ASHFORD
TOWN PARISH

PARISH PROFILE

Team Vicar with special responsibility for lowest income communities



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We are looking to appoint a new Team Vicar for Ashford Town Parish who will combine a focus on holistic mission with our lowest income communities across the whole parish with pastoral responsibility for the Willesborough & Sevington church community.

Key elements of the role will be

- Taking a strategic role across the parish for addressing the second element of our parish vision statement, 'Initiatives that are serving the community by having a transformative impact on people's lives in the most deprived areas of Ashford.

- Ensuring that those from lowest income communities are included in the Mission Action Planning process that flows from the parish vision statement and that activities relating to this are effectively supported, including Ignite.

- Being rooted initially in the Willesborough & Sevington church community, holding pastoral responsibility for it and fostering strong local leadership.

- Working as part of a dynamic and supportive Parish Leadership Team of lay and ordained colleagues.

About the diocese



A Message from the Bishop of Dover

Welcome and thank you for taking an interest in the role of Team Vicar for Ashford Town Parish with special responsibility for lowest income communities. You will see from the parish profile some of the specific things that the parish 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.

Our Vision



By God's grace we want to be a people who are...

- confident & creative disciples of Jesus Christ
- rooted in scripture & drenched in prayer living gratefully, giving generously, caring for creation & sharing the gospel
- growing in number & expectations – of God & ourselves
- motivated by justice & love, open to the Spirit & ready for adventure!

Therefore we will..

'Therefore we will...' is a recognition that words without actions are empty. It is a commitment to taking real steps now to make this vision a reality soon. The current actions that flow from this vision are outlined in our current strategy document which you can find here. Of course, these actions will change and develop over time - and it's exciting that some of our parishes are already considering this vision carefully for themselves, exploring together what actions they will commit to take, what their local 'Therefore we will...' might look like.

At the heart of all we do is this vision: a vision of transformation for ourselves and our communities: Changed Lives → Changing Lives. In your role, in your place, we will be looking for you to join in with what God is already dong and play a crucial part in making this vision a reality.

Our direction

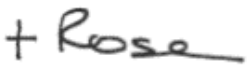
Our vision unites us in purpose but will be expressed in different ways according to what makes sense for different parts of our diocesan family. We are working closely with our deaneries to identify, resource and support them as they seek to grow their mission, ministry – and their churches – in ways that make sense to their contexts. Each deanery is developing its own mission plans – and you could play a key role in helping to develop your deanery's vision for the future.

As a diocesan family, we are also deeply committed to our calling to build a safer, more welcoming church for all. We will never be perfect, but we can work together to make our churches safer. At the heart of this ethos is the conviction that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – and that it needs to be at the heart of everything we do. You can find out more about our approach to safeguarding here.

Our commitment to you

We know that supporting healthy, flourishing ministers (lay and ordained) is crucial for a healthy, flourishing diocese. Therefore, we offer the 'Canterbury Diet' to all our new incumbent ministers – this is an intentional programme for ministerial development, health, growth and faith. A similar lay programme is in development too. We offer pastoral supervision and spiritual accompaniment, an invitation to be part of residential training programmes focused on learning, leading and mission, action learning sets, as well as a range of specialised training events, and other regular 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 Rt Revd Rose Hudson Wilkin
Bishop of Dover and Bishop in Canterbury

The Canterbury Diet

for Incumbents and Priests in Charge

After licensing the Incumbent meets with the Director of Mission & Ministry who introduces the priest to the
Canterbury Diet
and offers a
Pastoral Supervisor
with whom she/he meets not less than four times per year

Ministers acquire a
Spiritual Accompanier
and meet regularly, recommended 6-B weekly

In the first two years the Incumbent or Priest in Charge attends the
Ministry Training Programme
Monday to Friday residential courses generally held in Bruges
Week One: **The Minister as Learner** (January, soon after licensine)
Week Two: **The Minister as Leader** (June, of the same year)
Week Three : **The Minister as Missioner** (January, the following year)

Participation in the annual
Ministerial Development Review
Meet with Consultant Reviewer, complete a Personal Development Plan;
meet with Archdeacon a year later and update the PDP, and so on,
with opportunity to review Pastoral Supervision and Spiritual Accompaniment.
Also meet with the bishop during the course of the two-year cycle.

