

Cudham and Downe Churches, 2025 reports for APCM

*St Peter and St Paul, Cudham and St Mary, Downe
May 2026*

Cudham Churchwardens' Report

2025 saw our Interregnum continue. Working closely with the Churchwardens of St Mary's and with our Parish Administrator, Barbara Sheret, we have maintained the running of weekly services at both Churches.

We are hugely indebted to the mainly retired clergy who come, some from quite a distance, to lead our services and we acknowledge the input from Kim, Licensed Schools and Families Evangelist, and John Curle, in respect of School services and the Pastoral Care Team. We also acknowledge the amount of work borne by the PCC's Treasurer, John Isbell, and Secretary, Mark Comley, and thank all members of the PCC for serving on it. Our meetings this year have all been joint with Downe PCC and we feel this has worked well with Mike as joint chairperson.

The fabric of the church building is sound, though there will always be repairs needing doing and redecoration throughout is everyone's desire. An eye is kept on the issues raised in the Quinquennial Inspection (the next one is due in 2027) and the desire to make improvements in the church remains. Tipping over into 2026 and at its first meeting of the year, Diane presented the PCC with a list of repairs and improvements we should or could be getting on with, and we hope to be able to carry them out within the next 12 months. One item of note was the clock which is not working and which was mentioned in our report last year.

The annual checks of the fire extinguishers, the servicing of the heating system, and the tuning of the organ, have been carried out, and the monthly checks of the emergency lighting in the South Chapel and Tower effected, along with the annual 3 hour test by the electricians. The rainwater goods (gutters, valley gutters and downpipes) have been checked and cleared out, but moss from the roof slopes combining with needles from the large Scots Pines along the boundary is causing a particular nuisance at the narrow outlet at the western end of the northern valley, necessitating more regular clearing. Throughout the year the church was kept clean by volunteers, whom we would thank through this report, alongside those who creatively decorate the church with flowers.

Maintenance of the churchyard, which with the clearance of the fenced area is now a much bigger area, is still being carried out by the same band of volunteers with various numbers turning out for the monthly Working Parties and between times as necessary. Our thanks to these people, as they save us, as a Church, a huge expense. The Churchyard Fund is still funding petrol but will not cover the expense of new gates, which is a project in the pipeline.

As Churchwardens we are trustees of three charities – the Ecclesiastical Sarah Wood and Cudham School Trusts, along with the incumbent if we had one, and the Parochial Thomas Stringer Trust, with two representatives appointed by the London Borough of Bromley. The 2 historic trusts are basically dormant, whilst the Cudham School Trust funds the maintenance of the old headmaster's house attached to Cudham School and provides supporting resources for Cudham CofE Primary School. The tenants of longstanding at the School House moved on in June and, after redecoration and the laying of new carpets, new tenants moved in at the beginning of December.

The Church Log Book and associated papers are filed in the Parish Office, the Terrier and Inventory are stored in the safe.

Diane Kemp and Mike Manthorpe

Downe Churchwardens' Report

Church life has continued much the same as last year.

Kevin Custis and I were again admitted to the positions of churchwardens on June 12th 2025. We, as churchwardens, are responsible for the fabric and contents of the church, the maintenance of the churchyard and ensuring that services are conducted in accordance with canon law. We are just about able to do this and owe a huge debt of gratitude to Caryn Newell for her support and all she does in respect of the above, as you can see from her churchyard and buildings report. She ensures that the church is cleaned, replaces all the spent candles and in many other ways that are often taken for granted.

To be transparent, I repeat most of last years report. We are holding our own, with our limited numbers and resources, due in large part to the help and support of Diane Kemp and Mike Manthorpe, churchwardens of Cudham Church and to Barbara Sheret our administrator.

As seen in the annual report the process of finding an interim Priest-In-Charge continued throughout the year.

Through Diane's concerted efforts to arrange cover (fulfilling our duties in accordance with canon law) we have been blessed by the ministries of several retired clergy and lay ministers, which our congregation, albeit small, have greatly appreciated.

