



**Diocese of Canterbury**  
CHANGED LIVES ➔ CHANGING LIVES

## PILGRIMS WAY BENEFICE

*Parish Profile 2026*



PILGRIMS WAY  
CHURCHES  
*Growing together*

### *Our Vision*

*Together with our new vicar, we seek to share ministry, to nurture faith, and to encourage spiritual growth, sharing the love of God with our congregations and the wider community through the teachings of Jesus Christ.*

## *Who we are*

- A six-church Benefice spread across three parishes, set along the Pilgrims Way within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding natural beauty.
- All Parishes are located in the North and North-East of Maidstone, with communities centred on the edge of Maidstone.
- Each Parish has a Parochial Church Council and has strong links with its Parish Council.
- The post of Vicar provides an exciting opportunity to grow in a leadership role within a supportive environment.

## *Safeguarding*

The Pilgrims Way Churches, take their responsibility for Safeguarding seriously. Each parish has a Safeguarding Officer to help implement the House of Bishops Safeguarding Standards, ensuring our churches and activities are places of safety for everyone.

## *Who to contact*

If you feel that God might be calling you to new ministry in the Pilgrims Way Churches, please contact any of the below:

**Gill Munson:** [gillmunson@fastmail.fm](mailto:gillmunson@fastmail.fm) (Boxley Churchwarden)

**Nicky Reid:** [hnickyreid@gmail.com](mailto:hnickyreid@gmail.com) (Detling and Thurnham Chairman)

**Gill Brown:** [custance8@gmail.com](mailto:custance8@gmail.com) (Hollingbourne and Hucking Chairman)

To discuss the role, contact **The Venerable Estella Last:** [archdeacon.maidstone@diocant.org](mailto:archdeacon.maidstone@diocant.org)

## ***Our Churches***

### ***St. Mary the Virgin and All Saints Church***

Boxley, Maidstone ME14  
3DX



### ***St. John's Church***

St. John's C of E Primary  
School, Grove Green,  
Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5TZ



### ***St. Martin of Tours Church***

Detling, Maidstone, ME14  
3JU



### ***St. Mary the Virgin Church***

Thurnham Lane, Thurnham,  
Maidstone ME14 3LG



### ***All Saints Church***

Hollingbourne, Maidstone,  
ME17 1HW

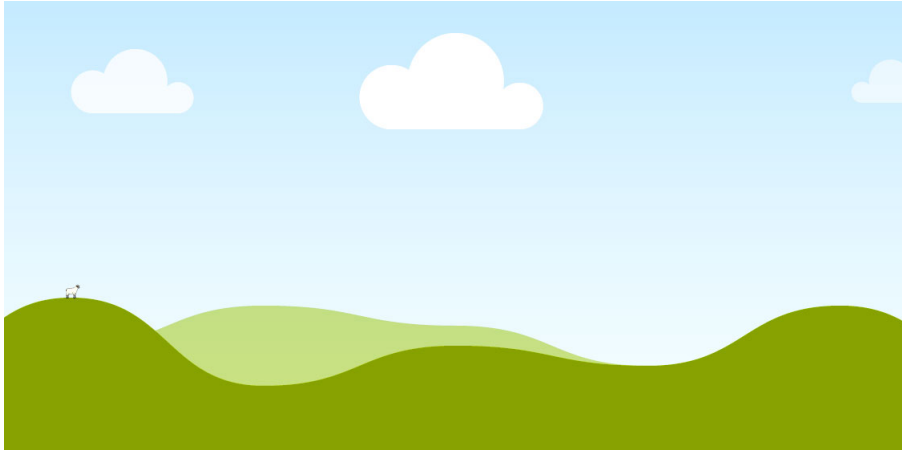


### ***St. Margaret's Church***

Hucking, Maidstone,  
Kent, ME17 1QT



# ***Our Parishes***



## ***Boxley***

- Includes Invicta Barracks (36 Engineer Regiment & King's Gurkha Engineers)
- Sandling hamlet with village hall
- Historic Boxley village
- Mixed development: housing, retail and business parks
- Two care homes, private hospital, secure adult mental health facility
- Primary and secondary special schools
- Grove Green (1980s–90s estate) with C of E primary school and St John's Church
- Local centre with medical practice, shops and community hall
- Weavering hamlet with village hall

