

# The Parish of Rochester

and

# The Parish of Borstal

## St Peter's, St Margaret's, and St Matthew's Churches



<https://parishofrochester.org.uk/>

<https://stmatthewsborstal.org/>

**Parish Profile – June 2026**

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## 1. Archdeacon's Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to prayerfully consider whether God might be calling you to be the next Vicar and Priest in Charge of the benefices of Rochester and Borstal.

This is an exciting time in the life of Rochester Diocese as we reflect on how we as a Diocese, and in different ways in each of our parishes, might Change and Serve and Grow so that God's Kingdom can be increased, and more people can come to know the love of Jesus. Our Diocesan vision and strategy prioritises parish ministry and we are committed to supporting our clergy and lay leaders in their mission and ministry in their local context. We have recently been awarded £11m of SMIBB funding (from National Church) to support this vision.



The congregations of the combined parishes of St Peters with St Margaret, Rochester, and St Matthew's, Borstal, are warm and welcoming and completely inclusive communities looking forward to working with a new Vicar and Priest in Charge, building on existing strengths and developing the growing sense of shared mission and ministry. It is important that you value the liberal catholic tradition and are inclusive as the churches are members of Inclusive Church and as such have previously offered the prayers of Love and Faith.

The three churches, each having different strengths and opportunities, are keen to continue to work to develop outreach and deeper connection with their local communities, especially in serving local schools and families. We are looking for an enthusiastic leader who will bring their own gifts and skills, as well as being able to value, encourage and build upon the good work that is in place.

Please be assured of my prayers as you discern whether you are the person the Holy Spirit is calling to join us in this next stage of mission and ministry in Rochester Diocese. I'd be delighted to have a conversation with anyone who may be interested.

With every blessing as you discern God's will.

*Archdeacon Sandra.*

## 2. Three Churches - Two Congregations

St Peter's and St Margaret's churches have a single united congregation. St Matthew's Borstal has a separate congregation. Each of the parishes has its own PCC. In recent years we have been fortunate to share the same ministry team and to start to work more closely together. St Matthew's church is in the centre of the village of Borstal with an adjacent hall and car park. St Margaret's church overlooks the river Medway and is surrounded by older houses, close to the Cathedral and High Street, and St Peter's Parish Centre, is in the urban hub of the parish with a car park and is on a frequent bus route. Several previous incumbents have taken the opportunity to be priest vicars at Rochester Cathedral.

- St. Margaret's is a Grade II\* listed church with wonderful views over the Medway Estuary and a bell tower with eight bells which are regularly rung.
- St. Peter's is a busy modern Parish Centre, which is widely used by the local community. The garden is enclosed and safe for use by children and young people.
- St. Matthew's is a late Victorian church. The adjacent Cleave Warne Hall is actively used by a variety of groups, both throughout the week and at weekends.
- There are many volunteers who work diligently in both parishes in many different roles. Members of the congregations are involved in several different ways, including welcomers, providing refreshments, servers, readers, lay assistants, running a coffee shop and assisting with activities for people with dementia.

Features of the Parish of Rochester include:

- There is a parish administrator who works part time in the office at St Peter's.
- We show a willingness to give our time to fundraising and community outreach.
- We are financially viable and meet our reserves targets.
- Average attendance at morning service is forty-five in the Parish of Rochester.
- We have well cared for buildings with two excellent quinquennial reports.
- The congregations reflect the diverse nature of the parishes.
- We endeavour to be progressive and are open to broadening our journey in faith, for example recently by using the "Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church".
- We are using the prayers of Living in Love and Faith.
- Recently members of the ministry team have been involved in weekly worship sessions with three local Church of England primary schools.
- We hope to build further links and work with children and young people.
- All our policies and risk assessments are up to date.

Features of the Parish of Borstal include:

- St Matthew's is a much-loved and flourishing church.
- A church with a loyal congregation including a former village Primary School teacher and former Brownie leader, so lots of local history contained therein.
- A very friendly church where the long-established locals have embraced newcomers to the area. It is presently attracting and retaining more newcomers with its weekly Sunday service figures indicating that the majority of people who 'try us out' return.
- Progressive as far as its expanded choice of biblical readings, such as the recent Women's Lectionary.
- LGBTQ couples living in Love and Faith are very much welcome; the first LGBTQ Prayers of Love and Faith blessings at St Matthew's were also a first for the Diocese of Rochester.
- A church which embraces inter-generational activities

- Messy Church is enjoyed by the mums and dads, who not only enjoy the crafts as much as the children, but also have a tea or coffee and chat to each other and the volunteers. Messy Church is currently paused for a review period.
- The more senior members are represented by the Fellowship Group - a monthly meeting, where speakers and musicians (e.g. saxophone and ukelele players) inspire/entertain in advance of a lunch at the local pub.