Once again I repeat last year's closing paragraph that I am saddened and concerned by the declining number attending our Sunday services but understand as many of our church family have health issues, but we are truly blessed to all who contribute their time and skills to ensure our church continues to be a friendly caring and welcoming church that brings honour to God.

I'm truly grateful to the flower arrangers, bell ringers, to Carol for our meditation group, to Kevin for playing the organ at our services, to John our Treasurer and of course to all our PCC members.

Chris Isbell

Downe Churchyard and Buildings

In February CES undertook the work that was need following our 5 year electrical system test in late 2024 and issued us with a certificate to say that the electrical system is in satisfactory condition.

July saw the long awaited repairs take place to the wall and I have to say the gentleman who did the work was excellent and very conscientious.

Despite chasing Idverde did not come back to continue the work in the churchyard that they started in 2024.

The following maintenance took place during the year:

- April – gas boiler service
- April - tuning of the organ
- November – inspection/maintenance of the fire extinguishers

Caryn Newell

Orpington Deanery Synod

The Orpington Deanery Synod only met twice in 2025, at St Mary's, Green St Green, in January and at All Saints, Orpington, right at the end of October. I attended both meetings and reported in full upon each of them to the PCCs. Both were very informative meetings and if you are interested I'd be more than willing to let you have my reports.

The guest speaker at January's meeting was the Bishop of Rochester. He introduced himself with a summary of his life of faith, from hearing a member of Billy Graham's team while at University, through Ordination and serving in Paris and Switzerland, to his time as a parish priest on the Wirral before becoming Bishop of Huddersfield and then Bishop of Rochester in 2022. He then opened and unwrapped the new Diocesan strategy, 'Vision and Strategy', which had been adopted by the Diocesan Synod only weeks before. Seeking first the Kingdom of God we are called together by God to Change and Serve and Grow with Compassion, Courage and Creativity.

He spoke of the slow decline of the Church over the last few years but was delighted to report that over 1200 people came to the Cathedral at Christmas time, an increase in attendances which was reflected across the Diocese. He feels that people are looking to the Church for answers in an increasingly scary world and now is the time to let the 'Light of the Gospel' shine through and proclaim the Good News. The challenges faced are enormous, with the decline in clergy numbers, fewer families and young people attending Church, an ageing population, a need for sustainability in rural areas, many ancient buildings to preserve and a decline in Indicative Offers. Responses to these challenges are at a National and a Diocesan level.

The subject for the October meeting was Rochester's Companion Diocese Programme and the guest speakers were members of St Stephen's Church in Tonbridge, and co-chairs for the link with Mpwapwa Companion Diocese in Tanzania, one of the four overseas link Dioceses of our Rochester Diocese. Their talk was obviously about links with their particular Diocese but it clarified what these links are all about.

In the Companion Diocese Programme there are four Dioceses with which Rochester has links, these being Estonia, Harare in Zimbabwe, and Kondoa and Mpwapwa in Tanzania. Slightly different, in that it funds projects which are outside of these four Dioceses, but still part of the Programme, is Poverty and Hope. The underlying tenet of the Programme is that Churches, schools or other organisations, even individuals, form their own links with 'Churches, schools or other organisations' in these Dioceses.

Each meeting is preceded by a short act of worship, which I find gives a flavour of the type of worship of the hosting Church, and allows time, sometimes rather short, for typical agenda items.

All are welcome to attend Deanery Synod meetings as guests and I would promote it as the best way to keep abreast of what the Church is doing, locally, in the Deanery, at Diocesan level and even higher up.

Diane Kemp

Electoral Rolls

April 2026 saw the yearly revision of the church electoral rolls at Cudham and Downe. Those listed on the rolls as members can participate in the governance of the church and can vote at Annual General Meetings. A copy of the privacy notice, which details how member's data is held by the church in keeping with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), is available on notice boards and the benefice website www.pcd.org.uk

Cudham - the roll has increased by 2 and now stands at 37 members of which 24 are residents and 13 are non-residents.

Barbara Sheret, Electoral Roll Officer

Downe – the roll stands at 33 members of which 27 are residents and 6 non-residents.

