

## The benefice profile for All Saints with St Philip & St Stephen Maidstone

Welcome to our parish profile. We hope you're inspired by what you read!

In recent years, the parish has strengthened its three centres of worship - united in one worshipping community.

We strive to teach, share and express God's fellowship in our Churches.

However, there is a real appetite for progress and a genuine desire among a good number of people to discern, in collaboration with our new priest, where the focus of mission should be across the benefice and the deanery allied with the priorities of the Diocese of Canterbury.



### Vision Statement

We are a committed group of Christians on a shared journey who believe that, under God, we can dream out loud with each other as to how we might become a more Christ-like community, focused on mission and being open and welcoming to all.

We believe that our dreams can be realised in at least three practical ways:

- *Offering comfort, strength, and inspiration to our existing congregation, doing all we can to equip us for ministry so that together we can grow the church*
- *Nurturing the faith of those we meet through our existing partnerships with schools and other community groups and developing other pastoral encounters through baptisms, funerals etc*
- *Being more intentional and missional about the use of our benefice buildings as resources for the 'common good'*

## Who do we want our priest to be?

It is our strong belief that the church is here to be Christ both in and for the community (the Word was made flesh and dwells among us!). It is made clear as we recall that the one commandment that Jesus gives us is to gather around a common table to break bread and drink wine with each other in remembrance of him.

We believe that this table is NOT to be limited to those who come to church but is to be a table that is large enough to embrace the whole community, especially those who find themselves on the edge of society.

Therefore, we look for a priest who will help us to deepen our faith through prayer, reflection and worship so that we can engage more effectively for our parish.

- place prayer, reading and reflection as a high priority and make time for personal and spiritual development, recognising that worship is the beating heart of our common life, giving us the grace and strength that we need to live Christ-like lives each and every day
- encourage us to pray and reflect on how we are living our lives in obedience to Christ, possessing the self-awareness needed to enable others to flourish and blossom in their presence
- creative and imaginative, possessing flexibility in their thinking and who will embrace change, able to take the difficult decisions and not be afraid of conflict
- discern, encourage and make use of the gifts of everyone; someone who is hospitable, welcoming all people regardless of age, gender, ability, sexuality or ethnicity thus working collaboratively to develop a culture of team-working across the benefice
- able to think and plan strategically, identifying priorities for the benefice and be able to display a sense of adventure; not be afraid to be a risk taker
- recognise the harsh reality of parish ministry within a context of fragile but faithful congregation with limited resources
- put group ministry within the Deanery at the heart of their mission, reflecting and affirming the PCC's desire to be a part of a wider Deanery serving Maidstone
- seek to live out a Gospel of Resurrection that rejoices in the promise of hope and new life that the Gospel proclaims.



## Three Centres of Worship: One Worshipping Community

All Saints church is the focal point of the Maidstone Heritage Quarter: a group of surviving mediaeval buildings, one of the finest in England which are renowned for their historical significance and character. Much of the area surrounding All Saints consists of the business hub of the town whereas St Philip's and St Stephen's are located in residential areas.

At **All Saints**, our music is led by a paid Director of Music and organist who leads a small and loyal group of robed adult singers maintaining a historical choral tradition. At St Philip's and St Stephen's, we are pleased to have a regular organist/pianist who leads the congregational singing at both worship centres. As a parish, the PCC is investigating sources of funding and opportunities to provide possible choral scholarships to develop our musical elements of worship.

Over the last few years, the congregation has wrestled with major restoration projects including the partial completion of the nave roof. There is further urgent work required to the roof and the building in the future but this is the nature of looking after a significant medieval building. Whoever is appointed needs to prioritise the potential for All Saints as a valuable and unique resource both for the gathered community as well as the wider community of Maidstone. The recent innovation of the Saturday Community Café has provided us with an exciting opportunity to engage with the wider community and beyond.



**St Philip's church** and centre is at the heart of the local community and this is reflected in the intimate feel of the worship there. It is also blessed with a community centre which consists of a large hall with a kitchen and two smaller meeting rooms. The Parish Office is located here. In recent times, it has been used for Singing for Health and Wellbeing and regular Bible Study groups as well as community groups including martial arts, a dance group and children's parties. The Parish is open to considering the potential use of the church and centre in the future.

**St Stephen's** is located in the Archbishop Courtenay Church of England Primary School, Tovil. The parish provides an after-school activity on a weekly basis in support of the school's after school provision. The current priest in charge has done much to foster stronger links with the school, including holding regular worship within the school.