### 3. Vicar and Priest-in-Charge Person Specification

We are seeking a pastoral, fully inclusive and collaborative leader.

#### 3.1. Essential Qualities

To have a deep relationship with God and ability to share this with others; to help them grow with God by preaching, teaching, and helping to develop a vision for the future of our parishes.

He or she will keep the Eucharist at the heart of worship. In addition, we are looking for someone who will:

- Demonstrate commitment to liberal catholic theology and sacramental worship.
- Have a strong pastoral sensitivity and emotional intelligence.
- Actively support and encourage all the groups within the parishes.
- Focus on parish needs and outreach into the local community with pastoral care and prayer support.
- Carry on with the contacts at the schools, almshouses, and residential homes.
- Play an active role in our partnership with our twin parish in Walsum, Germany.
- Be willing to spend time in Church activities including weekend social and fundraising events, continue links with the local cluster of churches and the Cathedral, and develop links with other local churches.
- Support all the congregation, especially those who need moral or spiritual support.
- Encourage others to develop their talents and identify those who may wish to explore their vocation to ministry.
- Demonstrate their commitment to inclusion and safeguarding.
- Be a good communicator and a strategic leader in the parishes.

**Thoughts from younger people** – We would like someone who is a good teacher who can answer questions and is easy to understand, also someone who is kind to everyone. We would like to have a vicar who has an informal style and is approachable.

**Thoughts from older people** – We need someone who is accepting and non-judgemental.

#### 3.2. Desirable Qualities

Experience in urban or suburban ministry

Experience of community engagement and social justice initiatives

## **4. Parish Context**

### **4.1. About The Parishes**

The Parish of Rochester encompasses the former parishes of St Margaret's and St Peter's and is large and diverse, with a population of 14,000. St Margaret's church is used extensively by local schools and St Peter's is a locally rooted parish church with many users of its community spaces.

Rochester parish is part of Medway, an area of relative deprivation with a predominantly white population and increasing ethnic diversity. Since the withdrawal of the Navy from Chatham dockyard, Medway has experienced economic and cultural renaissance with regeneration. Medway now hosts three universities, all of these are on a site in the Chatham Maritime area, and the student population in this area, and nearby, has increased as a result.

The Parish of Borstal is centred on St Matthew's Church, set in Borstal village on the hillside overlooking the Medway valley. Borstal was originally part of the larger parish of St Margaret's, Rochester, before St Matthew's was built in 1878–79 and Borstal became a parish in its own right in 1901. The church remains deeply embedded in the local community with a strong village identity while also being closely connected to Rochester and the wider Medway towns.

Borstal parish is also part of Medway, and is an area with pockets of relative deprivation, a predominantly white population, and growing ethnic diversity. The parish sits within a wider urban and suburban context shaped by Medway's naval, military, educational and regeneration history, while retaining a more local village character.

More information can be found on key regeneration aims at [www.medway.gov.uk](http://www.medway.gov.uk).

Medway operates the 11+ entry examination to grammar schools, and there are many successful selective and non-selective secondary schools nearby, both state-funded and independent. The King's School Rochester is the world's second oldest school and the chorister school for Rochester Cathedral.

### **4.2. Rochester's Location in Kent**

Rochester is situated thirty miles from London, accessible by train within 40 minutes. We are a few minutes' drive from countryside – including the picturesque area around Bluebell Hill on the North Downs, the Riverside, Capstone and Shorne Country Parks, Nashenden Nature Reserve, and the RSPB reserve at Northward Hill, High Halstow.

The coastal town of Whitstable is approximately 40 minutes away. Other coastal resorts include Herne Bay, Camber Sands, Walmer, Deal, Margate and Ramsgate. Dover is just over an hour away, from where there are frequent crossings to Calais, or the Channel Tunnel at Folkestone is only 40 minutes away.

The Medway Towns have a long military history, and when the Royal Dockyard at Chatham closed in 1984 it was turned into a working museum and flags and ropes are still made there. The Army has the Royal Engineers barracks and a museum in Gillingham. Rochester itself celebrates Charles Dickens and his links with the Towns.

Locally we have a Dickens' weekend in December which celebrates Charles Dickens' links with Rochester, a Pride Festival, concerts in the grounds of Rochester Castle, a Dragon Dance in Chatham to celebrate the Chinese New Year and a Spring Children's Festival at Riverside. Rochester Sweeps' Festival is a celebration of folk song and dance.

### **4.3. Borstal's Location in Kent**

Located in the Medway Unitary Authority, Borstal was originally a village close to Rochester. In recent years, however, it has become absorbed by the expansion of Rochester itself. It retains its own historical connections including Fort Borstal, which was built, apparently, as an afterthought from the 1859 Royal Commission on the Defence of the UK. Within the parish boundaries are HMP Rochester and HMP Cookham Wood, both of which are an adult Category C prison for males over the age of 18.

