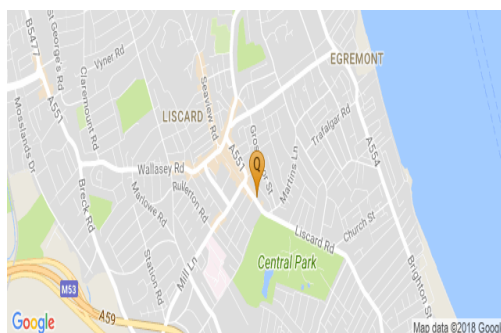


St Thomas the Apostle

Liscard



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ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE - LISCARD PARISH PROFILE

Our Parish Mission Statement

Our mission is to worship God, maintaining the spirit of the anglo-catholic tradition, build Christ's fellowship within his family, and to serve the people of the parish, witnessing to the gospel in prayer, social activities, and our response to the needs of the town centre community.

This profile is offered as a gesture of welcome and source of information to our new potential Parish Priest, in the hope that it will help him to get to know our parish and its character, how we have got to where we are now, our vision for the future, and the qualities we believe he will need to lead us forward.



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The Wirral Peninsula

The Wirral peninsula is within easy reach of both Chester and Liverpool, and the beautiful countryside of Wales, the Lake District, Peak District and the Yorkshire dales, are all a reasonable drive away.

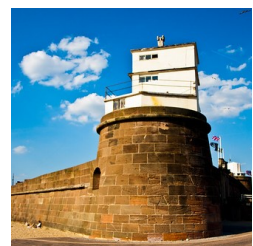
There is a healthy network of cycle paths and routes connecting towns across the Wirral and a coastline walk from Seacombe to West Kirby which is possible to complete within the dayand back again if you are feeling really fit!

New Brighton, a seaside resort on the tip of the peninsula, is a unique blend of old and new. Fort Perch Rock and the Fort Perch lighthouse, together with a variety of historical points of interest and heritage sites is complemented by an £80million leisure and retail facility which attracts many visitors to the area.

Large grassed sea front areas make good venues for large scale events. A short stroll inland reveals a growing number of independent cafes, bars and shops, and the area boasts a popular theatre, a marine lake and some attractive parks, surrounded by miles of spectacular coastline with stunning views of Liverpool's skyline.

The area now called Wallasey comprises several distinct districts - Egremont, Liscard, New Brighton, Poulton, Seacombe and Wallasey Village. These gradually merged to form a single built-up area during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Unlike in most other towns, there is no single Wallasey town centre, although the main shopping area is centrally located at Liscard, which is where St Thomas the Apostle is situated.

Whatever your interests there is something to be discovered and treasured in this hidden gem of an area within the UK.



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Who we are & What we do

THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE, LISCARD

Seaview Road, Wallasey CH45 4LB -

A Parish of the Society ~ under the Patronage of S. Wilfred & S. Hilda

Vicar up to the present vacancy, now Associate Priest, pending retirement,

Revd. Fr. Robert. T. Nelson MBE BSc., SOfSc.,

5 Sedbergh Road, Wallasey,

Wirral, CH44 2BR

e-mail: rnelson43@gmail.com

Telephones: Home: 0151 630 2830 Church Office: 0151 639 5278

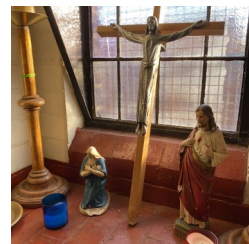
CHURCH OFFICERS

Reader (awaiting licensing) Mrs Liz Cooper-Clark

CHURCHWARDENS:

Mr Ron Cowle 51 Daintith Court, St. Paul's Close, Rock Ferry CH42 3XL

Mr Kieran Folkard 19 Edinburgh Road, Liscard, Wallasey CH45 4LR



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Who we are & what we do

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Secretary:

Mr P. Ashley-Mudie 12 Marsden Court, Rake Lane, Wallasey CH45 5DQ

Parish Safeguarding Coordinator

Mr P. Ashley-Mudie (as above)

Sacristan

Mr P. Ashley-Mudie (as above)

Treasurer:

