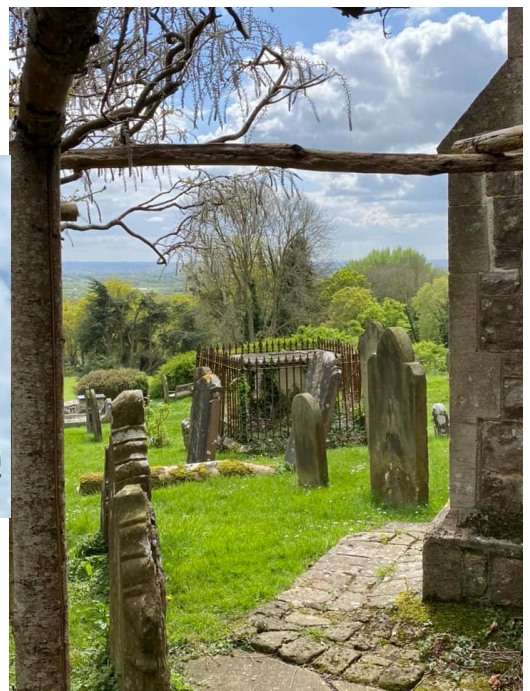


St Peter's Church, Boughton Monchelsea, Kent

Vacancy for Part-Time Parish Priest



Parish Profile
August 2024

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Who are we looking for?

Boughton Monchelsea Church is looking for an inspirational, mission focused, caring communicator to be our new parish priest. This is a part-time position, entailing Sunday duty plus three days. It comes with housing and a 50% stipend.

You will:

- have a strong faith, being Holy Spirit-led, prayerful and centred on the Bible
- be mission focused, with a clear vision and sense of God's purpose
- have a sense of humour, be energetic and youthful in outlook
- be an enthusiastic preacher of God's word

Helpful (but not essential) experience:

- The semi-rural context and the opportunities and challenges ministry in such places can bring
- Developing ministry to children and young people – a key objective for the parish

Key skills:

- Excellent pastoral skills
- Excellent communication and listening skills
- Excellent spiritual leadership and management

Our priorities

Boughton Monchelsea includes St Peter's Church and Junction, a Fresh Expressions church plant formed in 2010. Our priorities are:

- to develop new ways of connecting with people in the local community of all ages, especially children
- to develop new ways of supporting people of all ages to become committed to Christ and become active disciples in our church community
- to facilitate the further spiritual and vocational development of our existing ministry teams
- to support and facilitate the spiritual development and gifting of our current congregations

Our vision

We aim to be lively, joyful Christian congregations who are:

- committed to Christ and each other
- being built into deeper discipleship
- reaching out and serving our wider community
- bringing new people into the kingdom

We believe our vision complements the current mission strategy for the Canterbury diocese.

What we can offer you

- Committed and capable ministry teams and a well organised PCC keen to support you in your work
- Caring and supportive church congregations with people keen to grow in faith and expand God's kingdom
- An active and supportive "Friends of St Peter's" independent charity contributing to the upkeep and development of church fabric
- An attractive historic church in a beautiful setting overlooking a deer park and the Weald of Kent
- A friendly village with a good community spirit

Who to contact

If you sense that God may be calling you to minister at Boughton Monchelsea please contact:

- The Churchwardens for an informal conversation
 - Carol – caroljparry@hotmail.com
 - Peter – peter@holland.me.uk
- The Archdeacon of Maidstone, the venerable Andrew Sewell to discuss the role (andrew.sewell@archdeacmaid.org)

In preparation for this Parish Profile a questionnaire was used to gain views of people in all congregations and the wider community. 51 questionnaires were returned. The views expressed have fed into the parish profile. See Appendix for a summary of the feedback received from the questionnaire.

Worship

The electoral roll at Boughton Monchelsea includes both St Peter's and Junction and is currently 139 people. Around 40% live in the parish with another 45% living in the south Maidstone area and the remaining 15% slightly further away.

