



Christ the King, Princes Park



Parish Profile & Statement of Needs



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Summary

Christ the King is a parish on the outskirts of Chatham in Medway, Kent with a very diverse congregation. We are close enough to London to be seen as a commuting area and this has brought many people into the area who travel to the city for work. Families are finding it too expensive to buy houses in London and are choosing Medway as a suitable place to put down their roots.

We have just said goodbye to our previous minister who was here for nearly 5 years and has now retired. He and his wife were dearly-loved and will be missed but we realise we neither need nor want a direct replacement for them. Instead, we are looking for the right person to take us to the next season for the church and re-energise, re-invigorate and lead the congregation on to the next step in their spiritual journeys whilst capturing the imagination of our members.

We are not perfect but know the love of God even when we make mistakes. We make fun of ourselves and move on when we get things wrong. We believe our church is a safe place where we can practice our faith before taking it into the world where it belongs and encourage the use of God's gifts in all their forms.

Prayer is an important part of what we do and we are working to ensure it is core to all of our activities. We have a twice a month prayer meeting, a prayer diary for all members and a small team that provides individual prayer for members of the congregation during and after the 10 am service.



Figure 1: - The church entrance



We have a free style of worship that tries to encourage the use of Spiritual Gifts, we strive to keep up to date in order to not get left behind and to reflect the styles of worship expected by those coming into the area. We love to hear and grow in the word of God.

We have a modern building that is well maintained and well used by the congregation and local community. We have a history of involvement within the local community but we know we could do much more and we need new blood to take us forwards. We have a good link with Morrison's who previously have been very helpful and generous, allowing us to carol sing in their foyer.

Thanks to God we have experienced gentle growth over the last few years with new people arriving replacing those who have died, left or moved away. We now have a congregation that covers a wide range of ethnic and social backgrounds who are starting to work well together and with other churches in the local area.

We have moved from being a church where the minister was the hub that linked the congregation together into being a church where the congregation works side by side with the minister to see God's glory shine in our parish.



The broader context

The boundary of our deanery is that of the old City of Rochester and borough of Chatham, both part of Medway. The river Medway forms the western boundary.



Figure 2: - The River Medway looking towards the former Royal Dockyard

A shared campus set in the old Royal Marine Barracks in Chatham is the Universities of Greenwich, Kent and Canterbury Christ Church. Locally we have HMP and YO1 Rochester, the original borstal, which is currently a category C training and resettlement prison for adult men and young offenders in Kent. The Ministry of Justice has appointed Oasis to establish England's first secure academy trust – to be known as Oasis Restore; an innovative, new model of care for young people in the youth custody estate, where the aim is to improve outcomes for children. The prisons have their own chaplaincies.

BAE systems at Rochester is a major employer in the area. We are fortunate to have the Wisdom Hospice at Rochester, it is the only Adult Hospice for the areas of Medway and Swale. There is a wide range of medical centres and state schools within the deanery and there is also Kings School, a co-ed public school linked by foundation to the Cathedral. Medway Maritime Hospital is just outside the eastern boundary of the deanery.

The area is popular with commuters with regular train services to London. With the creation of the three main universities, the student population has risen significantly



in recent years. Chatham Town Centre has received a substantial Church Commissioners' grant focused on the soon to be re-opened church of St John, and the Church Army has made Chatham a centre of mission with a wider remit for the Medway Towns.