Chris Isbell, Electoral Roll Officer

Safeguarding

Both PCCs for Cudham and Downe continue to adopt the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance policy. This specifies that the care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

The Safer Church posters are correctly updated with who to contact if any Safeguarding concerns and are displayed in both Cudham and Downe. The Church of England's safeguarding policy statement, *Promoting a Safer Church has been accepted and signed by the joint PCC and Action Plan agreed in line with National and local objectives. Our safeguarding arrangements and who to contact are also displayed on our Parish websites. We continue to ensure members are reminded of their responsibilities and policy relevant to individual roles.*

Risk assessments have been completed by those leading events in order to comply with Safeguarding and Health and Safety requirements.

As the new Parish Safeguarding Officer I have now completed the training and in position. Safeguarding is a standard agenda for the PCC. I have given short presentations on safeguarding subjects to raise awareness in addition and to support mandatory training. During Safeguarding Sunday I did a presentation for both Cudham and Downe to explain the meaning of 'Safeguard' and raise awareness of vulnerabilities, as well as introducing myself as the PSO, which was well received.

DBS renewals and recruitment is responsibility of our Lead recruiter. We currently have one expired DBS and chasing for this to be rectified. 50% of safeguarding training is complete. Those outstanding are mainly for Foundation and/or Domestic Violence training. They have been told this must be up to date by the end of April 2026. I am chasing for compliance.

Cudham currently do not have a Bell Tower Captain. This has been risk assessed by me whilst resolution found. I intend to visit each during bell ringing to build rapport and ensure safeguarding material displayed and record being kept of visitors.

I feel confident that Cudham and Downe are taking safeguarding seriously to ensure we have the confidence and skills needed to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse.

Joanna Clark, Parish Safeguarding Officer

Messy Church

Messy Church is a form of church for all ages that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality.

Messy Church met on 7 occasions during 2025:

- 3rd January on the theme of Epiphany: the visit of the three kings and New Beginnings at Cudham.
- 20th February on the theme of 'Love one another' at Downe.
- Good Friday, 18th April on the theme of Easter at Cudham.
- 30th May on the theme of 'Ascension and Pentecost Praise' at Downe.
- 25th July on the theme of 'Stepping out in Trust' at Cudham.
- 30th October for a Hallowtide Light Party at Downe,
- 30th December on the theme of 'New Year, New Resolutions, New Start' at Cudham

Attendance varied during the year, with an average of around 31 children, parents/carers and helpers, of which several do not attend church on a regular basis. This is a 34% increase on last year so very encouraging. The most popular session was the Hallowtide Light Party with 55 in attendance! We continue to have a core of regular attendees although there are usually one or two new families at each session. It is a delight to potentially be introducing them to a life with Jesus Christ.

Kim and John Curle led all age worship on each occasion, and it was marvellous to be able to offer an amazing buffet and refreshments at all these events once again, with the exception of Good Friday when hot cross buns and an Easter egg hunt were provided!

A donation box was made available; and donations have slightly increased this year although these sadly did not cover the costs of the hall hire (at Downe) or craft materials overall.

The arts and crafts are prepared by myself and we have several regular helpers that help facilitate, talk with attendees or help with food and refreshments. An enormous thank you to Bridget Law, Karen Lockley, Mike Manthorpe, Kim and John Curle, Diane Kemp and Barbara Sheret, who all help on a regular basis as well as, Kate Brignall and Ava Mackay who have given a hand too.

Denise Angell
Children's Parish Representative.

Sunday Club at Cudham

Sunday Club was held throughout the year, meeting most 2nd to 4th weeks of each month (except during the summer holiday break) with All Age Worship being held the first Sunday of each month. The average number of children that attended is two to three, although sometimes we have had several more! The leaders have the experience to adapt the ideas for the children they have with them, whether it be one child or many.

We have continued to mainly use 'Roots' resource material, which enables the learning to be in line with that used for the adult service.

Karen Lockley, Kim Curle and myself, have led the sessions. Kate Brignall, Bridget Law and John Curle have continued to help. My thanks to all these people who plan, teach and deliver such fun and engaging material for the children. We are still a helper short, so if you would like to find out more about this valuable and rewarding role then please do get in touch!

