



Diocese of Canterbury
CHANGED LIVES → CHANGING LIVES

TOWARDS A FLOURISHING & SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Diocese of Canterbury
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Introduction: A word from Bishop Rose

Changed Lives → Changing Lives is what first drew me to Canterbury Diocese. I saw in these words and the strategy underpinning it, not just a tagline, but a commitment and a passion - a passion for allowing ourselves to be transformed by God's loving grace so that we might, in turn, transform our world for his glory.



The past 12 months have been challenging, to say the least - for our Church, for our nation and for our world. The Coronavirus pandemic has turned the spotlight on our priorities and insecurities, challenging our desire to find a way back to 'normal' to 'the way things used to be', to 'the way we've always done it'. But we can't go backwards - and we mustn't. Instead, God is calling us to a better way, a better future.

In the midst of all the harsh realities of Covid-19, this is a 'Kairos moment', an amazing opportunity for us as God's Church to listen to God, and to one another, more clearly. This is an opportunity for us to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit into a place of renewal and growth. Already, many of us have gained new skills, discovering the ways in which technology can enable us to engage with many who might otherwise never have entered our buildings. Let us grab this moment, let us commit to continue to grow and learn and be shaped into the diocesan family that God is calling us to be. Let our lives continue to be changed, so that we can bring God's transformation to the lives of others across our county. And let us be clear that a flourishing and sustainable future for our Church means growth - growth in discipleship, growth in confidence and growth in numbers.

Over the coming pages, you will see that this process has not been 'top down'. We began with an intentional period of listening throughout the autumn of 2020 ([you can explore what emerged from that process here](#)). Then, throughout this winter we have worked with our deaneries, parishes and diocesan team to draw up plans for this next stage of our life together. You will be able to read the detail of those plans in this document, and as I have been reflecting on them, I see some exciting themes emerging.

I see the passion that our people have for **evangelism and discipleship**, for **breaking down the boundaries between lay and ordained**, for **equipping all God's people** to step into their vocation. I see the desire for us to **engage more openly and intentionally with this amazing generation of children and young people**, to find new and better ways to **reflect the generosity of God** in our own living and serving and giving. I see our longing to change not only lives but our world **as we strive for justice and peace** and as we seek to **care for this amazing world** that we have been given. I also see the sacrificial willingness to ask





and answer the hard questions that are facing us – and it is perhaps this courage that I am most thankful for. I am so grateful to all those who have worked so hard to grapple with these challenging and difficult issues - especially to our amazing area deans and lay chairs - and to those who have engaged in our discussions so openly at parish and diocesan levels.

This document signals a beginning, not a destination. Together we are embarking on a journey to create the kind of culture that will enable us to build a flourishing and sustainable future for our Church. We will be driven by our commitment to seeking God in prayer and scripture. Our journey will be marked by our openness to one another and to the Spirit and by our trust in the God who is bigger than pandemics, who is stronger than financial constraints - and who has plans for us that are greater than we could possibly imagine or hope for.

Thank you to each and every one of you - it is a privilege and a joy to be embarking on this adventure in such extraordinary and wonderful company!

With blessings,

+ Rose

The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin
Bishop of Dover





What are the key challenges facing us?

Despite our best efforts, attendance at our churches for worship has continued to steadily decline – down 15% over the past 10 years, with a sharper decline among children and young people. On current trends, our congregations are both getting smaller and growing older.

Strongly linked to this decline in attendance is the challenging financial position facing us all as diocese but which is felt most keenly at a local level. We have fewer givers in our churches, with less money to give. Many of our parishes find it difficult to pay the full amount that is being requested from them in Parish Share, alongside seeking to maintain their buildings, meet other financial commitments and engage in local mission.

In essence, the plan outlined in this document seeks to address how we can turn this situation around by addressing the challenges that face us, seeking to grow in numbers and in faith, building a flourishing sustainable future for our whole diocesan family.

How was this plan developed?

In late 2019, we identified the need to further develop our Changed Lives → Changing Lives strategy.

We began 2020, asking our Archbishop's Council, area deans, lay chairs and Diocesan Synod to imagine what a thriving church would look like in 5 to 10 years' time. We sent one another 'postcards from a flourishing future' and a number of key themes emerged. Over that summer there were wide-ranging discussions about what the future of our mission, ministry and buildings might look like and throughout autumn 2020 we invited everyone across our diocese to take part in a period of reflective listening and discernment - from which further insights emerged.

The impact of Covid-19 on our nation, our communities and our churches has further highlighted these challenges - and has brought more clearly into focus the fact that many of our parishes are finding it difficult to pay their Parish Share.

Over the winter of 2020/2021 our deaneries and parishes worked on plans that would help them to move locally towards a flourishing and sustainable future - which you can read later in this document. A comprehensive review of diocesan expenditure has also been conducted, identifying where costs can be reduced. The 'Blueprint' section of this document outlines the key themes that have arisen from all this work and sets out a plan to address them. The 'Outline strategy' section below provides an overall summary of how these themes will help us to address the key challenges noted above.





Our vision

Changed Lives → Changing Lives

By God's grace we want to be a people who are...

- ...confident & creative disciples of Jesus Christ
- ...rooted in scripture & drenched in prayer
- ...living gratefully, giving generously, caring for creation & sharing the gospel
- ...growing in number & expectations – of God & ourselves
- ...motivated by justice & love, open to the Spirit & ready for adventure!

Therefore we will...

.....

'Therefore we will...' is a recognition that words without actions are empty. It is a commitment to taking real steps *now* to make this vision a reality *soon*. The current actions that flow from this vision - both at a diocesan level and in our deaneries - are outlined in detail over the rest of this document. Of course, these actions will change and develop over time - and we would encourage our parishes to consider this vision carefully for themselves, to explore together what actions they will commit to take, what their local 'Therefore we will...' might look like.

Outline strategy

The vision outlined above lies at the heart of this strategy. It is a commitment to a shared journey of discipleship and growth - learning, sharing and listening on the way. It is only as we come to recognise more deeply the ways in which our own lives have been changed through knowing Jesus Christ that we will, in turn, be able to effect change in our communities, in our society, in the lives of those we know and love.

- **We will** identify places where some of our churches might benefit from revitalisation, and whether there are other places in which we should explore the possibility of planting new worshipping communities.
- **We will** grow and deepen our engagement with children and young people and with those on the edges of our communities. In turn, this leads us to a concern for social and environmental justice, where we will demonstrate practically God's concern for our communities, often working in partnerships with others to grow the Kingdom. Underpinning all of this will be a review of the way that local ministry works, considering how we might better discern, equip, support and inspire a range of ministries, lay and ordained, stipendiary and self-supporting.





- In order to be financially sustainable, **we will** find ways to live within our financial means. To do so, we will look at our levels of stipendiary clergy, and seek to reduce our central support costs.
- **We will** also explore how living generously - both personally and collectively - can release resources (including, but not limited to money) to further support our flourishing and growth together.
- **We will** look at how our buildings can be used to best support and enable local mission and to bless our communities - or whether they can be released if they are no longer able to do this.

This strategy is further developed in the 'Blueprint' section below, and the same themes are reflected in our deanery plans, which are set out in detail later in this document.





Financial strategy

Our diocese - in common with much of the Church of England - has seen a gentle and progressive decline in its financial sustainability over several years. Key factors in this picture include falling church attendances, increasing difficulty for parishes in meeting their Parish

Share, and a historic pattern of supplementing our diocesan budget with income from property development and sales.

Matters came to a head in 2020, when the impact of national Covid-19 restrictions meant that many more of our parishes struggled to pay their Parish Share in full than in previous years. Our commitment as a diocesan family to addressing these issues and planning for a flourishing and sustainable future is not just about tackling the impact of Covid-19, but looking at the bigger picture of our long-term decline.

The principal focus of this work is mission. We are committed to Changed Lives → Changing Lives - to growing God's Kingdom in our diocese as we serve diverse communities: rural and urban, coastal towns and a university city. God is calling us not just to survival but to life in all its fullness - and we know that a growing church is the strongest foundation for a flourishing and sustainable future.



Nevertheless, we need to look very carefully at our finances - with a clear commitment that everything is on the table and everything is up for discussion. This work is already well underway and has identified major opportunities to balance our income and expenditure from 2022 onwards. In all this, we want to structure our life together so that today's Church can truly pay for today's Church and changed lives really can change other people's lives. These opportunities and recommendations will be considered by Archbishop's Council on 17 April 2021, and will be submitted to Diocesan Synod in July 2021 for approval.

Parish Share

The amount of Parish share requested from many of our parishes is challenging, and in some cases inhibits local mission. In addition, communication has not always been clear on both how Parish Share is calculated for deaneries, benefices and parishes - or how that money is used to support mission and ministry throughout our diocese. For 2022, we will make a number of changes:

- Our Archbishop's Council approved the reduction of the amount requested for each ministry post in 2022 by 10% - from £48,470 to £43,623. This will be affordable because the amount of pension contributions payable by our diocese will be reducing





as historic pension deficits in national schemes are brought under control. To achieve this reduction it has also been assumed that there will be the equivalent of ten full time equivalent ministry vacancies at any point in time, which is in line with historic trends, but Parish Share will continue to be paid in full during any vacancy periods.

- The Council has also agreed that the total amount requested for diocesan shared costs should also be reduced by 10% - from £3,351k to £3,016k. This is affordable because of planned reductions in expenditure on training and on services provided to parishes by our diocesan team, which are described below.

Importantly, this reduction in the amount of Parish Share requested will only be possible if our parishes make a commitment to paying their Share in full. A spirit of generosity is hoped for with those parishes able to pay more encouraged to do so - for example, by continuing to contribute at 2021 Share levels.

Parish ministry

Our greatest single area of expenditure is that of parish ministry - £4,538k in 2020. As of April 2021, we have 90.65 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts in parish ministry, with 18.5 vacancies (not including curates). The planning work that has been done by our deaneries suggests that a slightly smaller number of stipendiary posts may be needed to support our local mission and ministry.

- We have begun the work of reviewing our deanery plans (which can be read in detail later in this document) with the deaneries and are determined to maintain stipendiary posts where they are needed. We will, however, need to consider how we might work together better locally, sharing resources more and encouraging the gifts and vocations of the whole people of God. Building on the work of our deanery plans we will also need to be sure that the structures and organisation of our benefices are serving the mission of God's Church as best they can - and consider how we might change these, where needed.
- In recent years, encouraged by the national Church, we have increased our number of stipendiary curacies to a target of nine new curates per year. The cost of this (and of other ministry training) was £1,767k in 2020, and has been funded from Parish Share. We have now recognised that the local need for stipendiary clergy will decrease over the coming years, and that we can reduce the level of our investment in this area. We will therefore reduce our number of stipendiary curacies to four per year, whilst increasing our training budget for lay ministry and self-supporting clergy. Because of the current cohort of curates in our diocese, the full impact of this change will not be realised until 2025.





Support for local mission and ministry

The total cost of the support for local mission and ministry provided to parishes by our diocesan staff team (excluding parish ministry and training) during 2020 was £2,543k. While all of this work has previously been considered desirable and necessary, and care has been taken to minimise costs, we recognise that we cannot support this level of central expenditure for the foreseeable future.

- We have, therefore, looked very carefully at what is spent on these central support services in order to ensure such expenditure is necessary - and that services provided by our staff team are efficiently organised and cost-effective. We are exploring whether there are services that could be provided more economically by outsourcing or by cooperating more closely with Rochester Diocese or with Canterbury Cathedral - as well as what local skills and expertise might be better used to benefit our deaneries and diocese. This work is continuing.

We hope to avoid any compulsory redundancies and recognise that the financial impact in 2021 will be relatively small. However, we have already identified annual savings of £250k for 2022, representing 10% of our annual budget for diocesan services.



In addition to all this, we are committed to improved and more regular communication with our deaneries, their leadership and parishes, about finance. This has already begun with the launch of a new regular email ([Finance News](#)) to parish treasurers and a new [Demystifying Parish Share document](#), published in early March 2021.

We are all hopeful that by 2022 Covid-19 restrictions on Church life will have lifted, our church doors will be open and our physical community connections will be much less encumbered. However, there can be no illusion that we will simply be 'going back to the way things were'. After this degree of disruption, and all that we have lost and gained, missed and learned, there will be still more change and it is not possible to be certain how different our 'new normal' will be from the life of our churches in 2019. We hope and believe that the ability and desire of our parishes in 2022 to support our diocesan ministry and mission by meeting requests for Parish Share will have returned. However, in 2020 as a diocese, we spent more than we received in income - and we expect to have a deficit in 2021 also.

This has both short and longer-term implications. In the short term we have had to manage our cash particularly carefully. We are grateful for the extra support that some parishes have been able to provide by using their own reserves to meet Parish Share payments, and by making payments earlier than they would normally do. This has made an enormous difference to the picture - thank you. We have taken advantage of the





Government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme to help us meet stipends and salaries and pay our other bills. In the longer term, of course, these loans will have to be repaid. We are also grateful to the Strategic Investment Board of the Archbishops' Council for the support they are providing to our diocese through these times of immense change.

We do not intend to increase our requests for Parish Share to recover the deficits in 2020 and 2021. It is clear that any such move would put an impossible burden on our parishes, and critically damage the efforts that are being made across our diocese to grow God's kingdom: Changed Lives → Changing Lives.

An ongoing review of our property has identified several properties that will no longer be needed for ministry purposes and these have been earmarked for development and sale. This work will be done over the next two to three years in order to maximise the proceeds. However, it is important to remember that we cannot continue to sell property assets to support our ongoing work - today's Church needs to pay for today's Church. The reason for having reserves that can be called upon in difficult times (both in terms of property and our limited amount of other investments) is to ensure that our work can continue despite a crisis - and we are blessed in having sufficient reserves accumulated by our predecessors to see us through this unusually challenging period.

On the following page, you will find a summary of the overall position of our unrestricted income and expenditure (which supports our ministry activity) for 2019 and 2020, with projections for 2021 and 2022 that reflect the changes described above. The underlying plans will be examined in more detail as part of the budgeting process for 2022 and beyond that will take place later this year, for final approval by our Diocesan Synod in July.



Notes on Financial Projection (below)

- The figures represent the unrestricted results on ordinary activities of CDBF as a solo legal entity.
- The figures exclude the two trading subsidiaries for education and property and, from 2021, the charitable subsidiary Together Kent.
- The figures represent Ordinary Activities and exclude exceptional items such as accounting gains on property sales.
- National Church costs exclude National Church training for ministry costs of c. £250k which are included within training for ministry.





Financial projections for 2022

Income	2019 Audited	2020 Unaudited	2021 Budget	2022 Projection
Parish Share Requested	7,740	7,653	7,617	6,735
Shortfall in receipts from parishes	(497)	(1,005)	(1,279)*	-
Mission grants & external funding	560	882	909	938
Other income	1,275	1,075	834	834
Total income	9,078	8,605	8,081	8,507
Expenditure				
Cost of parish ministry	(5,013)	(4,538)	(4,636)	(4,546)
Training for parish ministry	(1,725)	(1,767)	(1,800)	(1,595)
Local Church Development	(204)	(208)	(203)	(203)
Communities & Partnerships	(318)	(212)	(259)	(259)
Children & Young People	(378)	(328)	(380)	(380)
Bishop & Archdeacons	(159)	(158)	(171)	(171)
Support services	(1,385)	(1,317)	(1,278)	(978)
National Church	(294)	(292)	(284)	(284)
Grants for Mission	(92)	(28)	(80)	(80)
Total Parish Support Costs	(2,830)	(2,543)	(2,655)	(2,355)
Total expenditure	(9,568)	(8,848)	(9,091)	(8,496)
(Deficit)/ Surplus on ordinary activities	(490)	(243)	(1,010)	11

*Assuming 85% of the requested Parish Share is received.





Blueprint for our strategic themes

This section brings together all of the key themes that have emerged from our deliberations as a diocese since the beginning of 2020. These have been built on the foundations of our Changed Lives → Changing Lives strategy. They represent a broadening and refinement of our thinking together, building on what has gone before, not replacing it.



Structure of this section

Over the following pages, each of our strategic themes will be explored using the following structure:

- A short description of the theme
- A summary of our starting point (**Where are we now?**) and our destination (**Where do we need to get to?**). Inevitably these are simplifications and aggregations - they serve as guides for our journey together.
- An outline of how we are going to make the journey - what we will need to do:
 - **Collective Focus** represents the things that we all need to work on together
 - **Local Focus** identifies the things that need to be worked out in each local context - deanery, benefice and parish
 - **Collective Support** outlines the support that will be necessary
 - Items in **bold** highlight specific projects or programmes of work that are further unpacked below the table
- Any particularly important links between themes are noted
- Outlines of the **key projects** identified

In every theme this blueprint covers, there will be opportunities for working with others in partnership. This is a key element in our Christian mission and ministry and reflects our calling to play our part in God's bigger picture. From the very beginning, God has worked in partnership - in the working together of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in Jesus' working with and through his companions, and in the calling of each of us through baptism to partner with him in bringing forth the Kingdom. We can also work in partnership within our parishes, with other parishes in our deaneries, with diocesan colleagues, other churches and secular partners. In this outworking of God's mission we are never alone. There are many wonderful examples of this kind of partnership in evidence across our diocese - and an appetite for more. This blueprint itself points to a partnership between our collective and local focus - how a theme is worked out locally but supported more widely. Each theme has opportunities for partnership which we will need to make the most of.





24/7 Discipleship

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>This incorporates prayer, Bible study, generosity and sharing faith.</p> <p>Discipleship is the beating heart of our vision for a flourishing and sustainable future. It is only our changed lives that will in turn result in changing others' lives. This is therefore foundational in enabling the church to grow and flourish.</p>	<p>Some members of our congregations see themselves as 24/7 disciples but there are varying levels of commitment and confidence.</p> <p>Many feel uncertain or ill-equipped to talk about and share their faith, especially outside of church.</p>	<p>Every church member seeing themselves as a disciple of Jesus Christ, committed to prayer, Bible study, living generously and confidently sharing their faith - each in their own context.</p> <p>Generosity flowing naturally from gratitude to our generous God and not just about money - time, spiritual gifts, skills and other kinds of sacrificial giving too.</p>
Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>Developing and promoting a fresh Discipleship Programme for every generation.</p> <p>Developing a Generosity Strategy that reflects and encourages generous living as part of our shared 24/7 discipleship for every generation.</p>	<p>Delivering local discipleship events using locally-appropriate resources.</p> <p>Greater emphasis on generosity, establishing a culture of generosity that is about more than just money.</p> <p>Engaging with (and potentially delivering) Changing Lives Conversations & Missional Learning Communities.</p>	<p>Ensuring that a range of suitable discipleship material is available, signposted and accessible.</p> <p>Drawing on the national development of a new approach to generosity which will help us promote an increasingly generous culture.</p> <p>Evolve the Changing Lives Conversations & Missional Learning Communities content and delivery in response to local need and feedback.</p>





Links with other themes

There are strong links with the national Growing Faith agenda, which is set out in our Prioritising Young People theme.

Key projects

Discipleship programme

Discipleship is at the heart of everything that we do - and is central to our strategy. Together we will need to further explore what that looks like and develop a programme that will encourage us all on our discipleship journey. A broadly common approach across our diocese will enable us to ensure that our communications and encounters can positively reinforce what we are trying to achieve.

There is plenty of good material already available across our diocese and nationally. We don't need to reinvent the wheel - we will instead focus on curating and signposting the most effective resources and ideas. Delivery will take place (and in many places already is being done) locally by those enabled to select - and in some cases create - the best materials for their context. We will seek to make the most of local experience and expertise, sharing our learning to help us all to grow in confidence and commitment.

Changing Lives Conversations (CLC)

- 1. How is knowing Christ/God changing your life now?**
- 2. How can we best encourage one another to be everyday disciples?**

Our existing CLC programme was developed as part of our response to the national [Setting God's People Free](#) initiative. The simple questions that we have adopted (and which have been picked up by the national church) are designed firstly to get us thinking and talking about how God is at work in our lives. Secondly, they aim to help us consider what we need to support 24/7 discipleship in our homes, workplaces and in our (lay and ordained) ministries.

Two cohorts in our diocese are currently engaged with CLC, asking these questions intentionally of one another and seeing what difference this makes to our thought and practice as disciples. This work will need to be expanded and developed further.

Missional Learning Communities (MLCs)

Missional Learning Communities are designed to engage a wider leadership team in planning missional activities and approaches, and to embed missional spiritual practices into each church. Two "waves" are currently on the journey and are reporting exciting results, even though it is still early days. These were initially run face-to-face but have transitioned online well. Delivery models can continue to evolve and could potentially be a mix of on-line learning and local practice, perhaps delivered by deaneries. All





benefices/parishes could/should be encouraged to participate in time.

Generosity strategy

Generous living is a key part of our discipleship. And it's not just about what we do with our cash (though that is an important part of it). Our experience and understanding of God's generosity should enable and inspire us to live generously with all that we are and all that we have, including our time, talents, passions and resources. The national team has developed some helpful thinking and materials around this, which broaden the scope beyond an over-simplistic focus on financial giving and stewardship.

As a Church we also need to cultivate a culture of generosity, enabling us all to grow in our understanding of the generosity of the God who loves us, and to be transformed to live more generously in response. There are four ways to enable this culture and we can remember them through the acronym IDEA:

1. Leaders need to **inspire** people to give, and to model generous lives.
2. We need to give people the opportunity to learn and reflect on what it means to live generously as a core part of their **discipleship**.
3. We need to **embed** generosity in our plans, our services, and our wider provision and make it a part of all we do.
4. And we must enable people to **activate** their generosity by providing programmes and activities that give people the opportunity to grow in their generosity.

Our **Generosity Strategy** will focus on three areas:

1. Promoting a growing culture of generosity in the lives of churches and individual Christians.
2. Targeted support to particular churches which need help with promoting regular giving, in line with that change of culture.
3. Look at ways that might bring in additional income from other sources to support the work in our diocese.





Prioritising young people

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>What if we saw every <i>decision that we make</i> - as a diocesan family and locally - through the lens of what it means for children and young people?</p>	<p>Across the diocese there is mixed success in engaging with schools, families and young people, with some examples of very good practice.</p> <p>However, in general we're seeing declining attendance of children and young people at church-based activities.</p>	<p>Deeper and more creative engagement with children and young people across three spheres of school, home and church. More young people engaging in church-initiated activities.</p> <p>Presence and deeper participation of children and young people in decision-making across all our diocesan structures and working groups - as leaders, advocates and true stakeholders.</p>
Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>Using the Growing Faith agenda as a mechanism to enable local review and to support planning.</p> <p>Schools at the centre of our mission - develop chaplains and headteachers as key spiritual leaders.</p> <p>Establish archdeaconry youth forums, hearing and sharing children and young people's voices, investing in them as leaders and bringing them into our structures.</p> <p>Focus on mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Develop plans to engage with children and young people across church, home and school.</p> <p>Involve local headteachers and chaplains in further developing deanery plans.</p>	<p>Inspired by Growing Faith, support churches to think intergenerationally through networking, resourcing and training opportunities.</p> <p>Create a resource hub and support a culture of coaching to share practice and enable adaptation of models and resources to suit local contexts.</p>





We want to see...

- children, young people and households coming to faith, growing in discipleship and contributing confidently and creatively to the Kingdom of God
- church schools standing at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation, promoting a deeply Christian vision of life in all its fullness (John 10:10) – emphasising that this fullness and flourishing is *for everyone*
- the voice of children and young people being heard and valued in the Church – an aspiration articulated in *Going for Growth* (2010), *Rooted in the Church* (2016) and *Growing Faith* (2020). This includes meaningful engagement that equips them as advocates and young leaders

Link with other themes

- Evidence shows that children and young people are especially concerned for the environmental crisis that is facing our world. The church will need to be able to demonstrate that we are prioritising and deeply committed to **care for the environment**.
- Children and young people's ministers and headteachers are key lay spiritual leaders in our diocese. We will need to include them in planning as we establish appropriate **ministry training and development** for all.

Key projects

Resourcing 'Growing Faith'

We will support our churches to think intergenerationally through networking, resourcing and training opportunities. We will establish a resource hub and support a culture of coaching to share good practice and enable adaptation of models and resources to suit local contexts.

Establish youth forums

These forums will initially be established at archdeaconry level as an essential way of hearing and sharing children and young people's voices, investing in them as leaders and bringing them into our structures, working groups and governance.

Schools at the centre of our mission

Our aim is to open new church schools, but also to think creatively about planting new worshipping communities and encouraging a more creative use of church and school buildings as centres of faith in the community - using them more widely to serve the good of our communities.

Mental health and wellbeing

Recognising the importance of highlighting mental health and well-being, we plan to engage Mental Health First Aid trainers in each archdeaconry, available to all schools and parishes to support children and young people.





Mutuality & Parish Share

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>We can only flourish and be sustainable if all parts of our diocesan family can flourish and be sustainable.</p> <p>The whole system needs to work together so that today's church can pay for today's church. This means taking a hard look at how much we can afford to spend.</p>	<p>Our current overall financial situation is not sustainable.</p> <p>We have a strained financial situation in many of our parishes, whilst some have significant reserves. Many are concerned about sustaining local mission and ministry and see Parish Share as an unwelcome tax. How Parish Share is used to support parishes is not well understood.</p>	<p>A sustainable financial position for all from 2022 onwards.</p> <p>A renewed sense of being part of the diocesan and national family of the Church of England, and a sense that this is worth contributing to. Joyful mutual support that ensures that ministry is available and mission continues, regardless of the local financial situation.</p>
Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>Explore the possibility of a reduction in overall Parish Share in 2022 by 10% and work towards further reductions thereafter.</p> <p>Increase transparency and clarity in our financial communications - including an easy-to-understand summary of how Parish Share is used.</p> <p>Work proactively with parishes that are struggling financially, exploring ways that the Parish Share system could be improved to reflect mutuality and generosity.</p>	<p>A commitment to paying the full reduced Parish Share.</p> <p>Financial support within deaneries to help those least able to meet Parish Share requests.</p> <p>Creative & missional use of local resources including people, buildings and finance.</p> <p>Greater emphasis on understanding and living generosity in response to our generous God.</p>	<p>Transparent and earlier allocation of Lower Income Communities funding from the national Church.</p>





Links with other themes

There is a strong linkage with the Generosity elements of the 24/7 discipleship theme.

Review central & support services

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>We need to take a comprehensive look at all aspects of our central services in order to deliver significant cost reductions.</p> <p>Any such review must also ensure that central services are aligned to supporting the delivery of deanery plans and meeting the needs of the local church.</p>	<p>Our current level of central support costs is not sustainable.</p> <p>There is a lack of clarity over how central support services add value to mission and ministry in deaneries and the local church - as well as which elements are required by law or Church of England policy.</p>	<p>A shared understanding of what services are statutory and where collective support adds value to our shared mission. More sharing of local resources and expertise across our diocese.</p> <p>A saving in support costs, as well as a central team better enabled to support the local church.</p>
Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>A forensic review of central and support costs, resulting in significant cost reductions.</p> <p>A re-alignment of resources to support deaneries in the delivery of their plans.</p> <p>A strategic review of our properties in the light of forecasts for reducing stipendiary posts.</p> <p>Maximising returns from our property portfolio.</p>	<p>Clarity about what support deaneries will need to deliver their plans and how this might best be resourced.</p>	<p>Review opportunities to work more efficiently and effectively, including curating and sign-posting rather than direct delivery.</p> <p>Review opportunities to work in partnership with Rochester Diocese and our Cathedral.</p> <p>Optimise rental income from properties and look for ways to reduce the cost of maintenance and repairs.</p>





Links with other themes

This links well with our Mutuality & Parish Share theme, with both contributing significantly to our overall picture of finance, resourcing and sustainability.

Key projects

Review of central & support costs

A comprehensive review of each service provided by the Diocese has been carried out to identify opportunities for efficiencies (“doing the same for less”) and savings (“doing less for less”). This includes:

- a. Deletion of vacant posts
- b. Stopping production of Outlook magazine in print
- c. Releasing strategic investment funding
- d. Adoption of the national Parish Giving scheme
- e. Opportunities to achieve better rental returns from properties
- f. Consolidation of office accommodation
- g. Streamlining of events management and administration
- h. Other efficiencies
- i. Items (e) to (h) will lead to further post reductions. Projects will need to be undertaken to deliver these.

It is not anticipated that the above will result in significant reduction in the support that is available to our deaneries.

The anticipated financial outcomes of this review are incorporated in the 'Financial strategy' section of this document.

Realignment of resources

Once deanery planning has been completed and consolidated, an assessment can be made of the support that our deaneries will need for the delivery of their plans.

It will be important to develop a clear and transparent understanding of the services provided centrally and which of these are statutory/mandatory. This can then form the basis for further discussion with deaneries of where services provided could be adjusted.

There may then be:

- Further opportunities for savings. This is likely to involve a dialogue with deaneries where current support and services could be reduced/withdrawn.
- Opportunities to bid for Archbishops' Council funding – Strategic Transformation Funding and/or Strategic Development Funding.





Strategic review of properties

Just under a third of our properties are vacant or let to tenants. Elsewhere in this document you will see that our forecast need for properties for clergy and curates is set to reduce. A strategic review therefore needs to be carried out to assess which properties should be retained (due to likely future need for ministry) as well as opportunities to release capital by sales or increase income through rent.

This review will also incorporate our target of becoming net carbon neutral by 2030. In order to achieve this target, we will look at a combination of energy efficiency improvement measures where it makes economic sense to do so. Energy usage reduction and selection of an appropriate tariff are the responsibility of the clergy (or rental occupier).

Maximise return from our property portfolio

The management of property is not just about keeping our costs down - there is also the responsibility to maximise the return from our land and property portfolio. At present we have 12 schemes which we have already applied for planning permission or will be submitting applications within the next 6-9 months.

The total potential value of these sites should be in the order of £7m if planning permission for residential development is obtained, though doing so can be difficult and expensive to achieve. Whilst we feel reasonably confident on our eventual success, some of this expenditure may end up being abortive.

In our diocese it is accepted practise that where schemes make use of vicarage gardens, up to half of the proceeds go to the parishes to further local mission. This policy could be reviewed.

All our vicarages could be viewed with the intention to develop them, where possible.





Ministry - lay and ordained

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>Reviewing all forms of ministry, the vital contribution that each disciple can make and the mutual relationship between our different ministries.</p> <p>We also need to consider how roles can best be trained and equipped.</p>	<p>A historical over-reliance on stipendiary clergy.</p> <p>An inconsistent range of lay and non-stipendiary ministry that often feels overlooked and undervalued.</p>	<p>Less paid ministry and leadership, better equipped ministry and leadership. Valuing and equipping lay and self-supporting ministers. Maintaining our commitment to clergy wellbeing and development.</p> <p>Selection, training and development based on future rather than historic needs.</p>
Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>A review of training for ministry that matches supply and demand and minimises associated costs.</p> <p>A comprehensive re-evaluation of lay, self-supporting & stipendiary ministry.</p> <p>Establishment of appropriate training & development for all.</p> <p>Enable a wider set of ministries, allowing people to explore, grow, and offer their gifts and skills.</p>	<p>Growing leadership teams that incorporate stipendiary and self-supporting clergy as well as lay ministry.</p> <p>An emphasis on missional chaplains operating within schools and parishes.</p> <p>Encourage & discern vocations for all.</p> <p>Delivery of context appropriate training.</p>	<p>Further development of the Canterbury Diet for lay people, including children and young people's ministers, headteachers as spiritual leaders and others.</p> <p>Review all training and development programmes.</p> <p>Review alternative models for developing future stipendiary ministry.</p> <p>Enable our various ministries to recognise one another's worth and work collaboratively.</p>





There has been a historical dependency on stipendiary clergy for leadership and ministry in the Church of England. Stipendiary ministry has also attracted the lion's share of training budgets. With declining attendance and declining finances, the same level of stipendiary ministry is not financially sustainable across the diocese. At the same time, there has been an inconsistent development and use of lay ministry. New models therefore need to be developed that include:

- a continuing shift towards oversight ministry and leadership
- extension of team and group ministry, including the minster model
- an increased role for lay, self-supporting ministry etc in ministry teams
- development of focal ministry where this makes contextual sense
- a review of how training is offered across all types of ministry

Link with other themes

There is a strong linkage here with our 24/7 discipleship theme. In particular:

- **Changing Lives Conversations** ask about how we are releasing and equipping God's people for their ministries both in the church and outside and the mutuality of lay and ordained.
- **Missional Learning Communities** intentionally bring together a wider team of local leadership to focus on embedding missional growth.

Key projects

Training for ministry

The training of future ministers accounts for a significant proportion of our budget – typically over a third of the cost of stipendiary ministry. A review has been carried out considering our future needs for stipendiary ministry against a forecast of the supply of new ministers becoming available through the discernment and training process. This recommended that a cap of 4 stipendiary curates per year be introduced, once our current cohort of curates have completed their training. This represents a significant reduction from our previous aspiration of 9 per year – albeit with 90% of the cost of up to 3 of those posts being met by the national Archbishops' Council.

Modelling suggests that this change will bring supply and demand for stipendiary ministry into balance. Going forward, the supply vs demand forecast will need to be regularly reviewed to ensure that the correct balance is maintained. The review has also identified the possibility of offering more flexible part-time stipendiary curacies.

A comprehensive re-evaluation of lay, self-supporting and stipendiary ministry

Some ideas to explore:





- Create more local leadership teams comprising of ordained, lay and locally-ordained individuals. This could work in parishes, teams, groups and benefices. Oversight could be done at a deanery level, or by someone equipped to offer oversight leadership. These teams could consist of authorised lay ministers, readers, distinctive deacons, self supporting ministers, PTOs, youth and children's workers...
- Training for ministry could be delivered locally - drawing on the expertise of local lay and ordained people. Following a rigorous discernment process, a first year of training could be foundational, ending with the possibility of being commissioned, authorised or licensed, or ordained (to the diaconate) while individuals continue to train / engage in ministry.

Suitable training and development for all

There are various 'pathways' for training priests and the cost of training for stipendiary ministry depends on the pathway chosen. This includes costs paid to the national Church for ordinand training and family support grants paid by our diocese to ordinands.

Our diocese has a variety of lay ministry roles including readers, authorised lay ministers, children and youth workers, and permanent deacons. Are the historical distinctions and differing titles helpful? Might there be better models? What types of training do we already have in place - or do we need to develop - to better support lay ministry?





Structures & organisation

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>This theme incorporates reviewing all aspects of our diocesan structures to better support flourishing ministry for all.</p>	<p>Our current level of stipendiary ministry is not affordable.</p> <p>Many of our stipendiary clergy feel overstretched by administrative burdens - especially, when overseeing multiple parishes.</p>	<p>The right number of stipendiary posts to enable a flourishing ministry while being financially sustainable.</p> <p>Administrative structures that enable that flourishing ministry.</p>
Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>Support our deaneries with their mission and ministry planning.</p> <p>Review all of our leadership and governance structures, streamlining how decisions are made, the role and terms of reference of different groups and how each is held accountable.</p>	<p>Develop deanery plans for a sustainable and flourishing future, which include a review of the number of stipendiary posts.</p> <p>Re-imagine local structures.</p> <p>Where it makes sense, look at using pastoral reorganisations to enable team or group ministries or reduce the number of parishes.</p>	<p>Ensure deaneries are supported through mission accompaniment and in other ways, as required.</p> <p>Technical support for pastoral re-organisation.</p> <p>Ensure new structures have adequate models of ministry built in.</p>

Key projects

Review of numbers and models of ministry

As part of the deanery planning process, each deanery has done an initial review of the number and type of ministry positions it will need to ensure both a flourishing and financially sustainable future. These plans - which are included in full later in this document - will need to be put into action in keeping with the needs of each deanery.





Pastoral reorganisations

Many deaneries are keen to explore the further consolidation of parishes to simplify their administration and enhance local working. Alongside this there is a desire to develop more flexible working through team and group ministries.