St Peter's

The main 10.15 am service at St Peter's is either Holy Communion or Morning Prayer, and has a congregation each week of around 40 – 60. Services include a variety of liturgy and hymns or worship



songs. Once a month, the worship is led by a band with guitars, while on other Sundays the organ and piano are used, and worship includes more traditional hymns. The congregation, who come from a wide range of different church backgrounds, are appreciative of a variety of musical styles. A dedicated team of bell-ringers ring most Sundays before the 10.15 service, as well as ringing for weddings and at other local churches. Twice a month there is an 8.00 am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion service, attended by a faithful congregation of around 10-15 people. This service is spoken, with no hymns. The two Churchwardens and two Deputy Churchwardens are supported by many teams of volunteers in organising all aspects of services.

Junction



Junction meets weekly at 10.30 in the Village Hall. Gatherings generally consist of 20-25 people, with an age range from 40 to 80. Currently, members consist of a mix of mature and newer Christians. Communion is generally administered once a month by a minister from

St Peter's. Worship is varied and contemporary, keeping abreast of new praise songs. The praise and worship are a mixture of live praise led by a couple who attend Junction, alternating with screen worship coordinated by the tech team.

Junction's mission statement is encapsulated in the words 'Love, Heal, Grow, Send.' Its aims are:

- To be welcoming to all
- To befriend the unchurched
- To provide hospitality
- To break down social barriers

Festivals

Festival services have historically been well attended by the wider community, although since Covid this is taking time to rebuild.

The team of flower arrangers excel themselves at festival times.



Services over Christmas include Carols by Candlelight and a Nativity service, as well as carols on the village green organised by Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council.

On Good Friday there is a walk of witness in the village, with a service of worship on the village green, followed by hot cross buns in a local home.

Remembrance Sunday is well attended by uniformed organisations.



The annual patronal Rose Festival service takes place in the churchyard, weather permitting.

Occasional Offices

St Peter's Church is popular for weddings, with as many as 12 in some years, and 8 booked for 2024. Around 10 baptisms are carried out annually. The churchyard remains open for burials and interment of ashes for parishioners, with around 20 funeral or thanksgiving services and interments of ashes conducted annually in the church or churchyard.

Church Life

Core Groups

St Peter's Core Group includes the Churchwardens, a non-stipendiary priest with Permission to Officiate, two Readers, a retired United Reformed Church minister and the church administrator. Most services are organised and led by members of this group. Junction's Core Group consists of three lay members, who organise and lead the majority of their services. We are grateful for the additional support with services from local retired ministers with Permission to Officiate.

Home groups

Home groups are recognised to be a very important part of church life, providing an opportunity for study, prayer, and developing relationships with God and each other. St Peter's has four home groups meeting weekly or fortnightly in people's homes, each with 4 – 10 members. Junction has recently set up three home groups which meet weekly, each with 4 – 8 people attending.

Prayer

A fortnightly prayer meeting has recently been instigated in the church. At Junction, prayer ministry is offered regularly in worship services. Intercessions are led by a range of different people on a weekly basis at both St Peter's and Junction.

Communication

Both St Peter's and Junction produce a weekly news sheet which is shared with church members by email, with some printed hard copies as well. Church members are encouraged to join the St Peter's and/or Junction WhatsApp group, which are used to share news and prayer requests. Junction and St Peter's both have a website.

PCC

The active PCC is currently chaired by one of the Churchwardens and includes members of both St Peter's and Junction. It meets at least six times a year.

Church Guiding

The church is open for guiding most weekends between Easter and harvest, as well as for pre-arranged visits from groups including history and art societies, and uniformed groups such as cubs and brownies.

Outreach

Messy Church



Messy Church was established 12 years ago and is organised and led by a lay team, with monthly meetings in the village hall on a Saturday afternoon. Around 10 – 20 families from the village and surrounding area join the sessions, which include a time of craft followed by worship and then tea.

