

St. Peter & St. Paul's Aylesford



Parish Profile

'A Church
united in
wanting to
grow in faith.'



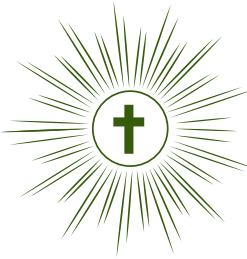
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Job Role



Location: Aylesford and Eccles, Kent (Diocese of Rochester)

COULD YOU LEAD A GROWING CHURCH WITH A 1,000-YEAR HISTORY AND A HEART FOR THE FUTURE?

St Peter and St Paul's is a warm, friendly, and diverse community in the picturesque village of Aylesford. We are a "non-shhh" church where everyone is welcome, united by a desire to grow in faith and share God's love with our local community.

WE ARE PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A PRIEST WHO WILL:

Inspire and Teach: Deliver Scripture-based teaching that helps our congregation grow in faith and understanding, who is committed to working with us to encourage growth in numbers and in faith.

Lead Collaboratively: Be an outward looking leader with a sense of humour to work with our committed lay ministry team and PCC to shape our shared vision especially with encouraging volunteers for church positions of treasurer and church warden.

Engage the Community: Be a visible, active presence, building on our current outreach including the Community Hub, Dementia Café and Food Bank.

Nurture All Ages: Sustain our tradition of being a welcoming family church, particularly strengthening our work with families and young people.

Value Our Heritage: Respect our rich liturgical traditions, ranging from Common Worship Holy Communion to modern Family Services, within our stunning historic building.

WHAT WE OFFER

- A supportive, active congregation eager for growth.
- A dedicated pastoral care team including a parish administrator and strong lay leadership team.
- A beautiful Grade I listed place of worship with modern community facilities nearby.
- A purpose-built 4-bedroom vicarage in a historic village close to the church with good transport links to London and the coast.

For an informal conversation, please contact the Diocese. Full Parish Profile and Application forms are available via Pathways / Diocese of Rochester Website.



APPLY NOW

Our Profile

This introduction highlights the church's active role in both spiritual life and community engagement, balancing traditional worship with modern outreach initiatives.



As a church we are a mix of friendly people from different backgrounds but united in wanting to grow in the Christian faith. We question our faith, learn from each other and enjoy being together. As a Church of England parish church St Peter and St Paul's is here for everyone in the parish.

*Read
on*



If this interests you...

Welcome & Overview

We are a friendly and welcoming church. We have strong links with our local community. We have a foodbank open for 2 sessions weekly, a community hub formed in conjunction with the Church of England warm space initiative a few years ago and it is very well attended every week and a dementia cafe run monthly.



We also enjoy participating in village events and opening the church for a variety of concerts and social gatherings.

However, we are conscious that we are growing slowly in numbers, and we are ready to be led sensitively through change to help rectify this.



We know there are great opportunities in our parish and we need a vicar who can continue to help us identify our priorities and work with us to achieve these.

Our History

Our church is over 1000 years old and our parish includes the historic centre of Aylesford village, suburban and rural areas.



There are two main villages: Aylesford and Eccles, located in Mid Kent, at the foot of the North Downs, on the banks of the River Medway approximately half way between Rochester and Maidstone and close to the M20 and M2.



What Can We Offer You?



Parish



Setting

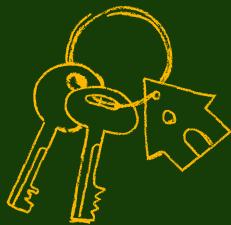


- We are a single parish, single church benefice with many opportunities for mission and ministry.
- Our congregations are friendly, relaxed and welcoming.
- We have supportive lay participation in leadership and worship.
- The vicarage is a modern, detached four-bedroom home, close to the church.

