



Ashford Town Parish

Could you be our Team Rector?

The Parish of Ashford Town came into being in April 2016 when Ashford's seven parishes were united into a single parish. The Town Parish now has one PCC, a core ministry team, led by the Team Rector and one set of financial accounts.

We have seven churches, two chapels of ease and one church family meeting in a community hall, with a wide variety of churchmanship and worship

styles. Three churches have been reordered, with two sharing their flexible spaces for community activities, and there are three other church development projects in the pipeline. We have four church halls.



Loving God : Serving Ashford





Ashford Town Parish

An introduction from Bishop Rose:

Thank you for taking an interest in the role of Ashford Parish Team Rector . You'll see from the rest of the profile some of the specific things that the benefice 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.



The Diocese of
Canterbury



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Where we're heading:

At the heart of all we do is a vision of transformation for ourselves and our communities: no one can encounter God and remain unchanged. In our diocese, we want to increasingly become a Christian community transformed through our encounter with Christ, overflowing to transform and bless the families, homes and communities we serve in Kent: *Changed Lives* → *Changing Lives*. In your role, in your place, we'll be looking for you to play a crucial part in making this vision a reality.

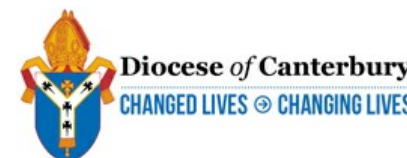
Changed Lives → Changing Lives unites us in purpose but will be expressed in different ways according to what makes sense for different parts of our diocesan family. It's also a living strategy – as we listen to God and one another, the shape of our work together will undoubtedly change and grow - you could help to develop this vision for the future. Find out more [here](#) or speak to the Ven Darren Miller, Archdeacon of Ashford on 01233 712649 or at darren.miller@archdeacashford.org.

Our commitment to you:

We know that supporting healthy, flourishing ministers (lay and ordained) is crucial for a healthy, flourishing diocese. That's why we offer the 'Canterbury Diet' to all our incumbent ministers – this is an intentional programme for ministerial development, health, growth and faith. A lay programme is in development too. Additionally, we offer a range of specialised training events, as well as 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



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Ashford Town Parish

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Ashford Town Parish

At the beginning of our journey we divided the parish into five 'local areas' (with soft boundaries) each of which has a leadership team and at least one local warden. The local leadership teams have responsibility for mission and ministry in their community, however, they serve the united parish and its combined resources have enabled us to instigate exciting mission initiatives across our town. These include [Ignite](#): two informal communities and church for the marginalised, [Make Lunch](#): free food for children and parents in school holidays, Ashford Debt Centre: providing debt help in partnership with [Christians Against Poverty](#), and Education: extensive work in Ashford's schools and college.

We are also actively involved in cross-denominational initiatives including [The Winter Night Shelter](#), and [Street Pastors](#).

We have an excellent partnership with Ashford Council, which sees the community benefits that the Parish brings. The Council has provided direct funding and has enabled Developer funding for several of our projects.

We are mission-minded and keen to re-imagine ministry and enable our people to extend God's work in Ashford Town.

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Our Churches





Ashford Town Parish

St Mary the Virgin, Ashford



- Bringing Mission and Ministry to the people of Ashford
- Town Centre, Grade1 Church, re-ordered in 2011 as a 'Sacred and Shared Space' to serve the community
- Faith in Action: engaged locally and globally through Cafés, [Foodbank](#), Theatre and Third World infrastructure projects
- Music in worship, a Choir, Band and Organ, reflect the Sunday service range; along with Thursday Eucharist, Morning Prayer, Choral Evensong & relaxed family services
- Central venue, St Mary's Art's Trust, in partnership with Ashford Borough Council & the Church, hosts lunchtime and evening music, theatre, comedy and debates, along with a wide variation of guest speakers

[Revelation Ashford](#) - a unique pop-up arts venue just off Ashford High Street, in the 'Shared Space - Sacred Space' of St. Mary the Virgin Church. Since 2011, Ashford's growing community has experienced high quality events, legendary performers and theatrical performances of their own heritage.

- Atmospheric, intimate and quirky, with its distinctive setting and exceptional acoustics - voted Best Kent Cultural Venue in 2017
- Around fifty events each year at St Mary's, with twenty more performances on Ashford Bandstand and other town centre spaces
- Nationally and internationally acclaimed musicians: Courtney Pine, Steeleye Span, Kathryn Roberts, Paul Jones, Martin Simpson, Fairport Convention, etc.
- Film, theatre, spoken word, and community performances for all ages: Cardboard Orchestra, Family Film Fun, Long Nose Puppet Theatre, David Starkey, Dad's Army Radio Show, Gerald Dickens, etc.

