

# St John the Baptist Church, Barlaston



## Parish Profile

***'Called by God to live out his exciting mission in this place'***

<https://stjohnsbarlaston.co.uk/>

*'We are not looking for perfection, but for someone who will love, lead and learn with us – someone who will bring both steadiness and vision and who will delight in seeing others flourish.'*

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## Introductory words from the Bishop of Stafford

I am delighted to commend this excellent profile for St John's. This is a parish church deeply embedded in the community it serves. It is distinguished by able and supportive lay leaders who are ready to work alongside their Vicar with enthusiasm and commitment. Congregational life is lively and warm and there is a real desire to grow in discipleship. This is a role that would reward someone who makes teaching and training a priority. There are strong links with the church school and some excellent work with children and whoever comes to be the new Vicar will find plenty of opportunities to develop this work further.

As a resident of Barlaston myself, I can recommend the village itself as a wonderful place to live. The Vicarage is a good house, and the church building is flexible and well placed to serve the community.

The Deanery of Stone is small but relationships within the Deanery are good. The Diocese of Lichfield continues to put Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism at the heart of our vision and we are committed to the wellbeing of our clergy. The [Diocesan website](#) is worth a visit to find out more about our priorities.

So, I commend not only this profile but the role itself and I would be very glad to hear from you if you think God may be calling you to be the next Vicar of Barlaston

+ Matthew Stafford

## 1. The Context

St John the Baptist, Barlaston, is a single-church parish served by a part-time (0.5 FTE) vicar, working with a strong lay leadership team.

- Situated in the Archdeaconry of Stoke-upon-Trent, within the Deanery of Stone in the Diocese of Lichfield.
- We are seeking a replacement part time Vicar to lead us forward.
- Church members consistently value Bible-based, thoughtful, and relevant preaching.
- Our key service is held at 10.30am on Sundays, supported by an enthusiastic choir and a MOSAIC group for children. The style of worship includes a mix of traditional hymns and more modern songs.
- Barlaston is a large and active village in Staffordshire, located between Stoke-on-Trent and Stone, and within easy reach of the M6 motorway and mainline rail services. The parish is semi-rural in character, combining a strong sense of village community with close links to the wider Potteries and the market town of Stone. The Trent and Mersey Canal runs through the village, and there are areas of outstanding natural beauty nearby, including Downs Banks and Trentham Gardens.



- Our present church building, completed in 1983 after the former parish church was closed due to subsidence, is modern, flexible, and well-used for both worship and community activity. We are looking at future proofing our building through sustainability with replacement windows and heating system.
- We have close ties with Barlaston First School, where the vicar and team contribute to worship and governance, and we are eager to strengthen this relationship further. We also work with the Parish Council and community groups to maintain a visible Christian presence in village life. The new vicar might explore involvement in school governance as appropriate – outside of the 0.5% working time.

## 2. Our Vision

- is rooted in discipleship, care, and community:
- to extend and nurture discipleship across all ages, from the youngest children to older members of the congregation.
- to develop and encourage the gifts and talents of all who serve.
- to deepen our pastoral reach, especially with the frail and housebound.
- to continue building strong partnerships with our school, local council, and wider community.
- to grow as a “green church,” caring for God’s creation.

Financially, we are committed to supporting the wider mission of the Diocese through the Common Fund, which we paid in full in 2024. Our finances are managed carefully, and while resources are finite, we have maintained our building and ministry faithfully with the support of generous parishioners.

There are no pastoral reorganisations currently under consideration. We look forward with hope and prayer to welcoming a new vicar who will share in our vision, help us grow in faith and number, and enable us to serve the people of Barlaston more fully.

### 3. The Challenge

Together with our new vicar, we believe God is calling us to address a few key challenges:

The church has moved on considerably since Covid. We are now more relaxed in our worship.

The time for serving refreshments (after every Sunday 10.30 service) has developed into a great period of fellowship.



