

Parish Profile

St Wilfrid's Church Grappenhall



Welcome from us all at St Wilfrid's.

Heavenly Father, during this time of transition, we seek your wisdom and guidance as we search for our new Rector. We ask that you guide us to find someone who will shepherd our congregation with love, wisdom and a deep sense of service. May they be a person of prayer, dedicated to nurturing your flock and leading them to grow in discipleship and become closer to you.

Guide those involved in the selection process that they may discern your will with clarity and purpose. We trust in your timing and your perfect plan for our church community. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.



Invitation

The parish church of St Wilfrid's sits at the heart of the historic village of Grappenhall. We are an Inclusive Church and over the last decade, with strong leadership and unwavering belief in the power and love of God, we have become an effective and growing church. We are now looking for a new Rector who can build on this foundation and continue our mission of growth and discipleship within the community.

This is a full-time stipendiary post, with a 5-bed Rectory, described later in this profile. You will be supported in your work by a hard-working ministerial team devoted to spreading the joys of our faith and the love of God. The work of the churchwardens, the PCC, and the many volunteers including our administrative and finance teams has been recognised within the Diocese as exemplary, and our finances are healthy.

We are specifically looking for an approachable, inspiring, and faithful Rector, a devoted servant of God, who can share their love of Christ with the church family, and with a love of people that helps them to reach out to the wider community. They will extend a visible invitation of grace to those who may feel they don't belong. As you read this profile, we invite you to join us in prayer for the continued growth of our church.

We ourselves will be praying the prayer on the cover to this profile. The successful applicant must be a good communicator with relaxed and engaging presentation skills that can be enjoyed by people of all ages. They must be able to facilitate change and improvement. Their churchmanship should align with the expectations of the Grappenhall community.



Our Churchwardens,
Linda & Phil

Who we are looking for.

- **Inclusive Church:** our new Rector should embrace an inclusive approach, *which welcomes and serves everybody*, without discrimination. All parishioners must feel welcome and accepted.
- **Missional Skills:** deepening our discipleship by bringing scripture alive through effective teaching and a demonstrable faith in Christ will help our people in living out their Christian faith in everyday life, Monday to Saturday and not just on a Sunday, developing their faith at all stages along life's journey.
- **Relationship Skills:** the ability to get alongside people to understand their concerns, and build trust is very important. A Rector who can connect with people on an individual level, to nurture the gifts of others, will encourage our volunteers, and develop teamwork.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** our Rector should be willing to learn and adapt as society and technology changes. For example, building familiarity with the opportunities our new AV/IT equipment offers will enable services to be crafted that cater to the expectations and needs of all our congregation.
- **Holistic Perspective:** our Rector's willingness to embrace using the Church building for wider outreach – not just for our regular services - is very important. Our Church can touch on the lives of more people and act as a hub for all the community.
- **Safeguarding:** our new Rector will be able to foster good safeguarding culture within the parish.
- **Community Engagement:** a successful candidate should have a strong commitment to community engagement. They will foster relationships with St Wilfrid's Primary School and other local schools, benefiting both the schools and the parish. Additionally, they will develop connections with the local residential and nursing homes as well as engage with businesses within the community. This commitment reflects a desire to share God's love across all ages.



A brief introduction to Grappenhall

Grappenhall is in North Cheshire, about 40 minutes from the city centres of Liverpool and Manchester and about half an hour from Chester. It is 5 minutes' drive from the heart of the motorway network and the A55 to North Wales. It is less than 2 hours by train from London. Beautiful gardens and countryside are in easy reach.

