



Diocese of Canterbury
CHANGED LIVES ⇌ CHANGING LIVES

TRINITY BENEFICE, FOLKESTONE

Profile 2026



We're praying for our new vicar to be a true shepherd who will make us, with them, a church joyful in worship, united in witness, working, caring, praising and loving to the glory of Jesus





Holy Trinity, Folkestone

Who we are

- A three church Benefice covering the west of artistic Folkestone and the charming village of Sandgate
- All three churches have their own style of worship, coming together on the fifth Sunday of the month
- Each has a spirit of generous hospitality and buildings in daily community use
- Scope for development of individuals, groups and community links

Holy Trinity

- Traditional church, with robed choir, sacramental worship, traditional hymns, using books
- Strong choral ethos which transfers into traditions of the church
- Beautiful Victorian Grade II* listed building plus hall



St George's

- Band-led worship, songs, Powerpoint slides on a big screen, no books or robes
- Late 20th Century flexible building with chairs and side rooms
- Intergenerational and inclusive: young people with special needs help in services, some elderly with dementia



St Paul's

- Grade II Victorian building, with a hall that is in regular use
- Friendly, worshipful church, music led by the organist, live-stream services
- Prayer is at the heart of our life



Who we're looking for in our new Vicar

Key Responsibilities

1) Worship & prayer

- Lead and oversee the worshipping life across three distinct traditions—from choral Eucharist and Evensong at Holy Trinity to band-led services and café Church at St George's, and accessible, screen-based services (with livestream) at St Paul's.

2) Preaching, teaching & discipleship

- Deepen prayer and scripture engagement; nurture discipleship through groups, bible study, and tailored formation across our churches.

3) Pastoral care

- Cultivate a culture of attentive, inclusive pastoral care, including oversight of ministries in various settings.

4) Children, youth & families

- Support the rebuilding and growth of work with children and families, collaborating with local schools and supporting ministries like Messy Church and family services.

5) Community mission & partnerships

- Strengthen connections with community groups and charities (e.g., Folkestone Rainbow Centre) and encourage imaginative use of our buildings as focal points for mission, hospitality and the arts.

6) Leadership & team development

- Lead an experienced ministry team (licensed clergy, Readers, ALMs, including Anna Chaplains) and a seasoned staff team; spot and foster talent, enabling people to flourish in their roles across the Benefice.

7) Deanery & wider church

- Play an active part in Elham Deanery and Churches Together in Folkestone, contributing to shared mission, prayer and civic witness.

Person Specification

We're praying for a Vicar who is

- A true shepherd: joyful in worship, uniting us in witness, caring and praising to the glory of Jesus.
- An inspirational, approachable leader and good communicator who spots and fosters talent, gently guiding people to fulfil their part in God's family.

Experience & gifts

- Confidence leading traditional Anglican liturgy and choral worship and contemporary, intergenerational services.
- A pastor and teacher who can deepen prayer and scripture engagement and nurture discipleship.
- Heart for community mission, with creativity to use buildings and events for outreach and hospitality.
- Commitment to work with children, families and local schools; ability to rebuild and grow these ministries.
- Collaborative leadership with volunteers, wardens and PCCs; wise, transparent stewardship.



Holy Trinity, Folkestone

What we offer

- A warm welcome from three congregations longing for a transformational leader
- An experienced Ministry team for you to lead, which meets weekly to pray together: a priest licensed to the Benefice, who is also an Anna Chaplain, a priest with PTO, a distinctive deacon, three Readers and three ALMs, one of whom is an Anna Chaplain
- A seasoned staff team: an administrator, a Verger and a Sacristan at Holy Trinity, in addition to the Director of Music
- Six Churchwardens
- Three PCCs, each meeting six times a year
- Volunteers undertaking the various tasks in worship services
- A detached five-bedroom Victorian vicarage, with garage and parking for three cars. The house has two reception rooms and a kitchen-diner as well as an office and a study, and there is a large, beautiful and well-stocked garden.



Location and facilities

Folkestone is only an hour by train from London, and an hour via the Channel Tunnel from France. It was named by The Sunday Times in 2025 as 'The best place to live in the South East.'