The Deanery

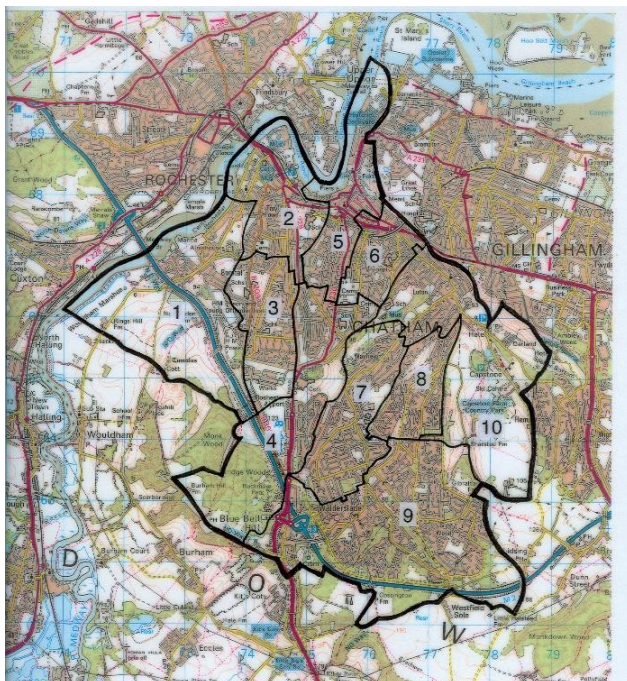


Figure 3: Deanery Map – Christ the King is No 8

The deanery comprises ten parishes, which include one Team ministry

Parishes range from those based on post-war housing estates to the Victorian centre of Rochester and the village ethos of Borstal, with some areas of significant deprivation in almost every parish.

Our neighbouring Parishes are:

- St Philips & St James (7)
- South Chatham (9) which is also an LEP with the Methodists
- Christ Church Luton (10) – originally the mother church of Christ the King.

The deanery has three geographical clusters of Rochester, Walderslade and Chatham.

We also have the Cathedral within the deanery.

The deanery vision is twofold. Firstly, it aims to build strong supportive relationships between parishes and communities through monthly Chapter meetings, thrice yearly Deanery Synod, Clusters and other informal networks, so that all initiatives arise from a basis of trust and shared desire for mutual flourishing. Secondly, we are increasingly sharing expertise between parishes, trying to plan mission and training across the deanery in a more coherent way in order to avoid duplication and overlap. Whilst there is diversity of churchmanship there are no extremes, and levels of commitment at colleague and deanery level are strong.



Who we are looking for

We are looking for a part time (Sunday plus 3 days pro-rata / equivalent time) minister who will work with our congregation to lead us into the next season of the church. The right person for us will:

- Be someone who fully trusts in God, has a healthy prayer life and displays openly the fruits of the Spirit, leading and encouraging others by their example, teaching and training.
- Be fun, challenging, encouraging, a pastor and a leader.
- Know when, and be able to say “no” to the demands of the church in order to preserve their own family and spiritual life.
- Bring the good news of the Gospel in a relevant, inspirational and applicable manner leading us to a personal trust in God.
- Pastorally skilled in dealing with social, spiritual and mental needs to deliver sensitive but firm guidance to all.
- Lead our mixed aged and ethnic background congregation to explore other approaches in styles of worship, music and teaching.
- Be a good communicator
- Be committed to working with families and young people.
- Bring together the different parts / groups in our church and engender a sense of belonging to all.

“We do want a new vicar who is kind, caring, charismatic and down to earth”.

Of less importance, but good to have, our next minister will:

- Have experience working in industry or the commercial sector.
- Have experience in the requirements and day to day needs of running a church and PCC.
- Have knowledge or experience of finances and church building maintenance.
- Work with local schools, groups and other local churches to further the work of God in our community.
- Be computer literate at least to the level of simple word processing and email management.
- Be able to use social media e.g. WhatsApp.



With the help of our new Vicar the PCC want to:

- Improve our prayer ministry.
- Increase our work with and in the local community.
- Provide opportunities and encourage everyone including young people to take up roles in the church community, e.g. leading prayers, reading the lessons, Sides people, PA & VA operators.
- Develop our work with young children.

We recognise the importance of working out the best way to support a part time minister. We will endeavour to protect their personal life to enable them to fulfil this God called role and not get overwhelmed by administration and the like. We therefore expect to provide office administration support to deal with day to day matters e.g. initial baptism, wedding enquiries and funeral requests and filter matters that do not require the full attention of the Vicar. To share ministry with three people who hold certificates to preach and lead services occasionally and with our experienced churchwarden who manages rota's, building works etc. A new Vicar will have the benefit of a vicarage close to the church (more details of which are included later) and the reimbursement of work expenses as appropriate.

In return we will offer you our love, support, prayers and will work with you to further God's kingdom until He returns.

“People contacting the church assume that they have to speak to the Vicar for everything, even booking the hall, that's not the case at Christ the King”



About the Church – People, Services, Groups



Figure 4 Church membership in February 2024

We are Christ the King. While we worship in a fairly modern building, we are not defined by it but have our own sense of “self”. Our congregation encompasses people with a wide range of age groups from new born babies to a member in their 90’s different backgrounds and education levels, and different economic and ethnic origin groups. We are a multi-cultural church, welcoming all ethnicities, with a wide range of ages. We have an increasing proportion of African-Caribbean and other Multi Cultural members as well as an increase in families with school aged children which has changed the make-up of the church. We recognise this requires us to change our structure and style if we are to cater for our current and possible future congregation.