At Christmas, several children (joyfully including a few from our local community that don't attend Sunday Club) performed the Bible Society's Instant Nativity: The Amazing Advent-ure! This entailed some audience participation and once again proved to be great fun. It would be lovely to see more in the audience next year!

Denise Angell
Children's Parish Representative.

Pastoral Visitors' Team for Cudham and Downe

John Curle undertakes the role of Team Co-ordinator supported by four Team Members forming the parish pastoral team. In 2025 the team met regularly to pray for the ministry and share in confidence about those in the parishes we are particularly in touch with. We also planned special occasions during the year with a key focus on holding Warm Welcome and Holiday at Home events in Cudham Parish Hall / Downe Village Hall. These events have been greatly enabled by a very generous grant from the Andrew Morris Foundation in both 2024 and in 2025 and by teams of volunteers who have given of their time. Another successful collaboration was the Summer Tea Party hosted by the Year 5/6 class at Cudham Primary School, encouraging and building the children's confidence in their showing hospitality and caring concern.

We have kept in regular communication with those on our pastoral list (approximately 32 people, including 4 couples), visiting in their homes (or maintaining contact by telephone) and this may include, on request, taking Home Communion, which is undertaken by two members of the team who are trained in this capacity. Other aspects of ministry, shopping for the housebound and visiting where there is sickness or bereavement for example are made, but generally, with team members' increasingly limited mobility we are stretched with the demands of visiting and keeping in touch with mainly older people in the community, thus additional team members would greatly enhance what we are able to offer.

Last year we distributed Easter and Christmas giftings in the community to approximately 18 people in Cudham (including 2 couples) and 16 people in Downe (including 1 couple). In October, we also distributed a generous gift of planted bulbs from children at Downe Primary School.

Anna Chaplaincy: Commissioned to offer spiritual care and support to older people and their families, including people with dementia, it is a privilege to help those we are in contact with across the benefice feel cared about and loved.

During 2025 we attended 3 meetings of the Anna Chaplaincy Bromley Hub for sharing news and mutual support. We also attended the Anna Chaplaincy bi-Annual Gathering which was on the theme of 'Gold' – celebrating the 'Golden Years' with a programme which blended worship, discussion and activities and opportunities for networking.

Not having care homes in the benefice, our ministry to older or housebound people has mainly focused on visiting them in their homes or through the outreach events we have initiated. An extension of bereavement care has been the opportunity Kim has had to lead the All-Souls' services in both churches during the Vacancy.

In our pastoral capacity, in April, Kim attended the Bishop's Study Day at Bishop Justus School in Bromley on the theme of 'Growing Safe and Healthy churches' with Bishop Jonathan as the main speaker; in April we also attended the St Benedict's Prayer Festival at West Malling, which offered a variety of workshops on different aspects of prayer and meditation, concluding with Taizé Evening Prayer; in June we both joined a Quiet Day at Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre on the theme of the Lord's Prayer, and 'What does it mean to hallow God's name'. then in October we both attended the Licensed Lay Ministry Conference at St Andrew's Church, Paddock Wood on the theme of 'Growing the Kingdom of God', and again with Bishop Jonathan as the main speaker, supported by the Bishop of Chester and Chine McDonald, Director of Theos, the religion and society think tank.

John Curle, *Pastoral Team Co-Ordinator,*
and Kim Curle (*and both Commissioned Anna Chaplains – spiritual care for older people*)

Schools and Families' Work in Cudham and Downe

Collective Worship at Cudham: Our leading the weekly Collective Worship on Tuesday afternoons continued with good support from Lisa Askew, the Head teacher and her staff. For this we use the school worship plan devised from the joint Canterbury and Rochester Diocesan guides for worship. Kim leads, with John focusing on the administration, IT and PowerPoint presentations.

Towards the end of the Spring Term, we organized Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Easter workshops with creative activities and whole school plenary session to consolidate the Easter story. The Easter service in church was more of a *Messy Church* type experience with crafts in the St Katherine Chapel and all-together time in the heart of the church to share our creativity and round-up our worship.

