

# Brighton The Chapel Royal

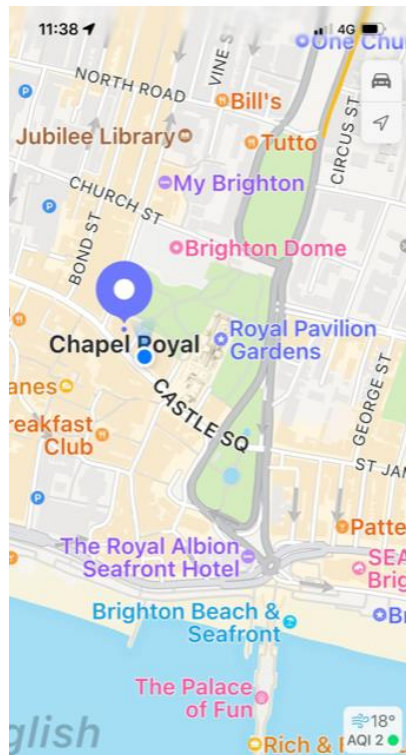


We are in the city centre close to the Royal Pavilion and Gardens

**The Chapel Royal  
164 North Street  
Brighton.  
BN1 1EA**



[www.chapelroyal.church](http://www.chapelroyal.church)



## Parish Profile - January 2024



Located in the historical heart of Brighton, in the city of Brighton & Hove,



picture a Regency chapel which is an oasis of peace and calm  
in the middle of rushing crowds and traffic,



that's the Chapel Royal, Brighton.

A community that welcomes EVERYONE!

## **Proclaiming the Mystery of Faith**

In 2025 this diocese celebrates the 950th anniversary of witness and evangelisation from a mission base in Chichester, building on the earlier mission founded by St Wilfrid at Selsey. 2025 also marks the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea with its reminder of the formative claim upon us of the catholic creeds.

These anniversaries are more than historical footnotes. They speak powerfully about the richness of faith and mission that is our inheritance locally and universally.

Inspired by that inheritance, we seek to be a household of faith that is endlessly curious about how the Holy Scriptures and the sacraments of the New Covenant enable us to know, love and follow Jesus Christ in today's noisy and distracted world.

If God is calling you to join us in the task of proclaiming the mystery of faith in some part of this diocese, we pray that the contribution of your gifts and experience will enrich our witness and deepen your own discipleship.

We take very seriously the call to diversity and radical inclusion as characteristic of the Church's mission. For this reason we welcome applications from ordained women and Global Majority Heritage clergy, who are under-represented in those who serve this diocese.

**+Martin**

# **This is our Vision and Mission**

## **Vision statement**

The Chapel Royal, Brighton is a community within the liberal catholic tradition of the Church of England, which is led by the Gospels and works to inspire others to come to faith in Christ Jesus.

The community is dedicated to maintaining a prayerful, inclusive and diverse Christian ethos centred around the Eucharist with sacraments at the forefront.

## **Mission statement**

The Chapel Royal, Brighton has the following priorities:

- to include and consider all to be of equal value, affirming everyone as children of God.
- to have a worshipful life, especially as a city centre church, which is largely focused on reaching out to the marginalised.
- these groups include, but are not limited to, the homeless, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities and those recovering from addiction.
- to share our building on an almost daily basis with 12 step programmes and other groups.
- to gather as sisters and brothers in Christ, inspired by the scriptures to be welcoming and open to all, actively seeking to include and affirm our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters and to continue welcoming refugees and asylum seekers.
- to provide outreach to the many students of Brighton and Hove and provide them a safe space in which to explore and develop their Faith.
- to maintain good relationships with those in our parish, including the nearby businesses and charities. We also open our church on a weekly basis for lunchtime concerts that bring in many visitors to church.

The Chapel Royal is a quiet, reflective and inclusive space situated in central Brighton which attracts, gathers and nurtures those who may have experienced displacement and exclusion.

## **Our Music**

### Service Music at the Chapel Royal

We are very fortunate that we have a community that loves singing and joins in with the music during the Mass and services.

Chris Stringer-McGibbon is our organist and Musical Director, and has been playing the organ at the Chapel Royal since 2015, initially on a shared basis. He now plays for three of the Sundays (four if there is a fifth Sunday in the month) and we are fortunate to have Adam who accompanies the worship on the piano on the fourth Sunday of the month.