Review leadership and governance structures

Review all of our diocesan leadership and governance structures as a whole, streamlining how decisions are made, clarifying roles, accountability and terms of reference for different groups. This will include a review of which of our present structures need to be amended.

Church revitalisation & planting

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>Several of our deanery plans mention the need for church revitalisation or planting. In some situations, this will be about reinvigorating existing churches with missional intent. In others, it may be about planting into new areas, such as a recently developed housing estate. There may also be a case for developing resource churches that can support the ministry of churches around them.</p>	<p>Despite the dedicated and creative work of our ministers, church attendance across our diocese has been declining for some time, in line with national trends. Some churches are reaching critical levels for sustainability - a situation that may be made worse by the pandemic.</p> <p>Ignite plants have been very successful at engaging people in disadvantaged communities, inviting them on an adventure of faith.</p> <p>There are also some areas of new housing in our diocese where the church does not currently have a presence.</p>	<p>We need an injection of missional energy into new or existing areas where a church presence is currently lacking or needs a boost - such as new housing estates.</p> <p>The Church often finds it difficult to engage with people who are on the fringes of our society - yet these were the people that Jesus often prioritised. We want to establish a proven model for engaging with disadvantaged groups, so that they are better represented in our church communities. This model may form the basis for reaching other groups, based on the same principles and approach.</p>





Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>Developing a better awareness of the models available, and a readiness to encourage and resource the local context.</p> <p>Progress Ignite plants to help them build a sustainable future.</p> <p>Consider the potential for establishing new Ignite plants.</p>	<p>Explore models of church revitalisation and planting that are appropriate to local contexts.</p> <p>Share local learning at deanery and diocesan levels.</p>	<p>Draw on and contextualise research and learning from the national Church on successful models and resources.</p> <p>Develop an Ignite toolkit so that the model could be used for further plants. This may also be useful for other areas of ministry.</p>

This is an area which is not always understood to be something for the whole Church, regardless of tradition. Revitalising a church or church planting can be done in a variety of ways, some that might not be thought of as ‘planting’ in the way that it has often been seen in the past. For example, a parish which has a successful Sunday morning Eucharist may start, or plant, a new congregation in a local café on a Thursday evening, or perhaps have an informal Eucharist at the school at 3.30pm on term-time Wednesdays. These are something new but still true to the church’s DNA - but they don't have to be tied to what happens on a Sunday morning in the church building. Of course, there is a place for more radical models where a successful church (of whatever tradition) gifts resources and people to another church in order to start new ministries there. The key challenge for our diocese is to explore the whole range of possibilities for enabling revitalisation and planting so that our parishes can be enabled to respond appropriately to the mission need in their contexts.

Key projects

Explore models of church revitalisation & planting

In the first instance, there is a need to draw on learning from across the Church of England with regard to successful models that might be applicable in our diocese. A meeting was held in March 2021 with Bishop Ric Thorpe and Philip James with our Archbishop’s Council and other interested parties to begin exploring this. A working group may need to be established to explore an outline approach, with particular care given to how this approach might work across a range of ecclesiologies.





There will also be some helpful insights and learning to explore on from the establishment of our six Ignite plants within the diocese specifically to engage with disadvantaged communities.

Work on this theme may be able to draw on grant funding from the Church Commissioners.

Ignite

The Ignite project is supported by Strategic Development Funding from the Church Commissioners to supplement our diocesan investment. Its aim is to establish seven new worshipping communities (six in our diocese and one in Guernsey) based on the model developed at St. Paul's, Cliftonville. The project has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, with early promising signs having to pause in many places. Once restrictions have been removed the goal will be to re-establish each of the Ignite plants and continue to build on this earlier work. The aim is for each plant to become self-sustaining - the project will need to be extended beyond the original timescales in order to maximise the likelihood of achieving this. Agreement - and possibly additional funding - will be sought from our Archbishop's Council and the Church Commissioners.

Ignite toolkit

As part of the project, an Ignite toolkit will be developed to enable the approach to be adopted elsewhere. This could also be useful for other areas of ministry.

Potential for further Ignite plants

If the Ignite model proves to be successful and sustainable, there may be other areas in our diocese where it could be developed. Several deanery plans have indicated a desire to do this and could include a further funding application to the Church Commissioners.





Church buildings

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>PCCs reflect that their two biggest concerns are how to pay Parish Share and how to maintain their buildings. These twin concerns often mean that there is less energy to focus on mission.</p>	<p>It is widely recognised that we have too many church buildings, many of which are not well suited to modern use. In some cases, population centres have moved over time away from our churches so that they are no longer in the best location for mission. However, many church buildings, particularly in rural areas, have a ministry and witness in their own right, simply by their continued presence in the community.</p> <p>Many of our buildings are expensive and resource-intensive to maintain.</p>	<p>Fewer church buildings open for regular worship, more of our buildings opened up for wider community use.</p> <p>Potentially making use of more school and community buildings for local mission and ministry.</p>
Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>Explore how we can reduce obstacles to changing the use of buildings (looking at the role of DAC etc).</p>	<p>Review the use of buildings, to ensure cost-effectiveness and optimisation for missional needs.</p> <p>Explore how the designation of festival churches might help locally.</p> <p>Church buildings as community spaces/hubs.</p> <p>Sale of surplus buildings.</p>	<p>Offer parishes and deaneries legal and technical support, including 'How to' guides.</p> <p>Share stories and learning from across the diocese and further afield.</p>





Key projects

Festival churches

Where congregations have reduced below sustainable levels, there is an option to designate the church building as a Festival Church. There would no longer be regular worship held in the building, but it would still be used for appropriate festivals. There are, of course, complex concerns to be navigated in such changes. A change of designation or use may also not lead to reduced maintenance costs.

A toolkit or 'how to' guide should be developed that will support deaneries and parishes in the process of working through the options, setting out the key processes step-by-step. This should look to remove or reduce the obstacles to changing the use of church buildings.

Churches as community spaces

Many communities appreciate and value their local church building even if they do not come to worship there. Particularly in rural communities, there is a strong tradition of "Friends of" groups that help contribute to the cost of caring for church buildings. It may be possible to extend or enhance these arrangements and further explore support from appropriate trusts and grant-making bodies.

There are potential opportunities to broaden the use of church buildings to suit wider community use. This might include re-ordering - examples of good practice, toolkits and 'how to' guides will need to be collated and made available.

Selling surplus buildings

Where specific buildings are no longer necessary to support ministry, options for sale will need to be developed, with appropriate advice and support made available for parishes throughout the process.





Social and environmental justice

Theme	Where are we now?	Where do we need to get to?
<p>Sharing the good news of Christ through our actions and decisions.</p> <p>Honouring God's call to build a better world for everyone and to care for the gift of creation.</p>	<p>We have a bronze Eco Diocese Award and many of our churches are trailblazing excellent work in this area - with a clear desire from others to do more and very good engagement in our schools.</p> <p>There are a number of diocesan and local social justice initiatives, including our work with refugees, the hungry, homeless, the vulnerable and victims of oppression, especially in the work of the Communities & Partnerships team.</p>	<p>The environment as a core concern for every church and school.</p> <p>We have made a practical commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.</p> <p>Continued development of our local and diocesan social justice work.</p>
Collective focus	Local focus	Collective support
<p>Develop a Care for the Environment strategy.</p> <p>Promote awareness, encouraging both corporate and personal action.</p> <p>Promoting a 'just faith' through local and sustainable community action and social justice initiatives.</p>	<p>Develop ways to further promote social justice as central to our discipleship and engage with disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>Commit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030.</p> <p>Facilitate and encourage sustainable, locally owned, projects.</p>	<p>Facilitate access to support and resources.</p> <p>Share good practice and learning from a wide range of projects and initiatives from across our diocese.</p>





Link with other themes

- There is an important link with **prioritising young people**. A recent report from Tearfund showed that engagement of the church with the environmental crisis is essential if we are to have any relevance to young people.
- There is also a link with the strategic review of properties in our **review central and support service costs** theme, where consideration needs to be given to reducing the carbon footprint of our property portfolio.

Key projects

Care for the Environment strategy

Our diocese has committed to caring for the environment - and specifically to becoming net carbon neutral by 2030. A draft Care for the Environment Strategy has been prepared. This needs to be progressed and action plans need to be monitored, including a comprehensive communication plan. It is noted that much of the work will be required at local parish and school level. We will need to ensure that this theme is reflected across all of our areas of work and establish a framework to monitor our progress and maintain accountability.





Deanery Plans

Introduction

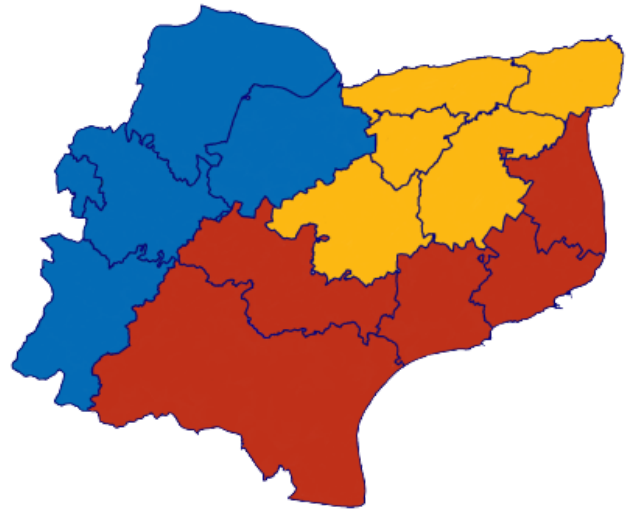
One of the great strengths of our diocese is the confidence we place in planning at a deanery level – and in the expertise and knowledge of our lay chairs and area deans in particular.

Faced with the reality that current trends and old practices cannot continue unchecked, these local voices are best placed to discern what kind of ministry and mission are needed – and what will be affordable - as we look to build a flourishing and sustainable future for all in our diocese.

Mindful of this - and with the support of their archdeacons and the diocesan team - in November 2020, our deaneries embarked on a series of focussed conversations about mission, finance, ministry and buildings. Over the pages that follow you will be able to read the outcome of these conversations in detail.

At the start of each report, we have included a deanery snapshot, giving a brief overview of the size and location of each deanery and including some data on trends in giving and attendance, which are drawn from the national Statistics for Mission return. Please note that some of the maps in the pages that follow do not show the whole of the deanery - we are working with the national team to address this.

These plans will evolve over time as the local conversations continue and they will inform planning at a diocesan level as we explore further what central support and services our parishes need to flourish and grow. We are hugely grateful to all those who have worked on these plans during an extremely demanding time - thank you for your understanding, expertise, critical insight and creativity.





Ashford Deanery: Snapshot

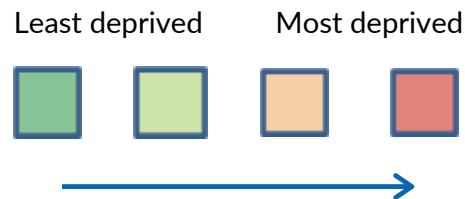
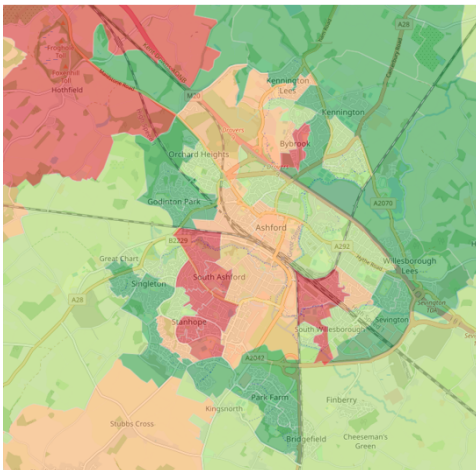
The Ashford Deanery has 18 churches serving a population of 97,000 people, 0.9% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is very mixed, with a large area of deprivation to the north east and in the Stanhope area, as well as much more affluent areas in the north west and scattered around the Deanery.



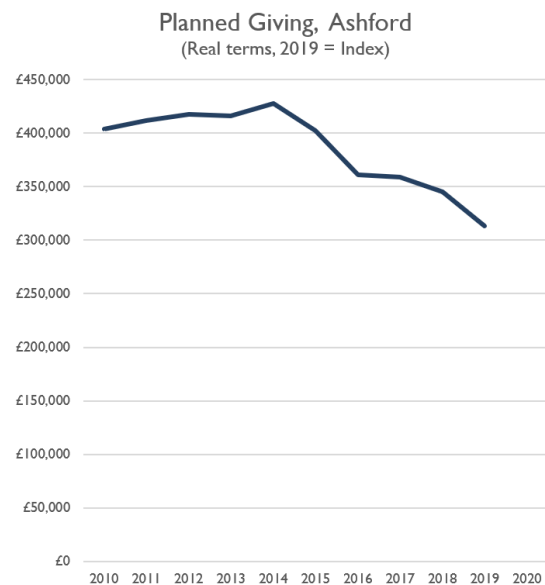
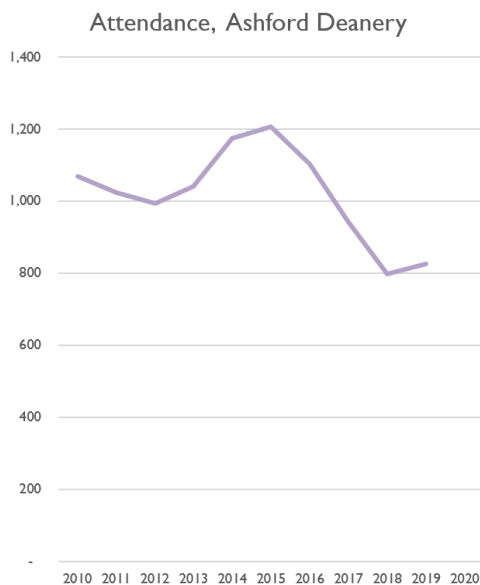
Attendance and giving are both in decline, with the number of planned givers down by 30% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has seven full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including two vacancies), two self-supporting clergy posts and two curates.

Area Deans: Chris Denyer & Jeremy Worthen

Lay Chair: Liz Richardson



Please note that this map only shows part of the deanery





Ashford Deanery: Plan

We aim to be a deanery where:

- the focus is our shared purpose in mission
- models of ministry are open to dynamic development in light of that focus
- gifts and skills are shared generously and creatively
- we welcome new disciples of all ages and see them grow in faith

Over the next twelve months, we will begin to take forward the following seven priorities:

- Develop shared vision
- Support one another in mission
- Make good use of ministry across the deanery
- Foster a culture of generosity and responsibility
- Realize the potential of our buildings for connecting with our communities
- Increase contact with and participation by children and young people
- Understand and respond to social change as we emerge from the pandemic

The table below sets out our initial thinking as to how we plan to do this. We expect these plans to evolve further in the coming months as we look to identify responsibilities and timelines with regard to the possible tasks and review progress on a regular basis.



Priority	Key objectives	Possible tasks
A. Develop shared vision	Clarify shared understanding of purpose in relation to this exercise.	Draft a deanery statement to follow on from the diocese’s strategic vision (‘Therefore we will...’).
B. Support one another in mission	Identify some shared priorities for mission and enable greater sharing of experience and resources.	Undertake a Mission Action Planning process as a Deanery that brings together the thinking within each parish about priorities for the next 3–5 years, and enables us to see the potential for mutual action, support and learning.





Priority	Key objectives	Possible tasks
C. Make good use of gifts of ministry across the deanery	Release gifts of the whole people of God to further the Kingdom of God, including the range of people available for public worship (leading, preaching, funerals) and other recognized ministries.	Carry out a Deanery skills audit this Spring of clergy, readers, ALMs and lay people of all ages, that identifies gifts, specialisms and interests, e.g. sourcing and applying for grants, working with children and youth.
		Work with the national Setting God's People Free initiative to encourage vocations to lay ministries, alongside other kinds of vocation (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
		Parishes to explore possible model of a 'focal minister' for each church, with corresponding oversight role for stipendiary clergy.
	Promote sharing of ministries across the deanery.	Establish a Group Ministry agreement within the Deanery to share more effectively ministry across the benefices.
	Encourage a younger and more diverse range of people to be involved in lay and ordained ministries.	Continue to grow a mixed ecology of church by identifying possible new Fresh Expressions or church plants.
		Consider Giving Reviews as a way of raising generosity.
Work more closely with the Diocesan Ministry Framework to encourage younger adults to explore vocation.		
D. Foster a culture of generosity and responsibility	Find appropriate and effective ways to communicate about regular giving with our congregations.	Use the Growing Faith Reflection Tool as a lens in future planning so that young people are included.
		Make use of national and diocesan initiatives and resources eg CofE generosity resources on website.





Priority	Key objectives	Possible tasks
E. Realise the potential of our buildings for connecting with our communities	Be clear about the resources we have in terms of buildings across the Deanery.	Ashford Town Parish to undertake a buildings resources review and to disseminate the methodology across the Deanery.
	Sustain breadth of community engagement through use of church premises.	After the pandemic, be ready to maximise the potential for hall bookings and review fees for ongoing bookings.
	Make informed decisions about future use of buildings within God's mission.	Develop an awareness of grant-making bodies and identify someone from the skills audit who could help apply for grants.
		Identify church buildings that could be celebrated as Festival Churches and learn from the current project at Sellindge.
		Invest in developing our buildings where this can help us be more effective in serving our communities and generating future income.
		Review and research possible new partnerships in the local context for sharing church buildings and halls.
Support each other in working towards the Eco Church on 'bronze award' across the Deanery, sharing relevant expertise and where possible drawing in people from the wider community.		
F. Increase contact with and participation by children and young people	Grow connections between children in our church schools, churches and households.	Consider ways in which benefices or the Deanery could connect the generations within church and community, using the Growing Faith Reflection Tool.





Priority	Key objectives	Possible tasks
F. Increase contact with and participation by children and young people	Help children and young people to feel valued as fellow pilgrims.	Include children and young people where appropriate in decision-making, and planning and leading worship.
G. Understand and respond to social change as we emerge from the pandemic	Listen to key bodies within our communities and reflect on impact of what they are saying on other priorities identified here.	Working with the local Chamber of Commerce, consider social trends after the pandemic in relation to our buildings and church communities, e.g. more people working from home with an increased demand for 'hot-desking' where our buildings might provide a this kind of informal office space with internet.
	Support one another within the Deanery in learning from and adjusting to life after the pandemic.	Make space for appropriate conversations at Synod and Chapter, drawing on resources from Diocese and elsewhere as needed.
	Strengthen and sustain the CofE online presence in our communities, including digital communication and online services and other activities.	Explore shared training, and exchanging good practice and resources.





Canterbury Deanery: Snapshot

The Canterbury Deanery has 10 parishes serving a population of 71,367 people, 1.5% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is very mixed, with the most deprived regions in the Thanington area and north of the city.

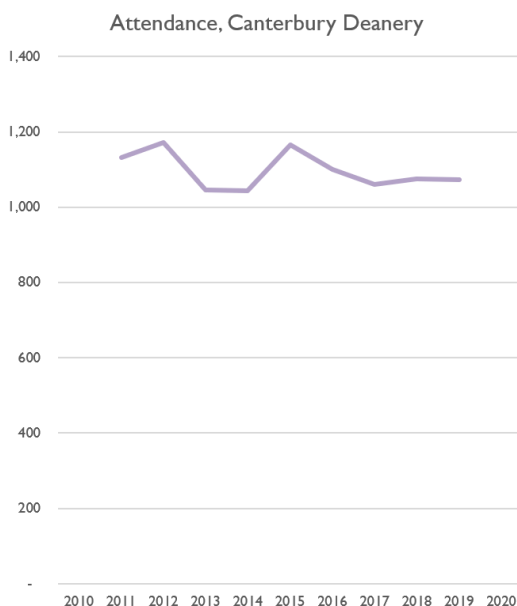
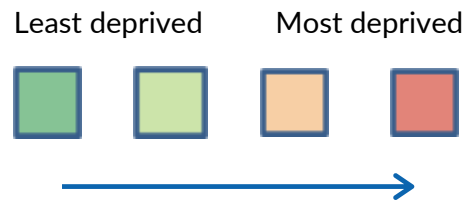
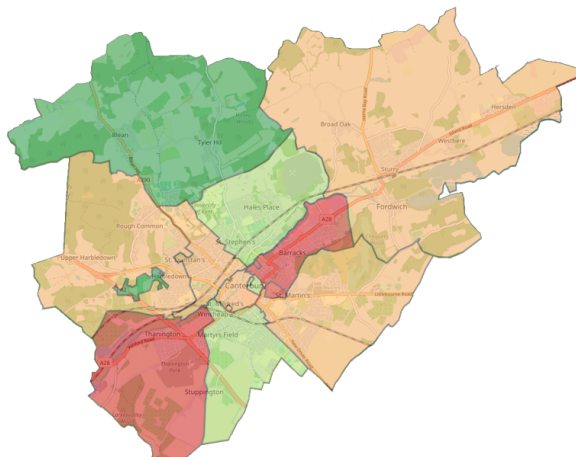


Attendance and giving are both reasonably static in the Deanery, although the total number of planned givers has fallen by 20% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has ten full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including one vacancy), one self-supporting clergy post and three curates.

Area Dean: Mark Griffin

Assistant Area Dean: Phil Greig

Lay Chairs: Liz Morrison & Janet Bentley





Canterbury Deanery: Plan

Better together!

In 2020 we adopted the Canterbury Deanery Mission Plan, created and owned by Deanery Synod. The plan includes grouping, flourishing and sharing, drawing us into a future that commits us to working together, building up links between parishes and across the Canterbury Deanery.

Even in this difficult year of a national pandemic, we have seen parts of the mission plan being put into action. The document is dynamic and sustainable, being implemented and refined at every stage.

Throughout the creation process, there has been the desire to share resources and to support each other prayerfully and practically, working together and yet recognising the strength in our diversity.

We have seen the Mission Plan coming alive in:

- A deanery Lent course, which has over seventy participants from all parishes and other denominations, overseen by deanery readers and curates
- A joint deanery confirmation planned for October 2021
- The beginnings of a community wardrobe for school uniform in conjunction with local branches of the Mother's Union and our community partners
- Bringing together eco champions from each parish to encourage us all to be good stewards of God's creation in Canterbury
- The first meeting of deanery PTO clergy and readers with 26 participants
- A successful initiative to appoint a mission priest for the Deanery and Thanington parish. This is a major step forward in working together as a deanery and alongside the archdeacon to resource our future
- Deanery churchwardens meeting together (by Zoom) to share knowledge and resources

We are working on the next steps:

- To improve deanery communications by appointing an identified talented volunteer to co-ordinate our output in consultation with the Deanery Leadership Team
- Plans for shared training on practical matters, like first aid and food hygiene, to safeguard the people to whom we minister
- In the light of our experience during the pandemic to enhance our online presence
- Pulpit swap to share ministry





All are called!

PCC responses to the Mission Plan endorse a ministry that underlines a call to use our God-given gifts in our whole lives as Christians.

The Deanery Lent course is the pioneer event of many to equip the people of God. Vocation events in the deanery are planned to enable discipleship and to embed our beliefs into our daily lives.

PCC responses welcomed lay participation in its widest sense, drawing people into service and commitment, as well as promoting more formal lay leadership and lay ministry across the deanery, especially Reader and ALM ministry.

All PCCs affirmed the place of ordained ministry in the church as part of the people of God and journeying together. This year has seen the Clergy Chapter working together more closely. We are looking to support each other in curate and lay minister training. While rooted in their own parish, opportunities are available for individual curates to broaden their experience in different contexts and different traditions across the Deanery.

Buildings

DMMC felt that our current number of buildings were largely sustainable and many were very widely used by church groups and the wider communities.

The PCC responses included some particular comments, almost entirely by those who had more than one building:

- St Peter's highlighted the potential development of their church building in its unique location in the city centre for multi-purpose use, transforming it into a community hub on the busy central thoroughfare of Canterbury.
- St Martin's and St Dunstan's both talked of mission through heritage and the international reach of their buildings.
- St Paul's identified the use of their church and church-centre as a hub for the Deanery.

Finances

The finances of our deanery are influenced by monetary contributions from partner organisations and these need to be acknowledged. We are currently supported by the Methodist Church and Junior King's School in the LEP in Sturry. Archbishop's School pay 20% of the incumbent's stipend as their Chaplain, thus reducing the share for St Stephen's. Diocesan funding of the University of Kent chaplaincy allows the Chaplain to be a 10% minister for Blean Parish. All Saints receive Church Lowest Income Communities Funding for their Mission Priest.





Currently, deanery finances show that two parishes are in arrears (Sturry and Harbledown), two parishes are significantly subsidised (All Saints and Thanington (planned)), two parishes are supported by chaplaincy income (St Stephen's and Blean), three parishes are currently paying their way (the two parishes in the benefice of St Dunstan, St Mildred and St Peter and the parish of St Martin and St Paul) and one parish is noticeably more secure (St Mary Bredin).

The future

The creation of the Mission Plan is acknowledged to be the initial phase of Deanery development and this document is phase two, drawing on the plan and PCC responses.

It is recognised that stipendiary ordained ministry is becoming less sustainable, requiring the growth of new lay ministries and the drawing of others into leadership roles in any new groupings:

Harbledown

Harbledown is currently a resolution parish under the House of Bishops Declaration 2014. In their response to our options of grouping with St Stephen's and Blean, they emphasised their wish to remain a resolution parish and not to group with others. DMMC are keen to work with Harbledown PCC and the incumbent to ensure that the parish is flourishing and sustainable and commit ourselves as a deanery to support the ongoing development of their Parish Mission Action Plan.

North Canterbury Grouping

Blean and St Stephen's were keen to group with each other, although both expressed reservations about joining with Harbledown.

The current provision of ordained ministry at Blean is entirely dependent on the Diocese funding the University Chaplaincy, which allows the parish to have a 0.1 appointment.

DMMC support the grouping of Blean and St Stephen's. The University Chaplaincy is discussed further below but it should be noted that if the income were to be lost the preferred option would be that St Stephen's and Blean become one parish with one priest.

East Canterbury Grouping

The DMMC preferred option in East Canterbury is that, on the retirement of the Rector of Sturry in May 2021, Sturry and All Saints be grouped under one priest. This is seen as being sustainable in the short term and gives the two parishes the best opportunity to flourish as a grouping in the longer term as the Lowest Income Communities Funding, supporting one stipend for All Saints is likely to end in 2025 enabling both parishes to contribute an equal share to support one full time Priest.





The dialogue with the Methodist church about the LEP should continue but from an Anglican perspective, the current situation, and therefore the LEP, appears unsustainable after May 2021. Part of the dialogue will be about how the potential ending of the LEP could be resolved, as new arrangements are implemented. The new incumbent should be protected from being over-stretched and be given space to draw the two parishes together allowing opportunities for mission and ministry to grow. Attempting to achieve realism, the interregnum offers an opportunity to have a period of reflection that looks into the long term for the sustainability and flourishing of Sturry, All Saints and Canterbury Deanery. This needs to happen first with Sturry and then with Sturry and All Saints together.

DMMC understand the pain that this will cause especially as the Parish response from Sturry spoke of the desire to remain in an LEP. We also acknowledge the concerns felt by the All Saints PCC about protecting the parish's commitment to mission, as well as potentially spreading ministry too thin. We believe that, with the right support for the new incumbent and the two parishes, this grouping could work well.

Other Groupings

St Dunstan's, St Mildred's and St Peter's (DMP) formally came together in 2018 on the appointment of the present Rector, as a benefice grouping. This is working well and could offer support to other groupings in how to flourish together. The establishment of this Benefice has shown a commitment to new arrangements and being open to change within the Deanery.

St Martin's and St Paul's PCC acknowledged that it could group in the longer term with the East Canterbury Grouping or with DMP in the future. Scope was identified for loose partnerships in the immediate future. The large estates in the parish link ministry requirements to All Saints and Sturry, while heritage opportunities offered partnerships with the DMP Benefice. A successful holiday club organised by three parishes (DMP, All Saints and St Martin's and St Paul's) in 2019 shows an enthusiasm for partnerships in mission and a keenness to build on that.

The PCC of St Mary Bredin supported the option that the parish would continue in its present form and not be part of a grouping. As seen in the appendix to this paper SMB have significant mission plans for their parish and seek partnerships with the wider deanery in our mutual flourishing.

Mission Priest post

Recently, a bid for five-year funding for a mission priest in a Deanery post based at Thanington was accepted, supporting cross-Deanery mission. In responses to our consultation both St Mary Bredin and St Martin's and St Paul's welcomed the appointment





and saw opportunities for partnerships, support and sharing experience. The DMMC see the Deanery part of the mission priest's role as supporting work on the London Road estate.

Although the appointment has not yet been made to this post, there is need to look to the end of the five years of agreed funding and create sustainable options for developing ongoing mission in the Deanery

Options for the post and for Thanington are:

- **Option A:** Find new funding to continue with the role, especially if the mission part is successfully embedded.
- **Option B:** Draw the post into SMB but with agreement on the retention of St Nicholas Church.
- **Option C:** A new mission post based on Mountfield Park but incorporating the work in Thanington.

(Mountfield Park is potentially a 4500 new housing development, currently going through the planning process. This would straddle two deaneries as it covers part of the Lower Hardres end of the Parish of Bridge in East Bridge Deanery, and St Martin's and St Paul's Parish in this deanery. The planning process is continuing, within the next few years we should know if it will happen and if it does, the shape of the development.)

Education post

The DMMC values links with local schools and seeks further Deanery co-operation, as stated in the Mission Plan, as a way of working in the secondary and primary schools of Canterbury, better using the giftings of lay and ordained ministers.

It is proposed that the priest in the North Canterbury Grouping holds, as part of their role, an education portfolio for the Deanery and that on the retirement of the current incumbent in 2023 that would form part of the parish recruitment profile. This role would support schools work and encourage lay and ordained ministers to work more closely together across our schools in the Deanery. The role assumes that parishes continue to build up their own relationships with schools but are better able to find support and economies of scale in working with the post holder.

The incumbent of St Stephen's is the Chaplain of Archbishop's School and the school pays part of his stipend. If the Archbishop's School funding were reduced or withdrawn it would be possible to build on the current support to the school from St Stephen's and from Clergy, Readers and other ministers to provide chaplaincy, co-ordinated by the holder of the Education post.





Chaplaincy

DMMC endorsed the importance of chaplaincy in schools, further and higher education in our Deanery. We support the continuation of the funding of the University of Kent chaplaincy by Communities and Partnership as a vital part of the mission of the Deanery to the university and its wider community. We acknowledge the benefits, which come to the Deanery and Diocese, through our stake in the world of education given by the chaplaincies. We would look in future to work more closely with the university chaplaincies at the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University, offering resources and pastoral support. The work of parishes across the deanery in ministering to the student population that live throughout the city is acknowledged and is seen as a gifting distinct from the gifting of chaplaincy ministry. Support to the Independent School chaplaincies at St Edmund's and the King's School (especially supporting involvement at Junior King's in Sturry) should continue. The St Edmund's post is currently vacant.

The Cathedral

In many ways the role of the Cathedral is beyond the remit of the DMMC. However, the Cathedral has played an important part in the Deanery through Deanery Synod and through the role of the Canon Missioner. The Dean and Chapter corporately and individually have offered support in the life of the Deanery, and the DMMC feels a shared sense of partnership. There have been some questions from the parishes about the Cathedral and its place (or lack of it) in what has been described as a "doughnut deanery". It was noted in responses that the Cathedral's regular congregation is a gathered community of people mostly from within our parishes, some of whom also take an active part in our parish communities. It is recognised that there is a wealth of experience in the Cathedral Chapter of parochial ministry and of specific gifts and a willingness to share that experience with the Deanery.

The DMMC seeks to explore further partnerships between the parishes of the Deanery and the Cathedral, to share resources and to be creative in mission. We see that as an opportunity to work together in specific areas of overlap (e.g. pilgrimage/heritage) but also to build further collegiality and mutual support between the Cathedral and lay and ordained ministers in the Deanery.



This document was approved by Canterbury DMMC and issued on 23rd March 2021. It replaces all previous versions.

Appendix

- Flourishing in Mission





Canterbury Deanery: Appendix

Flourishing in Mission

As a deanery is the sum of its parishes, we asked PCCs to respond to the Consultation paper and Mission Plan and to outline their own visions especially with new partnerships.

St Mary, Bredin

- The re-establishment of a CAP (Christians Against Poverty) Debt Centre
- To continue to grow the reach and influence of their anti-slavery ministry 'Stop the Traffik'
- A partnership between their New Wine Discipleship Year Hub with the Diocese and the national Ministry Experience Scheme for more 18-24 year olds to give a year to grow in discipleship and experience ministry through a local church
- Their commitment to the Church of England's Growing Faith agenda, becoming a Growing Faith resource church
- Responding to the Church of England's challenge set out in 'Setting God's people free', in training and resourcing lay leaders from across their congregation. The Growing Leaders course will again be running from late Summer 2021 in partnership with the Diocese. This will be their third cohort. As before, other churches will be invited to send participants

St Dunstan's, St Mildred's and St Peter's

- Partnership with Catching Lives as part of the ecumenical/deanery ministry to the homeless
- Mission to pilgrimages and visitors through heritage especially at St Dunstan's
- Mission to the city centre through chaplaincy to the Marlowe Theatre, links to Business improvement District (BID) and their work with the shops and businesses in the city centre
- St Peter's continues to host the Romanian Orthodox Church and occasionally the Greek Orthodox community.
- Potential development of St Peter's and use as a hub for welcome and an oasis of calm!
- The Churches are part of Inclusive Church and the Eco Church Movement
- Strong and growing Friends organisations in both parishes

St Martin's and St Paul's

- Estate Ministry, partnering with others in the community, especially residents groups, the city council and holding events/messy church in the community not on church premises
- Partnership in the World Heritage Site (with Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and other stakeholders) telling the Christian story afresh





- Hope to work with parishes across the Deanery to resource each other in care home ministry and working with the older members of our community
- Planning joint musical events across the Deanery enabling others to sing together

Blean

- Partnering with others to care for the older members of society, particularly the active older
- Working with other churches to foster community engagement in environmental matters
- Improving the small Church room, to make it more suitable for community activities, and to be an asset to the Deanery
- Fostering previous good relations with the local (non-church) primary school with several outreach activities

All Saints

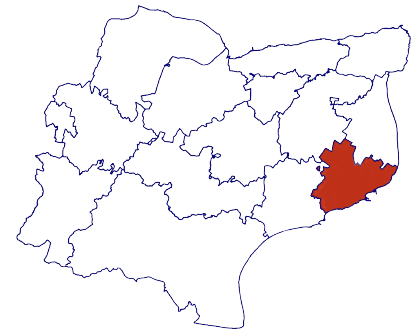
- All Saints joined the A Rocha UK Eco Church initiative towards the end of 2020. Their church is currently below Bronze standard, and they are identifying areas they can improve, both short and long-term. Their current aim is to become a Bronze standard church. They have recently started a monthly eco church meeting
- As part of their ongoing building project plans (needed to replace end-of-life roof tiling), they are studying feasibility of energy efficiency installations, such as heat pumps or solar panels. They will also substantially improve much needed church insulation
- They would be happy to host any shared training in their building, and benefit from the neighbouring Council office car park available for use in evenings and weekends. They do have several people who offer professional training (in other topics) as part of their day-job; they may be able to offer help with delivery if there were 'off the shelf' resources available.
- They would be keen to continue collaborative ministry with teenagers, as they have done in the past with some churches in the Deanery and across the Diocese. An All Saints churchwarden and church member are willing to take this work forward with a team from other churches and the appropriate member of the DMMC.
- We have long standing good relationships with the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Evangelical Orthodox church and the Brazilian Church who meet to worship in our building.
- The Curate welcomes involvement in her wider interfaith partnerships project





Dover Deanery: Snapshot

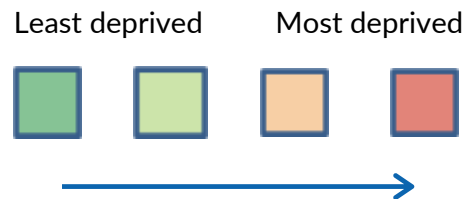
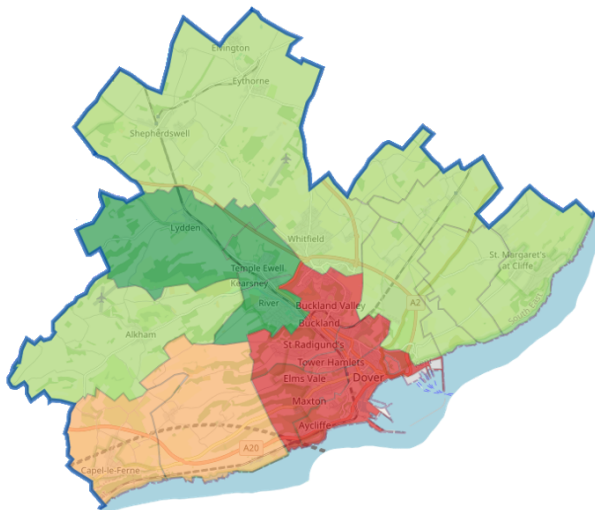
The Dover Deanery has 13 parishes serving a population of 57,586 people, 1.1% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is mixed, with large, more affluent areas in the North and East, but the town itself is much more deprived.