While we have a similar ‘feel’ to other local churches we have enough differences to make us fairly unique. We value this uniqueness in that it makes us ‘sticky’ – i.e. our members don’t want to go elsewhere but also recognise that unless we continue to evolve that stickiness will erode.

We strive to be a welcoming church however we also recognise we could do more to develop a sense of belonging to newer members of the church, whether they have



come from other churches or from a non-faith background. We need to further encourage all our members to bond together as a family, no matter how long or short a time they have been with the church, and no matter what cultural background they have come from.

We serve tea and coffee after the service in the larger meeting room to bring people together socially. In addition, we run a small number of social events to bring us together but still need to do more.



Figure 5 Celebrating King Charles Coronation

Our current service pattern has a main church service at 10:00 every Sunday with a said service at 08:30 service of Holy Communion held on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month. The first Sunday is normally our Family 10:00 Service where the whole family of Christ the King worship together and the third Sunday is normally a morning worship, with the main service on the 2nd & 4th Sundays being Holy Communion. The average attendance on a Sunday at 8:30 is 7 (all adults) and at 10am services 39 with 8 children (under 16) and 40 communicants.

“The 8:30 is a friendly and a little more Traditional service, we find the 10 o'clock too busy for us to concentrate on why we're there”

During the 10am service (except for the Family Service) our Junior church (Sunday School) provides age relevant teaching and fun and games interspersed with various craft activities. It is inclusive for all children who want to join in. We are blessed to see so many children in our church as our numbers continue to increase. However, they fluctuate each Sunday from as few as 3 or 4 to as many as 20 children per week.



Due to pressures of work and family commitments, the families we have cannot be as regular as they might like to be. So, there is an unpredictability as to who will be in Junior church each week. With that comes the pressure of planning the lessons and activities each week, for the different ages – never knowing who is able to come. But we still manage to see the children having fun and absorbing what they do. The young people return to the main worship area towards the end of the service and they are encouraged to tell and show what they have learnt.

We feel now the time is right to develop our teenagers further by giving them a role to play in church life. There is at present no regular evening or mid-week worship although both of these have been run in the past.

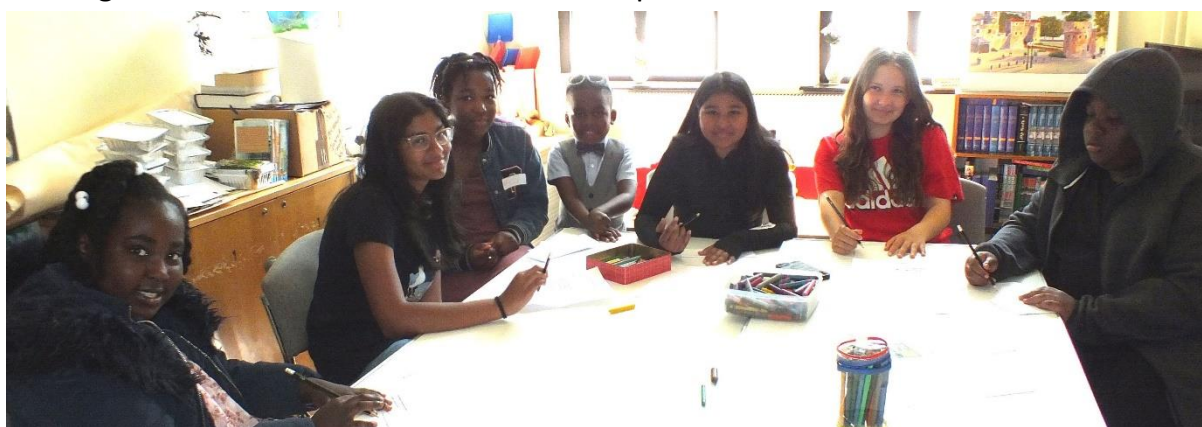


Figure 6: Some of our children in Junior Church

In addition to the Sunday morning services, we run special services on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, a Carols by Candlelight, Christingle, Christmas Eve Midnight and Christmas Day. Every lent a course is normally led by the Vicar on a suitable topic.