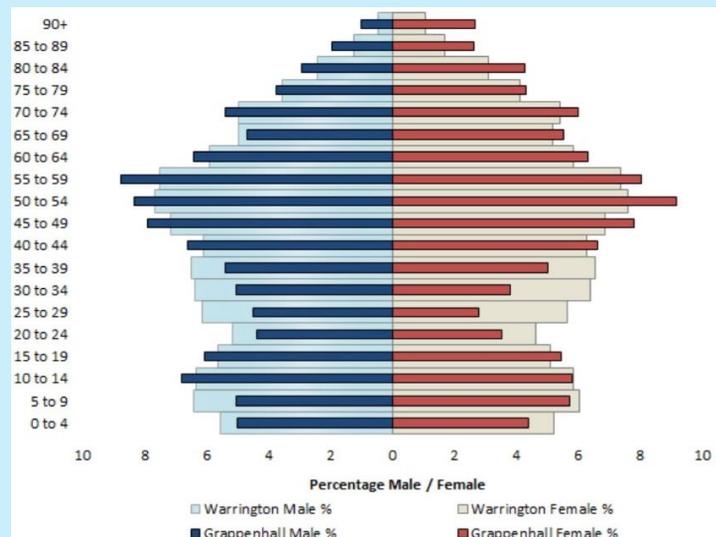


Much of the housing in Grappenhall dates from the first half of the 20th century. The oldest buildings are in the picturesque village centre by St Wilfrid's Church. Close by is our Parish Centre, St Wilfrid's School, the canal, Scout Hut, and the Old Rectory Nursing home.

The cobbled Conservation Area also has 2 pubs and a group of 18th/19th century houses. Amidst the encroaching urban sprawl, the church's enduring presence within this protected space offers a reminder of the village's long-standing spiritual heritage.

Many people who grew up in Grappenhall retain a strong sense of place and of belonging to a community with deep roots, traditions and customs. Grappenhall people are proud of their 12th century Church, the sound of church bells chimed by our excellent team of bell ringers and traditions like Walking Day. There still are farmers in Grappenhall, but now the baptismal register lists occupations like marketing, healthcare, sales, scientific, technical, managers and transport.

Population The Grappenhall population of 7749 is shown in 5-year age bands. The age profile is biased towards older people, and this is reflected in church attendance. Many of our volunteers are keeping young, even into their 80s and 90s, by faithfully serving their community. 25% of the Church's electoral roll lives outside the Parish.



Worship

The regular **Sunday** pattern is:

8:30 am Holy Communion BCP (fortnightly)

10:00 am Holy Communion CW

4th Sunday each month

10:00 am Family Praise

5:00 pm Celtic Communion



Churchmanship and the Ministry Team

The ethos of our Church is central. Our Rector and Choir wear vestments, when appropriate.

Our Curate, Kate, is currently a Deacon, and due to be priested in June 2024. We have two Lay Readers, John and Gill, and a Pastoral Worker, Margaret, other members of the congregation also participate to make services more inclusive.

130 services have been held by St Wilfrid's in Church and elsewhere in the first 3 months of 2024. This includes Weddings, Funerals, special services for Lent and Easter, midweek prayer and HC services, services held out of Church in School, Residential Homes and an Ecumenical Easter service outdoors in Warrington.

Church Music

St Wilfrid's makes its contribution to music in Grappenhall with our award-winning bell ringers, who act as a training tower for other ringers. They have created a Young Ringer's Group starting from age 9. Many groups of visiting ringers have enjoyed the experience of ringing our new 10 bell configuration. Our church choir takes to the outdoors for the annual Grappenhall Walking Day and our Palm Sunday walk through the Grappenhall Conservation Area.

**GRAPPENHALL CHESHIRE
BELL RINGERS**



At St Wilfrid's music plays a vital role in enriching our services. Our diverse musical offerings enhance the worship experience for our congregation.

Let us introduce some of our talented musicians:

Guy: Our skilled organist and choir master.

Helen and Phil: contribute their unique talents and style to our worship music, to help create a rich and dynamic atmosphere.

Pip and Nikki: Our talented sisters, both fully trained recognized classical musicians. Pip, described by Musical Stage as 'One of the leading violinists of her generation,' graces us with her violin. Nikki, at the keyboard of the grand piano, provides the supporting accompaniment.

Together, these musicians create a harmonious blend of tradition, talent, and passion, enhancing the spiritual journey of our congregation.



The local community packs the church for our annual nativity play, the well-loved Crib Service.

St Wilfrid's People

At St Wilfrid's, volunteers create a warm and welcoming worship experience. Churchgoers hear bells, walk through a tended churchyard, and find fresh flowers inside. Lay volunteers participate in services, and, after worship, everyone enjoys refreshments. Behind the scenes, dedicated teams manage multiple tasks, ensuring the smooth functioning of the church.



Inclusive Church

St Wilfrid's, Grappenhall, tries to represent everyone in the parish. Unlike a city church, which could aim to serve a niche group of the wider community, we are committed to be welcoming to all. We have been open to modern, more inclusive, language, new music and child-friendly practices. We voted some years ago to become an "Inclusive Church".

Inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

As a worshipping community we work hard to make sure our welcome is as good as we can make it. Our recently constructed annex has helped with the welcome we can offer, and the car park extension has given us better disabled parking and access. The PCC recently voted to allow the "prayers of love and faith" to be used in St Wilfrid's, as currently allowed by the central guidance.

'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.'

Galatians 3:28



Key Resources Communication Hub



Get the message out effectively – on multiple channels

The Church Office is manned 5 days a week by our part-time Church Administrator, who is supported by volunteers. This is a hub, a link to all the Ministry Team, the Finance Team, the Churchwardens, or organisers of events or activities.

You will find a friendly person to ask – particularly when you do not know who to speak to.

"Please can I talk to someone about..."

- Pastoral Care
- This event you are advertising
- Family History
- Equipment delivery
- Dates – Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals."



'And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administration and various kinds of tongues.'

1 Corinthians 12:28-31

Education

Warrington and Grappenhall both have higher than northwest average levels of educational attainment. St Wilfrid's Primary School encourages strong links with home, church and the wider community. They aim for high standards in all they do and try to provide high quality of provision in support of pupils' achievements. Their aim is to work as a Christian community, which welcomes children and values them as individuals. There is a community primary school in the parish which we have previously had contact with, and which we would hope to re-engage in the future. All the local secondary schools and colleges are outside the Parish boundary, so there is the potential to develop links with them perhaps in collaboration with other Parishes.

St Wilfrid's Primary School

We are a large two-form entry primary school situated in the heart of Grappenhall village. Our school's Christian vision promotes a culture of hope, dignity, tolerance and respect.

We enjoy strong links with St. Wilfrid's Church and together we have worked hard to ensure that our children and whole school community feel part of God's family. We have worked in partnership with the Church Rector to further develop the Christian distinctiveness of our school and we hope that the new incumbent will continue to play a very active role in school life.

The Rector leads weekly collective worship based around the Christian values of peace, forgiveness, hope, respect, sacrifice and love. Worship is a special time for the school community to come together to pray, reflect and celebrate in an inclusive environment where everyone is welcome.

Our governing body is key to our school success. The Rector sits on our governing body along with a combination of Foundation governors, staff and parent governors. They provide high levels of support and challenge to ensure we maintain our high standards while keeping our Christian values at the heart of everything we do.

Mrs Glenda Davies (Headteacher)

SIAMS 2019

'Governors are enthused by lively collective worship led by the Rector.'

We asked the children what they were looking for in a new Rector, here's what they said...

We would like our new Rector to be **'kind and loving'**, 'a great listener who answers our questions', **'someone to lead us in worship every week'**, and 'someone who is respectful and patient.'



SIAMS 2019

'Governors are passionate about their role and are proud that school and church are at the heart of Grappenhall village.'

Our Ethos group play an important role in school and are very much looking forward to meeting the new Rector!



'Let your light shine for others to see'
Matthew 5:16

St Wilfrid's Church

Building

Sunlight filters through magnificent stained-glass windows, casting patterns onto warm red sandstone pillars. This Church is a living storehouse of treasured memories. A Grade I listed building that has faithfully served generations of Grappenhall people for over 900 years. Thousands of people step across its threshold, drawn by curiosity and reverence. As the heavy door swings open, they enter a space where time seems to fold upon itself—a bridge connecting the ancient past to the dynamic present.



Adaptation has been the key to survival. From its origins in the 12th century, this sacred place has evolved, embracing the needs of each era. Today, it stands ready to welcome 21st-century souls. Rows of comfortably padded chairs await churchgoers.



These 250+movable seats are rearranged and augmented to accommodate gatherings: from preschool children to nursing home residents in wheelchairs, even gatherings of up to 500 people. The Lady Chapel is a more intimate area in the south aisle which suits gatherings of 20-30 people for Morning Prayer sessions. We aim to adapt the Church to suit the people and the occasion.

High-tech screens guide worshippers through the liturgy, their illustrated displays enhancing the spiritual experience. Visual imagery reinforces the timeless message of God, bridging the gap between ancient texts and modern hearts. And for those unable to attend in person, the services are live-streamed—a digital thread that ensures all remain connected, even from the quiet corners of their homes.