As able, participate in professional ministry courses:
Management Skills Course
Working with Conflict
Leading Change
each a two by one day course, offered regularly at advertised times through the year

Participation in four
Wellbeing Courses
two hour evening meetings, two offered per year

Participate in relevant
Continuing Ministry Development Events
at advertised days and times

Golden threads

How are prayer and spiritual practices being developed?
How am learning and reflecting on ministry practice?
How are we attending to good relationships and collaborative ministry?

Archdeacon's Introduction



The Ashford Town Parish was created in 2016 as something new – a single parish to serve one growing town so that the Church could serve the community in a way that was organised, intentional and built on the mutual mission and resources of the individual churches. As a new way of being the Church of England in Ashford it is still a work in progress as something this innovative cannot be an instant fix, but under Canon Jeremy Worthen's leadership the parish is strengthening and shaping its vision for the next stage of its development.

Part of that development involves this Team Vicar role which is being supported financially by the diocese for the first five years. It melds together ministry rooted in the communities around Willesborough with a role focusing on ministry with lowest income communities across the parish. It is a role that encompasses an incarnational expression of faith, making a tangible difference to people's lives in the name of Christ, and bringing those people to him in the worship in the parish.



I hope that you will be excited by what you read of the post in the profile. To help you discern whether this is for you, I feel that the right person for this role will be able see what they could do with colleagues in the parish, lay and ordained, to respond to the diocesan vision's challenge of 'therefore we will…', because this is a role which has to be outward facing and ready to take the Gospel out to people wherever they find themselves. That person will need to be comfortable with the breadth of traditions across the parish, working with them to develop new ways of expressing mission that are authentic to the churches. An ability to help develop the outreach of the eucharistic and gently catholic churches could help in making that real difference. If the new Team Vicar could be you, you'll need an ability to innovate and to be able to demonstrate how you have enabled a church to grow, both in faith and in numbers.

Do contact me (darren.miller@archdeacashford.org or 01233 712649) or Jeremy (jeremy.worthen@ashfordchurches.co.uk or 07549 173565) if you would like to discuss any aspect of this role further.

With my prayers as you discern where God may be calling you,



The Ven Darren Miller
Archdeacon of Ashford

FAMILY COMMUNITY FAITH

A **family** of churches centred on Jesus, serving the **community** and sharing our **faith**.

Serving the community

Like many towns, Ashford contains a very wide range of communities in terms of relative deprivation. On the IoD 2019 Dashboard, neighbourhoods in the ninth (i.e. second lowest) percentile for most deprived sit alongside eight neighbourhoods in the second percentile, with one in the first. As Ashford Town Parish encompasses the whole town, on the map provided by CUF it appears roughly third from the top in terms of Church of England parishes nationally in terms of levels of deprivation, but this can mask the seriousness of the poverty that marks the lives of many of the people we as a parish are called to serve.

There is a strong recent tradition in the parish of commitment to social outreach that aims to help the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our communities. This would include:

- Community cafés at two of our churches (St Mary the Virgin in the town centre, and St Mary the Virgin Willesborough), with another one planned to open soon (at St Francis)
- 'Holiday hunger' initiatives – MakeLunch at St Francis (well-established), with plans to start Family Food and Fun at Christ Church South Ashford
- Food bank supplies available at a number of our churches
- Emergency supplies for rough sleepers available at St Mary the Virgin in the town centre
- A parent and toddler group at St Francis
- Support for Ignite in Ashford, now based at St Mary the Virgin in the town centre and attracting a growing number of guests
- Support for CAP debt centre in Ashford, providing finance, centre manager and other volunteers
- Support for the Winter Night Shelter organised by Ashford Together prior to 2020.

When in a survey of our seven church communities in May–June 2021 we asked people what three things we should be most passionate about, the most frequently given answer (from a list of 14, with the option to add your own) was 'Serving the community around us'. At the same time, we have recognized in conversations within the Parish Leadership Team that we could make a stronger impact in terms of showing God's love in action to those on the lowest incomes within our parish. One factor here is the location of our better-attended churches in older and more prosperous areas of the town, with consequent low levels of visibility and engagement in some of the poorest areas. Another is a lack of strategic thinking around how we can work both in partnership and in a way that complements what other churches and agencies are doing to effect lasting transformation, and not just short-term relief.

