

Team Vicar

Town Centre Mission Area

A key role in **Ashford Town Parish**
based at St Mary's Ashford

ASHFORD
TOWN PARISH



Diocese of Canterbury
CHANGED LIVES  CHANGING LIVES

Introduction

This is a significant opportunity to join a large and growing urban parish at a moment of real change.

Ashford Town Parish is implementing an ambitious Mission Plan focused on growth in faith, discipleship and community engagement across a population of over 80,000 people.

We are looking to appoint a Team Vicar who will provide confident local leadership in the Town Centre Mission Area, and who will also play a full part in shaping the future of the parish as a whole.

The Team Vicar will be based at St Mary's Ashford, which will serve as their primary base of worship and ministry within the parish.

This is a role for someone who can combine rooted priestly ministry with collaborative leadership and a willingness to help lead change.

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Key Facts

- Population: c. 83,000
- Eleven worship locations across the parish
- Four full-time stipendiary clergy
- Ambitious Mission Plan supported by the Diocese
- Town centre context with both opportunity and challenge
- Four-bedroom clergy house in the town centre

Welcome from the Bishop and Archdeacon

From the Bishop of Dover

Ashford is a place of real opportunity and importance within the Diocese of Canterbury, and this role will be central to the next phase of its development.

We are committed to supporting parishes as they grow in confidence in mission and ministry, and Ashford Town Parish is an important part of that vision. This post offers the chance to contribute to a significant and well-supported programme of growth.

I hope you will give careful and prayerful consideration to whether God may be calling you to share in this work.

+ Rose

The Rt Revd Rose Hudson Wilkin
Bishop of Dover and Bishop in Canterbury

From the Archdeacon of Ashford

Ashford Town Parish is at an important point in its life. There is clarity about direction, a willingness to engage with change, and a commitment to working together.

The Town Centre Mission Area combines real challenge with significant opportunity. This role will be key in holding together worship, pastoral care and outward-facing ministry.

You would be joining a committed clergy team, supported by colleagues across the deanery and diocese, and I would look forward to working with you if God is calling you to this ministry.

Darren Miller

The Ven Darren Miller
Archdeacon of Ashford



Bishop Rose



The Ven Darren Miller

Why this role matters

Ashford is one of the most significant growth areas in the Diocese of Canterbury, but levels of engagement with the Church of England remain low.

Following external review and wide consultation, the parish is now implementing a clear and ambitious Mission Plan. This role is central to that work.

The Town Centre Mission Area lies at the heart of the parish, both geographically and strategically. It combines a strong civic presence, established congregations, and significant engagement with people experiencing social and material need.

This is not simply a role to sustain what exists. It is an opportunity to help shape what comes next.

Our vision

Our vision is that many more people of all ages will encounter faith, come to faith, and grow in faith through our family of churches.

We are working towards:

- Greater engagement with the wider community
 - Growth in people beginning and sustaining faith
 - Deeper discipleship and participation
 - Expanded work with children and young people
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About St Mary's Ashford – your primary place of worship and ministry

St Mary's Ashford is the historic parish church at the centre of the town and will be the principal base for the Team Vicar's ministry. It is part of the national Major Churches Network.

Its life is centred on the Parish Eucharist, with a valued choral tradition expressed through a robed choir, the use of the organ and regular Choral Evensong.

Alongside this, there is a commitment to accessible and inclusive all-age worship, together with a range of midweek and community activities. The life of the church therefore reflects a breadth of expression, seeking to enable people of all ages and backgrounds to participate and grow in faith.

St Mary's is also home to Ignite Ashford, a midweek community bringing together those experiencing various forms of social and material need, offering hospitality, informal

worship and practical support. This forms an important part of the mission of the Town Centre, complementing the church's more traditional patterns of Sunday worship.

The church brings together sacramental worship, pastoral care and civic engagement, and sustains a varied and committed congregation. The Team Vicar will need to be at ease within this context and able to contribute to its life and leadership with confidence and sensitivity.



Sunday worship at St Mary's, Ashford Town Centre

Meet the team

Team Rector

Jeremy Worthen provides overall leadership of the parish, working with clergy and lay leaders to shape and implement the Mission Plan, and supporting the development of each Mission Area.

Team Vicars

Jo Purle and Adam Childs share responsibility for parish-wide ministry while each leading one of the Mission Areas, contributing to collaborative oversight, mutual support and shared decision-making.

Curate

Steve Horne is engaged in ministerial formation within the parish, contributing

to worship, pastoral care and emerging areas of mission.

