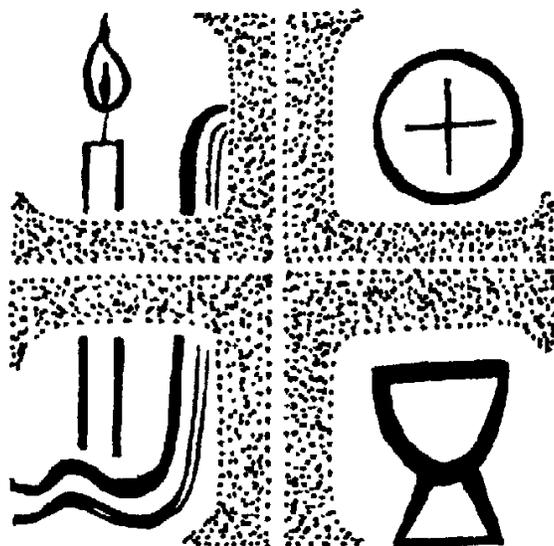




**The Church in Wales**  
**Yr Eglwys Yng Nghymru**

# **The Parish of Llansawel, Briton Ferry**



**Parish Profile 2019**



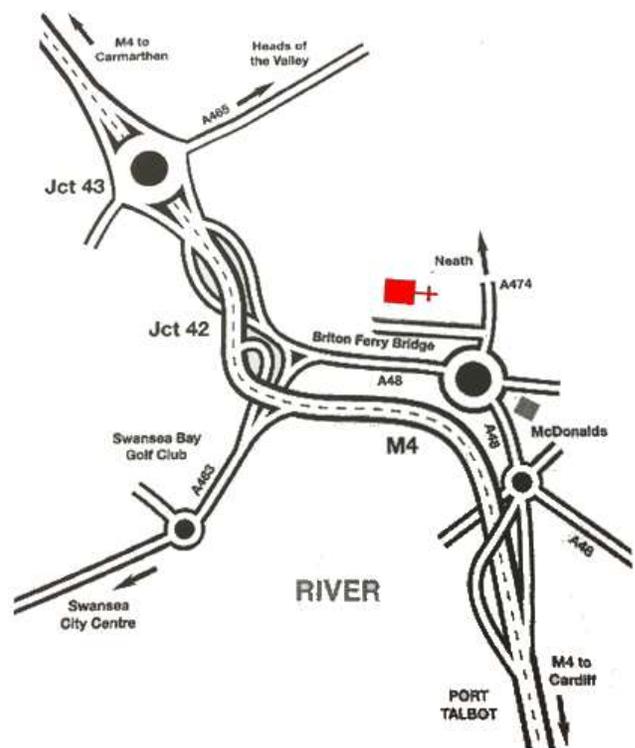
## The Parish

The Parish of Llansawel Briton Ferry lies at the mouth of the River Neath, at Junction 41 of the M4. The city of Swansea is 10 minutes by car, leading onto the Gower Peninsula, an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Ecclesiastically the Parish sits within the Diocese of Llandaff, the Archdeaconry of Margam and the Deanery of Neath. The local authority is Neath Port Talbot.

The town came to prominence in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when Sir Marc Brunel (Isambard's father) built a unique floating dock. This dock is now going to be restored, with The Prince of Wales taking a keen interest in the proposed redevelopment.

The Parish is committed to supporting the new Diocesan Strategic Vision: telling the joyful story, growing the kingdom of God, and building our capacity for good.



## Church Buildings



The Parish Church is dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, and is located literally underneath the legs of the old Briton Ferry Bridge which carries the A48.

There is evidence to suggest that there has been Christian worship and witness held at this site since the 6th Century AD. The current chancel and nave were built between 1891 – 1892 to replace a smaller 17<sup>th</sup> Century building. The Norman Tower was heavily restored in the 15th Century.

The rear of the nave has been partitioned off to form a smaller meeting room and kitchen. There are now plans to convert this area into a separate sound-proofed meeting area, to include a kitchen, toilets and meeting area.

Overall, the church is in a fairly good state of repair. The churchyard (which is open now only for the interment of cremated remains) is well maintained.



## Church Hall

The church hall, which was extensively refurbished in 2017, is located half a mile away from the church on a separate site within the parish. It is well supported by the community, and indeed is currently used for worship on Sunday evenings by the Gilgal Christian Fellowship.

## Ministry Leadership Team

There is good lay involvement in the church and parish, including readers and intercessors at our main services, as well as a parish visiting team and people licensed to administer the Sacrament to the sick and house-bound parishioners in their homes.

## Services

| DAY       | TIME           | TYPE                   | ATTENDANCE | RITE |
|-----------|----------------|------------------------|------------|------|
| SUNDAY    | 8.00AM         | HOLY EUCHARIST         | 5 - 6      | 2004 |
| SUNDAY    | 10.00AM        | SUNG EUCHARIST         | 40 - 55    | 2004 |
|           | FAMILY SERVICE | 1 <sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY |            |      |
| WEDNESDAY | 10.00AM        | HOLY EUCHARIST         | 15 - 20    | 2004 |

The average Sunday attendance for the Parish Share is currently 45 communicants, but we are usually 50+ on a good Sunday morning.