Reflection on this has been a crucial element in the process of forming our vision statement, adopted at our last APCM, as the frame for our Mission Action Planning for the next five years:

Our vision is to be **a family of churches that is centred on Jesus, serving the community, and sharing our faith.** As we have sought God's will for our parish over the next five years, we see this vision including:

1. A rich variety of discipleship activities and worship services that enable people of different ages and stages of faith to live lives centred on Jesus

2. Initiatives that are serving the community by having a transformative impact on people's lives in the most deprived areas of Ashford

3. An evolving range of 'bridge' activities that build relationships with people who are not currently part of a church community, including those living on newer estates, and provide opportunities for sharing our faith.

Our church communities are working on plans for mission aligned with this vision statement. Many have elements in them that are specifically intended to relate to part 2 of the statement. It is also notable, however, that these may be short on specifics, as church members are conscious they may not know much about 'people's lives in the most deprived areas of Ashford' and need to find out more before they can judge what may have 'a transformative impact' for them.





In the light of these developments, the parish has submitted a successful bid for 50% funding for the first five years of this new post via the Diocesan Mission Resources Group. Funding for 50% of a Team Vicar post currently forms part of our parish share calculation for the diocese. In order for this post to be sustainable beyond the first five years, we are likely to need to see some significant increases in numbers of regular attenders in the coming years, amongst other things. Given the growing population of the parish, this is not an unreasonable expectation.





About the parish

We are a busy multi-church parish serving a varied and growing town – more detail on that in the next section of this document. There are eleven locations across the parish where worship takes place regularly: six parish churches, three chapels of ease, and two community centres. Our congregations encompass a range of different approaches to worship and spirituality within the spectrum of contemporary Anglicanism. In 2021, Average Weekly Attendance across all congregations was recorded as 305.

There are currently four full-time stipendiary clergy working in the parish: the Team Rector, two Team Vicars and a curate. We have two
self-supporting ordained ministers who give generously of their time to the work of the parish. Paid posts include administrative staff, a Parish Mission Enabler and an Ignite Enabler (the latter two funded through fixed-term external grants). We also benefit from a number of active clergy with PTO who live in the parish, as well as Readers and Authorised Lay Ministers.

How do the different congregations connect with one another? We currently operate as seven ‘church communities’ (some encompassing two different centres for worship), each with its own local leadership team and its designated minister with pastoral responsibility, all under the one PCC. The Parish Leadership Team, which includes all licensed clergy as well as some lay members, works across the Parish to implement agreed priorities and goals, coordinate ministry, and identify emerging issues and the appropriate response to them.

We are looking to complete the initial phase of our parish-wide Mission Action Planning process by the end of the year, with each church community identifying key medium-term priorities for the next five years and specific goals for 2023, as we seek to live out the vision for our parish summed up in our vision statement.

About the town



Ashford Town Parish, formed in 2016, is one of the largest parishes in the country in terms of population, recorded in 2018 as 83,506 and increasing further with continuing development. It encompasses different kinds of communities, including areas of significant deprivation alongside historic villages and newly built executive housing.

Ashford is a growing town. For long term residents of Ashford, it feels like they have been building for years, and that is the reality! It has been a long-term strategy to build more residential properties across the Borough. Since the Parish was formed, two major new out-of-town developments have been started, while a large hotel and several complexes of flats are being built in the town centre along with the in-filling of brown-field spaces across the town.

As well as this growing residential development, commercial and infrastructure developments have followed. Ashford is now served by three junctions from the M20; it has high speed railway connections to London and the Continent and has recently had a large extension to the Designer Outlet. A new cinema and leisure complex has opened in the town centre.



Ashford is a town of contrasts. That includes contrasts in terms of types of housing, and the character of different areas. The rural housing in Sandyhurst Lane is surrounded by fields and woods, while a historic village vista greets you from St Mary's, Great Chart. Victoria Park has brand-new flats facing onto it across the river, while there are numerous distinctive housing estates, some going back to the railway boom in the 19th century. There are also three areas within the Parish which are a mixture of council flats and houses, along with privately owned and buy-to-let accommodation.