It has:

- A good selection of schools
- A wide range of cafes and restaurants
- A two-screen cinema
- Wide range of sports for all ages, football, rugby, hockey, golf, bowls, sea swimming, gyms, skatepark, parkrun
- Thriving Creative Quarter
- A range of activities like adventure golf, shuffleboard and a giant outdoor screen on the bustling Harbour Arm
- An annual book festival, the Triennial Art Festival and, this year, its first Music in May festival



Our Vision

Holy Trinity

- Seek to deepen discipleship
- Strengthen community connections
- Ensure sustainable ministry for the future



St George's

- A deepening of the prayer life of the church
- An increase in engaging with scripture and teaching
- A strengthening of fellowship in the church and the wider community



St Paul's

- Maintain and extend fellowship
- Establish regular prayer meetings
- Deepen the faith of the congregation



Pattern of services

Holy Trinity

Sunday

8am - Eucharist

10.30am - Sung Eucharist

6.30pm - Cathedral Style Choral

Evensong

Monday

9am - Morning Prayer

Wednesday

9am - Morning Prayer

Friday

9am - Morning Prayer

11.30am - Eucharist



St George's

Sunday

10am - Eucharist or Café Church

6pm - Evening Prayer (monthly, Reader)

Saturday

8am - Iona Service



St Paul's

Sunday

10.30am - Communion, Family Service or Service of the Word

6.30pm - Evening Prayer (monthly)

Tuesday

8.30am - Morning Prayer

Thursday

8.30am - Morning Prayer



Opportunities and Challenges

Across the benefice: We are looking to boost communications in and between our three churches, as well as with the wider populations of our parishes and residents beyond our parish and benefice boundaries.

Holy Trinity

- To engage with the local community's varied needs and patterns of life
- Seek to strengthen engagement with children and young people, local groups and the wider community
- To sustain the building through wise stewardship, finding new and creative ways to generate the necessary funds



St George's

- Respecting the needs of long-standing members while engaging with young families and newcomers
- Developing the discipleship of individuals
- Rebuilding work with children, families and community groups



St Paul's

- Developing the discipleship of individuals
- Seeking to establish work with children



Context

Folkestone is a wonderful town to live in with the delightful village of Sandgate to the west. Our three churches all contribute to the development and performance of music, art and culture in the community and offer excellent opportunities to become focal points while being seen as valued resources.

At first glance, the area may appear relatively affluent, with its large buildings and leafy communal gardens. Yet we serve a diverse local community. Many houses have been subdivided into apartments, and there are several modern apartment blocks and retirement communities within walking distance of the churches. All three congregations are strong supporters of the local charity helping the homeless in this area, the Folkestone Rainbow Centre.

The three parishes are all members of Elham Deanery and Churches Together in Folkestone. The Deanery Synod is working to engage with more lay members. The Area Dean is the Vicar of Saltwood, the Rev Barry Knott. The Dean and Chapter meet monthly for mutual support and fellowship and spend three days a year away on a Chapter Retreat.

“Our Benefice is truly blessed by our churches’ diverse worship styles – there’s a place for everyone!” – Heather S

Churches Together in Folkestone is strong and active. It organises various annual district-wide initiatives, including the annual walk of witness, the Easter Procession which erects three crosses on one of the surrounding hills, and Carols in the Community which attracts thousands to the Harbour Arm, in the run up to Christmas. They also hold regular prayer meetings for the town, for schools and for persecuted Christians. The town’s clergy meet regularly for prayer.

The Benefice churches also take part in Kent Churches’ Ride and Stride and the annual Walk of Kings, organised by Folkestone charity The Rainbow Centre to raise funds for the homeless. Church members have also taken part in the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter, instigated by Churches Together in Folkestone and run by the Rainbow Centre from the beginning of December to the end of February for many years.

Our three churches and their communities

Holy Trinity with Christ Church, Folkestone



Holy Trinity is a worshipping, prayerful church on Sandgate Road in west Folkestone. We are known for the quality and reverence of our worship, the richness of our musical life, and our openness to the wider community.