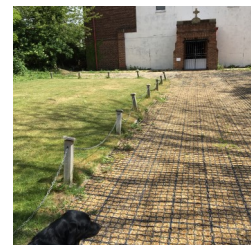
Mrs. D.C. Nelson 5 Sedbergh Road, Wallasey CH44 2BR 630 2830

Deanery synod Representative

Mrs. D.C. Nelson (as above)

Organist

Mr A. Roberts



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Who we are & what we do

CHURCH SERVICES

EVERY SUNDAY

10.00am PARISH EUCHARIST - Children welcome
(Activities offered)

1st SUNDAY IN THE MONTH

5.00pm EVENSONG & (5.30pm) BENEDICTION

WEDNESDAYS

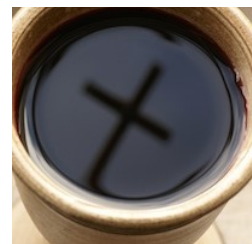
12.15pm HOLY EUCHARIST

DAILY

Wednesday to Sunday 9.30am MORNING PRAYER (sung or said)
(when possible) except Fridays when morning prayers are said with other Central
Wallasey Churches Together at venues as advertised.

FESTIVALS AND HOLY DAYS

As advertised in the magazine and on Facebook, or announced



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Who we are & what we do

HOLY EUCHARIST MONTHLY

St. George's Nursing Home,

(normally) Croxteth Avenue, at 3.30pm on the last Sunday.

Walsingham Mass on the last Saturday at 9.30am.

"Let's Make Mass Together" - an informal Eucharist for all ages,
at 6.30pm in the vestry, dates as advertised in the magazine.

QUARTERLY

Parish Eucharist with the Ministry of Healing, as announced. (normally)

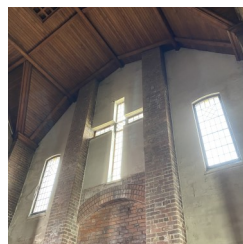
THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Confession and Ministry of Reconciliation

Times as announced or by appointment

CONFRATERNITY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:

Vespers and Benediction - as announced



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The vicar we want

Everyone has been invited to have their say on the vicar we would like and have taken time to contribute their thoughts on the matter . This was broken down into essential characteristics and desirable.

Essential

- Welcoming to all
- Kind and compassionate
- Good listener
- Interesting sermons
- Ability to lead and to delegate
- Prayerful
- Spiritual expression in anglo-catholic tradition
- A priest of the society &/or SSC with a commitment to maintaining the membership of the parish in the Society .

Desirable

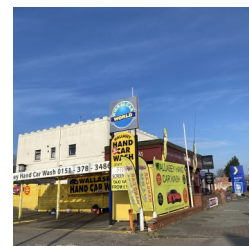
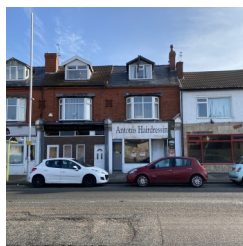
- Good singing voice
- Young enough to serve for many years
- Sociable
- Keen to develop new ways with technology
- Experience in children's church activities
- Knowledge of the world
- Mentoring skills



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About the parish

The parish is small, and inner-urban in character with little green space (though Central Park and Rake Lane Cemetery adjoin it). The main shopping area of Walasey is in the parish, including a covered mall, the Cherry Tree Centre, but it has become more run down in the last quarter century, with a proliferation of charity shops and the loss of leading name retailers (e.g. Marks & Spencer, Littlewoods, Woolworths and Tesco). These have been replaced by discounters such as Primark, Poundland, Home Bargains and B & M. The major ASDA store, outside but near the parish, has taken much trade from the central shops. There were council office departments, DSS/Job Centre Plus, but all have vacated their premises. There is a Crown Post Office in the parish. Seven public houses trade in or adjacent to the parish, but there is no other 'entertainment', though the Grosvenor (ballroom, band venue, function hire etc.) is close by. There have been a local residents association, and Liscard & Egremont Partnership functioning in the area, but currently they are relatively low key or in abeyance. There are several public car parks in or adjacent to the parish, but charges levied mean it is prohibitive for all-day parking for local small business proprietors. We therefore currently offer parking facilities in the churchyard for their vehicles as a small gesture of support. This has built up a sense of friendship and collaboration with the business community.



