



Community Connector: Information Pack



Welcome to St Mary's

And thank you for your interest in the post of Community Connector.



On the outside, St Mary's church looks like a typical picture postcard parish church. On the inside you will find a warm and friendly community. Our hope is that St Mary's is a church where all are affirmed, welcomed and valued, recognising that we are each made in the image of God.

Henbury is geographically the largest parish in the Diocese of Bristol and includes the diverse districts of Henbury, Brentry and Hallen as well as the historic and beautiful Blaise Castle Estate. We are home to "The Mall" – the famous shopping centre at Cribbs Causeway in the northern edge of the parish as well as stretching from the Bristol Channel coast in the west, right across to embrace much of the old Filton Airfield, home of Concorde, in the east. Henbury is fast becoming home to a growing population as well, with extensive new housing and other developments being built in the parish as part of the North Fringe of Bristol Masterplan.

Both the parish and church are full of fascinating history which can be explored through the life stories of the generations of people connected to the church and surrounding area. We are always finding out more about the stories of our past and learning to understand and learn from them - especially the stories which are challenging in our modern world, such as those associated with Transatlantic Chattel Slavery, which was a big part of Henbury's history. We also have some interesting 'queer' history, including an LGBT landmark grave in the churchyard, marking the final resting place of the 19th Century Egyptologist, Amelia Edwards.



Connecting with the community

Members of the church are actively part of the community in many small but important ways. We'd like to build on this as we move forward, taking fuller advantage of the blessing of being such a diverse parish. For example:

- We have a Pastoral Care Team who provide support to our parishioners at challenging times and offer communion to those ill at home or in hospital
- We support the local Food Bank through providing donations
- We regularly worship with the residents at local care homes
- Under the guidance of our enthusiastic Musical Director, we connect with the community through regular choir activities and a Summer Concert
- Our Children's Church has a growing number of members. The children and the volunteers explore the life of Jesus and his significance in their lives through weekly 'Godly play' sessions and monthly 'Muddy Church'
- Members of our congregation are trustees and volunteers of Every Family (an independent family support centre, formerly known as Henbury & Brentry Children's centre), and the relationship with St Mary's is much valued by the staff at the centre
- We have some emerging ministries with schools and children through educational visits as well as Duke of Edinburgh volunteers carrying out environmental and churchyard projects
- Members of the congregation are also involved in 'Sustainable Brentry and Henbury' – a community group which builds goodwill through organising litter picks and other street care projects.



St Mary's Vision

Although St Mary's is a beautiful church, the condition of the building has deteriorated, and it lacks internal space and basic amenities. At the Annual Meeting in 2025, a vision for St Mary's was endorsed to work towards repairs and refurbishments that will enable us to use the building more effectively beyond our Sunday worship.

Inspired by Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" the vision is for St Mary's to develop as a place and community:

- Which blesses the whole community and engages well with younger generations
- Where people of all ages and backgrounds can find belonging and new life in God
- Where the stories of our heritage are actively confronted and retold for future generations through developing as a site of conscience and education around social justice



Priority Communities Network

As part of the Diocese of Bristol's '*Transforming Church: Together*' strategy, a significant financial investment is being made through the Priority Communities Network (PCN) to parish contexts where the highest levels of deprivation are experienced. Funding is confirmed until December 2028.

Henbury has been identified as a priority parish under the PCN programme, and we are delighted that this funding will allow us to invest in new ways to support and enable outreach and growth in the central areas of Henbury which are most in need.

The particular opportunities and challenges we have identified are:

- **We would like to build missional confidence and capacity in the congregation.** We have a core of people from the regular congregation who are gifted and energised to be more engaged in meaningful and inclusive outreach, but they need a confidence boost and a clear focus of 'what to do'.

Within the areas of our parish which experience social and economic deprivation, there is a particular range of deprivation which affects children and young people, with 16-28% of children under 16 living in relative low-income families in the parish.

- **There is minimal and inadequate provision for young people** in the parish, which we are building links with our community partners to understand and address.



According to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2024-25 (Bristol City Council), Henbury ward shows up in:

- The top 10% most deprived areas of the country for health and disability deprivation: a combined measure which aims to "capture the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health."
- The top quintile for the "prevalence of excess weight in reception year pupils across Bristol."
- The top quintile in Bristol for "hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in young people (aged 15-24)."
- The second quartiles in Bristol for rates of "individual children in the youth justice system" and "fear of crime affecting daily life."

Additionally, the Crow Lane LSOA*

- Ranks within the most deprived decile of multiple deprivation within Bristol
- Has a larger than average concentration of residents with no qualifications (34% compared to 18% nationally)

*(Sources: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) reports, Bristol City Council and www.streetcheck.co.uk/policing/avon-and-somerset). *Lower Super Output Area; a statistical geography used for the release of Census and other ONS data.*



A Community Connector

We are focusing the investment from the Priority Communities funding programme into the creation of a new post of **Community Connector**.

As Community Connector you will play a significant role in developing transformative community outreach in the priority areas of our parish. We don't expect the Community Connector to 'do it all for us', but to come alongside us to support, guide and equip volunteers to grow in confidence, thereby establishing a sustainable foundation that we will continue beyond the life of the funding. The two initial areas of focus for the Community Connector will be to:

- Develop a team of volunteers who will connect with clients of Every Family to provide befriending and practical support around specific life skills or needs.
- Develop links with youth and family service providers operating within the parish to identify ways St Mary's could support young people (11-18yrs).

There is scope within the role to shape the project as time goes on in response to the opportunities that arise.

To fulfil this role, you will need to:

- Be a Christian committed to the development of your own spiritual journey, through involvement with a church community and a lived-out-faith
- Have an understanding of the aims of Inclusive Church and an enthusiasm to work within an inclusive church context
- Have experience of leading and developing volunteers or teams
- Be skilled at sensitively leading or developing contextually-appropriate activities or projects aimed at sharing or nurturing the Christian faith with those who are not from a church background
- Be aware of how social and economic disadvantage affect people
- Be a self-starter and able to work on your own initiative
- Have experience of working collaboratively to develop links and build relationships with other partners and organisations

Interested?

We'd love to hear from you.

If you'd like to apply, please complete the Application Form and send it to jobs@bristoldiocese.org

For an informal conversation, please email: Rev. Jae Chandler (Priest in charge) on revjaechandler@gmail.com or call Anna Hannam (Churchwarden) on 07584087701

Further information

Application deadline:	9am on Monday 7 th July 2025
Interviews will take place:	Wednesday 23 rd July 2025
Location:	St. Mary's church, Henbury, Bristol
Hours:	Full time 37.5 hours per week
Salary:	£27,000 to £30,000 (dependent on qualifications or experience).

An enhanced DBS check will be required.