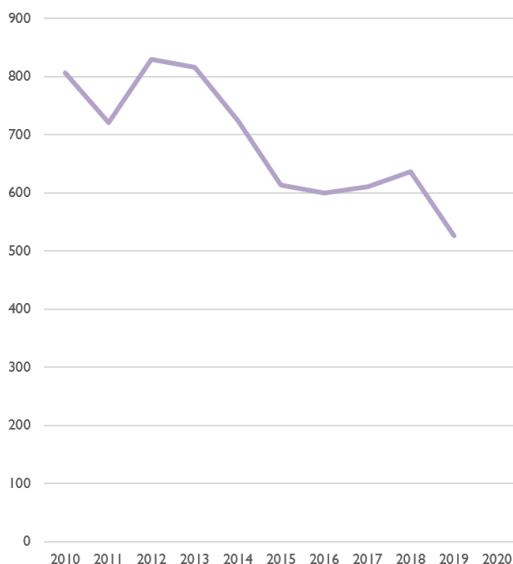
Attendance and giving are both in decline in the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers down by 50% over the last decade. The Deanery currently has 6.9 stipendiary and 1 self-supporting clergy posts (including curates). As of April 2021, the Deanery has 5.9 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including one vacancy) and one self-supporting curates.

Area Dean: Andy Bawtree

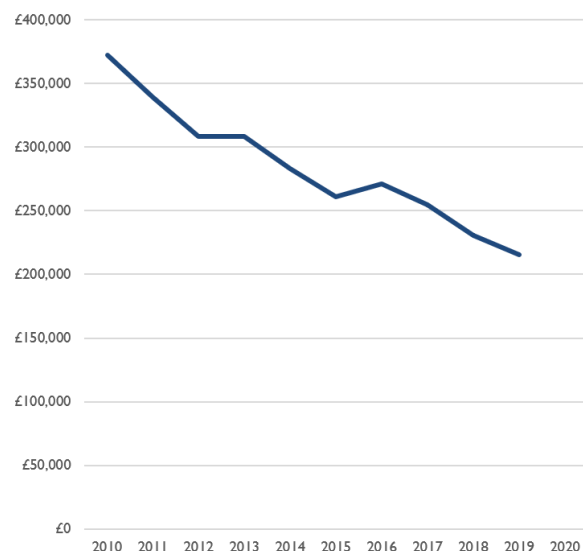
Lay Chair: Nigel Collins



Attendance Dover Deanery



Total Planned Giving, Dover Deanery
(Real terms, indexed to 2019)





Dover Deanery: Plan

1. Introduction

Bishop Rose has commissioned each deanery to review its life in local and deanery-wide conversations to ensure it has clearly identified its missional direction, priorities and shape for flourishing and sustainable ministry; writing to Area Deans and Lay Chairs she said:

"When we look at what needs to change, we cannot simply try to spread the same ministry more thinly. We must do things differently, re-examine our priorities, and put mission at the heart of our life."¹

This Plan builds on the mission planning which culminated in the 2017 plan for structural reorganisation and the need for change because the church must adapt to a changing culture and context. The model of one parish with one church and stipendiary priest is no longer realistic.

It is largely recognised that the role of stipendiary clergy will be to provide leadership and oversight which equips the whole People of God for mission. To release stipendiary clergy for this role they will need the support of other ministers² working together in a focussed way not just to rebuild our church communities as we emerge from the impact of Covid-19 but also as we continue to reach out in loving service within our local communities. Furthermore, we need to be confident disciples of Christ. Disciples who are prayerful, versed in the scriptures, kind and generous in word and deed. Above all we need to be confident in telling others about the difference being a Christian makes in our everyday lives.

We also need to be realistic and ask ourselves the difficult questions which will need to include a review of our buildings and finances. On the one hand we can no longer expect to be bailed out by the 'diocese' when we fail to pay our parish share in full because it pays for the ministry and support services we receive. On the other hand, we cannot plan stipendiary posts around the ability of parishes to pay or we will only have a couple of stipendiary clergy in a couple of 'bigger' parishes leaving the other parishes to fend for themselves – we must be generous and support ministry across our whole deanery.

2. Mission Statement³

The mission of the Deanery of Dover is to encourage, support and enable the parishes, in their local mission to proclaim the Kingdom of Christ, through fellowship and affirmation, good communication, cooperation, the sharing of resources and collaborative working. The Deanery aims always to be open, transparent, inclusive and supportive – seeking to do together what can best be achieved together.

1. *'Everything's changed,'* a Briefing for Area Dean's & Lay Chairs from Bishop Rose, November 2020.

2. These will include lay and ordained colleagues exercising self-supporting/voluntary ministry. Some will be in formally authorised ministries (eg Readers, ALMs, curates, deacons) and others exercising their gifts in areas such as administration and hospitality.

3. As agreed in the Dover Deanery Mission Plan July 2007.





3. Parishes and ministry

- Dover Deanery comprises 6 benefices totalling 13 parishes and 22 churches (including St Mary in Castro, an extra-parochial place).
- Since 2010, the benefices have been grouped into 3 ministry areas:
Town: comprising the benefice of Dover Town in a Team ministry.
East: comprising the benefices of Bewsborough; and St Margaret-at-Cliffe w Westcliffe & East Langdon w West Langdon.
West: comprising the benefices of Alkham, Capel-le-Ferne & Hougham; River; and Temple Ewell w Lydden in a Group ministry.
- In 2017 the Deanery Plan outlining a structural framework for pastoral reorganisation within each of the ministry areas gained the consensus of Deanery Synod.

4. Ecumenism

- Christians Together in Dover (CTID) works actively in developing ecumenical work to address local need, in particular issues of social justice focussed mostly in the town. Working cross-denominationally they have been instrumental in establishing the Dover Foodbank, Dover Outreach Centre and other initiatives tackling homelessness and poverty.
- Other examples of ecumenical working include the Port of Dover Chaplaincy, Cross-Links Dover working with young people in Buckland and participation in community partnerships such as Together4Dover.
- There is an Anglican-Methodist agreement in place with the parish of Bewsborough.
- The ancient St Edmund's Chapel is available for ecumenical use and is managed by a memorial trust.

5. Identified aims

- Implement the 2017 strategy for structural change and pastoral reorganisation.
- Clarify the needs and mission priorities of benefices and parishes, including a review of resourcing staff, buildings and finances.
- Encourage vocations to ministry (lay and ordained) and opportunities for Christian discipleship and learning.
- Enable a sharing of human and physical resources and expertise.
- Provide opportunities for mutual support and affirmation through meeting, listening, sharing, prayer and worship.

5.1 Implement the 2017 strategy for structural change and pastoral reorganisation

5.1.1 Present context

- **Town**

The plan is to unite the group ministry into a single team ministry and eventually into a single parish.

- Pastoral reorganisation has been completed: now a single benefice of 5 parishes





working in a team ministry. The team rector post is currently vacant, an interim appointment is due to be made in 2021. The team mission priest post ends in March 2021. A time-limited Associate Priest post will start in March to support the remaining team vicar during the vacancy.

- The team ministry has two stipendiary clergy totalling 2 FTE posts. A curate (SSM) is in her first year of training within the team. There are five Readers and some lay worship leaders/ALMs plus churchwardens leading morning prayer.
- Focal ministry for congregations has begun to emerge across the team.
- There are six parish churches and one worship centre. There is one parsonage house and three clergy houses.
- There are three Church of England primary schools (Charlton, St Mary's and Guston), nine other primary schools (including an infant and junior school), a special school and five secondary schools.

- **East**

The plan is to unite into a single benefice in stages (initially creating a group ministry with some parishes uniting).

- These benefices began to explore some possibilities of working together but have been hampered by lengthy and challenging vacancies. A priest in charge was appointed at Bewsborough and a 0.2 priest in charge is due to take up post at St Margaret's in March 2021. Across the two benefices there are two stipendiary clergy totalling 1.2 FTE posts. A PTO priest (SSM) supports the ministry at Bewsborough. Both benefices receive support from retired clergy who assist with leading worship as well as some lay leaders. Bewsborough has one Reader and some lay worship leaders/ALMs; St Margaret's have two Readers and some lay worship leaders.
- Focal ministry in the villages is beginning to emerge but not yet fully recognised. Ministry at Bewsborough is shared with local Methodists in a formal agreement.
- Bewsborough has five parish churches and one redundant church. St Margaret's has four parish churches (one in each of the parishes). There is one parsonage house in each benefice and one clergy house at Eythorne.
- There is one Church of England primary school (Sibertswold federated with Eythorne Elvington), two other primary schools and a special school. The extensive housing development at Whitfield is ongoing.

- **West**

The plan is to unite the group ministry into a single benefice with some parishes uniting.

- Pastoral reorganisation into a single benefice has not yet happened but some parishes united resulting in there now being three single-parish benefices in the group ministry.





- The lengthy vacancy at Temple Ewell developed a strong team of lay leaders and a return to the Bishop of Dover's episcopal oversight. A priest in charge (0.5) is now in post after a move delayed by covid. Across the group ministry there are three stipendiary clergy (one in each benefice) totalling 1.7 FTE posts. River has four Readers as well as some lay worship leaders. There are some lay worship leaders in the other benefices.
- Alkham benefice has three parish churches and one redundant church; Temple Ewell with Lydden has two parish churches and River has one parish church. There is one parsonage house in each benefice but no other clergy houses.
- There is one Church of England primary school (Temple Ewell) and three other primary schools.

5.1.2 Goals

- To encourage and enable the benefices to explore their next steps for implementation.
- To provide appropriate support for benefices as they implement the agreed next steps.

5.1.2 Tasks and resources

- Deanery leadership working with benefice and parish leadership teams/PCCs.
- Diocesan support and advice from the Archdeacon, Diocesan Mission and Ministry Committee (DMMC) and other officers/advisers.

5.2 Clarify the needs and mission priorities of benefices and parishes, including a review of resourcing staff, buildings and finances.

5.2.1 Present context

- Post-covid – resuming physical services, re-building congregations, coping with bereavement/loss, 'hybrid' church.
- Financial – parish share arrears, reduction in planned giving, stipendiary posts, possible mission funding.
- Reimagining ministry - potential for focal ministry, encouraging vocations, families, children and young people, schools ministry.
- Church buildings – viability, fabric issues, review. • Deprivation – may satisfy criteria for Lower Income Communities Funding.

5.2.2 Goals

- To enable benefices and parishes in their local mission so that they are both flourishing and sustainable.
- To support any review process especially as difficult decisions are made about stipendiary posts, buildings and finances.





5.2.3 Tasks and resources

- Deanery audit to clarify the needs and mission priorities of benefices and parishes.
- Support their reviews of resources as appropriate - Deanery leadership working with benefice and parish leadership teams.
- Diocesan support and advice from the Archdeacon, DMMC, DAC and other officers/ advisers.
- Request diocesan support in exploring focal ministry (advice, training and ongoing support) and with stewardship and generosity.

5.3 Encourage vocations to ministry (lay and ordained) and opportunities for Christian discipleship and learning.

5.3.1 Present context

- Most churches have a core of committed and confident disciples often busy with church officer-type roles and business.
- Some past success with Alpha, Deepening Discipleship and lay ministry training.
- Need to be more outwardly focused.

5.3.2 Goals

- Confident disciples, engaged in everyday mission, sharing stories and witnessing to their faith.
- Numerical and spiritual growth in our worshipping communities.
- Increase the numbers exploring vocation and training for recognised ministries.

5.3.3 Tasks and resources

- Request diocesan support in providing local opportunities for exploring vocation.
- To facilitate a local Deepening Discipleship course annually.
- To identify any ministry training needs and deliver local (bespoke) training as appropriate.
- To explore opportunities for lifelong learning and sharing stories for mutual support and to build up the Body of Christ.
- Identify potential course facilitators within the deanery – request diocesan support to train potential facilitators if appropriate).

5.4 Enable a sharing of human and physical resources and expertise.

5.4.1 Present context

- Administration often holds (stipendiary) clergy back from their leadership role.
- Parishes don't always have the expertise or capacity for tasks such as: admin, faculty applications, fundraising, projects etc..

5.4.2 Goals

- To share expertise across benefices and parishes.
- To establish effective and appropriate levels of administration and coordination within the deanery.





5.4.3 Tasks and resources

- To explore the possibility of centralising some administrative tasks across the deanery.
- To explore and enable ways of sharing expertise between benefices and parishes.
- To review channels of communication and information sharing within the deanery.

5.5 Provide opportunities for mutual support and affirmation through meeting, listening, sharing, prayer and worship.

5.5.1 Present context

- Opportunities to meet are in the following contexts:
 - Deanery Synod meetings – at least 2 per year.
 - Deanery Day of Encouragement – annually.
 - Deanery Chapter – mix of breakfast and evening meetings (includes lay and ordained ministers) and annual residential (Condette).

5.5.2 Goals

- To build relationships and networks of mutual support across the deanery.
- To encourage each other in our discipleship and faith.

5.5.3 Tasks and resources

- To continue to enable the opportunities for meeting as listed in 5.5.1.
- To explore other ways of providing opportunities for mutual support and affirmation and to develop them.

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Appendices

1. Initial questions for benefices and parishes
2. Explanation of terminology





Dover Deanery: Appendix 1

Initial questions for benefices and parishes

We encourage this revised Deanery Plan to be discussed as widely as possible across benefices, parishes and churches. We pose these questions for consideration:

1. Is the number of stipendiary posts (4.9 FTE) in the deanery still a realistic and affordable plan in light of current/projected levels of planned giving and share arrears in our parishes?⁴ If not, how many stipendiary posts would be affordable and what models of ministry do we need to develop to work alongside those stipendiary posts?
2. Is the 2017 Structural Plan (Town-East-West) as described above still realistic? If so, how can we make progress in each of the ministry areas?
3. If not, do we need to reimagine the structure across the whole deanery perhaps along the 'minster' model with a core team of stipendiary clergy (based on the number we can afford between us)?
4. How can we encourage and develop:
 - confident disciples within our churches who are equipped and released to witness in their everyday lives?
 - opportunities for sharing our stories of everyday faith (both in our own churches and across the deanery maybe at an annual Deanery Day of Encouragement)?
 - opportunities to explore a call to recognised lay and ordained ministry including focal ministry?
5. What do we do about our places of worship? Should we consider any of them becoming a 'festival' church or something else?
6. How can we support the missional priorities of our benefices, parishes and churches?⁵
7. What resources do we need from the diocese to enable the answers to the above questions to become a reality?
8. Is there anything missing from the plan?

We ask these questions on behalf of the newly appointed Deanery Mission and Ministry committee. Please send your responses to the Lay Chair: nigelcollins60@gmail.com by Easter Day 2021.

Nigel
Nigel Collins
Lay Chair

Andy
Revd Andy Bawtree
Area Dean

March 2021

4. In my own parish (Buckland) our share is £17,500, however our achievable planned giving is likely to be around £7,000. We cannot continue to use our reserves to pay our share or we will run out of money in a few years - I'm sure we are not alone in our situation (Nigel).

5. This could include supporting virtual as well as physical gatherings for worship, and centralised administrative support for clergy and parishes.





Dover Deanery: Appendix 2

Explanation of terminology

- A benefice is an ecclesiastical office not a geographical area and really relates to the incumbent (who is known as a vicar, rector or team rector). Benefices consist of one or more parishes. Each benefice has a patron whose role is in appointing the incumbent (they recruit to a vacancy and then 'present' their preferred candidate to the Bishop, who then usually offers them the incumbency). By the way, benefices are either vicarages or rectories – which is why some incumbents are vicars and others are rectors!
- A parish is a geographical area and a legal entity. The PCC are the charity trustees (they only have to register as a charity if their finances are over a certain threshold). The incumbent (or minister) is chair of the PCC/s within the benefice.
- A priest in charge is not an incumbent but appointed by the Bishop to be 'in charge' of a benefice where the right of the patron to present a candidate has been suspended. The Bishop can suspend a benefice to allow for pastoral reorganisation and/or to reallocate the 'parsonage house' (which is the property where the incumbent lives).
- A parsonage house is part of the benefice property and is where the incumbent resides. There can only be one parsonage house in a benefice because there can only be one incumbent. There does not have to be a parsonage house in a benefice, but the diocese has an obligation to provide a suitable house if an incumbent is appointed. Other clergy houses are usually the property of the Diocesan Board of Finance. All clergy homes/residential properties are managed and maintained by the Diocesan Property team.
- A group ministry is a formal arrangement between one or more benefices which allows incumbents and priests in charge to minister across the boundaries by invitation. There is no change to the legal status of benefices/parishes so there is no change to governance. Where there is a vacancy within a group ministry, the other incumbents/PICs should be consulted about filling the vacancy.
- A team ministry is a formal arrangement within a benefice where the clergy act as a 'team' across multiple parishes or multiple churches. The incumbent is known as team rector and other clergy are usually team vicars. Team vicars have the same status as an incumbent but are not legally the incumbent! Team clergy can be given special responsibility for certain parishes or churches within the team.
- Places of worship are either
 - consecrated buildings and known as 'parish churches' or 'chapels of ease' – the only difference relates to things like the right of parishioners and marriages, baptisms etc. OR
 - they are un-consecrated buildings licensed by the Bishop for marriages, services etc. These can be classed as 'parish centres of worship' or 'licensed places of worship' – they can include village halls, schools, community centres etc.





A festival church is a church building which ceases to hold weekly services and instead concentrates on holding festival services at least six times a year. The term 'festival' is flexible and refers to community-focused events, centred around an act of worship rather than referring to only to traditional church festivals. The care and maintenance of the building should be carried out by a body other than the PCC – there are various governance models that are possible. Weddings, baptisms and funerals may continue to take place. It is important to note that changing the status of a church, or even closing it, doesn't make much difference to parish share as there's still a parish! However, these actions allow a parish's resources to be used in a more focused way.

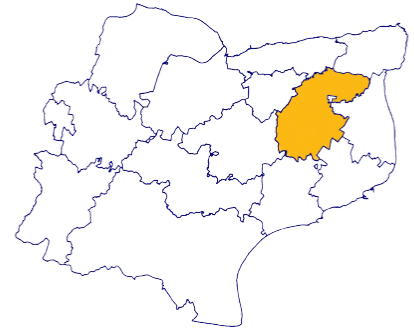
- The minister model is an arrangement where a thriving benefice, parish or church becomes a resource for smaller parishes/churches around it, providing services and facilities that they cannot.
- Focal ministry is not intended to be a new ecclesiastical office or to replace (stipendiary) ordained ministry, it will look different from place to place and could be a commissioned role inhabited by a suitable and appropriate lay or ordained person (eg a churchwarden, reader, ALM, SSM or PTO priest or deacon) it enables a wider sharing of ministry.





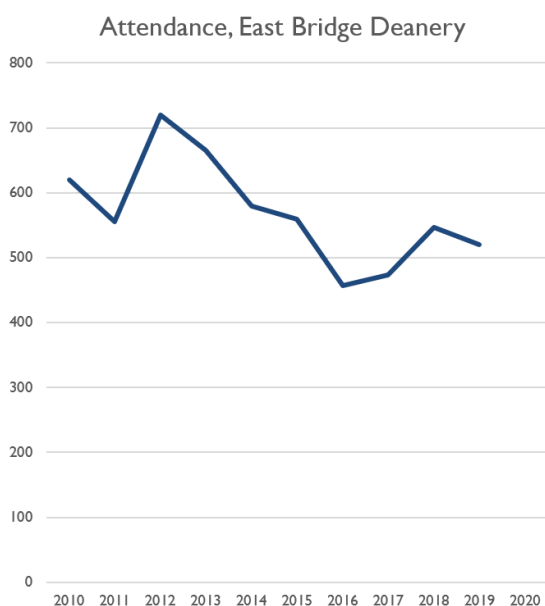
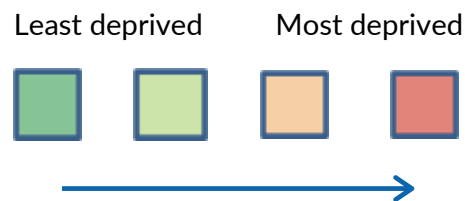
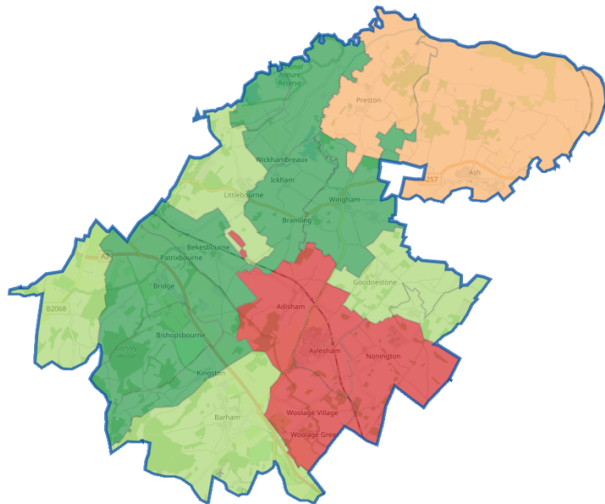
East Bridge Deanery: Snapshot

The East Bridge Deanery has 18 parishes serving a population of 21,327 people, 2.5% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is mixed, with a large area of deprivation focused around the Aylesham region, surrounded by more affluent areas.



Attendance and giving are both in long-term decline in the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers down by 10% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has 4.6 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including a 0.6 vacancy) and one curate.

Area Dean: Stefan Thomas Lay Chair: Steve Sheath Assistant Lay Chair: John Andrews

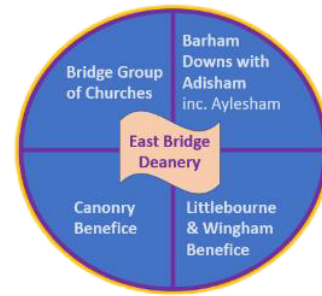




East Bridge Deanery: Plan

A. Who we are

We are God's Missional People who like the disciples (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:32-33), are commissioned by the power of the Holy Spirit in serving Christ through a variety of ministries both lay and ordained and in encouraging the proclamation of the Good News – the Gospel. The East Bridge Deanery is a group of rural benefices (one of which is now a single parish), stretching from Barham to Ash. The Deanery, comprised of 21 churches, is currently served by four full-time ministers (one of whom is a mission priest, for Aylesham partly supported by Mission grant funding). We also have the benefit of the service of a 0.5 interim minister for one of our Benefices currently in a long interregnum. We have 21 churches each with their congregations of varying sizes and some whose attendance per percentage of population exceeds urban and national figures.



B. What we know about ourselves, where we are at and what we have learned about ourselves in the past year

In our thinking since the publication of the document 'Everything's Changed' our Deanery M&M committee have met to discuss our way forward as a Deanery and each Benefice / Parish has conducted an audit. The minutes and audit reports from this exercise are available on request from our Deanery Secretary and all parishes will have seen a copy.

We understand the challenge of Financial Sustainability as we move towards 2022 and have discussed ways in which both individually as parishes, collectively as Benefices, and as a whole Deanery we might begin to improve our Financial Situation. There is a renewed understanding that we need to be realistic both about the Ministry we need and the ministry that we can afford, and we need to plan in a fiscally strategic way.

Some key things are clear to us following the work we have undertaken through our Deanery Synods, M&M Committee & PCCs:

1. That the relational nature of all our mission and ministry is crucially important: by this we mean that the presence of clergy in our churches and villages provide valuable points of connection for those living here, with both the past and present, and most importantly with our incarnational God.
2. That there is central significance in our churches 'belonging' to each of our villages, and our ministry with them in its entirety. In villages like ours the local church is vitally important to people's sense of identity whether in a historical, cultural, geographical, or of a folklore setting – more so than for churches in urban settings. These are some of the reasons why they choose to live here – even if they only enter its doors at





moments of acute tragedy or rejoicing. Our buildings are mostly ancient, listed and costly to maintain but our communities hold them in high regard and many through the unstinting support and good will of 'Friends of the Church' organisations.

These two points show us that clergy and parish are the material witness of the church – they are what inspires people, makes them feel safe and encourages them to pray, to participate and to give willingly to the *missio Dei*. As a deanery we are committed to continuing to strengthen the relationship between our parish churches and the communities in which we serve.

3. We also know that we have been blessed with Lay Ministry which has allowed our limited numbers of stipendiary clergy to share in ministry so widely throughout our Benefices. We continue to value Lay ministry and to encourage lay engagement in all our mission and worship activities. Some deanery examples include: - Lay-led Zoom Worship, Pastoral Care Team, Prayer Groups, Messy Church and Youth Groups, School Mission Clubs, Home-visiting inc. Nursing Homes, Coffee Mornings, Prescription-Runs, etc.

4. Our Benefices have in lots of ways achieved great success in working together and sharing the costs of ministry across many small communities. There is some enthusiasm for greater joined up working between Parishes in Benefice groups and the fledgling Bridge Group Parish is already offering positive feedback on the benefits of closer working together. Other benefices are a little more cautious but are already working much closer together in terms of shared worship services and pastoral care and may envisage some smaller parishes coming together in time (Stodmarsh, Ickham & Wickhambreaux being an example to come). Single parishes may reduce administrative pressures on clergy and lay volunteers and provide greater support and joint working, but our Deanery is too geographically spread-out, and at this time the needs of our communities are too diverse to thrive under a model of Deanery Centralised Ministry.

5. Financially we know that some Benefices have struggled to meet their Parish Share commitments. It is hoped that the move from the Deanery Formula to the Diocesan Formula for calculating the distribution of the share will even out some of the inequities of the previous system and enable churches to fully appreciate the cost of the Ministry in which they share and the implications of non-payment / shortfall. Due to the COVID-19 Lockdown periods, 2020 and 2021 have seen financial disruption and closures. We are hopeful of a return to better financial circumstances as we are able to reopen.





C. Looking to the future

The mission of the East Bridge Deanery as we move forward into the Spring of 2021 will be:

1. To recover from the pandemic by encouraging a safe return to worship and other activities within our Parish Churches over the course of the coming year.
2. To retain practices such as the provision of on-line worship to reach those unable to be present in services, for whatever reason, and to look to how we can enhance this mode of communication with those on-line participants perhaps by sharing this work in some way. We need to accept that hybrid worship services will be the future yet ensuring that those who have no commitment to IT services are still cared for with hard-copy liturgies. Churches not previously equipped are exploring opportunities for introducing Broadband and Live Streaming technology. Deanery funds may be used to provide mission grants for parishes seeking to improve their facilities in this way.
3. To renew our commitment to young people and children in our work with the local schools, Messy Church, youth groups, toddler groups and other such activities.
4. To encourage people who have missed out on important family events such as weddings, baptisms and memorial services to plan for these events in the coming year and to provide pastoral support.
5. To start discussions about greater collaborative working across the deanery by exploring the pros, cons and possibilities of forming Single Parish Benefices. This would allow for a sharing of responsibility for administrative and financial burdens amongst all the churches and communities of a benefice, so that all churches feel a part of the 'whole' and thus more secure.
6. To look at rectifying finances that have been rendered more precarious by the pandemic, by encouraging a greater response to the generous God whom we serve, supporting members of the churches and their local communities to give generously through Stewardship campaigns, fundraising efforts where appropriate, and the formation of Friends groups. The need to explore innovative giving is paramount especially with a growing generation that pay more often with 'card' and not 'cash.' This will help to protect the provision of clergy in our Deanery, by enabling us to commit to the full payment of our Parish Share in 2022, and to maintain our network of local churches each precious to its own community.





7. To look at the possibility of each church developing its own local mission plan building upon what it does well in its own locality (USPs) both in terms of worship and mission and for the provision of space for other organisations; hospitality to visitors, or use as a venue for concerts, art exhibitions or other such ventures. Examples include grant applications for necessary toilets and running water facilities to make the church far more attractive as a venue.

8. To recognise the importance and validity of lay-led ministry by encouraging all members of our Church communities to consider that all individual acts of participation, whether in worship, by reading, singing in the choir, or helping with church activities such as Messy Church, are 'Lay Ministry' and are important to the functioning of our churches. Where people have a sense of 'calling' they are to be encouraged and supported in their discernment and their role to be affirmed as part of a ministry team at a local and deanery level. Training and Development should encourage cross-parish discipleship by the instigation of local and central training packages which bring together clergy and laity. Providers of training would come from Diocesan House, Deanery expertise and other mission charities.

9. We recognise that for a confident stipendiary mission the geographical size of the deanery demands at 'least' four full-time ordained clergy (and a training curate) to help lead their benefices. There is evidence to show that when a position has been filled after a long period of interregnum the mission of that benefice increases in line with giving. This deanery had faith when the Bridge Benefice was advertised four years ago and although on paper could only afford a part-time post yet by supporting a full-time position the now Bridge Group of Churches has flourished and continues to do so. We believe that a similar act of faith and courage is necessary in order to regalanise the mission in the nascent Little Stour Benefice and where appropriate support with some deanery resources to help bring about hope. We also envisage that the mission post at Aylesham will continue to thrive in a self-supporting position once the funded mission-post has ended due to the excellent mission activities already in abundance there. We will also continue to work closer together in our Two Group Ministries.

In conclusion

Our mission is to continue to model the inclusive invitation and welcome of God (Luke 15:20), constantly to look outwards to our communities and to those on the margins, both physically and spiritually, by seeking to proclaim all that we do, all that we are – even all that we say – the transforming and healing love of God, by naming his presence in all that is positive in the lives of our parishes, and challenging all that is contrary to the Gospel. We will do this by constantly seeking new patterns of engagement, joining in, developing initiatives of local service and outreach while faithful to our core proclamation by sacrament, word, praise, prayer, pastoral care and witness.





Our thanks and gratitude to all the responses of our wonderful deanery in enabling this mission plan to come about and knowing that this is a beginning of a journey.

Stefan

Revd Stefan Thomas
Area Dean

Steve

Mr Steve Sheath
Lay Chair

4 March 2021





Elham Deanery: Snapshot

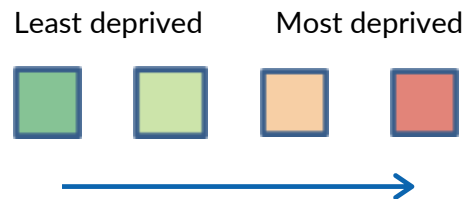
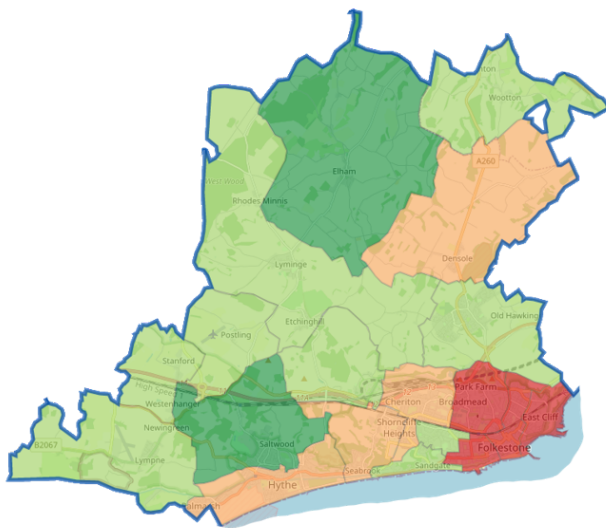
The Elham Deanery has 19 parishes serving a population of 86,611 people, 1.5% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is mixed, with areas of deprivation focused around the south and east of the Deanery, surrounded by more affluent areas.



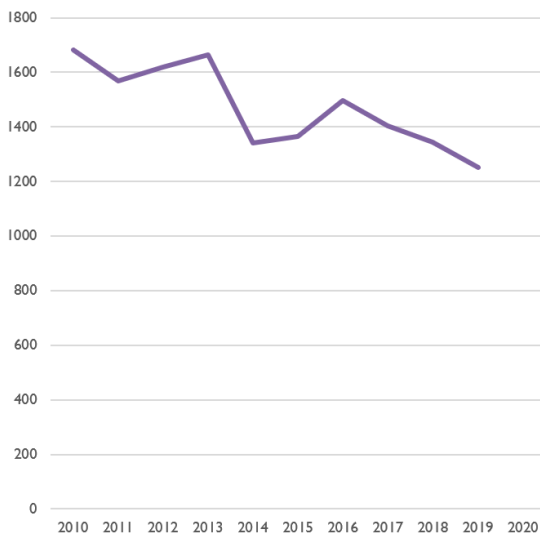
Attendance and giving are both in decline in the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers down by 30% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has nine full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including two vacancies), five self-supporting clergy posts and one stipendiary curate.

Area Dean: Jane Weeks

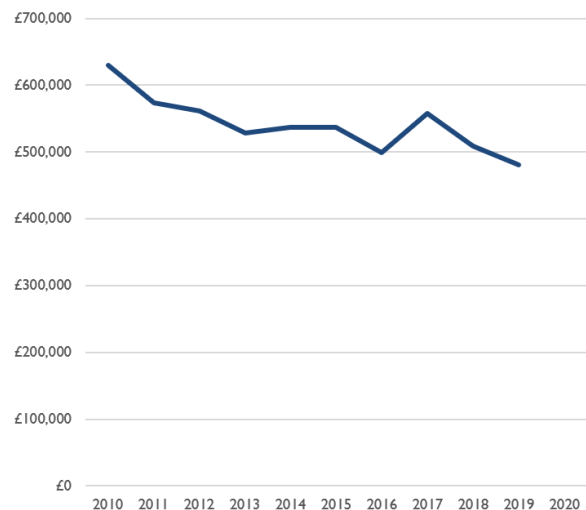
Lay Chair: David Donald



Attendance, Elham Deanery



Total Planned Giving
 (Real terms, index to 2019)





Elham Deanery: Plan

Everything's Changed

Vision

By God's grace we want to be people who are...
...confident and creative disciples of Jesus Christ
...rooted in scripture and drenched in prayer
...living gratefully, giving generously, caring for creation, and sharing the gospel
...growing in number and expectations – of God and ourselves
...motivated by justice and love, open to the spirit and ready for adventure!

Therefore we will...

Priority

The Church at all levels **must** become sustainable through growth for the financial year **2022/23**, preferably without closure of any churches.

Information

Refreshing that we have Senior Staff that engage and listen to us now.

A shortfall in tithing should not be confused with a shortfall of Parish Share. But one may lead to the other.

One benefice in the Deanery is paying a Parish Share of over £100,000 and others are very close to that figure. Many churches are very generous and pay their Parish Share.

In Hawkinge the situation is more acute there and we need to look at how we can explore the sustainability and support of ministry in that place.

Hythe needs to be looked at in much the same way.