## ***Hollingbourne and Hucking***

- All Saints, Hollingbourne located in upper village
- Well-served village with mainline station and community café
- Primary school and early years provision
- Village hall and playing field with pavilion, used by local groups
- St. Margaret's, Hucking small rural hamlet (approx. 15 dwellings)
- Adjacent to Hucking Woodland Trust estate

## ***Detling and Thurnham***

- St. Martin of Tours, Detling, centrally located, close to the majority of residents
- Strong village community centred on hall, pub and community-run shop
- Recreation ground and cricket ground
- St. Mary the Virgin, Thurnham, located in rural hamlet setting
- Historic features within parish including Thurnham Castle ruins, and Binbury Castle
- White Horse Country Park within parish boundary

# ***What we're looking for in our new Vicar***

## ***Key Responsibilities***

- To have regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy and other relevant legislation including safeguarding
- To develop a clear strategy for the Parishes in keeping with the aims and objectives of the Diocese of Canterbury, Three Bold Outcomes and our Mission Action Plans
- To build the Kingdom of God in the Benefice through ministry to the community and the cure of souls
- To build congregations committed to prayer, bible study, evangelism and whole life discipleship
- To take an active part in St John's School including becoming a Trustee of the Academy
- To actively grow links and develop relationships with local people and organisations, to support the aims of the churches
- To support the congregation in achieving the objectives of the Parishes
- To maintain financial stability

## ***Purpose***

- Minister to the Benefice
- Ensure the smooth and efficient running of the Parishes

## ***Person Specification***

### **We're praying for a Vicar who is**

- Ordained in the Church of England with relevant experience of typical range of duties of a priest in Church of England parish ministry
- Able to lead liturgy that is both glorifying to God and edifying to people
- Able to identify, devise and implement patterns of worship that will be appropriate for a wide variety of people, including all ages, and those not yet familiar with the Christian faith

## ***Faith***

- Confident in their own faith and secure in their identity as a Christian leader
- Able to access appropriate resources to sustain and refresh their own faith and spiritual life
- Practising good self-care (spiritually, emotionally, socially, mentally and physically) so as to stay fresh and be a positive role-model for others
- Committed to praying for the church, alone and with others, to discern what God is saying and doing



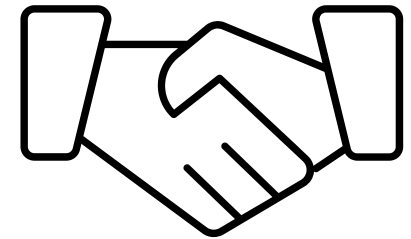
## ***What we're looking for in our new Vicar***

### ***Leadership***

- Committed to and skilled in delivering leadership and supervision which empowers others through delegation and sharing of responsibilities, and enabling the ministries of others to thrive in worship, fellowship and outreach
- Actively involved in giving pastoral care to the community
- Effective in creating, communicating and delivering inspiring vision in collaboration with members of the congregations and across the benefice and in developing appropriate strategy, attainable objectives and clear action steps to achieve it in reliance on God in prayer
- Able to manage, change and effectively handle all issues within the benefice
- Committed to personal development and training

### ***Key working relationships***

- Bishop of Dover
- Archdeacon of Maidstone
- Area Dean of North Downs Deanery and Lay Chair of Deanery Synod
- Church Wardens
- Parochial Church Councils
- Headteacher and Trustees of St John's C of E Primary School
- Local Community partners: church leaders of all denominations, schools, Parish Councils etc.



## Boxley

- To nurture and grow St. John's Church
- To expand outreach to the vulnerable and elderly in the community
- Ensure the church has facilities to support a growing, diverse congregation sustainably.



## Detling and Thurnham

- Outreach – to help with loneliness within the community
- Start a new bell ringing band in Thurnham church
- Fundraising to increase the awareness of the churches and their needs



## Hollingbourne and Hucking

- To continue and build on our relationship with Hollingbourne Primary School
- To continue with the men's breakfast and increase its frequency
- To recruit as widely as possible to the PCC



## Services

The Sunday services, with the exception of St John's, are traditional, either Eucharist or Morning Prayer. These are taken by the vicar, retired clergy or members of the laity.

