The Benefice of King’s Wood

St Cosmas & St Damian Challock
St Mary Chilham
St Mary the Virgin Crundale
St Lawrence the Martyr Godmersham
St Peter Molash

2020

The Post of Priest-in-Charge
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Vision and Values

We have a VISION and have expressed our VALUES
Are YOU the priest to help us make these a reality?

Our Vision:

Going forward with Jesus, we seek to be:
A valued presence in our communities
A place where everyone can belong and be loved
A place to find peace and to find God

Our Values:

We are a church which is part of the community
We are a church which is a home for all ages
We are a church which cares for people
We are a church which meets spiritual needs

Could you be the Critical Friend who leads us in answering these questions?

• How well do our actions and attitudes reflect our vision values?
• Are our current initiatives appropriate, balanced and realistic?
• Are we playing to our individual church strengths AND sharing mission?
• What have we not asked ourselves?

In order to answer these questions and lead our Benefice in the next stage of its mission and ministry, we think we need a Priest-in-Charge with the following skills and qualities.

Someone who has a heart for:
• Evangelism, teaching and preaching
• Ministry in the wider community
• Enabling the people of God to live out their faith throughout the week

A team player and leader who has:
• Great people skills, being an enabler, encourager and listener
• The ability to inspire and motivate
• A genuinely affirming attitude to different styles of worship
• The insight to help bring cohesion across the Benefice

Crucially, this will mean being a visible presence in our communities
About the Benefice

Our benefice was formed in 2012, bringing together the two benefices of Chilham, Molash & Challock and Crundale & Godmersham. King’s Wood has been served by a full time rector and part time assistant priest, the latter living in Godmersham with particular pastoral responsibility for Crundale and Godmersham. Both priests took services across our benefice.

Although the 2012 pastoral reorganisation was the result of extensive local consultation, we soon realized that we needed proactively to build the community of the benefice. To that end we arranged a series of opportunities to discuss ways in which this might be achieved. These were sometimes open to all, sometimes to PCC members and sometimes solely for representatives. We were greatly assisted by external facilitators, principally from our diocese. Our Archdeacon and Deanery Lay Chair were much involved. On these occasions we audited the current situation, looking to agree a common vision and values. From this we worked on a pattern for the provision of ministry to which everyone ascribed. One positive consequence of the process was that, when the Benefice Council was formed its members had already built good working relationships and developed a collegiate approach. The Council has continued to meet during the vacancy; it is crucial in the process of building our benefice.

We face a number of serious challenges. Most of our churches have experienced a decline in congregations and in the number of members in planned giving schemes. As a consequence, all agreed that the part time post could not be sustained and would go. After detailed conversations and analysis, the benefice, deanery and diocese agreed that the living should be suspended, but that there was sufficient potential to justify the appointment of a full time Priest-in-Charge. Chilham PCC is shortly to receive a very substantial legacy. Our new priest would have the challenge and pleasure of helping discern how this will be used to sustain priestly ministry and resource mission opportunities.

We look forward to growing our benefice, numerically and spiritually, with the new Priest-in-Charge who is attuned to our challenges and opportunities. There are some promising local initiatives and possibilities. Furthermore, our deanery is looking at the possibility of pastoral reorganisation more generally. In this journey we have been assured of support from our diocese.

We have become more open in sharing our financial situations with each other and realise that the issue of parish share apportionment needs revisiting. One problem common to all our churches is the need to supplement our regular giving schemes with fundraising. We endeavour to make these
events social and mission opportunities. An example of this is the annual Five Church Walk, in which four of our churches are involved (not five, for purely geographical reasons). Refreshments are sold at each church and in doing so we are able to engage with the hundreds of walkers who participate and fundraise for the churches and local charities.

Some Basic Statistics

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The Wider Church

King’s Wood Benefice is part of the West Bridge Deanery and the Diocese of Canterbury. It can be seen that our vision and values very much reflect the three diocesan objectives. Our deanery sees its primary role as supporting and encouraging the benefices. The deanery leadership has been integrally involved in the process of building our vision and values.

Over recent years we have been increasingly involved with the wider church and are eager for that perspective to be continued. As can be seen in Part 2 of this profile a number of our churches have overseas links.

Our Benefice Teams

Our new Priest-in-Charge will work alongside a diverse lay team, together offering leadership, leading worship and meeting the wider needs of our communities. The Benefice Council has two representatives from each church. There is currently no formal constitution and significant decisions are passed to PCCs for comment and approval. There are four PCCs, but Challock and Molash also arrange meetings to serve the needs of their individual churches. Up to now the Rector and Associate Priest have chaired all regular meetings and there is no network of sub-committees. The Rector and, in the vacancy, our Reader have attended worship planning meetings at Old Wives Lees, where there is a monthly service held jointly with the Methodist Church.