The two nearest local schools, Maundene & Kingfisher, are welcomed when they hold their own Harvest and Christmas services in the church.

*“We need to focus on our children’s & Youth work”
(member of congregation)*

Our sung worship style is mixed, drawing on songs and hymns from traditional to more modern styles. In recent years we have invested in new technology following on from the need to adapt during the Covid pandemic where we used Zoom with great success to keep the body of worshippers together. Services are run using power point projected on the screen at the front of church with the controlling Apple PC positioned at the back of the church. At the 10 am communion services we sing



supported by a small music group and at the family services we are accompanied by CD. The sung worship we enjoy is largely from Songs of Fellowship and of good quality allowing the majority of the congregation to enter into a place of spirit led worship every week. Special pieces are performed at Easter and Christmas by the music group

We have a small music group of musicians and singers all of whom are pensioners. The music is mostly electronic keyboard with bass guitar. We are looking to build the group in numbers and younger blood with mixed experience and abilities We have a self-standing electric organ which is not currently being used, but which has been played in the past mainly at Christmas and for the odd traditional hymn during a service.

Because the church building is modern, we do not have a high demand for weddings and have noticed that the demand for funerals to be held in the church is also diminishing (in line with the national trend). We held several infant baptism services last year in the afternoon.



Figure 7: A cup of coffee and a friendly ear

We have 1 local Councillor that worships as part of our congregation. He brings a wealth of local experience and contacts that have served the church well in areas such as local council grants and appointment of contractors.

We have a relaxed approach to the wearing of robes at the 10 am service but robes are normally worn at the 8:30 service by the priest. A new person would not need to feel pressured in their personal choice



Our largest out-reach group is the 'Chicks' parent and toddler group which takes place on Thursday morning serving the local community where a huge need for activities and companionship for stay-at-home parents has been recognised. The craft group that runs during the week was independently run but last year came back under the PCC control. This has improved our relationship with them.

Our supportive PCC team comprises of ex officio and up to 9 elected members i.e. the Vicar, one hard working and loving Churchwarden, we have four deputy wardens two of which were elected to the PCC and one to the Deanery Synod Representatives. We have a Parish Safeguarding Officer who is responsible for all the DBS checks and associated record keeping and the PCC have formally adopted the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy. The PCC meets bi-monthly when the Vicar usually chairs the meeting although our Warden, who has been elected as Vice-Chair, will stand in when required.

We have three long-standing members who have a licence to lead and preach on an occasional basis under the watchful eye of the Vicar.

We no longer have any Lay Readers nor Pastoral Assistants.

We are looking to encourage more of our congregation to join the rota of people who lead prayers and read at services to provide a wider and stronger ownership of the church services.

We treat GDPR very seriously and members are asked to sign a consent form to allow the use of their data in accordance with their wishes for inclusion in a regular prayer diary, for communications by email, a weekly news sheet, and to join a WhatsApp group and inclusion in the internal church address & telephone directory.



Medway and the Parish of Christ the King, Princes Park



Figure 8- Parish of Christ the

The parish of Christ the King, Princes Park was created in 2007, having been a church plant of Christ Church Luton and is situated to the south of Chatham town centre. Chatham along with Rochester, Strood, Gillingham and Rainham form the Unitary Authority of Medway.

Until the late 60's the majority of the present parish was farm land. This was built on in the 70's and 80's, with a significant number of families moving to the area from London.

Medway is the largest conurbation in the south east outside London, with a population of around 280,000, which is projected to grow to 330,000 by 2035. Medway aspires to become a leading waterfront university city. It is strategically positioned between the capital and the continent, and has fast train connections providing services to London in 34 minutes. Medway has a rich heritage, with Rochester being the second oldest cathedral in the country. It is the home to universities with 12,000 students. Medway is one of the leading areas for innovation in the south east, with a growth rate ahead of the rest of the UK.