### Timetable of services

| Church        | 1st Sunday | 2nd Sunday | 3rd Sunday | 4th Sunday |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Boxley        | 9am        | 9am        | -          | 9am        |
| St. John's    | -          | -          | 10am       | -          |
| Detling       | 10:30am    | 10:30am    | 10:30am    | -          |
| Thurnham      | -          | -          | -          | 10:30am    |
| Hollingbourne | 11am       | 11am       | 11am       | 11am       |

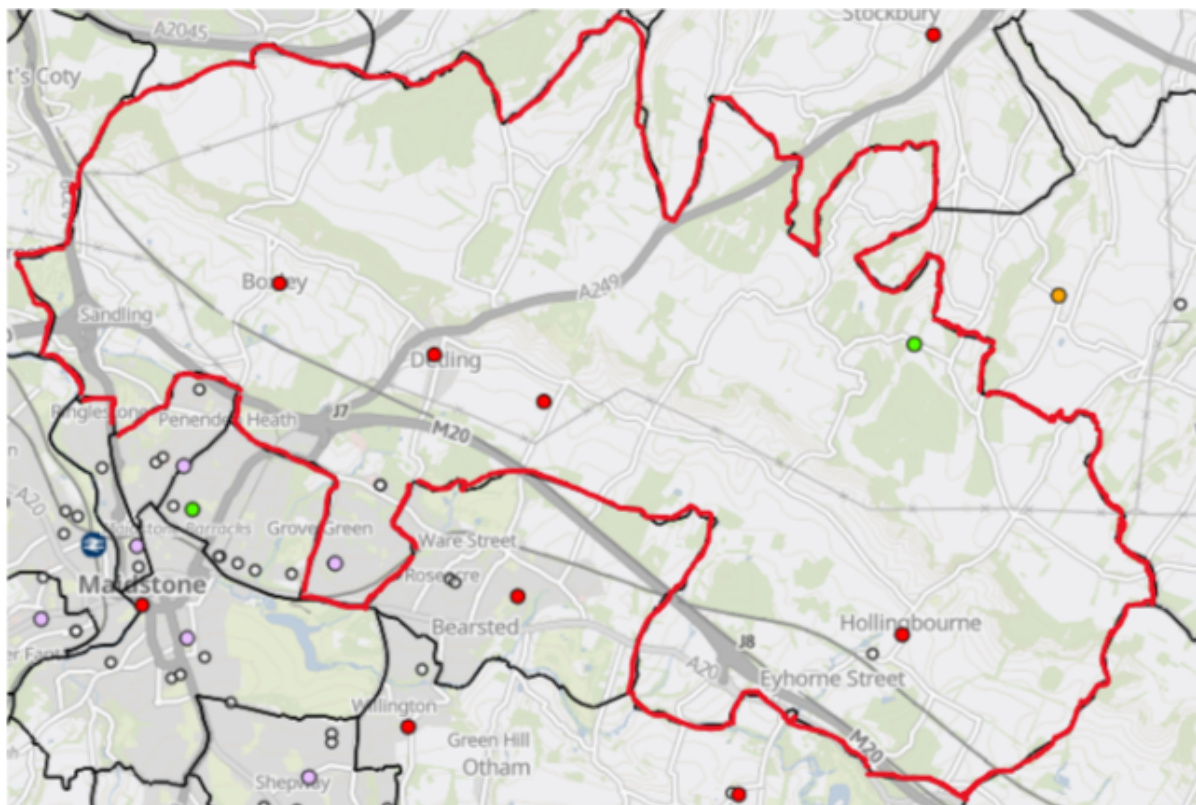
When there is a 5th Sunday in the month, there is a Benefice service held in one of the churches.

Hucking holds a Palm Sunday service, Harvest Songs of Praise and a Christmas Carol service all of which are joint services with Hollingbourne and very well attended.