The demographic of Borstal itself is - according to the age distribution from the 2021 census – one where the highest proportion of its residents fall within the 35-49 age-bracket, with its occupants having achieved a higher-than-average educational attainment with a high percentage of those working being in full-time employment.

The largest demographic of St. Matthew's congregation is the over fifties, many of whom are retired with former occupations such as roles within the police, prisons, schools, and UK Government. For those of working age, there has been a shift to working from home and those setting up and operating their own businesses, and there is a strong village feeling with St. Matthew's at the heart of the community.

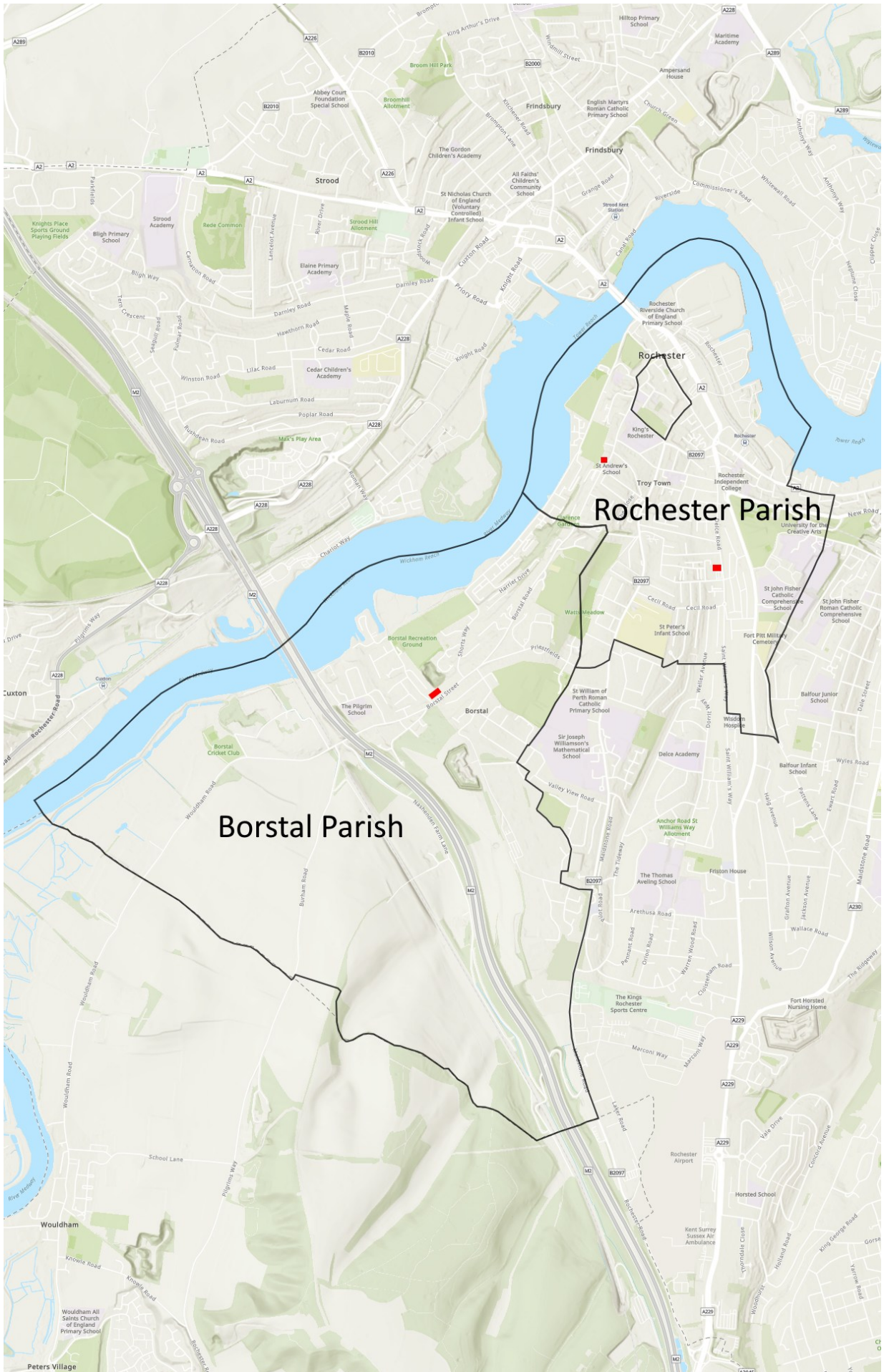
The three best reasons to live in Borstal according to some people who live in Borstal:

“Community”

“Country-living - but with a proximity to London”

“Whether it's for worship - or otherwise - it feels like the Church is the hub”.