It is interesting that our these two larger parishes, Hawkinge (population 11k) and Hythe (9k), both single parishes, have the most trouble raising funds.

People might be happier paying into something that was growing rather than something that is seen as dying out. If the 'Church' does not attract younger people it will die out in two decades.

'Friends of' churches, buildings and the development projects seem to be very well supported financially by our communities, which demonstrates a recognition of Churches as a part of community life.





Restrictions of COVID have left parishes £1000's in deficit.

Many of our churches send financial letters out to the wider community annually and many of our clergy do preach and speak about money and mission together.

If everyone across the Deanery who came to church gave £51.20 per month/ £13 per week the equivalent to a gym membership, the Parish Share would be covered for the Deanery. There are disparities across the Deanery: Holy Trinity Folkestone each person who comes to church pays £9:52 a week to cover their share and Hawkinge each person pays £24.40 to cover their share. Elham Valley Group being in the middle at £15.31 a week.

Note: these figures do not take in to account the disparity of income across the Deanery or even the Elham Valley group and the number of people actually giving in each parish.

Useful documents

- [Guide to the Parish Share](#)
- [Everything's Changed](#): briefing for Area Deans and Lay Chairs
- [Presentation to Area Deans and Lay Chairs](#): 22 February 2021

Vulnerabilities

Requirement to maintain buildings, however the archdeacon has said we cannot close churches and pass them to the trust for historic churches as that organisation cannot take on any more buildings.

Unwillingness to ask the hard questions due to a denial of the position the Church finds itself in.

Do we want Church? If we do then we will have to work together.

Elham Valley Group can be a beacon of light as the new way to do this.

We can take this forward only by example.

Concern is for the clergy; expecting them to have expanding oversight of more churches and in the work of nurturing and the calling of vocations. They will need proper training; supervision and their wellbeing will be a priority. In this deanery many of the clergy have had ill health, and not even covered 5 years of service.

Lay Leadership needs to be given the same priority too.

The way we have done church until now is no longer an option.





Churches of the Deanery need to be spiritually ready for the hard decisions to be made.

Are we going to have a Reformation of how we deliver our mission in this deanery?

'Folkestone Town Centre Group Ministry' which was supposed to be an informal group who worked collaboratively together for Mission and Ministry seems unpopular, as Incumbents would like the freedom of working collaborating across the Deanery on specific projects with specific churches and it is that which excites, motivates gives us new options and new adventures together.

Legislative position

PCCs and the Diocesan Board of Finance are the only bodies locally with a legal responsibility and this plan must be PCC driven. Therefore, the PCCs need to be collectively in agreement with the broad direction of change.

Options

Prayer - The increased doing, learning new ways, more quiet days, retreats and meditation across the Deanery and a Deanery Prayer Group focused on Pastoral Care and Mission. Participative dimension in services, greater appreciation of witnessing and engaging in the shared Mission of the Church locally and Diocesan -wide. The churches within a group can be used for this in a specialised way building on their individual character and style of worship.

Scripture - Discipleship - Cell Groups, House Groups, Lent and Advent groups, Bible Study, Local Missional Learning Communities.' Affirmation and Celebration of diversity and difference.

Generosity - Our Churches are very generous with their hearts and time. During this pandemic, many people have learned that they actually never have retired and want to do less. But less is always more; concentrate on doing less, and focus on what is really important; discipleship and mission, and do it well. Need to empower people to volunteer. Not to be seen as an elite.

Growth - Address the financial challenge in the Deanery by only appointing after consultation with the Deanery M&M, thus looking at the Deanery finance as a whole, so staff are only appointed 'if affordable to the Deanery.' We need to relieve the financial pressure so we can concentrate on our Spiritual Disciplines; Social Care, growing Church, developing Teaching at our 'heart', as we learn to come to Church for others; Discipleship, Walking Church, Forest Church, Pilgrimage with 'Fresh Expressions', Deanery Summer Evensongs and we already have many BCP services in the Deanery which have gained in popularity.





Change the default point of view- 'All will be well if we get people into church. God is radical.' Empowering the whole Body of Christ to evangelise in and outside the church; encouraging story telling, hospitality and invitation.'

Steps to the Future - The 'parish' 'room for all' 'those who are outsiders' Traditional, Middle of the Road and Rural Parishes still have large numbers of occasional offices. Mission there needs expanding. Cross co-operation and specialist churches.

Finance - Perhaps as charities - 'Charity Law' should be looked at and our churches only hold onto reserves that allow us one and half times what we need to pay out for a year.?

General - Ministers need to be freed from financial pressures, and from more administration where it is apparent.

Radical overhaul on interactive giving; including training support and advice.

Seek Charitable Funding for the specific projects within the Deanery.

Elham Valley Group of Churches could work towards a closer, or even 'one parish' model of working.

Be more radical and scriptural; encouraging giving our reserves away and spending them for what they were given, and trust in our radical God.

Encourage tithing; change the language of a 'tax' to a generosity in response of a God of love, for the building up of God's Kingdom, and be realistic not everyone can, or should, pay more.

Continually review management structure, taking into account how the parish share is spent.

Sustainability is a challenge for many Benefices which is why we need to look at how we do things.

Greater engagement with community and agencies, celebrating what we already do with them; the Church Army, Food Banks, Princes Trust, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Drug Counsellors, Kent Workplace Mission etc.

Facilities such as heating, toilets and car parks are what any new or existing church member should expect, but cost money and require planning, paperwork (faculties etc). Many buildings are G1 listed.





Employment of Deanery Youth Worker and Evangelist; creating the development of a Faith Awareness Programme aimed primarily at children and young adults to recognise their achievements and gifting as we journey together in faith.

Deanery Evangelistic Mission Events.

Benefices becoming single Parishes.

Reimagining Ministry; equipping the clergy to discern vocation from apprenticeship making a ministry-mixed model approach- less academic and staying in situ.

Teaching about collaboration, synergy and thereby modelling Jesus's life.

A survey of skills and experience of all members and dialogue of time willing to be given.

Empowering the Laity to take up their calling and equipping them.

Local facilitators minister taster days. LLM. Not just trained for preaching, but evangelism, youth, administration, pastoral care and healing.

Live Streaming and Zoom services have reached those who would not consider entering a church building, and those with disabilities, and should be continued as part of a range of options for those who wish to engage with Church.

Reengage with those who used to come to church.

Focal ministry has been decided against in the Elham Valley churches, as the key points of contact are the Church Wardens who often live there and have been known by the community for years. (They could be said to be the Focal Ministers?) In addition, the Ministry Team like to work as a group across the Valley, developing a Pastoral Care Team and a Children's and Youth Team.





Who is going to do what and by when?

Progress against these activities to be reviewed at PCC meetings and reported to Deanery in the last quarter of 2021/22 year. These activities should be new or significant development of existing activity only.

Elham Valley Group of Churches

Benefice	Benefice-wide activities	Target completion date	Lead person (churchwarden unless delegated)
Elham Valley Group of churches as a whole	Develop lay led services to reduce pressure on ordained clergy, which will free up capacity to assist across the whole Benefice. St Martin's have Lay Reader Sharon and ALM Janet who work across the Benefice. St Martin's will continue to provide funding for training costs and physical assistance when required. Other churches in the Elham Valley Group are to be encouraged to identify lay ministers and share their resources.	Ongoing	All parish churchwardens
	Promote use of the Elham Valley Prayer Hub, as an invaluable source of information about services, meetings, prayers, sermons, reflections and websites. It is produced weekly by our Benefice Administrator Alison Dale. This publication will include promotion of the initiatives within this plan. Likewise, the continued development of existing websites, to promote parish level, and benefice level collaborative projects across all eight churches in the benefice.	Ongoing	





Parish	Activity	Target completion date	Lead person (churchwarden unless delegated)
St Martin's Acrise	Immediate activity		
	Children's Services – Restart the successful services of 2019, and achieve pre-Covid attendance by Advent 2021	1 December 2021	Janet Weisner-Butcher
	Outreach Run a community event/festival in lieu of the flower festival second weekend of August 2021	8 August 2021	Mike and Sue Prebble
	Outreach (2) Church reopening / gift day event and open air services on the green, where all benefice will be invited	Summer 2021	Simon Smith and Martin Bradley
	Medium term activity		
	Structural improvements Explore plans with the Friends Group to build toilet facilities, to enable additional events/services to be held at St Martin's, and work in collaboration on other community projects.	6 April 2023	Simon Smith and Martin Bradley
	Structural Improvements (2) Improve IT infrastructure in the church building to enable online streaming of services, and potentially the installation of Credit/Debit card scanner for cashless donations.	6 April 2023	Simon Smith and Martin Bradley





Parish	Activity	Target completion date	Lead person (churchwarden unless delegated)
St Mary the Virgin, Elham	Delivery Plan - Church Building		
	<p>Threats to the building PCC becomes insolvent.No funds for security, insurance, roof and wall repairs. Vulnerability to thieves and rainwater leaks. Churches Trust not accepting any more redundant churches. No succession of younger volunteers to manage the building.</p>		
	<p>Village without an open church No services, baptisms, weddings, funerals. No Christmas and Easter services, no flower festivals, no bells. No unifying source of pastoral care for adults and children. Gifted to us by our ancestors the church becomes unloved, silent, decaying, reproachful.</p>		
	<p>Opportunities Residents take ownership of the building with the same resolve that saved the village shop. Those of faith or no faith see the building as a vital part of our cultural heritage to be preserved, not just as a building but as a living church. The new facilities open up greater diversity of use.</p>		





Parish	Activity	Target completion date	Lead person (churchwarden unless delegated)
St Mary the Virgin, Elham	Actions		
	1.Communicate to residents the urgency of community action.	Opening of the new facilities, when covid restrictions are lifted	Churchwardens & treasurer
	2.Invite residents to a grand opening of the new facilities.		
	3. Produce and circulate an account of how the new facilities were conceived and implemented - generate interest.		
	4. Produce a budget for a sustainable church presence.	Now	Treasurer
	5. Calculate per capita contributions to achieve budget, and raise the idea of a voluntary tithe for all households.		
	6. Identify new residents and seek to create a bond with the church. Liaise with residents association.	When Covid restrictions are lifted	Not settled
	7. Seek to recruit a volunteer management team for the building, in addition to the wardens, and to provide for succession.	When Covid restrictions are lifted	Churchwardens & treasurer
	8. Widen the PCC membership. Encourage residents to attend meetings and enjoy the new facilities.	After 1, 2 & 3	Everyone
9. Devise fundraising events	Now	Seek out residents with fundraising expertise	





Parish	Activity	Target completion date	Lead person (churchwarden unless delegated)
St Mary the Virgin, Elham	Actions		
	10. Engage with the Deanery to reduce the parish share as current deficits are unsustainable, and the PCC will become Insolvent next year.	Now	Churchwardens & treasurer
	Worship and Café Church at St Mary's: 2021		
	<p>We need to continue the tradition of regular Eucharistic services as well as experimenting with new and different forms of worship. Each Sunday of the month will be part of the pattern:</p> <p>1st Sunday – 8.00am Eucharist BCP 2nd Sunday – 9.30am Eucharist CW Order 1 3rd Sunday – Service of the Word/Café Church (might be on a different day of week) 4th Sunday – 9.30am – Eucharist CW Order1</p> <p>We would like younger families to meet with Rev'd Jane and a lay leader to plan and organise a Café style service. The service would be held once a month at the church and the families would organise the service with the leader and be responsible for contacting the participants to ascertain what their</p>		





Parish	Activity	Target completion date	Lead person (churchwarden unless delegated)
St Mary the Virgin, Elham	Worship and Café Church at St Mary's: 2021		
	<p>opinions were on the service. Our hope is that by totally involving the young families and making them responsible for the service, they will support and encourage their preferred style of worship. Submitted by Pete, Geoff and Reg 17th March 2021. 3.45pm</p>		
	Enhancing connections between St.Mary's & Elham CofE Primary School		
<p>Historically, two local charities (Sir John Williams Trust and the Elham Community Trust) have helped build links with Elham Primary School significantly by providing annual income and funding for special needs, notably books, bibles and recently, external sinks. This important connection between church and school will, it is hoped, continue into the future, but more has to be done to promote personal links between the church community and school staff and pupils.</p> <p>There is recognition of the pressing need not only to attract younger people to church services and events but to retain them. To this end, we will enlist the assistance of the Benefice Children and Youth Team,</p>			





Parish	Activity	Target completion date	Lead person (churchwarden unless delegated)
St Mary the Virgin, Elham	Enhancing connections between St.Mary's & Elham CofE Primary School		
	<p>working with the School's headteacher and senior management team, to ensure a presence of church representatives at school assemblies and services in church. In addition, either by re-orientating the Café Church services towards young people, or by creating special young peoples' services, the format of the services will centre on making the Christian Way more understandable to young people while at the same time, being attractive and fun. Services would be enhanced by introducing hymns and praise songs familiar to children from their school activities. Personal testimonies by attendees and small group discussions during services would also help to build community.</p>	<p>Planning for change can start immediately, with the aim of having plans in place by the time churches are fully open and Covid restrictions lifted</p>	<p>St. Mary's Church Wardens, Worship Committee, Benefice Children and Youth Team, Elham Primary School Headteacher and Senior Management Team, PCC appointed school governors.</p>

Detailed plans are still in development for St Mary & St Ethelberga, Lyvinge, St Mary Magdalene, Denton with St Martin Wooton, St Mary and St Radigund, Postling, All Saints, Stanford, St Oswald, Paddlesworth, and for the benefices of St Luke's Hawkinge, Cheriton, Holy Trinity, Folkestone, Hythe, Lympne & Saltwood.





Communication plan

Consider creation of a deanery media team to promote the vast, wonderful things we are doing.

Celebrate our differences, and have Open Air services for the Deanery including choral evensong in the Summer.

Ensure we take people with us.

Tell the community about the vulnerability of the Church.

Improved notification of requirements made of PCCs from Diocese via Deanery Synod

May we all gather and pray together; be shaken and filled with the Holy Spirit that we may speak the word of God with boldness. May we be of one heart and soul; everything we own held in common and may we all with great power give testimony to the resurrection of Jesus.

(Acts 4:31-33)





Maidstone Deanery: Snapshot

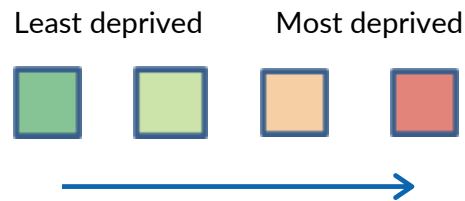
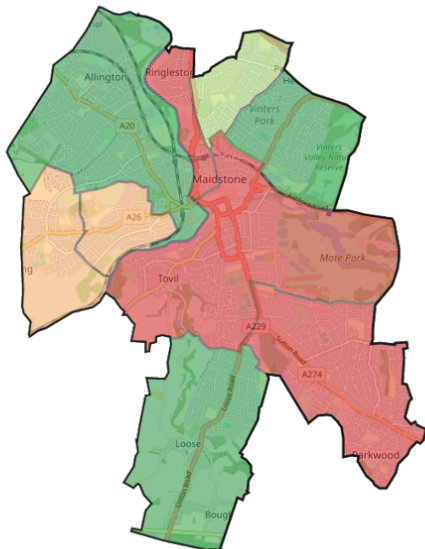
The Maidstone Deanery has 9 parishes serving a population of 95,524 people, 1.1% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is mixed, with a large area of deprivation focused stretching across the middle, surrounded by more affluent areas.



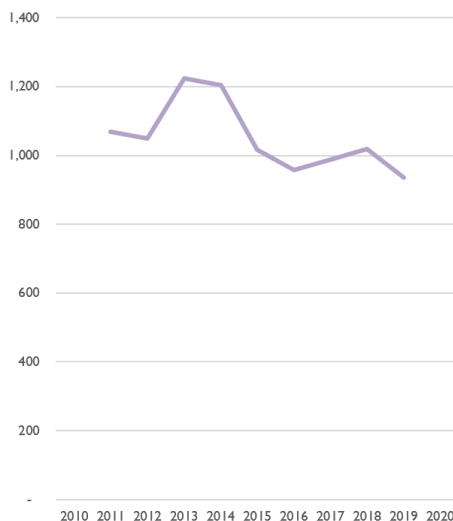
Attendance and giving are both in decline in the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers going down by about 6% per annum. As of April 2021, the Deanery has 6.2 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including 1.5 vacancies), one self-supporting clergy post and one stipendiary curate.

Area Dean: Chris Lavender

Lay Chair: Diane Enfield



Attendance, Maidstone Deanery



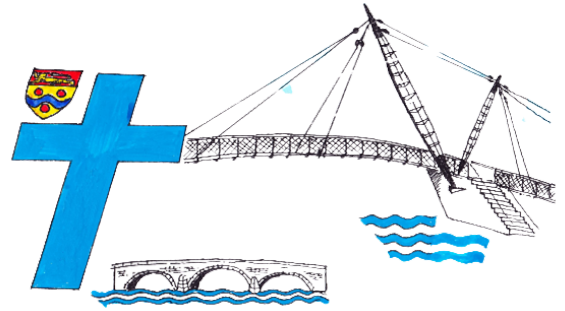
Total Planned Giving, Maidstone Deanery





Maidstone Deanery: Plan

Shaping our life for a flourishing future



The Deanery has so far engaged with this consultation process by the collating of initial thoughts from each parish that were developed into our submission to the Diocese at the beginning of February. A working group, consisting of the M&M committee, additional incumbents and church wardens of parishes in vacancy was formed to develop our thinking. This has involved meetings with Archdeacon Andrew and Bishop Rose and discussion at Deanery Synod, feeding into this second submission. Many suggestions have been made and it seems appropriate that anything of a substantial nature requires further discussion over a much longer period of time.

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Our parishes

Maidstone Deanery is blessed with a wide variety of church traditions that serve our communities and it is worth noting the activity that is already taking place across each of those churches in their particular contexts as follows:

All Saints Loose

A very active conservative evangelical church on the southern edge of town that has grown significantly in recent years. Their strategic vision for growth is evident and they are now at the stage of considering church planting. Such developments should be encouraged, not least in view of the level of residential development taking place in Maidstone.

All Saints Maidstone with St Philip's & St Stephen's

'Middle of the road' in terms of churchmanship and theology, covers a large area across the town centre that is also on the high level of deprivation index, which means that it could well benefit from the expansion of the Ignite Project into the parish. Members at St Phillips continue to benefit from taking part in the diocesan led 'Missional Learning Community'. The fruit of this has been a spiritual growth that has led to changing perspectives with regard to the future of the parish, which is also currently in interregnum. Their most significant challenge is the building that is All Saints Church which is seen as the 'civic church', hosts a number of town-wide services and events, is Grade 1 listed, and has major fabric issues – the scale of this project is of a nature that requires creative thinking around issues of support.

St Andrew's

A 'middle of the road' church on the west side of town, which sits between St Michael's





(slightly closer to the town centre) and St Margaret's (parish church of Barming, in Rochester Diocese). It is currently struggling with resourcing both financially and with availability of church officers. Regular meetings are taking place to consider future strategies of mission. The priest is shared with St Nicholas (St A 0.3, St N 0.7) and consideration needs to be given to how any future direction may affect clergy staffing levels on a deanery basis.

St Faith's

An open evangelical church with a community focus, which has embarked on a major project involving their existing building being sold and a new bespoke church and community centre being built on the Ringlestone Estate, on the north side of town that has also had significant residential development recently. Plans have been drawn up and financing is gradually coming into place. This a project that could be very much part of the deanery picture as things develop further.

St Luke's

A charismatic evangelical town centre church that, whilst having experienced significant decline in recent years, is redeveloping itself under new leadership and a new vision for growth. The fruits of this are already being seen. The church has always had a heart for mission, but the high level of parish share and poor state of building maintenance has been costly to its mission. However, they are gearing up to a new future with plans to rebuild and renew the physical buildings and a growing priority for reaching children and young families. St. Luke's is keen to work with other churches, as well as the possibility of planting, for the sake of town wide mission.

St Martin's

A 'middle way' church in south east Maidstone in one of the most populated and deprived areas of the country. It has a heart for community social action and partners in this with the local council, local landlord and local ecumenical churches. As such it currently benefits from a LinC mission grant and the development of an Ignite Project. Just recently, during the current lockdown, there has been an element of partnering with All Saints/St Phillip's/St Stephen's and this is something that could be pursued, particularly with an expansion to Ignite. Meeting monthly costs, including parish share, is a huge and draining task. The incumbent of St Martin's is also committed to leading the deanery on the hugely important issue of tackling the environmental crisis. St Martin's dreams of having a youth worker and a worship leader.

St Michael and All Angels

A high anglo-catholic church on the west side of town with its long-standing tradition appreciated by many. Under new leadership the church is seeing the fruit of respecting and developing, that tradition; it has been experiencing growth since 2017. This provides





the Deanery with a clear contribution to Christian witness. The ministry team is looking at a variety of new initiatives for engaging with both the unchurched and with its growing congregation, as well as maintaining its work with the schools in the parish.

St Nicholas

A 'middle of the road' church, also on the west side of town, which has undergone significant re-ordering in recent years to develop it into a community church that is at the heart of the suburb in which it sits. Working alongside schools and community groups, including the borough council, has seen the church gain respect in the community as it has developed into a place of welcome and inclusion. The development of lay leadership has also been a priority.

St Paul's

A 'middle of the road' church which close to the town centre, and not far from St Luke's - which may mean that there could be the development of future partnerships in that direction. It should be noted that they are in a financially stable position. For now, they are in interregnum and are starting the process of seeking a 0.5 priest. This presents them with a sense of uncertainty for now - but as things progress, with deanery support, and a willingness be to open to new possibilities, their desire for mission in their community has great potential.

Maidstone Deanery has seen various changes in the last twelve months around the role of the Area Dean and how that has impacted St Paul's. We have said goodbye to Andrew Sewell who was their incumbent and the Area Dean. We also said goodbye to Ian Parrish as the incumbent at All Saints/St Philip's/St Stephen's, and then we have welcomed a new incumbent to St Luke's.

Christ Church

On the Parkwood estate, this is legally a conventional district of St Martin's, but last year formed a partnership with St Peter's Boughton Monchelsea. This means that in practical terms it works under North Downs Deanery. This has saved a 0.5 stipend in Maidstone Deanery.

Finance

As a deanery it should be noted that the overall Parish Share for 2020 was almost fully paid, bar St Andrew's. That is quite an achievement during challenging times. However, the continued ability to pay Parish Share in full is a concern for all of our parishes. The time and energy required to meet Parish Share comes at a price that can impact mission. It is recognised that some parishes contribute above and beyond the cost of their own ministry to enable the Diocese to fund ministry in other places - this, too, is costly in terms of their own local ministry and mission.





Where are we now?

Within the Deanery there are many positive and exciting things happening. There is the significant project that St Faith's has already embarked upon and it is apparent that All Saints Loose has potential to step up and plant out. Alongside the new life being breathed into St Luke's, growth at St Michael and All Angels, community development at St Martin's and St Nicholas, the introduction of Ignite, a general desire to see greater social action as a gospel imperative, changing attitudes and a new spirit at All Saints with St Philip's and St Stephen's, it seems that the Deanery is already on a good footing.

To add into the mix, it needs to be noted that we have good ecumenical relationships on the back of such projects as Waypoint, which saw 23 churches of all denominations signed up to work together in shared mission to our town. This was the product of time spent building good relationships and mutual respect and trust and in turn won the respect of, and partnership with, the local council and business community. It continues in the form of local churches partnering to support their communities and some bigger events, such as Eco Harvest On The Heath, and the Passion Play That Nearly Happened last year!

We work closely with para-church organisations such as CAST/Family Trust, Street Pastors and Winter Shelter which again, have earned respect within the town wide community. Also, the recently developed Anna Chaplaincy to care homes has been inspirational in bringing together, re-focusing and developing a very important ecumenical ministry across the town. The Fremlin Walk Chaplaincy supports retail staff in the town centre. The Deanery Environment Group takes a lead in encouraging our parishes to engage with creation care and respond to the environmental crisis, developing practical steps for achieving this, and keeping us informed about the issues. So we have good models of shared mission on which to build.

In the last year...

- we have reduced by one stipendiary post across the Deanery - 0.5 the Area Dean and 0.5 at Christ Church
- we have reduced our church plant by two building sales (in final stages), St Faith's Church and St. Hilary's House
- one church has developed the vision to plant another congregation in the near future
- one church is about to build a new church and community centre in a new area of housing where there is no other church building
- one church is in dialogue regarding its future ministry and mission
- two churches are sharing online worship and are open to consider shared mission across deprived communities
- other churches have embraced new ministries and new visions, with some looking forward to new leadership





- online worship/meetings/study groups/social events have been available to all churches
- we have engaged in considerable ongoing work in social action to care for the most needy across Maidstone, including a rapid response to critical need during the pandemic

Where are we going?

There are challenges around the All Saints, town centre, building, and the future of St Andrew's. However, these are being considered and it needs to be recognised that such things take time. For now, it seems that to consider a substantial deanery re-structuring, that hasn't been prayerfully thought through, could well jeopardise what are already 'good things' going on. We acknowledge, however, that this process is ongoing, and that, to make our deanery sustainable for an ever more challenging future, we will need to be open to the possibilities of more radical structural changes.

To summarise, Maidstone Deanery is already doing much to further the gospel of Jesus Christ in many different ways in the county town of Kent. There are challenges as much as there are missional opportunities and these will be considered appropriately, and prayerfully, by the Deanery, and individual parishes, over the course of the coming months, and indeed years, in a spirit of unity and generosity.

Areas of mission that we have identified for consideration in future development are:

- ministry with children and young people
- raising up and training for lay ministry
- social action
- the extension of the Ignite project
- the potential for planting and partnerships between some of our churches

We also recognize that this whole consultation process is costly to each of us personally and there is a need to care for each other pastorally.

Central services

In response to questions about the best way to deliver central services across the Diocese, some discussion has taken place. Among our parishes we have a range of experience in terms of take-up and effectiveness of central services. Some have found great benefit in accessing support with social action projects, buildings issues, sale of buildings, safeguarding, stewardship campaigns and financial advice. Accompaniment and leading of both parish and deanery vision days has been greatly appreciated, as has care and support through the selection and training for ordination process. The Missional Learning Community project is leading to the inspiration and flourishing of lay people at All Saints with St Philip's and St Stephen's. All of this is very highly valued. On the other hand, some parishes have not needed or chosen to access central services very much at all.





In the future we may be looking for support in developing children's and youth ministry. The Deanery does benefit from having a children, youth and families minister who sits on the Diocesan board.

We fully recognise that the Church of England, and Canterbury Diocese, face significant challenges and that these have been highlighted by the current pandemic, however, as a deanery, we seek to explore various avenues that respect our different traditions, theologies and contexts whilst developing mission to Maidstone as a whole. We believe that, whilst we have no desire to rush into any significant structural changes that could impact all of the above good work, we have come to a greater appreciation, and understanding, of individual contexts

within the deanery that will enable a more supportive working platform for mission across the town. We are committed to continuing the conversation.

Maidstone Deanery Planning Group

Rev Joyce Addison, Brian Beswick, Elizabeth Bryson, Fr Neil Bryson, Rev Gareth Dickinson, Diane Enfield, Susan Ghinn, Tim Gosden, Rev Arthur Houston, Denise Joy, Rev Chris Lavender, Anthea Mitchel, Elizabeth Mullins, Robert Phil, Rev Steve Price, Sue Shaw.



Appendices

1. All Saints Maidstone with St Philip's and St Stephen's
2. St Faith's
3. St Luke's
4. St Martin's
5. St Michael and All Angels
6. St Nichols and St Andrew's
7. St Paul's





Maidstone Deanery: Appendix 1

Response from All Saints Maidstone with St Phillip's and St Stephen's

1. EMBRACE CHANGE: God is calling us and His churches to change, offering hope for a brighter, more exciting future.

We need to be bold, ready to work together towards new beginnings and exciting opportunities so that we shall all grow closer to God. Accepting change allows us to deal with change more easily. We need to explore new ways of open-minded thinking, new structures, new technologies, new ways of working including churches coming together in new ways. We have been blessed as congregations to share so many gifts together; working and planning change to share in the community and beyond must be our intent in order to sustain our church presence in Maidstone TOGETHER...

...finding ways to share in new conversations to make our vision a reality. Together.

2. DEVELOP / OUTREACH: God is sending us out into the World

We need to reimagine a different church that is part of the community and beyond. This will mean identifying and creating a new, clear vision for how we can reach all God's people, setting out and exploring a new path together leading to a new direction.

We need to challenge ourselves to share and support the resources available to us (e.g. facilities usage/ usability and school chaplaincy): not merely in terms of buildings but what all that we can all offer spiritually as individual disciples of Christ.

3. DREAM OUT LOUD: be open with one another in sharing our visions and our aspirations, being intentional in our mission

We need to share through a series of conversations (both within church and beyond) why we are changing, exploring what is available to us and considering what we could do better.

Everyone has a role to play in preparing for change, sharing our individual gifts and focusing on our spiritual growth. We need to strengthen each other so that ready to hear God calling us and our churches for the future that God wants us all to experience. We need to find ways to pray together for the Hope and Joy awaiting us as we pursue a new direction in our mission.

We have been blessed as congregations to share so many gifts together; working and planning change to share in the community and beyond must be our intent in order to sustain our church presence in Maidstone TOGETHER...





Maidstone Deanery: Appendix 2

Response from St Faith's

St Faith's has been through a number of years of reflection and decisions regarding its ministry and future outreach initiatives etc. We feel we are coming to the end of this phase now and have had a rich learning experience along the way.

Going back 8 years the parish was aware of the need to focus its energy and resources on the Springfield and Ringlestone areas of the parish. This was the area that most people live in and also an area designated for major housing developments. After an exhaustive church and community process of consultation it was decided to demolish the current church hall and build a community centre in Ringlestone but also to maintain the current church in the town centre. A development charity was formed to involve the community and the church together and planning permission was achieved. Frustratingly, funding for the new centre was proving difficult, the planning permission lapsed and the scheme had to be abandoned, which looking back on we can see was part of God's plan, as the principle was right, it was an important step along the way but our vision was not big enough and the timing for the point we have now arrived at was not clear back then.

The parish continued to pray and seek the Lord for the right way forward. There was a major community survey that identified St. Faith's hall site as one of the best options for a local community centre. Other sites were considered but all failed to develop the right environment needed. It was an exhausting and in many ways frustrating process but through it we built strong links with Maidstone Borough Council and the Ringlestone Residents Association. Through this process, which also involved intense church consultations, we concluded that we ought to have just one building and to make it possible we should sell everything else we owned.

In February 2019 we commissioned an architect to draw up expanded plans for a church and community centre on an enlarged site. We received planning approval in May 2020 and are now well advanced with our plans to commence building St Faith's Centre in April 2021.

We have had to face up to many challenges along the way such as what buildings do we need and where should they be to best reach our community. Considering that the parish will soon have doubled in size due to intensive new housing schemes the timing of this development is perfect and will be in the centre of the existing and new communities. Our mission focus is the building of relationships with our local community. This is already bearing fruit with an increase in attendance at events we have already held. Sharing the good news of Jesus is most effectively done through friendships and a culture of warmth and welcome.





We are excited that soon we will hopefully be building St Faith's Centre and then the joy of seeing what new opportunities will unfold as we continue to build the Kingdom of God. It would be great if the Deanery could also own this new project and look at ways to partner with us to achieve more. We feel that what is now happening, although it has taken a number of years and some very difficult decisions, is very much the right approach in today's culture. If there are things the wider church can learn from this then that would be an extra benefit. Unfortunately, it does sometimes feel that as individual parishes we are left to paddle our own canoes and we would all benefit from more honest sharing and real partnership working across the Deanery and Diocese.

So to distill some lessons from our particular journey which may be of benefit for the Deanery to prayerfully consider and build into a more robust deanery mission plan:

- What is important to us?
- Who is important to us?
- What could realistically be achieved with the resources we have?
- Is God stretching our vision of what we think can be done?
- What would be left if we didn't do anything?

Sharing the good news of Jesus is most effectively done through friendships and a culture of warmth and welcome. Therefore:

- Have we spent time discerning the vision for how we do this not just as individual churches but also collectively?
- Are we taking the good news to people rather than expecting them to come to us?
- Are we making the best use of the assets we have and how are we sharing our resources of knowledge, buildings and people?
- We value the monthly Deanery prayer bulletins, focusing on praying for individual churches but we could all benefit from more honest sharing and real partnership working, such as:
 - Getting involved in each other's projects and events
 - Helping to produce and share resources and training. We have all had to step up to doing church digitally and differently over the last year, so how can we ensure that we share that learning and support each other?
- The deanery Mission and Ministry Group is currently used as a forum to share information and encourage each other in our individual projects but it would be good to collectively seek God's guidance for how we can develop a joint plan and be constructively challenging to each other about how we are fulfilling our calling to Mission such as...
 - Being more proactive and inquisitive in helping develop a local mission strategy alongside a Deanery Mission Plan.





- Being able to offer extra mission expertise to ensure effective mission in a changing culture.
- Being able to offer advice on funding, structural and legal issues and encourage Diocesan interrogation. Parishes sadly often don't feel they are part of a much larger and friendly organisation, hence the feeling of aloneness and a trend towards individualism.
- Enlarging our vision of what God can do in Maidstone.

To pick up this last point, St Faith's PCC invites the Deanery to partner with us in the challenge that in 5 years' time, when St Faith's Centre is built and fully used, we would together rejoice that our regular worshipping community has trebled to at least 100 people of all ages 0-100.





Maidstone Deanery: Appendix 3

Response from St Luke's

Suggested principles for a 'Flourishing Future':

- To have a kingdom mindset; to listen to and follow the Holy Spirit's leading and guidance
- To be in line with the national C of E initiative to be simpler, humbler, bolder
- Pruning is essential if we are to bear fruit that will last. Any cutting back is merely temporary, so that we can advance the Gospel in the future, with even greater effect
- To fulfil the diocesan vision Changed Lives → Changing Lives we need to change our culture to a more missionally engaged way of being
- Relationship is key; learning to listen and trust others.

Maidstone has several examples of churches working successfully across parishes and denominations building on the Maidstone covenant and networking to establish good relationship amongst leaders: Touch Maidstone website; Winter Shelter; Fremlin Walk Chaplaincy; Waypoint

- Resourcing: restructure is a long term strategy and needs to be fully resourced; in terms of finance, equipping a team with the right skills, and training for laity and clergy to work and lead in new ways. A small, multi-disciplinary staff team (children and families, youth worker, operations and administration, worship, leader in training) working across parish/deanery boundaries could be fruitful (many of those within a church are unaware of parish boundaries, and this is certainly true of those outside the church!)

Proposed next steps:

- Develop a mission strategy to engage with primary aged children in North East Maidstone; consider working with Family Trust, Salvation Army, Maidstone Family church, Church Army, alongside Anglican parish churches and primary schools: Northborough, St Paul's, Sandling, Eastborough and St John's. Apply for grant funding for a full time children's and families' pastor or outreach worker.
- Implement a digital strategy for the Maidstone Anglican churches, reaching the wider community; improving quality and effectiveness by building confidence through training and resourcing. St Luke's would be happy to develop an online presence and work with others to offer different styles of services. Apply for grant funding for a full time digital and social media missionary.
- St Luke's holds the name and building of St Luke's lightly to support the emergence of new structures and facilitate the growth of God's Kingdom in north east Maidstone.
- Structural Reform - We could learn a great deal from other Diocese who are facing similar resourcing of ministry and mission challenges. We would suggest a conversation with Truro Diocese who have secured strategic development funding for





their Transforming Mission initiative that is based around structural reform bringing together partnerships of rural and town parishes (<https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/tm/>).