Remembrance Sunday is commemorated in all villages with church services, parts of which are held at the outdoor memorials.

Once a month services are held at St. John's at 10am. These are fun, noisy and energetic with contemporary music, stories, crafts and lots of cake! The hall is set up cafe style with a multimedia screen for worship, games and bible verses.

## Map of The Pilgrims Way Churches



**Source: ArcGIS Church of England Parish Map**

The Benefice is outlined in red. Four of the churches, Boxley, Detling, Thurnham and Hollingbourne, red dots, sit on the Pilgrims' Way. St. John's Church, held in St John's School, lilac dot, is in Grove Green where the population of the Benefice is concentrated. The church in Hucking, green dot, is in a straight line north of Hollingbourne. The area north of the Pilgrims' Way, the North Downs, is very sparsely populated.

## Population statistics

| Parish                      | Population |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Boxley including St. John's | 6411       |
| Detling and Thurnham        | 1099       |
| Hollingbourne and Hucking   | 1107       |

**Source: Census 2021 Data**

# Churches

There are four Grade 1 churches: St. Mary the Virgin & All Saints, Boxley, St. Martin of Tours, Detling, St. Mary the Virgin, Thurnham and All Saints, Hollingbourne. St. Margarets, Hucking is a Grade 2 church. Thurnham and Hucking are Chapels of Ease and both have authority to conduct baptisms, weddings and funerals. The churches are well maintained and in a good state of repair, with the exception of Thurnham which is in need of a new roof. All have modern facilities.

All the churches have churchyards which are environmentally and ecologically friendly places for wildlife. Each has a Garden of Remembrance except for Hucking and some have open burial grounds. Areas of both Boxley and Hollingbourne churchyards are maintained by Boxley Parish Council and Maidstone Borough Council respectively.

Boxley Parish Council also has responsibility for churchyard walls, lychgate and war memorial.

Maidstone Borough Council also has responsibility for Hollingbourne churchyard walls but the lychgate is maintained by the Parochial Church Council.

Hucking is an open churchyard and is maintained by the Parochial Church Council.

Each church has an interesting history not only the buildings but also artefacts and past worshippers and visitors.

The last quinquennial surveys were for Boxley 2020, Detling 2025, Thurnham 2025, Hollingbourne 2025 and Hucking 2016/17.

**“Our church  
means everything  
to us.”**

**“Our church is open every day. It is somewhere to go for peace, quiet, prayer and sometimes sadly bereavement. However, I often meet a friendly face and life always seems better afterwards.”**

As custodian trustee, the Diocese owns land purchased with funding from the Boxley Church Hall Charity for which the PCC is the managing trustee.

The Lotus Group, owners of Boxley House, allow Boxley Church to use its drive for car parking during services.

St. John's Church, Grove Green which is in the Parish of Boxley worships in St. John's Church of England Primary School hall.

## ***Working within the Benefice***

There is a very strong relationship between all the churches within the team. Currently the service rotas are arranged so that the Minister can take a 9am service at Boxley and also either 10.30am or 11am service at Detling or Hollingbourne respectively. We have shared services for every fifth Sunday and some festivals.

We are supported by three licensed Lay Funeral Ministers, two of whom are Readers.

Events are widely publicised across the churches and we try and support each other as much as possible

The Benefice has a part-time Administrator to support the Minister and Churchwardens in their duties.

**“Not just a place of worship but as the key way of bringing people together.”**

## Communication

- There is a Benefice website **[www.pilgrimswaychurches.org.uk](http://www.pilgrimswaychurches.org.uk)** which gives information about the churches, their services and events.
- Boxley has a monthly church magazine delivered to subscribers. It includes church news and a range of interesting articles.
- Detling and Thurnham News is an important feature of the village. The monthly magazine is delivered free to every household in the village and keeps residents up to date with church and village affairs.
- Hollingbourne and Hucking magazine is also published monthly by the church and has a wide readership. It includes church news, service times, village information and articles of general interest.
- To date the Incumbent has written an article each month that is published in all three magazines.
- Individual events are publicised throughout the Benefice and elsewhere using social media and other advertising opportunities.