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EDUCATION IN THE PARISH

There is only one primary school (St. Alban's RC Primary), though Liscard Primary School includes the parish in its catchment area, on which basis St. Thomas's has built a fruitful relationship. Regular visits by whole year groups (approx. 90 children in each) by Years 1 and 2 to experience the seasonal stories are much appreciated at Holy Week/Easter and Advent/Christmas. Oldershaw Academy (secondary education) adjoins the parish. There have also been joint school choir concerts at the church with Liscard Primary and Oldershaw.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

There used to be a Wirral Borough Council One-Stop Shop in the parish until a few years ago, but the nearest nowadays is in Seacombe, within the Town Hall. The Citizens' Advice Bureau still operates on Liscard Road. Wirral Food Bank is located on the Dock Road in Wallasey, with distribution centres at several local churches, including St. Alban's RC Church within the parish. Wirral Churches Ark Project (Wirral Ark), the major Wirral provider for homeless people, located in Birkenhead, was founded by the present incumbent of St. Thomas's and the church maintains a good relationship with that charity. There is a Mental Health Drop-in run under the auspices of Wallasey Churches Together, which is now located at St. Alban's Parish Centre. NHS provision in the parish consists of the Manor Health Centre GP practice on Liscard Village, and adjacent to the parish is the Wallasey Walk-in Centre on Mill Lane on the site of the former Mill Lane Hospital, for minor injuries and assessment. Also on site there are another large GP practice (Central Park), physiotherapy, X-Ray and mental health services. St. George's Nursing Home on Croxteth Avenue is the only care home actually within the parish boundary, though Eaton Court, Mother Redcaps and Victoria House are close by.



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History of St Thomas's

1900 - 1925

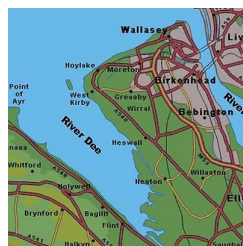
The country was still at war with the Boers in South Africa and Queen Victoria nearing the end of her reign when Canon Sayer of St. Mary, Liscard, secured the land in Seaview Road for a daughter church to be built. The site was purchased for £600 and a corrugated iron church dedicated to Saint Thomas the Apostle was built. The Bishop of Chester, Rt. Revd. Francis Jayne, licensed the church in December, 1900. This church was built in a fortnight to seat 300 people at a cost of £250! A fund was started in 1909 toward the cost of erecting a substantial church building.

1925 - 1983

The parish of St. Thomas was separated from that of St. Mary, Liscard, on 29th December, 1925. By 1929 the building fund had reached £6000 plus, thanks to a donation by Mr Frederick North of New Brighton totalling £1000, and the efforts of the parishioners of both St. Thomas' and St. Mary's. At the start of a week of bitter weather in Wallasey, the present church building was consecrated on Saturday afternoon, 9th February, 1929. The cost of this first phase was £6600, and £5000 would be needed for completion of the church.

Dr. Luke Paget, the then Bishop of Chester, said it was with 'great satisfaction' that he was consecrating the first part of the building so soon after visiting Wallasey to do the same at All Saints. When he had come in March the previous year (1928) to lay the foundation stone he had hardly dare hope that within twelve months he would be back to consecrate the building. the bishop hoped the church would always be a blessing to its members and commented that no-one could enter the church without admiration for its 'quiet dignity'.

The consecration service was attended by the mayor of Wallasey, Alderman A. Wrigley, himself a former churchwarden of St. Mary's. The bishop was assisted by Canon Simpson, Vicar of St. Mary's and Rural Dean, and by Revd. K.V. Evelyn-White, first vicar of the new parish of St. Thomas. The Wallasey News called the service 'impressive'.



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A church hall was erected and opened on 7th June, 1960 (as a temporary structure, still standing but NOT in use today!), and shortly after that the church acquired the look it has today. A main door and porch were put on the west wall, the west windows installed, and the original entrance (the north porch) became used for bell ringing purposes and storage. That period saw great changes in the parish itself, with houses being demolished to make way for the new shopping centre. Tower Street, Conway Street and half of St. Albans Road disappeared. Immediate neighbours of the church closed at that time - the Liscard Palace cinema (opened 1911) closed in 1959. The building now houses the Shoemarket. Heavyside's soft drinks factory went in the early 1970's.