Chris spends a lot of time looking at the readings for each Sunday to choose hymns that are appropriate, together with hymns that we all love and know. We have four hymns each Sunday; entrance, offertory, communion and final. We use two Mass settings – Inwood and Mass of the Christ of Peace. We sing a joyful Alleluia (changed to Praise to You, O Christ our Saviour during Lent). We have several Gloria's that we use that rotate. At present the Responsorial Psalm is said.

During Communion, we have two members of our congregation who often sing, and we are looking to increase this to a singing group that would join together to enhance the music experience and possibly people could help lead the Responsorial Psalm if we are to sing this. Chris has put booklets together over the years for Christmas and the Easter Triduum and is always willing to assist with liturgy where possible. He looks forward to working together with our new Priest to enable the music to grow and make a lovely sound of praise.

## **Finance**

### The Parish and its Finances:

Chapel Royal (PCC) is blessed to have various investments and deposit accounts, some held and controlled by the diocese and some held by us. Neither of which can be used, but accumulated interest goes towards

stipend and other expenses. All the funds are restricted in their use and one is an endowment fund,

The churchwardens are also trustees to other funds and investments which do not belong to the PCC.

Chapel Royal has a contracted Administrator and a Finance Officer. We are lucky enough to have a volunteer organist which saves us considerable expense.

The majority of local residents are social housing tenants, and many of the congregation are pensioners or low-income households. The Church currently pays just over a third of its Parish Ministry Costs, meaning that we are reliant on grants and our fund-raising activities and subsidies from the Diocese to cover our running costs.

We also raise funds from hire of the hall and church, flower festivals, and Christmas fairs.

## **Who uses the Chapel Royal?**

### **Worship**

Currently we have a Parish Mass on Sundays at 10.15am, with an attendance of between 30 to 40 people, and a midweek Mass on Wednesdays at 10.00am, with an attendance of 20 to 25. There is always time to socialise after the services, and much coffee and tea is consumed over a good old chinwag.

Prior to the pandemic we also had a regular Vigil Mass on a Saturday at 5.30pm. This was especially popular with those unable to attend on a Sunday. There was also a late afternoon & an evening service, on Tuesday and Thursday, which had a low attendance.

### **12 Step Programmes**

At present seven groups running the 12 step (or similar) groups use the Church Hall throughout the week. This is regarded as a vital ministry for the Chapel Royal giving help and support to our sisters and brothers battling with addiction.

### **Concerts**

On Tuesdays between 1.00pm and 2.00pm, the church opens its doors for Lunchtime Classical Concert Recitals (LCCR). This attracts professional and semi-professional musicians of a high calibre, and also packed houses audience wise.

The Church also hosts local choirs and other musical groups for one-off concerts during the year.

### **Coffee shop**

Café Royale, opens on Saturdays from 11.00am to 2.00pm for anyone passing the Church to come in off the street, and enjoy a reasonably priced brew, and a sandwich, and a slice of cake. Previously this was run in conjunction with local charities, who provided volunteer helpers, and shared in the proceeds. Because of the difficulty in getting volunteers, the café is staffed nowadays by members of our congregation, with the proceeds helping to bolster church funds.



It is hoped in the future to resume the partnership with local charities.

### **What the Chapel Royal means to our congregation and church users:**

- Steve (congregation and PCC member) *“Welcoming with a prayerful balance”*.
- Caroline (congregation and Wednesday coffee maker) *“Everything, and so friendly”*.
- Carol (congregation) *“A weekly space to worship and socialise with other Christians is so valuable”*.
- Jean (congregation) *“A lovely meeting place”*.

- David (sacristan and Deputy Churchwarden) *“Chapel Royal is a special place in the heart of a busy city - it a safe, quiet and spiritual place and it is great to worship with such a great community of people. I was very honoured to be asked to be a sacristan and enjoy the role along with being a server”*.
- Christine (congregation) *“My second home since 2006”*.
- Alara (recently joined the congregation) *“A lovely community”*.



- Roy and Terry (Saturday Coffee Shop regulars) *“We love coming here, and meeting up with a variety of people, especially when you’re on your own. It’s such a lovely atmosphere, and the best coffee in town!”*.



- Sylvia and Joan (Coffee Shop regulars) *“We’ve been coming to the Coffee Shop for years. It’s so friendly and we meet people of all faiths. We’ve made many friends by coming here”*.
- Gillian and Gerald (congregation) *“The most welcoming church we’ve ever been to, and so much part of the history of Brighton”*.





