



Welcome to St Margaret's Parish Profile!

Read on and you will learn about our warmly welcoming and committed congregation, our stunning church nestling in the beautiful and peaceful Kentish countryside, and also you will discover something about the wonderful wider community that is Horsmonden.

Here, by the Grace of God –

- those who worship in church are very active members of the local community, and even for those villagers who come to church only very occasionally; this is very much **their** parish church.
- the pastoral ministry of the parish priest is widely welcomed in the village.
- our village is growing quite significantly and church members are keen to see the Christian faith shared with all ages and to serve their neighbours.
- worship is heart-felt and varied and numbers are growing gently.
- we are looking to work more closely with our neighbouring churches and their clergy and lay people with Diocesan plans in sight.
- we are looking for someone to come and live amongst us as our HFD Priest..

Could this be you...?

What do we offer?

- A 'varied' congregation 30 to 50 in all, keen to move forward under God.
- An enthusiastic Reader with PTO and a gifted lay Informal Worship Leader.
- A marvellous, ancient 14th C parish church building with new kitchen etc.
- A great and surprisingly busy village to live in.
- An opportunity to build on strong links to a very active, wider community.
- The challenge to help our ministry grow in an expanding village.
- An opportunity to work more closely with neighbours in a Cluster of parishes
- The encouragement of great Deanery colleagues
- Fully experienced Admin support and PCC Secretary.

We need a new Priest, who...

- Will give leadership in the church whilst empowering lay members.
- Will encourage us in sharing our faith and longs to see a church grow
- Delights to lead and preach from the Scriptures.
- Will challenge each and every one of us to develop our spiritual gifts.
- Enjoys ministering to a local school and other institutions.
- Will want to work enthusiastically with others in other denominations as well as our neighbouring parishes at Lamberhurst, Matfield and Brenchley.

Appointment proposed: House For Duty - 2 days (or equivalent) plus Sunday duties each week: - Initial period 3 years but with option to extend tba both sides.

Where and what are we?



Horsmonden is a relatively small but what Estate Agents call a 'highly sought-after' village, some nine miles east of Tunbridge Wells with a current population of around 2,400 but with significant new building growth on the horizon.

The village is on the edge of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and at its heart is the 'Heath', a village green, the site of various events through the year, mostly well supported by the church.

Local shops and other facilities within the village include a Village Shop, a Hairdresser, a Chemist, a new Cafe and a small business centre. The village has its own GP Surgery.

There is one Pub in the village, The Gun, and a justifiably extremely popular and busy Social Club: Various church events, such as **theWell@5**, a monthly St Margaret's Sunday afternoon informal outreach event, take place there and church members are active in encouraging the life and activity of this popular club.



Heath Stores & 'The Gun'



The Village Hall & the Social Club

Sports clubs in the village are well supported - football, cricket, tennis, darts, keep-fit, indoor bowls. There is a cricket ground and an outstanding tennis club, with 5 courts, floodlit for year-round play.

Other community societies and activities abound, and are generally very well supported. Twice monthly **Coffee Mornings** are organised by St Margaret's at the Social Club and are well attended. We also have our own Church Hall, a 1970s building behind the Rectory in the heart of the village currently mainly used for PCC Meetings etc plus our work with families, children and young people.





St Margaret's Church

People have worshipped at St Margaret's for seven centuries: It is Grade I Listed. It is lovely... It is in a beautiful truly rural setting; however this does mean it is 2 miles from the centre of the village which obviously brings its challenges. This does mean, however, that we have parking adjacent to the church for up to 50 cars!

It has been recently 'upgraded' with a new kitchen and loos and there are plans to remove all or some of the pews as well as upgrade the heating and lighting. It is used from time to time for concerts and festivals and it is planned that this should increase going forward. It is open during daylight hours and attracts many visitors, particularly because of historical connections, for example to the (Jane) Austen family.

There are many and varied activities that take place on a regular basis sponsored or supported by St Margaret's, and these are shown on the page overleaf:

Worship and ministry

Worship styles are varied and inclusive, albeit they could be loosely described as Low Church Evangelical. Lay participation is encouraged. Here is the current monthly service pattern:

10.00	Communion (BCP based) Service on the <i>1st Sunday</i> in the month Attendance around 30 to 40 adults.
10.00	All Age Worship on the <i>2nd Sunday</i> — Slightly different mix of mostly adults with some younger children
10.00	'Common Worship' Communion on the <i>3rd Sunday</i> in the month More 'traditional' service of around 20 - 30 adults.
10.00	Informal Worship Service. <i>4th Sunday</i> in the month More musical and informal. Attendance again 30 - 40 adults and kids
17.00	theWell@5 – on the <i>3rd Sunday</i> in the month Tea & coffee, relaxed with music, videos and open chat in Social Club