We wish to grow in fellowship with each other and our develop our relationships with our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Discipleship

- To sustain and deepen Bible-based preaching that is thought-provoking, reflective, and equips people to live out their faith during the week.
- To extend discipleship opportunities for children into teenage years and young adults, helping them to grow in faith.
- This may include developing a follow-on pathway after MOSAIC, confirmation preparation, and opportunities for teenagers to participate actively in worship and small groups.
- To grow and develop our new 'All Together' worship that we are currently running in the first Sunday of each month at 10.30am.

#### Vocation

- To encourage and nurture the gifts and talents of the congregation in worship, pastoral care, and community life.
- To equip and support lay leaders across youth, pastoral, music, and communication ministries, recognising the scope of a part-time role and the need to empower others for growth

#### Evangelism

- To strengthen our relationship with Barlaston First School, ensuring children and families feel welcomed into the life of the church
- To find new ways of engaging with younger families in the parish so that they feel drawn into worship and church life.

- To increase our outreach to the elderly, housebound, and those less able to attend church regularly, offering care and connection.
- To maintain a visible, caring presence in the wider village community and deepen partnerships with local groups and the Parish Council. \*
- To work in such a way that ministry is shared, encouraging and equipping PCC members, the ministry team, and as many of the congregation as possible to use their gifts and take an active role, so that the whole church is empowered to grow in confidence and faith.



## 4. The Role Description

We are seeking a vicar who will work with us in these ways:

### Discipleship

- Lead worship and preaching that is rooted in scripture, reflective and thought-provoking, equipping people to live out their faith during the week.
- Developing opportunities for children and young people to continue growing in faith through their teenage years and beyond. Encourage a culture of prayer, reflection, and learning across the congregation.
- Grow the weekly Bible study group.

### Vocation

- Identify, encourage, and support the gifts and talents of members of the congregation, enabling lay leadership in worship, pastoral care, and community engagement.
- Work collaboratively with wardens, PCC, readers, choir, and ministry team to strengthen shared leadership.
- Given the 0.5 FTE scope, this will include empowering lay leadership in youth, pastoral, and music ministry.
- Inspire and support vocation across all ages, nurturing gifts and talents, and enabling people in different parts of the parish community to contribute.

## Evangelism

- Develop and deepen our relationship with Barlaston First School, strengthening links with pupils, staff, and families so that the school community feels part of the life of the church.
- Reach out to younger families and children in the parish, drawing them into worship and church life.
- Strengthen pastoral outreach to the frail, elderly, and housebound, ensuring they remain connected to the church family.
- Maintain a visible, caring presence in the wider community, building positive partnerships with the Parish Council and other local organisations.



## 5. Person Specification

### (a) Experience

- **Essential:**
  - Preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ.
  - Bible-based sermons.
  - Leading a range of worship styles.
  - Providing pastoral care, particularly for families, older people, the frail, and the housebound.
- **Desirable:**
  - Experience of nurturing children's and youth discipleship, and of working with schools.
  - Experience of supporting and encouraging lay leadership within a congregation.
  - Additional training in children's, youth, or school's ministry.

## (b) Knowledge, Skills & Competencies

- **Essential:**

- Ability to preach in a way that is scriptural, reflective, thought-provoking, and relevant to everyday life.
- Strong communication and listening skills across different ages and contexts.
- Competence in pastoral ministry, ability to support people in times of need.
- Sound understanding of safeguarding, safeguarding culture and best practice.
- Organisational skills to build and coordinate lay teams (e.g. pastoral, youth, music).

- **Desirable:**

- Confidence in community engagement and building partnerships with local organisations, especially the parish school.

## (c) General Attributes

- **Essential:**

- Compassionate, approachable, prayerful, with a warm sense of humour.
- Energy and vision to inspire younger families and children.
- Community-minded and visible in village life.
- Encouraging of others' gifts and talents, enabling shared ministry.