- Reduce the overheads of buildings, structure and governance by reducing the number of Anglican parish churches serving Maidstone from 9 to 4, starting afresh with new names; currently 9 churches are attended by approx. 556 people (less than 0.5% of the population of Maidstone).
- Re-invest savings in resource across the churches to connect with those outside the church (currently 98% of population); this may involve a review of service formats, times and days of services, improvement in communication and coordination etc.
- St Luke's is keen to partner with other churches in order to advance the gospel; enabling pooling of resources and talent while respecting different theology and traditions. Consider challenges of co-existing in same space, or sharing online initiatives such as Alpha online.
- St Luke's is keen to be part of a training and resourcing church hub to equip and bless the wider church as we share learning and experience and each play to our strengths, while supporting and maintaining our different flavours and traditions.
- St Luke's would be interested to investigate opportunities to reach the community, alongside others, such as the prison, chaplaincy to the shops and businesses, support for the vulnerable following the COVID crisis.
- Is there any learning from the Ignite project in Shepway, which could be extended more widely?
- Anna chaplaincy; is this a model we could replicate? With diocesan support St Michael and All Angels have enabled those of other traditions to fulfil their calling and ministry.





Maidstone Deanery: Appendix 4

Response from St Martin's

Current situation

- The pandemic has changed our communal life at every level - church building closed for worship, baptisms, weddings, funerals only under strict conditions, hall lettings almost all suspended, significant loss of income.
- Both Sunday and midweek services and Ignite events have been successfully transferred online, via Zoom and with those who are able to access it there is a strong bond and family feeling, which has provided crucial support to many members.
- Finance has become even more of a challenge and we meet our parish share only by constant and exhausting fundraising and the support of a generous mission grant. All of our reserve funding has now been used.
- The pandemic has also afforded new missional opportunities:
 - Working even more closely with churches of other denominations in our area to help the local primary schools with a range of provisions from serving meals to assisting schools/children with remote learning.
 - partnering with Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council and Golding Homes to support those in need through shopping and prescription runs.
 - supporting our 2 residential homes by caring for the staff and through the Anna Chaplaincy ministry we are ministering to the residents.
 - providing activity packs to 2 pre-schools in our area during the holidays
 - new weekly mission initiative currently being launched – Grab and Go Ready Meals
 - Whilst our church building is closed, our front lawn is open to creating new ways to connect with our neighbours: Harvest for the Estate, prayer flags, yellow heart/stones in times of grief, Christmas/Lent tableaux, lit signs, posters, a prayer box, etc. What was a space that divided church from community, has now developed into a place where we meet one another and even ‘worship’ together. This development had already begun but has been accelerated by the pandemic.

Proposed steps for a flourishing future

In our community

- Whilst some of the above have come about as a result of the pandemic, they all have strong missional benefits and we look to continue these in some form beyond the pandemic, especially the close working partnerships with other churches, the councils, Golding Homes etc.
- We also want to continue with projects that were in progress prior to COVID-19, specifically Ignite. It takes time to build trust and relationships in this area and we feel we cannot now abandon what has been achieved. We have a strong and potentially sustainable team to run events, but would need funding to support this and to





facilitate a regular presence in the community. The Ignite evenings and events are only one end result of the work that happens "behind the scenes" – building relationships, supporting and befriending vulnerable members of the community.

- The upcoming regeneration of Shepway is another exciting opportunity for us to embed ourselves further in this community. In addition, with the sale of one of our buildings (St. Hilary's) and current doctoral research on climate change/environment taking place amongst the congregation, we are starting to plan the re-ordering of the church building in Shepway, with the aim of making it accessible for a range of uses to benefit the community and facilitate mission.

Across the Deanery

- St Martin's is keen to be part of a process of exploring the potential of partnerships and sharing of resources to best facilitate effective mission to our town. We feel that a strong basis has been built through initiatives such as Waypoint, which show the effectiveness of working across parish and denominational boundaries. Unity has been achieved by coming together to meet a central need. Projects such as Winter Shelter, Street Pastors, Fremlin Walk Chaplaincy, Anna Chaplaincy and the Princess Project are great models – what other community needs can we meet with this kind of unified practical action?
- St Martin's is committed to tackling today's environmental/climate change crisis and we feel that action on this is another issue which can unify our churches. We would like to strengthen and build on the work already begun via the Deanery Environment Group.
- Our primary objective in the use of our buildings has always been meeting the needs of the community – to this end we have already made some tough decisions, selling St Hilary's House, and re-purposing the vicarage for use as a home for Syrian refugees. We are committed to continued consideration of the best use of our buildings to serve our community and the needs of the wider deanery going forward. This could mean reducing our buildings still further, it could take the form of shared occupation of the church building by other groups, for community projects and for worship – different traditions using the building at different times.
- We believe that for a sustainable future, the churches of our deanery will need to be willing to join together to share buildings, resources and financial and ministerial obligations.

**For us to flourish, let us first help our neighbourhoods to flourish
and in so doing be a blessing to all.**





Maidstone Deanery: Appendix 5

Response from St Michael and All Angels

The Deanery expresses mission across the Deanery with Christians in other denominations: the Street Pastors, the Winter Shelter giving care to the homeless, the Food Bank, concern for the environment encouraged by Rev Joyce at St Martin's and the Care Home ministry coordinated by Anna Chaplain Elizabeth Bryson from St Michael & All Angels. A particular kind of achievement or expertise in one parish can be of benefit to the deanery as a whole.

Parishes could make their own Mission Action Plans to co-ordinate with the Deanery's aims and objectives. Or, indeed, might the process be reversed, and parishes be encouraged to submit their own Mission Action Plans so that the Deanery could then take account of them and draw them together?

How about some inter deanery activity with the occasional shared service in a different Church each time? It would be fun to welcome people to our Church - perhaps an afternoon service, tour of the Church followed by Coffee and Cakes? It could lead eventually to a Deanery Festival. It might seem impossible to come up with a sensible time but PM 5th Sunday of the month would be a good starting point. October St Michael's?

It is important that the Maidstone Deanery continues to have Churches that offer the wide 'umbrella' of styles of worship which is the Church of England. People come to St Michael & All Angels from our Parish and also people who live in other parts of Maidstone choose to attend our Church because they like the Anglo-Catholic style of worship. This wide 'umbrella' from Anglo-Catholic to Conservative Evangelical with others in between must continue to offer the Anglicans of Maidstone the worship and type of Church where they meet with Jesus and grow in faith.

We do not have any enthusiasm for replacing the parishes and their buildings with a deanery and one building. This would dissipate the sense of belonging. The parish funded the erection of the church and pays for its upkeep as an investment in the local mission, whose congregation know the context. Every time a church is shut down and sold off, it is seen by secularists and other non-Christians as a defeat for Christianity; land claimed for Christ and the buildings thereon ceded back to other forces. Moreover, the selling of a church by outsiders (non-parishioners) calls into question what the destination of the proceeds would be; if they are pocketed by the diocese or the Church Commissioners, for example, even were it legal is sharp practice, and thus of questionable morality, when they haven't funded its erection or maintenance. We have a good number of the congregation who walk to church; think of the mission opportunities lost because Maidstonians live too far from some central church building.





Can buildings be used better (or less!) and how can we best use the resources God has given us in our people?

Can buildings be used better? Much depends on local circumstances and it will take imagination, but we are sure that in Maidstone the answer is yes. There is a contribution we can make to local culture and "more abundant life" as well as mission in its more restricted sense. The RCs and URC do some exemplary work in keeping places of prayer and meeting open in the town centre. Churches on the periphery may find new ways of doing local outreach if, as seems likely, more people continue to work from home rather than commuting.

Our Church building is important and necessary for our worship. The congregation were delighted in June when we could live-stream Mass from the Church building instead of from the Vicarage dining room. We feel strongly that our building, even though it leaks, is a missionary asset and not a liability. We have a potentially winning combination of a beautiful and characterful building and first-rate technology - a support and focus for our worshipping community and also a means of outreach that should be increasingly useful in the future.

We hope to have more days when the church is open and someone is there to meet and greet, so our ministry to our neighbourhood will grow. We had visitors socially distanced on Heritage Open Day 2020, suggesting that if we open our doors more, more people will come through them. They won't all be seeking the Lord, but there is always the possibility that He might turn out to be seeking them. When we opened for prayer at the end of the lockdown, we had one visitor who really needed help and came in because the door was open.

Our Church building should be a good music venue. We hope to have more Choral Evensongs and the Church would be a good Concert venue. We also have an organ which is a lovely instrument and historically important giving the real possibility of benefiting the life of the locality by our music and increasing community connectedness. Some visitors would pick up a sense of the beauty of holiness and want to investigate. We have the educational opportunity offered by our choir and by Gareth's generous music tuition; giving a way of involving families but it underlines the fact that the Church has always been involved in providing education, not just for its own benefit but for the benefit of society at large.

Use of buildings is key but they don't need to be less they need to be used in a way that encourages parishes to thrive with different activities or uses of the buildings. Why should our Church only be used for worship on Sundays and Thursdays? What else can go on in areas of the Church, not necessarily the whole building? Schools and Nurseries can be encouraged to use the buildings and develop links in other ways.





Bellringers used to ring at our Church before Covid. New people came along to Church after hearing the bells – they are missional, calling people to worship. The bells outreach to those not associated with the church which can lead to future members. Some bell ringers join in our online streamed service.

Are we making the best of our relationships with schools, other denominations or local agencies?

Before Covid we went into St Michael's Schools to lead Assemblies and the School came to Services in Church 4 times in the year. The Junior School also came on Remembrance Day and the Junior School had Class visits and a short Service in September. Fr Neil was involved at St Augustine's Academy and Elizabeth led 3 Services a year in Church for the Wendy House Nursery. Fr Neil and Heidi Elvers are on the Governors of St Michael's Schools.

Care Home ministry involves other denominations. Before Covid Fr Neil and Elizabeth attended Ministers' Breakfasts and an ecumenical lunch once a month. Our Church supported the Waypoint Project and were planning to help at the Easter Play 2020.

What is the local financial position and how can it be improved? Where finance, even shared across parishes or benefices, cannot cover the full and associated costs of stipendiary clergy ministry, what other models of ministry will enable our mission to happen?

We have paid our Parish Share in full. We have income from the Wendy House Nursery that meets in our Parish Hall as well as congregation members contribute planned and occasional giving. We wonder if the Parish Share could be reduced so we have more money available for parish mission activities e.g. Messy Church. Are there financial savings that could be made at the Diocesan level? Are, for instance, all the posts necessary (and we note that two new posts have been created in this last year)?

What sparks of hope can be fostered and encouraged? How can we face new challenges, such as digital inclusion in the Church? How can we enable your locally discerned vision for your Deanery, as part of our wider Church, to flourish?

Live-streaming Mass is missional - new people are joining us online and in the Church building. People can 'visit' online and join us in worship before coming into the Church building. People unable to attend Mass in the Church building because they are isolating, shielding or too infirm to attend Church can join us via the internet.

The residents at Abbeyrose Care Home join us at Mass on Thursdays and Sundays via You-Tube and a resident at The Poplars Care Centre. The twice-weekly mailing about the Services is currently sent to 64 subscribers.





Rather than changing our mission, maybe it needs to be adapted to meet the needs of the Parish. Why do we need to only enable change? Look at what is working and use this as a basis for making amendments. Rather than out with the old and in with the new, how about look at the old to inform the new?! In a normal situation (no Covid), many aspects of the Church could get more people involved as has happened in the past including Coffee after Mass, Lunches, Fairs and other organised events which are a great social element which helps hold the community together and bring in other parishioners.





Maidstone Deanery: Appendix 6

Response from St Nicholas and St Andrew's

St Nicholas has had a rolling programme of change over the last few years with the following:

The building

Re-ordering has taken place that has seen replacement of pews with chairs, a new heating system, new LED lighting system, upgraded technology including TV screens, new kitchen and toilet facilities, new decorative wall panels and altar frontals. All of these provide a contemporary, fresh, clean, and welcoming environment that is now used as community space, and hire facilities, as well as for worship.

The halls

A new management structure was tasked to maximise the percentage use of the halls, to simplify the charging structure and to ensure efficient credit control.

The worship

A simplified worship pattern has been developed over the years that has enabled a greater breadth of worship styles, less focus on 'Sunday mornings' and development of lay leaders. Covid-19 has proved a significant challenge to worship but the development of online services has propelled us into new ways of thinking and working – it has been interesting to note how lay leaders have grown in confidence in leading and preaching during this period.

The families & schools ministry

The children's & family's worker was reauthorized as Children & Families Minister and then, just recently, as Children's, Families and Schools Minister. She now has all responsibility for developing all work in these areas and is the first point of contact for schools. COVID has prompted us to re-think our strategy with schools along the lines of a 'chaplancy' model.

The community

The unwritten vision to develop St Nicholas as a 'community' church has largely been realised and Covid-19 only seems to have enhanced this through the greater use of social media and the service provided to the community through the provision of assistance to the shielding and vulnerable and the provision of grant funding, via Maidstone Borough Council, to those in need.





Recommendations for ongoing development

- Pro-active community engagement
- Further development of lay ministry
- Evolving model of engagement with schools
- Continued use of social media channels
- Sharing of expertise with others

St Andrew's Church

St Andrew's is currently reviewing its future model for mission in view of various resourcing challenges. It is too early to say what impact this will have in terms of itself and the wider picture of the Deanery suffice to say that long hard questions are being asked as to what the way forward will look like.

Very much on the positive side is the fact that funds were raised in 2019 that has provided for a three-year outreach project into the local primary school, utilising the Schools Minister at St Nicholas Church. This is at an early stage and has been significantly hit by Covid-19, nevertheless the importance of this work should be a major missional thrust for the parish.

Summary

- The importance of schools work and engaging in more holistic ways i.e. Chaplaincy model
- The importance of engaging with the community through practical, and spiritual, activity
- The importance of communicating in many ways, particularly via social media
- The importance of developing lay ministry and sharing of ideas





Maidstone Deanery: Appendix 7

Response from St Paul's

Use local knowledge and the information we hold for each deanery to look prayerfully and honestly at how the Deanery is expressing its mission and develop the local plan to enable the Deanery to flourish.

St Paul's believes the Deanery plan has not been sufficiently well communicated to us. Our own vision statement "Becoming Christian Community – serving the wider community." has guided our mission in recent years and as such has allowed and encouraged our congregation to such projects as Waypoint, Winter Shelter and Harvest on the Heath.

Can buildings be used better (or less!) and how can we best use the resources God has given us in our people?

St. Paul's is one of the most modern, best equipped and well-maintained churches in the Deanery. It has a range of meeting rooms of different sizes all interconnected within the church complex, which are consequently well used in normal times by a wide range of organisations. St Paul's therefore fulfils a substantial community role for north Maidstone in addition to its central purpose as a place of worship.

There is a suggestion to open a Christian café or tearooms; perhaps in one of the local church buildings. It could be manned by Christian volunteers who serve homemade snacks such as cakes and soups. There would be a separate prayer room with comfortable chairs and Christian books available for people to read there or take home. In addition if they wanted someone to pray with them, a member of the Deanery would be available to do so.

Are we making the best of our relationships with schools, other denominations or local agencies?

We should be doing much more with schools than we are currently. The idea of a Children, Families and Schools minister (in a chaplaincy role) is imaginative and forward thinking. The additional financial costs if we are more 'together' as a cohesive and missional deanery would be relatively small as there would be economies of scale if we had 2 or 3 of these people to cover the whole deanery.

What is the local financial position and how can it be improved? Where finance, even shared across parishes or benefices, cannot cover the full and associated costs of stipendiary clergy ministry, what other models of ministry will enable our mission to happen?

While we cannot comment on the financial position of the deanery as a whole, St





Paul's has always paid its parish share in full and as such can afford a half time stipendiary priest in charge. Our finances however rely heavily upon the hiring out of the halls and that in turn depends upon our relationships with our hall hirers. These have developed over the years so that the sense of "family" is growing and sometimes spills over so that they support outreach activities; so far this has not progressed into worship in church but is an area to cultivate.

What sparks of hope can be fostered and encouraged? How can we face new challenges, such as digital inclusion in the Church?

The success of Zoom and YouTube during the pandemic could be utilised going forward to allow those who cannot physically attend church to participate. It also could be used to relay a sermon from/to another local parish in real time. Digital technology allows sharing of the best to a wider community so encourage a focused approach with those with appropriate talent and skills reaching greater numbers, leaving others free to undertake other projects. We also have to be very intentional in developing strong (free) lay teams and focal ministers. With adequate training and resources, this would be a very cost effective way to ensure stability and succession were baked into ministry teams, regardless of the ebb and flow of stipendiary (or non-stipendiary) incumbents.

How can we enable your locally discerned vision for your Deanery, as part of our wider Church, to flourish?

Waypoint was a tremendous project that brought members of church communities together and provided visibility in Maidstone but seems to have lost traction. Closer deanery and inter denomination working and the sharing of successful and failed project data would allow for further development and 'lessons learned'.

Does Group Ministry look today as it was envisaged when it commenced or are churches still in their own silos? This needs a full review. Would a team ministry on a Minster model provide greater impact using fewer stipendiary clergy but achieve greater impact?





North Downs Deanery: Snapshot

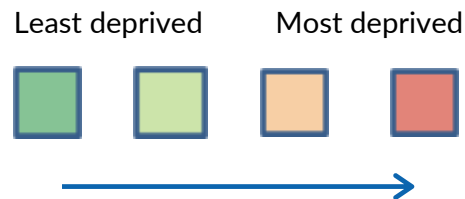
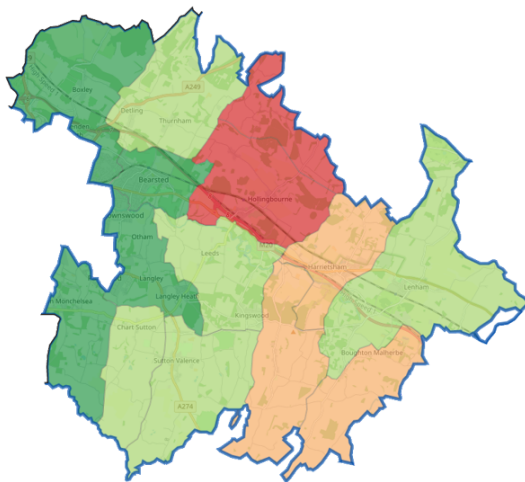
The North Downs Deanery has 12 parishes serving a population of 36,617 people, 1.6% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is largely in the middle two categories, with a more severely deprived area in the Hollingbourne region and more affluent areas to the West.



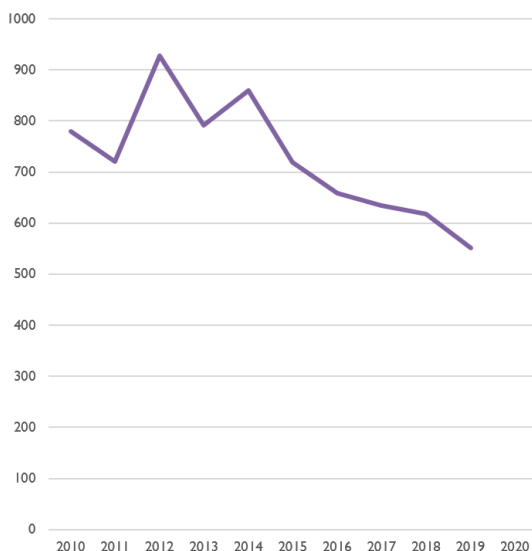
Attendance and giving are both in decline in the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers down by 15% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has six full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including one vacancy), one self-supporting clergy post and one stipendiary curate.

Area Dean: John Corbyn

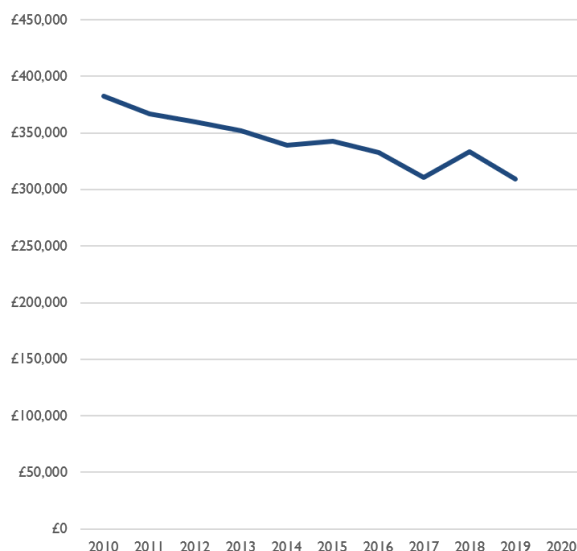
Lay Chair: Rhian Banham



Attendance, North Downs



Total Planned Giving
 (Real terms, index to 2019)





North Downs Deanery: Plan

Those in the Mission Action Plan Team

Lay	Clergy
Rhian Banham (Lay Chair)	Jonathan Arnold (diocesan partner)
Graham Bibby (mission plan lead)	John Corbyn (Area Dean)
Mike Cuerden	Phil Goodey
Jon Holland	John Huggins
Helen Judges	Mark Pavey
Gordon Mackley	Anne Price
Helen Parker	
Peter Roberts	
Jackie Saunders	

1. Context of the Deanery

We are located to the south and East of Maidstone, on the western side of the Canterbury Diocese. Our churches are broadly of a rural or semi-urban nature. The styles of worship vary between traditional, choral, BCP, modern catholic, charismatic and open Evangelical. Taize, Celtic, and family services can be found in some. There are several Messy Churches and three or four Fresh Expression of Church (although only one of these is 'Fresh' in the sense of being a recent initiative), and 1 LEP. There are good relationships with the other denominations in the area, including, Methodist, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and new churches denominations. Most churches buildings (pre-Covid) ran one, or in some cases, two services each Sunday, although some buildings had services only twice a month.

Housing in the Deanery has been and still is expanding in Otham, with many new estates now in Harrietsham, being built in Lenham, underway in Langley and 80% complete in Boughton Monchelsea. There are controversial plans for a new village in Lenham Heath. All of this is currently covered with 5.5 paid/stipended staff and with one position currently interregnum. Geographically there are three regions in the Deanery: the North Downs Team (John Corbyn, Rector) and two other benefices, one of which also has a conventional district (Parkwood) outside the Deanery. Two thirds of our church buildings are listed, mainly Grade 1.

2. Prayer

Lead people: Phil Goodey, and representatives of each parish

In addition to existing prayer within our churches, a key element in developing the Deanery Action Plan will be prayer. To that end we have created a zoom prayer room that is available to





anyone who would like to use it. At least once a week there will be a facilitated zoom prayer time, where there will be an hour of prayer for the churches and communities within North Downs deanery.

3. Worship

3.1 Shared pulpits

Lead: chapter clergy

We recognise that the spread of clergy (including PTOs) is not geographically even, and will take forward discussions in Chapter the use of visiting clergy in services to serve the Deanery in the best way.

3.2 Sharing human resources

Similarly, we have an uneven spread of other talents, including musicians and those involved in Messy church. The set-up of In/Spire, a band-led service that has been held in Leeds Church, has paved the way for cooperation between geographical groups and we will seek to build on this. There has also been early discussion on the need/desire for a preaching course as well as a course on Biblical exegesis that provides the skill set to be a Bible teacher. We note the proximity of St Augustine's but are also considering something that is local in nature.

3.3 Fresh Expressions

Lead people: Gordon Mackley and John Huggins

Fresh Expressions of Church (FEC) are already playing a significant role in attracting a broader age-range of worshippers than some traditionally-styled services, such as Junction at Boughton Monchelsea, Breakfast Church in Lenham, New Way in Bearsted and In/Spire in Leeds. We will visit each of these FEC to understand how they meet their context and who they attract and especially how many of those attending are new to any form of worship or have returned to communal worship. By talking to their leaders and pioneers, we will produce a guide of how to start such a FEC, and what works well and why. Whilst these FEC generally are generated as 'bottom up' we can encourage and support schemes and we believe that at least two new FEC could be set up across the Deanery in the next 3 years to grow the church's ministry to the unchurched as well as the 'dechurched'. We are open to New Monastic Communities if God leads in this direction.

3.4 Online services

Lead people: Mark Pavey, Phil Goodey and John Huggins

Over this period of Lockdown many of our Church leaders have had to quickly upskill in video editing and presenting on YouTube and social media platforms. Currently there are





four different online services being produced on a weekly basis with varying viewer figures across the three. The impact of one of these has led to an online Alpha course with approximately 70 people attending. The North Downs Deanery is keen to utilise the opportunities this has created and to support and expand the ministries of the various churches across the team. Discussions as to the best way forward are ongoing but there is certainly a desire to work closer together, to share resources and skillsets to provide an online service that can be shared across the deanery.

3.5 Messy Church

Lead people: Graham Bibby and Anne Price

We plan to establish a regular meeting of all those involved in Messy Churches across the Deanery to provide support, teaching and encouragement. The plan would be to promote the current Messy Church best practice in established groups in order to help new groups and in order to help other churches seeking to start a Messy Church for their church.

3.6 Developing and training lay leadership

Lead people: Jon Holland, Margaret Purkis, Peter Roberts

There is wide agreement that better training is needed for lay leadership across the Deanery. Our lay chair is currently collating information on what training has been taken and what needs are perceived and whilst this happens, lay members of the group who have worked towards this document have suggested the following: growing gifts and ministries in the church family; encouragement; evangelism as a normal part of everybody's life; learning to recognise and be obedient to the Holy Spirit's prompting; pastoral care; prayer ministry; making disciples; learning daily habits of prayer and Bible reading; giving.

4. Buildings

Lead people: Rhian Banham, Mike Cuerden, Jackie Saunders

We will complete an in-depth audit of our church buildings. Its purpose is to identify the current physical context of each building. This will include: determining the building's resources and condition; looking at any future works that could make them better fit for purpose; identifying what activities occur in each of our buildings; and considering what additional activities may be considered in the future taking into consideration their location and suitability.

We will undertake a feasibility study as to what type of funded activities may be suitable to the benefit of both the local and church communities. We will also assess the carbon footprint of each of our churches with a view to improve our impact on carbon emissions.





The overall intention is to identify ways to use our buildings to make them sustainable and add value to their church and local communities into the future, although we appreciate that this may not always be possible. With current legislation, we cannot see a straightforward way of reducing building costs through e.g. festival Church approaches.

5. Schools

Lead people: John Corbyn, Graham Bibby, Anne Price and John Huggins

The North Downs Deanery (clergy and lay) already lead collective worship in all the church and state schools within the parishes with varying frequencies. We will undertake a survey to establish what more can be done to provide support Christian teaching for each school, training lay people to help with the increased demands and discovering the involvement of Family Trust in each of the schools. Our intention is to improve the links between schools, homes and church, in particular noting that whilst the churches have been good at reaching out to children through schools, the relationship between parents and the churches needs strengthening for this work to bear fruit in engaging families into the life of God's church.

6. Housing estates

Lead people: Phil Goodey

In order to encourage an outward-facing aspect and an engagement with the new housing estates that have sprung up across the area, Phil Goodey will be organising prayer walks through new estates across the whole deanery. This will encourage members of the local churches to join in praying for their new residents and providing possibilities of conversations and faith sharing among them. In the Len Valley there are developing plans to use the Church buildings as centres for welcome events for those in new estates, acting as a catalysts of community, in which the church congregation is a key component. A social media presence, for example using 'Next Door', will be important in some areas. We will communicate across parish boundaries to communicate with each other what works well to expand our presence into new area.

7. Action in the community

7.1 Social action

Lead people: Mark Pavey

A community café initiative has started in Downswood to listen to the community needs; they will observe and learn and reproduce where appropriate. The mission initiative of reordering the west end of St Mary's Lenham into a community hub has similar potential. We will share other examples of good practice across the Deanery. Current local examples are: Helping Hands, Boughton Monchelsea; the Fish Scheme, Harrietsham; Home Angels, Bearsted. Many of our churches are already involved in social projects like the Maidstone





Food Banks and individuals in some churches are also working with Maidstone-centre initiatives such as Family Trust, Princess Project and Street Pastors. We will ask our mission enabler to help us to best coordinate and leverage these efforts for the Kingdom of God.

7.2 Eco-action

Lead people: John Huggins and Anne Price

Recent research by TEARFund and Youthscape shows clearly that if the church does not start becoming active in caring for the planet that God has given us, young people will not only not join the church but will leave it. Our goal within the Deanery is to raise ecological issues from being a "close-to-irrelevant" side-line in some churches to becoming mainstream in our churches. Our plan is to identify eco-champions in each geographical area across the Deanery by end 2021; encourage the registration of 50% our churches into the eco-church scheme by 2022 (currently there are none) and all by 2024; identify and establish specific eco-projects in each geographical area of the deanery; and to find routes by which all Christians within the Deanery can join with others in their community to exert pressure on those who make decisions that affect our climate and environment.

8. Finance

Finance is included last because we believe how we manage finance should emerge from the mission plan rather than driving it or being a parallel activity.

The spreadsheet in Appendix 1 has been collated from information requested by Mike Cuerden and Peter Roberts from Church Treasurers and provided by the Diocese concerning the 2021 Parish Share. Where information has not been received from Church Treasurers, or is incomplete, assumptions have been made.

The Treasurers were asked to confirm how much of their Parish Share was paid in 2019, including the amount taken from reserves, and then to use their Parish Share for 2020 as a basis for Forecasting their ability to pay their Parish Share in 2022. The year 2021 was not used as, although the totals for the Deanery have been received from the Diocese, the amounts have yet to be allocated to the Parishes. The 2021 Parish Share information was, however, used to confirm the Parish Share for 2020.

It should be noted that the pandemic, which has impacted the finances of all the Parishes since March 2020, makes forecasting extremely difficult. Nevertheless, we have endeavoured to forecast whether each Parish is able to meet their Parish Share in 2022 and collectively whether the North Downs Deanery is self-sufficient by 2022.





There are four parishes that are expected to be unable to pay their Parish Share in full for 2022 which results in a deficit for the Deanery of approximately £90,000. Clearly, this is unsustainable, and we will continue discussions with the Diocese to encourage generosity and to reduce our cost base.





Ospringe Deanery: Snapshot

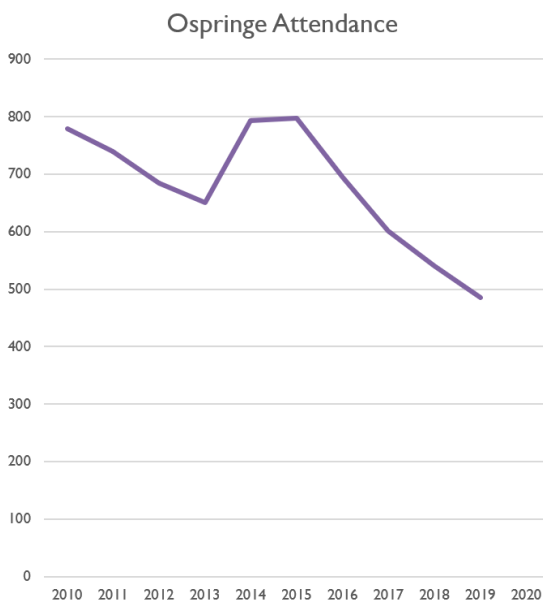
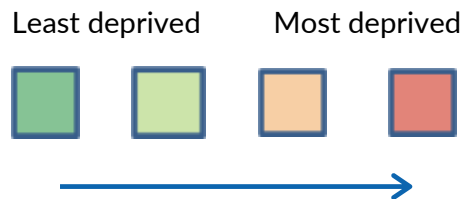
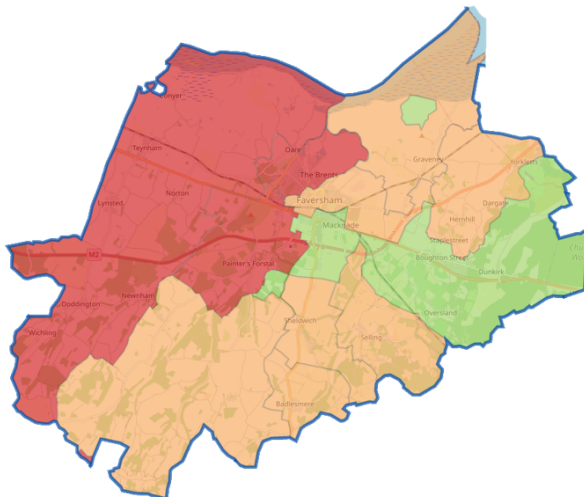
The Ospringe Deanery has 12 parishes serving a population of 35,297 people, 1.5% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. There are large areas of deprived and severely deprived regions across the Deanery, with slightly more affluent areas in the East.



Attendance and giving are both in decline in the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers down by 10% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has 4.4 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including a 0.2 vacancy).

Area Dean: Steve Lillicrap

Lay Chair: Miranda Ford





Ospringe Deanery: Plan

Context

- Whilst celebrating all that has been achieved by the Deanery Churches during the Covid-19 Pandemic, in being Church in very different ways, uncomfortable truths which were being apparent slowly before the pandemic, are now blindingly obvious
- One area is finance. Diocese cannot keep shoring up finances with capital sales etc. Today's Church need to pay for today's Church - we cannot expect bail out from elsewhere
- In considering this we believe that the Church is about the Mission of God uppermost, we are prayerfully seeking Him as we look to where he is leading us in this Mission
- In this context we are looking to see a "Sustainable and Flourishing" Church within the Deanery of Ospringe (and beyond!)
- As a Deanery our continued aim is to be Mission focussed with our purpose being to Support, Encourage and Serve, the local Churches and Parishes
- The Deanery has one town, Faversham, with its 4 Parishes in the one Benefice serving the town; it is then made up of rural parishes in 3 other Benefices (Boughton, Hernhill and Graveney - 3 parishes, 4 Church buildings; Shepherd's Lees - 3 parishes, 4 Church Buildings; Kingsdown, Creekside and High Downs - 2 parishes, 10 Church buildings) with a total of 21 Parish Churches

Our conversation

National Church and Church Commissioners Funds

- We recognise that the CC have a large amount of funds, which more recently they have been using to fund specific Mission projects within Dioceses, rather than propping up the traditional Parish Churches. These monies have been described as not only today's but also investing in Mission from what might be seen as tomorrow's.
- The annual publication of how well the CC investments are doing and the apparent wealth of the Church is unhelpful to the local Church as that is not reflected in the wealth of the local church which more often than not is struggling financially, although we do recognise there are reserves in churches across the country and in our own diocese.
- Church Commissioners helped the Diocese with a Covid-19 Relief Grant of over £600k

Diocese

- Changed Lives->Changing Lives more than a tagline – reality and perhaps fair to say in ways we were not at all expecting.
- Diocese cannot keep shoring up finances with capital sales etc. Today's Church needs to pay for today's Church - we cannot expect bailout from elsewhere.
- The Diocese is not sitting on reserves that could continue to support non-payment of Parish Share.





- It is important for us in our conversations, to appreciate that the Diocese is genuinely looking at the central budget in a forensic way as we have been informed. We as a deanery and benefices recognise, we too need to do the same. We understand that the Diocese is losing over £1m a year in 2020 and predicted for 2021

Deanery and parishes

- Since 2008 we have reduced from 3 full-time Ordained Priests in Faversham to 2 and one of those is half funded through a capital sale of a Vicarage (St Catherine's)
- We have two other full-time ordained clergy, and one 20% part-time stipended priest, with a second part-time (20%) post being advertised.
- Are we already at the minimum in terms of incumbent status ministry? [We see an answer to this question in terms of the role of incumbent ministry going forwards, shared with lay ministry.](#)
- We recognise the importance of lay ministry and when saying this we are also talking about 'upfront' lay ministry. [This is about reasonable training, permission giving, and willingness of clergy to share upfront ministry.](#)
- One Benefice, in the re-opening of Churches after the first Covid-19 lockdown immediately moved to a place of using lay ministry far more actively than previously in terms of Sunday worship.
- Buildings - strategically, the number of buildings do not make sense. However, one of the great things about C of E is presence in each Community and most obvious is the building.
- The sustainability of buildings in each Community has to be questioned.
- Although, after Parish Share the thing that the PCC most obsesses about is the building and that can push Mission out
- A lot of Churches built as Temples - what are we doing; in our buildings we have brought the huge power of God into a "teeny weeny space".
- We entertained the idea of what a Benefice might look like if we had one Church building - with a fresh and flourishing vision? Yet the geographical spread for some potentially makes that difficult.