Music plays an important part in our Sunday worship, and we consider ourselves fortunate to have a good organist and robed choir. Music is not an end in itself, but a means to enhancing our worship, and we regularly draw on a variety of resources from Wesley to Kendrick to Stuart Townend.

## Children and Young People

We have recently re-launched the Sunday Club and re-named it the Sunday Breakfast Club. We invite children (and their parents) to the church hall on a Sunday morning from 10.30am until 12noon and everyone present receives a free breakfast; the children then have a short craft activity and a bible story. So far this is proving extremely popular with an average attendance of more than 30 children and adults.

Once the new facilities become available in the back of the church we anticipate that the Club would move to St Mary's and meet during the main service.

Last Good Friday we held an afternoon "Crafternoon" for children with activities based around the Easter Story. This was popular and we had 40+ children attending.

We are currently in the process of setting up a mid-week youth group and a monthly film night.

## Church Organisations

Our church-based activities include:

- Parish Choir
- Ladies' Guild (formerly the Mothers' Union)
- Weekly Bingo Club



## Nurture Groups

A weekly Bible Study meets during Lent, and there is interest in this type of study group being held throughout the year.

## Occasional Offices

Baptisms are still held frequently in the parish, and because of the large numbers that usually attend are normally held outside the context of the main Sunday worship.

In contrast, church weddings are quite rare; normally only 1 or 2 in an average year.

With a population of nearly 6000 in the parish there is usually an average of about 20 funerals conducted by the parish priest in a year.

## Other Services

A variety of non-Eucharistic services are held throughout the year. These include:

- Informal Taizé-style meditative service, eg during Lent
- United services with Briton Ferry Churches Together
- Civic Service for the new mayor of the Community Council
- Annual Civic Remembrance Day service
- Annual Service to distribute money to charities
- Christmas Love Light Carol Service for the bereaved



## Parish Finances

Planned giving in 2017 was £28,500, an increase of approx. £5,000 on 2016.

The parish receives income tax refunds through Gift Direct, Gift Aid and the Small Donations Scheme.

The parish priest receives expenses according to the Church in Wales Guidelines.

## Church Community Charity Shop

Since 1996 the church has run a community charity shop. The parish priest shares responsibility for the administration of the shop and its finances with a small number of other Trustees.

The shop is manned ecumenically by volunteers, and raises funds for the local community, the parish and other denominations. In 2018 we donated £26,500 to other charities, churches and organisations within the local area, and the parish received £6,000.

## Local Schools

Up until 2018 the church enjoyed very strong links with all the schools within the parish. However, in September 2018 a new 'super' junior school opened in the west of the parish, which absorbed all the infant and junior schools onto one site. This followed the relocation of the local comprehensive school to a new site within the adjoining parish of Baglan.

There is a Welsh-medium primary school located within the parish.

We are very keen to re-establish links with the schools, and to offer the use of the church and the church hall for carol services, concerts, etc.

## Nursing Homes & Sheltered Housing

There is one residential/nursing home located in the parish. The church has close links with the home, with the priest and the lay visitors regularly visiting.

## Parsonage

The parish is fortunate to possess a modern vicarage that is situated in the neighbouring Parish of Neath, at 14 The Avenue, Neath. SA11 2FD . The Vicarage has 4 bedrooms, 3 reception rooms, and separate access to the office. It is in an excellent state of repair and benefits from having small and low-maintenance front and rear gardens.

## Our Vision and Future Plans

The church wardens, the PCC and congregation are energetic, enthusiastic and supportive.

We are not afraid to try new ideas and to keep what works well and discard things that don't!

We are eager to move forward under the leadership of the right priest, and keen to build on the good work of our last incumbent.

We benefit from our contact with the Church Army's *Neath Centre of Mission*, and we would hope that the new priest would work to continue and develop these links.

As a parish we will support any plans to work in partnership with other parishes in the Deanery.

## Our Aspirations

- to continue to reach out to the local community within Briton Ferry and to show them that Jesus Christ loves them
- to set up a regular bible study group so our congregation has the opportunity to study and discuss the Bible in more depth and to deepen our own Christian faith
- to develop our children's and youth work in the church and parish
- to push ourselves beyond our comfort zones and to try new initiatives inside the church and outside in the community

## We Pray for a Parish Priest:

- who will be someone who is willing to roll up their sleeves and get involved with us in our ministry and mission
- who will be a pastor, teacher, leader and an encourager



## Our Mission Statement

*“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,  
that whosoever believes in Him may not die, but have eternal life.”*

(John 3:16)

This is what we preach. This is what we believe.

**Please come and help us to make this eternal truth  
a reality for the Community of Briton Ferry.**