## 4.4. Map of the Area



## 5. Buildings and Facilities

### 5.1. St Margaret's Church

St Margaret's church is a Grade II\* listed Chapel of Ease. The main body of the Church is Victorian, but the Tower is mainly 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The Church seats around two hundred people on the ground floor. There are two upstairs balconies at present used only for storage. There is a peal of eight bells with a thriving band of regular ringers who practice weekly on Fridays and ring before the Sunday eucharist. There is a sound system with an induction loop, and the heating system has had the boilers replaced in 2025. The last quinquennial report showed only one significant item which is an issue with a pane of internal glazing.

It is used for regular services, school services, and concerts. Services are live streamed on You Tube. St Margaret's has been awarded the Eco Church programme Bronze Award, and there is a wildflower meadow in the churchyard.

### 5.2. St Peter's Church Parish Centre

St Peter's Church in Rochester is a modern accessible church and 'Parish Centre' building on Delce Road. The building combines worship space with practical parish facilities, so it serves both as a place of worship and as a community venue. It was completed in 1973 and has two mono-pitched roofs. The worship area and two halls can be opened up to form one large area which is adjacent to a large garden. The parish office is off the lobby and there is a separate vestry adjoining the worship space. The last quinquennial report showed only minor maintenance items over the next five years.

### 5.3. St. Matthew's Church

St. Matthew's is a late Victorian church built in 1878 from Kentish ragstone with an Arts and Crafts interior and famed for its Seven Sanctuary Lamp. It lies along the Pilgrim's Way in Borstal on a steep hillside overlooking the Medway valley. It can seat approximately 120 people.

St. Matthew's will be due a new quinquennial report in 2026, but the church has been well maintained, and its needs are looked after by its PCC. The last quinquennial report showed the church to be structurally sound. It needed works to be done on the roof, and this was completed in 2023. The need for a Parish room resulted in an extension to the Church. Completed in 2000, its cost of £46,000 having been raised from fund-raising, donations, and bequests.



St Matthew's Church



Lanterns



Stained Glass

## 5.4. The Cleave Warne Hall

Designed and constructed almost entirely by voluntary labour over a period of four years, the Cleave Warne Hall (also known as our Parish Hall) was officially opened in April 1956. The hall will hold eighty people seated and up to forty standing for a total of 120. It has a separate kitchen as well as a curtained stage.

The hall remains in a very good condition with new flooring being added in recent years. In addition, thanks to a bequest from a member of one of the village's long-standing families, this summer has seen the building undergo a complete redecoration.

The hall is a very useful resource for the community. Not only does it provide a venue for activities such as Dog Training, a Theatre Group, a Pilates Group, a Care Group and Baby Sensory Classes as well as Rainbows, Guides and Brownies, it provides a helpful income for the church.

Without Walls Charity Swap Shops also hold their events in the hall approximately six times a year. The Church does not charge the organisers for its use of the hall given the fact that underprivileged children and their families benefit in the form of outings etc. from the money raised.

It is also used several times a year for church social and fund-raising functions as well as for small children's birthday parties on an occasional basis. All of this gives us great encouragement that St. Matthew's, as a Church, is playing a very real role in the community of our parish.



Churchwardens



Production in Cleave Warne Hall



Oddballs

## 5.5. The Gardens at St Matthew's

Our gardens comprise two memorial rose gardens as well as a sensory garden, the latter (which includes a small water feature with seating around it) provides a very peaceful area.

Cared for by six volunteers, the gardening often coincides with the Downs Syndrome group (mainly adults), who appreciate seeing what the gardeners are doing and, at times, interacting with them.



Working in the garden



Showing our work!



Cleave Warne Hall



The garden path

## 6. Ministry and Leadership

### 6.1. The Parish of Rochester

Currently we share a part time Associate Priest (0.5 FTE) with the Parish of Borstal

The Parish has long experience of being a training Parish. The Vicar of neighbouring St Justus Church was our curate and trained with us.

We have:

- a team of servers
- a Licenced Lay Minister (with PTO) who is also an Anna Chaplain
- a Lay Minister in training
- two Churchwardens and three deputy Churchwardens
- a part-time salaried parish administrator

The congregation contributes to worship by reading the lessons, leading the intercessions, serving, crucifering (and thurifering when applicable) , administering the chalice, with music led by the music group on the first Sunday of the month. We also have an organist on Sunday one or two days per month.

Information is provided on the weekly pew sheet, on the regularly updated parish website <http://parishofrochester.org.uk> and on ACNY (<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>). In addition, we have a Facebook page.