- We enjoy a historic village atmosphere on the edge of Maidstone and in the midst of beautiful Kent countryside, on the Pilgrims Way and very close to the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- We benefit from excellent transport links, road and rail, to London, the coast, and the continent, with ready access to airports
- We have a variety of good schools, primary and secondary, serving the village. Neighbouring towns have a good selection of secondary schools including some grammar schools and a CoE secondary school at Tonbridge.

Welcome

The Rectory



Aylesford Vicarage is a large modern 4 bedroom home, built in the late 1980's.

This property features spacious ground-floor living with a large living room, separate dining room, generous kitchen and utility, plus a substantial study and cloakroom. Upstairs offers four bedrooms—including two large doubles—and a family bathroom. Outside, the home benefits from a long driveway leading to a double garage and a large wrap-around rear garden with mature trees and a patio area.



The Rectory



Worship



Sunday Services

10am – First Sunday of each month and third Sunday is a sung holy communion service (Common Worship)

10am – Second is the service of the word

10am – Fourth Sunday is a flexible 'Come and Praise' with family service

Daily

There is an on line daily prayer meeting in the morning

Sunday
Attendance
30 - 50



Electoral Role
109

Special
Services
Attendance
up to 100



Morning Daily
Prayer - Online
every morning

Ministry Team

Lay Readers:
Peter Smith, Emma Parren

Anna Chaplain:
Jane Roberts

Church Administrator:
Christina Hellyar

Authorised Worhsip leader:
Des Nolan

Singing

We have a children's community choir who join us for family services supported by their choir leader their enthusiasm for singing brings a great joy to the service.



There is a traditional choir which is mainly adults who sing for some Sunday services, weddings, funerals and other services throughout the year.

We also have a number of auxiliary singers who join us to supplement the choir for special occasions.

The choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music and we enjoy singing a range of music throughout the year.



Music

Bell ringing – a keen band ring before the 10 am service, at weddings and special events. We also have a handbell team which rings occasionally at services and other events.



We welcome visiting bands and orchestras as well as hosting organ recitals by visiting organists.



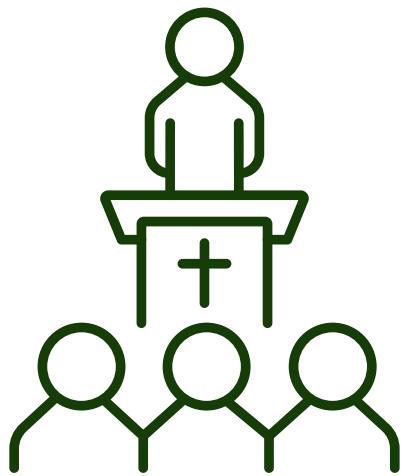
The organ is a Forster & Andrews instrument dating from 1865, this has been restored and re-electrified in 2015.



Occasional Offices



Weddings



We celebrated 7 weddings in 2024 and 5 this year so far. Our church offers choir, organ and bells in a beautiful village setting.



Baptisms

We conducted 10 children's baptisms and 2 adult baptisms in the last year.