As described above, the Benefice Council has been meeting about four times a year to develop our vision and values, along with a set of principles which underpin our worship rota. (See table 2.) This rota relies on the availability of one ordained priest, supported by local and retired clergy for holiday cover and additional Eucharistic provision at key festivals. The main tenet is that the priest does not take more than two services on any Sunday morning.
We have a Worship Leaders’ Group to coordinate and give support to those leading worship and intercessions. These include our Reader, a small number of ALMs and an increasing number of laity authorised by their PCCs who are developing their skills on task.

During the first part of this vacancy period, before she retired, our Associate Priest led worship according to the pattern established by the Benefice Council with the agreement of our PCCs. Our Reader is based primarily in Chilham, but has taken services elsewhere, especially at Molash and Old Wives Lees. She takes a number of funerals, but other occasional services rely on the availability of local stipendiary and retired priests.

Much pastoral work is undertaken locally and informally with reference to our priest as appropriate. This is an area that may require further reflection.

Our Rector was Area Dean of West Bridge and to allow him time to undertake that role, the deanery paid for a part-time administrator (5 hours/week). She has been working solely on King’s Wood Benefice administration and the deanery has generously continued to pay her salary. We have a good working relationship with the deanery and especially with its officers. It will be vital that our new Priest-in-Charge develops strong relationships and appropriate working patterns with our Administrator as well as with our Reader, Wardens and all engaged in lay ministry. We look forward to this appointment and challenge.

**Benefice Service Pattern**

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<td>Lay-led</td>
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<td>Lay (+priest?)</td>
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<td>Priest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molash</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lay (+Reader)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

When there is a week 5, we have a Benefice Service rotating between the churches.
A Description of the Area

Situated just a few miles from the cathedral city of Canterbury and the market town of Ashford, the Benefice of King’s Wood includes the five churches of Challock, Chilham, Crundale, Godmersham and Molash. Challock & Molash form one parish and within Chilham parish is the settlement of Old Wives Lees where the monthly service is held. There is also a Methodist Church at Challock.

The area has a rich history with Chilham Castle playing prominent role. Jane Austen was a frequent visitor to Godmersham and King Henry VIII is said to have hunted in the 1500 acres of woodland, named ‘the King’s Wood’. Visitors flock to these woods at bluebell time; the woods are also home to many animals such as deer, badgers and foxes.

Three of the four parishes in the King’s Wood Benefice have part of these famous woods within their boundaries; the fourth, Crundale, occupies a downland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. With a range of trails, footpaths and a national cycling route, the area is popular with walkers and cyclist alike. There are significant leisure facilities in Ashford and Canterbury and more modest ones locally especially in Chilham and Challock. Local village halls hold a range of activities but there are none owned directly by the churches.

The area has good transport links – there is a train station at Chilham and nearby at Wye with regular links to London via the high speed train from Ashford. There is a regular bus service serving Chilham and Godmersham to Canterbury and Ashford. There is a less frequent service from Canterbury that serves Molash (in school term time) and Challock, the latter also having a bus service to Ashford and Canterbury.

The benefice falls within Ashford Borough Council. Hospitals are located at Ashford and Canterbury and there is a GP surgery in Chilham. Parishioners in other parts of the benefice attend surgeries in Chartham, Charing and Wye.

There is a Church Primary school in Chilham and a Community Primary in Challock, both of which have a high reputation and good contacts with our benefice. There are easy links to secondary schools (grammar schools, high schools and academies) in both Canterbury and Ashford. There are also several tertiary educational establishments in Canterbury.

King’s Wood Benefice Profile
The population within the four parishes is about 3800 (See table 1 above). Residents include commuters and also families who have lived in the area for generations. A range of socio-economic groups are reflected in the population. Local people are proud of their villages, their history and their heritage. There has been modest housing development in Chilham and a more significant one is currently taking place in Challock.

The Vicarage

The 1970s Benefice Vicarage is located at 3, Hambrook Close, Chilham in a quiet cul-de-sac. It is within a few minutes' walk from Chilham village centre, church and school. The farthest points of the Benefice are little more than a ten minute drive away.

The vicarage itself has a drive for 2/3 cars and a medium sized garden largely laid to lawn; there is a garage adjacent to the property. Internally there are four bedrooms, with a family bathroom and an en-suite bathroom with the largest bedroom. Downstairs a study with cloakroom comes immediately off the entrance hall. There is a utility room beyond the kitchen and two reception rooms.

![Vicarage Image](image-url)
The Parish Church of St Cosmas and St Damian, Challock

The Wider Community

Challock is a popular and rapidly-growing village, inhabited by a mixture of long-standing residents and families moving in more recently. Approximately 30 new houses have been built in the last few years, with a total of over 70 new dwellings approved in the village plan to 2030. The population currently stands at over 1000 people.