Until the present incumbency the longest serving of the eight previous incumbents had been the first vicar, Fr. Evelyn-White, who was here for thirteen years.

Fr. Robert became non-stipendiary Priest-in-Charge of the parish in November 1983, and continued on that basis until 1987, when he became Industrial Chaplain for Wirral in combination with ministry at St. Thomas' till 1993. In the years since then, he has been caring solely for this parish (eventually being appointed vicar in 2012) up to the present day.

1989 marked the Diamond jubilee (60 years) of our present building. Several celebrated preachers came, including Rabbi Lionel Blue, the Most Revd John Habgood, Archbishop of York, and Rt. Revd David Hope, then Bishop of Wakefield (and, later, Bishop of London, then Archbishop of York), as well as our local Bishops of Birkenhead and Chester.

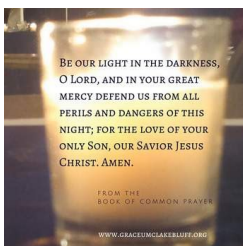


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Neighbouring Churches

St. Thomas' is one of three churches in the parish, the others being St. Alban's RC and Hebron Hall Evangelical Church. In the Central Wallasey Churches Together (CWCT) area the ecumenical scene is alive and active: St. Thomas', St. Alban's RC, Marlowe Road URC, Christ Church Free Church of England and St. Luke's Church of England work and worship together. We have joint Friday morning prayers, quarterly Sunday evening services, and collaboration on Good Friday (Walk of Witness commencing from St. Thomas's)/Easter Dawn (sunrise service) with the other churches of Wallasey. Other than worship, there has been an Easter Drop-in, using a shop unit in the Cherrytree Centre, organised on behalf of Wallasey Churches Together. A Russian Orthodox (English) congregation worships in Rake Lane Cemetery chapel, adjacent to the parish, but there has been no inclination so far on their part to join in ecumenical endeavours.

We introduced the new services of Common Worship in 2001, and at St. Thomas' have become more firmly part of the traditional Catholic sector of the Church of England (where the parish's roots lay), a parish of the Society under the Patronage of SS. Wilfred & Hilda, and under the care of succeeding Bishops of Beverley. The 90th anniversary of our church was celebrated in 2019, the focal event being a Parish Mission, LORD LOVE LISCARD, with a visiting mission team from the Community (and College) of the Resurrection, Mirfield, which we hope will become a springboard for the continuing mission and ministry of St. Thomas's into the next generation.



Lord
Love
Liscard



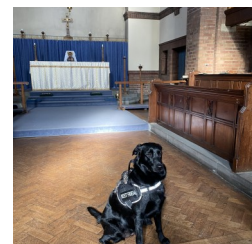
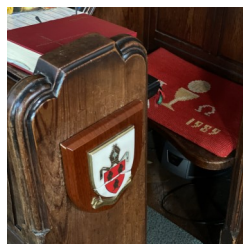
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PARISH



CHURCH DEMOGRAPHICS

Parish population (2011 census)	2351	Church attenders	30 (approx. max. no.)
Age Profile	(%)		(%)
0-14	16		26
15-29	19		7
30-59	38		30
60+	26		37
Male/Female	46/54 (2001 census)		43/57
Ethnicity			
British	99		93
Other	1		7
Declared religion			
Christian	69		
Other	22		
Not stated	9		



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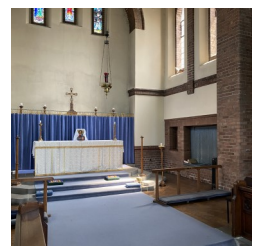
The church and its buildings

The church building dates back from 1929 and is of brick with a slate roof. It was left incomplete, the nave having never been constructed. It is structurally, reasonably sound, though with ongoing issues over inefficient heating, aged decoration, decaying gutters etc but despite these points the statement by Dr Luke Paget the Bishop of Chester 1929, that 'no one can enter this building without admiration for its 'quiet dignity' is as true today as it was then. The simple lines of the structure and the space that has been created along with the beautiful Lady chapel and the stained glass windows, make the desire to pray an instinctive reaction.

