheltenham PCC. The Rector serves ex-officio and we are open to discussing how this works in practice (not assuming 'Chair'). An Ethos Committee oversees Christian distinctiveness, and we would welcome the Rector's involvement.

Pastoral Care is deeply valued within our school community. This has included offering comfort in times of bereavement, supporting the resolution of concerns, and caring for staff wellbeing. We would welcome opportunities to develop this for our families. For many, St Mark's is their main connection with a Christian community.



All Saints' Academy

All Saints' Academy is a Church of England secondary school that serves the community of West Cheltenham.

We have 1,100 students, including 180 in the sixth form. Numbers have grown in recent years and are expected to rise significantly with local housing development. www.asachelt.org

Disadvantaged Community

Need in our community is significant. 40% of our students receive pupil premium funding, the highest by some distance in Cheltenham.

Nationally, the school sits in the lowest quartile for deprivation, and locally is among the most deprived, with high levels of child poverty.

Last year, 58 students were supported by a social worker, including those on Child Protection and Child in Need plans. We work closely with social care and other agencies to support our families.

40% of students arrive within an entry profile that is below "expected standards" in English and maths, compared with 25% nationally.

Many have additional needs, particularly in social, emotional and mental health. 26% do not have English as their first language. In response, we provide layered support, with early reading intervention, 'Thrive' teaching, wide enrichment opportunities, and a carefully developed curriculum. Our aim is for sustained progress over 5–7 years, moving students to successful post-16 pathways.

Our Christian tradition shapes our belief that all of us are uniquely made, valued and belong at All Saints' Academy.

Our Vision is that our students are become **"Light in the World"**, in school and community, through academic and personal development.

Our **Ethos** is framed by our "All Saints' Way" which expresses our values as verbs, and aligns our Christian ethos with our approaches to personal development.

We have a team of chaplains, funded in partnership with the diocese who support our connection to the community as well as leading spirituality within the Academy.

We look forward to growing our Partnership this year, with the appointment of a School Connector 'Youth Minister.. This person will be a visible Christian presence in school, and in the churches of West Cheltenham.



MINISTRY TEAM



JAMES FARAGHER

Associate Rector with responsibility for St Barnabas' Church

James joined the team in 2024 and has a particular passion for intergenerational worship.



JANICE HAMILTON

Community Pioneer Minister

Since 2021, Janice has worked particularly in the Springbank and Hester's Way areas of West Cheltenham.



APPOINTED

School Connector & Youth Minister

Due to start in Sept 2026, the School Connector/Youth Minister will share their time between outreach within All Saints Academy and discipleship of youth within our churches.



GORDON HAYES-DONE

Operations Manager

Gordon oversees everything behind the scenes; bookings, events, communications, admin and more!



CURRENTLY RECRUITING

Pioneer Curate

The Pioneer Curate is due to start in spring 2027 and will work predominantly alongside Janice and James..



PHIL SOUTHAM & KATHRYN MARTIN

Parish Wardens

Working tirelessly behind the scenes, Phil and Kathryn provide important support to the clergy and leadership of a dedicated PCC.

The ministry team work closely and collaboratively across the parish, working alongside each of the three churches' leadership teams and the PCC. They meet weekly for worship, prayer, planning and coffee.

Within the parish there are three clergy with PTO and several Readers

THE PARISH AT A GLANCE

The Parish of West Cheltenham is a group of three sister churches located on the Western edge of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire: St Mark's Church, St Barnabas Church and St Aidan & St Silas Church.

The parish is the most populous in the Diocese of Gloucester, with over 28,000 people currently living within our boundary. This is set to increase substantially between now and 2030, with over 10,000 new residents moving here as part of the Cyber Park development.

It is a demographically mixed area, containing large local authority (and ex-local authority) housing, alongside more affluent, newer housing.

About a quarter of households within the parish are local authority tenants.

The 2021 census showed that 10% of people in the area are Asian/Black/Mixed/Other and there is a large Eastern European population, with 11% of homes who have English as a second language.

In terms of the Christian faith, the census showed just 44% of residents refer to Christianity as their religion – down 14% in 10 years. 45.6% identify as having no religious affiliation.

In terms of age demographics, 19.1% of the population are 15 and under, and 12% fall into the 15–24 bracket. There are 11 schools within the parish boundary, as well as the Cheltenham Campus of Gloucestershire College.

OUR PARISH CHURCHES

Our parish has an open evangelical and charismatic character and heritage.

