

# Kent Downs and Malling Team

**additional background information  
for interested candidates**



# Contents

## A brief look at...

St Margaret's, Addington and its community .....	3
All Saints, Birling and its community .....	5
Ss Peter & Paul, Leybourne and its community .....	7
St Michael & All Angels, Offham and its community .....	9
St Martin's, Ryarsh and its community .....	11
St Peter & St Paul, Trottiscliffe and its community .....	13
St Mary-the-Virgin, West Malling and its community .....	15
Our place in the Church of England .....	17
Ecumenical relationships.....	19
Contact information .....	20



# A brief look at St Margaret's, Addington and its community

## The church building and its history

St Margaret's is mentioned in the Domesday Book but the Nave dates from the 15th Century with some 19th Century additions. The church seats about 100 in the nave, has two side chapels and the fabric is in good order. The tower has four bells and bells are rung at festivals and some Sunday morning services. We also have church room adjoining the church, with tea and coffee making facilities. As well as our own activities, it is offered free of charge to groups from outside of the Parish for Christian activities.

The church is fully accessible and has an accessible WC with baby change facilities.



## The people, our worship and outreach

We believe that the Bible is the definitive word of God, and we encourage our members to have a personal and saving relationship with Jesus. The worship style at St Margaret's is relaxed evangelical. Our non-eucharistic services are led by our lay team of three Licensed Lay Ministers and we have one additional leader who has completed the Diocesan "Speaking God's Word" course.

Music and its role in worship is a particular strength of our church and worship is led by our group of gifted musicians who introduce new songs on a regular basis. There is no formal choir and except for the Christmas Carol Service we do not use the organ. Our relaxed contemporary worship style is a fundamental part of St Margaret's.,

Our culture is one of giving. We believe that God provides, and we do not fund-raise. We are financially sound with a healthy reserve and give a minimum 10% of our income, which mainly comes from planned giving. Last year we gave to TEAR Fund, The Salvation Army, Smile and Fields of Life.



*Angel Space Addington, 2019*

We have been exploring ways to reach out to the village and in the summer of 2019 we held “Angel Space” on the green. This was our gift to the village and included music, activities, and free food. At Easter we put ‘Stones of Hope’ with prayers on the Green and at Christmas our Carol service and Christingle services were also held there.

We aim to use people’s gifts where available and one of our blessings is that most of our congregation give their services to God in various ways, including welcoming, reading, music ministry, serving and making coffee and refreshments, cleaning, visiting and children’s work. One of our biggest challenges is finding people to teach the children during Sunday services and we have been encouraged by being able to re-start this ministry during 2024.



## Looking to the future

Our vision is “Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known”.

Looking to the future our wish is to:

- ❖ expand our children’s work to include ‘Children’s Church’ in every service and to encourage more families to try Messy Church;
- ❖ develop outreach to have more links with the village;
- ❖ Establish a succession plan for key leadership roles in our church.

# A brief look at All Saints, Birling and its community

## The church building and its history

All Saints is a large church that sits in the centre of the village, with an open churchyard that is much visited by the community. It is a Grade I listed building and appears in the Domesday Book, formerly under the care of the Nevill Family and now the Diocese. We are experimenting with having the church building open every day in order to make it accessible to everyone in the village as a place of peace and prayer which is there for them.

The worship style at All Saints is relaxed and our preaching is scripturally led. We focus on what God teaches through his Word. We have a small but gifted group of musicians that play at each service. We value the intergenerational richness of our small congregation.





## The people, our worship and outreach

We are a family-friendly, forward-looking congregation with a good number of young people, bursting with ideas but short on resource. We have a heartfelt desire that others from the community join us. Community events held at All Saints include art exhibitions and concerts, including our popular 'Pimms and Hymns.' Recently we have held two successful 'pop up' craft afternoons for all ages. We ran a support group through Covid to help those in need and invited the village to create a trail of hope up the church steps.