## Electoral Roll, Service Attendance, Baptism, Weddings, Funerals and Interments

| <i>Church</i>        | <i>Electoral Roll Numbers</i> | <i>Avg. Service Attendance</i> | <i>Baptisms</i> | <i>Weddings</i> | <i>Funerals</i> | <i>Interments</i> |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Boxley</b>        | 49                            | 33 adults<br>2 children        | 7               | 3               | 4               | 6                 |
| <b>St. John's</b>    | -                             | 25 adults<br>8 children        | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0                 |
| <b>Detling</b>       | 22                            | 13 adults<br>1 child           | 4               | 1               | 3               | 1                 |
| <b>Thurnham</b>      | 10                            | 18 adults                      | 0               | 0               | 3               | 1                 |
| <b>Hollingbourne</b> | 40                            | 11 adults                      | 0               | 0               | 1               | 2                 |
| <b>Hucking</b>       | -                             | 0                              | 0               | 2               | 0               | 0                 |
| <b>Total</b>         | -                             | -                              | 11              | 6               | 11              | 10                |

Source: 2025 Statistics for Mission Return

## Music and bells

Our worship is enhanced by music. Boxley and Detling choir members on occasion sing together.

Boxley, Detling, Thurnham and Hollingbourne each have working organs which are played for the majority of services.

Boxley church has a peel of six bells and Hollingbourne eight bells which are rung before each service, weddings, funerals and special occasions.

Boxley and Detling Handbell Group sometimes support services and other church-based events.

## Home Groups

Boxley has a Prayer and Discussion group who meet fortnightly online. We have previously had a monthly Bible Study home group.

Home communion is available on request for those who can no longer attend church on a regular basis.

## Regular Helpers

We consider ourselves to be blessed with people who are more than willing to help and support the running of the churches. These include servers, sidespersons, coffee makers, cleaners, flower arrangers, gardeners.

In addition, there are individuals that take specific responsibility for maintaining clocks, heating and sound equipment.



After service at Detling church

## Pilgrims and Visitors

Many pilgrims pass through the Benefice. Boxley, Hollingbourne and Hucking churches are open daily. Thurnham Church provides overnight accommodation and basic necessities. Most of the pilgrims who stay at Thurnham are part of the Augustine Camino pilgrimage between Rochester and Ramsgate.

On the pilgrimage that Archbishop Dame Sarah Mullally made from St. Paul's Cathedral to Canterbury Cathedral she called in at Boxley church where she and her party signed the visitor's book. They then walked on to Detling Church and attended a short service of Evening Prayer. We would also like to encourage more schools and other youth groups to visit our churches.



Archbishop Sarah leaving Boxley Church



US Naval Cadets visiting Thurnham Church as part of their pilgrimage

**“True faith and love for  
Jesus is easily visible”**

## ***Pastoral Care***

Boxley has a team who conduct monthly services in the two care homes in the parish. It also has a fortnightly well attended coffee morning held at the Fox & Goose pub in Weaving.

Cygnets Hospital, a 63-bed secure Mental Health facility for adults would welcome the support, which we were previously able to provide.

Detling also holds two coffee mornings a month in the church which attract a large number of residents. It has a Men's Breakfast every two months.

Thurnham has a Ladies Afternoon Tea three times a year held in The Bell Inn.

Hollingbourne and Hucking have a Men's Breakfast held in The Hook and Hatchet pub.

## ***Bearsted Churches Together***

A group of churches formed an alliance several years ago, when Thurnham was linked with Bearsted.

Thurnham continues to be part of this group which encompasses Holy Cross, Bearsted, Bearsted Methodist Church and St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church.

This ecumenical group arrange events during Lent, Easter, and Christmas.

**“An important part  
of the community”**

## ***Orthodox church***

For over 30 years Boxley church has welcomed the Greek community for their regular twice monthly services, weddings, baptisms and funerals.

## Schools

St. John's Church of England Primary School is a two-form entry, single Academy Trust. Boxley PCC provide Trustees and Members who play an active part within the school. The relationship between the school and the church is very strong and the vicar plays a key part in worship and school life. St John's was rated an Outstanding school in all aspects when visited by the Ofsted team in March 2025.