At first glance, the area may appear relatively affluent, with large buildings and leafy communal gardens. We serve a diverse local community. Many houses have been subdivided into apartments and there are several modern apartment blocks and retirement communities within walking distance of the church.

The 2025 indices of Multiple Deprivation highlight significant levels of deprivation locally. Our neighbourhood sits within the most deprived 70% of areas in England, with area to the west within the most deprived 60% and the area to the east within the most deprived 86%. Christ Church Primary Academy, with whom we have a strong link, is in a neighbourhood more deprived than 96% nationally. This is a major challenge. We also serve a small but significant number of people from other countries, and we value

the many languages and cultures they bring to our community. Built in 1868 and designed by Ewan Christian, Holy Trinity is a prominent landmark in Folkestone serving as a place of worship and a hub for mission and community life, hosting concerts, community groups, schools and local organisations.

The church is set within a well-kept garden and has on-site parking including designated disabled spaces. The church hall, located at the west end of the grounds is equipped with a kitchen and toilet facilities, including an accessible disabled toilet with baby-changing provision. The grounds also include a Remembrance Garden providing a peaceful place where the ashes of deceased parishioners may be laid to rest. There are 64 people listed on the electoral roll following its revision in May 2025. This has since increased to 72. Hundreds more come into contact with Holy Trinity each year through concerts, community groups, hall hire, and school services for Folkestone School for Girls and Christ Church Primary Academy.

We are committed to ensuring our buildings continue to serve a wide range of people well. We want to install an accessible toilet and a servery in the church and repair and eventually replace the roof.

Worship

Worship at our church is essentially traditional, with a robed choir present at both Sunday services, supported by organ and servers with formal liturgy and a strong sense of reverence.

The choir sings at Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, and at some weddings and funerals. It does not usually sing during August.

Priests, Deacon, Reader and Servers together ensure worship that is dignified, prayerful and welcoming.

Refreshments are offered after both Sunday morning services. Ministry at Holy Trinity is shared and collaborative. The work of a paid vergger, an able Sacristan and a committed team of volunteers, ensures that the church is clean, welcoming, regularly open, and properly prepared for worship.

The wider leadership team includes two Churchwardens, an experienced Safeguarding Officer, and a Treasurer who is a qualified accountant. The Parochial Church Council meets six times a year and currently has five elected members, alongside two parishioners elected to the Deanery Synod. PCC committees covering Finance, Legacy, Building, Missions & Links, Worship and Social life meet regularly and support the life of the parish.



Music and community life



Music is central to both our worship and our engagement with the wider community. Our Director of Music has been in post since 1993, and the choir plays a significant role in parish life.

The regular Sunday choir consists of up to 12 singers in the morning and up to 21 in the evening. On the fourth Sunday of the month, up to 13 additional singers join for our Trinity Chorale Evensong. Most choir members are experienced singers, and some are musicians in their own right. We have three assistant organists and are developing four Choral Scholarships funded by the Onward Trust, along with one Organ Scholarship funded by the Friends of the Music. We are also launching a recruitment drive to strengthen our children's choir.

Holy Trinity regularly hosts concerts and recitals by professional musicians, which – along with the annual summer organ recital series

organised by the Friends of the Music - are an important part of our outreach and fundraising. The church hosts a wide range of activities, including Monday Music, a popular and inclusive community singing session, also bible study, fundraising events, and the hire of the church hall by local organisations, including Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, Cubs and Beavers, a monthly machine-repair workshop, retirement groups and private events. The church is licensed to serve alcohol and provides a licensed bar at some social events as a means of income generation, overseen by a trained designated premises supervisor. A monthly community lunch is cooked by our licensed priest.

***“The beauty of the chancel
and the music always lift my
spirit” - Norman***



Mission and outreach

Holy Trinity is committed to serving the wider community of Folkestone. In conjunction with the Rainbow Centre, our licensed priest works closely with people experiencing homelessness, offering practical support and advocacy. Through our Missions & Links committee, we support a range of charities, including Missions to Seamen, the Rainbow Centre, and Christian Development in Uganda.