Overview of Financial position before detailed conversation with benefices

Benefices:

- Prior to 2020 Ospringe Deanery had two years of being able to meet its Parish Share in full.
- Faversham: 50% support Missioner post, and paid off debts. Supporting each other. Ospringe cannot pay PS going forward, Davington struggle, Faversham from legacy, St Catherine's able to support a little. Going in to 2022 St Mary of Charity won't be able to pay full share. 2021 Benefice share will be paid. 2022 churches will struggle.
- Shepherds Lees paying from income with the help of a trust, not needing reserves to





pay for the Part-time stipend post it was thought they would. More discussion needed.

- Boughton, Hernhill, Graveney - Hernhill and Graveney struggling and unlikely to be able to pay Parish Share in full as things stand at present.
Kingsdown, Creekside & High Downs: 2020 saw Parish Share paid in full including for the unfilled Part-Time post. 2021 expects to be able to again. However there is a dependency on some major village fund-raising initiatives in some of the villages, for their church, which were stopped in 2020 from happening because of the pandemic and if prevented again is likely to cause some difficulty.
- In terms of generosity - cannot get a quart out of a pint pot, however there can still be the expectation that monies will somehow arrive from outside the local church in some quarters. Also a belief God will provide if we work with the gifts we have amongst us.
- Jesus said “Go and make Disciples” Is Kingdom building the way we should measure our growth not numbers on the pews which we use for our parish returns?

Buildings:

- Noting above comments about buildings we recognise that closing and selling on a Church building is fraught with difficulty under current regulations. However not impossible.
- Festival Churches: Whilst this route can take pressure off the clergy and lay system in terms of regular worship, financially there is not much saving - Parish Share and Insurance are the two main costs which will remain.
- Mothballing buildings a possibility
- Buildings are also about those outside their walls
- Can our buildings be used better or less to aid flourishing and sustainability
- Practical dream is to connect with our schools even more with use of school buildings but that does not help financially because of the above + potential rental costs.
- Consideration: Christian events in secular buildings as above and others. Secular events in our churches. Creating more of a flourishing sustainability.
- Works on buildings should we only be doing crisis works with our non restricted monies

Mission and worship

- This has changed through the pandemic - virtual services/view of Eucharist
- Consideration: how to capitalise on our learning from Covid-19 and our connectedness outside our usual congregations when we are live again, as the resources are spread thinly. People of faith and non-faith watching online
- Consideration: If Church creates Mission then it will always be churchy, but if mission creates Church it will always be missional. Many people even those of faith don't cross the thresholds of our churches





- Level of interest in spiritual things; 70% believe in a God but what sort of God do they believe in? Our aim should be to bring them to the true God.
- What does Ministry and Mission flourishing look like?

Following on from our January submission above

Following our MMC submission at the end of January, which is fed in to this final paper, we have since met with all our Benefice PCCs and DCCs across Ospringe Deanery. Having explained the detail of our January paper, then commencing with worship and prayer, we sought views relating to the following question:

- **What actions are you going to take in the “self responsibility” of seeking under God a flourishing and sustainable future Benefice, in order to grow the Kingdom.**

In total around 100 people have been consulted in our deanery, ordained and lay.

Benefice meeting notes

Boughton

(Boughton x 2, Graveney and Hernhill)

- Parish Share Shortfall in 2020 continuing in to 2021.
- Hernhill 2020 shortfall £5767
- Graveney 2020 shortfall £3284 – they predicted they would run out of money in 2 years... 2 years ago.
- Currently predicted 2021 shortfall for Benefice £1,2661.78
- Boughton paying 100% of its requested share
- Fair proportion of income coming from non congregation
- They were honest in saying they were flummoxed! Then recognised that a one parish deanery might be the answer, and larger numbers could be very positive.
- Lay Leadership of Services needed encouraging and resourcing to go forward
- Questions over Communion by Extension
- Online should be continued as well, it encouraged new people of a younger age group
- Huge appreciation of Jean’s ministry. Community events the way forward
- A feeling that re-organisation will be needed and the joining of all churches together
- Buildings - mixed feelings, blessing vs burden, - too many - Boughton with 2 buildings with St Barnabas being central and set up to do less traditional services but not the main parish church (which is outside the village). Hernhill - building manageable. Graveney struggling. People who don’t attend in the community and around may become more interested in the building if encouraged
- Meeting together in groups may become more important – Need to be honest with
- Church Family. Use Church or lose it.
- Church needs to become meaningful to incomers, how do they belong





Faversham

(Davington, Faversham, Ospringe, Preston)

- Strong focus on Mission opportunities – didn't want to approach the question by cutting costs but by growing church.
- Mobile initiative
- Meeting YP in their own contexts, not ours. Children, YP and families are key
- Intergenerational has to be developed
- Community events that would also bring in fundraising opportunities
- Legacy income needs developing, essential giving
- Stewardship campaign could be quick fix not long term gain.
- Although affection for churches recognised there are many other ways of worship
- Importance of digital presence continuing, as many digital viewers as live members, numbers doubled since first lockdown of Church.
- Generosity - Prayer should be key....3 of the 4 Churches giving below Diocesan average focus here on giving and encouraging that generosity with mood overall of 'we can do this!'
- Parish Share shortfall 2020 continuing into 2021. Ospringe shortfall 2020 £12275.72
- Dispel the belief that C of E is cash rich
- Online events, auctions etc.
- Faversham have items they could sell to raise funds
- Excitement about Benefice website
- Benefice group important so no individual missed out – co-operation and care key
- Make more of Occasional Offices before and after the event
- Questions of Buildings: too many, or on the other hand opportunities with significant housing growth in Faversham (currently 30,000 under construction). Using buildings for different things more advantageously? Working together as a Benefice/Deanery for events. Community see the alien nature of buildings currently. Concern of how much energy and time taken up in buildings. Sustainability how we look after the buildings we are stuck with, how we look after the earth our ecology. Faversham is registered as an eco church.
- Buildings not modern enough to attract the modern world??
- Lay Ministry increased immediately on first lockdown

Kingsdown and Creekside

(Doddington, Lynsted, Newnham, Norton, Oare, Teynham, Wychling) and High Downs (Eastling, Stalisfield with Otterden, Throwley)

- Already thought outside the box - what had worked in the past should be consolidated on as well as new ideas. Asking people directly to help rather than waiting for the volunteer
- 10 churches difficult but a blessing meet together to bounce ideas as a forum
- Buildings – Friends making them more accessible and attractive to local communities





although some communities have very active Village Halls, whereas one village the Church is the only one that invites them in. Letter to community to invite their help has been successful. Energise the local population.

- Church buildings are there to serve not to be served - do we have too many? Should buildings be rationalised, cost versus saleability and community attachment.
- Eco Church an attraction for the Community, wildlife grounds and special services
- Families - finding ways to include families.
- Lay Ministry becoming even more essential
- Place of Digital in supporting not replacing physical services.
- Communion by Extension an established practice.
- Community – sterling work to raise funds, art exhibitions, concerts/ music, cake festivals, mini market, post office etc.
- Focal ministry was discussed for lay and ordained. Church language can be off putting.
- Being honest with each other as a group of churches as to what we need to do.

Shepherds Lees

(Baddlesmere and Leaveland, Selling and Sheldwich)

- Buildings - questions around the numbers (4) in 3 parishes. More energy should be spent on mission and less on buildings. Use the buildings for different types of services, e.g. coffee during service as people do when they watch online.
- Parish Organisation - some looking towards one Parish numbers useful in development
- Questions over Communion by Extension
- Looking to lay leadership more reader course only seems to attract older people more young people needed. Permission giving essential
- Move away from old fashioned Church, fit the culture we live in. Church is “fuddy duddy”
- Finance: The previous decision to appoint a 20% Stipended Incumbent was to use generous donations that had been given to two of the parishes. Currently the finds are in place to sustain current pattern for a further 5 years.
- Creative types of Mission - Community focused and based. Create a comms and marketing environment to draw people together. More families now in Sheldwich create activity for the non church children. Messy Church to rotate around the Benefice. Not appealing to our younger generation - action needed. Come together more as a benefice.
- We need dynamic website, social media, comms group.
- Complete wedding packages – funerals and baptisms, using the Community
- Sales and Marketing for Growing the Kingdom!!
- Make the Church relevant to today





Consolidated thoughts and ideas from the Benefices in the Deanery

Fundamental assurance needed re: concerns of Church Commissioners' use or non-use of their monies... and trusting central diocesan look at finances is truly forensic. Concerns over 'middle management posts' across dioceses in country - are they needed?

Fundamental question: Why aren't people interested in coming to Church? The replies from the benefices included in their fuller notes below indicate we are not up to date and need to recognise today's culture. Covid-19 has shown us even more clearly "Church is not the Building it's the people", what do our buildings look like to those who don't come to church? They often don't get past the door.

Mission: Children, young people, families and community were key and innovative ideas were at the forefront using creativity to attract the young and new incomers. Prayer was underpinning everything as was Discipleship. How we measure growing the Kingdom is truly important.

One Parish Deanery was raised on a number of occasions, in different ways; it is now time for Ospringe to re-consider this concept, using churches for different purposes across the Deanery. New models of mission and ministry now needed.

Buildings were a key discussion point, selling some however difficult may be the answer or using them more diversely for community activities, or changing use to festival church etc. Eco Church and the environment were seen as essential ways forward but also attracted public interest. We have 8 churches registered for Eco Church with two awards one bronze and one silver.

Finance was a key topic as some churches could afford Parish share, others couldn't and a few were supporting each other. Many and varied suggestions below in the notes for increasing income (and cutting costs} while missionally growing the Kingdom.

Generosity: Many, many suggestions of how to be all inclusive in this area it's about mission, church and community. Building partnerships in the community.

Lay ministry and stipendiary ministry: Leading together was widely discussed and welcomed across the board. It had been used immediately in some churches as soon as lock down released in July. Not enough attraction for Young lay people particularly in this area. Upfront lay ministry is key how are we going to change this training?

Recognising the need for an intentional new role description for incumbent ministry, moving away from the old parish priest model.





Digital Church: Some churches see this as a support to physical services and others as 50/50 approach, but each benefice felt that this should continue in some form as part of our mission and ministry offering.

Way forwards

Seeking a flourishing and sustainable Church in the Ospringe Deanery

Role of Deanery: Support, encourage serve one another to enable each benefice to move forwards in their self responsibility for a flourishing and sustainable Church.

Prayer and word of God as foundations

Mission priorities:

- Families
- Children & Young People - Schools! - Mobile Initiative
- Communities
- Environment

Ministry:

- Real encouragement for lay ministry.
- Importance of permission giving, expectancy and simple equipping of lay upfront ministry, recognising it is God that gives gifts to us all.
- Role of ordained ministry: development to reflect new way being Church.
- Biblically rural being hub of Jesus' ministry. Body of Christ image - no part being less – > reinvents what it is to be the one parish. Licensed person to community, person of presence - (focal ministry).
- Using us together in the Deanery as God's resource for equipping in all areas of lay ministry.

Finance:

- How, as a deanery can we be sustainable in terms of Parish Share?
- Currently there are not funds available within the Deanery as a whole, to support those churches that are not able to pay their Parish Share.
- Many creative ideas have been shared to increase giving, to promote generosity which now need to be actioned.
- Priority of Parish Share in Parish finances - direct connection between paying Parish Share and receiving ordained ministry.
- Recognition of our interdependence as parishes within benefices and the Deanery. This includes mutual accountability for our finances and paying Parish Share.
- Making decisions about ongoing stipended ministry in terms of sustainability.
- Pastoral re-organisation - looking at One Parish Deanery with a view to sharing lay and ordained Ministry more widely and more flexibly.





Buildings:

- As a deanery and as Benefices to take an honest look at our buildings.
- Reflecting on population growth predictions.
- Looking at closure, however difficult as a possible outcome.
- Looking at change of role to festival church.
- Looking at re-ordering to allow more creative use of the buildings in the community as well as seeing them in terms of context and history of witness to Christ.
- We need a system that fulfils the obligations we have in caring for our buildings that is less onerous in terms of the operation of the Faculty procedures.

Review:

- The Deanery to continue to support, serve and encourage one another in our mutual accountability through report back from PCCs at the next Deanery Synod in June.
- Area Dean and Lay Chair to revisit benefice PCC member meetings in September to maintain the passion and momentum.





Reculver Deanery: Snapshot

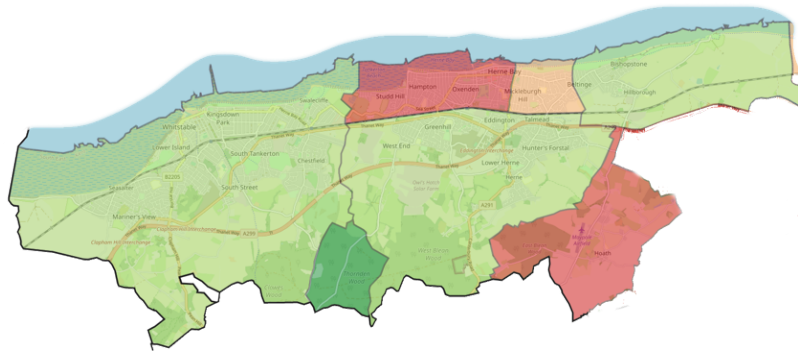
The Reculver Deanery has 6 parishes serving a population of 75,231 people, 1.3% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the deanery is largely in the less deprived categories, although there are pockets of deprivation around Herne Bay and in the Hoath area.



Attendance is in decline, but giving has held up due to the increased generosity of givers. As of April 2021, the Deanery has six full-time equivalent stipendiary posts, one self-supporting clergy post and four curates.

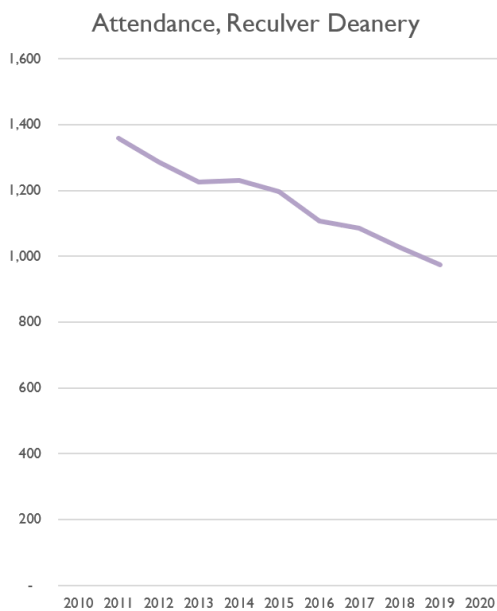
Area Dean: Carol Smith

Lay Chair: Amanda Boucherat



Least deprived

Most deprived





Reculver Deanery: Plan

Moving towards a flourishing, sustainable future

Introduction

Our outline Deanery Plan (Edition 1) provides the backdrop to this refined version which follows an Open Deanery Synod meeting via Zoom on 24 February 2021, when community stakeholders (including CE Schools, other denominations and KCC Community Wardens) were also present. At that meeting, **we looked to Acts 2.42-47¹ to reflect on the early church characteristics that we wish to model and live by.**

We will carry this Bible passage into our ongoing discussions and decision-making as together we discern how **the whole people of God, both lay and ordained** from the Herne Bay and Whitstable churches can best **mobilise together, in mission** to those we serve – or may yet serve in our local communities, as our shared ministry sees more people becoming part of the body of Christ in the various parts of our deanery.

For ease of reference, **a summary of the 'directions of travel'** identified by our deanery survey and included in our outline deanery plan now follows:

- 1) **Simplification.** The United Benefice of Reculver is moving towards becoming a single parish, thus reducing administration; the Whitstable Team is also reviewing its faith-inspired activities as its churches work towards effective governance and shared support structures.
- 2) **Relationship between clergy and the Church.** Both clergy and churches need to have a shared understanding of the role of clergy in supporting the ministry of all the baptised and enabling others to recognise and exercise their own vocation in the church and the world. This highlights a vocation-education need.
- 3) **Partnerships.** Our survey indicated core faith-inspired activities which each church is individually resourcing, but which could be brought under a single umbrella across the deanery – for mutual support, sharing experience, savings in time and effort, learning and training, each church contributing something to the whole.
- 4) **Specialisms.** Faith-inspired activities across the whole deanery are wide-ranging. A meaningful sharing of resources could see different churches focussing on a particular

1. **The Fellowship of the Believers:** "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."





specialism, e.g. youth ministry or liturgical worship. (This is one aspect of ‘generosity’, which we seek to espouse.)

5) **Stipendiary Clergy.** Recognising the deanery’s current overall shortfall in the collection of parish share, the survey raised the question about the sustainability of having six stipendiary clergy costs included, especially in the three groups at the Herne Bay end of the deanery. Facilitated conversations, initially with the clergy, are planned.

6) **Stewardship.** It is acknowledged that the deanery planning exercise is a response to a financial crisis. All areas described in our plan have implications for how we spend money and use resources, and sustainability will require thinking about how to encourage generosity among our members. Teaching is required.

7) **Buildings.** Our buildings are both an asset and a liability as we consider our presence in the community. A review of church property across the deanery is needed to identify where buildings could be used as community hubs, which might function effectively as festival churches (with fewer than six services per year) and where community use can be encouraged by upgrading the plant.

Development of our Deanery Plan

The presence at our Open Deanery Synod meeting of community stakeholders and more than deanery synod members plus some ecumenical colleagues, together with our deanery accompanier, Quentin Roper and Archdeacon Jo Kelly-Moore, provided a richness of reflection, thought and creativity as we considered how God is calling us to serve our communities now and in the future. The new headings below are a distillation of what we heard at this meeting, through attendees’ reflections, comments, sharing, the Zoom chat facility and responses to questions that were put to the Archdeacon.

What follows does not supersede items one to seven above but rather adds to and develops them:

A. ‘What kind of ministers do we need for what kind of ministries?’ This is a fundamental question that we need to address in carrying out this review. In relation to those faith-inspired activities that we anticipate resurrecting (as revealed by the ‘RAG Returns’ from each of our church groupings), **we will work together to reduce duplication of time, effort and resources.** And in relation to **any new mission and ministry roles** that we may wish to introduce, we will ask, **“Can this be fulfilled by a lay person or does the role require an ordained person?”** And, **“Will it be a voluntary or a paid role?”** (Relates to 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 above.) Whatever we decide must consider wellbeing and be financially sustainable.





- B. A Central Deanery Hub/Platform for (a) current faith-inspired activities and (b) new ideas** has been suggested, 1) so that each church knows what the others are doing/offering and can supportively signpost or take responsibility for a 'service/need', and 2) to avoid unnecessary replication.
- C. 'New Builds'.** The number of these (new housing estates) in Herne Bay and Whitstable represent a significant mission opportunity, which raises questions such as, "How may we approach this together?" And, if mission is, "finding out what God is doing and joining in", "How will we pay attention to these (and other) mission opportunities?" (Relates to 5 & 7 above.)
- D. Church of England Schools.** Both lay and ordained people in our deanery serve the five Church Schools in Whitstable and Herne Bay. Whilst our schools' work is good, important and valued, we recognise duplication of effort – particularly by the clergy who prepare weekly Collective Worship. (Links with 1 and 6 above.) One of the Headteachers has asked if we would consider the possibility of a **Schools' Work Chaplain or Co-ordinator**, which is a role we will explore (noting that the principles named in A. above, apply here). (Relates to 1, 3 & 4 above.)
- E. Ecumenical Relationships.** We need to know and be aware of the bigger picture in our 'local' to establish what we may do together rather than apart. Ongoing conversations with our Churches Together groups continue to be part of our work.
- F. Community Networking.** Our **KCC Community Wardens** are 'local superheroes who help sew communities together'. We can learn from and work with them, seeking to join in with services already in place rather than replicating them, and connecting, for example, Street Pastors, Beach Pastors, PCSOs etc. One Community Warden asked, **"Could the church have a specific Community Engagement person?"** This is something we could explore (again, employing the principles in A, above).

We will take this work forward prayerfully through our Chapter and Deanery meetings.

Revd Carol Smith, Area Dean & Amanda Boucherat, Lay Chair; 1st March 2021





Romney & Tenterden Deanery: Snapshot

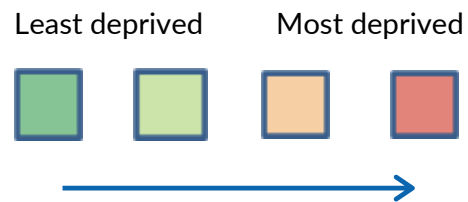
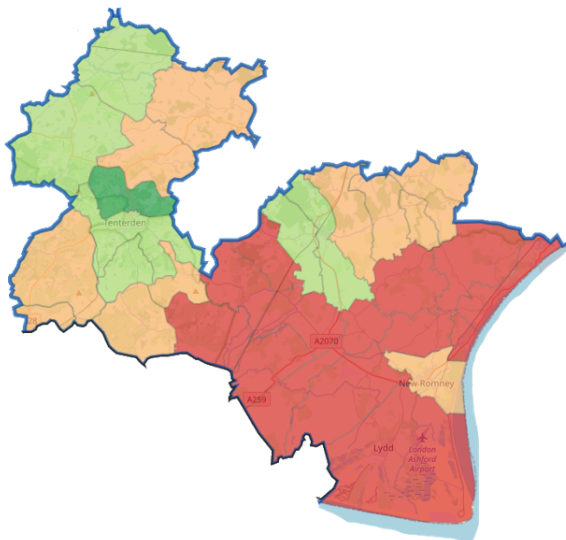
Romney and Tenterden is our largest Deanery, with 292 parishes, serving a population of 49,369 people, 2.1% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. There are large areas of deprivation to the South, with more affluent areas in the North West of the Deanery.



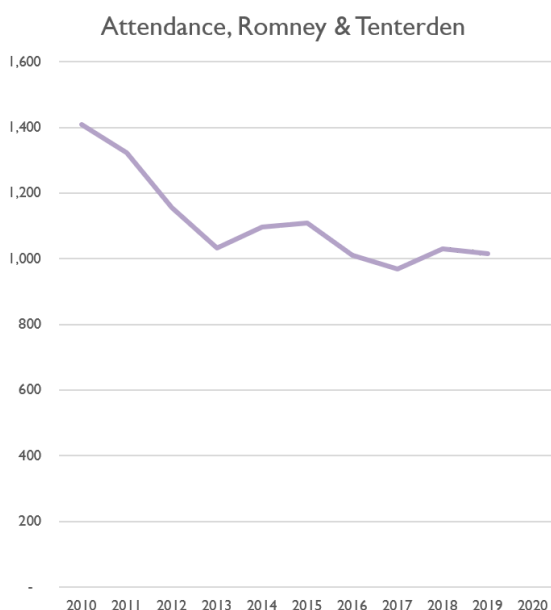
Attendance and giving are both in decline in the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers down by 15% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has 7.5 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including two vacancies), one self-supporting clergy post, one self-supporting curate and one stipendiary curate.

Area Dean: Chris Hodgkins

Lay Chair: Ian Bentley



Please note that this map only shows part of the deanery





Romney and Tenterden Deanery: Plan

A flourishing, sustainable future

Headline summary recommendations

1.0. Encourage flourishing within individual parishes and across the whole Deanery:

1.1 Foster more collaboration among clergy, PTOs, LLMs, NSMs, SSMs, Readers, ALMs and PCCs of the Deanery.

1.2 Encourage clergy creativity. Clergy encouraged to review the way they manage PCCs and time management. Senior staff give more encouragement for clergy to guard their time. Senior staff to get closer to Parishes, showing support and appreciation for issues being faced.

1.3 Improve the flow of communications within the Diocese. A commitment to respond to all communications with acknowledgements, or holding responses, within 48 hours of receipt. Diocese to set up generic email addresses for communication with clergy and church office holders.

2.0. Deanery priorities

2.1.0 The Romney Marsh Benefice

2.1.1 Critical: Appointment of the Team Rector to the Romney Marsh Benefice.

2.1.3 external facilitator to develop cooperation between the previous New Romney and Lydd Benefices in preparation for appointment.

2.1.3 Appoint an administrator across the Romney Marsh Benefice.

2.2 Deanery to meet Parish Share payments in full.

2.2.1 To aid individual churches to meet payments we would help PCCs to understand what the parish share pays for and how it is allocated to enable fuller appreciation of the need to pay it.

2.2.2 Create team to persuade parishes with reserves to invest in weaker parishes to support ministry.

2.2.3 Look at funding a project manager; project managed fundraising campaign to raise Parish Share within local communities.

2.2.4 Encourage the development of Friends for all Churches, where the community takes on responsibility for the care and upkeep of churches.

2.2.5 Only if the strategies and earlier options do not work, or time does not allow, the Deanery would have to lose two stipendiary posts.

2.3 Develop a long-term strategy for increased lay ministry.

2.4 Encourage a children/family orientated initiative which recognises local contexts but may also be effective for all benefices in the Deanery.





2.5 Kenardington church as a retreat centre.

2.6 Use combined purchasing power, where appropriate, to negotiate savings for insurance, lighting and heating, maintenance, photocopiers. etc. also negotiate internet enablement in all relevant Churches for future delivery of services without boundaries.

2.7 To review the needs of local schools from churches, to develop plans for developing relationships with local schools. (see appendix A for summary of the relationship profile with schools in Deanery).

Detail to proposals

1.0 Encourage flourishing:

1.1 Culture of isolation in the church - We will seek to enable a culture of collaboration between parishes and challenge feelings of isolation experienced by some parishes, clergy and lay leaders. We noted particularly the need for relationships to develop between New Romney and Lydd, but also Wittersham, Appledore, Rolvenden and the Tenterden Team, and between Smarden and Biddenden and the Bethersden, High Halden and Woodchurch Benefice, and the Tenterden Team. We hope this can be achieved through Chapter, the Clergy Forum, Deanery Synod and Deanery retreats as well as working closely together across the Deanery.

It is often perceived that the structure of parish ministry can encourage a tendency for competitiveness, with some Clergy tending to work on their own projects rather than making use of the wealth of resources, gifts and talents that can be found across the Deanery. Isolation also exists within parishes, where there is not only rivalry, but also a lack of concern or interest in the parish next door, historically parish loyalty can be deeply ingrained.

We seek to challenge this perception and to enable the people of God across the Deanery with the opportunity, tools and resources to break down boundaries and equip them for growing God's Kingdom in their Deanery.

Isolation can also extend to church/community relations. Often shown by the local community's lack of understanding of the financial stresses of the church where only a small percentage of the population attending church is committed to its support. In some cases the vast remainder of the community is not aware that their church is in financial distress.

We would seek to work with local communities, using the resources available to us within the Dioceses and across the deanery including Friends groups and the Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust and the Friends of Kent Churches to present to the wider community the needs of parish churches.





1.2 Clergy creativity - Clergy often recognise a lack of time to be creative in ministry and are unable to allow time for reading and thinking. Frustration arises when it is felt that too many initiatives come from Diocesan House, often at short notice, overwhelming the priest who has to find time to think about them and then enthuse their parishes, asking themselves how the new initiative will fit in with their priorities. When we add in the essential demands of safeguarding, risk assessments, mission statistics, GDPR etc onto time then clergy wellbeing becomes of utmost importance.

Many clergy work three sessions a day (morning, afternoon, evening). The question needs to be asked how we can affirm the need for all in ministry to create a better work/life balance and how clergy administer their time to allow for effective ministry. We seek to encourage better ways of understanding and recognising the efforts of clergy both from the Diocese and within the Deanery. We would seek to communicate to our senior staff what is happening at the “coal face” on a more regular basis. It is sometimes felt that senior staff are themselves so busy and overwhelmed that it is a challenge for them to stay in touch with the clergy under their care.

We would like to encourage Clergy and PCCs to review the way they work together to further benefit the long-term mission of the Church, focusing on discipleship, teaching, and social outreach. Many PCCs and clergy are burdened with the overwhelming concern of caring for the fabric and upkeep of their church, with too little time given to mission, discipleship, teaching and the ministry of the church within the wider community. Buildings and churchyards are historically and socially important, and clergy ultimately should ensure these are attended to. However, by encouraging and enabling our PCCs to focus on the wider mission of the Church, and not just concentrating on their buildings and fundraising for their upkeep, we seek to create a culture of mission, teaching and social outreach within the Deanery.

To further encourage creativity we would like to create a directory of clergy with PTO, Readers, LLM's and Lay Ministers, meeting with them to discuss their availability, and willingness, to support ministry within the Deanery and work collaboratively within our parishes. We seek to build relationships with our PTO's, Readers, LLMs and Lay Ministers, as well as SSMs and NSMs, recognising the wealth of experience and gifts they bring.

1.3 The functioning of the Diocese - There have been reports from both laity and clergy highlighting a lack of response to communications to the Bishop's office and, to a lesser degree, the Diocese. We recognise this is not deliberate and understand that everyone is working under immense pressure, however, a lack of response can undermine confidence and increase clergy stress and may lead to a loss of morale and a lack of confidence in the operation of the Diocese.





We recognise that too often communications from the Diocese end up in email Spam boxes which often are not checked on a regular basis. We would encourage all clergy, lay and ordained ministers, PCCs and Church Wardens to form a habit of checking Spam boxes regularly.

We ask if there may be a way to improve the flow of communications within the Diocese:

1.3.1 We seek to create a commitment to respond to all communications with acknowledgements, or holding responses, within 48 hours of receipt.

1.3.2 Working with those gifted in understanding technology we would like to see email communication between the Diocese, clergy and possibly all church officers to be on one server, i.e. provide all with generic email addresses. We recognise that this may not be possible but feel a system like this would improve data protection and safeguarding. This may be possible through 'A Church Near You' or 'MailChimp'.

2.0 Deanery priorities

2.1 The Romney Marsh Benefice

2.1.1 Appointment of a Team Rector for the newly created Romney Marsh Benefice -

The Deanery regards an appointment to the role of the newly created Team Rector as strategically critical to the ministry and mission of the whole deanery, let alone the benefice. Working alongside Archdeacon Darren we seek, and pray for, the right person to fill the post. The new benefice needs to be resourced and enabled to work together as a team and we recognise that this will not just be the work of the new Team Rector, but that as a Deanery, working together, we all have a part to play. A major gifting of the new Team Rector will be as an overseer of a large benefice, this gift will add to the skillset found across the Deanery. There is in place a strong body consisting of clergy, clergy with PTO and lay ministers within the new benefice who are able to manage the required services within the benefice. The Team Rector will be in a position to organise their priorities without having a major concern regarding resourcing ministers for services.

2.1.2 We would like to place a facilitator in the Romney Marsh Benefice to further develop cooperation between the individual parishes within the Benefice. Teamwork does not always occur naturally in many contexts, it is felt that a facilitator would help all of the benefice to work together. The activities of the facilitator could both prepare the way for a new Team Rector's appointment and also assist the new incumbent as required in helping to develop a collaborative culture between the parishes.





2.1.3 Looking at the gifts and skills found within the Deanery we would like to explore the possibility of appointing an administrator to the Romney Marsh Benefice enabling the right person the opportunity to bring together the administration for the whole benefice in one role.

2.2 Strategy for balanced Deanery budget, i.e. the ability of parishes to meet the Diocesan Parish Share payments in full

In the last financial year 2020, the deficit of Parish Share payments was £132k. For 2021, without changes to the number of stipendiary Deanery clergy, the deficit is expected to be around £100k.

We are unclear how soon this deficit is to be met, we therefore make several proposals, with different time periods over which the deficit is met.

Generally, there are three categories of parishes and benefices in the Deanery. Those that are able to sustain paying the parish share, those that are not, and then those that are not able to pay fully, but are and will be, in receipt of grants. Those benefices not able to pay parish share need some kind of transitional support to establish whether income can be raised to sustain full time stipendiary clergy. As experience tells us, it takes time to build up levels of giving and income.

We offer the following proposals:

2.2.1 Working with our Deanery Treasurer, the Diocese and local Parish Treasurers we seek to explore the possibility of, and the need for, a project manager to work with parishes on fundraising campaigns helping to raise the Parish Share within local communities. We feel that there is a major distinction between rural parishes, and suburban or town parishes in the widespread support and desire to see a functioning church in the heart of the community. This project might run over three years and will be open to all our Parishes and Benefices, but is felt to be particularly crucial for those where the most recent appointments have been made. If this proposal is found to be viable we may require Diocesan investment and we will seek to work collaboratively across the Deanery and with the Diocese on the detail.

2.2.2 The Deanery has reserves in excess of £2,000,000. We propose creating a team that has the legal support and expertise, to encourage PCCs to use reserves to invest in parish ministry. We recognise this is an extremely sensitive issue. Such work could only happen with the cooperation of PCCs involved. This proposal is not about confiscation of reserves, but working with parishes to create a 'Spirit of Generosity' thereby encouraging those parishes with reserves to support parishes in financial





difficulty enabling them to continue ministering to the community. We would seek to work with the parishes in creating robust plans where support is provided helping parishes facing financial difficulties become viable in the longer term or walking alongside them as they consider their options. A key element of this proposal will be to work with PCCs to impress on them both the seriousness of the situation, as well as the potential these reserves offer.

We may find that we need to be mindful of the potential for negative impact in encouraging people to leave legacies to the church in the future, if this initiative were too aggressive. Like the proposal above, this proposal requires more work on the detail.

2.2.3 Encourage the development of Friends for all our Churches, enabling local communities to take on the responsibility for the care and upkeep of local churches. Across the Deanery Friends organisations help in galvanising the local community to develop responsibility for the management and upkeep of the church building. Those churches that have a strong Friends Group could mentor those that are struggling with their relationships between a Friends group and PCC or where they are without a Friends group. We also recognise and welcome the working relationship between the churches on the Romney Marsh and the Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust. This initiative could also be linked in with the fundraising campaign within local communities.

2.2.4 Finances in many of the rural parishes that are meeting their Parish Share are finely balanced, it is felt that this is due to the presence of a priest in the community. Losing ministry in the parishes that are currently not financially stressed, is likely to undermine giving and Parish Share income. We cannot realistically rely on giving remaining at current levels in those parishes that might lose stipendiary ministry, which in part would defeat the object of ministerial cuts, and not help the struggling parishes.

If parishes in the deanery were required to eliminate the deficit with immediate effect, we feel that the Deanery would need to lose at least two stipendiary posts. However, this cannot be done easily and must be done in consultation with the PCCs and Clergy of the parishes concerned. There are no obvious mechanisms in the Deanery to transfer the savings of a stipendiary post to another benefice in the Deanery. There will also be a large impact on the provision of ministry and reduced parish share income to the Diocese.

We have identified that there is a need for a 'Training Officer' within the Deanery. This need can be met by imaginatively looking at the Biddenden and Smarden





benefice and the Bethersden, High Halden and Woodchurch benefice with a view to combining them. We would like to explore the possibility of adding to the ministry within the new benefice by including a 0.5 Associate Priest to work alongside the Rector and in the Deanery role of 'Training Officer'. This would allow us to offer training to both clergy and laity across the Deanery at source, taking into account the diversity of different contexts found in the Romney and Tenterden Deanery. Using both Diocesan resources and those found outside of the Church of England, where appropriate, we will be able to equip the Training Officer to enable ministry across the whole Deanery.

Given the small number of posts already this would require a review of stipendiary posts and roles and a critical look at the shape of each Benefice in the Deanery. At present we cannot see where another post could be lost.

We would seek to work with the Diocese in creating a spirit of generosity of giving within the communities that make up our Deanery. This would be achieved through discipleship and teaching which could be delivered by the 'Training Officer'.

During the pandemic, Zoom has allowed parishes to become closer, in normal times traveling distances between churches impacts upon the Clergy time and deterred parish laity interaction. Another option to be considered would be to work with Tenterden as a Hub with an East Tenterden and West Tenterden or North & South.