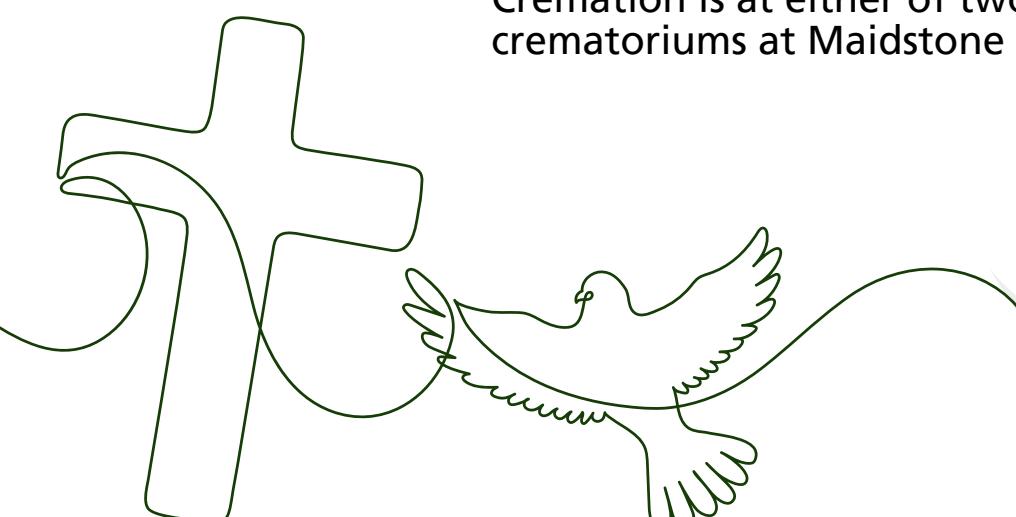
Funerals

Funerals numbered 10 in church and 4 in the crematoriums. The churchyard is closed to burials except burial of ashes of which there were 4 this year.

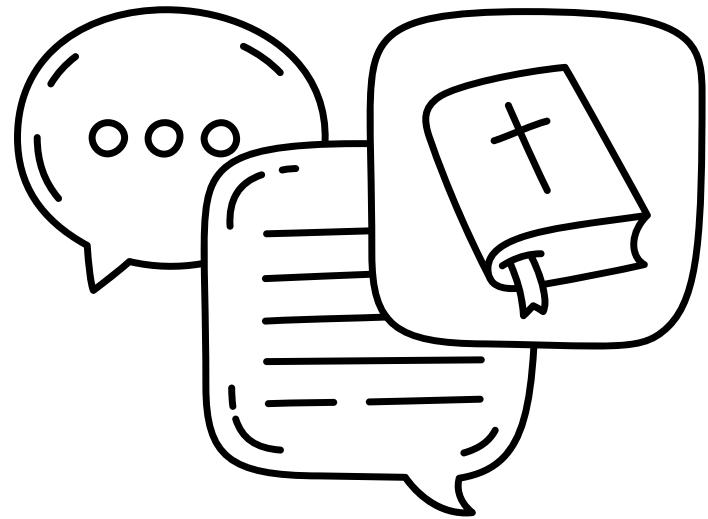


Burials

Local burials take place in the nearby cemetery. Cremation is at either of two nearby crematoriums at Maidstone and Medway.



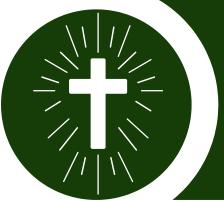
Encouraging and Exploring Faith



Confirmation groups are held regularly



Lent courses



Connect groups established and well attended



Courses like Living in love and faith



Children & Young People

We are a church that delights in the presence of children and young people. Though we currently have a small number of young families we are committed to creating a welcoming and engaging environment where all ages feel included and valued.



We proudly operate a "no shush" policy children are not expected to be silent spectators but are embraced as full participants in our worshipping life.

A dedicated children's area at the back of the church offer colouring sheets books and toys allowing children engage in play during the service. This space helps families feel relaxed and supported

Once a month the well attended family service brings together all generations in a spirit of creativity and celebration with a craft activity designed for all to join in. The youth choir brings vibrancy to the service and enhances our connections with the community.

We see great potential to grow this ministry and would welcome leadership that shares our vision for an inclusive family friendly church where children and young people are encouraged to explore faith ask questions and feel at home



Outreach and Church In The Community

There has been considerable contact with the British Legion Village which includes services in the sheltered housing complexes and the nursing homes with the RLVI our Pastoral team and Anna chaplain.

The incumbent normally leads the annual Remembrance Service in the British Legion Garden of Honour.



The Vicar has served with Churches Together in Malling group and there is potential for increasing ecumenical working together in mission and ministry which includes Eccles Methodist Church and The Friars, a Roman Catholic Carmelite religious community with whom we have a good relationship.



Our Pastoral Assistant, in conjunction with people from other local churches, has provided support at the Heart of Kent Hospice.

