



St Mary-le-Tower  
Civic church of Ipswich

# Role Description and Parish Profile



# From the Vicar

## The Reverend Tom Mumford

Since arriving in Ipswich in October 2021 I have been overawed by the potential of this parish church and its people. St Mary le Tower is situated in the heart of the town and has an important place in Ipswich's history, being the place where its ancient charter was first read in 1200. Now, following the announcement by the Bishop that St Mary le Tower is to become Ipswich Minster in 2025, I am certain the church will play a central part in the town's dynamic and vibrant future. One of England's 'Major Churches', with our location at the heart of Ipswich, there is such potential to be a centre for mission, a beacon of Christian hope, and a community of prayer, love, and service. In the coming years I want the church to be a place that people come to Ipswich to visit and a church that those who live here feel proud of. I hope it will be a place where people are able to come and find peace and stillness in a busy world. And a place where people will be able to experience the warmth and love of God in prayer.



## Associate Priest

### Role Description

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and the Vicar of St Mary le Tower seek to appoint an Associate Priest with energy, compassion, and creativity, rooted in a strong life of prayer. They will be a key part of the churches Senior Leadership Team, and share in its ministry to the town, but will have particular responsibility for creating new meaningful contact with children, young people and families, inviting them to explore the Christian faith. It is envisaged that a consequence of this ministry will be a number of outreach groups and at least one new worshipping community, all leading to a growth of at least 30 new young Christians at St Mary le Tower, by then Ipswich Minster. There is a small team ready to support this, as well as possible venues in addition to the church building.

Role Title: Associate Priest

Type of Role: Full-time stipendiary, fixed post - 3 years (sponsorship funding involved)

## Key Tasks

- Sharing in the cure of souls in collaboration with the Vicar and other members of the ministry team;
- Praying the daily offices, sharing in the administration of the sacraments, leading worship and preaching;
- Establish new ways of growing the church younger and in number, beginning at least one new worshipping community/congregation
- Working with others, to develop opportunities for learning and discipleship for the congregations;
- Overseeing the children's and youth ministry, leading and working with the children's and young person's volunteers;
- Participating in Ministerial development and in Continuing Ministerial Development;
- Taking care of their own well-being and the well-being of others;
- Following PCC policies and procedures;
- Having regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy (as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of professional Conduct for the clergy and other relevant legislation);
- Carrying out any other duties and responsibilities as required in line with the needs of the benefice.

## Person Specification

### Qualification/training

#### Essential

- A person in priest's orders in the Church of England or in a Church in full communion with the Church of England
- Satisfactory completion of Initial Ministerial Education (or anticipating completion by the beginning of the appointment)
- Safeguarding training at the highest level appropriate to incumbent/church leader

### Experience and Skills

#### Essential

- Ability to lead high quality liturgical worship;
- Preaching and teaching with imagination
- Ability to work with people of all ages and backgrounds, including families and young children, enabling them to encounter and grow in the Christian faith;
- A passion for reaching out and sharing the gospel with children and young people and a track record of making new disciples;
- Able to identify, build and nurture the talents and gifts of others in a collaborative way;
- A solid foundation in the provision of pastoral care for a wide-range of people and circumstances;

- Ability to relate well with people, communicate effectively and appropriately with people of all ages and situations, both inside and outside the Church;
- Ability to identify and respond to opportunities for mission and outreach;
- Gifted for ministry among young adults and children;
- Ability to participate fully in a Senior Leadership Team with lay staff as well as clergy;
- Good working knowledge of IT and social media;
- Understanding of Church of England Safeguarding policies and practices, and work in accordance with a Parish Safeguarding Policy

## Personal Qualities

### Essential

- A prayerful priest with a sensitive pastoral heart;
- A good team player who can work both independently and in collaboration with others;
- A self-starter who is self-motivated and able to see, develop and engage in missional opportunities;
- Person who exhibits self-awareness, warmth, empathy, humour and openness
- Someone who is engaging, unflappable and fun;
- A general appreciation for church choral music and in particular how it can draw people to God





# The Tower



The first church, endowed with 26 acres and probably built of wood, flourished in the time of Edward the Confessor as recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. Holy Trinity Priory was then founded in about 1177 (on the site of what is now Christ Church Mansion) and for 360 years its Augustinian secular canons served the Tower church and parish. By 29th June 1200, when King John's Charter was received in its churchyard, the second Romanesque church shown on the Borough Seal had replaced the former Saxon building. St Mary le Tower has been the town's civic church ever since.

The current church, the fourth on this site, was finished in the 1860s. The Tower has had a range of traditions over its long history, from the pre-reformation catholicism, to Puritanism in the 17th century, and to the Anglo-catholic Tractarians who built the present building. Today, however, the Tower's worship is within the Anglican High-Church choral tradition.

