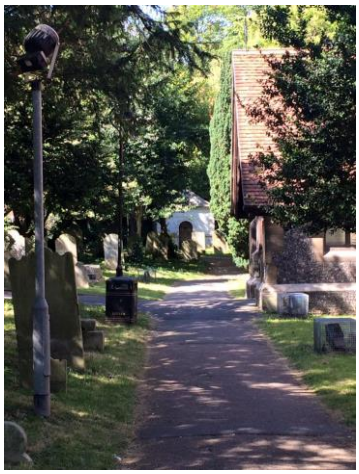
PARISH PROFILE
ST NICHOLAS, SUTTON
http://stnicholas.suttonteam.org.uk/

SUTTON PARISH

The ancient parish church lies close to the commercial centre of the town of Sutton, nestled behind the modern Sutton Civic Offices and library building, its churchyard paths a cut-through for people going about their daily business. The church building, rebuilt by the Victorians on the site of a church dating from Saxon times, and the Rectory and Community Hall, are within close proximity to the High Street.





Much of the parish is also residential with many types of housing. There are 91 on the St Nicholas parish electoral roll, and the population of the parish itself is thought to be around 8,500, and has increased by around 10% over the last decade. St Nicholas is one of about 15 parishes within the London Borough of Sutton.



Parish boundary – cross marks church location



Satellite image – red marker is St Nicholas church location

Having been part of Sutton Team Ministry (comprising St Nicholas, St Barnabas and Christchurch) for the last 12 years, St Nicholas is now ready for a new challenge, building on its own unique presence in the town centre whilst still working as part of a group with St Barnabas and Christchurch.

The Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) with Trinity Church (URC and Methodist) and Sutton Baptist Church continues to be an important part of the life of the churches in central Sutton (the initial Covenant was signed in 1971) and St Nicholas is committed to furthering this partnership.

St Nicholas Church fully supports the ordination of women. There is a part-time paid parish administrator and a paid part-time caretaker.

MAP (Mission Action Plan)

Our Mission and Values statement was agreed by the PCC in July 2015.
"*St Nicholas strives to be a welcoming and safe place where people can know the warmth of the love of God and of their neighbour*."

From this statement, four words/phrases were selected for congregation 'working parties' to expand and from which to develop action plans by the summer of 2016:

1) Welcoming; 2) Safe; 3) Warmth of the love of God; 4) Neighbours.

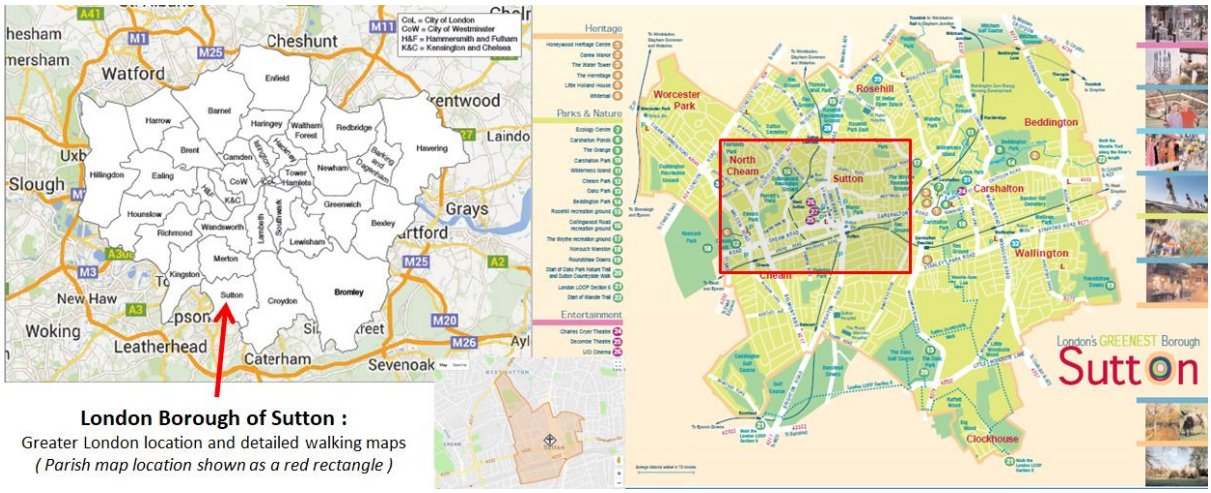
Unfortunately, this process was never completed and the MAP itself wasn't finished and submitted to the Diocese. However, the church has continued to work on welcoming everyone into the church and on increasing its on-going public presence by for example: regular weekly open days, heritage open days, charity events and local college educational days.