- Rob and Paul (congregation) *“As a gay couple with differing religious perspectives, finding an LGBTQ+ affirming church was vital for us to ensure both the parish and its teachings resonated with us. In the relatively short period of time, we’ve been attending mass at Chapel Royal we have been welcomed with open arms by all the church’s parishioners. We’ve had the pleasure of getting to know them over this time and it’s like being part of wonderful family.”*



- Rosemary (congregation) *“I was looking for a new place of worship (having previously been at the same church all my life), and once I attended Mass at the Chapel Royal, I felt I didn't need to look any further. It was (and still is 9 years later) welcoming, inclusive and able to meet my spiritual needs. The Chapel Royal community is indeed very special.”*
- Enid (congregation and electoral roll secretary) *“When our previous church closed, we thought we’d try the Chapel Royal - I loved the notice on the door which said refugees and asylum seekers welcome here. We stayed and have worshiped here ever since”.*

- Paul (LCCR, lunchtime concerts) *“The Chapel Royal is a historical setting, offering one of the best acoustics in the city for live acoustic music. All that play or listen there, comment on the exceptional setting and atmosphere. The central location of the building slap bang in the middle of Brighton right by bus stops is a huge asset”.*



- Caroline (congregation and PCC secretary) *“Why did I choose the Chapel Royal for regular Sunday worship ten years ago when my daughter and I moved to Brighton? It must have been the liberal catholic tradition initially and then the vicar at the time took such an interest in what was then our rather sad situation. Even if my daughter weren't gay and married to an American Jew, the quiet, unshowy commitment to inclusion would have gladdened my heart. There can be no better way of beginning the week than morning service at the Chapel Royal.”*

## **Fundraising and Social**

Here at the Chapel, we are a social community and try hard to make everyone feel welcome, not only for the services, but to join us for social events throughout the year.

After Mass on a Sunday and Wednesday we share coffee and cake in the hall at the back of the church. A time to catch up with our friends, swap news, put the world to rights and maybe even discuss the vicar's sermon! In the summer we often sit in the Pavilion Gardens for our refreshments and enjoy the shade of the trees whilst watching the people of Brighton and the many visitors pass by, enjoying, like us, these lovely grounds we are so lucky to have on our doorstep.

On special occasions we may organise a shared lunch after a Sunday service. They are always a popular event, everyone contributing plates of food and having a chance to show off their culinary skills.

Once a month, after a Wednesday service, we take a short bus ride to a local restaurant for fish and chips. This has proved to be another excellent way for people to socialise and chat in the company of their church friends but in a different setting within the community.

As with any other church we are always mindful of fundraising schemes and the Church Fair, usually held at the end of November or beginning of December has become a great social event and a way of raising funds to boost the church coffers.

We have many talented knitters, crafters and bakers within the congregation and these skills produce a wonderful array of goodies to sell on the day. Many of our folk say that the preparation, build up and working together, before, and on the day is an important part of their social calendar.

We also support the Macmillan coffee morning every year, and, as with all of our social events, we love a raffle! Prizes are donated and everyone enjoys the chance to win a prize, whether it is shampoo or champagne.

Many of our congregation live alone and these social occasions play an important part of enriching their week to week lives within the community of the church. Strangers have become good friends over helping to sell raffle tickets, chatting over coffee, eating chips or running a stall at the Fair, and long may this continue.

## **Description of Building**

The most recent quinquennial Survey for Chapel Royal was carried out by our Inspecting Architect, Julian Vallis RIBA, SCA, AABC in late 2021. Most of the works identified as requiring urgent attention were carried out in 2022-2023, including extensive roof repairs and maintenance. We are fortunate in that our previous churchwarden, who sadly died suddenly in May 2020 was a buildings person, and left a legacy of a well-maintained building.

The church was re-ordered in the 1990's, under the direction of the then Vicar, Father Richard Capstick. An aisle altar and new seating were introduced, so that worship can take place in 'the round'. We are able to seat up to 140 persons in the church. The introduction of plate-glass front entrance doors gives passers-by a window into our lovely chapel.



The church has a gallery on three sides of the interior, which is out of bounds to the congregation, due to the unsafe nature of the flooring. At present this is used for storage.