Looking ahead

As we look to the future, we are seeking an incumbent who will join us in shared ministry — someone with a warm and approachable manner, who values collaboration, prayer and worship, and who will work alongside clergy, musicians, volunteers and parishioners. We are open to growth and development, and we want to move forward together with care, trust and hope.

St George's

We are a lively, inclusive, intergenerational church, committed to scripture-based worship. We want to be a beacon of light on the corner of Audley Road, by Folkestone West railway station. The girls' and boys' grammar schools and Sandgate Primary School are close by, so hundreds of children and commuters pass by every day. A seat on the corner outside is a meeting place for young people.

Like many other churches, we have the challenge of respecting the needs of long-standing members as well as engaging with young families and newcomers.

There are 46 on the electoral roll. The average weekly attendance in 2025 was 63. We have been able to pay our quota to date but that may become a challenge in the future. Voluntary giving provides about two-thirds of our current income, and we give away about 5%.

St George's is a modern-style building which has been extended and updated and is ideal for community gathering, which matches our talent for hospitality. Becoming a greater part of the community is important to us and we want to be seen as a focal point and a valued resource. We are a welcoming and friendly church, with band-led music worship and an informal approach to robes and ceremony. Our congregation includes all ages and backgrounds, offering different skills and strengths. A number of them are part of the team during our twice-monthly Café Church services. This popular style alternates with our twice-monthly Eucharist Service. All are presented on a large screen with PowerPoint. We have a strong history of children and families work, which we would like to rebuild.



“When we moved to Folkestone, St George's welcomed us with open arms” - Nick

We have two Home Groups, one of which becomes a larger Advent or Lent Group in those seasons. Guides and Rangers continue to meet at St George's in the evening and on Sunday afternoons, as they have for the past 20 years, and the local Nepalese Christian Community worship in our building. Children from Sandgate Primary School attend a Monday-Friday after-school club in our building. Until recently we held a regular well-attended Messy Church, which we want to resume. Folkestone Gospel Choir rehearse here weekly.

The community we serve

St George's is surrounded by a mix of high-end residential properties and an area of more modern family housing with some social housing. There are two blocks of flats and apartments for the elderly and a small group of shops. A community friendly pub sits close to the church.

Close to the church is a care home for adults with neurodiversity and complex medical needs. We have built close and affectionate relationships with six residents, each of whom attends Sunday worship supported by a carer. Several residents participate actively in services by reading, taking the collection, assisting with PowerPoint, and helping to present the elements at Communion. Their contribution is integral to our worship life and deeply valued.

The church building is accessible for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility. Services usually include several wheelchair users and people using walking aids. Participation is encouraged in ways that recognise individuals' gifts and responsibilities: for example, our PowerPoint support is carried out with great reliability and skill, without which the church would genuinely struggle.

Long-standing activities such as Toddler Praise, Young People's Fellowship, Children's Club and Messy Church are in abeyance at present but the possibility of restarting these ministries lies in the future. Ministry with older people has grown. Twirly Club, a lunch and activity supporting those who are isolated or living with particular challenges, has been a source of great joy. Weddings at St George's are now rare, with none in the last year, but three baptisms have taken place at Café Church. Funerals are more frequent, almost all for members of the church family, reflecting strong pastoral connection and commitment.

*"I really love the
inclusivity of St George's"*
- Sandra





Partnerships and Community Use of the Building

St George's maintains strong links with several charities, including Touchbase Care, Mission Aviation Fellowship, The Rainbow Centre, and Alongside Africa which are financially and practically supported through our Mission and Links working group.

Outreach and in-reach frequently overlap through the hiring and shared use of the church building. The worship space also functions as the church hall and is well used by the wider community, including Folkestone Gospel Singers and a weekly choral workshop. On Sunday afternoons the local Nepalese Christian Community use St George's for their worship and hospitality.

Historically, the church hosted a full range of uniformed organisations. This has reduced, due to a shortage of leaders, but Guides and Rangers continue and the Trefoil Guild remains an active and valued presence.

Pastoral Care

Members of the congregation often offer informal support such as companionship, shopping assistance, and practical help, reflecting Christian friendship rather than formal pastoral roles.