The PCC consists of the clergy member, two Churchwardens, two Deanery Synod members and nine elected members of whom three are Deputy Wardens.

### 6.2. The Parish of Borstal

Except for a Priest-in-Charge (once appointed) and an Associate Priest shared with the Parish of Rochester, St. Matthew's relies upon volunteers. There are two Churchwardens, one bellringer and an organist, who is paid according to the numbers of services for which he provides the music.

Three members of the congregation have completed Hearing God's Word and Speaking God's Word courses, one of whom has also completed the "It's Your Calling" course.

Training is provided for PCC members and those who need it within the Church for Safeguarding.

The PCC consists of the clergy member, two Churchwardens, one Deanery Synod member and the elected members.

St. Matthew's is also developing a friendly relationship with the Christ Apostolic Church which has recently been established in the village.

## 7. Worship, Identity and Tradition

### 7.1. Inclusive Church

Following the Inclusive Church Statement:



We believe in inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate.

We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

Our PCCs support the principles of Living in Love and Faith and have adopted the prayers of Living in Love and Faith as commended by the House of Bishops.

### 7.2. Liturgical Style

Worship is primarily Eucharistic, following the Revised Common Lectionary. Seasonal vestments are worn at all three churches.

At St Peter's and St Margaret's churches there is a Gospel procession, a sanctus bell is rung at the elevations of the elements, incense is used at Patronal Festivals and Midnight Mass and the celebrant reads the gospel from the centre of the congregation.

In Rochester Parish, children have been admitted to Communion before Confirmation since Easter 2002, and Wilda Gafney's 'A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church' was followed instead of the Revised Common Lectionary for 2024/25, which was well received.

### 7.3. Services

The usual pattern of services is:

Every Sunday	09:00	Holy Communion (BCP) at St Margaret's Church
Most Sundays	10.30	Parish Communion (CW) at St. Matthew's Church
1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , and 5 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	10:30	Parish Communion (CW) at St Peter's
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	10:30	Parish Communion (CW) held St Margaret's

Home Communion is taken regularly to the sick and housebound. We also like to explore different forms of worship including Taizé, Lectio Divina, and café church. We have a Palm Sunday Procession, usually between St Peter's and St Margaret's on Palm Sunday, led by a donkey.

At Easter we celebrate Holy Week with Compline each weekday evening, and we have washing of feet at the Maundy Thursday service. On Good Friday we spend three hours in a vigil 'At the Foot of The Cross'. We join the Easter Vigil at 05:30 at the Cathedral on Easter morning followed by our Eucharist services, and confirmations are held at this service. Other confirmation services are held occasionally at the Cathedral and at other churches at different times of the year.

#### **7.4. Ecumenical relationships and interfaith engagement**

We are members of the local ecumenical group Churches Together in Medway.

### **8. Mission, Outreach and Community Activities**

#### **8.1. Coffee Shop**

Coffee Shop is held every Tuesday throughout the year at St Peter's Parish Centre. The Citizen's Advice Bureau hold surgeries every week, and Bereavement Support is available. The local councillors hold a surgery once a month, Dementia Carers' support group meet monthly, and the local police come when they can. We have a Knit and Natter once every two months which is run by, and raises money for, the local hospice.

#### **8.2. Bell Ringing**

St Margaret's church has a peal of eight bells hung for full circle ringing, the tenor weighing 9 hundredweight, 2 quarters, 8 pounds.

The ringers meet for practice every Friday evening at St Margaret's, and the bells are rung before 10:30 services, as well as for weddings, funerals, and other special services.

We are a training tower for new ringers, and we can accommodate people who have difficulty in accessing high ringing chambers as the ringing chamber at St Margaret's is on the ground floor.

Also, we have a video camera showing a live view of the bells during ringing, and this can be displayed on a large screen for special events.



Walsum Group



Bell ringing



Quiz Night

### **8.3. Link with Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Walsum-Aldenrade**

The link between the parish of Rochester and Walsum has existed since 1984, with a large group regularly visiting both parishes until the pandemic and a smaller group continuing to meet annually to study, worship and socialise. See <https://www.kirchengemeinde-aldenrade.de/>



### **8.4. Dementia Groups**

Dementia Groups are held twice a month at St Peter's, Singing for Memory with the Silver Song Box on the second Friday and Dementia Café on the fourth Friday of each month. We also take the Silver Song Box to other groups as requested. We hold a monthly Dementia Worship service once a month at St Justus Church.

### **8.5. Friends of the Parish of Rochester**

The Friends of the Parish was set up in 1999 to maintain the fabric of the churches and £145,000 has been raised since then. St Margaret's Church and Tower are open three weekends a year for visitors over Sweeps' weekend in May, Heritage Open Day weekend in September and Dickens' weekend in December. The Friends have funded many things including kitchen appliances and decorating, and also the refurbishment of the organ at St Margaret's Church.