## Looking to the future

We are fully embracing the opportunity of being part of the Kent Downs and Malling Team. We know that a sustainable future depends on continuing to engage with the wider village community to enable a sense of greater shared ownership of the church building and churchyard. Our mission and ministry continues to be inspired by a desire for all to respond to the gracious invitation of Jesus Christ to know him as Saviour and Lord.



# A brief look at Ss Peter & Paul, Leybourne and its community

## The church building and its history

Ss Peter & Paul Church is around 1,000 years old. Part of the nave wall is reputed to be pre-conquest and contains a 12th century decorated Norman window. The church was substantially restored in 1874. The building is Grade II\* listed. The churchyard contains graves dating from the 1700s to the present day, as well as cremated remains. The stained glass is all modern because the windows were blown out by a flying bomb during World War II. They have been recently surveyed and need repair and cleaning and fundraising for this work has started. The church contains a Heart Shrine, dedicated to Sir Roger de Leybourne, friend of Edward I, who died on Crusade and whose heart was sent home for burial.

The church building has recently been re-ordered. The church was re-roofed, redecorated and now has an accessible toilet, a tea bar and Wi-Fi.

## The people, our worship and outreach

We are a busy church of all ages with exactly 100 people on the Electoral Roll. Post-COVID typical Sunday attendance is 50 plus of all ages. We believe music is a powerful aid to worship and we are forming a children's music club "The Leybourne Melody Makers" and an informal Praise Group to lead the music on Sunday mornings. There will also be a Festival Choir to sing at special services including baptisms, weddings and funerals, as required.

We also believe in using people's talents and interests, and many in our congregation give their services through roles on our committees - Fundraising, Fabric and Social – assisting during services as sidespeople, writing intercessions, providing refreshments, gardening, pastoral care and much more.

In the past most of the wider community events in Leybourne have been led by our church fundraising committee. For example, we have organised outdoor concerts, afternoon teas, BBQs, Christmas and other events. The Parish Council hold a Christmas tree lighting and other celebrations in which we participate.

The PCC has passed a resolution to apply as an "Inclusive Church", affirming our inclusion of all – irrespective of race, gender or sexuality.



## Looking to the future

We have embraced the opportunity to become part of the Kent Downs and Malling Team. We believe that we are the Church – not just a building. Our mission statement is “Leybourne Church seeks to serve God through prayer, worship, action and example in the wider community”.

We want to be at the heart of our community, providing pastoral care wherever it is needed, developing worship and growth in spirituality, reaching out afresh to children and young families, and whilst ensuring that all ages, and types of people feel equally valued.

Our services range from informal and lay-led to traditional Anglo-Catholic. Post-covid we have taken the opportunity to review and refresh the way forward for our Church community and as a result we now live-stream our services.

We have identified our priorities as reaching out to families and children and engaging more imaginatively with our local community. We started a new music ministry in September 2022, set up a successful children’s choir, the Melody Makers, and have re-started our Toddler Praise group.





# A brief look at St Michael & All Angels, Offham and its community

## The church building and its history

St Michael's Church lies half a mile to the north of the village of Offham. The greater part of our small, simple and beautiful Grade I listed church is 13th century with a number of key historic features. We look forward to sharing more about the story of our church with our new Team Vicar as they begin to settle in. In 2018, we purchased a new digital organ to enhance our music and worship. A great deal of work carried out over the last two Quinquennials has left the building structurally sound and in very good repair. The Churchyard ragstone wall has been completely renovated and rebuilt in recent years by the 'can-do' attitude of volunteers from the church congregation and the local community.