As previously mentioned, the hall is situated at the rear of the church, with access from a separate entrance in Princes Place. There is an office, and vestry on the east side of the church, from where the priest enters at the beginning of services. This area also gives access to the bell tower, and the gallery.

The crypt of the church is subject to a “flying freehold”, and is not owned by the Chapel Royal. It is currently used as a gym and well-being centre, with a separate access on the east side from Princes Place.

## History

The Chapel Royal was founded in 1795 as a church for the Prince Regent to worship in. The location close to the Royal Pavilion was to encourage the Prince Regent to go to church.

The building inside is a Classical style popular in the Georgian period. The exterior red brickwork and belltower were Victorian additions by the renowned architect Arthur Bloomfield.

The mid 1990's re-ordering of the Chapel Royal saw major changes to the layout which exist to this day.

Over the years the church has had a varied history, starting as a fashionable Regency venue because of the royal connection. It was later known as 'the shopkeepers' church due to the number of shops in the vicinity. It also operated primarily as a Christian Bookshop, and church with a very small congregation, prior to the re-ordering in the 1990's.

## The Present Day

The Chapel Royal, in common with many churches since COVID, has seen a diminished congregation. However the church has a regular committed Wednesday and Sunday congregation of 20 and 40 people. There are currently 95 people on the Electoral Roll (2022-23).

We are also a very dog friendly church with sometimes up to five dogs (with their walkers) attending Sunday Mass.



The hall which is inside the building, (accessible from a door from the street), is used by AA & 12 Step groups regularly throughout the week. The church is also used on a Tuesday lunchtime for classical concerts, which have been running since the 1990's. We also allow the church to be booked by local performers for occasional concerts during the year. We have a Community Coffee Shop run by volunteers from the church on Saturday mornings throughout the year.

## Accommodation

The vicarage is situated in a gated development in Parochial Mews, just off the Old Steine, and a five-minute walk from Chapel Royal.

It is a modern 4-bedroom townhouse with an integral garage, and a separate dedicated parking space. There is a delightful small enclosed rear garden.



## Where are we going?

We would like to engage more with our local communities, not just residents, but businesses and charities within the Parish. This could include having a lunchtime Eucharist once a week, and maybe a teaching programme for those exploring the Faith.

The city has a large student population, and we would like to see relationships develop within the student community, perhaps by providing a simple Eucharistic service, followed by refreshments once or twice a month.

We would also like to reinstate our 5.30pm Saturday Vigil Mass, in addition to the services we already offer.

We would like to encourage more visitors to our church.

During the period of National Mourning following the death of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II, we opened the church and had many visitors.

We are now planning, with help from members of our congregation, to be able to open the church for a couple of days each week.

## Could you help us?

**The Chapel Royal is a community within an embracing, and inclusive liberal catholic tradition.**

We are members of 'Inclusive Church' (<https://www.inclusive-church.org>)



The Aims of 'Inclusive Church' are:

- "We believe in 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."

## **We are looking for a shepherd**

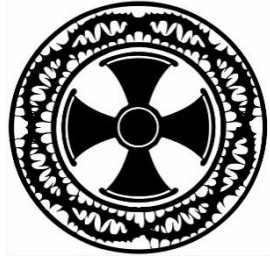
Someone who will continue to care and minister to, not just the church community, but those from the community who use our church on a regular basis, (including our 12 step groups, other hall users, concert goers, and Saturday coffee shop users), and to develop wider community interaction with those outside the church doors who work and live in the city centre.

The Parochial Church Council of Brighton  
The Chapel Royal January 2024

**Email:** [royalchapelbrighton@gmail.com](mailto:royalchapelbrighton@gmail.com)

**Tel.** 01273 328767





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Christian ethos, centred around the Eucharist,  
with sacraments at the forefront.

### **Transport**

The Chapel Royal, being in the city centre on North Street, Brighton,  
is on a major bus route which serve directions  
coming from the East, West and North of the city.  
The bus stops are in close proximity to the building.

There is limited access to North Street by car,  
as the street has a bus gate. The church does not have a car park.  
Taxis are able to access North Street both ways.  
The closest Blue Badge parking is in New Road.

The nearest car parks are the NCP Theatre Car Park in Church Street,  
NCP at Churchill Square, and The Lanes Car Park in Black Lion Street.

Brighton railway station is a ten-minute walk.

**The Chapel Royal, Brighton  
Diocese of Chichester**

**CCL 566866**

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