LBS – London Borough of Sutton

The London Borough of Sutton's population has increased by 4.7% since 2001 and today is over 200,000. Many LBS residents commute into London, and the borough is within the Oyster Card zone. There is a good train service to the City and Victoria, and good access by bus to both Gatwick and Heathrow Airports. We are well connected by local bus services.

There are many schools in the Borough, including some church primary schools, plus a variety of nurseries and pre-schools. The borough boasts some of the best secondary schools in the country, including several grammar

schools. (2 primary and 3 secondary, including Sutton High and Sutton Grammar, are in our parish and there is potential to build much closer links)



London Borough of Sutton :
Greater London location and detailed walking maps
(Parish map location shown as a red rectangle)

One of the joys of living in the borough is that, in only a ten-minute car journey south from this built up area, you can be surrounded by lavender fields, small holdings and the edges of the North Downs.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Sutton

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sutton_High_Street https://www.london.gov.uk/in-my-area/sutton

SUTTON TOWN

Sutton town centre has a range of commercial and retail outlets, with coffee shops, restaurants, bars, a night club, the Divisional Police HQ, colleges, library and main Post Office. There is a newly refurbished multi-screen cinema and, for those who are more active, many sports centres and gyms, both public and privately owned. Sutton is also the UK HQ of Subsea 7, an international deep sea pipeline company. HMP High Down and Down View are situated on the southern border of the town (just inside the Diocese of Guildford). There is a Holiday Inn situated close to St Nicholas, and The Royal Marsden Hospital (Sutton Branch) is just outside the town, as is St Helier Hospital. Gander Green Lane, the home of Sutton United Football Club, is also part of the town. There is a significant amount of investment going into the area, providing new high spec office accommodation as well as new flats and retail outlets.

Types of housing range from large houses to smaller terraced properties, both old and new, and apartments. There are many sheltered accommodation blocks, several of which we visit regularly, and 3 residential care homes within the parish boundary.

http://www.suttonguardian.co.uk/news/16298203.developer-puts-homes-for-huge-new-tower-block-in-middle-of-sutton-on-the-market/

http://www.suttonguardian.co.uk/news/15984673.__14_1million_deal_secures_more_land_for_world-leading_cancer_hub_in_Sutton/

ST NICHOLAS

Worship

The tradition of the church is middle of the road. Worship at St Nicholas is mainly Eucharistic, with a 9am service each Sunday following the Book of Common Prayer, and a 10.30am, usually communion, service. The church is open one weekday a week, when there is either Matins or a Communion service.

As part of our commitment to the LEP, there is also a weekly united evening service every Sunday (rotating around the three churches), and three united morning services each year. This bond manifests itself particularly strongly at times such as Lent, Easter and Advent and during Christian Aid Week.

Many in the congregation feel that music is an important part of worship, but this aspect has proved a challenge for St Nicholas over many years. There is a substantial pipe organ which has undergone significant work recently. There is also an electronic piano/keyboard. The church is currently served by a rota of individual players, rather than a permanent regular instrumentalist. Some of the congregation are members of the Trinity Church Festival Choir.

Community

The congregation is diverse, covering all age groups. The changing ministerial faces leading from the front week by week since the formation of the Team Ministry has challenged us in the provision of a continuity of welcome to those who come through the doors.





The children's group, JAM (Jesus And Me), meets weekly during the principal Sunday morning service during term time and, with increased leadership input, has recently grown in both numbers and enthusiasm, hopefully leading to the re-formation of a group for slightly older children in the near future.



The congregation and JAM love to share their learning at the end of each service, and there is potential for ministry to young parents here.

JAM's mission statement is :

'to show young people that church and Christians can be fun, whilst equipping them to serve God at home, in our church, at school and in society at large'.

There is a successful Youth Group covering the three churches in the group which meets monthly, usually on a Saturday.

