

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

Annual Report
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31st December 2025

Aim and purposes

St. Mary, Downe, is part of a United Benefice with St. Peter and St Paul, Cudham. The Parish was without an Incumbent for 2025, and services were led by a number of visiting priests as well as Kim Curle. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has continued to fulfill its responsibility, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical during this time of vacancy.

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, Downe the PCC currently consists of 2 churchwardens' treasurer and 4 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 2025 the PCC met during January, March, April, May (including the Annual Parochial Church Meeting), June, and October, all meetings being Joint with Cudham PCC. During these meetings a variety of issues of concern and importance connected with the life of the Church/es - worship and services, missional, spiritual, financial, practical and social.

Regular PCC agenda items included –

- Work towards the process of seeking a new Priest-in-Charge.
- Safeguarding
- 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.
- Financial statements and reports, Indicative Offer to the Diocese.
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Churchyard and cemetery maintenance and.

Review of the Church year and calendar

The process of preparing to seek an Interim Priest in Charge continued throughout the whole of 2025; the preparation of the final version of the Parish Profile was undertaken over a series of PCC meetings and via email. The final draft was submitted to the Diocese in January; at this time the Parish reps (2 from Cudham, 2 from Downe) were notified to the Archdeacon. The reps met with the Archdeacon and Associate Archdeacon in June to review the Profile and request further details to be included, for example the opening statement from the Archdeacon and the Diocesan vision. These were made available in October, and the final version of the Profile was adopted by

Joint PCC in the same month; this was forwarded to the Diocese in order for approval to be sought from the joint Patron of Cudham, Church Society Trust. The vacancy was finally to be advertised early in 2026.

The time that this process has taken has meant that considerable work has been undertaken by many members of the PCC and wider church community – Church Wardens, Parish Administrator and many others, both seen and unseen.

The congregation have enjoyed many services led by visiting clergy and lay ministers which include

February 20 th	Messy Church in Downe Village Hall
February 23 rd	Joint Service with Cudham
March 30 th	Mothering Sunday
April 3 rd	Downe School Easter Celebrations
April 13 th	Palm Sunday, Procession with Donkey from Christmas Tree Farm
April 18 th	Good Friday Reflections
April 20 th	Easter Day
May 3 rd	Downe May Queen
May 18 th	United HC with APCM
May 30 th	Messy Church in Downe Village Hall
July 16 th	Downe School, end of year service
August 10 th	Joint HC with Cudham
August 24 th	Joint Songs of Praise
September 7 th	United Café Church in Downe Village Hall
September 28 th	Harvest Festival
October 3 rd	Downe Primary School harvest Festival
October 5 th	Joint Service at Christmas Tree Farm celebrating St Francis if Assisi
October 26 th	Bible Sunday
October 30 th	Hallowtide Light Party in Downe Village Hall
November 2 nd	All Souls Service
November 9 th	Act of Remembrance outside church
November 16 th	Safeguarding Sunday
December 16 th	Downe School Christmas Service
December 21 st	Carols by Candlelight @ 4pm
December 25 th	Christmas Day HC
December 28 th	Joint Service with Cudham

Pastoral Visiting Team:

The Pastoral Visiting team for the United Benefice continues with contact and visits within the parish. The PCC received regular reports from the Team.

Midweek Holy Communion for the United Benefice

This takes place once a month on the second Tuesday of the month.

Prayers

A prayer meeting for the United Benefice has been held on the first Tuesday of each month.

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. The Standing Committee did not meet during 2025.

Church Attendance

A new Electoral Roll was prepared in 2025; the new roll has 33 names, with 27 being resident in the parish and 6 being non-resident.

Figures for the church attendance of adults at worship on the four Sundays in October 2025 were 30 (United Service at Downe), 7, 10 and 21. The number of children who attended the same four Sunday services was 11, 0, 0 and 0. The School Harvest Festival service was attended by 70 children and 37 adults. On average around 11 adults and 1 child attend services each Sunday, although in line with many Churches, there is a larger pool of people who attend from time to time.

Occasional Offices

As well as our regular services we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of their journeys 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 2025 1 baptism and 8 committals or burial of ashes were held at St Mary's.

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*). Our Safeguarding Officer (Joanna Clarke) was newly appointed in 2025, and enjoys the support of the previous office holder.

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). Mark Comley is the Data Controller; Barbara Sheret Data Protection Officer.

Membership - Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). As a consequence of the church electoral roll falling below 50 names, the number of PCC members is now 6. 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. In 2025 the following served on the PCC:

Ex-Officio Members:

Vicar:	Vacant
Churchwardens:	Chris Isbell Kevin Custis
Deanery Synod Rep:	Zoe Knight

Elected Members:

John Isbell	until APCM 2026	Treasurer
Kim Curle	until APCM 2026	
John Curle	until APCM 2026	
Caryn Newell	until APCM 2027	
Zoe Knight	until APCM 2028	

There were 2 spaces for co-option, but none were made

Kim Curle is Licensed as a Schools and Families Evangelist and she and John Curle are commissioned Anna Chaplains.

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, especially during this time of vacancy.