The M&M committee strongly believes that any decision on cutting clergy posts in the Deanery can only be carried out with a full consultation with parishes and existing clergy, so that decisions can be owned and arrived at with consensus.

2.3 Develop a long-term plan for increased lay ministry

In the longer term, over the next 5 years, the Deanery needs a strategy to anticipate reduced clergy, and for how rural ministry can evolve with increased local lay leadership.

The Deanery is committed to developing lay ministry and training but there are specific local challenges. Churches in the Deanery are geographically spread out, and most of the Deanery is relatively far from the traditional training centres of Canterbury and Maidstone. Nevertheless, successful lay training events have taken place. Among those which have worked best have been bespoke benefice lay training programmes. This is where we feel that a 'Deanery Training Officer' would be necessary to work across the Deanery delivering local training and building up the whole people of God.

The Deanery might evolve into two Team ministries, one centred on Tenterden, the other





on the new Marsh Benefice. What are the possibilities of working in conjunction with the Diocese of Chichester to deliver training to the communities of Rye and Winchelsea which are geographically closer to Canterbury than Chichester?

2.3.1 Lay training will be a regular focus of discussion for M&M and Chapter meetings.

2.3.2 If necessary contact will be made with the Deanery of Rye.

2.3.3 Working in conjunction with the Diocese, Deanery 'Training Officer', M&M and Chapter we will develop a strategy for increasing lay ministry across the Deanery.

2.4 Encourage a children/family orientated initiative in each benefice of the Deanery

Most benefices have some provision of ministry to children and families, it varies from Messy Church to All Age outdoor services. During interregnums work with young families, youth and children can sometimes suffer. We would like to work with 'Youth and Families Ministers' and those who engage with our schools to build a strategy ensuring cover is maintained. We also wish to work alongside ministry teams to build ministry to Young Families and Youth Work in the parts of our Deanery where this may be difficult due to a lack in local resources. There is an opportunity for sharing resources and those who are gifted in this area to create a sustainable and flourishing outreach programme.

2.5 Kenardington Church

This has no viable congregation, but the church does have support from a trust fund set up by a former benefactor. Just over £1M has been spent on the refurbishment of the church that is now nearing completion. All of this investment was funded by the benefactor from his charitable foundation, The Uren Trust. We feel that there is an exciting opportunity in recognising that the church could be developed as a Deanery or Diocesan day retreat centre. We would need a centre manager to develop the vision alongside the Rector and PCC, taking into account the care and maintenance of the building. One possible source of funding may be to persuade the Uren Trust to support such an initiative as well as seeking other external grants. The building needs to be legally supervised and may need to be placed under the umbrella of Warehorne PCC, or another PCC.

2.6 Combined buying power

The largest financial commitment of any parish is the Parish Share, once paid this leaves some parishes with little finances left for other ministry, and building related costs. However, savings can be made with collective buying initiatives, e.g., for insurance,





lighting and heating, maintenance, photocopier. We would seek to promote the use of the Parish Buying Scheme across the Deanery. Other options include the use of local combined buying power to negotiate better deals with utility companies and internet providers – at benefice and Deanery level.

Working together with our Deanery Treasurer, PCC Treasurers and the Diocese we seek to realise the potential found in combined buying power, such as the Parish Buying Scheme, and help PCCs to cut costs and increase savings which would help pay the Parish Share.

A key area that we wish to explore is to develop better internet connections for rural churches and communities, this has been highlighted by the recent demands that home schooling has brought. Stronger internet connections in Rural Churches will not only enable them to engage with the community, local schools and families but will also help to bring parishes across the Deanery together in new and exciting ways. We would explore what resources we have within the Deanery to enable this project to happen.

2.7 Schools

Working with our Schools, both church and Local Authority, is a key feature in our plan bringing together the strands of Youth and Families work, social justice work, and care in our communities. We would like to appoint a ‘Deanery Schools Officer’ to review the needs of local schools from our churches and to develop plans for deepening church relationships with local schools. (see appendix B for summary of the relationship profile with schools in the Deanery). We realise that this may have to be a voluntary post unless funding can be found.

Romney and Tenterden Deanery M&M
5 March 2021



Appendices

- A: Deanery Action plan
- B: Relationship profile with schools in Deanery





Romney and Tenterden Deanery: Appendix A

Action Plan

Progress to be reviewed in M&M Meetings

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
1.0 Encourage flourishing		
1.1 Better collaboration between neighbouring benefices and parishes; clergy and PCCs to exchange ideas, share knowledge, talent and best practice	Area Dean	At least twice a year
1.1 Clergy share pulpits, move around the Deanery	Chapter	Quarterly?
1.1 Clergy encouraged to undertake projects in collaboration with Deanery colleagues. Eg development of Marriage prep day.	Chapter clergy	
1.2 Regularly ensure Archdeacon invited to Deanery Chapter.	Area Dean	At least twice a year
1.2 Review clergy daily workload with a view to delegating to administrative support for every benefice. Encourage use of helpful technology like the Life Events Diary	Ministerial Review Process	At annual review
1.2 Aspire to place an administrator in every benefice	?	By ??
1.2 Use the clergy review process to encourage creativity, new learning, new experiences and provide motivation.	Ministerial Review Process	At annual review





WHAT	WHO	WHEN
1.2 Develop a culture where care of churches is a clear responsibility of the PCC (church wardens) and that the wider community via Friends groups or similar accept a major part of the financial burden.	Deanery accompanier	Deanery retreat focusing encouraging clergy to reflect on purpose and role of PCC
1.3.1 Develop a culture of politeness and urgency where emails are responded to within 48 hours.	All Diocesan Clergy & Lay Members	Immediate
1.3.2 Diocese to create email addresses for all clergy and church officers.	Diocese	
2.0 Deanery priorities		
2.1.1 Team Rector appointment for Romney Marsh Benefice	Diocese	Immediate
2.1.2 A facilitator to begin work with the parishes of the new Benefice to foster a culture of collaboration	Deanery accompanier	Immediate
2.1.3 Appoint an administrator for the Romney Marsh Benefice.		
2.2.1 Seek to work with the diocese in the areas of project management and fundraising working within the Deanery to raise giving from within the community.	Deanery M&M and Diocese	
2.2.2 Encourage parishes with reserves to support weaker parishes enabling a continuation of ministry.	Deanery M&M and Diocese	
2.2.3 Encourage the development of Friends groups for all parishes in the Deanery.		





WHAT	WHO	WHEN
2.3.1 Lay training as a regular focus of discussion for M&M and Chapter. Taking into account the gifts and experience of PTOs, SSMs and NSMs within the deanery. Combine the Biddenden and Smarden post with a Deanery Training role.	M&M and Chapter	
2.3.2 Contact is made with the Deanery of Rye, Diocese of Chichester	Area Dean	
2.3.3 M&M and Chapter to develop strategy for increasing lay ministry	M&M and Chapter	
2.4 Sharing of experience of ministry to families and children. Pooling of resources across the deanery including both lay and ordained.	Chapter	
2.5 Develop Kenardington church as a retreat centre. Make contact with the Uren Foundation.	Rector Saxon Shoreline	
2.6 Achieve savings with combined purchasing power	??	
2.7 To review the need of local schools from churches. Create a Deanery Schools Officer to help parishes engage with local schools.		





Romney and Tenterden Deanery: Appendix B

Relationship profile with schools in Deanery

The relationship between the church and the school remains critical.

The Deanery will need to review what local schools need most from their local churches, to help develop plans to grow the relationships with local schools.

Below is a summary of the current relationship profile with schools in Deanery:

Senior schools

Marsh Academy, Romney Marsh – Relationships are not strong. However the school is open to collaboration, and was supportive of the work of the Apollos Trust. The school is part of the Skinners' Company, one of the London livery companies, and has links with the Archbishop.

Homewood, Tenterden – Excellent relations with church. Tenterden Schools Trust CEO a practising Christian, Revd. Canon Lindsay Hammond a Trust Member and Clive Thomas a Director and former Apollos Trust member.

Primary Schools

Biddenden – CoE Primary school - Strong relationship. Incumbent foundation governor

Smarden – (Kemel Academy Trust) Primary school – Strong relationship with church

Woodchurch – CoE – Primary School - Good relationship. Incumbent foundation governor

High Halden – CoE – Primary School - Strong relationship. Incumbent foundation governor

Bethersden – LEA Primary school. - Strong relationship with church

Lydd – Primary School - Good relationship. Part of Village School Academy (see below).
Revd. Chris Maclean a Governor

Greatstone – Primary School – Foundation school. New Head more amenable, links being established by Revd. Jackie Darling before Covid.

Brenzett - CoE – Primary School - Good links with it. Revd. Chris Maclean a governor.
Reader taking Godly Play sessions.

Brookland - CoE – Primary School. Good links with it. Revd. Shuna Body a Governor.

New Romney - St Nicholas Primary School – Aquila – Revd. John Richardson supporting

Dymchurch – Primary School – Only as a laity volunteer. Part of Village School Academy which has Revd. Steven Lillicrap as a member and Quentin Roper as Chair of Trustees

Hamstreet – Primary school. Lay connections from Hamstreet and Warehorne

Aldington – Primary school. Good relationships





Tenterden St Mildred – See Tenterden Schools Trust – Excellent relationship (Junior CoE & infant schools)

Tenterden St Michael CoE – See Tenterden Schools Trust – Excellent with good links to local school

Rolvenden – Primary school under Tenterden School's Trust. Good working relationship with regular visits.

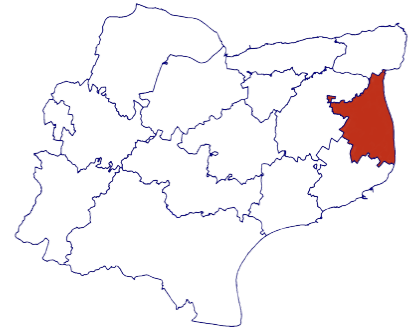
Wittersham - CoE – Primary school - Good relationship. Incumbent foundation governor.





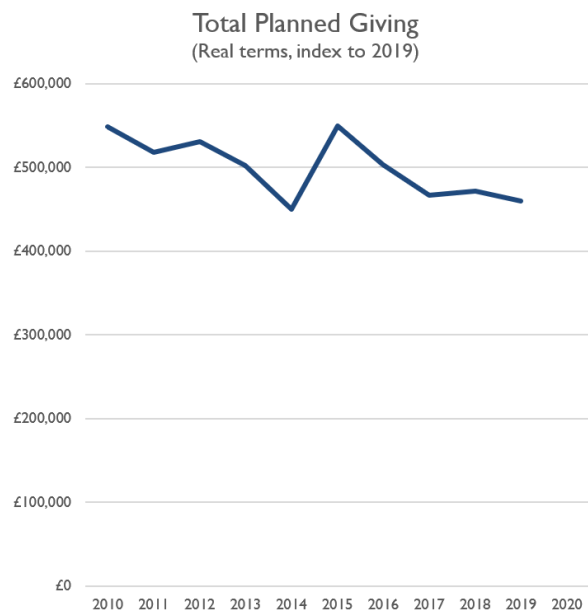
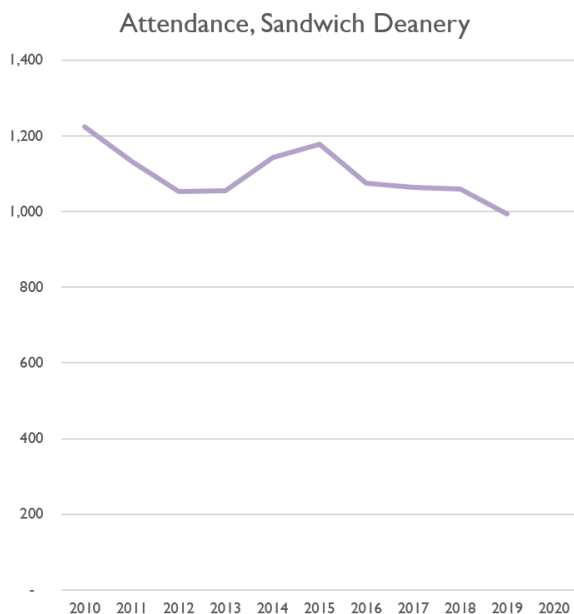
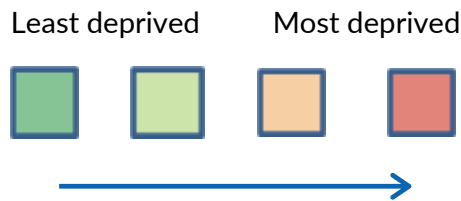
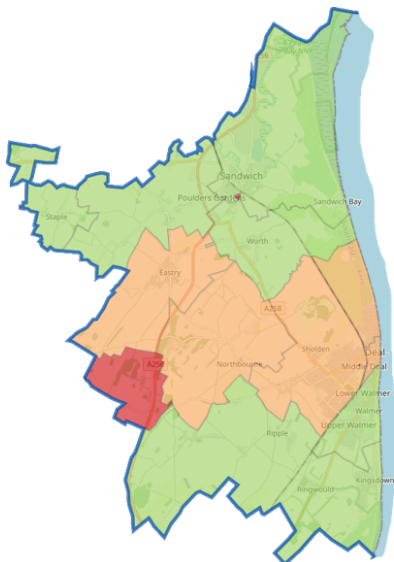
Sandwich Deanery: Snapshot

The Sandwich Deanery has 12 parishes serving a population of 46,620 people, 2.1% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is largely in the middle two categories.



Attendance and giving are both in decline across the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers declining by 33% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has 6.85 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including one vacancies), three self-supporting clergy posts and three stipendiary curates.

Area Dean: Chris Spencer Lay Chair: Ian Stephen Assistant Lay Chair: Trevor Longman





Sandwich Deanery: Plan

'How can the Deanery express its mission and develop the local plan to enable the Deanery to flourish?'

1. Vision

Across the Deanery we want to see:

Up: **Flourishing worship** - diverse and vibrant, enabling people to draw near to God

In: **Flourishing churches** - loving, welcoming, and disciple-making

Out: **Flourishing mission** - transforming our parishes through faith, service and witness

2. Values

Across the Deanery we want to see:

The mission is Christ's: 'As the Father sent me, so I am sending you'

The mission is local: mission arises through engagement in the life of local communities

The mission is diverse: different approaches and traditions in a mixed economy

3. Key considerations

1. **Flourishing clergy:** able to focus on the work of ministry

2. **Flourishing laity:** enabling a Christian presence in every community where the whole body of Christ is equipped and encouraged in ministry

3. **Flourishing mission:** transformational engagement with local communities, and the lives and concerns of those who do not yet know Christ

3. Priorities

To create an environment in the Deanery where such flourishing is encouraged we will continue to develop a mixed-economy of church, embracing both existing inherited patterns of ministry and new approaches.

- [Walmer and Cornilo Parishes](#) continue to explore collaboration in ministry
- [Sandwich and Eastry Benefices](#) continue to affirm the importance of the mission of the local church/parish
- [St. George's](#) continue to develop a Minster model for Fresh Expressions and new forms of lay-led church within and beyond the Deanery
- [St Andrews](#) to continue to pursue partnership with a parish of similar tradition beyond the Deanery (Holy Trinity, Ramsgate)
- [Upper Deal](#) to explore the shape of its mission with the incoming mission priest, with a view assess how its mission will fit with that of the whole Deanery
- [Review continued online presence](#) after return to buildings
- [Continue to review the appropriate use of church buildings](#) including consideration of





whether some become festival churches, acknowledging that church buildings can be viewed as precious assets in mission

- [Sustainability](#): Given the Deanery's commitment to the primary importance of stipendiary ministry, the Deanery will continue to press for significant reductions in diocesan and national church costs, and all parishes will continue to seek to sustain and grow income from congregational giving as an expression of worship and discipleship, and to grow in number to enhance this.



Appendix:

- MAP initiative: 'New Forms Resource Church'





MAP initiative: ‘New Forms Resource Church’ as part of a wider church planting strategy

Sandwich Deanery Mission Action Plan

As part of the Mission Action Plan put forward recently from Sandwich Deanery, St. George’s Deal is described as a ‘Minster’ resourcing new forms of lay-led church within the Deanery and beyond. This paper expands that proposal from St. George’s to not only play a part in continuing to bring into being and grow new forms of church in Sandwich Deanery, but also to help bring into being and grow new forms of church across the Diocese.

The recent history of Sandwich Deanery and St George’s

St. George’s was originally a church plant for the new community of fishermen in Deal in the early 1700s. There have been other pioneering initiatives over the years and in the 1990s St George’s planted the first extra-parochial church plant in the Church of England.

Over the period of the last 18 years, the exploration into new forms of church has taken place. Much has been learnt over this time as the theory has been put into practice. The church is currently made up of various missional communities and micro-churches, all lay-led with training and equipping coming from the clergy. St. George’s has served other churches over the years through envisioning, training and mentoring of other clergy, both in the Diocese and beyond.

‘New Forms Resource Church’

This part of the Mission Action Plan is the proposal for St George’s to be designated as a ‘New Forms Resource Church’. Its brief, as practitioners, is to be a resource for the Diocese by envisioning, training and equipping those across the Diocese who wish to explore new forms of church.

We see three strands to this, one of which is currently being facilitated by the Diocese through Steve Coneys and the other two being strands that St. George’s is offering to resource and give clergy time to:

a) MLCs – Missional Learning Communities: working with existing parishes to bring about culture change through a process developed by CMS. Greenhouse materials are also used as a part of this. MLCs been described by Archdeacon Darren as a ‘slow burn’ process. Facilitated by Steve Coneys.

b) Catalyse – Raising Missionary Disciples: an alternative ‘medium burn’ process aimed at working with Leadership Teams of parishes wanting to explore the transition from solely congregational worship-based approaches to a deepening culture of disciple-making in missional communities, using the insights and models of Kairos Connexion





(3Dm). Facilitated by a team from St George's.

c) Disperse - Planting Micro-churches: 'a medium/faster burn' process of helping to identify, train and support pioneering small lay teams to establish new simple, lightweight Christian communities using the national Fresh Expressions Greenhouse model and other insights that have emerged from practice. Facilitated by a team from St George's

Each strand has its own shape and style, yet the intention in all strands is to develop and grow Christian communities making disciples who make disciples.

Chris Spencer (Area Dean Sandwich) & Shiela Porter (St George's)





Sittingbourne Deanery: Snapshot

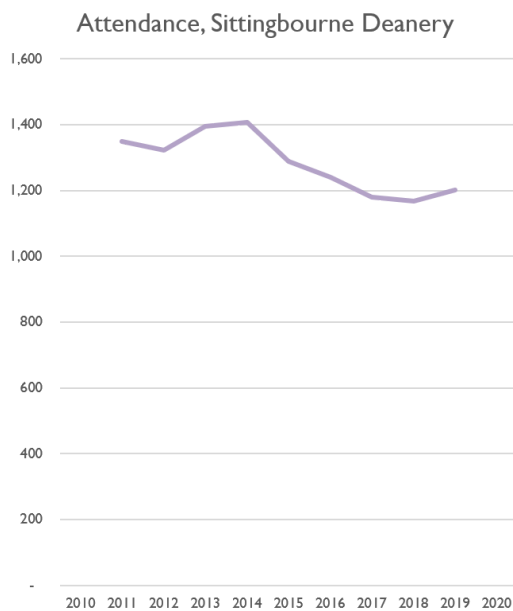
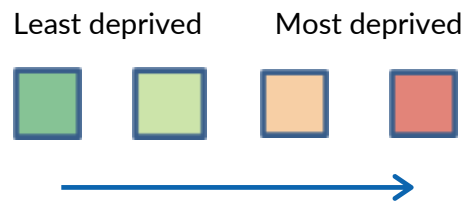
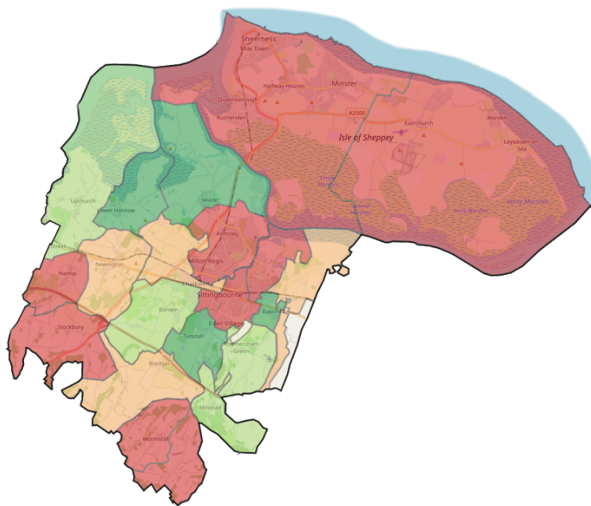
The Sittingbourne Deanery has 19 parishes serving a population of 115,323 people, 1% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is mixed, with a very large area of severe deprivation covering the Isle of Sheppey, as well as similar pockets elsewhere.



Attendance and giving are in long-term decline across the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers declining by 30% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has 8.9 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including including an innovative joint funded parish/school chaplain post and 3.2 vacancies), two self-supporting clergy posts and 2.5 curates.

Area Dean: Julian Staniforth

Lay Chair: Phil Bromwich





Sittingbourne Deanery: Plan

“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you...
to give you hope and a future” Jer. 29.11

1. Approach

This document identifies the current position of the Deanery, then sets out a “Vision” of a possible future before mapping out the “Plan” with practical steps towards the future.

2. Current reality

- **Mismatch between Diocesan expectations about Deanery role and the reality on the ground:**
 - Diocese: “one of... strengths... is the confidence we place in planning at deanery level”
 - Deanery: a grouping of parishes & benefices with no coordinated plan:
 - mission initiatives are at benefice & parish level
 - limited sharing of knowledge & resources across boundaries
 - patchy engagement & does not include key lay people
- **Challenge of Culture Change: no shared understanding of what “mission” means in practice**
 - between parishes & benefices
 - there has been a stronger focus on mission brought by the previous area dean
 - “go out there” has been heard but
 - not yet fully grasped at congregation level?
 - the focus on services and Sunday largely persists
 - residual expectations of ministers and “church” remain
- **Deanery finances (as a whole) are not healthy:**
 - significant previous year arrears
 - underlying annual deficit, which has worsened in 2020
 - West Sheppey is in special measures
- **Current finances cannot sustain the existing stipendiary resources + buildings**
 - Town: 4 FTE roles, 2 financed by grants; 3 current vacancies; 8 buildings
 - Rural: 3 FTE; 14 buildings (1 single parish benefice)
 - Sheppey: 2.4 FTE; 1.2 financed by grants; 0.2 vacancy; 5 buildings(?)
- **Yet the (lay) people resources are there**
 - Stretched, unconfident, under & over-used?
 - Number of overall “leaders” in the Deanery (Licenced/PTO/Authorised) unknown





- What knowledge, skills and experience to share?
- What resources waiting to be released?
- **Ancient village buildings are valued local presence, but not-fit-for 21st Century needs**
 - Absorb volunteer time, energy and finance
- **Good links with local primary schools but less so with secondary schools**
 - Regular presence through assemblies
 - Half-time school chaplain (Bapchild), funded by school & grant
- **Youth Hub project started at St Mary's but "mothballed" due to Covid-19**
 - Deanery project with some Diocesan funding
 - Seen as part of Changed Lives->Changing Lives strategy
 - What next? Deanery decision
 - How to develop engagement with primary & secondary schools?
- **Three different mission contexts with different opportunities & challenges**
 - Town: C of E = one amongst many denominations/independent churches
 - Mix of C of E churchmanship & worship style across town eg:
 - Holy Trinity + Bobbing: contemporary/linked to New Wine
 - St Michael's: traditional/central
 - Rural/Semi-rural: C of E = local church (with small Methodist pockets)
 - Congregations identify more with place; inhabitants value local village identity
 - 2 multi-parish benefices (The Six/Tunstall & Bredgar) + 1 single parish (Borden)
 - Suburban/rural blurring
 - Mostly smaller congregations, but with 'fringe' local community links
 - Isle of Sheppey
 - Physically separate
 - Culturally different from Sittingbourne (e.g. pastoral offices)
 - Structurally unable to pay own way: needs a different funding approach
 - Is the right long-term mix of clergy roles in place?
 - **Group ministry in theory but not yet fully in practice**
- **Ecumenical cooperation on defined initiatives in place e.g.**
 - Swale Foodbank
 - Street Pastors
 - Christians Against Poverty (CAP)
 - Some Deanery congregations more aware and engaged than others





- **Diocesan Changed Lives->Changing Lives Ignite projects in two settings**
 - Sittingbourne (with St Michael's) & Sheerness (with Holy Trinity)
 - How to integrate locally for effective cooperation when separate reporting line?
- **Housing developments mean parish boundaries no longer reflect emerging communities**
- **Moment of opportunity for engagement with local community concerns and action?**
 - Joining in with spontaneous community initiatives (seeing where God is at work)
 - Building connections/partnerships around key concerns e.g. mental health, climate etc
- **Engagement with “culture change”**
 - Two benefices committed to “Missional Learning Communities” (The Six/Tunstall)
 - Sense of progress impacted by pandemic

3. Purpose & Vision “Changed lives, changing lives”

- Mission is local through local relationships. Q = How (not if) to sustain local presence?
- **A common understanding of the purpose & vision of the local church needs to be shared across the Deanery, using language everyone can easily articulate based on the practice of every-day “holy habits” that enable bit-by-bit a missional culture to emerge and grow**
 - Purpose = “Seeing lives transformed through encounter with Jesus” (John 4)
 - Vision = “being the people who BLESS” our communities (Gen. 12.1-4 & Jer. 29.7)
 - founded on deepening relationship with the Lord
 - building relationships with each other and the world (Matt 22.37-39)
 - embodying Jesus in our communities
 - empowered by the Spirit (John 15.4-5 “apart from me you can do nothing”)
 - expectant that the Lord is at work
 - “Holy Habits” = **all involved** in **do-able** spiritual practices (“I can do that”)
 - Being rooted in Jesus and hearing his voice through worship and prayer
 - Listening attentively to the concerns of the community
 - Engaging with people as a community offering & receiving hospitality
 - Serving actively in the community and speaking up boldly for the vulnerable
 - Sharing our stories of faith with confidence
 - Simplicity is key: “**BLESS? I can do that!**”
 - Fruit = local church communities of disciples growing as a result of distinctive, credible missional engagement with the local community (Acts 2.42-47)





- **Deanery works collegiately (1 Cor 12.12-21)**
 - **Stipendiary clergy role = strategic**
 - Stipendiary clergy across Deanery work as a collaborative team
 - Self-supporting clergy support stipendiary clergy in a given area
 - Responsibilities for a specific area (>1 parish) retained
 - **Relationships are critical** (rather than boundary changes, unless really necessary)
 - Deanery Mission & Ministry Team (not Committee!)
 - Clergy + lay leaders/ reps work with the Archdeacon
 - defines the plan for sustainable ministry (in terms of key appointments)
 - coordinates specific plans for wider mission, ministry and evangelism
 - encourages sharing of resources to enable mission & ministry to happen
- **Local Christian presence in each community remains, but how (& by whom) expressed varies**
 - Three core areas under specific stipendiary clergy with strategic oversight:
 - Sittingbourne Town; Rural; Sheppey
 - "Area Minster Church Centres" within each area
 - Places of welcome and hope offering "breathing space"
 - **Local lay teams** for local focal mission & ministry (given allegiance to locality)
 - under clergy oversight
 - gathering in varied settings (church, local halls, outdoors as mission requires)
 - Shared administrative support, with shared skills & systems for finance & online
 - Single centre for Sittingbourne and area; single centre for Sheppey

3. The plan

4.1 Ensure deanery effectiveness in its mission planning role

- **Prayer & worship together: What is God saying? Where is God at work?**
- **Embed a shared understanding of purpose & vision across deanery**
 - In Deanery Chapter / Ministers Forum / Synod (as open meetings)
 - "Audit" of existing initiatives within the Deanery
 - Consider a quarterly deanery newsletter?
- **Build ministerial relationship as commitment to operating as a team**
 - Hold bi-monthly Chapter meetings for licenced clergy (monthly at first)
 - To build team ethos
 - To provide mutual support and encouragement





- **Identify existing deanery ministerial resources (for viability of local lay-led teams)**
 - "Audit" of skills/experience/deployment & availability of existing ministerial resources
 - Priests: stipendiary/self-supporting/PTO/curates
 - Lay ministers: lay readers / ALMs / others with experience
 - "Audit" of buildings' facilities
- **Identify existing deanery facilities**
- **Identify local lay training needs (and local means of delivery)**
- **Establish a regular Deanery Ministers Forum (clergy & lay) for:**
 - Sustaining focus mission in terms of purpose & vision
 - Encouraging use of "Up / In / Out" as diagnostic tool for balance

4.2 Encourage the culture change needed for missional church communities

- **Encourage local engagement with/commitment to:**
 - "Missional Learning Communities": underpinning outward-looking spiritual practices
 - "Changing Lives Conversations": confidence in our stories of encountering Jesus

4.3 Identify opportunities for partnerships around key concerns: "With not for"

- **Engage with Council community development (listening for specific local concerns)**
- **Develop relationships with schools & local groups around areas such as:**
 - Mental health & well-being
 - Care for creation: opportunities linked to Climate Sunday
 - Natural environment
 - Climate Change
- **Encourage commitment to Eco-Church**
- **Encourage engagement of all congregations in:**
 - Foodbank / CAP
 - Support for IGNITE projects

4.4 "Youth Hub": establish a model for flourishing Youth work in the Deanery

- **Set up a working group to review the Youth Hub experience to report by June 2020**





- Review existing funding + role of St Mary's (currently on hold)
- **Carry out consultation with young people in defined schools by June 2020**
- **Define the model and way forward by Sept 2020 (inc funding needs)**
 - How will this work with schools & local churches?

4.5 Establish sustainable, collaborative ministry across Sittingbourne area

a) Sittingbourne Town

- **Fill the three existing vacancies in the town with coordinated Parish Profiles**
 - Form an (informal) town group ministry (rather than change boundaries) focused on:
 - common mission challenges and opportunities
 - importance of team working in the person specifications
 - St Michael's Sittingbourne 2-year interim agreed
- **Open dialogue with New Wine Church Planting re possible resource**
 - Possible role of HT Sittingbourne as "Resource Church"?
- **Define "Area Minister Church Centres" for the town: "Places of Welcome"?**
 - Possible closure of St Mary's if no longer needed for Youth Hub?
- **Integrate Ignite's ministry within the Sittingbourne Group**

b) Rural/ Semi-Rural settings

- **Review long-term shape of multi-parish benefices, inc position of Borden**
 - Importance of retaining distinctive Anglo-Catholic worship
- **Define "Area Minister Church Centres" in each benefice**
 - Identify festival churches or chapels of ease
 - Identify existing "Friends" of..." groups + initiate where necessary

4.6 Establish sustainable, collaborative mission for Sheppey

- **Define a separate, specific plan for ministerial resources and finance**
 - Continue to focus stipendiary roles towards mission-oriented parish priests
 - Create a single island parish under one priest in place of the group ministry





- **Open dialogue with Diocese re different funding model (investment)**
 - How to avoid regular write-offs?
 - Consider options?
 - Remove from normal Parish Share method?
 - Alternatives?

4.7 Define a sustainable deanery financial & buildings plan

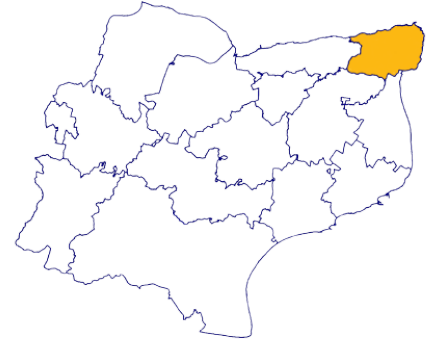
- **Objective = “Break-even” during 2024**
 - **Not realistic earlier given existing financial position**
 - In effect needs two separate plans:
 - for “mainland” Sittingbourne
 - for Sheppey
 - Plan needs to be realistic in terms of
 - sustainable level of stipendiary clergy and...
 - provision for shared administration hub(s)
 - funds for building works (e.g. carbon-neutral goal)
- **Set up working group to formulate financial plan & options:**
 - Option A = Fill vacancies in 2021 but by 2024 the position as follows:
 - Sittingbourne “mainland” stipendiaries = 6 FTE
 - 4 FTE funded locally
 - 2 FTE covered by grants/ other funding
 - (incl 1 FTE split 50% benefice/ 50% Bapchild school chaplain)
 - Sheppey Stipendiaries = 2 FTE
 - 1 FTE fully funded locally
 - 1 FTE covered by grants
 - Option B = Don’t fill all posts but by 2024 assuming grants
 - Sittingbourne “mainland” stipendiaries
 - 3 FTE fully funded locally
 - How much grant funding available for posts?
 - Sheppey Stipendiaries
 - 1.5 FTE fully funded locally
 - 0.5 FTE grant funding?
 - Key question = what will share of Diocesan costs look like?
- **Requires Generosity in Giving from 2021: crucial yet significant culture change**
 - “small amounts each week together make a big difference”
 - Re-frame language of “Parish Share”
- **Explore viability of Carbon-Neutral by 2030 for ancient buildings**
- **Establish Deanery group for Grant applications?**





Thanet Deanery: Snapshot

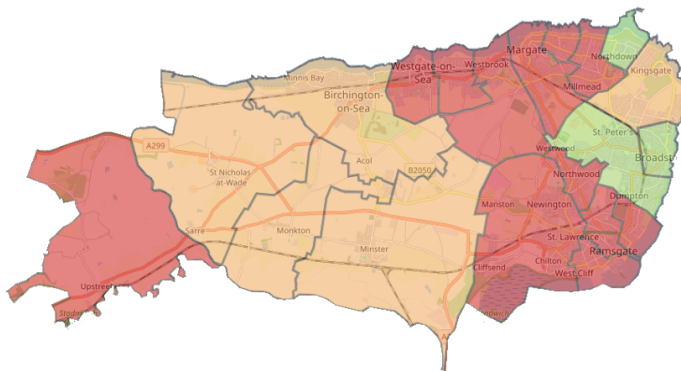
The Thanet Deanery has 20 parishes serving a population of 142,000 people, 1.4% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is largely made up of the most deprived categories, with some more affluent areas in the East.



Attendance and giving are in decline across the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers declining by 30% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has 15.6 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including two vacancies) and five curates.