The vicar is usually asked to be the Chaplain to the Royal Navy Association



Fun & Fellowship



At St Peters and St Paul's we value time spent together to have fun and appreciate each other's company; we also aim to involve the wider community in many activities including brass band concerts, food events including afternoon teas, summer fairs and talks by guest speakers.



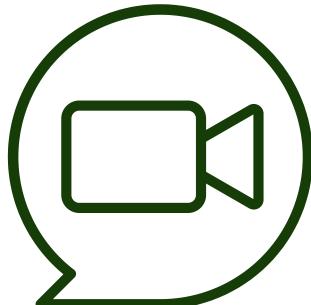
We also take an active part in the Ride and Stride event established by Friends of Kent Churches. As well as raising funds for our church and others, it is a good way to meet people from other churches and organisations



Communication



We have a well-established website
www.aylesford-church.org.uk and
Facebook page
St Peter & St Paul's Church Aylesford



We recognise that communication (internal and external) is key
Church notices are read weekly in church and added to our Facebook page
Our Pastoral team also telephone housebound members of the congregation and we offer Zoom connections for most Sunday services



St Peter and St Paul's Church Aylesford

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School Links



The church has a close association with two local Primary Church Schools and the vicar has been part of the Governing boards St Peter's School, which is just next to the vicarage.



www.st-marks-aylesford.kent.sch.uk

www.stpetersaylesford.kent.sch.uk



The other two schools in the parish, Valley Invicta Primary Aylesford and Aylesford Secondary school, whilst not faith schools, value their links with the church.



The Vicar has regularly held assemblies and visited all four schools. In addition, special Christmas and Easter services are arranged for each of the schools in the church.

Mentors from the congregation go into the schools under the auspices of the charity CAST (Churches and Schools Together); the schools say this has been very valuable.

There are also some pre-school groups in Eccles and Aylesford,

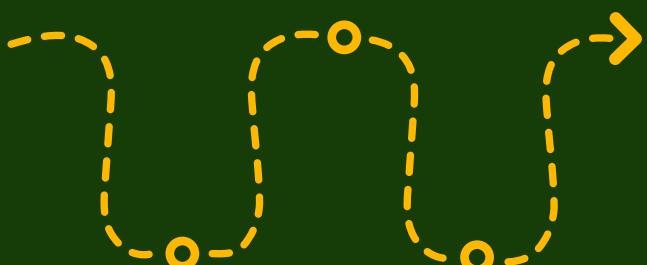
The Church

The Church– is set on a hill overlooking the ancient village of Aylesford, the church is a major landmark. Dating back to Norman times the church is in good repair, with usual ongoing maintenance costs cropping up from time to time. The church, with Lady Chapel, can comfortably seat about 250 people and has a large area at the rear of the pews for refreshments including after service coffee and tea and for additional seating.



In recent years the eight church bells have been re-hung; a kitchenette and toilet have been built in the base of the tower, the organ has been cleaned, rewired and enhanced and work done to repair and repoint stonework. The pews have all been enhanced with new pews cushions

The church is open currently 2 days a week but the key is always available for visitors to collect from the local shop we provide a welcome to pilgrims en-route to Canterbury on the nearby Pilgrims Way



Church Buildings

The Vicarage - The vicarage is a modern detached building near the church. It was built in the late 1980's and has four bedrooms, kitchen, lounge, dining room with a separate study and downstairs toilet for visitors. There is a double detached garage, a good-sized garden is at the rear. An estate agent's description and floor plan of the house is available on request.



Brassey Centre - formerly a school, this building is owned by the Brassey Trust and let to the church. Essentially it is our "Church Hall". It has two halls, toilets, 2 catering kitchens, a good-sized car park and is an asset for the parish and village. It is hired out and also houses the church office.

The smaller hall is used for the foodbank and the community hub weekly and also for our church committee meetings



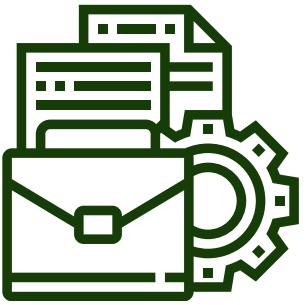
The Churchyard – is closed for burials, apart from the burial of ashes.