St Mark's Church was founded in 1862. St Silas' was planted in the 1880s, St Barnabas' in the 1940s, St Aidan's in the 1950s and Emmanuel in the 1980s. In recent years the congregations of St Aidan's and St Silas' have joined together and, after the demolition of the St Aidan's building, now meet in the Oasis Centre (leased by Gloucestershire County Council to the YMCA). Emmanuel has also amalgamated into St Mark's.

Each congregation has its own distinctive feel but all seek to be welcoming and multigenerational church families. We work together to contribute to parish life and occasionally worship together with joint services. A Communion service takes place in one of our churches each Sunday. There are weekly parish wide prayer gatherings and hub groups.

Our 2026 electoral roll:

- St Mark's: 66
- St Aidan's & Silas': 20
- St Barnabas': 55

Typical Sunday service attendance: Occasional offices 2025:

St Mark's: 63 adults & 16 children
(Sunday)
25 Adults (Wednesday)
St Aidan's & Silas': 19 adults & 1 child
St Barnabas': 47 adults & 6 children

- Baptisms: 10
- Weddings: 5
- Funerals: 10

THE PARISH AT A GLANCE

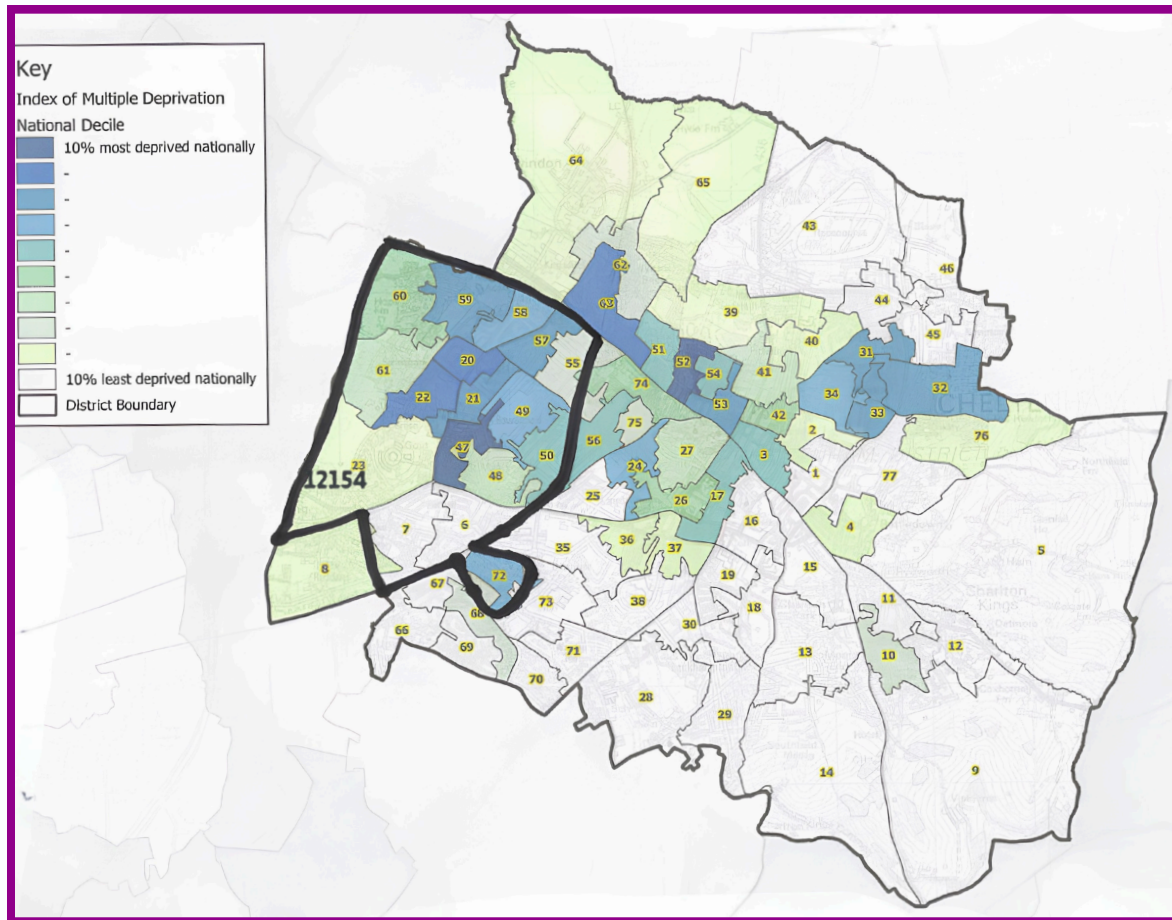
- GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) lies within the Parish and is the town's single largest employer.
- Other major employers within the town are UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service), Spirax Sarco, Kohler Mira (Mira Showers), Endsleigh Insurance and Superdry.
- Within the Parish there is a small amount of light industry, as well as a slightly run-down shopping centre on Coronation Square.
- Work has commenced on the creation of a 200-hectare cyber park, intended to turn the town into the UK's cyber security capital. It will include 3700 new houses, a new primary school and green space. A significant part of the site will fall within the Parish.
- Gloucestershire County Council Social Services have a base on Edinburgh Place (adjacent to Coronation Square), where there is also a public library.
- Many voluntary organisations serve the local communities with whom we have good working relationships, including West Cheltenham Partnership, Springbank Community Group and Common Ground.
- There are eleven schools within the Parish. These include All Saints' Academy (the only C of E secondary in the Diocese), and St Mark's C of E (Voluntary Aided) Junior School, where the Rector is an ex-officio governor.
- Alongside these schools are Benhall Infant School, Hesters Way Primary School, Rowanfield Infant & Junior Schools, Springbank Primary Academy, St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, St George's Centre (KS4 alternative provision setting), Pate's Grammar School and (parts of) Dean Close Independent School. Gloucestershire College's Cheltenham Campus is also within the Parish
- We have good relations and active links with the many of these schools.