"Something to surprise and delight everyone. It all goes to make Ashford an even more exciting place to be at the moment."
Frazer Thompson, CEO Chapel Down



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Ashford Town Parish

St Mary's, Kennington & Community Centre



- Medieval Church with adjacent modern office and hall
- Modern Church Community Centre, in Rylands Road housing estate.
- Offers both traditional and contemporary forms of Liturgy and music at both places of worship
- Maintains a good relationship with local schools, particularly Kennington Academy and Downsview Infants School

- Eagerly engages in newer forms of mission (Kennington-Style Make Lunch)
- Provides a varied range of social events

St Mary's Church Kennington uses its congregation, Medieval Church building, 1997 Church hall and Community Centre in Rylands Road:

"To proclaim the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the people of Kennington, by word and by action."





Ashford Town Parish

St Francis, South Ashford



- Church re-opened in 2016 after laying 'dormant' for two years
- The church and hall now host to a number of exciting programmes, working in partnership with other agencies
- Regular worshipping community on a Tuesday Lunchtime and hosts the monthly Parish Informal Worship Service
- Hosts one of the Ignite plants in Ashford
- Runs the programme 'Make Lunch' as an outreach into the local community
- A toddler group (Little Squeakers) was launched in November 2019 run by church volunteers from Singleton Church
- The hall and grounds are well used by the local community
- Hosts the Ashford Winter Night Shelter every Monday from December to March



Ashford Town Parish

St Mary's Church, Great Chart



- Grade 1 Listed, building with "Pest House" adjacent.
- Village location just outside the town of Ashford.
- Very close to Chilmington Green Development.
- Small but good regular attendance for weekly services.
- Very popular Marriage and Baptism venue.
- Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Services very well attended.

St Mary's, Singleton



- 25-year-old Church-Plant, serving the Singleton community
- Well attended weekly informal Sunday services
- 'Family Church' with children's Activity Mornings during school holidays
- Sunday morning worship led by congregation musicians
- Hall extension is the venue Grapevine Community Café
- Excellent links with the 3 local primary schools, one Community School, one Church of England/Methodist School and one 'all through' Church of England Academy



Ashford Town Parish

St Michael & All Angels, Kingsnorth



- An eclectic, broad church with an open evangelical leadership
- In the historic heart of the village but surrounded by new housing
- Offering a variety of worship styles including Café and Contemporary services
- Popular for Baptisms among the many young families in the area
- Extensively re-ordered 13 years ago with flexible space for Toddler Groups, Drama Groups and a monthly lunch
- Modern extension with meeting room, offices and an open Churchyard

SS Peter and Paul, Shadoxhurst



- Grade 1 listed Chapel of Ease
- In sound order, with an open Churchyard
- Two 8am Holy Communions each month, Songs of Praise service and a popular annual Crib Service.
- Several Weddings and Baptisms during the year.
- Shadoxhurst has a strong community feel and a small thriving Methodist Chapel
- Recently several small housing developments along with community endeavour, help to create a land buffer around the village which is becoming increasingly closer to the Chilmington and Kingsnorth planned housing



Ashford Town Parish

St Mary's Church, Willesborough



- Serving urban community with extensive social housing.
- Excellent re-ordered 'in-church facilities' including café six days a week, flexible nave space & seating, good heating and lighting.
- 'Middle of the road' worship style with music group and a strong choral tradition,
- Messy church and social events each month.
- Multiple external groups use the Church space.
- Caring & loving church family.

Christ Church, South Ashford



- Victorian railway worker's church in suburb of Ashford
- A previous history of Anglo-Catholic style worship
- A 'working' church, seeking to expand its ministry within one of Ashford's most diverse and deprived communities
- Developing mission field, including Ignite project
- Currently engaged in plans for refurbishment of hall and church front to provide a community hub



Ashford Town Parish

St Mary's Church, Sevington (Chapel of Ease)



- Small and intimate worship space supported by a faithful few elderly folk
- Bi-Monthly ALM led services in addition to occasional festival and bespoke Worship
- Cut off from Ashford urban area by major dual carriageway
- New expansive business and housing community planned adjacent to the Chapel
- Project planning underway for Chapel re-ordering to serve this emerging community.



Ashford Town Parish

In the first three years the parish cleared circa £216k of historic parish share debt owed to the Diocese. Our turnover in 2019 was £534k however there was a £23k shortfall in income against expenditure which hopefully will be addressed over the next few years. Two years ago we took the difficult decision, for financial reasons, not to replace one of our stipendiary priests however the position remains open so there is the opportunity to expand the ministry team in the future.