The large village green provides a focal point where local children play and dogs are walked. Facing the green is the local shop and post office and the Methodist's hall. Nearby is a shop selling local produce, a modern village hall, children's playground and cricket field. The church is located approximately 1 mile from the village, down a narrow lane.

Challock has a highly rated primary school with over 200 children. Services at the local primary school have been held regularly by the previous incumbent in liaison with the head teacher. These school services were very well attended, attracting 80 to 100 children and parents.

Our Worshipping Community

In 2018 normal Sunday services were attended by an average of 11 adults (but no children); although there is a wide variation. Special service attendances in 2018 were: Easter 21, Mothering Sunday 29, Remembrance Day 84, Christingle 90, and Christmas 47. We were saddened at the need in 2017 to close the Sunday Club for children due to lack of support and we hope that circumstances will change in the future so that it can be resumed.

Challock Church offers a range of services throughout the year with a service held in the church on two Sunday mornings per month. Local retired clergy help out with services when required. We have one communion service each month and one non-communion service led by lay leaders.

The PCC encourages the use of the church for concerts, lectures and festivals. In 2018 the PCC and The Friends of Challock Church held the annual Flower Festival over August Bank Holiday weekend, and an Art Exhibition in memorial of the work of the late John Ward, R.A. who painted several of our modern church murals. The Flower Festival was attended by hundreds from the local community and beyond. Also well-attended were the February Snowdrop Teas, March Daffodil Teas and the May Five Church Walk.

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. Whilst we are a small church and very pressed to keep going financially, we annually support Combat Stress the ex-serviceman’s charity, the Children’s Society, and other charities when we can.
We carry the word of God into our community by contact with our neighbours, and by example. We produce a monthly Parish Magazine jointly with the secular Parish Council which is delivered free to every home in the parish. This carries the Christian message and advertises our services and events. We are indebted to many villagers who are not regular church-goers, but who give time, energy and money to our activities. These contacts are invaluable and spread the outreach of the church wider than just church members and their families. There is a reserve of goodwill towards our church in the village which has been built up over years of caring for the community at large.

The Associate Priest attends the parish coffee morning each month held in the Methodist chapel along with the Borough Councillor and they are both available for pastoral support (Priest) and borough issues (Councillor). We work closely with the Challock Methodist Chapel and hold joint services with them several times a year. There are no other Christian denominations in Challock, but our church religious services are open to all Christians, who are very welcome.

Our fund-raising year commences with serving tea and cakes on two Sundays in February, (Snowdrop Teas) encouraging villagers to come to see the snowdrops in our churchyard. Financial difficulties have required us to expand this activity, and we now offer ‘Daffodil Teas’ on a Sunday in April. In May, tea and cakes are again offered to participants in the ‘Five Church Walk’, a charity event in which participants walk between churches in and around our benefice. A flower festival is held in the Church over the August bank holiday week-end which is a major contributor to our finances and also a happy occasion for villagers to meet. Other events are held on an occasional basis. These fundraising events help to place the church at the centre of the village and raise much needed funds.

Our Resources

Our church building is listed Grade II* - ID number 1185088 on the listed buildings register. It is famous for its unique modern murals and many visitors from around the world come to see these and to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the church in its remote North Downs setting. There are conservation areas in the churchyard, kept to encourage wildlife. Following the reconstruction of the church from war damage, the first modern mural painted was in 1953 when the “Lives of Ss. Cosmos and Damian” in the Lady Chapel were painted by Rosemary Aldridge and Doreen Lister. The success of their efforts prompted the later murals by John Ward RA and Gordon Davies. John and Gordon painted the Chancel “Life of Christ” in 1956, and in 1999/2000 they painted the “Millennium Mural” on the north wall.

Our Architect, Mr. Roger Joyce, provides advice and reports fully on the condition of the structure every 5 years through the Quinquennial survey, which was last undertaken in 2017. In his report there were no major matters for concern and all items for action will be dealt with in order of urgency as indicated therein. Between the PCC and The Friends of Challock Church we are
constantly working to maintain and preserve the church and a number of major projects have been undertaken in recent years.

The Friends of Challock Church commenced operations in 2003; they assist the PCC by raising funds as requested by the PCC, to ensure the maintenance, security and repair of the fabric of the church buildings and churchyard. The Friends of Challock Church are made up of annual subscription-paying members who elect a committee at their AGM. The priest of SS Cosmas and Damian church is the President of The Friends of Challock Church and the Associate Priest, a Churchwarden and the PCC Treasurer also currently sit on its Committee. The Friends of Challock Church accounts are consolidated with those of the Challock PCC.