The parish has a very diverse population of around 8,665 in approximately 3,367 households. It is a young population, with 39% being 29 years old and under, and



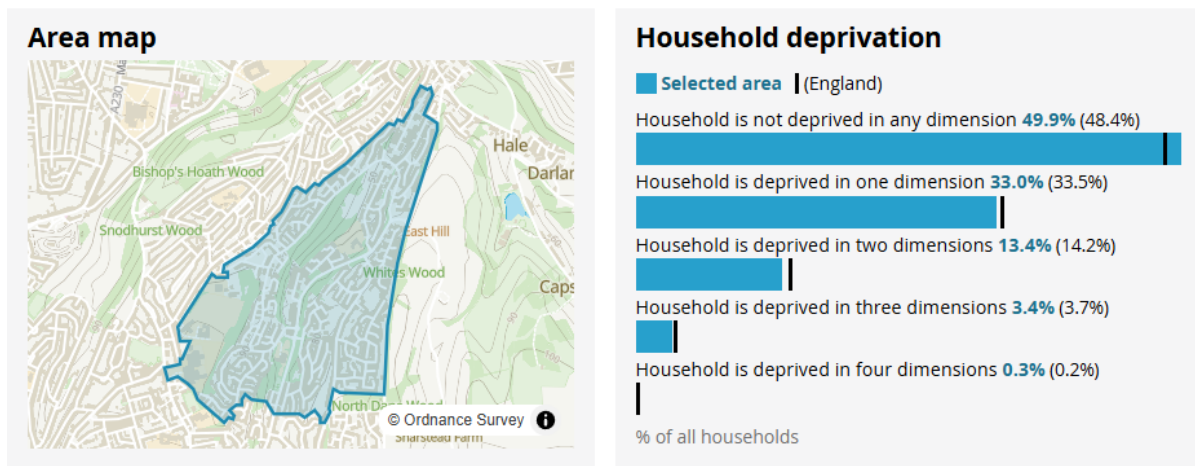
only 8.6% being 70 or over. Its fertility rate is higher than the average for England and Wales.

Medway’s population is 85% white British, with African Caribbean 5.6% and Asian being 5.9%. There is a significant African Caribbean element in our congregation, and this is growing. The parish also has a small Eastern European community.

Medway has seen the South East’s joint second-largest percentage fall in the proportion of people aged 16 years and over who were unemployed from 4.5% in 2011 to 3.2% in 2021. Despite this Medway was in the highest 25% of English LA ‘s who were unemployed in 2021.

In the 2021 census 45.1 % of people in Medway described themselves as Christian (down from 57.8% in 2011).

In terms of deprivation Princes Park has been identified as follows:



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Figure 9 – Parish statistics

Definitions

The dimensions of deprivation used to classify households are indicators based on four selected household characteristics.

Education

A household is classified as deprived in the education dimension if no one has at least level 2 education and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student.

Employment

A household is classified as deprived in the employment dimension if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability.

Health

A household is classified as deprived in the health dimension if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled.

People who have assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled. This definition of a disabled person meets the harmonised standard for measuring disability and is in line with the Equality Act (2010).

Housing

A household is classified as deprived in the housing dimension if the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating.



In common with Kent, Medway has retained selection at the age of 11 and has several Grammar schools within its boundaries. The vicar of Christ the King has previously served as Governor of a local (non selective) school with that school also frequently using the church for services such as Harvest and Carol Services.



Figure 10: Christ the King location map

There are good transport links to and from the area which is within easy reach of the Bluewater regional shopping centre, the Kent coast and the M2, M20, M26 and M25. There are excellent rail links across the county and to the principal destinations of London, Canterbury, Dover and the Channel Tunnel rail links at Folkestone and Ashford.

The area is steeped in history, including an association with Charles Dickens. An earlier historical connection comes from Norman Britain which can be seen in the castle, with Rochester Cathedral being the second oldest cathedral in the country. The historic dockyard at Chatham, which once produced warships for Henry VIII and submarines for the Royal Navy is now a working museum. There remains a military presence at Gillingham Brompton Barracks with the Royal School of Military Engineering including the Royal Engineers Museum on site.

Rochester and The Historic Dockyard Chatham are popular local tourist attractions, with thousands of visitors from around the world attending the many events during the year, (including the Dickens' Week) in Rochester and visiting the historic dockyard where working displays of rope and flag making are in operation.



There are several country parks within easy reach, some in Medway and some in Kent. Capstone Country Park is the nearest and can be reached within a few minutes by car. Luton recreation ground is close by. Further away is Riverside Country Park offering pleasant walks along the banks of the river Medway. Out on the Hoo peninsula there are nature reserves and a cycle trail called the Heron Trail.