Schools

Boughton Monchelsea Primary School is a thriving primary school with around 200 pupils. The whole school, along with families, attend services in St Peter's Church during a school day to celebrate Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Members of The Family Trust visit the school three times a year to take an assembly. Bibles bought by the church are presented every July to Year 6 school leavers. Recently, the school has shown a much greater openness to additional input from the church, including whole-school assemblies and singing assemblies in school, as well as class visits to the church to learn about the church. There is a sense of excitement and anticipation as to how this relationship may develop further in future.

Babies and Toddlers

A Baby and Toddler group was set up in the church seven years ago. Around 10-20 families attend each week for an informal session of play, snacks and a short time of singing at the end. Sessions are promoted on Facebook by one of the mums.

Tea and Cakes

A Tea and Cakes afternoon is held in a local home once a month, attracting around 10-20 people for a time of fellowship and encouragement.

Friendship Circle

Friendship Circle runs once a month, usually in the village hall, for anyone in the local community, particularly the older generation. Around 20-35 people attend the programme of activities, including an annual trip, usually to a nearby seaside town for fish and chips. One of the highlights is the Christmas lunch for around 50 people, cooked by members of the church.

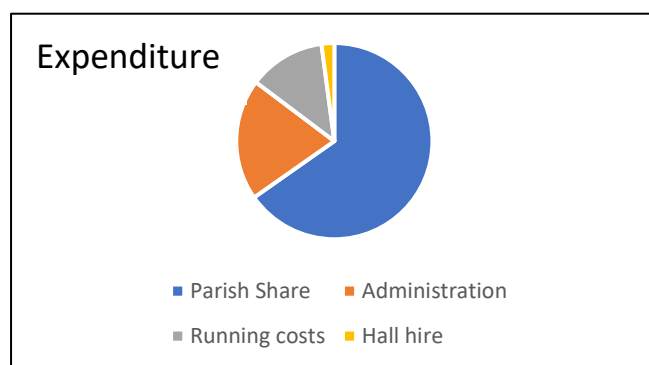
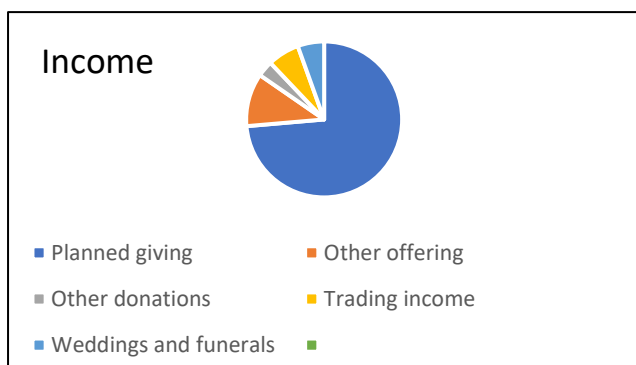


Finances

The PCC runs an internal financial monitoring system which provides up to date and detailed monthly data on our finances, and baseline projections for the rest of the year. Our annual report and accounts are prepared and submitted to the Charities Commission on time.

Current transactions

In 2023, income was £93,000 and expenditure £95,000 (£62,000 in Parish Share and £33,000 spent locally), as shown in the charts below. In addition, thanks to the generosity of the congregations, £4,500 was raised for various charities and causes.



The number of donors and donation levels have increased recently. The 2024 Parish Share, reflecting half a full-time vicar, is £63,000 and the latest (July 2024) baseline projection is for a £5,000+ current surplus in that year after making that payment.

Capital work

The 2021 Quinquennial report stated that the church building and churchyard were generally in a good condition and well maintained. Recent expenditure on its recommendations, and other capital items, cost a net £27,000. Most was funded by grants from Friends of St Peter’s Church and Benefact Trust, leaving £4,000 provided from PCC funds. A small amount of work is outstanding.

Funds

As at July 2024, the PCC has about £25,000 to hand and is owed a further £5,000 in Gift Aid and grants. Of the total, £8,000 is set as current reserve and £11,000 is restricted to future fabric work.