## The people, our worship and outreach

St Michael's has a healthy level of church attendance with an Electoral Roll of 62 and our finances are reasonably sound. Our Sunday services offer a regular rotation in both music and worship style, with support for children through our All-Age service (once a month) and Sunday School. Holy Communion is celebrated two or three times a month, accompanied by the organ and congregational singing. The All-Age service's sung worship is led by a music group. We run Alpha each year and share in the mix of House Groups, Lent courses, Pub Theology and occasional groups taking place in the Benefice. At major festivals, we run a variety of events and services, including a willingness to experiment with styles of worship and services such as Tenebrae in Holy Week or Taizé prayer.

St Michael's is well-regarded in our local community and is involved in village life through May Day, Christmas Carols in the pub, and a strong and supportive relationship with the school. We have good relationships with Barfield Farm (cherries), and with Laurence J Betts Ltd (lettuce and salads), whose farm adjoins St Michael's.

In recent years, St Michael's was pivotal in establishing a Community Network in the village to support the elderly and vulnerable during the Coronavirus lockdowns. We worked with civic groups and local residents to provide an umbrella organisation of volunteers and to ensure no-one was without help.

## Looking to the future

Over the last ten years, we've been able to grow our Electoral Roll and Sunday attendance, deal with all the major fabric concerns and initiate some new children's ministry. We understand the demands on modern family living and have tried to adopt a creative approach in understanding the needs of our community, with an emphasis on serving all ages. We are always keen to look for opportunities to reach people with the Gospel and serve our community with the love of Christ.

We recognise that we have a particular challenge and calling in reaching out to migrant farm workers from Eastern Europe and beyond who spend significant time in the parish each year. Post-pandemic, we also know we have challenges with rebuilding regular attendance in church while also looking at our parish-wide communications after the demise of the Parish Magazine during lockdown. A long-term aspiration is to see if we might add some facilities to St Michael's through a modest extension that could provide a toilet and refreshment facilities in the building itself and to improve our opportunities for worship, community engagement and outreach. We look forward to continuing to work with our Team Rector and our new Team Vicar to further develop mission and ministry at St Michael's.



*The Village Service, 2019*



# A brief look at St Martin's, Ryarsh and its community



## The church building and its history

St Martin's is an attractive Norman 'plague' church situated some way from the centre of the village. The church seats approximately 100. The church has a fine pipe organ and three bells. The fabric of the church is in good order. St Martin's has its own Church Hall, 300 yards from the church, providing plenty of parking for services. The Hall, built in the 1970s, is owned and maintained by the PCC. It has recently been completely refurbished and redecorated with new heating, kitchen, flooring and toilet facilities. The hall is used for many church and village activities and can be hired for private events.

## The people, our worship and outreach

St Martin's is a vibrant, happy church. It has a very warm, welcoming atmosphere and an all-age congregation. Though numbers are small, everyone plays an active part in worship and ministry offering their gifts to the

furtherance of God's work. We are of low churchmanship, with a variety of services both formal and informal. Activities for children are provided at each service. There are currently 40 people on the Electoral Roll. The church gives 10% of its income to Christian charities each year, which we would wish to maintain.

We currently have a Holy Communion Service on the first Sunday of each month and an All Age Service on the third Sunday. Our talented musicians and children play a full part.



We have a strong history of outreach activities. The church is set apart from the village and so we regularly take the church to the village. For example, placing pots of jam on the doorstep of new residents when the estate was first opened, or the annual Nativity service held in the grounds of the village pub. We hold occasional popup coffee mornings on the village green, and during the Jubilee weekend we organised both a concert and tea party in the village hall – attended by 168 residents of the village. On the Sunday we held a Platinum Jubilee Service of Celebration.



To bring the village to St Martin's, in recent years we have held both a Wedding and Quilting Festival, a 'Royal Romanovs' dinner party, a 'Portrait of St Martin' Art Exhibition, and 'McMartinis' drinks and canapes evenings.

Children's work has traditionally played an important part in the life of St Martin's. Stepping Stones for primary school aged children meets once a month on a Friday evening. We have positive links with our local primary school at Ryarsh and nearby Valley Invicta Primary School at Leybourne Chase.