We were invited to join the school community for their Cudham 80th Anniversary VE Day Celebration and to offer *Space to Breathe* activities at the Cudham School fete (which we also did at Christmas). We were pleased to welcome again Year 5/6 pupils to the Bromley Schools Festival at Bromley Parish Church where John and I were leading workshops over two days on the theme of Trust.

In July the school again hosted a Summer Tea Party to which we invited those on our pastoral visitors list. We are grateful to the Year 5/6 pupils who offered hospitality so graciously and entertained us with songs from their end-of-year school production.

Together with the Head Teacher and Year 5/6 Teacher we were involved in the end of year Leavers' service in school leading the dramatised Bible reading, the talk and prayers and giving out copies of the *It's Your Move* Scripture Union book to Year 6 pupils making the transition to secondary school.

The school Harvest Celebration in church was an opportunity to work with worship leads and involve other pupils in readings and prayers and sharing about the role of foodbanks as well as everyone giving to the appeal for cans for Bromley Foodbank.

It was great to have children from the Glee Club come and sing for us at our Warm Welcome Christmas Special in Cudham Parish Hall in December and to stay on into the afternoon to do Christmas crafts alongside the guests.

We were pleased to attend the school Nativity and prepare children for the Christmas Service in church as the younger children formed a Nativity Tableau and older pupils led the readings and prayers in our retelling of the Christmas story.

Lisa Askew, Head, informed us just before Christmas that Aquinas Trust had advised her that she invite Spinnaker Trust to come in and share delivery of the weekly Collective Worship sessions. This was a surprise to us and implemented in January 2026 with Spinnaker leading worship on a Monday and us on a Tuesday on alternate weeks.

Collective Worship for whole school at Downe: These continued weekly under the new Head, Matt Ferguson, but then less frequently in 2025 until the end of the summer term when the school advised they would no longer be holding regular worship sessions, therefore not requiring our support for collective worship for the foreseeable future. Instead, they would be using assembly time to introduce children to a broad range of world religions, helping them develop an understanding of different beliefs, cultures, and practices supposedly reducing the overall time allocated to assemblies to accommodate the demands of a very full curriculum. However, they very much wished to maintain our valued connection with them, and they warmly welcome our involvement in key events throughout the year, including leading with the children the Harvest, Christmas, Easter, and end-of-year services in St Mary's Church for which we have been in regular liaison with the RE lead. *cont'd/.....*

In March we invited a group of children from Downe School to sing at our Warm Welcome event in Downe Village Hall. They then had great fun doing Easter crafts alongside the guests!

At the School Leavers' service in July, we presented copies of the Scripture Union *It's Your Move* book to Year 6 pupils moving up to secondary school. In addition to gifts of food items generously donated to Bromley Borough Foodbank at their school Harvest Festival, the children kindly presented planted bulbs to be distributed to those on our pastoral visitors list and others. Their homemade cards accompanying our Easter and Christmas giftings to the community were also much appreciated by recipients. It has been great to have parents join us for the special school services and to have a full church! The children always participate so well with enthusiasm and joy!

Wider involvement with children and families:

Kim was pleased again to lead the May Queen service in St Mary's Church and come alongside the children and their parents in the rehearsals and celebrations on the day.

Leading Café Church in Downe Village Hall and the open-air service at Christmas Tree Farm for St Francis of Assisi Day with Blessing of Animals are great missional opportunities. We are always pleased to welcome families from the schools to *Messy Church* and pray that God will keep open the windows of opportunity during this ongoing time of Vacancy for new ways of sharing the stories of Jesus with girls and boys in the locality.

During the year, Kim undertook the preparation sessions for parents who had requested baptism for their children. These meetings are usually held in the parents' home and cover explaining the meaning of baptism and going through the service as well as thinking about choice of hymns.

Supported by the diocesan Children & Young People Mission & Ministry Development Team, Kim has invitations to their regular Network days (usually in Rochester, sometimes at St Benedict's, West Malling) for children and family ministers for mutual support and training; and their annual Retreat (last year at Ashburnham, near Battle) which she attended.