- **Desirable:**

- Interest in environmental and wider community initiatives, as part of the church's broader mission

## 6. What we have to offer:

- A committed, congregation eager to support and grow with their part time vicar and honouring the nature of the role.
- A team of dedicated lay leaders, PCC members, organist, children's volunteers and church officers.
- A flexible, modern church building well-used by local groups.
- A good-sized vicarage close to local amenities and schools.
- A strong safeguarding culture with clear processes and an experienced Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- We are not looking for perfection, but for someone who will love, lead and learn with us – someone who will bring both steadiness and vision, and who will delight in seeing others flourish.

## 7. The Church Leadership:

Our church leadership is a committed and capable team ensuring the smooth running of parish life. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) operates with openness and collaboration, and the Ministry Team is at the heart of this.



We currently have two Churchwardens: Gary Rainbow and Clare Briscoe. Alongside them serve our two Readers: Dennis Croome and Alison Dando. The PCC is also strengthened by our two Deputy Churchwardens, Julie Lamond and Gill Brealey. Administrative support is provided by Janet Gadd, who serves faithfully as PCC Secretary, while Steve Parkhouse oversees the parish finances as Treasurer.

Our work with children is through the MOSAIC group at Sunday services, with three volunteer leaders Eleanor Ravenscroft, Sue Croome and Gill Sands. OASIS (coffee morning) group leader on Thursday mornings is Sue Croome, supported by a great team.

For musical direction, we hold a contract with Chris Burton who working closely with the Vicar leads our choir and the rehearsal times.

While the Vicar provides spiritual direction and oversight, they will be joining a parish already blessed with committed wardens, officers, and volunteers working faithfully to support the mission and ministry of the church.



## 8. The Parish

Barlaston is a friendly and semi-rural parish with a strong community spirit. Many parishioners are over 70, but there are also younger families, particularly in the Wedgwood estate and newer housing developments. Respondents noted a sense of divide between different parts of the village which the church seeks to bridge.

The community is welcoming and supportive, with a high level of volunteering and a wide range of social groups. The Barlaston Gazette, produced by the church, helps connect residents. Pastoral needs include the frail and housebound, with some needing help with transport. The parish is blessed with access to countryside, the canal, Downs Banks, and Trentham Gardens nearby.

## 9. Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism

Worship: the most well attended service is at 10.30am on a Sunday supported by the weekly Wednesday 10.30 service. Children are very much welcomed to church, and the atmosphere is one of warmth and inclusion.

Services are Bible-based, thought-provoking, and supported by music that blends traditional hymns with newer worship songs, accompanied by our established choir. As feedback from the recent questionnaire indicated the congregation values this balance, recognising that it nourishes different ages and backgrounds and invites reflection that carries through into the week.

Children are supported through our dedicated MOSAIC group, which meets alongside the 10.30am Sunday service. MOSAIC is open to all children, whatever their age, with parents and carers often staying with the youngest ones. Age-appropriate Christian teaching is shared, alongside fun activities, crafts, and stories that help children to understand and enjoy their faith. This ministry is seen as a vital way of encouraging children to grow in discipleship and to feel fully part of the worshipping community.

We have recently introduced an All-Together service on the first Sunday of each month, when all ages worship together.

There is a clear call to create follow-on provision for teenagers through confirmation preparation, youth groups, and youth-led participation. There is a 10.30am Holy Communion service also on a Wednesday. Typically, once a month there is an early Holy Communion Sunday service also - although while we are in vacancy this is not running.

The life of the church extends well beyond our services. Coffee mornings, lunches, and social gatherings are regular features, offering a chance for fellowship and for those on the edges of church life to join in. Fundraising events bring people together for a shared cause, often drawing in friends from the wider village. The Barlaston Gazette, produced

by the church, continues to be an important means of communication, linking congregation and community alike.



Pastoral care is a hallmark of St John's ministry. Baptisms are celebrated within the main Sunday service so that families are welcomed into the life of the church from the outset, with preparation and follow-up visits providing ongoing support. Weddings are approached with care and joy, with couples guided through marriage preparation and celebrated as they begin their life together. Funerals are marked by dignity and compassion, supported not only by the vicar but also by members of the congregation who continue to walk with the bereaved through visiting and prayer.