Hospital chaplaincy, emergency visiting, Home Communion, or authorised pastoral visiting is undertaken only by those who are appropriately trained, DBS-checked, and operating in line with diocesan safeguarding policies. Safeguarding is embedded in the life of the church and taken seriously in all areas of ministry.

St George's has a strong and valued relationship with Folkestone Care Centre, where we lead a monthly service of the Word and a weekly Communion service, followed by bedside visits for residents unable to attend the main service. This ministry is a great joy and privilege, and residents consistently say how much they value the spiritual support and companionship offered.



St Paul's Church, Sandgate

St Paul's Church stands on a hill just a stone's throw from the sea, in the coastal village of Sandgate. Shaped by the rhythm of waves, weather and prayer, it looks out over a village that knows both calm and storm – and like Sandgate itself, St Paul's stands strong, welcoming and full of life.

Sandgate is a charming village just beyond Folkestone, known for its coastal paths, independent cafes and close-knit community. The church is set in the grounds of SAGA, where dog walkers, runners and neighbours often pass by.

Music from our organ often fills the church and surrounding spaces, a gentle reminder that worship and prayer are at the heart of St Paul's. Dogs are always welcome – Lotta, a local Bulldog is a familiar visitor – and our dedicated gardening team ensures the grounds remain a peaceful, inviting place.

We are deeply connected to our community. The library opposite hosts regular groups and helps us share information about church events, drawing new visitors through our doors. Sandgate Primary School joins us for Harvest, Epiphany and our monthly family services, where children are actively involved. God is at work among young minds curious about scripture and we are committed to nurturing that faith and curiosity.

Worship at St Paul's is accessible and user-friendly. Services are displayed on screen rather than buried in paperwork and we livestream for those unable to attend in person. Visitors regularly comment on the warmth of the welcome they receive and on the genuine hospitality that influences our shared life together. It is this same welcome we look forward to offering our new incumbent – someone who will join us for the foreseeable future as we grow in confidence, deepen our witness, and discern what God is calling us to next.



Photograph taken during the week of celebrations for our 200th anniversary

St Paul's has served Sandgate for over 200 years. Over the last three decades our church building has been carefully and lovingly renovated. We are deeply thankful for this gift as a base from which we worship, pray, serve, and build relationships both within Sandgate and across the benefice.

In 2022 we celebrated our 200th anniversary with a week of events that opened the church to the whole community. These included an evening with Terry Waite, guided tours, and displays ranging from wedding dresses spanning six decades to artwork, memorials and reflections on former vicars. Our congregation produced a commemorative brochure exploring the church's history, organ and ministry. Several who visited during that week have since become regular worshippers, encouraging us to continue building confidently on what we have begun.

Our electoral roll is 55 and we have an average of 32 in church on Sunday mornings with a number of others joining online. Over the past 14 months we have been supported by retired clergy and a committed team of volunteer ministers who have faithfully sustained worship, preaching, prayer and pastoral care. We are profoundly grateful for their support, and for the way this season has strengthened our sense that ministry is something we share. The biblical preaching offered during this time has been particularly valued.

Prayer is at the heart of St Paul's. We have an active prayer group and two home groups that offer friendship, support and space to grow in faith. We have been praying for our new incumbent for over a year and continue to trust that God is already at work among us. We are also blessed with a loyal and generous congregation. We consistently meet our diocesan quota and currently give over 20% of our income to support Christian work beyond the parish.

We hope to build on this generosity together, for the sake of Sandgate and the communities we serve.

In response to the Canterbury Diocese's Three Things framework, our PCC has prayerfully identified these priorities for the coming season:

- Maintaining and extending fellowship, including through a weekly lunch club
- Developing regular prayer meetings at St Paul's
- Deepening the faith of our existing congregation, including the offer of an Alpha course.

These are not fixed endpoints, but a shared direction of travel. We are excited about welcoming an incumbent who will help us develop what is already taking shape – with prayer, wisdom and care – as together we seek to serve God's kingdom in Sandgate.



Map of Trinity Benefice, Folkestone