Other clergy

Alongside the Team Rector, Team Vicars and Curate, **Charlotte Coles**, a Self-Supporting Associate Priest, and seven priests with PTO currently make up our clergy team, contributing together to worship, pastoral care and emerging areas of mission across the parish.

Parish staff

Provide administrative support, coordination and communication that enable the life and mission of the parish to function effectively.

What you will be doing

Leading the Town Centre Mission Area

You will take responsibility for ministry across the Town Centre Mission Area, including St Mary's, Christ Church and Ignite.

This includes:

- Leading worship and preaching
- Providing pastoral and sacramental ministry
- Supporting and developing Local Leadership Teams
- Encouraging lay leadership and shared ministry
- Building relationships with schools and community partners

A key aspect of the role will be holding together the different expressions of church life in this area, and helping them grow in confidence and connection.



Ignite at St Mary's

Contributing to parish-wide mission

You will work with the clergy team, lay leaders and diocesan colleagues to implement the parish Mission Plan.

This includes contributing to planning, reflection and learning, and supporting the development of new initiatives.

You will bring insight from ministry in the Town Centre — including experience of working in contexts of social and economic deprivation — into parish-wide reflection, learning and shared practice

Over time, you will take responsibility for one area of mission across the parish, in line with your gifts.

Working as part of the clergy team

You will be part of a collaborative team ministry, sharing in the life, leadership and governance of the parish.

This includes participation in team meetings, PCC life and wider diocesan engagement.

What success will look like

- A stable and confident pattern of ministry in the Town Centre Mission Area
 - Growth in engagement and participation, particularly among those not currently connected with church
 - Strong and effective Local Leadership Teams
 - A clear contribution to the parish Mission Plan
 - Lay leadership identified, encouraged and developed
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About the Town Centre Mission Area

The mission area includes:

- St Mary's Ashford – the civic parish church with varied patterns of worship and community engagement, and a well-established relationship with its church school



Christ Church, South Ashford

- Christ Church, South Ashford – a Victorian church with an evolving role, whose longer-term future is still being discerned
- Ignite – a midweek community offering hospitality, worship and practical support.

The context is diverse, including areas of regeneration alongside areas of deprivation. There is significant scope for growth and development.

About Ashford



Ashford town centre

Ashford is a fast-growing town with excellent transport links, including high-speed rail to London.

It is a place of both long-established communities and significant new housing development, bringing a younger and more diverse population.

The town offers good amenities, access to the countryside, and a strong sense of continued change and development.

Housing



1, The College – the Team Vicar’s house

The Team Vicar will be provided with a four-bedroom house close to St Mary’s, well situated for ministry and within walking distance of the station.

Further information

For an informal conversation, please contact the Team Rector, the Revd Canon Dr Jeremy Worthen: jeremy.worthen@ashfordchurches.co.uk.

Appendix 1 – Mission Plan (Summary)

Ashford Town Parish has developed a Mission Plan following external review and parish-wide consultation.

A vision has been formulated of **many more people of all ages encountering faith, coming to faith and growing in faith through our family of churches**. Outcomes that can support its achievement are under discussion, with initial proposals including:

- **Many more people encountering faith** – increasing the proportion of the population of Ashford having contact with us through community outreach activities across the parish from around 2% to 10%, and developing a network of ‘hubs’ to support this, where we serve the common good, are overt about our motivation as followers of Christ, and offer opportunities for experiencing and learning about the Christian way
- **Many more people coming to faith** – raising the percentage of the population of Ashford who are worshipping with us on a Sunday from 0.4% to at least 1%, with much of that growth coming from starting new congregations, at existing or new locations, with a particular focus on newer housing estates with no visible Church of England presence, and accessible pathways for seekers to become disciples
- **Many more people growing in faith** – raising the percentage of church members participating regularly in discipleship activities beyond regular Sunday worship from around 15% to more than 70%, with varied provision of education and training including offerings within individual church communities and others made available for the parish as a whole, and more than 80% of adult church members committed to regular, proportionate giving
- **Many more children and young people engaging with our family of churches** – raising the percentage of under 16s in our attendance figures from around 15% to at least 25% of our church members, with a range of mid-week and school-holiday activities being offered at different locations, and some contact with 50% of Primary school children and 30% of Secondary school children across the parish.

To support this, the parish is being organised into five Mission Areas, each with local leadership and responsibility for contextual mission and ministry.

Strategic oversight is provided through a Project Board working alongside the PCC, ensuring accountability, learning and coherence across the parish.

The plan is supported by diocesan partnership and funding, and will continue to develop as it is implemented.