## Looking to the future

The Kent Downs and Malling Team Benefice was formed over a year ago under the strong leadership of our Rector, Revd Canon Dr Helen Burn, with the Vicar, Revd. David Green, and the Curate, Kelly Parsons. The resources among the seven churches are rich, and a good support network is building.

It is good that the process of streamlining and improving communication is happening. The seven PCCs agreed to form a Joint Council. There will be an elected representative from each church. The Joint Council can make decisions on the agreed matters and will hasten the time it will take to go through the seven PCCs in future. It is good news that The Bishop Council has approved the Joint Council.

We are sorry to lose our servant-hearted Vicar to another Parish. He is talented in many ways, such as his excellent IT skills, knowledge in many areas, eg weddings, baptisms, funerals, churchyard, etc., good communication and listening skills, and working closely with the local community.

We are looking forward to recruiting a new Vicar to fill the void.



# A brief look at St Peter & St Paul, Trottiscliffe and its community

## The church building and its history

St Peter & St Paul is a Grade I listed 11th century pilgrim church, nestling beneath the North Downs and situated close to the Pilgrims Way in Kent. It has been a place of worship and pilgrimage for almost ten centuries and is highly valued by many visitors and pilgrims seeking a quiet place of prayer on their journey. The church is kept open every day for this purpose by a dedicated team of volunteers from the village and for the village community as a whole.



## The people, our worship and outreach

There are 47 people on the Church Electoral Roll and, at the last October count, 26 people attended two services.

At present there are two services a month plus additional services for special occasions such as Easter, Christmas, Remembrance Sunday. One service a month is Common Worship Holy Communion, and the other service is A Service of the Word and led by a Lay Reader. This service normally has a folk group which helps to make this service less formal. The style of worship is traditional but relaxed. We hope that the warmth of our welcome and strength of our commitment are felt when entering the church.

The Church and Village Hall Committee are well known for being very community orientated and work together on many projects. At present a project to install a toilet and kitchenette facility in the Church has been started.

We hold various events from time to time in the church including concerts and special services for the local Church School. In addition, there are other church sponsored events usually held in the Village Hall such as Harvest Suppers, Jumble Sales, Christmas Bazaars, Plant Sales, and other events held outside, such as the Garden Safari, Pilgrims Lunch, Ride & Stride sponsorship day and lighting of the beacon for special events like the Jubilee. The church bell was rung for one hour after the deaths of the Duke of Edinburgh and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. All these events are organised and run by local volunteers within the church community.



The Plough at Trottiscliffe is run by a Christian family who attend St Margaret's and is also a great location. It was bought by the village as a community asset. The pub supports the church in a variety of ways such as providing cake and coffee free after the Remembrance Day Service. In the winter months, during Covid, the pub provided soup and rolls and profits of around £2,000 from this outreach were given to the church.

There is a beacon in the village which is used for special occasions such as HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We had a ball in the Village Hall, champagne around the beacon, a cricket match with teams from Trottiscliffe Church and Addington Church competing, a special

service in Church, including planting of a Jubilee Tree, and a street party including a village choir. The church building was specially decorated by a team of volunteers for the four days during which these events took place

The Church of England Primary School situated in the heart of Trottiscliffe is a vital part of the church community and is thriving. The Team Rector is an ex-officio member of the Governing Body. This contact between the Team Rector and the school provides important outreach through leading assemblies and taking part in school religious activities both in the church and at School as necessary as well as meeting parents and establishing a rapport with staff and students.

We play a full part in joint Team initiatives including Messy Church and the 'Village Voices' choir, Fellowship and Bible Study groups.

## Looking to the future

We have embraced the opportunities which being part of a Team of seven has opened up. We are about to launch The Friends of Trottiscliffe Church and we are full of hope about ways in which the already strong bonds between church and village can be encouraged and deepened.