There are some Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard.



140 The Avenue - the Church owns a house in the parish. It is commercially let and provides a regular income.

Church Administration



Our Parish Administrator arranges weddings and baptisms. She maintains all church records and registers and undertakes searches. She manages Brassey Centre bookings, liaises with the caretaker and other tradespeople, orders supplies, produces service sheets and weekly notices, amongst many other things.

The Church Office is well equipped with a computer and photocopier/ printer.

We currently do not have a church warden but have support from 2 deputy wardens and our retired warden, a PCC of 8 very active members . Meetings are held monthly at present

We work hard on our safeguarding responsibilities and have a Safeguarding team meeting regularly to manage the issues on behalf of the PCC.



Finances

The Church has run a deficit in the last few years like so many churches however we have been very fortunate to have been in receipt of legacies and donations specifically for the maintenance and preservation of the fabric of the Church building so repairs and fixtures can be continued.

A recent church giving service has also encouraged us all and we have introduced digital donations in church or via the website

We are looking to actively fund raise for a new audio visual system in the church and the preliminary researching for this has started.

We have the benefit of rental income from a residential property and is managed by a local letting agent.



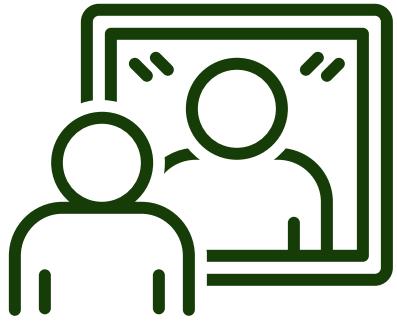
Financial Information for 2023 - 2024:

Parish income £90,677
Expenditure £101,256
Parish share £ 46,000



Reflections

Where are we now?



We think of ourselves as a **friendly** and **welcoming** congregation

Prominent and attractive **well maintained church building** suitably equipped

Considerable **lay involvement** in the conduct of worship.

Very conscious that we are an ageing and declining congregation. This is making it harder to resource new initiatives although there are **many proactive and willing people**.

Excellent relationships with our local schools.

The **PCC** has a **comprehensive plan**, focusing on worship, youth work, community needs and nurturing faith.

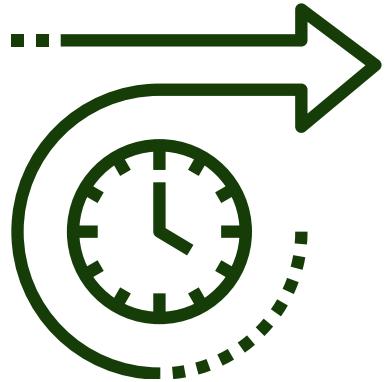
Deliberate fuzzy edges to church membership; **we aspire to be a place where it is easy to belong**, and people are accepted wherever they are in their faith

The importance of **baptisms, weddings and funerals**; the opportunities they bring.

Encouraging the use of small groups to **build discipleship and support**



Facing the Future



The church seeks to be a central point of the community and our prayers are that in today's world we will reach out more in love and service to the community so that people can come to share the building, enjoy the fellowship , and join the worship.

Our principal challenges are:

Growth



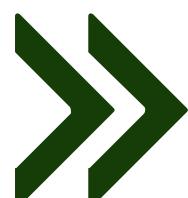
Encouraging more volunteers needed for a flourishing church

Getting our finances on a sounder footing.



Continuing our strong links with the wider parish community.