However, the upkeep of this dignity falls on fewer shoulders and the size of the building in terms of maintenance is a real challenge especially in terms of heating. The system is expensive to run and is not very efficient. Some parishioners don't attend church in the coldest of weather because of this. The heating system needs to be completely overhauled and although we have investigated different forms of heating the financial cost of changing from our oil based system has been prohibitive as we don't have the means to pay for it.

The church hall, which has in the past been a means of income has fallen into a sorry state of disrepair and is now no longer safe for use partly because of an asbestos content in its fabric but also because we have been unable to keep pace with the general maintenance. We have applied for grants but so far have been unsuccessful. Alternatively, it might be possible to sell the site to a developer, but that is an avenue, yet to be explored.

The main church building is where all our fundraising and worship takes place. This is good as people come into the church for all our activities and church itself is not such a mystery; however, we have not managed, despite this breaking down of barriers, to enable any movement from tea and cakes to Eucharistic, bread and wine.



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Finance

The 2019 figures not yet adopted by PCC/APCM owing to lockdown. In 2018 the total balance was £18,310, with £2692 excess payments over income. There are no investments; the church survives hand-to-mouth, and giving, in total (including donations and gift aid), is insufficient to meet commitments without extra fund-raising, on which we have to rely. Parish share was £6896. By special arrangement this is 15% of the rate for the parish, based on the parish having been served by a 'retired' priest, with no house provided by the diocese. A development fund of £35,000 from legacies is being rapidly eroded to pay for improvement projects such as installing the Ecogrid ground cover in the churchyard, but also some unforeseen essential repair and emergency costs. It currently (2020) stands at just over £24,000.

This is a somewhat bleak picture, and in the future we will need much encouragement and ideas from a fresh perspective, which we hope our new priest will offer, to increase our numbers, giving and fund-raising efforts so that we get back on track once again



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The church and the community

St Thomas's lies in the heart of Liscard. The socio-economic context of the local area, Liscard, wherein St Thomas's church sits, is largely residential and contains mainly high density semi-detached and terraced housing. Liscard is an area of the town of Wallasey, in the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral, Merseyside and is situated three miles from Birkenhead, and four miles from Liverpool (via the Kingsway Tunnel). In the latest IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation Wirral was ranked as 66th most deprived authority (of 326 authorities) in England and Liscard, the specific area that St Thomas's serves, is in the 1% most deprived LSOA's in the country. Overall almost one in three (30%) of the Wirral population live in areas classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived in England.

The above information sounds rather depressing but at its heart sits St Thomas's with a small, but feisty, energetic congregation, who try consistently to reach out to the local community in ways that show that we understand the daily struggle. We see ourselves as a church of mission. The word Mission has different interpretations for some of us. Mission as in proclaiming the gospel conjures up images of standing on the street corner, telling passers-by that they should mend their ways.. However, that image has been dispelled and a more positive outlook has emerged, one that sees Mission as other ways of proclaiming the gospel, outside church, in the community, and not by standing on a soapbox. Every month we organise a 10p Sale. Every item costs 10p. So popular is this event that a queue snakes out from the church doors to the street, at least 30mins before. We have a café area within the church during this time with tables, decorated with flowers and tablecloths, with parish magazines and lists of services. A slice of homemade cake and a cuppa are £1. On the back of the popularity of the cake we do 'cake to go' and cake is boxed up and taken round to the local shops, each box having a list of the weekly services stuck to the lid. In conversation, while distributing the cake (50p a slice) church, Jesus and blessings are all discussed so this fundraising activity becomes a mark of mission under Loving service to the community, who are hard pressed for cash. There is no doubt that this is also proclaiming the gospel and along with 'Say one for me' and litter-picking shows that the congregation at St Thomas's cares for the people of Liscard and Liscard itself.



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The church and its people

The congregation is composed of some that have been going to St Thomas's all their lives. Some are 80+ and some are 1+ . The majority are people who have washed up on the shores of this church and have not felt able to leave because of the beauty of the liturgy, the anglo-catholic fusion, the friendliness of the congregation and loyalty to the incumbent, Father Robert.

It's a mixed bag but a bag that contains a complex variety of personalities that always encourage, support those within and without the church community and enable things, events, special services to happen.