### Parish Worship

Our worship pattern currently supports a weekly Sunday morning service at 10.00am, meeting at All Saints on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month for a Eucharist, with a Eucharist at St Philips on the 2nd Sunday and on the 4th Sunday we meet at St Stephens (within the school) for a Service of the Word. There is a strong core of the congregation who worship at all three worship centres in the united benefice, In addition All Saints has a service of Evensong on the 1st Sunday of each month. Major Festivals in the church calendar are currently celebrated at All Saints, being the larger and more central church.



## Come and see

St John's Gospel tells the story of Nathaniel who isn't convinced by what Philip has to say about Jesus, so he invites him to come and see for himself. We are conscious that this document can only offer a snapshot of what life in the Benefice is like and how we see the ministry and mission of the Benefice developing.

We hope you have seen enough to want to explore whether you are being called to be our vicar. If that is the case, we invite you to visit informally as part of the discernment process: to walk the streets, to experience our worship and to talk with the Area Dean or Archdeacon so that you can gain a more accurate picture of who we are and what is required.



We acknowledge that full time ministry can be very demanding on clergy and their household. In return for your commitment to this ministry, we will play our part in offering whatever support we can:

- In honouring the clergy terms and conditions of service, particularly in relation to time off – a 24 hour rest period every seven days; uninterrupted rest period every month of 48 hours and 6 weeks' annual leave
- In encouraging you to take advantage of spiritual direction and learning opportunities
- In offering paid administrative support (currently 6 hours per week)
- In offering a supportive group of lay people who are keen to engage in pastoral care as well as planning and leading non-eucharistic worship
- In working with you in developing an appropriate and realistic role description

The Benefice at present is supported by a retired bishop. In addition, the parish has several lay church members who are able to prepare and lead services, one of whom has completed the Diocesan ALM course. A number of members of the congregation are very open to taking part in preparing and leading services as well as supporting the community; roles already undertaken here include the Anna Chaplaincy and Street Pastors.

Worship is currently held every Sunday with a service at 10am for the whole parish rotating around the three churches. We have a sung evensong on the first Sunday of the month at 3:30pm in the winter and 6:30pm in the summer.

We are a committed group of Christians who will work with you as together we fulfil our common calling to be Christ in our community

## Additional information which you may find helpful

### Church Buildings

All Saints is located on Mill Street and is a Grade 1 listed building. It was built in 1395 on the site of an earlier building dedicated to St. Mary.

The churchwardens are working closely with Maidstone Borough Council, the Archdeacon, Area Dean and various Heritage organisations to prepare for future development of the Archbishops Palace, Carriage Museum and their surrounding areas. They are also exploring the possibilities of improving the facilities within All Saints Church as well as looking at improving the appearance of the churchyard and paths within it which are adjacent to the Archbishops Palace Gardens. The emphasis being on creating an area of important Heritage interest that will be attractive to all for use in a variety of ways.

St. Philip's is located on Waterloo Street at the heart of a residential area of the town. It was built in the mid 1860s (the spire was added in 1876). In 1967, part of the church was divided to provide for a community centre for local use.

St Stephen's, Tovil is located in Archbishop Courtenay School. The original church of St Stephen was closed in about 1980 and has since been demolished. The school now hosts Sunday worship for this part of the benefice. The school benefits from a room, enabled by the Diocese and a legacy from a past Head Teacher of the former All Saints School, for the use of the parish: the Dove Room. This room is currently used for Dove Club, Church Meetings and small group work.

### The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a relatively modern house with 5 bedrooms, a bathroom, a study, small office, a lounge with adjoining dining room, kitchen with a utility room and downstairs toilet. It has a spacious and well looked-after garden to the rear with a garage and private parking space for several cars.

It is situated in Priory Road in the heart of Maidstone and in close proximity to All Saints. It is within walking distance of the town centre and of St. Philip's. St. Stephen's is a 20 minute walk away.



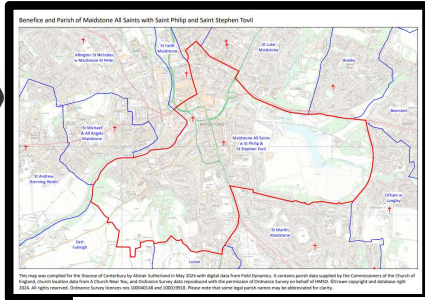
### Maidstone

Maidstone is the county town of Kent and has a population of about 176,000 (2021). The town is served by two mainline railway stations which provide easy access to London. It is also a hub for numerous bus routes into different parts of the county. It is situated in the heart of the county (the Garden of England!) and is well placed for excursions into some beautiful countryside. It is also within easy reach (an hour or so) of coastal resorts both on the North Kent Coast as well as the South Coast. The town is also served by Mote Park: a large parkland area with extensive facilities, including a boating lake, large playgrounds and spacious walking areas as well as a large leisure centre.