Giving and money. We have paid the Challock parish share up to August 2019 but we are in default for the last four months of that year and for the first two months of the current year. We are hoping to pay two months by the end of February resulting in us owing four months of parish share. With our major fundraising events yet to come, and the prospect of a reduced levy due to the reduction in clergy cover, we are working to catch up. Income is usually made up of regular givers, restricted donations, grants and local fundraising events. The money in the bank raised by the Friends is restricted for a predetermined purpose, therefore unrestricted funds is an area of constant need.

The Parish of St Mary, Chilham

The Wider Community

The parish of Chilham lies in the middle of the benefice, being mid-way between Canterbury and Ashford, overlooking and running along part of the Stour Valley. The parish incorporates the villages of Chilham and Old Wives Lees and the hamlet of Shottenden. At Old Wives Lees, monthly worship is held jointly with the local Methodist church and that worshipping community has contributed a separate section to this profile.

We have a wide social and age mix. Numbers have been slowly rising with one housing development two years ago and another larger one in the planning stage. In Chilham village centre there is a Post Office/shop, two pubs, tea shop, castle and a Church of England Primary School. On the outer edges are the village hall, doctor’s surgery and sports centre.

There are several local organisations including those relating to sport and music (especially at Old Wives Lees). There are Rainbows and Brownies and the church has membership within Chilham Retail and & Traders Group. The castle is the venue for an Annual Chilham Chase and the Globe Theatre now visits each year at the start of its summer tour.

Chilham is a much visited, picturesque village on the Pilgrim’s Way to Canterbury and has been used as a film location on a number of occasions.
Our Worshipping Community

Over recent years the regular Sunday congregation has steadily declined, so that on an ordinary Sunday it has averaged no more than about 20 of us. On special occasions this is much increased; in 2018, for instance there was a congregation of 340 for Remembrance Sunday. This indicates something of the challenges and the possibilities for us; there are many on the fringes of our church with whom we would love to engage more regularly and draw into our worshipping community. A few years ago we held a “Celebrating Community” event to try to do this and we have an annual Open Church in August with the same intention.

There are other ways we are trying to engage the wider community. A Sunday Breakfast gathering is held monthly and, on that Sunday, is also our parish worship. At this we have a light breakfast in the south transept, during which we have a fun quiz-type activity, which is not usually faith based but relates to the theme for the day. This is followed by a brief video clip and subsequent conversation. The morning concludes with a short period of prayers. Numbers are variable, but have exceeded those for other services and include more children.

Sunday Breakfast and Messy Church are lay led. We are going to continue an experiment of holding quarterly Messy Church immediately after school; this timing was successfully trialed for a Christingle Service. We shall continue our annual Easter Eggsplored Messy Church on the Saturday of Easter where we explore the Easter story and include an egg hunt in the castle grounds. This year 50 children and their carers joined in this event and we have had required eggs for over 100 children in the past.

Last year we formed a baby and toddler group which meets weekly and is led by two of our lay members. Encouragingly this now has a steady core of parents and children attending from Chilham and surrounding areas including Chartham.

We have had mixed success with home/bible study groups, but normally have two running in Lent. A retired priest is a great support generally and specifically with our Lent groups.

All of these activities suggest that there is good potential for growth. We would welcome the insight and energy of a new priest to work alongside us in evaluating the way we try to draw in our wider community, whilst providing our regular congregation with satisfying worship.
There are many groups and individuals contributing to our worship and the maintenance of both the church and churchyard. In 2018 The Friends of St Mary’s was reformed and holds social and fund raising events. There are 62 members, who commit to an annual subscription.

The church is popular for occasional offices, with many who are married returning for their children’s baptisms. Our church choir leads worship on three Sundays each month, there is a dedicated team of flower arrangers and also bell ringers, ringing every Sunday and other services on request such as weddings.

This is a relatively small community and we are pleased to play a significant role in its life. Our church is used for a range of purposes including large public meetings and consultation exercises. It is an ideal venue for concerts organised by ourselves or others.

We enjoy an excellent relationship with St. Mary’s C E Primary School, which is located at the opposite end of The Square to the church. The school makes good use of the church; school services are held as well as class celebrations and educational visits. The priest-in-charge would be an ex-officio governor and our previous priest visited the school regularly especially for collective worship. There are a number of organisations of which s/he is a trustee; two relating to the school and two to the village generally. There is an intention to close those which have become redundant.

The local Parish News is a St. Mary’s publication with a distribution list of over 400. It is another way in which we try to be at the centre of parish life, and PCC funds benefit from the profit it generates.

Throughout the summer months a group of volunteers from the church and village provide coffee and biscuits for sale in the church. Through this venture we make contact with local residents and some of our many visitors. St Mary’s remains open all year and we believe that a significant part of our mission is to those occasional visitors who come from all over the world.

We support the work of the Christian charity Pastos Verdes, which serves the community of Lichinga in Mozambique. This organisation provides a range of services and facilities, including a Children’s Home.