### **Barlaston First School**

The parish has a long-standing and valued relationship with Barlaston First School, where the vicar and team lead worship and support the staff and pupils. The school regularly comes into church for festivals and services, reinforcing the connection between school and parish. Many of us see this as a key area for future growth, with opportunities to strengthen discipleship and engagement with families.

Underpinning all these activities is a strong sense of vocation and empowerment. Parishioners have expressed the hope that everyone — from PCC and ministry team through to the wider congregation — might be encouraged to use their gifts for the growth of the church. In this way, discipleship can be deepened, vocation discovered, and evangelism expressed in the daily life of Barlaston village.

## 10. The Church

### Worship

Service	Time	Frequency	Type	approximate Attendance
Holy Communion	Sunday 10.30am	Weekly	Holy Communion with choir (twice a month), hymns, and worship songs	50
MOSAIC Children's Group	Sunday 10.30am	Weekly	Children's teaching	5-10 children
Holy Communion	Wednesday 10.30am	Weekly	Said Holy Communion	10-15
All Together	1 <sup>st</sup> Sundays	Monthly	Morning praise	50
Early Holy Communion	Sunday 8.00am	Monthly (not running during vacancy)	Said Holy Communion	5

### Music

We value the choir and organist, traditional hymnody and newer worship songs.

### The Congregation

There are currently 111 on the Electoral Roll (updated in 2025). The average age of Electoral members is 70 years. 70% live in the Parish of Barlaston. In addition, there are 10 children aged up to 11 years. Average Sunday attendance is around 50.

### The Church Building:

St John the Baptist, Barlaston, is a modern church building completed in 1983 after the former parish church near Barlaston Hall was closed because of mining subsidence. Unlike many older churches, it is not listed, giving us welcome flexibility in adapting the building to meet the needs of today's congregation and community.



The church is built of Hollington stone with a distinctive squat tower. Inside, it is light, spacious, and highly adaptable. The main nave can be divided by bi-fold glazed doors into three separate areas, allowing worship and community activities to run in parallel when needed. Alongside the nave are the

Wedgwood family chapel to the north and the choir space to the south, preserving links with our parish history.

Practical facilities have been kept fully up to date. The kitchen and toilets were recently refurbished, providing excellent facilities for hospitality and events. An office is located on the ground floor, and further space is available upstairs. The church is also equipped with a modern sound and visual projection system, enabling the congregation to follow the liturgy, prayers, readings, and hymns without the need for handheld books or leaflets.

The most recent quinquennial inspection (2021) confirmed the building is in excellent overall condition, thanks to careful stewardship by the PCC and congregation. The inspection identified no urgent works and only minor routine maintenance, affirming the effectiveness of parish stewardship. Routine maintenance is carried out promptly, and we are fully up to date with the required quinquennial work.

Although there is no churchyard attached to the building, the Cemetery is maintained elsewhere in the village, with the support of Barlaston Parish Council. Overall, St John's is a well-designed, flexible, and welcoming space. It serves both as a centre for worship and as a practical resource for the wider community, fully equipped for the next stage of our parish life and ministry.

### **The Churchyard:**

Although the present church building does not have a graveyard attached, the parish maintains the Barlaston Burial Ground on Hartwell Lane, a short distance from the church. This site remains open for burials and is an important pastoral and community resource. Regular grass cutting, tree management, and boundary maintenance ensure that the burial ground continues to be a place of dignity, care, and welcome for families and visitors.

## **11. Church Halls and other facilities:**

St John's is a flexible church building. It includes a modern kitchen and toilets, an office, upstairs rooms, and AV facilities for worship and community use.

## **12. Church Finances:**

We are grateful to be in a relatively stable financial position, having balanced our income and expenditure over 2024 despite a demanding year for essential maintenance and compliance.

Our total receipts for the year were £74,846, and total expenditure was £74,925, resulting in a very small shortfall of £79. This compares with a surplus of over £8,600 the previous year. The cost of running the church averaged £1,441 per week.