Fund raising

The church is signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme and can receive contactless payments for donations. Twice a year, as a main fund raising event, members of St Peter’s sell tea and cakes when the neighbouring stately home, Boughton Monchelsea Place, opens its gardens to the public. Recently, a good source of income has been renting St Peter’s church space to musicians for recording purposes.



Friends of St Peter's

Like many Church of England parishes, St Peter's has a 'Friends' group which raises funds to help with the upkeep of the church fabric. Friends of St Peter's Church, Boughton Monchelsea was established in the mid-1990s and is modelled along the lines of most Anglican Church Friends charities.



The Friends raise money through quizzes, music festivals, choral events, auctions, talks, flower festivals and open days. They have helped by funding over £50,000 of work in the last 30 years, repairing ragstone walls, stained glass windows, the church bells, the lychgate and more. They have an active committee which organises four or five annual events and currently has 80+ members who give regularly as supporters.

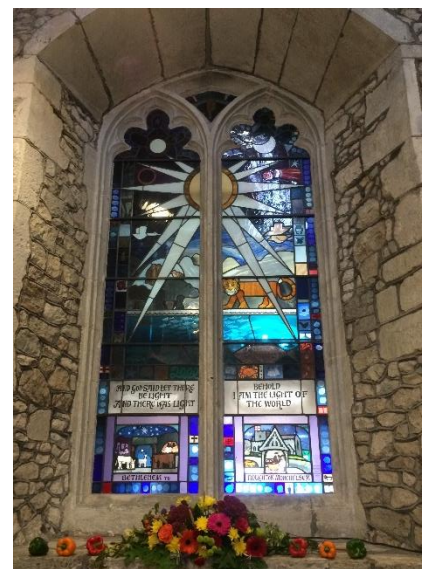


St Peter's Church and Churchyard

Built 900 years ago from fragments of Kentish ragstone gathered from the local quarry, St Peter's Church has a rich history. From its early days, when it was much smaller and lower, two Norman arches remain. The Victorians added a Vestry, South Aisle and South Porch using dressed stone from the quarry. All the stained glass windows, including nine scenes from the life of St Peter are from this period.



The 20th century saw the planting of a wisteria (1922), a unique sculpted glass window (1942), works of art adorning the walls, and a magnificent Millennium Window (2000).



The peace and beauty within the church and the churchyard, with its views over a deer park and the Weald of Kent beyond, make St Peter's Church a much-loved building. The churchyard is popular with walkers and ramblers, being located on the Greensand Ridge route. The church's volunteer churchyard team use the space to promote "Muddy Church" with seasonal trails and quizzes.



The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a purpose built 1950s four-bedroomed detached house situated mid-way between the church and the heart of Boughton Monchelsea Village. There is a large driveway with plenty of space for parking and a generous garden to the rear. There is an office adjoining the house, in addition to the study on the ground floor.



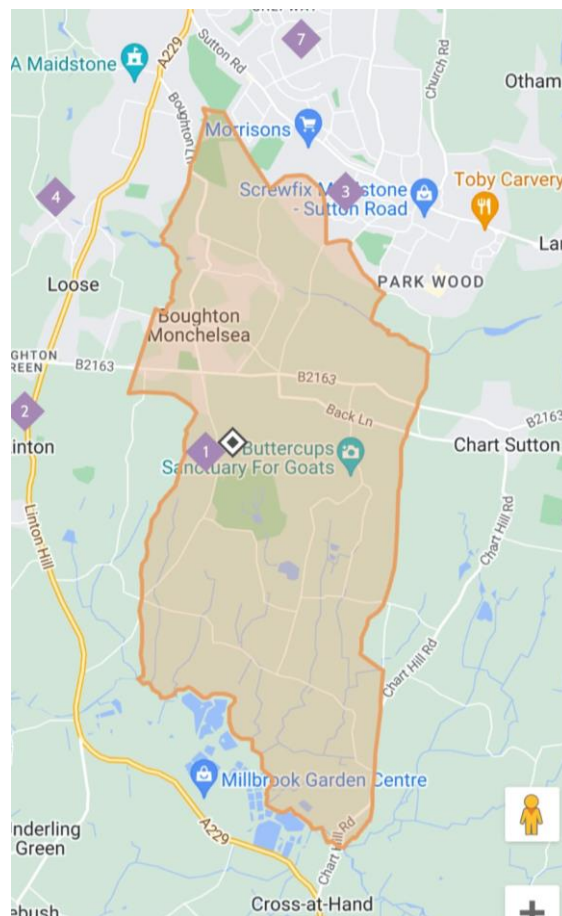
Boughton Monchelsea Parish and Surroundings