**Our Resources**

Our building is a much loved, beautiful place of prayer and worship, dating in part possibly from the 13th Century. It is in generally good condition externally and internally, funding for which relies heavily on our Friends organisation. In 2006 a significant re-ordering introduced a nave altar and saw the transfer of the font to a location near the centre of worship. It is large for the size of the village, with some significant monuments; both of these features relate to its association with Chilham Castle. We have a peal of eight bells, which attract bell ringers beyond our own community.
Over recent years regular giving has fallen short of meeting our needs and new initiatives are going to take a time before they bear fruit in this respect. The legacy to which reference was made on page 4 will improve our financial situation dramatically. Our beautiful, Grade I mediaeval building requires constant attention and resources to serve the needs and regulations of the twenty first century. Thankfully the Friends of St Mary’s is contributing more and more towards the costs of this.

Old Wives Lees (OWL) Community Church

Old Wives Lees is part of the Chilham parish, but has its own worshipping life. Our Church is community based and meets monthly, on the fourth Sunday, in the village hall. This service began about twenty-two years ago and has been going ever since and growing steadily. It is a United Service with the Methodist church in the village, with the Minister from their church taking part in the service three times a year.

There is a small group of us that meet monthly to plan the service, which is inclusive and informal. In the past, the Vicar from Chilham Church has participated in the planning meeting, and has led the service at OWL every other month.

The congregation is made up of all ages, and the children have activities for them based on the theme of the service. There is a music group that accompanies the singing of traditional hymns and worship songs.

As a congregation it works to support the work in St. Paul’s, Cliftonville and Pastos Verdes in Mozambique; and they come yearly to tell us what has been happening there.
The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin Crundale

The Wider Community

The parish of Crundale comprises just over 648 hectares (1,600 acres) in the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in two valleys divided by a ridge on which stands the 11th Century Parish Church. Crundale is a scattered rural community, but the majority of people live in the hamlets of Crundale and Sole Street. The church is some way outside both settlements; its isolation may be indicative of a pre-Augustinian site of pagan worship in Saxon times.

The parish is mainly farmland with the main farms being Hunt Street Farm and parts of three estates (Crundale House, Coombe Manor & Olantigh) who employ tractor drivers, shepherds, gamekeepers and stockmen. There is also an organic vegetable farm (Ripple Farm Organics) and a commercial lime works. Many of the residents are retired or work away from the village, in nearby Canterbury or Ashford or commute up to London on the high-speed train from Wye or Ashford. There are two private equestrian establishments in the village. In Sole Street there is a gastro-pub, The Compasses Inn, which has recently been given a Michelin Bib Gourmand. The churchyard is officially designated as a Kent Wildlife site.

There is a shared, modern well-equipped village hall situated in Godmersham, which is used by the shared Women’s Institute and Godmersham and Crundale Gardeners Association.

Our Worshipping Community

In terms of population, Crundale is the smallest of the parishes in the King’s Wood Benefice. Though the average congregation has been ten for many decades, the church of St Mary the Blessed Virgin is much loved and well supported by the residents of Crundale. There is a real sense of ownership. The village population has changed recently from having a large proportion of elderly residents to being home to many more families with children. There is a great community spirit which is helped by everyone’s involvement with the Crundale Fair, held in June every other year, to raise funds for the church. This community spirit means that people in need are identified and given support by their neighbours. Since the change in the pattern of services, the PCC has been actively trying to build...
further links with those who tend not to come to church. As many people in the village help to clean the church and do the flowers on a weekly rota, a 'Thank You Party' is held each February so the PCC can show their appreciation. This year, we sought the help of local farmers to celebrate Plough Sunday. Harvest Festival in October is one of our big events and many people from the village get involved. We intend to do more to engage the children and their families. At Rogation time we have a shorter service followed by a walk around the parish, which is well attended. Being in beautiful, hilly countryside means that a lot of walkers, cyclists and horse-riders come past our church and we would like to hold more special services for these groups. We have developed an email list so that we can inform everyone what is going on in our church. The PCC has lost several members recently, but our spirits are high, and we are optimistic that we can recruit new active members.

Our church attracts a lot of visitors to its peaceful location, many of whom write in our visitors’ book about its tranquility and are grateful that our church is always open for them. As the church is the only public space in the village, we are now holding our quarterly parish meetings there and are offering resuscitation training sessions too. One of our congregation organises candle-lit classical concerts, with world-class performers, each September to raise funds for the church and sometimes an additional Christmas concert for the sheer joy of music in our church. Once again, many locals are involved as helpers on these occasions. There is a historical link with Godmersham and on some Sundays, such as Remembrance Sunday and for the Christingle Service we join with them to worship.