In this hallowed space, where centuries converge, the echoes of prayers and hymns resonate—a symphony of faith that transcends time itself. On the tower, a “Cheshire Cat” relief may have sparked the imagination of a young Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), whose father preached nearby. It also has an inverted V, where St Wilfrid's School's roof beams once connected in 1712, before the school's relocation in 1846.

Already a sought-after venue, the annexe hosts gatherings, including educational tours, social groups, training sessions, and interlude refreshments during the ‘Live at St Wilfrid's! musical concert series. It also serves hikers, genealogy enthusiasts, and families gathering to mark significant events such as a baptism, wedding or funeral.



The Parish Centre

The Parish Centre, located opposite the church, is a bustling community hub.

During weekdays, it opens its doors at 8 am, hosting a breakfast club for school children. Later in the day, starting at 2:45 pm, it transforms into an after-school club. Beyond its educational functions, the facility is widely booked by external organisers of functions and events. At the rear, there's ample space for 20 cars.



- ❖ The Main Room is spacious and accommodates various activities.
- ❖ Adjacent Kitchen: Conveniently located for food preparation.
- ❖ Meeting Room: A smaller space for gatherings and discussions.
- ❖ Toilets: Including a disabled toilet and baby changing facilities.
- ❖ The Parish Centre comfortably seats 80 people for sit-down meals.
- ❖ Church Office and Ministry Room.



Rectory

17 Hilltop Road, Grappenhall, Warrington WA4 2ED

The house is in one of the most prestigious areas of South Warrington. It is a detached 5 bedroom and 2 bathroom property built in 1956.

It has an entrance hall, lounge, conservatory,



dining room, kitchen, cloakroom and utility room. A extension was constructed in 1992 to facilitate a Rector's study together with separate entrance and toilet facilities. Externally the property has good-sized mature well-kept gardens with a double garage which is also accessible from the house.



Giving and spending

Our Finance Team provides separation of roles for accountability: Financial authorisation and review are overseen by the PCC; Cashflow and reserves are managed by the Treasurer; Transactions are recorded promptly, with invoices retained for audit, and authorised expenses paid by bank transfer.



Our Finance Team,
Charles and Geraint



The strategy for giving is to:

- ❖ Encourage members to set up monthly standing orders for Planned Giving.
- ❖ Provide facilities for contactless unattended giving, text giving, web giving, coin box for tea/coffee donations and plate for cash by the door during services. We encourage Gift Aid.
- ❖ Apply for grants for capital projects. Reclaim VAT using LPOW scheme.
- ❖ Thank donors and show them what their contribution has funded.

'You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us'

2 Corinthians 9:11

The strategy for spending is to:

- Pay Parish Share in full and explain what it is for.
- Invest in the quality and marketing of chargeable activities.
- Inspect building and graveyard regularly and plan timely maintenance, using professionals and volunteers, not cutting corners on workmanship or safety.
- Negotiate with suppliers to minimise lifetime cost of equipment and services.
- Create accountable, small project teams for significant capital projects (e.g updating heating)

**The 2023 Accounts and Annual report are on the Charity Commission website
(Reg. Charity 1131723)**

Serving our Community

In our unwavering commitment to foster growth and inclusivity, St Wilfrid's Parish Church endeavours to serve all members of our community. Our dedicated Ministry Team, which includes a Pastoral Worker, collaborates to deliver compassionate care and support. Our Pastoral Worker actively engages in ongoing training facilitated by the Diocese, while also encouraging other volunteers to participate in caring activities with appropriate training and safeguards in place.

Kindness and Support: Within our congregation, kindness and thoughtfulness are values we all embrace. Life's journey often requires additional support, and we recognize this need. We have recently erected a churchyard memorial specifically for parents who have experienced the loss of a child during pregnancy or shortly after birth. This is a sacred space for grieving and reflection and as a place to lay flowers to honour cherished memories.



'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.'

John 15:12

Prayer Groups: Our Prayer Groups extend their prayers for people of all ages whatever their needs.

Whether it's the cared-for individuals or their carers, we offer prayers from our homes and from the church. Our Church Office diligently collects prayer requests and routes these to our prayer group.