There is a leisure centre with gymnasium and sports centre within 2 miles and a larger sports centre (Medway Park) with swimming pool, gymnasium, running track etc around 4 miles away.

The parish of Christ the King, Princes Park is served by a supermarket (Morrisons) which shares an access road with the church, meaning the church is highly visible and known in the area and widely seen by passing traffic.

Within the same complex is a day nursery, hairdressers, post office/newsagent, pharmacy and public house with a doctor's surgery (opposite the church) also served by the supermarket car park. There is a bus stop directly outside the church gardens with the main town (Chatham) 3 miles away.



Figure 11: Christ the King, Princes Park viewed from the high level bridge crossing Princes Avenue

The remainder of the road on which the church is located is dedicated to sheltered / retirement housing consisting of 90 flats & bungalows with a central social area / lounge with a number of the residents being regular members of the congregation.

In short, Princes Park is a good place to live with amenities-leisure and sports facilities at hand, making it a convenient and pleasant place to live and work.



Church Finances

We have managed in the last two years to balance our general fund budget by adjusting the amount we give to the Diocese in our “Parish Offer”. Our reserves remain sufficient to cover a sudden reduction in income for three months. and we have built up our repair fund to cover anticipated expenditure identified in a recent Quinquennial inspection.

Church income is mainly from regular giving via standing order and the free will offering scheme on which we collect either Gift Aid or GASDS, with a significant income from hall hire.

We hold quiz afternoons and an annual Autumn fair to raise funds for the church.

The full church accounts are available in the annual report which is available on request.

“Prayer is the core of all our work” (PCC Member)



Church Building



Figure12: The Worship area

The Church building was completed in 1991 and we celebrated our 30-year anniversary in February 2021 during the Covid pandemic, the bishop linked up with us via zoom! The Church is set on an area of lawn which is adorned with wild orchids, flowers in season, shrubs and bushes, with a secure fenced area for children's summer time activities. Alongside the entrance our young people have created a sensory garden.

The church and church hall are unusual in that they are one room with folding, full height (but not sound insulating) divider between them. This enables the two areas to become one -if-required, or allows the back hall to be set up for another use e.g. a meal after the service, without it being part of the main worship space. There are also several well used storage rooms. The Worship Area contains a full immersion baptistery which has been used on many occasions not only by Christ the King but by other local churches.



Figure 13: The Hall Set up for a Meal

We have our own small car park and are able to use Morrison's car park opposite both of which are free to use. The interior incorporates a generous entrance/reception area that contains the church office, ladies, gentleman's and disabled persons toilets, the latter incorporating baby changing facilities.

Further in there are two meeting rooms, a crèche, the vestry and a kitchen.



Figure 14: Large Meeting Room used for after service tea & coffees and also the PCC meetings



Figure 15: Small Meeting Room used by the Junior church

Our hall is very popular with regular bookings by an NHS clinic meeting twice a week and others groups such as Brownies and Rainbows, keep fit, children’s ballet and a privately run youth group. Occasional hirers ask to use the building mainly for children’s parties.

The building itself is in a general good state of repair. We believe we have a building that is a blessing to us and the local community that we are trying to serve.



Figure 26: The Creche



The Vicarage

The vicarage at Thrush Close is a 10-minute walk away from the church and is situated on a housing estate built around the same time as the church. The house has four bedrooms which includes a small box room. The property falls short of the current requirements for a vicarage in terms of living space and hence would be best suited to a single person or those with either a small family at home or where the children have already flown the nest.



Figure 17 – Vicarage main entrance

Description

There is a small entrance lobby and cloakroom with the stairs to the upper floor.

To left side of the lobby is the kitchen diner (see figure 18) leading to an outside door to the rear garden.



Figure 18 – Kitchen Diner

To the right side of the lobby is the main lounge which has patio doors to the rear garden there is also access to the study.

An extension was added about 20 years ago to form a study (figure 19), WC and separate entrance. This was changed recently to be a second reception room and utility room with a garden gate installed, so that the former external entrance now leads to back garden. This could be changed back.



Figure 19 – Study extension



The upper floor consists of two bedrooms and a box room/study served by a family bathroom, and large main bedroom with ensuite is above the study extension.



Figure 20 – Rear Garden

Outside there is a garage and a driveway long enough for two cars. The house has a small front garden and a rear garden with lawned areas and mature shrubs and trees.