Pattern of Services

- 1st Sunday - 9:30am Lay-led Morning Worship
- 2nd Sunday - 9:30am Lay-led Matins
- 3rd Sunday - Holy Communion (BCP/CW alternate months)
- 4th Sunday
- 5th Sunday 11am - Benefice Service rotating between churches

Our Resources

Our 11th century church is in good condition having had a lot of work done to the roof over the last few years. One of the recent developments has been the instalment of a toilet and small kitchen area within the church which we felt was essential for a 21st century place of worship, this is supplied with rainwater from the church roof. However, the last Quinquennial survey did identify a problem with death watch beetle and there is some debate about how to deal with it. Last year, the family of a previous church warden commissioned a
new stained-glass window of which we are very proud. An unusual feature is the mounting block and vicar’s stable (now used for storage) next to the entrance gate of the churchyard. The churchyard has been designated a Local Wildlife Site by the Kent Wildlife Trust and contains one of the best selections of lichens in the county.

In the recent past the church has benefitted from several bequests which have allowed us to do work on the church. The Crundale Fair and concerts are a very important source of income though we have a list of regular donors. As we realise that our income needs to be secure, we are in the process of running a Time and Talents scheme, which will include a request for donors to review their donations. To date, we have always paid our Parish Share on time, so that we can get the discount available.

The Parish of St. Lawrence the Martyr, Godmersham

The Wider Community

The parish is located overlooking the Great Stour River and includes both Godmersham itself and the village of Bilting. We are a small linear parish with no public amenities or shops and have only the village hall and church as focal points for community engagements. We share the village hall with Crundale parish.

Members of the church get involved in activities at the village hall which hosts a regular gardeners’ meeting, Women’s Institute, flower arranging classes, Brownies, and fitness classes. Quiz nights, music events, entertainment and seasonal bbqs also take place.

A combined village fete is being proposed for 2020 by the church, village hall and Friends of Godmersham Church. Godmersham church is occasionally used to host concerts or an evening lecture. Our involvement in the local community is reciprocated when the wider community has helped the church with successful Flower Festivals and a Fete. Godmersham and Crundale churches combine to produce a monthly magazine distributed throughout both parishes.

Godmersham Park House was built in 1732 and eventually became the property of Edward Knight, brother of Jane Austen. Her novels Pride & Prejudice and Mansfield Park are said to depict characters and scenes from the village.

Godmersham Park House now accommodates the ABDO (Dispensing Opticians) College and together with Godmersham Park Estate are the biggest employers locally. There are a few very small businesses, and most inhabitants of working age commute outside the area by car.
Our Worshipping Community

We have one communion service (alternating either Common Worship or Iona) and one lay led service (usually Iona morning worship) a month on Sundays. Home communion is offered and taken to anyone who cannot attend church. There are several members willing to lead the lay led services and three capable organists. Additional services for festivals such as Easter, Christmas, Mothering Sunday, etc. are held as well as a rotating benefice service when there is a fifth Sunday. On these occasions workshops are held for children, especially at Christmas, Mothering Sunday, harvest etc. and children are encouraged to participate in bible reading or the prayers. We hold an Easter day sunrise service with Crundale church and in the past we have shared other services such as Remembrance day, Christingle and the Rogation walk. Children from both parishes take part in the annual crib service in Godmersham on Christmas Eve.

Our PCC meets approximately every 3 months and we have representatives on the Benefice Council. Our church community has a core of mainly retired villagers who are willing helpers but who need direction and coordination; they are looking forward to working with the new priest. Godmersham church has run its own Lent Course/home group in the past but more recently members have attended a group in Chilham. There are currently two ALMs.

Partly because we are a scattered linear community and have few local amenities, meeting and reaching individuals and communication is a challenge. Recent changes to our worship times have made attendance at church more difficult for some. Our reducing numbers has left some feeling that they have to shoulder most of the work. We are keen to grow in number and would like to see a return of young people’s groups, mother and toddler group, etc. There has not been an outreach into the community such as Alpha, for very many years and we would like to explore this.

We acknowledge that there are unknown families locally but we no longer have regular young people’s groups to encourage them into the church. There is potential for some sort of daytime activity/coffee morning/ social or study group for older or more isolated people but transport becomes a problem.

We try to support local charities with donations at Christmas and other special occasions. Godmersham has a Trust Fund (Godmersham in Need - Finches Trust) which is used to provide and pay for lifelines to the elderly and donations towards books for young people leaving to go to university. The priest-in-charge would become a trustee.
Our resources

The ancient parish church is dedicated to St Lawrence the Martyr. It is a moderately large church with a long single aisle chancel divided from the nave by an open rood screen. To the south side of the nave is an aisle and transept and to the north of the crossing is an unusual early medieval vaulted, apse chapel under and to the east of the base of the tower.