The Pastoral Worker coordinates hospital and home visits under the guidance of the Rector, ensuring services are provided within the safeguarding framework established by the Chester Diocese.

When calls for help were abundant, but helpers scarce, our **Bereavement Café** emerged as a beacon of support. Here's how the Bereavement Café unfolded:

1. **Programme Development:** A thoughtful programme was meticulously crafted, designed to assist individuals navigating the complex emotions associated with loss. Activities were curated to address the unique needs of those grieving.
2. **Invitations Sent:** Families who had recently experienced bereavement received heartfelt invitations. The response was inspiring —attendees found immense value in the programme.
3. **Volunteer Recruitment:** The success of the Bereavement Café led to a wonderful outcome: some attendees stepped forward as volunteers to help in all aspects of church activity. Their eagerness to support others underscores the power of empathy and understanding.
4. **Expanding the Model:** Buoyed by this success, we aspire to extend the “Café” model to other contexts. We are considering creating a Dementia Café or a Carers Café, tailoring the support to these specific needs. However, a critical challenge lies in recruiting and training experienced volunteers to operate these vital activities.

We work with the **Nursing and Care Homes** in our Parish, getting to know residents, singing, praying and reading the Bible with them. Communion is given regularly in certain residential homes. Individuals can request end of life care when appropriate. The monthly Communion and lunch service in Church enable people who are cared for at home to meet up with residents who live in several of the Nursing and Care Homes in our area.



"Pray without ceasing".
1 Thessalonians 5:17



'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'
Matthew 25:40

Signposting and Collaborations: In both the group Café and work with individuals we are committed to signposting by guiding individuals toward appropriate resources: encouraging people to connect with their GPs for access to mental health services is crucial. Additionally, our strong ties with the local NHS facilitate meaningful visits and connections with specialized charitable care providers.

Great Budworth Deanery: The structure provided by Great Budworth Deanery enables pastoral workers to communicate across parish boundaries, fostering a network of care and compassion.

Community Links and Fellowship Groups

St Wilfrid's hosts a popular Women's Friendship group. We want to develop a Men's Friendship group. We started a Community Choir which has successfully attracted people of all ages, who enjoy singing popular songs. Annual events such as Walking Day, Christmas Fair and Remembrance Sunday attract as many as 1000 people from across the whole community. Our monthly Church magazine has many subscribers who are not regular churchgoers.



We support Warrington Foodbank, Care UK and the Children's Society, and feel we should do more. St Wilfrid's is a member of Bridgewater Churches Together and Great Budworth Deanery.



ECO CHURCH Caring for God's Creation

In 2021 the opening of the Church Annexe, with its big wide windows, made many people much more aware of the beauty and peacefulness of our Churchyard. Surfacing the access route made it much more accessible than the previous muddy track had been. This led to many donations of benches, so visitors can now have a rest when they come to pay their respects, or simply sit and enjoy the flowers.



We applied and were successful in getting a bronze award in 2022 from A Rocha. St Wilfrid's takes a lead by supporting regular Fairtrade sales tables and using Fairtrade tea and coffee. Our appeal for Toilet Twinning met an enthusiastic response from church goers. We actively promote recycling and use recycled paper extensively. We also very actively work to reduce energy consumption throughout church buildings. The new annexe building is designed to be energy efficient and use natural construction materials like wood, wherever possible.

We strive to increase biodiversity in our large, active churchyard. We survey and record the birds that are attracted to the birdfeeders and to the many species of trees within the churchyard. We also survey the wildflowers and fungi. Our recent plantings are mainly flowering plants and shrubs as we aim to provide year-round colour and pollen to feed insects. School is beginning to use our churchyard as a learning resource, as we are now hosting their beehive.

Music and the Arts

Our Live at St Wilfrid's! concert programme has been running for around a quarter of a century.

These monthly classical and jazz concerts in Church draw in visitors from Greater Manchester as well as North Cheshire. It has been good to offer performance opportunities for young musicians as well as welcoming performers with an international reputation. Recent performances include Warrington Male Voice Choir and Craig Ogden.

Serving refreshments from the annexe has been welcomed by participants and helps Church funds.



**GRAPPENHALL
COMMUNITY
Voices**



St Wilfrid's hosts the Grappenhall Community Voices, a choir that meets weekly to enjoy singing modern popular songs.