The Friends of the Parish have recently voted to wind up the charity, with the remaining funds being given to the Parish of Rochester for the same charitable purposes. We look forward to working with the Friends of the Parish so that the popular events they have run in the last 27 years continue under the stewardship of the PCC.

### **8.6. Community Activities**

There is a Summer Fete at St Peter's with cream teas, which is a free community event. In addition, a Christmas Bazaar is held which is our biggest fund-raising event.

The hall in the Parish Centre is hired out most days of the week and this forms part of our outreach to the local population. We also hold bible studies, quizzes, Table Talk, and until recently "Pints of View" (a pub theology/discussion group started by the parish which has become independent).

Various traditional activities take place at St Matthew's, including monthly cake sales and weekly crafting sessions, the crafters being known as "Oddballs".

### **8.7. Our Mission Work**

Mission work has included toilet twinning, donating to the Food Bank, the Children and Family Hub in Chatham at Christmas, and the proceeds from the Christingle collection on Christmas Eve goes to the Children's Society.

The sponsorship money from a 'Ride and Stride' event in September is split equally between the Parish and the Friends of Kent Churches, and when Knit and Natter is held at Coffee Shop a collection is taken in aid of the Wisdom Hospice, the only hospice for adults in the Medway and Swale area.

## 8.8. Work with Schools

In the parish of Rochester, St Margaret's at Troy Town and Rochester Riverside primary schools are Church of England Schools, and the clergy team take an active part in assemblies and school worship events.

Similarly in Borstal, clergy hold services at the Pilgrim school, and the school's annual events such as Easter, Christmas, Harvest, and the School-leavers' service are held at St Matthew's Church.

Our Associate Priest is a governor at the Rochester Riverside. The three schools are connected through the same Trust, the Pilgrim Multi Academy Trust, and over the last year we have worked well with the Trust to organise a series of occasional school-based Sunday morning worship services.

## 8.9. The Rochester Cluster

The three parishes of Rochester (St Peter with St Margaret), St Justus, and St Matthew's, were invited to form a 'mission cluster' in April 2007, to come together for worship and for the development of mission.

The Parish of Rochester is rooted in early medieval Christian foundations alongside Rochester Cathedral (founded AD 604). The Parish of St. Matthew's has for a long time seen itself as a 'middle-of-the-road' church and, as befitting its village location, offering something for everyone. The ministry of St Justus's church is new, the building being 70 years old this year, but the name comes from the first Bishop of Rochester over 1400 years ago. St Justus's presents the message of Jesus Christ in contemporary ways with good resources in music, among other areas. Today, it has various creative mission initiatives with its parish of around 10,000 people, such as luncheon clubs, toddler groups, a café, a wellbeing café and a distinctive form of 'messy church' (Teatime Together). It is also involved in the Medway Food Bank.

Statistics for the cluster parishes can be found on the websites below:

- The [Diocese of Rochester website](#)<sup>1</sup>
- The [Parish Returns website](#)<sup>2</sup>

## 8.10. Without Walls Organisation

The organisation was created by the Rochester Cluster in 2010. It was a response to the evidence that the parishes rank high in the indicators of deprivation and to the need for the communities to work together in the alleviation of poverty and to reach out to the poorer families in the area. The organisation is funded by contributions from the parishes and by bidding for monies from local Trusts and other funding bodies and aims to support the provision of good quality education and leisure opportunities for young people, families, and older people.

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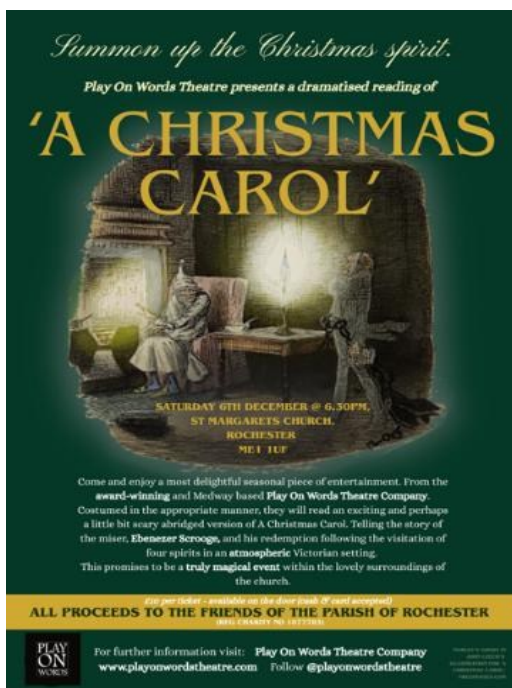
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rochester.anglican.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/census-dashboards/?diocese=31&search=rochester>

## 8.11. Rochester Cathedral

The Cathedral as Patron has long valued its close relationship with the parish of Rochester and the Chapter is keen to appoint a priest who is fully inclusive and who shares in the rich diversity of the Church of England. In the past the incumbent has been invited to preach once a year at a Sunday Cathedral Eucharist and some previous incumbents have also become a Priest Vicar to the Cathedral.