Key areas of spending in 2024 included:

- Our Common Fund contribution of over £30,000, paid in full.
- Energy costs significantly reduced due to a new contract.
- Increased investment in church and cemetery grounds.
- Essential building and compliance works, including gutter clearance, septic tank repair, and PAT testing.

Giving from the congregation showed a strong response to the Treasurer's 10% appeal last year, with:

- Regular giving through standing orders and plate donations increasing.
- Continued use of our contactless card machine, generating over £2,200.
- Gift Aid recovery bringing in £8,561, an important part of our income.

We are also grateful for grants, support from Barlaston Parish Council, and legacies received from church members — all of which support our mission and ministry.

While we currently maintain healthy reserves across unrestricted, designated, and restricted funds, the Treasurer has rightly cautioned that we cannot rely on break-even budgeting every year. We will continue to promote regular giving and stewardship to build resilience and prepare for future investments in heating, window replacements, and further accessibility improvements.

Prospective applicants will find a community that takes its financial responsibilities seriously and works collectively to steward resources with transparency and care.

The full accounts are independently examined and available upon request from our experienced Treasurer

## 13. The Vicarage

The vicarage is a good-sized modern family home close to local amenities and schools. It includes four bedrooms, study, a well-established garden, and parking. Its location near the church makes it well placed for parish life. It is ideal for family life and ministry.



## 14. The Area — Barlaston & Surroundings



Barlaston is an attractive village in Staffordshire, lying between Stoke-on-Trent and Stone, with a population of just under 3,000. It is well placed with easy access to the M6 motorway, the A34, and direct rail services to London from nearby Stoke and Stafford. The Trent & Mersey Canal runs through the village, giving Barlaston its distinctive character and strong connection to Staffordshire's industrial heritage.

### History

The parish was originally served by a medieval church, later replaced by a large Victorian building. When that church was decommissioned in the 1980s due to mining subsidence, the present St John's Church was constructed on Station Road. This modern building was completed in 1983 after the former church was closed due to mining subsidence. It is fit for purpose, accessible, and continues to be a visible focal point for worship and community life.

### Employment and Commerce

Barlaston has long associations with Wedgwood, whose factory and visitor centre sit nearby, continuing to provide both employment and tourism. While many residents commute to Stoke, Stafford, or Stone, the village retains several small shops providing essential local services. Broader employment is available in the wider area through manufacturing, education, health services, and commerce.

## Education

Local schools are well regarded, with strong OFSTED ratings. Keele University is nearby for higher education opportunities.

- Primary: Barlaston CE (VC) First School is a thriving, well-regarded village school serving ages 3–9. <https://barlaston.staffs.sch.uk>
- Middle: Most pupils progress to Christ Church Academy or Walton Priory Middle School in Stone.
- Secondary: Options include Alleyne's Academy (Stone) and, a little further afield, St Joseph's College, a Catholic grammar school in Trent Vale. Other accessible choices include Trentham Academy and Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy. Together, these offer families a strong mix of state, church, and selective education.

## Leisure and Community Life

The parish enjoys access to beautiful countryside. Downs Banks, a National Trust reserve just outside the village, offers walks, wildlife, and sweeping views across Staffordshire. The Trent & Mersey Canal brings walkers, boaters, and visitors into the heart of the community.

Within Barlaston village, there are active community groups, clubs, and societies. Trentham Gardens and shopping village, a short drive away. Nearby Stone also provides restaurants, cultural facilities, and a thriving market town. In nearby Stoke on Trent and Newcastle under Lyme there are selection of cinemas and theatres. The Regent Theatre and Victoria Hall are in Hanley and the New Vic Theatre (in the round) in Newcastle-under-Lyme. We can now experience independent cinema again with the re-opening of Stoke Film Theatre. Rail connections from Stoke and Stafford offer direct services to London. Barlaston has a Doctors Surgery which comes under the Brinsley Avenue Practice based in neighbouring Trentham.

*Thank you for your interest in our parish and taking the time to read our profile. We will be praying for you as you consider whether God might be calling you to join us on the next stage of our lives together.*