It is part Saxon, part Norman and underwent major restoration in 1864. St Lawrence the Martyr church dates to the 11th century and was owned by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the Domesday Book it is mentioned as Gomersham. Canterbury Cathedral Priory held the church at the time of the Reformation, and throughout the centuries there have been several changes to the buildings.

The chancel and nave are late Saxon, and in the chancel is a 12th-century bas-relief thought to be of Thomas a Becket; this is considered to be one of the earliest likenesses of Becket. The blocked west door has a tympanum of reused Norman stone showing traditional dog-tooth carving. Within the church is a memorial to Thomas Knight, who gifted the Godmersham House and estate to Edward Austen Knight. Jane Austen was a frequent visitor to her brother Edward, and regularly worshipped in the church.

The building is in very good condition and is supported by the community, with an active and successful ‘Friends of Godmersham Church’, who provide financial support for the upkeep of the church fabric. We were recently able to spend money from a restricted fund in order to install a much needed and improved heating system. The church attracts several visitors and is left open throughout the day.

Godmersham is currently unable to fully pay its parish share to the diocese. However, we are pursuing ways of fund raising and are ambitious to increase our membership and thus our regular giving. We have an envelope system of giving, but try to encourage planned giving. The existing congregation are generous with their time and money but are small in number, and are mainly aged 60 and over.

Godmersham church works closely with Godmersham Park Estate and regularly provides the teas and cakes for National Gardening events. This generates some needed income for the church. The church is also part of the Five Church annual walk and also provides refreshments to raise funds. Our links with JASNA (Jane Austen Society of North America) has resulted in us receiving some small donations as well.
The Parish Church of St Peter Molash

The Wider Community

The village of Molash lies high on the North Downs between Canterbury, Maidstone, Faversham and Ashford on the A252. The M20 and M2 motorways are close by and there are frequent trains running to London including the High Speed Link from Ashford. There are two buses a day that run to Canterbury from the village, but only during school term time. There is no bus service from the village during school holidays.

The village of Molash has no school with the nearest primary schools being in Chilham and Challock. Secondary/Grammar Schools are at Kennington, Ashford, Canterbury and Faversham with a local bus operator serving all.

Our Worshipping Community

The Church of Saint Peter (St. Peter’s) endeavours to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through worship and prayer with the provision, when and where required, of pastoral care. Currently St. Peter’s has two services every month. The second Sunday is Priest-Led Holy Communion and the fourth Sunday in the month has a lay-led service. We also have a Harvest Festival Service, Christmas Carol Service, a Christmas Day Communion and services on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Our aim is to continue to build our worshipping family by reaching those who are not regular church-goers. We will strive to encourage more to attend our services and are starting to reach more young families from the village including the neighbouring Hamlet of Shottenden, but the main congregation currently consists of the older generation. We have a strong, albeit small group that continue to support St. Peter’s. This strong core has kept the church going, especially during the last twenty-five years, which prevented the closure of the church that previously had poor attendance.

Our Resources

The Church of St Peter used to be a chapelry. The church as it stands dates from the early thirteenth century and is a classic rural ‘barn church’ with a chancel and large open nave, and traces of medieval wall paintings. The pews in the nave are moveable, and are repositioned for special occasions such as concerts.

St. Peter’s churchyard is divided into an open and closed section. The closed area is maintained by Ashford Borough Council, with the open maintained by
our volunteers. Within the closed section there are several ancient yew trees thought to be at least two thousand years old all, of which have a Preservation Order thereon.

The PCC has planning permission to build an interior toilet and replace the existing central heating system, which should be fully operational by Autumn 2020.

Our finances are sound, but rely heavily on fundraising, principally from two main fundraising events. We have an annual horse ride, namely the Blossom Ride, covering around ten miles of wonderful countryside. This event attracts riders from as far afield as south London and the Weald of Kent, including Rye and Hastings in Sussex. Many villagers help with this event and the profit made from this ride goes toward the everyday running of the church.

There is an annual walk, usually held on the first Bank Holiday Monday in May. This walk is called The Five Church Walk and entrants can start and finish at any participating church (Molash, Chilham, Godmersham, Challock and Boughton Aluph). Walkers donate entry or sponsorship money and money goes to the churches, Pilgrims Hospice or the Air Ambulance. Each Church provides refreshments which also generates profit.
West Bridge Deanery is small and rural. Part of the Archdeaconry of Canterbury, it stretches from the outskirts of Canterbury to the outskirts of Ashford, along the Stour Valley but also across the downland on either side. We straddle three parliamentary constituencies and three local councils (Ashford Borough, Canterbury City and Shepway District). The largest communities are Chartham and Wye. The 17 worshipping communities are grouped into three benefices (Chartham/Upper Hardres and Stelling; the United Wye Benefice and King’s Wood). Each benefice has a full-time stipendiary priest; the Wye benefice also has two part-time priests, one stipendiary, the other non-stipendiary. We work very closely with our neighbouring deanery of East Bridge and the two Clergy Chapters usually meet together and run popular Marriage Preparation days together. The Area Dean is the Rev’d. Ravi Holy, Rector of the Wye Benefice.