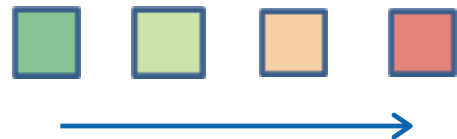
Co-Area Deans: Richard Braddy & Clifford Stocking

Lay Chair: Carole Bean

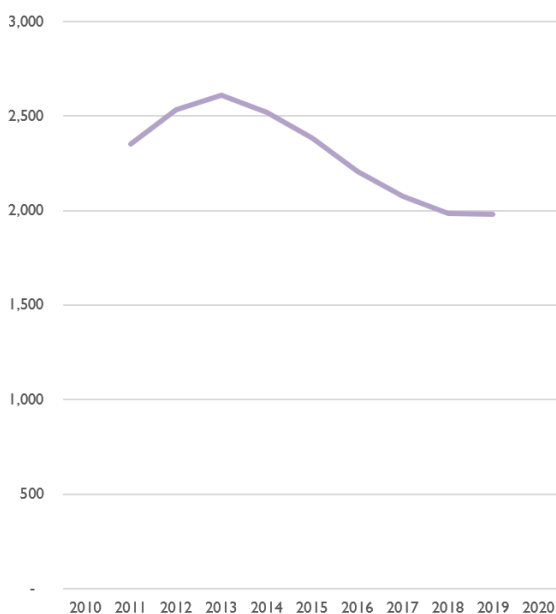


Least deprived

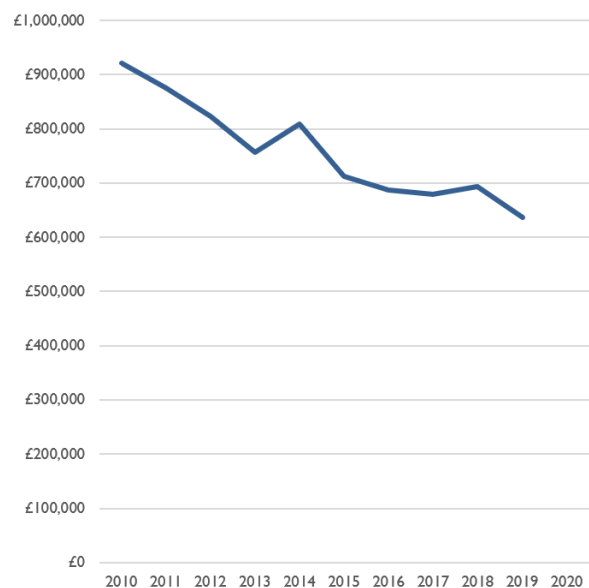
Most deprived



Attendance, Thanet Deanery



Planned Giving, Thanet
 (Real Terms, 2019 = Index)





Thanet Deanery: Plan

Creating a flourishing and sustainable future for mission and ministry in Thanet



Transformed by Hope

Introduction

Bishop Rose has written to the Diocese to say that local Deanery leaderships have been in conversations with the Diocese about the missional and financial challenges faced by the local church. Bishop Rose writes *"This is not a new conversation - many of us have seen it come and go in our time with the Church of England. However, we are in a different place now - one that offers a unique opportunity to re-imagine our present and to begin to build a more positive future for our Church."*

In beginning this dialogue, writing to Areas Deans and Lay Chairs in December Bishop Rose said:

"The speed and creativity of local churches' response to Covid has been simply amazing and I'm so grateful for your part in that. Now we need to be even more creative. For the Church, as for many other organisations, uncomfortable truths which were becoming apparent quite slowly before the pandemic are now blindingly obvious. So, as I made clear at our recent Diocesan Synod, everything is on the table."

"Our finances tell their own story. We cannot keep shoring up deficit budgets with property sales. Neither can we expect others to bail us out repeatedly - today's church should pay for today's church. We need to be financially sustainable."

The situation is that the Diocese needs to provide a balanced budget for 2022 and all Deaneries are being asked to create a plan for mission and ministry that will do that in their local area. Thanet's Deanery Mission and Ministry Committee created a small group to work on this; the group is representative of each of our four clusters. Now is the time to share information and consult more widely within the Deanery.

Before 2020 the deficit on our Deanery Parish share averaged at £135K for the preceding four years. For 2020 it is in the region of £269K and we can't see this position improving greatly in 2021. Sadly this is the reality of the task in hand. **The Diocese as a whole is conducting reviews including central operating costs including at Diocesan House.**

This initial plan is suggesting that sustainable ministry in the long-term will be 10 FTE stipendiary posts (15.2 in Jan 2020). This can only happen with retirements, people moving to a new post or working generously and together in our clusters. But as a





Deanery we are in a good place to move forward, particularly following the great work on previous plans which initially formed our clusters and have encouraged local conversations and working together.

If anything, the Covid pandemic has shown us that change is possible – even if it is difficult; and people are open to doing things differently. The last ten months have also taught us something painful about grief and loss too but as Christians we also believe in the hope of new life and resurrection. The ‘golden thread’ from the Diocesan-wide listening loops last Autumn was that ‘God has been changing us and stretching our capacity for change’. Now is the time to engage with that change as we seek to grow God’s Kingdom in our Deanery. Please read this and pray for our Deanery through this time of transition.

Below is a theological response to help us to begin to work together with a spirit of generosity. This is followed by some current facts and statistics and then an outline plan for the Deanery.

A theological response

2 Corinthians 8: 1-15 Encouragement to be generous

The Church today, certainly the part of the body that we claim to be, the Church of England, is in the middle of a time of change that has been highlighted or brought to our immediate attention by the current worldwide pandemic. Yet this is nothing new as we can read from Paul’s response to the Church in Corinth. As with the early Church, we are being asked today to be generous, not just financially, but spiritually and practically with the gifts that God has given us. The basic principle of the Church of England through the Parish System has been to provide a spiritual home for every person upon our shores and this has only been achievable by the gift of generosity where one has more, that has been given to those who have less. Over the centuries the parishes have changed in many ways, yet it could be argued that the churches have not. Today’s pandemic has brought us to a place where we will have to change if we want to use what resources we have to reach as wide as possible population and that will mean that we all need to pray for an open heart of generosity. Where we are today, we might not be tomorrow, but one constant remains that we are called to proclaim the gospel.

Some facts

Parish Share

Overall, the last five years have shown a decline in payment of parish share to the Diocese. With Mission Grants taken into account, and before 2020, the Deanery was only able to pay on average 86.5% of the share. In the last five years annual deficits were between £84K and £293K. Yet we know that the socio-economic factors across the Deanery speak to this.





Pre 2020 average deficit £135K = 13.5% of requested share
2020 deficit £269K = 24.5% of requested share
2021 deficit £??K

In 2020 Diocesan budget: Thanet Deanery Parish Share requested (£1.1m) represents 11.3% of total Diocesan income; and 12.4% of Parish Share income.

This fact is significant in Thanet Deanery needing time to devise and implement a long-term strategic plan.

Current ministry (excluding Curates)

2020 (Jan) Ordained ministry: 15.2FTE

(Curate numbers are excluded from ministry statistics in this document as they are funded centrally.

Attendance – figures provided by the national church from Parish Returns show that average weekly attendance & USA of U16 has declined 21% from:

2013: 2567 people

2019: 2030 people

Total population of Deanery c135K

Yet, two of our churches at the start of 2020 were not able to contain the growing need for provision for children and young people.

Consultation

Appendix 1 summarises responses from Parishes to two questions:

- 1.If you had one hope or vision for the mission of the church in your community what would it be? How might this be realised?
- 2.Across our Deanery or within our Clusters how might we collaborate more?
What might this look like?

Plan 2021

a)To suspend appointments in the Deanery until review carried out and plans agreed.

b)To determine:

- Deanery budget plan for next 3 years
- Number of affordable/sustainable FTE Stipendiary clergy
- Location of stipendiary clergy and what sort of ministry
- Identify how to implement the new ministry plan – including timeframe
- Strategy for generating increased lay ministry
- Numbers of active PTO and how this helps new ministry plan





- c) To plan for church / hall re-opening post lockdown
- d) To support well-being of clergy and lay colleagues

Short-term plan - by end of 2021

To suspend appointments in the Deanery until review carried out and plans agreed.

- Consultation in clusters to create local sustainable vision and plan for mission and ministry (by end July) – this will support Parishes where immediate changes have arisen; and plan for the shape of ministry in longer term should other vacancies occur.
- Diocese and Deanery to support St James Westgate and Christ Church Ramsgate following departure of incumbents (this support will be ongoing).
- This could reduce ministry costs by 3.5FTE

Mission Area	Population	Jan 2020 FTE ministry*	By end 2021? ¹	Saving by end 2021	Mid-long term (by end 20??) FTE ministry
Ramsgate	43,700	4.5	2.5	2	2.5?
Broadstairs	25,700	3	3	0	2?
Margate	48,100	5.2	4	1.2	3?
Seammarsh Group	24,200	2.5	2.2	0.3	2?
Total	141,700	15.2	11.7	3.5²	9.5?

* Not including curates

1. This includes 0.5 Assistant Curate post in the Seammarsh Group reduced to 0.2 Priest in Charge (saving 0.3); Ramsgate, Holy Trinity sharing ministry with Deal, St Andrew's (saving 0.5); not making new appointments where there are vacancies/retirements - Lay Missioner Ramsgate St Laurence, 0.5; Vicar, Ramsgate Christ Church, (1.0); Vicar, Westgate, St James (1.0); Assistant Curate Westbrook, All Saints (0.2).

2. 3.5FTE posts @ £48 470 = c£170K

With savings on Diocesan Shared costs this will help the Deanery balance its budget.

Mid-term Plan for outcomes 2022 onwards

Local conversations about future ministry plans ensuring each cluster/mission area has:

- vision for mission
- sustainable stipendiary ministry to sustain the vision
- full-time admin support
- lay ministry support
- appropriate number of buildings fit for purpose
- local and Deanery-wide mission initiatives (eg Children / Young People hubs)





Investigate appropriate structures of governance eg Group Ministry / Team Parish / other.
These conversations to be held: March-July 2021 (to begin in March)



Appendix

- Summary and observations from Deanery Parish Responses





Thanet Deanery: Appendix

Summary and observations from Deanery Parish Responses

Responses to the two discussion questions were received from 14 churches (out of 18).

These ranged from succinct answers to some detailed multiple responses.

We were also able to read some letters that were shared in response to the plan.

These have been summarised into the four areas with some observations and general comments:

Margate: there is energy within churches with current mission activities; some energy for working together sharing resources and activities. Encourage all churches to become involved; offer pastoral support and walking alongside St James while looking at their future. Next step to hold joint conversations.

Ramsgate: thinking in place as to how reduced collaborative ministry could work in this area; energy for clergy and laity to work together and hold conversations. Deanery and other Ramsgate clergy to support Christ Church to offer pastoral support and walk alongside as future is determined. There has been a developing conversation in Ramsgate over a number of years.

Seammarsh Group: good place to hold conversations for future development; themes included use of buildings / community and school engagement. Questions raised about possible shared governance / finance / resources / office / training / youth work. Need to ensure identity of all churches maintained and moving together at same speed.

Broadstairs: responses from Parish and via letter speak strongly about detailed current local activities and how these can be maintained going forward; also the need to maintain 3FTE clergy. However, second question responses speak of desire and need to increase collaboration on projects. One response (Harvest) offers a radically different approach to ministry.

General observations:

- Need to establish shared understanding of whole Deanery needs
- There is cost and pain to us all across the Deanery with this process
- Begin detailed conversations in local clusters – looking at responses / local proposals
- The only timescale we can work towards is that there is no avoidance of the issues.
- Maintain pastoral support and well-being for parishes and clergy

Carole – Lay Chair Clifford – Co-AreaDean
Richard – Co-AreaDean Steve – Deanery Accompanier





Weald Deanery: Snapshot

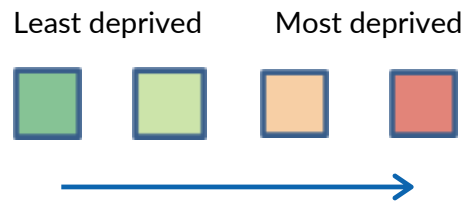
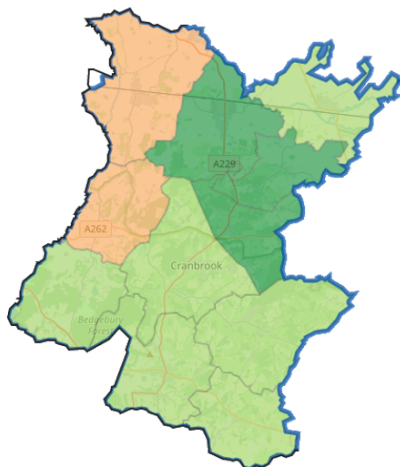
The Weald Deanery has 13 parishes serving a population of 37,303 people, 2.7% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is largely made up of the least deprived categories, with a less affluent area in North West.



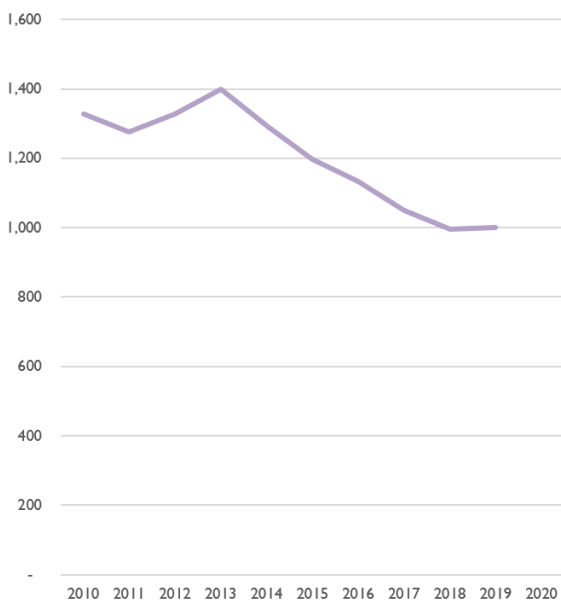
Whilst attendance has declined, total planned giving remains reasonably static, with the total number of planned givers has declined by 20% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has eight full-time equivalent stipendiary posts and one self-supporting curate.

Area Dean: Rodney Dreyer

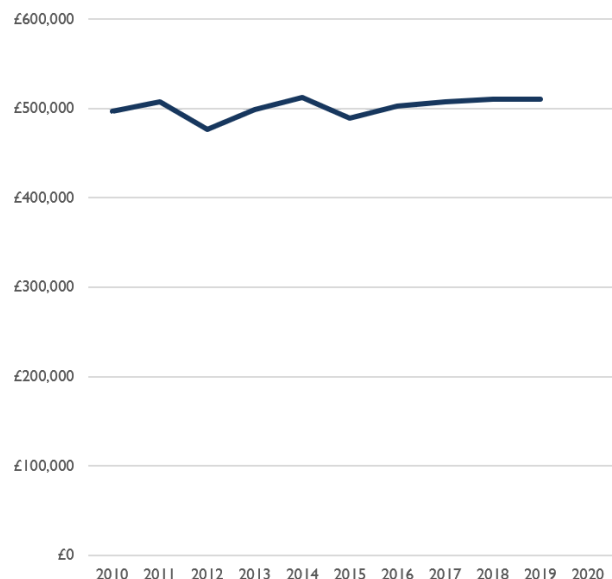
Lay Chair: Graham Codling



Attendance, Weald Deanery



Total Planned Giving
 (Real terms, index to 2019)





Weald Deanery: Plan

WEALD WIDE WEB

WORSHIP - WORK - WITNESS - SUSTAINABILITY

WORSHIP

- To be an 'invitational' church and, through seeking to develop growing and fruitful relationships with them, to encourage non-church goers into our buildings and lapsed members of the congregation to return, and to create opportunities for 'hospitality' as part of the worship experience.
- To ensure that there are sufficient clergy and/or lay people trained and available to meet different needs and interests. Fresh Expressions.
- To support one another in local churches, and within the Deanery, in prayer and where possible practical ways; e.g. to re-establish the Deanery Prayer Group, Deanery Services, encourage weekly prayers for the Deanery in all parishes, and reintroduce an Annual Pulpit Exchange with clergy.
- To vary the forms, styles and times of services and music and encourage young musicians/singers to take part.
- To discern prayerfully together what God is calling the Deanery to do.
- To hold half-yearly Deanery Eucharist Services and an Annual Deanery Confirmation Service.
- to encourage the formation and involvement in Study/Home Groups.
- To make Synod more Christ-centred with meetings beginning with a short service of worship and ending in prayer.
- To make Synod more 'open' with visiting speakers on relevant subjects/charities.
- To get the children to bring their parents to church regularly for assemblies and special services.

WORK

- To further develop social assistance, giving practical help and growing a relationship within our communities that reaches well beyond regular church-goers, e.g. Food Bank, Community Lunches for the Elderly Weekly Coffee Mornings (Village Café), Craft Group, Singing Group outside church.
- To determine what churches are doing well and encourage the sharing of, and encourage, good practice with other churches, e.g IT skills, children's work, etc.
- To encourage lay people to support their local church in whatever capacity and use their gifts to develop a 'Living Church', and to train Lay persons locally in various forms of ministry.
- To ensure that our church buildings are fit for purpose and used as a resource to serve the local community, e.g. for concerts, lectures, meetings etc.
- To ensure the regular circulation of news, information, etc between parishes to





encourage mutual support. (In Weald, via Deanery Communications Officer.)

- To determine the reasons for people not wanting to become Churchwardens or serve on the PCC or Synod.
- To improve knowledge of the work of the Deanery with regular reports of Synod business to PCC meetings and APCM; also to receive reports from parishes at Synod meetings.
- To develop and expand the existing meetings in the Deanery, e.g. between Churchwardens, Treasurers, Parish Administrators, so aiding support and a sharing of thoughts.
- To support and grow Deanery initiatives such as the School of Theology, Weald Family Hub.

WITNESS

- **To develop the relationships with schools at all levels, and to encourage new initiatives where there is lesser involvement with schools, e.g. encouraging assemblies (say, weekly).**
- **To strike a balance between nourishing existing church members, nurturing new enquirers and evoking interest in those on the fringe or beyond. Prayerful consideration of how the support is going to happen.**
- **To ensure that every pupil in the Deanery gets a really good (and fun!) experience of the Bible and a strong foundation in the word of the living God, also by inviting talented people with skills, experience, knowledge, into schools to talk to children from a church perspective and invite them with parents into school.**
- **To use the church building as an educational resource i.e. history, art, architecture, etc. in line with National Curriculum aims and objectives.**
- **As above, in Worship, to encourage an 'invitational' element by ensuring that there is a 'welcoming' mentality with an opportunity for 'hospitality' after, or during, services and events, which could appeal to lapsed or non-churchgoers.**

SUSTAINABILITY

- **To work towards meeting the Parish Share throughout the Deanery by encouraging increased giving, improved attendances and a wider use of the resources, whilst looking ahead towards maintaining sustainability.**
- **To identify other income sources to secure ongoing sustainability.**
- **To consider the future deployment of paid clergy for when vacancies arise, to meet the needs of the parishes concerned.**
- Conversations are taking place with clergy and other interested parties regarding their view of possible future arrangements.
- To engage in outreach, combining the best of our "higher traditions" with some of the more evangelical.
- To enable the continuance of the above elements of Worship, Work and Witness in maintaining sustainability within the Deanery and parishes.
- The focus must be on the **missional** as well as the **financial**.





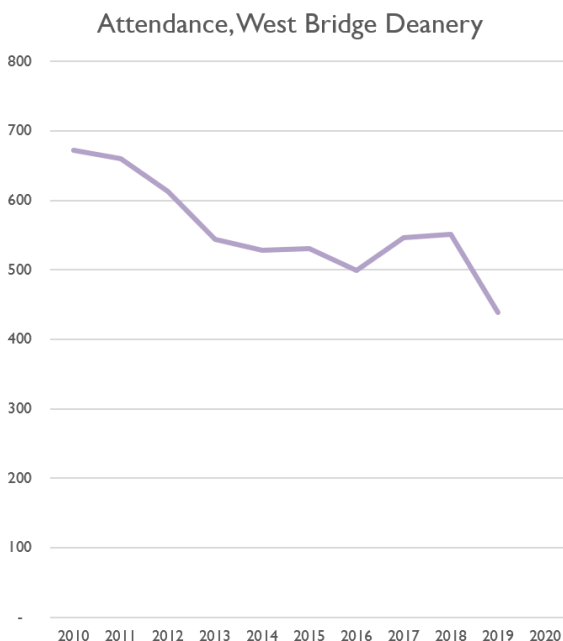
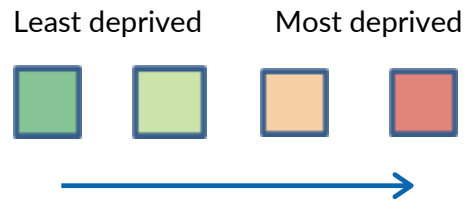
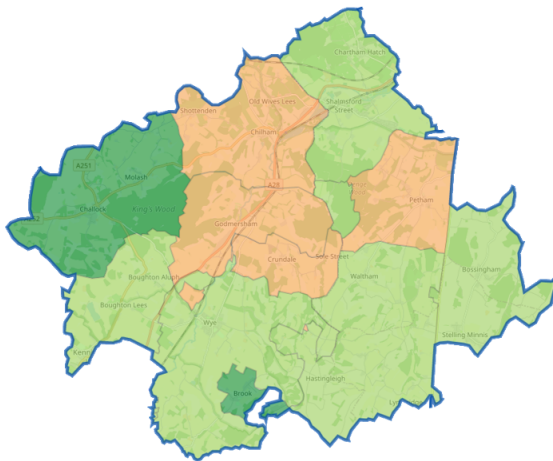
West Bridge Deanery: Snapshot

The West Bridge Deanery has 11 parishes serving a population of 16,085 people, 2.7% of whom attend church on an average weekly basis. The economic profile of the Deanery is largely made up of the least deprived categories, with less affluent areas in the Chilham, Godmerham, Crundale and Petham regions.



Attendance and giving are both in decline in the Deanery, with the total number of planned givers down by 30% over the last decade. As of April 2021, the Deanery has 3.2 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts (including one vacancy) and one self-supporting clergy post.

Area Dean: Ravi Holy





West Bridge Deanery: Plan

Conclusions

Following an open meeting of the Deanery Synod on 25 Feb 2021

The synod was very well attended (about 50 people) with good representation from all three benefices. This was encouraging because it suggested that the sense of excitement, energy and enthusiasm is not confined to the clergy but shared by lots of committed lay people – although obviously the arrival of two new incumbent-level priests in the last seven months (with a curate due to arrive soon) has been a key factor in creating this.

While people were realistic and rightly concerned about the challenges we face, the overall mood of the meeting was one of optimism and determination and several key themes emerged which offer us a roadmap for more effective mission in the immediate future.

Five proposals for an even more flourishing deanery

Asking people what they want and need: Several people suggested the creation and use of questionnaires to ask people in our communities – particularly families with children – what they actually want from the church, what would help them, rather than simply assuming that we already know. Everyone agreed that this was a good idea. One person suggested that this could be done face-to-face/door-to-door but more felt that mail or email would be more appropriate. Neville said that it's important to ask the right questions and that he has contacts who could help us with this. It would be great to do this as a deanery although clearly each questionnaire will be tailored for its local context.

Environmental issues as a way to connect with children and young people: Cathy talked about her plans for an eco-church for children in the King's Wood benefice which immediately got everyone excited. Wye in particular would be a good place to try something similar – especially as the diocesan environment officer is a member of the congregation. The importance of clergy and other church members engaging regularly with schools was affirmed while the fact that this is sometimes harder with non-church schools was also acknowledged.

The increasing popularity of pilgrimages: was also identified as a mission opportunity. Linda Cross talked about the hugely-successful Festival of Pilgrimage which took place in Wye a few years ago, organized by the Kent Downs (AONB) who are keen to make this a regular event. The Pilgrim's Way runs through all three benefices and many of the churches have significant historical features (wall paintings in Brook and Challock; possible remains of Thomas Beckett in Godmersham etc) so there could be some scope for creating a deanery-wide pilgrimage trail or walk.





The importance of community partnerships: The Pilgrimage Festival mentioned above is an example of this as is the developing relationship with the Our Place Wye community group. Several people affirmed the idea that effective mission involves 'Seeing what God is already doing and getting involved'. Church buildings – which in many cases are a burden – can be a real opportunity here playing host to mother and toddler and other groups. Obviously this is more so in big villages like Wye, Chilham and Chartham where the church buildings are in the center of the community rather than places like Stelling Minis and Upper Hardres where they are much further away but perhaps schools or church halls could be used by the church in such cases?

The game-changing reach of online services: was also noted. One retired priest said that where he couldn't imagine life without the Eucharist at the beginning of the first lockdown, the experience of worshipping online had shown him that there was 'more to church' and he felt strongly that we must continue to provide and develop online services even after the pandemic is over. In Wye, an online house-group which began as a confirmation group in the first lockdown will definitely stay online even after social distancing ends because several of the members are single parents who would not be able to attend evening meetings. Similarly, the deanery morning prayer on Zoom which is now regularly attended by between 10-12 people will remain online going forwards and the new and developing sense of collegiality in the deanery is very much to be welcomed.

Having said that, a couple of members of the synod questioned the purpose or even the point of the deanery. The treasurer said that he sometimes feels like a mere tax-collector and several people said that the deanery is perceived as irrelevant and an unnecessary extra layer of management. Most seemed to think there were clear advantages to sharing knowledge and resources and supporting each other even if, ultimately, mission strategies need to be devised and enacted at a benefice or parish level.

The view that there are too many layers of management was expressed by several people particularly with regard to parish share. Parishioners want their giving/parish share to fund priestly ministry on the ground not other officers or administrators in the diocese – although, interestingly, the clergy themselves were clear that their ministry is both enhanced and enabled by these people. Meanwhile, several people wondered whether the Church of England as a whole was structured in the most efficient way: why so many dioceses? Could merging dioceses have significant benefits in terms of economy of scale? These savings could then enable the national church/Church Commissioners to take on more of the responsibility for stipendiary ministry costs across the country.

This relates to the on-going issue of buildings which are cripplingly expensive to maintain but difficult to shut – and closure doesn't necessarily ease the financial pressure and might even make it worse. The treasurer suggested that the diocese needs to take decisive





action in this area but clearly this is far from straightforward.

Financial sustainability and mission potential

As detailed in the previous document produced for this deanery plan project (entitled 'initial thoughts') the financial picture is significantly more positive in this deanery than in many others. The Wye Benefice has always paid all of its parish share and while doing so this year will be tight and will involve making some not inconsiderable adjustments to the budget and, when possible, doing significant fundraising and a major stewardship campaign, there is both determination and a realistic expectation of continuing to do so. The size of the electoral roll, the numbers of clergy, readers and willing and able lay people – all of whom are committed to innovative missional activity and seeing the churches grow – along with the fact that new people are moving into the area all the time mean that it is realistically sustainable and likely to continue flourishing for some time to come.

King's Wood which has had some arrears in the past is now in a very good position due to a major bequest received recently and, again, the likelihood of growth due to new and exciting priestly input and missional activity. So, again, definitely sustainable for the foreseeable future with every chance and expectation of greater flourishing.

The Chartham benefice which has, similarly, had historic arrears and significant question marks over its ability to fund a full-time priest is also doggedly committed to reversing this trend under the leadership of its new interim minister and very dedicated wardens and lay people so even there there is the realistic possibility of long-term sustainability and indeed even greater flourishing than has been seen in the recent past.

In conclusion, while people are realistic about the challenges we face, we were encouraged by Archdeacon Stephen's statement (which itself echoes what Bishop Rose has said on this subject) that if we faithfully and prayerfully pursue the mission activities described above – and others which we identify as we move forward together – the finance will follow. We therefore believe that West Bridge Deanery is entering a new and exciting period in its life and that investment in a full-time priest for the Chartham Benefice will give us a very solid complement of clergy to lead a re-vision and rebuilding of the Christian ministry in the Deanery.



Appendix

- Initial thoughts





West Bridge Deanery: Appendix

Initial thoughts

Following two meetings of the M&M committee on 12 & 25 Jan 2021

What is flourishing?

In the Deanery as a whole, there is a sense of renewed energy and 'buzz' following the arrival of Cathy and Louise; the clergy say the daily office together every day (via zoom) which is completely new and very positive.

Although many of the churches are struggling with falling numbers (and therefore giving) and lack of human resources to address these, there is a 'dogged determination' to address these issues and good reason to be hopeful: significant potential in terms of numbers of people living in area.

In the Chartham Benefice: Huge potential in terms of numbers of people/new housing developments. Also lots of people willing to get more involved. New sense of cohesion and collaboration in the benefice.

In the King's Wood Benefice: Cathy introduced a new all-age service in Chilham just before the last lockdown and there are clearly families and potential there. She has established links with the schools in both Chilham and Challock which she expects to bear fruit in the future.

In the Wye Benefice: there are significant numbers of younger people coming to faith even in lockdown. The recent online confirmation class has evolved into a weekly house-group with new people still joining and becoming disciples.

In **Wye** itself, engagement with the village is good, particularly with major festivals/Remembrance etc., occasional offices and other outreach events like the 'Non-scary Halloween party' for younger children which had several hundred at it. Messy Church in **Bodsham** school (where Lorraine is a governor and very involved) and Family Services at **Petham** are extremely successful. Linda has done lots of work with **Brook** school and built up a network of young families. Linda has also been a key player in the **Our Place Wye** project and she and Ravi are currently talking to them about deepening that relationship and increased use of the Wye church building as a 'community hub'.

Overall, the pattern of services is relatively sustainable because there are lots of lay people who take services and rotas have been continually refined so that clergy are not over-loaded. The 'up the hill' cluster of 4 churches can be and is serviced by one part-time priest; the 'down the hill cluster' can similarly be serviced by one priest but at the moment there are two (one full-time, one part-time non-stipendiary).





What are the challenges?

These seem to be the same across the Deanery – and, presumably, the diocese/national church. Taking the fact that fewer people are coming to church (and that therefore there is less income) as read:

1) Lack of human resource

Cathy and Lorraine both said that they do not currently have sufficient human resource to help them in their ministry. The retired priests and readers we used to rely on are now too old or have died and there is no-one (young) to replace them. Lorraine has identified one potential Reader, but the training is possibly too daunting. Even in Wye where there are two Readers under retirement age, several active ALMs, four church wardens etc there are currently not enough volunteers to continue to run Sunday school as before (although that situation is being addressed).

2) Inhospitable nature of buildings

Cathy commented on older parishioners' lack of willingness to explore more modern forms of worship that might be more appealing to new/younger people. There is a similar parochialism with respect to considering alternative structures for parishes and benefices.

Lorraine highlighted the fact that most of her church buildings are not warm or inviting enough while Ginny (from Upper Haldes) expressed concern regarding church buildings are often far removed from the village centre/where people live.

3) The lockdown effect

Cathy, Mary (from Petham) and Nigel (from Wye) expressed concern about whether people will return to church when lockdown finally ends and whether even those who do will be less willing/able to give because of having lost jobs or fear of doing so.

4) Sacramental ministry and leadership

The present arrangements are workable, and the recent arrivals of Cathy and Louise have been a boon to their benefices and the deanery. Louise as Interim Minister is charged with healing relationships and developing leadership. Cathy's challenge is to develop interrelationships between her parish churches as parochialism is entrenched in the minds of many. The work at Chartham will take time, but the parish population encourages investment. If clergy numbers drop through retirement or ill-health, priestly provision will require significant redeployment.

Suggested solutions for a sustainable future

1) Human resource

Some of us felt that there is a clear need for a level of training that is more rigorous than the ALM training but not as demanding as that for Readers (although Ravi believes that the ALM





training is very good). Everyone agreed that more training/equipping for lay people is essential. Training should include preaching and how to lead worship in general (including All-Age Services), public intercessions and small/home groups. Training in youth work and general pastoral care would also be helpful. Could this training be on-line? Louise and Cathy also suggested training in use of social media etc.

Nigel wondered whether deanery teams could be created to help with schools and youth work across the deanery and whether the deanery churches could similarly collaborate for major feasts. The concept of a (paid) deanery childrens' and/or youth worker was, in fact, discussed at the last deanery synod and nobody in the M&M objects to the idea of a deanery youth group. However, Lorraine felt strongly (and Ravi agrees) that ministry in schools is highly relational. It takes time to build up trust and relationships with the schools which is not necessarily transferable. Meanwhile, major festivals are the very occasions when lots of people are willing to turn up to their local church (for crib services, Remembrance Sunday etc) so this would be the very worst time to change the location of services. However, occasional 'fifth Sunday' deanery services (instead of or in addition to the existing benefice services) may be something worth exploring.

2) Buildings

There was a lot of discussion about the pros and cons of shutting buildings. As stated above, they can be inhospitable and cripplingly expensive to run (although Wye is lucky to have a substantial trust fund that can only be used on fabric and Chilham has recently received a very significant bequest). However, shutting buildings doesn't necessarily help. If, say, Elmsted (which is one of the three churches in the Parish upon the Hills within the Wye benefice) were to close, the other two parishes would, presumably have to pay half of the required parish share rather than a third as they currently do. And this principle applies generally: the strategy of grouping more and more non-viable churches with bigger churches that can still 'afford a vicar' is pointless if an ever-decreasing number of parishioners are expected to fund ministry in an ever-increasing geographical area. Similarly, the concept of Festival churches solves nothing; better to close redundant church buildings in a way that generates income for the benefice/deanery or to find other ways of generating income so that the on-going costs of stipendiary and other ministry can be funded without looking to the church members who are already giving as much as they can.

Concern was expressed with a policy that 'you only get a vicar if you can pay for one.' This is the opposite of the Church of England's calling to be the church for all people and also contrary to the idea that God is there for all people with a particular concern for the poor: the rich get a vicar, the poor don't!





3) Post-Lockdown?

Obviously this has been a factor in reduced numbers and income but equally it has simply exposed problems that were there anyway. All our churches will need to do significant fund-raising and look at ways of cutting costs both once the lockdown is over and in the interim. But lockdown has also created exciting new opportunities: the Deanery clergy say morning prayer together, the Wye Benefice Confirmation group enabled several single Mums to become part of church life, Cathy has set up a 'virtual condolence book' for people who have died of Covid in the benefice and a 'King's Wood Heroes' scheme to honour people who have particularly helped the community during the pandemic and there are successful online church services in all three benefices. Plus there may be ways of fund-raising or doing 'collections' online.

4) Schools

Everyone recognises good work that is taking place in most schools and, where there is limited involvement, this is being strategically addressed. In two benefices, the clergy are new but keen to get stuck in; in the Wye benefice, two of the schools have had a change of head in recent times so the relationships have had to be renegotiated but this is going well with one of the new heads now worshipping regularly in Wye church on Sundays.



Bottom line

It's been – and still is – a difficult time for all sectors and everyone will be 'starting afresh' when lockdown ends. The fact that the deanery has this new sense of energy and collegiality at this particular time is a happy 'coincidence' and, in spite of the challenges, there is much to be positive about. While there may be question marks over each benefice's ability to continue to pay their parish share both now and in the future, everyone is committed to finding ways to do this and the potential of each benefice is such that any reduction to the current clergy resource would be counter-productive to the mission of God in this area.





What happens next?

This document represents the culmination of more than a year of listening, discernment and deliberation about what a flourishing and sustainable future for our whole diocese might look like.

Thank you so much to everyone who has taken part in that big conversation, which has taken place during a period of unprecedented disruption and uncertainty due to the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Over the preceding pages we have sought to set out the first iteration of this programme for transformation of our diocese. This plan identifies what needs to be done, both collectively and locally, over the coming months to help us to move towards that flourishing and sustainable future. This is the first time we've drawn together all these key elements in one place, alongside our vision for the journey, helping us to take a look at that bigger picture.

The publication of this document is by no means the end of the story - it signals the beginning of a new chapter in our life as a diocesan family and our plans will continue to change, grow and evolve as we take this crucial work forward together. Further work is likely to include:

- A review of the shared learning from our deanery plans - exploring how good ideas and learning from one deanery might benefit others.
- Clarifying the resources and support that our deaneries will need to deliver on their plans.
- The outline projects will need to be developed into project briefs, with specific actions and timelines.
- Our Archbishop's Council will be responsible for monitoring the development of the plan and our progress on its delivery. As this document is considered, further considerations are likely to be raised and other areas of work might need to be developed.
- Identification of what we may have missed here - what else needs our attention?





Timeline

When?	Who?	What?
April 2021	Archbishop's Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Outline Programme Plan • Outline what further work they would like to see undertaken
April 2021 - August 2021	Episcopal Staff Team Area Deans Lay Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine plans • Develop detailed project documents
June 2021	Archbishop's Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive update on Programme Plan • Consider bid to Church Commissioners for Strategic Transformation Funding • Receive revised 2021 budget • Consider potential 2022 budget
July 2021	Diocesan Synod	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive revised 2021 budget • Agree potential 2022 budget
September 2021	Episcopal Staff Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earliest opportunity for submission of stage 1 bid to Church Commissioners*
September 2021	Archbishop's Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive update on Programme Plan • Receive update on progress with bid for Strategic Transformation Funding

* The Strategic Investment Board meets several times a year. Strategic Transformation Funding is in two stages.





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