Priest Vicars play an important and much-appreciated part in the Cathedral's worship, life, and historic foundation. They occasionally assist in the leading of worship, with particular emphasis on weekday services, especially the lunchtime Eucharist and the Evening Office. Where appropriate and according to their gifts, the Priest Vicar may also sing as a succentor at Choral Services. There is an expectation that the Priest Vicar will attend the annual Cathedral Foundation Evensong at St Andrew's-tide, and they are also warmly invited to attend the Cathedral Volunteers' Evensong.



A play at St Margaret's



Coffee Shop



Dementia Worship at St Justus

## **8.12. Attendance and Electoral Roll**

At St Margaret's the Book of Common Prayer services have a congregation of approximately ten.

At St Margaret's and St Peter's the Common Worship services attract around thirty-five adults and four children.

At St Matthew's, the average attendance at services is twenty-three adults and two children.

Many more people attend the annual memorial service for the bereaved, the Candlelight Carol Service, the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass of the Nativity, as well as other special services.

The number on the Rochester electoral roll for 2024 is seventy-seven, and for Borstal it is forty-seven.

## **9. Congregation Profile**

### **9.1. Parish of Rochester Service Statistics (2024)**

15 Baptisms

1 Marriage

1 Blessing of a marriage after a civil ceremony

16 Funerals, of which six were held in church.

3 Memorial services which were held in church.

Attendance at Easter was 57, in Advent 259, and 18 on Christmas Day.

### **9.2. Borstal Parish Service Statistics (2024)**

4 Baptisms

2 Funerals

1 Burial of Ashes

Average regular Sunday attendance is 22.

## **10. Safeguarding and Governance**

We have adopted the Promoting a Safer Church policy and are endeavouring to follow all the national safeguarding five standards.

We have a significant number of volunteers who have been through the safer recruitment process and are aiming for all safeguarding training to be up to date.

## **11. Housing**

### **11.1. The Vicarage**

The vicarage is a detached house with a sitting room, dining room, study, kitchen, and utility room on the ground floor, and four spacious bedrooms on the first floor.

Built in 1973 with the church, it is situated next door to St. Peter's Church on the Delce Road. It has an attached garage with off-road parking for two cars in addition.

There is a manageable front garden and a spacious rear garden.



A view of the vicarage from the front



A view of the vicarage from the rear garden



The Dining Room



The Sitting Room



Clockwise from top-left: A bedroom, the master bedroom, kitchen and utility room.



The Study

## 11.2. Curate's Residence

The parish also owns a modern town house on the Esplanade, Rochester, near the River Medway. This is a three bedroomed property with a garage converted into two rooms. The house is being rented out on a long-term commercial basis, and this provides essential support to the financial stability of the Parish of Rochester.

## 12. Diocese and Deanery

The Diocese of Rochester is one of the oldest dioceses in England, with roots traced to 604, with Rochester Cathedral as its episcopal seat. The diocese covers Medway, north and west Kent, and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley. Recent diocesan reporting describes it as serving about 1.3 million people, with 211 parishes, ninety schools, seventeen deaneries, and three archdeaconries.

Our diocesan bishop is the Rt Rev Dr Jonathan Gibbs, assisted by the Bishop of Tonbridge, the Rt Rev Simon Burton-Jones. Strategically, the diocese is currently organized around its "Called Together" vision, a multi-year programme aimed at growing "missional churches, with missional leaders and missional disciples."

Rochester Deanery brings together local parish churches for shared mission, worship, pastoral care and governance, while remaining rooted in their individual communities. The deanery forms part of the Rochester archdeaconry and its churches include St Peter, St Margaret, St Matthew, St Justus, St John the Divine, St Paul with All Saints, St Philip and St James (known to locals as Pip 'n' Jim's), St Stephen, Christ Church, Christ the King, St Alban, St David and St William. The Revd Canon Martyn Saunders is Area Dean.