The town is well served by a wide variety of schools at both primary and secondary level.

## Further additional Parish information & data

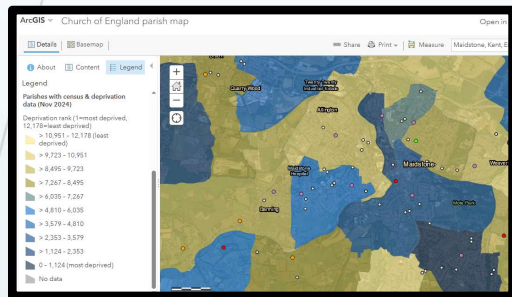
### Parish Boundaries



<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f209069c4808/content/pages/documents/maidstone-all-saints-benefice.pdf>

### Parish Population and deprivation

<https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=67bce0ed36dd4e0a7a16bc079aa09a&extent=-0.4317,51.313,0.1986,51.5945>



Parish: Maidstone: All Saints w St Philip w St Stephen (Tovil)  
Zoom to

Deprivation rank (1=most deprived, 12,178=least deprived)	2,745
Parish population (2021 census)	21,213
Parish number of occupied households	8,589
Area (square miles)	2.4
Population density (people per square mile)	8,863
% aged 0-4	6.4
% aged 5-19	17.1
% aged 20-29	14.8
% aged 30-44	24.6
% aged 45-69	26.9
% aged 70 and over	10.2
% Asian ethnicity	7.6
% Black ethnicity	3.2
% Mixed ethnicity	3.1
% White ethnicity	83.8
% Other ethnicity	2.3
% Buddhist	1.5
% Christian	45.3
% Hindu	1.7
% Jewish	0.1
% Muslim	5.0
% Sikh	0.1
% Other religion	0.9
% No religion	39.1
% Religion not stated	6.3
Rural/Urban classification	Urban
% Area urban	94.2
Parish code	560330
Parish local name	Maidstone: All Saints w St Philip w St Stephen (Tovil)
Parish legal name	Maidstone, All Saints with St. Philip and St. Stephen, Tovil
Benefice	Maidstone All SS and St Phil w Tovil
Benefice ID	06/150CH
Deanery	Maidstone
Deanery ID	56207
Archdeaconry	MAIDSTONE
Archdeaconry ID	562
Diocese	Canterbury
Diocese ID	6
CUF poverty lookup tool	<a href="#">More info</a>

### Christmas Services etc.

	Attendance
Invicta Carols	800+
Heart of Kent Hospice	300
MGGs Carol Service	600
Sandling School Carols	150
Maidstone Churches Carols	900+ (X2)
St Philips Carol Service	54
Pickard & Beale Carols	370
Archbishop Courtenay Carols	350
MGS Carols	270
Valley Park Carols	760
All Saints Church Carol Service	121
All Saints Church Christingle Service	450
St Philips Church Christingle Service	78
Midnight Eucharist	165
Christmas Day Family Eucharist	62

### Schools within the Parish

- Archbishop Courtenay Coffe Primary
  - Aquila Trust School
- Maidstone Grammar School
  - Selective boys (KS3-4)
  - Mixed (KS5)
- South Borough Primary School
  - KCC
- Park Way Primary School
  - KCC

### Schools outside the Parish but within the Deanery who use our churches during the year

- Valley Park Secondary School
- Maplesden Noakes Secondary School
- Maidstone Grammar School for Girls
- Invicta Grammar School for Girls
- Sandling Primary School

### Attendance

Regular Services taken from 2024 Statistics For Mission Return

- All Saints Church Adults 55 Children 3
- St Philips Church Adults 39 Children 2
- St Stephens Church Adults 36 Children 2

### Special Services & Events during 2024

In June, the parish held a Festival of Life and for a week we enjoyed a daily variety of activities and concerts to which all were warmly welcomed to enjoy and participate. All ages were catered for against the inspiring backdrop of a flower festival created and arranged by members of our congregation.'

In September, members of the Friends of Kent Churches celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a special evensong

In November members of the High Courts and Judiciary celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Combined Courts in Maidstone with a special service.

