

St. Mary's, Downe
Archdeaconry of Bromley and Bexley
Anglican Diocese of Rochester

Annual Report
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31st December 2023

Aim and purposes

St. Mary's Downe, Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, the Reverend John Musson, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

St. Mary's, Downe, is part of a United Benefice with St. Peter and St. Paul, Cudham.

The **Mission Statement** of the Church agreed by the PCC is:

"We exist for three main purposes: Worship, Witness and Welcome:"

- To worship the living God through the Lord Jesus Christ;
- To witness to the love of Christ shown supremely in his life, death and resurrection; and
- To welcome all people into our fellowship with the love of Christ.

Structure, Governance and Management

PCC - the method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Mary's, Downe, the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwarden/s, treasurer, secretary, reader, deanery synod representative and members elected by those who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

During 2023 the PCC met:

January 23, 15 May and 14 September jointly with St Peter and St. Paul, Cudham

March 7

April 30 for the APCM and AGM

During these meetings a variety of issues of concern and importance connected with the life of the church: worship and services, missional, spiritual, financial, practical and social, along with plans for the re-ordering of the church building were discussed,

Regular PCC agenda items included –

- *Messy Church and children's work.*
- *Pastoral care in the parish and the ongoing work of the Pastoral Visiting Team.*
- *Outreach, mission and community engagement initiatives.*
- *Safeguarding*
- *Financial statements and reports, budgets and parish pledges.*
- *General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).*
- *On-going plans for building and maintenance matters involving the church, building reports and updates, improvements to church building. Consultations continue with Paul Sharock (church architect) regarding the feasibility plans for the installation of a toilet, servery, gallery and re-modelled space.*
- *Churchyard maintenance and Churchyard Fund*
- *The Roe Window*

Review of the church year and calendar

The Bishop of Rochester joined a United Benefice Café Church on 2nd July; in attendance were the Mayor of Bromley and Councillor Jonathan Andrews, in the village hall.

An All Soulside Service was held in the afternoon of Sunday 29 October, in St. Mary's, where names of loved ones no longer with us were read out.

Remembrance Sunday service was held on 12 November, outside St. Mary's, for an act of worship including the singing of the National Anthem.

Review of other church events during 2023

- 1. Homegroups** continued throughout the year with meetings being held both in person and by Zoom
- 2. Holy Communion** service at St. Mary's on Tuesday mornings at 10am.
A quiet and reflective service with refreshments afterwards
- 3. Christian Meditation Group** held on the first and third Thursdays in the month. The group follow the method taught by John Main, an English Benedictine monk.
- 4. The Pastoral Visiting Team** meets regularly and continues to make contact and visits within the Parish. Easter and Christmas gift bags are distributed to those on the regular visiting list
- 5. Prayers** daily prayers were held by Zoom and in Cudham church on a Wednesday morning for the Benefice

2023

January 23

Rachael Archer's leaving service (joint) at 10.30am in St.Mary's

March 26

Passion Sunday, choral evensong

March 31

'Warm Welcome', held in Downe Village Hall

During Lent, the Home Group focussed on the Lent book, 'Failure'

April 2

Palm Sunday – United Service all age procession (starting at Christmas Tree Farm) with Communion Service

April 6

Maundy Thursday – family Agape service meal in Downe Village Hall

April 7

Good Friday, reflective service; Stations of the Cross

April 9

Easter day

April 30

May Queen service led by Rev. John Musson

May 7

Joint service to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III at Cudham

May 30

Messy church in Downe Village Hall

August 27
Songs of Praise in St. Mary's

September 10
'Appreciating Volunteers' afternoon tea in Cudham church

September 24
Dedication the Roe stained-glass window by Ven. Allie Kerr, Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley

October 1
United Service celebrating St. Francis of Assisi at Christmas Tree Farm (and blessing of animals)

October 27
Hallowe'en night party. Messy Church in Downe Village Hall

Christmas in Downe

Christmas tree of remembrance outside St. Mary's inviting people to tie a ribbon/leave a bauble or leave a message for a loved one

December 17
Carols by Candlelight at 4pm

December 31
New Year's Eve Café Church in Downe Village Hall

Committees

PCC and the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee can meet between full meetings of the PCC and consists of the Incumbent, Churchwardens, Treasurer and Secretary and two other members of the PCC. It has power to transact any urgent business of the PCC, subject to any directions given by the Council.

Church Attendance

The Electoral Roll stood at 46 at the date of the APCM (32 resident, 14 non-resident)
Figures for the church attendance of adults at worship on the five Sundays in October 2023 were 15 (United Service with Cudham), 13, 11 and 10, 35 (All Souls).
The number of children who attended the same five Sunday services was 9, 0, 0 and 0, 0.

On average around 14 adults and 3 children attend church each Sunday, although in line with many churches, there is a larger pool of people who attend from time to time.

In addition, there were around 14 who watched our online services each week.

Occasional Offices

As well as our regular services we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping.

In 2023 the parish church and its ministry celebrated:

One memorial service (Pam Townsend)
Two burial services (Anthea Bowers, Judith Carter)
Two funerals (Gabor Preznanzsky, Maisie Loudon-Carter)
One Thanksgiving (Judith Emus)
Four Interments of Ashes (Dalton, Holt, Lever, Alan & Sue Perry)

(No baptisms or weddings)

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). Recruitment of a replacement Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is underway.

Downe Primary School

Rev. John, Kim and John Curle take collective worship:

March 30, end of term Easter service

October 4, school Harvest service

December 20, school Christmas service

General Data Protection Regulations - *the PCC has acted in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which took effect in the UK from 25th May 2018, replacing the existing law on data protection (the Data Protection Act 1998). Rev John Musson is the Data Controller; Barbara Sheret Data Protection Officer.*

Membership - *Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). Since 2021 the total number of members elected to the PCC is 9, or 1/10 of the Electoral Roll, whichever is the larger number. A further 2 people may be co-opted for a year. One third of those elected to the Council retire from office each year and are eligible for re-election. The following served on the PCC:*

Vicar:	The Rev John Musson	Chair
Churchwarden:	Chris Isbell	
Deanery Synod Rep:	Zoë Knight	

St. Mary's elected members:

Caryn Newell until APCM 2024

Zoë Knight until APCM 2025

Cornelia Parkin until APCM 2026

John Isbell until 2026 - Treasurer

Kevin Custis until APCM 2024

There are 2 spaces for co-option but none were made.

The PCC extends sincere and grateful thanks to all the Church membership who work so hard to make our Church the worshipping, witnessing and welcoming community it is, and for their help and support in so many ways throughout the year.