About the Willesborough and Sevington church community

The Church family has focused on Mission Action Planning and is now delivering the following priorities:

- Offer regular services attractive to young people, families and non-church people
- Deliver Sevington church reordering & repairs, establishing a thriving church community
- Identify community needs and seek to serve North and South Willesborough, Sevington and Newtown as a whole, focusing on areas of deprivation
- Achieve a Silver Eco award (completed August 2022)
- Rebuild relationships with local schools and build on work with young people and families.



St Mary's Willesborough dates to 1050 and is in an urban district of Ashford.

The building was reordered in 2015 creating a warm, well illuminated, and flexible nave space and a café opening weekday mornings. The church is very well used by community groups.

Eucharistic worship is currently held at 11am on Sunday (60 attending) and 9.30am Wednesday (10 attending) plus a Sunday 8am BCP.

The congregation is primarily older with a few younger families.



We are focused on hospitality offering a welcoming, inclusive, and safe place, and our aim is to meet people where they are on their journey, sharing faith in Jesus and serving them.

We have an active social calendar attracting people from within and beyond the church family.

St Mary's Sevington is a small and intimate 12th century Chapel of Ease cut off from Willesborough by a dual carriageway.



Records show that congregations have always been small with few houses close by. The loyal congregation continue to offer a warm welcome to all who enter the building.



Two years ago, the Government constructed a lorry park and Brexit Customs Clearance Depot for lorries directly behind the church. Half the funding is in place for a church reordering project and, with the possibility of houses being built close by, we look with optimism to the future.

About our schools

Ashford Town currently has 31 Schools and 1 Further Education College within the Parish boundary. That number is expected to rise as new schools open on the Chilmington Green development.

As a parish, we have good links and regular contact with many of these schools and we do this through Collective Worship; Curriculum RE; support with SMSC Objectives; Chaplaincy; and Governance.



There are 5 Church Schools in the Parish:

- John Wesley Primary School – joint Church of England and Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School
- The John Wallis Church of England Academy – Church of England sponsored 0-19 Academy (Voluntary Aided equivalent)
- St Mary's Ashford – Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
- Kennington Academy - formerly Voluntary Controlled, now part of the Aquila MAT (The Diocese of Canterbury Trust), primary school.
- Kingsnorth Church of England Primary School - Formerly Voluntary Controlled, now part of the Aquila MAT (The Diocese of Canterbury Trust).



What will I be doing?

(a) Taking a strategic role across the parish for addressing the second element of our parish vision statement, 'Initiatives that are serving the community by having a transformative impact on people's lives in the most deprived areas of Ashford'.

- Support such initiatives that are already in place or beginning to be implemented, e.g. through advising, sign-posting resources, identifying partnerships within and beyond our parish, facilitating review and improvement
- Identify new initiatives that could contribute to transformative impact and working with local church communities, the wider parish and other potential partners to evaluate them and, if appropriate, take them forward
- Grow awareness and understanding of issues facing lowest income communities within the parish and resources available for addressing them, including funding from other sources.

(b) Ensuring that those from lowest income communities are included in the Mission Action Planning process that flows from the parish vision statement and that activities relating to this effectively supported, including Ignite.

- Provide significant expertise in mission and ministry among those from lowest income communities to the benefit of colleagues, local leadership teams and volunteers
- Support the Ignite community as it moves into a new phase, overseeing and helping to build up the leadership team
- Participate as agreed with the Team Rector in missional activities that are focused on those from lowest income communities, including work with children and families.

(c) Being rooted initially in the Willesborough & Sevington church community, holding pastoral responsibility for it and fostering strong local leadership.

- Lead worship and preach regularly, while also contributing to Sunday services and occasional offices elsewhere in the parish and the deanery
- Convene the Local Leadership Team and help them to be effective, creative, and focused in taking forward the Mission Action Planning process with a view to church growth, especially among children, young people and adults under 50
- Discern the gifts of others and build up every church member in their discipleship and vocation
- Foster networks of local connection, through e.g. occasional offices, contact with schools, and relations with community leaders
- Be ready to serve other church communities across the parish, on an occasional or regular basis, showing flexibility as needed.