Creating an innovative parish has been challenging and at times painful, however this has been outweighed by the positive effect of being united and, working together, being better equipped to reach out across the town. The Holy Spirit is very much at work in our parish of Ashford.

We want to give our new Team Rector the chance to explore how building on foundations needn't be more of the same, but exploring new models for a church in a changing world. There is a need to feel confident and comfortable in exercising *episcopé* and enabling ministry in others. We look forward in excited anticipation of what the new Team Rector will bring to this role within the parish.





Ashford Town Parish

Our new Bishop, Jamaican-born Rose Hudson-Wilkin, took up office as Bishop of Dover in November 2019, after having served for the past nine years as Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons. Archbishop Justin Welby, commenting on those years of service, has said that he has “constantly been told that she has been an effective pastor in one crisis or another, especially in the last few years. Before that, she was a parish minister of great impact. She has been described as prophet, pastor and evangelist...” and “will bring great energy and a profound commitment to collegial working, an outward looking approach to the mission of the church and a profound spiritual life.” Many of these expectations have been fulfilled in her first few months as *de facto* diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury

We believe that any new team rector coming in would find it a joy and a privilege to be able to work with Bishop Rose.



Ashford Deanery

Our Deanery used to comprise 19 parishes but now consists of 4: two in the benefice of Calehill with Westwell (villages north of Ashford), Ashford Town and the Parish of Stour Downs (villages south of Ashford towards Folkestone). Though the greater part is Ashford Town Parish, we strive at well-attended chapters and synods to include all parts of the Deanery, whether rural or urban in context. We are currently planning an exciting Holy Week in the Deanery with the theme, 'Living the Easter Story'.



Ashford Town Parish

Ashford Town

Ashford in Kent has been a settlement for thousands of years. It was known as a market town as early as the Thirteenth Century. Ashford is located centrally in Kent, and lies at the intersection of the south edge of the North Downs and the valley of the River Stour.

The original town of Ashford has now combined with smaller surrounding villages because Ashford has been marked for growth from the 1960s and, true to its vocation, its population has grown sizably from then. According to the 2011 census, Ashford's population was 74,204 and it is expected that by 2021, that population will have more than doubled.

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. Today the town has excellent

leisure facilities including two cinemas, a leisure centre, a bowling alley, a new brewery, the Ashford Designer retail Outlet (3 million customers/year) and the County Square shopping centre. Revelation Ashford, 'a live event venue' in the centre of the town.

The catchphrase that "Ashford" is "Best Placed to Live" is based on its connectivity indeed, the travel time from Ashford to London via the High-Speed rail link is now 38 minutes (and runs twice hourly). Ashford is less than two hours away from Paris and one hour from Lille via Eurostar, not to mention the Eurotunnel service linking Folkestone to Calais.

The M20 and M2 connect Ashford to London and to continental Europe and beyond through the Channel Tunnel and via the Port of Dover.

Ashford offers ready access to London's two main airports - Heathrow (around 90 minutes) and Gatwick (just over an hour).



Could "Ashford, Best Placed to Live" be Ashford, Best Place to Minister for you?



Ashford Town Parish



THE MULBERRY

5 Bedroom House



* Plots 476 and 490 are handed.

FIRST FLOOR

Bedroom 1	4.36 x 3.75m	14'4 x 12'4
Bedroom 2	3.79 x 3.48m	12'6 x 11'5
Bedroom 3	3.82 x 3.14m	12'7 x 10'4
Bedroom 4	3.75 x 3.15m	12'4 x 10'4
Bedroom 5	3.82 x 2.46m	12'7 x 8'1

GROUND FLOOR

Living Room	5.49 x 3.75m	18'0 x 12'4
Kitchen/Family	6.17 x 3.79m	20'3 x 12'6
Dining	6.20 x 2.67m	20'4 x 8'9
Study	2.97 x 2.61m	9'9 x 8'7

For full disclaimer details relating to these floor plans, please see back page.

The Rectory

The three-year-old five bedroom 'executive home' is located in a quiet area of the new [Finberry](#) housing development (7 Augustine Drive, TN25 7GH), next to woodland and around two miles from the town centre.

The last team rector led Willesborough church (closest to Finberry) as well as leading the parish, however we understand that the new appointee may decide just to take on the wider role or may wish to anchor to a different church in the parish.