**Website:** <https://st-johns-maidstone.kent.sch.uk/>

Having received 'Flourish' funding, we hope to appoint a part-time Children and Families worker to enhance the relationship between St. John's church and school.

**"I love the variety of different services and children are encouraged to join in"**



"We have always had an excellent relationship with Boxley Church which is important in our pupils' spiritual development as they move through the school. The vicar supports staff, pupils and their families empowering and supporting the continuous development of the school's Christian distinctiveness and mission". - **Headteacher**

## Schools

Hollingbourne, a half form entry Local Authority Primary School, although not a Church of England school, has strong links with the church and welcomes the Vicar and other lay members. It was rated a Good provider at the last Ofsted inspection in March 2022.

“Hollingbourne Primary is incredibly grateful for the fantastic links we have with the church. Our children and families have benefitted from services at the church to mark and celebrate key Christian festivals and as part of their learning within our RE curriculum”. - **Headteacher**

Leigh Academy Bearsted, a two-form entry primary school, part of the Leigh Academy Trust opened in September 2020. This school was rated Outstanding when first inspected in January 2023.

Leigh Academy Snowfields, adjacent to the primary school, is a purpose built special secondary school for 140 students which also opened in September 2020 and was rated Outstanding at its inaugural inspection in June 2023.

Currently there is no direct input to the daily life of these schools.

## ***Fundraising and Social Events***

Boxley has an active Social Committee and any funds raised support the general running of the church.

The Friends of Boxley Church charity (number 287040) has been in existence for approximately 40 years and has raised thousands of pounds over the years for the maintenance and preservation of the church building.

Typical events include garden parties, quizzes, coffee mornings, lunches, Christmas bazaars, Christmas tree and flower festivals.

Boxley Village Society is a charitable fundraising group with whom we sometimes organise events.

Detling runs a number of fundraising events which have included quiz nights, tours of the graveyard and Sunday afternoon teas.

Thurnham has held regular fundraising events including quiz nights, cowslip walks with ploughman's lunch, historical churchyard walks, classic cars on the field behind the church and Christmas Fayres. Fundraising continues apace but much money is needed to repair the roof. There are plans to start a Friends of Thurnham Church charity.

Hollingbourne has a range of social events and fundraisers including stalls at the Village Fete, summer barbeque, church Christmas cards, Christmas Fair.

The Culpepper Embroidery which is of national significance and is housed within the church is a fundraising opportunity.

There is a Friends of Hollingbourne's Historic Church charity (number 1099283) which has supported the fabric of the church extensively for well over a decade and support work in the closed churchyard, which is largely maintained by the local authority.



**“It is always a focal point for shared activities.”**

## Finance

All Parishes are able to pay their Parish Share in full and cover other financial needs from the funds held. The ministry cost within the Parish Shares are divided as below

| <i><b>Parish</b></i>               | <i><b>Parish Share %</b></i> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Boxley including St. John's</b> | 57.19                        |
| <b>Detling and Thurnham</b>        | 25.12                        |
| <b>Hollingbourne and Hucking</b>   | 17.69                        |

Boxley Church Hall Charity, mentioned previously, holds restricted funds.

The details can be found on the Charity Commission's website: **number 1069436**.

The Church Estate Charity in Thurnham holds restricted funds and owns four cottages and a number of allotments.

The details can be found on the Charity Commission's website: **number 211448**.

The independently examined accounts for all three parishes can be provided on request.

## The Vicarage

The vicarage is a five-minute walk from St. John's School, in a quiet 'no through road'.

It is a four-bedroomed, detached house with an adjoining garage. Downstairs there is a lounge, kitchen/breakfast room, dining room, living room/study and cloakroom.

The main bedroom has an ensuite shower room. The garden is lawned with a patio.



- Grove Green has shops providing daily needs, e.g. supermarket, doctors' surgery and post office all within easy walking distance of the vicarage.
- Maidstone has four Grammar schools (two for boys and two for girls), along with two local secondary schools adjacent to Grove Green, all rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.
- Maidstone has two mainline stations, with trains taking approximately an hour to reach central London or Canterbury.