We also have a combined service on the 5th Sunday of any month that brings together all the churches in the surrounding 'cluster' of parishes and these are strongly supported by St Margaret's members.. These services rotate around the four parishes

Traditional special services are held at Christian festivals and, on Good Friday, for example, a short open-air service – and in some years a “re-enactment” - is held around large crosses erected annually on The Heath. Separate Remembrance Services traditionally take place in the Church and on the Heath, although there is now a larger all-churches combined service at the village War Memorial which this year attracted over 400 people. Confirmation Services are shared with neighbouring parishes, usually on Ascension Day.

A typical year might see 6 weddings and a varied number of baptisms. Baptisms normally take place during the morning service and the incumbent generally leads on baptism and marriage preparation with support from a lay team especially for baptisms.

A Pastoral Group works closely with the incumbent to assist with pastoral care in the community although this area does need some fresh input.

Our Electoral Roll number is 79.

Children and Young People

Youth work definitely needs encouraging although we are working hard and doing our best....

We have a **Woodland Church** that meets once a month on a church member's land and this regularly has four or five family groups attending. Children are free to explore the countryside and enjoy fellowship around a campfire toasting marshmallows!

We also have **All Age Worship** once a month and we have a small but slowly growing number of children who attend with their parents.

We have a very successful 'Toddlers' Group called **Playtime** which meets each week in the Church Hall with up to 30 toddlers (plus parent / guardian) regularly attending. We hold an annual 'Sports Day' and a Christmas Party. We are fortunate to have the support of the families who value the work that we do.

We also have a weekly **Youth Club** in association with YMCA on a Friday evening aimed at Years 6 and above. At the present time most of the young people attending are from Horsmonden only, albeit Playtime has quite a few Mums from our neighbouring villages.

Organisation & Administration

We are blessed to have an outstanding Church Administrator who we share with our cluster parishes. We also have a remarkably efficient PCC Sec. The Administrator handles requests for information and assistance in support of the Incumbent. This is a paid position.

The PCC currently has 7 members and meets some 10 times a year.

Along the lines as required by the Diocese the PCC fully understands and accepts our Safeguarding responsibilities and our Administrator also acts as our Parish Safeguarding Officer who is fully up-to-date with Diocesan and other requirements.

Finance

In recent years both our Income and Expenditure Accounts have been inevitably 'distorted' by the very significant £490,000 that we have been faced with in terms of repairs to the Tower, window repairs and, particularly, a new kitchen and toilets, the bulk of which (~£406,000) being this last contract which has just completed - magnificently!

Setting these aside, as it were, our 'normal' expenditure in 2023 was a Parish Share of £38,895 and a total outgo of some £79,811, albeit this figure did include some exceptional repairs - but this will, of course always happen with a 700 year-old building. It is also important to note that this Share was in respect of Tim and Trish French whose ministry was on a 0.4 basis. Assuming we are going forward on the basis of say 2.5 HFD then this will fall further, albeit the underlying costs have increased since 2023. It is worth repeating here that we have always contributed 100% of the Diocesan requested/recommended share.

In that same year (2023) our 'normal' income from direct giving plus weddings etc was some £86,389.

In the intervening period we have been in Interregnum so our expenditure has reduced in terms of payment to the Diocese, rates on the Rectory etc. Having said that, our income has also reduced as one or two donors have left the parish. We are planning to refocus our church family on day-to-day costs and requirements once we have clarity about our new incumbent

The Rectory

The Rectory itself was purpose-built in the 1970s and is located on the Goudhurst Road, two minutes' walk from the heart of the village and about five minutes' walk from the school. There is an attached garage and a parking area, accommodating several cars, which is shared with the Church Hall.

Schooling

Horsmonden Kindergarten provides an excellent pre-school service in a new building near the Primary school.

Horsmonden Primary School has an 'Outstanding' rating and reputation. It is not a Church School, but there is a strong Christian ethos and the Head teacher welcomes St Margaret's input into the school assemblies through 'Open the Book' presentations. It used to have a lunchtime Quest club which might be worth re-considering. It currently has around 200 pupils although this will be severely challenged if proposed new housing development takes place as submitted.

Some additional background Information

Growing links with others in in our Cluster of local parishes will provide opportunities and challenges. As and when deployment provisions change in this area, as is anticipated, the new parish priest will help us to be ready for this through our links in the Cluster.