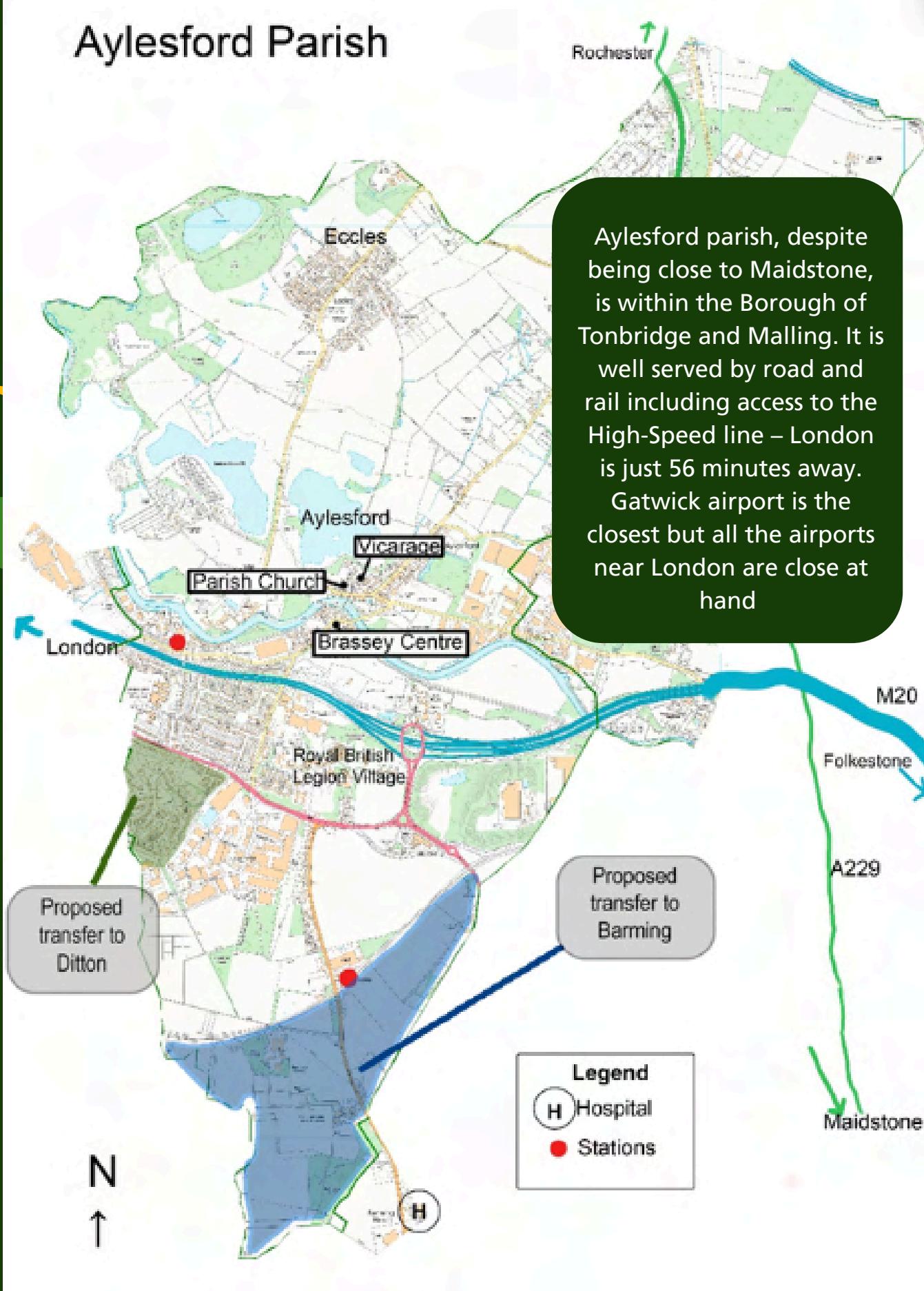
Massive population growth is forecast for our deanery and parish, mainly as the result of large housing developments. Aylesford's population is expected to nearly double by 2026 and nearly treble by 2046 based on data gathered by the diocese from local authorities. It has become clear that our church faces major challenges with declining and ageing numbers and so we are hoping that with the increased housing numbers there will be more families interested in coming to our church



The Geography of Aylesford & Eccles



Aylesford Parish



Facilities, Shops and Leisure

Within a few minutes' walk from the church there is one restaurant, three pubs, a tearoom, a village club and a well-used Community Centre with recreational space and children's play area.