The deanery typically holds two or three meetings a year. These are usually open meetings with a speaker and a topic of interest to our rural congregations; each meeting concludes with a short business meeting for elected Synod representatives. In between, the Deanery Mission and Ministry Committee meets to discuss matters of strategy, mission imperatives, and financial issues.

West Bridge Deanery supports this appointment wholeheartedly. We also agree that the living should be suspended: we know that there are challenging issues of sustainability in King’s Wood (shared by many of the other churches in our deanery), and that we may well be looking at further pastoral reorganisation in the deanery within the foreseeable future.

Ravi Holy
Area Dean

Caroline Spencer
Lay Chair

King’s Wood Benefice Profile
The position of Priest-in-Charge of the benefice of King’s Wood offers an enthusiastic priest with strong gifts of pastoral care and missional commitment the opportunity to work with a committed team of lay people to engage with these rural communities and thereby to grow the church here. Both the diocese and the deanery are fully committed to this appointment. The coming into being of a new Benefice Council, a new worship rota and lay worship leader training, and increased engagement with schools under the leadership of the previous ministry have set a great platform to work from. The numbers tell you there is much to be done but, as you will have read, the benefice is inviting their new priest to help them as their ‘critical friend’ to do what they need to do to keep growing and they want to partner with someone who will be welcoming and well known in their communities. You can read further below about the wider life of the Diocese of Canterbury which is also committed to growing our mission. I would be glad to have a conversation with you if you would like to know more about this post and please be assured of my prayers as you consider whether God is calling you to this beautiful part of East Kent – King’s Wood.

Jo Kelly-Moore, Archdeacon of Canterbury
Thank you for taking an interest in the role of priest in charge of King’s Wood benefice. You’ll see from the rest of the profile some of the specific things that the benefice is looking for – and a little of what the team here hopes the future may look like. Of course, part of your discernment process in coming to this role is gaining a sense of the bigger picture of us as a diocesan family, our vision and priorities for the future.

Who we are

Founded in 597 by St Augustine, Canterbury Diocese is the oldest diocese in England and has a special place in the life of the national and worldwide Church. With its iconic Cathedral it forms a focal point for the life of the whole Anglican Communion, offering a spiritual home and place of pilgrimage for people from every nation and walk of life.

Kent is renowned as the ‘Garden of England’ and this rural heart is core to our identity - yet the communities we serve are very diverse. Our Diocese stretches from Maidstone to Thanet, from the Isle of Sheppey to the Romney Marsh. We have 350 miles of coastline with historic ports and seaside resorts, alongside rural communities, market towns and commuter-belt urban developments. Affluent areas often sit alongside pockets of major deprivation, offering an exciting and challenging mission context.

Where we’re heading

At the heart of all we do is a vision of transformation for ourselves and our communities: no one can encounter God and remain unchanged. In our diocese, we want to increasingly become a Christian community transformed through encounter with Christ, overflowing to transform and bless the families, homes and communities we serve in Kent: Changed Lives → Changing Lives. In your role, in your place, we’ll be looking for you to play a crucial part in making this vision a reality.

Changed Lives → Changing Lives unites us in purpose, but will be expressed in different ways according to what makes sense for different parts of our diocesan family. It’s also a living strategy – as we listen to God and one another, the shape of our work together will undoubtedly change and grow. Could you help to develop this vision for the future? Find out more here or speak to The Venerable Jo Kelly-Moore, Archdeacon of Canterbury on 01227 865238 or email archdeacon@canterbury-cathedral.org

Our commitment to you

We know that supporting healthy, flourishing ministers (lay and ordained) is crucial for a healthy, flourishing diocese. That’s why we offer the ‘Canterbury Diet’ to all our incumbent ministers – this is an intentional programme for ministerial development, health, growth and faith. A lay programme is in development too. Additionally, we offer a range of specialised training events, as well an opportunities for growth in prayer and spirituality.

In short, I hope that you will be as excited by our vision, priorities and opportunities as we are. Be assured of our prayers as you consider your next step in ministry,

The Right Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin
Bishop of Dover

King’s Wood Benefice Profile
King’s Wood Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Guide us in our search for a new Priest
to minister here in our benefice of King’s Wood.
Give to us all wisdom, an openness to your will and a clear focus
to sustain our future and grow your church.
May we truly be…
  a valued presence in our communities,
  a place where everyone can belong and be loved,
  and a place to find peace and to find God.
We pray for a priest to hear and respond to your call.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.