St Nicholas has a thriving Mothers' Union, a Men's Group, Home Groups and an associated Scout Group, and a "Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard" group. The church is the base from which Sutton Street Pastors work, ministering to those in need of help on Fridays and Saturdays. St Nicholas supports the work of the local Foodbank as well as several other charities each year, including Sutton Schools Work and the newly founded Cruse bereavement service. St Nicholas has links to local colleges, providing volunteering opportunities. There are regular supper talks, open church days, an annual Patronal Lunch and occasional Bring and Share lunches. St Nicholas has hosted "Sutton Soup" since it began in 2016, raising thousands of pounds for local charities.

http://www.suttonsoup.org.uk/about-us.html

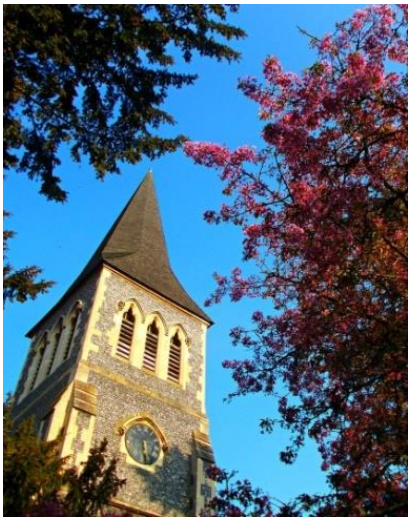
Finances

The Church finances are sound with an income last year of £110,259; the community hall makes significant contributions to the church finances and we have been successful recently in attracting more lettings for the hall. The church has 55 regular givers who mostly give through standing order, and is tax efficient. We have recently re-started a collection during services which has increased donations. The church last ran a stewardship campaign in 2015.

Each year our pledges to the diocese under the Parish Support Fund have been paid in full and on time. The church has also increased its contributions to the Parish Support Fund each year. Our 2018 pledge is £40,828. Opportunities to increase income could include running a stewardship campaign, looking at ways of fundraising, and applying for grants for the work we do through the Mission Action Plan. Our 2017 Annual Report and Accounts is attached.

Buildings

The present church building consecrated in February 1864 was built to serve Sutton's rapidly growing population due to the arrival of the railway.



West tower



Inside : looking SW from altar

Many memorials and tomb stones within the church and churchyard date back to the 17th and 18th centuries when St Nicholas church was in the countryside and was used by wealthy London merchants and administrators.

These have recently been recognised as a key heritage for Sutton, by English Heritage re-grading the church as grade 2* and grading four tombstones within the churchyard as grade 2. (This reassessment being one of the first results of the setting up of a 3 year Heritage Action Zone for Sutton town centre by Sutton council and English Heritage).

https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/sutton/





Gibson mausoleum - erected in 1777 to contain the remains of James Gibson, London wine merchant, and his family



The tomb of Cecil Talbot dates from 1720.

The church's location next to the high street, with a wooded churchyard around it and its size and seating capacity, lends itself to events and positive outreach to the local population. However, the church is in need of some urgent repairs; for example to the Victorian flint facing, which is cracking and bulging in several places, and to the sandstone louvres of the West Tower. The Quinquennial inspection, due in 2019, will detail anew what repairs are required and we plan to use this and our vision for opening up the space inside St Nicholas and presenting its heritage for future generations, to raise the funds needed.

The community hall, built in the 1970s at the same time as the Rectory, is used extensively by the church and local community. In particular, families with young children attend the Montessori pre-school, baby ballet and tinytalk classes.

https://sites.google.com/view/montessorisutton/home



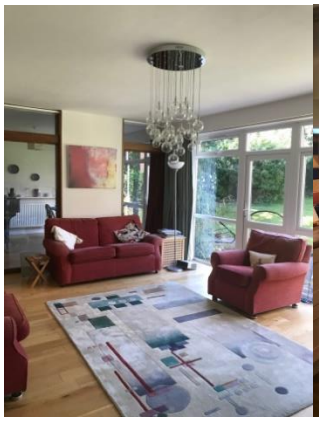


The church hall

The Rectory, adjacent to the Community Hall, is also nearby, but sheltered from the town centre, with a large Health Centre close by. The Rectory is double-glazed and has an enclosed garden. It has four bedrooms, a bathroom and a shower room, a kitchen, partitionable reception room, an office and off-street parking for two cars.



Rectory and garden





Sitting room and kitchen