(d) Working as part of a dynamic and supportive Parish Leadership Team of lay and ordained colleagues,

- Support the effective working of the team by whole-hearted participation in team meetings, care for colleagues, and fostering positive team dynamics
- Be a reliable colleague who is able to work happily as a peer alongside others.

Note: it is expected that half of your time will be spent on the cross-parish responsibilities relating to lowest income communities ([a] and [b]), and half of your time on pastoral responsibility for Willesborough & Sevington ([c]), with all areas of ministry being informed by commitment to team-working ([d]).

What gifts, skills and knowledge will I need?

We are looking for an ordained minister who:

1. Has significant experience, understanding and skills in ministering to people from lowest income communities
2. Can contribute to the on-going process of Mission Action Planning in our parish through theological reflection, effective communication, and practical leadership in mission for the Willesborough & Sevington church community
3. Will help to balance our current clergy team with an appreciation of the Catholic tradition within the Church of England, while being able to minister across different churches with a range of spiritual outlooks, liturgical styles, and social contexts
4. Is skilled in pastoral ministry and understands congregational leadership
5. Is able to nurture the gifts of others and empower them for ministry and leadership
6. Is a capable organizer, who can see through what they have started
7. Through their participation as both a leader and a member enable teams of different kinds to fulfil their potential
8. Will be faithful in prayer for the parish and serve as a model and teacher of prayer for others.

Living in Ashford



The catchphrase that “Ashford” is “Best Placed to Live” is based on its connectivity, with the normal travel time from Ashford to London via the twice hourly High-Speed rail link now 38 minutes. Ashford will be less than two hours away from Paris and one hour from Lille via Eurostar when services begin stopping again here, and Eurotunnel carries vehicles between Folkestone and Calais.



Historically, Ashford has played an important role in the railway industry from the opening of the works in 1847 (now permanently closed) but there are plans to convert them into state-of-the-art film studios.

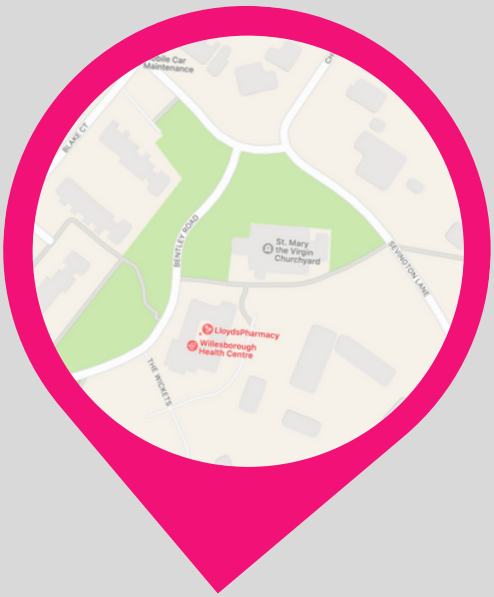
Along with coffee shops and several good restaurants, the town has excellent recreational facilities including two cinemas, a leisure centre, a bowling alley, a new brewery, the Ashford Designer Outlet nd the County Square shopping centre. St Mary’s Ashford also serves as a venue for concerts and theatre performances sponsored by ‘Revelation’, our local Arts Trust.

You don’t need to venture very far from the town centre to experience the beauty of the Kent countryside that is all around us. Head south, and it’s not far to the coast, from historic seaside towns to the wide open spaces of Camber Sands.

As described earlier, there’s a wide variety of schools in Ashford, with corresponding choices when it comes to education. The extent of new housing development makes it a relatively ‘young’ town in many areas, with much to offer children and families.

Housing

The Willesborough Vicarage is located at, 66 Church Road, Willesborough, Ashford, TN24 0JG.
The property comprises:



- Front Office and an additional study
- Substantial entrance hall
- Ground floor WC
- Lounge
- ·Part brick/ wooden windows lean-to on lounge
- Dining Room
- Kitchen
- 4 Bedrooms
- Family Bathroom
- Large integral garage and extensive driveway offering off-road parking for several vehicles.