In less than a ten-minute drive there is a large retail park with supermarkets, electrical and furniture stores and other food outlets Maidstone and the Medway Towns offer town centre shopping while Hempstead Valley and the huge Bluewater Centre provide out of town shopping and more.

There is a nearby Leisure Centre with family swimming facilities and also a gym.



There are dentists and a GP Surgery locally as well as a veterinary practice Maidstone Hospital is about two miles away.

Local Trusts & Charities

Brassey Trust - set up to commemorate a Victorian benefactor, it is a legally independent charity whose aim is to support the work of the Church of England in the parish of Aylesford. The Vicar and Churchwarden of Aylesford are ex officio trustees. The Brassey Trust owns the old school buildings now set up as the Brassey Centre and let to the PCC. The trust has provided grants to the PCC for a variety of projects.



The Royal British Legion headquarters are located in Aylesford. The HQ buildings are surrounded by light commercial buildings, offices and a good deal of social and sheltered housing which recently expanded to provide another 200 houses and some new community facilities. This community provides housing (some sheltered or assisted for veterans, elderly, or vulnerable adults, and social housing for young families and individuals.

Located on the same site is The Royal British Legion Industries which provides employment to many veterans. More information is available at www.rbli.co.uk

Trinity Court Almshouses - Aylesford has 14 Almshouses located in Rochester Road, which are occupied by the elderly and managed by a board of trustees. The Vicar and Churchwarden are ex-officio trustees.



Contact Details:

Church Office:
Brassey Centre,
Aylesford,
Kent,
ME20 7QR



Email:
admin@aylesford-church.org.uk

Phone:
01622 719366



Office Open
Monday
Wednesday
& Thursday
9am – 2pm

Web site: www.aylesford-church.org.uk
Facebook: St.Peters and St Paul's Church Aylesford



Message from the Bishop of Rochester

Welcome to the Diocese of Rochester and thank you for your interest in this exciting role. Our parishes and congregations are the beating heart of the Diocese and are central to our desire for churches to flourish and God's kingdom to grow across all our wonderfully diverse communities.

Our vision

As a Diocese we share the vision that we are Called Together **to change, serve and grow** the church across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Much work has taken place to understand what these three themes mean for the life of the Diocese and our priorities, and to define what and where resources will need to be allocated to deliver them.

Through prayerful engagement and discernment, what has begun to emerge is an understanding that we are a community:

Seeking first the Kingdom of God, and called together by God to change, serve and grow with compassion, courage and creativity.

- **Change** is about the need for us to adapt in a changing world, so that our churches can play their full part in serving God and drawing people once more to faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Serve** is about the attitude we need to adopt if we are to earn and gain that cherished place in people's hearts and at the heart of our communities.
- **Grow** is about what God wants to bring about in us and through us, as people growing into the likeness of Christ, and as churches where people are being drawn to follow Jesus through our words and through our deeds.

Our objectives

Within this overall vision, our emerging key objectives are to grow *missional churches, with missional leaders and missional disciples*, that are:

- Growing younger and more diverse,
- Growing numerically, spiritually, financially and in impacting their communities, and in turn are
- Creating a safe and healthy culture for all

This is the latest phase in developing our strategic plans, which are vital to our seeking to grow the kingdom of God across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent, and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Central to these plans is sustaining and growing a flourishing and well-resourced parish structure, so as to enable our local churches to take their full and rightful place at the heart of their communities: serving God and serving the people, loving God and showing his love in and to our communities.

If this vision excites you and you believe God may be calling you to this role, then we would love to hear from you.

With my prayers and best wishes,

†Jonathan

**The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs
Bishop of Rochester**



St. Peter & St. Paul's Aylesford



Parish Profile

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