Skills are brought to the table from previous lives. Jen who runs an active Sunday school whilst the service is in progress has a degree in fine art and teaches at a Wirral school. Dee the treasurer has been a bookkeeper , Peter, our safeguarding officer a social worker and Sheila who arranges the flowers has always been keen on floral art. Chris is a driving force for many of our creative fundraising events is extremely competent in the world of arts and crafts, Gill , deputy head at a Wirral school, is a born organiser and has initiated and been responsible for making sure that 10p sales have happened on a monthly basis over the last three years.

All these individuals give freely of their time and energy to enable St Thomas's to keep its doors open and welcome the community in. As a group, novel ideas for fundraising are always welcomed and new types of services are always considered. St Thomas's is fortunate to have a strong nucleus that are willing to go above and beyond.



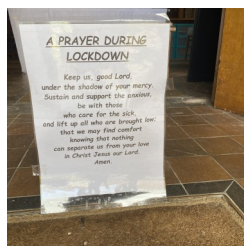
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Lockdown

Lockdown with Covid 19 brought many challenges to us as a congregation and as a church with Mission as the means in which we wanted to connect with the local community. Father Robert quickly established Zoom services once churches were officially closed and although not everyone is able to join the services the majority can and overall attendances at the services often have been larger than if the church was open.

We have kept in contact physically with those within and around Liscard by calling round and keeping socially distant, taking flowers, biscuits, cakes and the parish magazine. Whatsapp and text messaging have all played a part in keeping in contact with everyone and it has enabled us all to stretch our capabilities in terms of supporting one another. On Whatsapp, the prayer group, which responds to those in need of prayer, for those ill or distressed in any way, has been particularly helpful.

The church has been open behind closed gates with a table on view that has icons, a candle and prayers and 'Say one for me' cards have been available through the gate and several prayers have been left by people who need prayers for themselves or others. During this time we have dug deep into our spiritual resources in terms of people and technology and have tried to replace the regular physical services with those on-line. Not always suitable for everyone but with a variety of means to keep worshipping we have kept going, with an eye to the future when we will be able to open our doors once



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The wider context

Having established ourselves as a church of mission with our strapline
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our future seems bound with Mission and in the tentative approaches that we are making into the community through Welcoming Wednesday, 10p sales, Lets make Mass together, Litter picking, Say one for me ,it illustrates that the congregation is willing to try new approaches to reflect the presence of The Kingdom and in most cases encouragement, enthusiasm and support are all that's needed to make things happen.

Our proposed link with St Andrews , West Kirby seems a natural alliance theologically although the physical distance and the proportion of funds we can contribute needs to be taken into consideration in terms of how it would work

With Covid19 the future of Liscard itself , as a business centre, is in question, but St Thomas's can have a say and an input into how it shapes, survives and develops.

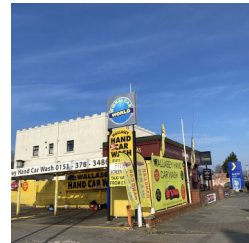
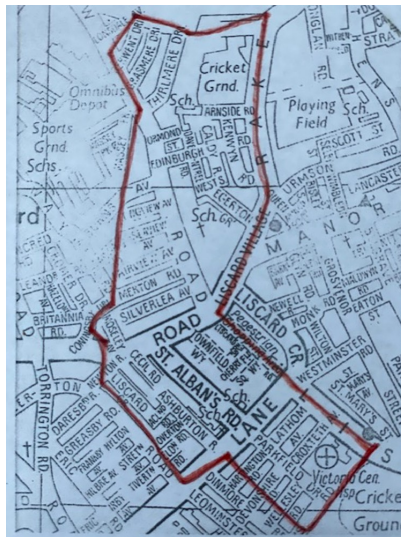
At the back of the church are empty local authority buildings that are due to be demolished. This is possibly going to be a housing scheme that caters for a range of needs. The over 55's, sheltered housing and 2/3 bedroom houses for young families with some flats for younger people as well. It's possible that the development will aid our development.

As a church we recognise that we have to go out and proclaim the gospel and not expect people to come through the doors with no effort on our part. we are taking steps in areas that we hadn't considered before. We are restricted in some of the ways in which we can develop, but the energy and will is there, to make things happen.



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inside the parish boundary



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