Ashford Town Parish

Ashford's Schools

Ashford Town has 31 Schools and 1 Higher Education College within the Parish boundary. As a Church we have good links and regular contact with most of these schools and we do this through Assemblies; Collective Worship; Curriculum RE; Support with SMSC objectives; and Governance.

In a new project, which came about as the Parish came into existence, the Parish is linked to Ashford School, the only independent school in the Parish, through the provision of a chaplain to the school. The post of *Priest to the Town Centre and School Chaplain* is jointly funded by the Parish and School; and the Priest is in school for half their time.

There are 5 Church Schools in the Parish
[John Wesley Primary School](#)- A joint Church of England and Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School

[The John Wallis Academy](#)- A Church of England sponsored 3-19 Academy (Voluntary Aided equivalent)

[St Mary's Ashford](#)- A 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), primary school.

The Parish of Ashford also holds one of 4 foundation places on the governors of [Norton Knatchbull](#) Secondary School.

The John Wallis Academy, a 3-19 Academy, has the provision of a Chaplain, funded by the school on site full time. He is also involved in the Parish as an ALM.

We hold a yearly (just before May half term) Pray for Schools Week, during which we

encourage our Parishioners to particularly pray for the Schools in the Parish, and we give a Thank You card and gift to each school for their staff.

We want to continue to build on our good links with the Schools in our Parish, the majority of the contact with the schools is through the Clergy Team, we recognise that we need to get more laity involved in this ministry.

We also meet with the students of [Ashford College](#) once a week as part of our Lay-Led Chaplaincy outreach.





Ashford Town Parish



Responding to a Growing Town.

For long term residents of Ashford its felt like they've been building for years, and that is actually the reality!

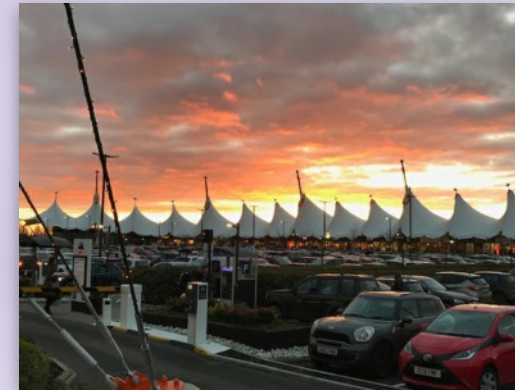
It has been a long term strategy to build more residential properties across the Borough, and since the Parish was formed 2 new large developments have been started, as well as the flats being built in the town centre, and the in-filling of brown-field spaces across the town.



As well as this growing residential development, commercial and infrastructure developments have followed. Ashford is now served by 3 junctions from the M20; has high speed

railway connections to London and the continent; has recently had a large extension to the Designer Outlet; and a new cinema and leisure complex has recently opened in the town centre.

As this residential development has evolved, it has been important to work out how the Church responds. In the last year an ecumenical new housing group has been formed to particularly look at the response to [Chilmington Green](#), to the South West of the town where 5,750 houses will be built over the next 30 years, but to also look more generally at the Church's mission to those in the new housing.



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Ashford Town Parish

For the past 3 years we have been involved in Carol Singing on [Finberry](#) (where the Rectory is situated), and we often post about Church events on their well used Community Facebook Page

In late 2019 the Methodist Church advertised for a New Housing Missioner to be based on [Chilmington Green](#), and we look forward to working with them in building community and exploring what a new worshipping community may look like. We ran our first event at Christmas 2019 with the developers on the [Chilmington Site](#), at this point there were only 18 homes occupied.

Our Team Rector will need to help us explore how we respond to this growth, working with the Council and our ecumenical partners, to best serve those moving to and already living in the Parish

Our vision

Our Vision statement was produced by a small group from across the Parish and agreed by the PCC in the summer of 2019.

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We haven't done any further work on developing this statement as yet, but we hope our Team Rector will help us explore what this means, and how it will impact on our work and ministry across the Parish.

Our Team Rector will need to help us explore how we respond to this growth, working with the Council and our ecumenical partners, to best serve those moving to and already living in the Parish





Ashford Town Parish

Could you be our Team Rector?

Being the next Team Rector of Ashford Town will be an exciting challenge for the right person. As you have hopefully seen from our Profile we are on a journey and we are looking for someone to lead us on the next step.

The main thing we are praying for us is for God to call, and then send, someone who is up for this challenge and wanting to go on this journey with us. At our Parish meeting about the interregnum the points below were suggested for our profile, and so if you think this could be you; we would love to hear from you.



The Parish community met together and were asked to compile a 'wish-list' of ideals. These are shown below.