Appendix 2 – Full Role Description (for reference)

(a) Local responsibility: Town Centre Mission Area

In close consultation and collaboration with other members of the core clergy team, the Team Vicar will:

- Lead the ongoing development and implementation of mission and ministry within the Town Centre mission area, contributing to progress across all four parish mission outcomes.
 - Exercise priestly leadership that is attentive to the realities of social deprivation, marginalisation and fragility within parts of the Town Centre and South Ashford, holding together pastoral care, social engagement and confident Christian witness.
 - Convene and support the Local Leadership Teams for St Mary’s Ashford and Ignite Town Centre, helping them to be effective, responsible, prayerful and outward-looking, and ensuring appropriate reporting and accountability to the PCC.
 - Discern the gifts of others and build up church members in their discipleship and ministry, encouraging shared leadership and lay vocation.
 - Lead worship and preach regularly within the Town Centre mission area, coordinating service planning with ordained and lay colleagues, while also contributing elsewhere in the parish as needed.
 - Provide and enable excellent pastoral care and sacramental ministry.
 - Foster strong local relationships, including through schools (notably Ashford St Mary’s CE Primary School), ecumenical partnerships, chaplaincy initiatives, community organisations and civic stakeholders.
 - Attend to and develop the partnership with Revelation Ashford and similar bodies as appropriate.
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(b) Parish-wide responsibility: Mission development and implementation

In collaboration with the Team Rector, fellow Team Vicars, lay leaders and diocesan colleagues, the Team Vicar will contribute to the ongoing shaping, development and implementation of the Ashford Town Parish Mission Plan.

This includes:

- Working constructively with the Project Board, PCC and Local Leadership Teams (LLTs) to support coherent planning, prioritisation and parish-wide learning.
- Bringing insight from ministry in the Town Centre and South Ashford — including experience of working in contexts of social and economic deprivation — into parish-wide mission reflection and shared practice.

- Working with colleagues to foster creative, realistic and prayerful strategic planning in each mission area as the Mission Plan unfolds.
- Supporting new and developing initiatives through sound discernment, encouragement of lay leadership, and appropriate priestly involvement, while ensuring that delivery is held within agreed governance structures.
- Supporting a culture of shared responsibility, accountability and evaluation as the parish seeks sustainable patterns of growth and ministry.

As the Mission Plan matures and its mission outcome areas become more clearly articulated and embedded, it is envisaged that each Team Vicar will, in due course, take responsibility for one specific outcome area on behalf of the parish (for example, evangelism, discipleship, work with children and young people, or community engagement).

(c) Core clergy team responsibility: Team Vicar

As a member of the core clergy team, the Team Vicar will:

- Share in the cure of souls for the whole of Ashford Town Parish, contributing to parish leadership and management as agreed with the Team Rector.
 - Participate faithfully and constructively in team meetings, taking appropriate responsibility for fostering healthy team dynamics and mutual support.
 - Serve as an ex officio member of the PCC, playing an active role in governance and strategic discernment.
 - Contribute to good communication across the parish, working with parish staff and acting as a conduit between parish-wide structures and their own mission area.
 - Serve as a member of the Project Board overseeing the plan for growth in the parish.
 - Participate in deanery and diocesan life as agreed with the Team Rector.
 - Commit to personal prayer, ongoing learning, good self-care and appropriate ministerial accountability.
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Time allocation

As a broad guide, it is anticipated that the post-holder's time will normally be divided approximately as follows:

- Parish-wide mission development (a) – 40%
- Local mission area leadership (b) – 50%
- Core clergy team and wider responsibilities (c) – 10%

In practice, many activities will span more than one of these areas.

Gifts, Skills and Experience

We are seeking an ordained priest who:

- Exercises confident, compassionate priestly ministry grounded in prayer, theological reflection and a secure Anglican identity.
- Has experience, understanding and skills in ministerial leadership within contexts of social and economic deprivation, including the ability to integrate pastoral care, social engagement and confident Christian witness.
- Has a track record of effective team working, including leading and nurturing lay leadership, working creatively with peers, and serving constructively under oversight.
- Is able to contribute to shaping, leading and implementing strategic planning processes at local and parish level, holding vision and delivery together over time.
- Shows commitment to holistic growth in church life and understands the opportunities and challenges of change in complex urban contexts.
- Is skilled in pastoral ministry and congregational leadership, with the ability to discern, nurture and release the gifts of others.
- Is a capable organiser who can see initiatives through, balancing imagination with realism.
- Knows how to balance initiative and consultation, and to work well within agreed governance structures.
- Is adaptable, resilient and thoughtful in contexts of transition and ambiguity.
- Is faithful in prayer for the parish and able to model and encourage a life of prayer in others.
- Is willing and able to work collaboratively with colleagues within the Team Ministry, across the Diocese and in the Deanery