# A brief look at St Mary-the-Virgin, West Malling and its community

## The church building and its history

St Mary's sits in a wonderful position at the top of the High Street in West Malling. The tower and the western part of the chancel remain from the original Norman church that was built by Bishop Gundulph nearly 1,000 years ago. Listed Grade II\*, the church is open every day and with the footpath through the churchyard being a key thoroughfare, many people pass by every day and some come in to light a candle, pray or simply sit for a while.

St Mary's are currently planning a major re-ordering scheme which will see an extensive refurbishment to modernise facilities, including underfloor heating, replacement seating and new sound and lighting facilities. An extension is also planned to house a flexible community space and for the children's use on Sundays, toilets and kitchen facilities. Around £1m has been raised with more fund-raising still to do. We hope to fold the recommendations in the current Quinquennial into the re-ordering.

## The people, our worship and outreach

There are just under 100 people on our Electoral Roll and across the average month, we see a wide range of people through our connections to the local CEP school and contacts from the Occasional Offices. Our online ministry during the Pandemic was very successful with a number of new people

added to our number and we've been pleased to carry out six adult baptisms in 2022 as a sign of that new growth. Nonetheless, we do face challenges and attendance in-person has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels and our General Fund finances remain a concern.

Twice a month we celebrate the Eucharist with organ and robed choir, while a music group leads our All-Age's service. We also have a well-attended Book of Common Prayer service each week with attendance usually around 10-15 people. Music is very much at the heart of our Worship in Church. Our Director of Music has been instrumental in the creation of one Organ and four choral annual scholarships (SATB), revitalising the adult choir and starting up the Treblemakers junior choir, working closely with local schools to bring through future scholars. We now can number around 25 to 30 people in the choir stalls on a Sunday.

We have a growing music band for the All Age Services, comprising of members of the congregation including some of the children. The band perform a mixture of



modern worship hymns and songs that the children might know from school, engaging all ages. This area of worship continues to grow providing a more modern style that is proving to be popular with families.



*St Mary's Choir, Scholars and Treblemakers, 2022*

We share in the mix of House Groups, Lent courses, Pub Theology and occasional groups taking place in the Benefice. At major festivals, we run a variety of events and services and, as the largest church in the Deanery, we are often called upon to host civic events and other major services.

We have good relationships with the Parish Council and various local community organisations. St Mary's hosts several musical events throughout the year including the annual Music at Malling Festival which runs over ten days and attracts internationally acclaimed musicians in a variety of styles. In recent years, St Mary's was pivotal in establishing a Community Network in the town to support the elderly and vulnerable during the Coronavirus lockdowns. We worked with civic groups and local residents to provide an umbrella organisation of volunteers and to ensure no-one was without help.

## Looking to the future



*Revd David's tenth anniversary party, 2021*

There is a strong sense of renewal in St Mary's and hope for the future. Today there are many ways in which we share the Gospel throughout the year. Our building may have old stonework, but our worshipping community are living stones. We hope to see the Team flourish and for our church community to grow within the Parish and beyond. At present, our church building is hindering that vision in various ways and so we also hope to widen the use of the building through the reordering, creating a hub that can provide a varied selection of events, both

church and community related. We understand the demands on modern family living for local people, and we think this requires us to be creative in shaping the church week and format of worship, understanding the needs of our community, being flexible and with an emphasis put on serving all ages.

We would like to see:

- ❖ Growth in numbers and spirituality within the congregation and to encourage growth of ministry offered by lay people.
- ❖ Encourage more young people into our church and continue to nurture the good and close links we have with West Malling C of E Primary School.
- ❖ Continue to encourage our strong and varied tradition of both contemporary and traditional music in our church, further encouraging you children, teenagers, and young adults to join in.



# Our place in the Church of England

We are geographically situated in the Diocese of Rochester. The Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs was installed as the new Bishop of Rochester on the 24th of September 2022. We have a suffragan Bishop in the Diocese, the Rt Revd Simon Burton-Jones who been the Bishop of Tonbridge since 2018. The Diocese is split into three archdeaconries, and we have been looked after by the Ven Sharon Copestake, the Archdeacon of Tonbridge, who will be stepping down from this role in October 2024.