Boughton Monchelsea is a semi-rural village including several farms and orchards to the south of Maidstone, with a population of just over 5000. This has grown significantly over the past few years through new developments.

The village has a good community feel, with a post office/local shop, a farm shop, two public houses and a garage, in addition to a well-run village hall which is hired by a variety of organisations, including the church. There is a popular village Community Choir and an active 'Helping Hands' social engagement and assistance network.

The single-form-entry village school in the heart of the village has good links with the church. Adjacent to the west of Boughton Monchelsea Parish, there is a large secondary school and to the north, a site including a primary school, secondary school and special school.

Boughton Monchelsea is in the North Downs Deanery, where the recently appointed Area Dean is bringing a renewed sense of purpose and engagement. Maidstone has an active network of support for Christian leaders, including Churches Together in Maidstone.



Appendix - Questionnaire Feedback Summary

Question 1 – What is going well at St Peters and Junction?
General leadership & organisation is good and much appreciated. People are working hard and helping each other.
People find the services inspiring and a source of encouragement. There is a good atmosphere at services – peaceful, calm, joyful, lovely, positive. At Junction in particular the prayer ministry and worship are much appreciated.
Regular activities such as baby and toddlers, messy church and friendship circle are going well and help to reach those outside the church. Home groups are going well, helping people to learn and share together.
Fellowship is good and relationships are deepening.
Church building/fabric being well looked after by many teams of volunteers. FoSP is doing well at raising funds for the fabric.
Numbers are holding up well. There is a general sense of momentum, and more people are helping.

Question 2 & 3 what could the church do better at St Peter’s and Junction and in the community? There was such a lot of overlap between answers to questions 2 and 3 that they have been merged together in this summary.
Developments to church services: Try to attract younger people to services (songs/group activities). Keep a variety of different types of service. Develop the music, perhaps with a choir? Develop prayer ministry in services.
Develop and introduce activities beyond church services: Build on current activities by developing links with school and messy church families. Have more focus on outreach, prayer and pastoral support. Have more social events and outreach events.
Adapting the church building Use the church more during the week for a variety of activities. Consider removing some pews to make the layout more adaptable and improving heating.
Develop communication/promotion of activities Better use of the website, social media, and notice boards to inform regulars and the parish. A welcome sheet for newcomers.
Community activities Develop links with organisations in the local community and beyond Be more visible as church to the local community

Question 4 most important characteristics of a new vicar
Have excellent pastoral skills – Love and care for the church family and wider community.
Have a strong faith, be Holy Spirit-led, bible-centred and prayerful.
Be mission focused, with a strong vision & sense of God’s purpose. Have an infectious enthusiasm for the gospel message and a desire to share Jesus with the community.
Be able to relate well to people of all ages. Be friendly, approachable, a good communicator & listener.
Be a good leader/manager, able to work well with other leaders, delegate & enable skills & talents to develop.
Have a sense of humour, be a charismatic, energetic person, youthful in outlook.
Be an enthusiastic preacher, open and flexible to new styles of worship, able to convey God’s word to a wide audience.

Question 5 What would a successful St Peter’s/Junction look like in 5 years’ time?
Increase in age range and size of congregations.
Range of services continue to meet the needs of all, with developments in music and accessibility and use of the building.
More people are drawn in and want to follow Jesus.
The church looks outward and serves the community.
Small groups and other activities expand and develop, with a growing emphasis on prayer and pastoral care.
People work together as body, with new leaders and ministries developing.
The church is a joyful worshipping community, lively, open and inclusive.