### 13. Appendix A - Finance and Stewardship

#### Parish of Rochester, Summary of Income and Expenditure for 2024

Income	
Planned giving	£ 21,312
Income tax recovered	£ 6,601
Non-Gift Aid planned giving	£ 2,694
Collections and other giving	£ 5,167
Sundry donations	£ 3,469
Fetes bazaars etc	£ 4,829
Dividends and interest	£ 3,952
Hathaway Court Rent	£ 14,442
Hire of Hall and rentals	£ 16,490
Memorial book	£ 80
Fees	£ 5,227
Legacies	£ 4,152
Other income	£ 2,959
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 91,374</b>

Expenditure	
Missionary & charitable giving	£ 100
Clergy expenses	£ 3,985
Parish offer	£ 39,060
Church running expenses	£ 25,978
Church repairs & maintenance	£ 4,315
Other property costs	£ 484
Hall running costs	£ 1,554
Printing and stationery	£ 1,301
Sundry expenses	£ 2,269
Salaries	£ 20,145
Diocesan Fees	£ 1,521
<b>Total</b>	<b>£100,712</b>

#### St Matthews Borstal, Summary of Income and Expenditure for 2024

Income	
Planned giving	£ 6,645
Gift Aid reclaim	£ 3,215
Collection (GASDS)	£ 3,875
Collection (non GASDS)	£ 1,181
Fetes, bazaars etc	£ 4,800
Fees	£ 808
Hall rental	£ 15,946
Restricted Income	£ 1,723
Other Income	£ 1,189
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 39,382</b>

Expenditure	
Clergy expenses	£ 4,163
Parish Offer	£ 5,332
Church running exp	£ 2,026
Church utilities	£ 10,582
Worship & Mission	£ 248
Hall running cost	£ 840
Hall utilities	£ 10,566
Church repairs	£ 156
Hall repairs	£ 400
DBF Fees	£ 971
Other Parish Costs	£ 124
Restricted Payments	£ 1,207
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 36,615</b>

#### Financial challenges and sustainability

In Rochester we continue to break even while employing three part time staff and have a substantial reserve fund and a significant fund held following the sale of a separate parish hall which has not yet been allocated for a specific purpose. Energy costs at St Peter's are a challenge and we continue to work on reducing costs whilst serving the community, but the boilers urgently need replacing with a low-carbon solution. At St Matthew's we were financially sustainable, however recently high energy costs and several of our older financial contributors passing away has eroded this position, but we are fundraising and planning a stewardship drive, and still meeting our reserves target.

## **14. Appendix B – Democracy and Amenities**

### **Local Councillors**

Our local councillors are:

#### **Rochester East and Warren Wood**

Councillor Teresa Murray, Labour and Cooperative Party (Deputy Leader of Medway Council)

Councillor David Finch, Reform UK (Leader of the Reform UK Group)

Councillor John Vye, Reform UK (Group Whip)

#### **Rochester West and Borstal**

Councillor Linda Bowen, Labour and Cooperative Party

Councillor Paula Hamilton, Labour and Cooperative Party

Councillor Alex Paterson, Labour and Co-operative (Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement)

### **Medical Practices**

The Dame Sybil Thorndike Health Centre, Longley Road

Castle Medical Practice, The Delce (next door to St Peter's Church)

City Way Medical Practice, City Way

Borstal Street Surgery, 25 Wouldham Road, ME1 3JY

### **The Parish of Rochester**

The Rochester Diocesan website ([www.rochester.anglican.org](http://www.rochester.anglican.org)) has detailed information on the Parish of Rochester. Information can also be found on 'A Church Near You'.

The Diocesan Vision can be found on <https://www.rochester.anglican.org/news/latest-progress-on-the-vision.php>

## **15. Appendix C - Schools**

### **Parish of Rochester**

#### **Nursery Schools**

King's Rochester Nursery School, Chadlington House, Lockington Grove, Rochester, ME1 1RH

City Way Nursery, 18 City Way, Rochester, ME1 2AB

St Andrew's Pre-School, 81 St. Margaret's Street, Rochester, ME1 3BJ

#### **Primary Schools**

King's Rochester Junior School, Chadlington House, Lockington Grove, Rochester, ME1 1RH

Ripplevale School and College, 9-13 New Road, Rochester, ME1 1BG

Rochester Riverside Primary School, Gas House Road, Rochester, ME1 1US

St Andrew's Junior School, 24-28 Watts Avenue, Rochester, ME1 1SA

St Margaret's at Troy Town CofE VC Primary School, King Street, Rochester, ME1 1YF

#### **Secondary Schools**

King's Rochester Senior School, Boley Hill, Rochester, ME1 1TE

Fort Pitt Grammar School, Fort Pitt Hill, Chatham, ME4 6TJ

Rochester Independent College, 254 St Margaret's Banks, Rochester, ME1 1HY

St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School, City Way, Rochester, ME1 2FA

### **Parish of Borstal**

#### **Primary Schools**

The Pilgrim School, Warwick Crescent, Borstal, Rochester, ME1 3LF

#### **Secure Schools**

Oasis Restore Secure School, Sir Evelyn Road, Rochester, Kent, ME1 3YB