## The Parish

The Tower's parish is essentially the town centre of Ipswich, starting just north of the church along the bottom of Christ Church park, going all the way down to the quay and docks. In terms of resident population, the parish is relatively small with not more than one and a half thousand residents. However, during the day, being in the heart of Suffolk's county town, the population of the parish swells to being one of (if not the) biggest in the diocese. This presents the church with a fantastic opportunity for mission.

What is often forgotten when thinking about the Tower as a Civic Church, known nationally for the quality of its music tradition, is that The Tower is set in a very poor area. According to Church of England deprivation stats, the parish is the fourth most deprived in the diocese and in the bottom 12% of the country. The recent vision and strategic plan sets out ambitions to address this reality as part of our mission.

The Tower has long had a strong musical tradition and those who attend worship find this enables them to better experience God in prayer. The choral tradition also attracts a range of ages, with currently more than 30 young people under the age of 18, approximately half children and teenagers.

Daily prayer is said at the Tower as part of its vocation to support and pray for the town as its Civic Church. On a Sunday there are four services including 8am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion, Choral Matins and Choral Evensong. The main service of the day is the Sung Eucharist at 10:30am. Across the day, the Tower welcomes on average around 180 worshippers and has seen encouraging growth in the last two years. The regular congregation consists of a mix of ages and backgrounds, most of whom come from outside the geographical parish and many from outside of Ipswich.

As well as the church building, the largest in Ipswich, the Tower has two other buildings on its site (Tower House and Church House) that are used and can be used by the Associate Priest for the church's mission and outreach. The church's vision and strategic plan was launched on Easter Day 2022. In this contains details of its mission and plans for the next five years.



# Community Life



St Mary-le-Tower is a parish church with a thriving and diverse congregation with people of all ages. We seek to live out the Christian faith through our worship and service of our town and parish. We seek to love our neighbour, being welcoming and inclusive of all. We aim to provide for the spiritual needs of the town, and all who come, whether just as visitors to the building or as sharers in worship.

## During the week

During the week the Tower is a hive of activity. Following Morning Prayer at 8:30am the church is open most days for visitors and those wishing to find some peace and a place to pray. On Tuesday lunchtime we host a regular free concert series that in 2022 celebrated its 50th anniversary. On Wednesday mornings the gardening volunteer team work to beautify the churchyard, we host our weekly Top-Up shop and community cafe (begun June 2022) and Warm Space (begun November 2022).

There is also a weekly service of Holy Communion. Evenings are also busy with regular rehearsals and practices of our bellringing team (national finalists) and the different parts of our choir. There are also regular meetings of small groups for study, prayer and Christian enquiry throughout the year. The Tower also plays host to a number of different events and organisations and is one of the premier venues in the centre of Ipswich.

Tower House, which is owned by the church, provides an additional buzz of activity on site. A former merchant's mansion house, Tower House hosts the Ipswich Citizen's Advice, as well as our Song School.

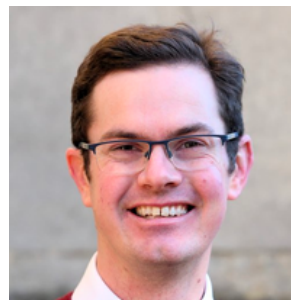


## Some of the team

As well as the Vicar, there are a number of people who exercise a daily mission and ministry at the Tower, including two curates, one stipendiary and one self-supporting.

Below are just a few of these fantastic people. In no particular order, from left to right:

Bridget Hanley, a Churchwarden, Jo Gunn , SSM Curate, Chris Borrett, Director of Music, Jim Robinson, a Verger.



## A Place to Flourish

As part of its vision and strategy, launched on Easter Day 2022 and following the arrival of its new Vicar in autumn 2021, the Tower has a newly refocussed mission and ministry as Ipswich's Town and Civic Church.

Its new *mission statement* says that the Tower seeks to be 'a welcoming, inclusive, and open church, offering peace and sanctuary in the heart of Ipswich, flourishing through prayer, faith, and positive action.'

Without doubt, the Tower is an exciting place to be, and a place where it feels God is powerfully at work. We can't wait to find out what the next few years has in store for us and our town as we become a Minster and seek to flourish as a church that enables God's people to flourish.





# Inspiring Ipswich

This post is largely funded by Inspiring Ipswich, an SDF project in the diocese, now two-thirds of the way through its seven-years (it was extended to 2025 due to the COVID pandemic). Here are some words from Archdeacon Rhiannon King, the project director:

“Looking back to its original four goals, there is a lot to give thanks for. We are behind on one, in excess of two and in sight of the most important one which is this: We are aiming to help 1500 new people follow Jesus and worship with us once a month and we have now reached over 1100 with less than a year and a half to go.

Over the last 6 years many new clergy have come to join us in the deanery of Ipswich and thanks also to the clergy who were here before, there is a fresh focus on mission and evangelism, prayer and a new joy which has come from that. As a result many of our churches are growing, we now have 35 new worshipping communities, there is a new culture of making disciple-making disciples and many are coming to faith in our new congregations. We’d love for you to be a part of that!”





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[www.stmaryletower.org](http://www.stmaryletower.org)



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