## Rural Deanery of Malling

The boundaries of this deanery extend as far north as Bluebell Hill and the edge of the Medway conurbation. We are on the border of Canterbury diocese with Barming the easternmost parish and our Team forms part of the western edge of the deanery.

There are 23 parishes in the deanery grouped in eight benefices. There is also a Bishop's Mission Order in place for Kings Hill. Around the deanery, there are a number of challenges relating to new housing development. There is a wide range of churchmanship within the Deanery, and even within the seven parishes of our Team.

Our Area Dean is Revd Danielle Pearson-Smith, Vicar of All Saints with Christ Church, Snodland.

There is an expectation that clergy attend Deanery Chapter meetings and play their part in Deanery Synod.

### Malling Deanery



Digital map from Dotted Eyes. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.  
© Crown copyright and database right 2010. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence Number 1000019918.



Revd Danielle Pearson-Smith

## **Strategic local Anglican links in the vicinity**

West Malling has increasingly become a hub of activity within the Diocese because of Malling Abbey and its grounds. All based on the same site, we are blessed to have a number of important sister organisations on our doorstep.

### **Malling (St Mary's) Abbey**

The Abbey is home to a community of Anglican Benedictine Nuns in a closed order. They continue a daily rhythm of prayer, worship, work and study. The Abbess is Sister Anne Clarke OSB.  
[www.mallingabbey.org](http://www.mallingabbey.org)

### **Pilsdon at Malling Community**

Pilsdon is a Christian-based community which seeks to provide an environment where people can rebuild their lives after experiencing a crisis, whether sudden or progressive. They offer a safe home for those working through depression, alcoholism, addiction, divorce or bereavement. The Guardian is the Revd James McKeran. [www.pilsdonatmall.org.uk/](http://www.pilsdonatmall.org.uk/)

### **St Augustine's College of Theology**

Formerly known as the South-East Institute for Theological Education (SEITE), the College provides part-time training for Ordinands and a number of theological courses at post-graduate, Masters or PhD level. The Principal is Revd Alan Gregory. [www.staugustinescollege.ac.uk/](http://www.staugustinescollege.ac.uk/)

### **St Benedict Centre**

On the same site as the Abbey is an exciting collaboration between the Sisters and the Diocese to provide a training location and (day only) retreat centre. The diocesan Bishop's Certificate, Licensed Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Development programmes are run from St Benedict's. Rooms can also be booked for quiet days, retreat or study. [www.stbenedictscentre.org](http://www.stbenedictscentre.org)

# Ecumenical relationships

## **West Malling Baptist Church**

The Baptist Church has been in West Malling since 1836 and is a significant partner ecumenically for St Mary-the-Virgin in West Malling. Their pastor is the Revd Dave Baxter who has been in post since 2015.

## **St Thomas More RC Church**

West Malling is also home to a Catholic congregation that draws from a wide area almost the size of the Anglican deanery. An independent parish since 1960, Fr Donatus is the parish priest.

# Contact information

Having read the Parish Profile and this additional information, if you have unanswered questions or wish to talk further about anything contained in this document, please contact the Revd Nick Cornell; his details are below.

Revd Nick Cornell

The Rectory, 86 Prospect Place, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 0EG

Phone: 07946 220638

Email: [nick.cornell@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:nick.cornell@rochester.anglican.org)

If you would like to have an informal conversation with our Team Rector, she would be very happy to chat with you; her details are below.

Revd Canon Dr Helen Burn

Team Rector

Leybourne Rectory, 73 Rectory Lane North, Leybourne, ME19 5HD

Phone: 07868 124623

Email: [rector@kentdownsmalling.church](mailto:rector@kentdownsmalling.church)