THE PARISH AT A GLANCE

Overall Deprivation

The population of this parish is **28160**. Nationally, it ranks **3349** out of **12154**, where 1 is the most deprived parish.

This means that the parish is relatively deprived compared with other parishes in the country.

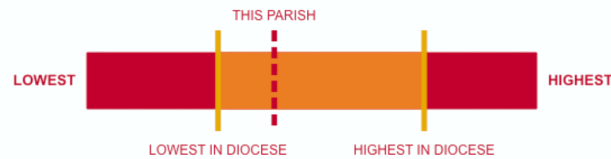


THE PARISH AT A GLANCE

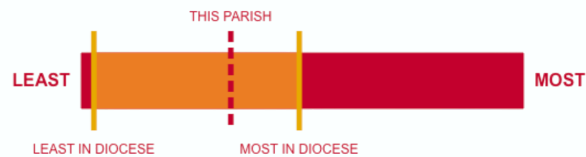
Child Poverty



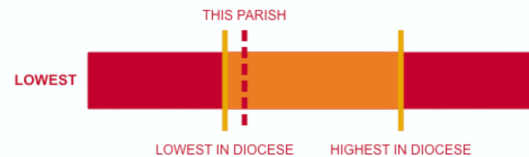
Life Expectancy (Boys)



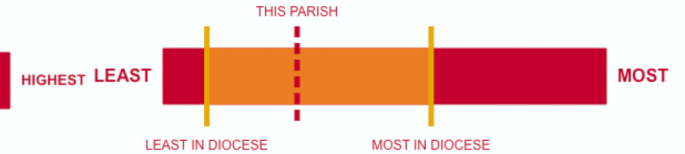
Working-age Poverty



Life Expectancy (Girls)