Ashford Town Parish

Experience:

- Led and Managed a Team
- Ministered within a multi-Church Benefice
- Ministered within different contexts
- Has worked in roles outside of ordained ministry

Personal qualities:

- Prayerful
- Discerner of the work of the Spirit
- Resilient
- Wise delegator
- A Good sense of humour
- Able to make difficult decisions and manage expectations
- Innovator

Skills:

- Strong Visionary leader with good strategic management
- Mentor
- Theologian/A man or woman of the Word/Teacher
- Able to delegate
- Good communicator
- Ability to bring reconciliation and healing/handle conflict
- Change manager
- Good networker at all levels

Approach to the role:

- Excited about Team Ministry and Collaborative Working
- Keen to develop lay ministry and encourage vocation
- Visible across the whole parish
- Encouraging schools work and a vision for Children and Young People
- Comfortable and embracing of differing traditions
- Desire to reach those outside the church
- Wanting to maintain a good balance of Missional and Pastoral Priorities
- Keen to build wider links: Churches Together in Ashford, Local Authority and local charities



Ashford Town Parish

Core Ministry Team members

Team Rector	Vacant	Paid by Parish
Team Vicar (Kingsnorth)	Rev Caroline Mansley	Paid by Parish
Team Vicar (Kennington)	Rev Eve Lanchantin-Piggott	Paid by Parish
Town centre Priest 50%	Rev Richard Bellamy	Paid by Parish
Ashford School Chaplain 50%	Rev Richard Bellamy	Paid by Ashford School
Associate Priest (Christ Church) 50%	Rev Dawn Stamper	Completely unpaid
Ignite Enabler 50%	Rev Dawn Stamper	Paid by Church Commissioners
Associate Priest (Great Chart, Singleton & St Francis)	Rev Cathie Aldis-Saunders	Completely unpaid
Ignite Enabler	Dawn Evans	Paid by Church Commissioners
Training Curate	Rev Andrew Brown	Paid by Diocese
Training Curate	Rev Bruce Watson	Paid by Diocese
Team Missioner	Nathan Wilson	Paid by Church Commissioners/Diocese
Team Development Officer	Phil Sibbald	Paid by Diocese
Church Wardens	Derek Goodwin Jerry Fox	Unpaid
Honorary Treasurer	Shirley Leslie	Unpaid

Retired and unpaid Clergy who help with our ministry.

Rev Bonnie Appleton
Rev Judy Griffiths
Rev Noelle Hall
Rev Sue Starkings
Canon Paul Miller
Canon Gilbert Spencer
Rev Tony Boyd-Williams

We have five Licensed Readers, a good number of Authorised Lay Ministers and eight Local Wardens





Ashford Town Parish

S.W.O.T. Analysis – Ashford Town Parish – 10th February

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Our heart for mission</p> <p>Expanding Missional thinking</p> <p>Combined resource enables mission</p> <p>Successful projects which we all own: Ignite, Make Lunch, CAP & The Tent</p> <p>Ability to think big or outside the box</p> <p>Extensive ordained and licensed ministry team</p> <p>A functioning core team that, communicates and operates</p> <p>Diversity of churchmanship/style/worship/staff</p> <p>Our Buildings & their visibility</p>	<p>Lack of buy in to united benefice and change</p> <p>Mission & ministry – Needs new focus</p> <p>Children & Youth – Limited strategy for next generation</p> <p>Leadership / Communication: Too spread out</p> <p>Too much business not enough ministry</p> <p>Our reliance on SSM, PTO to provide ordained clergy roles.</p> <p>Limited generosity</p> <p>No over-arching parish vision – what is it here for?</p> <p>Lack of diversity</p>	<p>Season of Change & new vision</p> <p>Chance to reimagine roles & structure</p> <p>People over the parish can take part in endeavours that interest them by “theme” and not just by local church (e.g. Make Lunch)</p> <p>Chance to draw congregations and teams closer together</p> <p>Enabling Lay Ministry</p> <p>Mission to Outlet Centre</p> <p>Growing Town (New housing Estates) – Focus on Serving Ashford</p> <p>Schools and developing mission & ministry within them</p> <p>New Christians from mission initiatives</p>	<p>Lack of financial generosity</p> <p>“Friends” and local pressure groups that want to keep their “wealth” local</p> <p>Fear of financial failure</p> <p>Dispersed resources</p> <p>Fear of change</p> <p>Closure of ordained posts</p> <p>Elderly age profile</p> <p>Lack of growth</p> <p>Illness in clergy and lay readers</p> <p>People moving on</p> <p>People in the team feeling stretched</p>