Growth

The Diocese of Chester recently launched its Vision, as described in the "Casting the Net Wide" report. The vision has a focus on serving all of the 1.5 million people who live and work in our Diocese. The four themes of the mission strategy are accepted as valid to St Wilfrid's Grappenhall. These are:

- **Growing braver, fuller faith;**
- **Blessing the 1.5 million, one life at a time;**
- **Transformative loving service (in practise);**
- **Engaged locally, working together in loving generosity.**

St Wilfrid's PCC has developed an initial Growth Plan, based upon the **Leading your Church into Growth** workshop which was attended by 7 delegates. As the Diocesan Vision continues into its detailed rollout stage, we will amend our growth plan to show we are working to meet the challenges.

During the vacancy, the PCC will continue work on our Growth Plan, and we hope to make real progress on our initial target areas. We have recognised weaknesses in bringing in the "missing age groups", on discipleship courses for both new and existing members of our worshipping community, and in looking outwards sufficiently. We look forward to our new Rector who will give us additional insights and help us discern our future direction. Our areas for growth may require work in cooperation with neighbouring churches. We are looking for a Rector who can work with existing links such as Bridgewater Churches Together, or with churches in the Deanery; and can be a team player, as well as a leader.

***'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.'* Acts 2:42**

Mission to Children and Families

Over 1000 children, currently about 40 per year, have been baptised in our ancient font during the 21st century. Children and their parents or carers are also invited to our twice-monthly midweek preschool praise services. All children are welcome to attend church services, particularly the informal and child-centred monthly Family Praise. We work hard to maintain and build relationships with schools in our Parish, inviting them to participate in events like exhibitions. St Wilfrid's Primary School classes regularly lead their worship services in Church. The Ministry team also hold weekly services at St Wilfrid's Primary School.



Vision for the Future: Plans and Opportunities

Who could have predicted all the challenges that have hit our community over the last few years? Many people have not yet fully recovered from the wave of fear, illness and isolation that swept over us during the pandemic. St Wilfrid's became part of the glue that held our community together.

None of us know what challenges lie ahead. We see war in Europe, fleeing refugees, earthquakes, and, across the world, there are escalating prices for food and fuel. We want to continue serving our community. We look for guidance and leadership to help us work out what practical things we can do here. As St David of Wales said, "look after the little things".

The PCC has reflected on what would we like to do in future or do better. The PCC listed goals and areas of opportunity. Here are some of their ideas:

'St Wilfrid's needs to be more visible in the community'

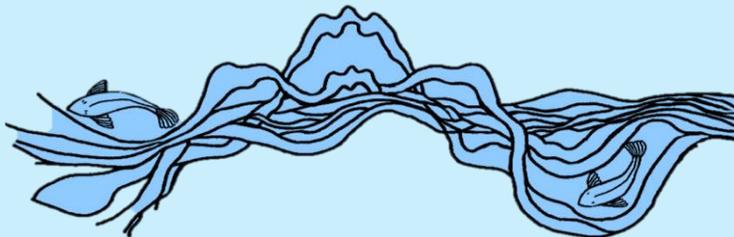
'Nurture young and old'

'Exhibition e.g. 80 years since VE Day (2025) large-scale, to involve people who do not come to church'

'Solar Power / Net Zero'

'Missing Generations from church'

'Discipleship Opportunities'



St Wilfrid's PCC is looking for a kind, thoughtful and inspiring Rector, ready for the adventure of growing with us and helping us to grow.

If you would like to know more. We are open from 9-4pm every day.

If you would like someone to show you around, please contact the Church Office by emailing stwilfchurchoffice@btinternet.co.uk.

Our church diary of services is available via the website <https://stwilfridschurch.org.uk>

You are very welcome to join us for a service or perhaps catch-up using livestream through the website. There is a lot more information about St Wilfrid's on this site, please use the menus as the site is currently being upgraded.

Other sources of information include:

Grappenhall ward profile 2022 [Grappenhall - 2022 ward profile \(warrington.gov.uk\)](http://warrington.gov.uk)

Annual report for charity [Charity overview, THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST.WILFRID, GRAPPENHALL - 1131723, Register of Charities - The Charity Commission](#)

[Casting the Net Wide - Report - Diocese of Chester \(anglican.org\)](#)