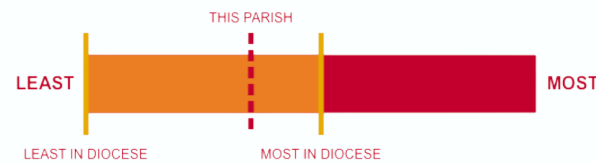
People Living On Their Own



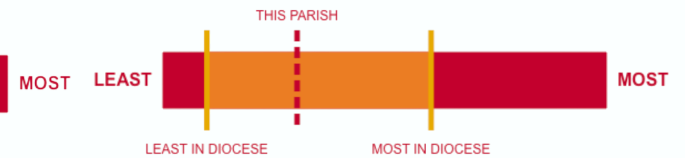
Pensioner Poverty



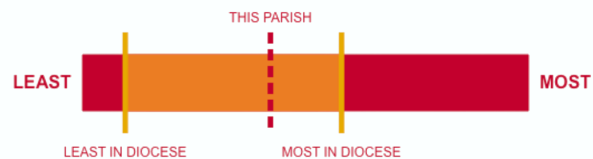
Lone Parenthood



People Living On Their Own

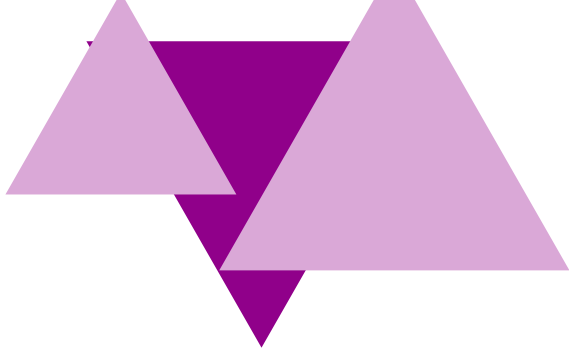


No Qualifications



Social Housing





Safeguarding

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy, the parish is committed to:

- **promoting a safer environment and culture;**
- **safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children young people and vulnerable adults within the church;**
- **responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation;**
- **caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons;**
- **caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons; and**
- **responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.**

The parish has adopted a safeguarding policy and procedure in line with the House of Bishops' guidance and policies and has a Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

The safeguarding policies of the Parish and Diocese can be viewed at:

Safeguarding – [The Parish of West Cheltenham](#)

Safeguarding – [Diocese of Gloucester](#)

LIVING HERE



ACCOMMODATION

The newly appointed Rector will move into the 4 bed detached Rectory with 2 reception rooms, an office, a spacious garden, garage and driveway on Fairmount Road – just around the corner from St Mark's, and a 5 minute walk from Cheltenham Spa train station.



CHELTENHAM

On the edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we are surrounded by wonderful countryside. As well as an array of shops and eateries, there is a museum and art gallery, two concert halls and three theatres, plus events such as Literature, Science, Music, Jazz and Food festivals as well as a Christian Arts Festival, and of course 'the' Cheltenham Festival, held annually at the racecourse.

Birmingham and Bristol are just an hour away.



West Cheltenham Parish is part of the Diocese of Gloucester and Cheltenham Deanery.

We are shaped by the Diocese of Gloucester's **LIFE Together vision**, which encourages us to:

- **Nurture everyday disciples** who grow in faith and live out their calling in daily life.
- **Invest in children, young people and families**, creating opportunities for them to explore and grow in faith.
- **Develop new and courageous ways of worshipping**, reaching people in different places and contexts.
- **Work for flourishing communities**, responding to injustice, exclusion, isolation and environmental challenges.
- **Develop diverse lay and ordained leaders** who can serve God's mission.

These priorities connect strongly with our own vision of seeing "**places and communities buzzing with the extraordinary presence of Jesus**", and are reflected in our commitment to prayer, mission and outreach, ministry with young people and children, intergenerational worship, and community engagement in areas of deprivation.

CHELTENHAM DEANERY

We are blessed by strong relationships with Anglican clergy and lay leaders across Cheltenham Deanery who pray together, encourage one another, share wisdom and resources, and seek opportunities to work in partnership. This spirit of collaboration is an important expression of unity in Christ and essential for the future flourishing of the churches in Cheltenham.

Within Cheltenham Deanery, we are committed to the **Deanery Strategic Pathway**, working collaboratively with other churches to respond to the opportunities and challenges before us. Key areas of focus include:

- **Collaborative ministry**; moving from isolated parishes towards networks of churches where ordained and lay leaders share resources, expertise and mission initiatives.
- Responding to the **Golden Valley Development and Cyber Park**, helping to shape the Church's response to one of Gloucestershire's most significant developments by engaging with new communities, and workplaces.
- Using finances, buildings, staffing and vacancies strategically so that resources are directed towards mission and the needs of our communities.
- New operations support – embracing new ways of working, including **Deanery Operational Leads**, so that clergy are freed to focus on spiritual leadership, discipleship and mission.



The Parish of
West Cheltenham

**Thank you for reading this
profile.**

**May God speak to you as you
consider your next steps.**

*O gracious and holy Father, give me wisdom to
perceive you, diligence to seek you, patience to
wait for you, eyes to behold you, a heart to
meditate upon you, and a life to proclaim you,
through the power of the spirit of Jesus Christ
our Lord.*

Amen



St Barnabas Church
West Cheltenham



St Mark's Church
West Cheltenham



St Aidan & St Silas Church
West Cheltenham