We continue to lead the 1st Sunday of the month *Worship Together* at Cudham Church with bespoke service booklet and themed creative activities; the worship at *Messy Church* and, Kim, Sunday Club on a rota basis. We are both on the planning group for *Messy Cathedral*.

We attend the Transform Bromley Borough (TBB) church leaders' prayer breakfasts held at The Warren, representing churches and Christian charities in the London Borough of Bromley, working together relationally to be a blessing to the borough not least through the multiple services supporting children and families.

Kim Curle
Licensed Schools and Families Evangelist
and John Curle

Warm Welcome / Summer Tea Party / Holiday at Home

Following the Pastoral Team's now established pattern, we held four main events during the year to support our churches' outreach and caring concern for those in the local community.

Our event in March was our best-ever attended **Warm Welcome** with a turnout of 35 people, including Jonathan Andrews, the Mayor of Bromley. We made available a range of social and creative activities, including a popular quiz and everyone enjoyed the fish'n'chip lunch followed by entertainment provided by children from Downe Primary School who sang a delightful medley of songs, after which there was the option to engage in Easter crafts with the children or to continue in fellowship with friends around the tables. The day closed with tea and cakes.

Our next event was the **Summer Tea Party**, the third such occasion held in Cudham Primary School Hall and hosted by Year 5/6 pupils, mainly for senior citizens from the local community. We took time to train the children and shared with them tips for hosting, which included how to welcome guests, conversation starters and serving cakes, all of which they undertook proudly and confidently. Again, the Mayor of Bromley and his mayoral attendant joined the guests. The afternoon concluded with entertainment provided by the children with musical numbers from their end-of-year production.

The **Holiday at Home** event followed in August at Cudham Parish Hall. This proved to be another successful undertaking with activities, morning refreshments, a fish'n'chip lunch (provided by Salisbury's in Biggin Hill), ending with tea and cake to which we were pleased to welcome the Mayor and Mayoress of Bromley. Our guests came from both our villages, including some new faces. The event was advertised as 'free' with donations welcome, and on this occasion, we were blessed by a local donor who covered the cost of the fish'n'chip lunch and to whom we were very grateful. As always, we appreciated our team of volunteers who gave practical help and support in enabling the day to run smoothly.

The year's main events culminated with our **Christmas Special** held in Cudham Parish Hall in December. Our guests which included some new faces, enjoyed the fellowship throughout the day, and after lunch, members of the Glee Club from Cudham Primary School entertained us with carol singing, following which they engaged in Christmas craft activities with some of the guests, giving the children opportunity to relate to the older generation (outside of their own families) which they readily did judging by the lively conversations around the tables – a truly intergenerational occasion! We acknowledge the support of Lisa Askew, the school head, for enabling the children to come, and for staff and parents who ferried the children from the school.

On this occasion we were blessed by the services of the Bromley-based Truly Fresh catering company who provided us with the tasty Christmas lunch. The overall funding of the day and others was covered by the generous grants received in the last two years from the Morris Foundation for 'pastoral work in the Benefice' (which covers specifically the social lunches for the elderly) for which we are most thankful.

Kim and John Curle

Commissioned Anna Chaplains – spiritual care for older people

On behalf of the Pastoral Visitors' Team

Homegroup

For the first half of the year, homegroup met fortnightly at Sue Everest's for 90 minutes on Monday afternoon. We usually looked at the Bible passage from the Sunday service held the previous day in order to discuss in more depth the meaning and significance of God's word to us. We shared refreshments and closed in prayer.

After the break for the summer holidays, we looked to resume homegroup but a combination of health issues, appointments and other commitments, both church and personal, meant we struggled to get all five people together in the alternate weeks to when Ladies Fellowship was meeting. However, four of the group regularly attended the monthly prayer meeting at Downe church and the monthly mid-week service of Holy Communion.

The intention is to restart the homegroup during Lent and we welcome anyone who would like to explore the Bible further in an informal setting.

Mike Manthorpe

Christian Meditation

Christian Meditation is a way of coming to your own centre and remaining there, still, silent, attentive. The method we use was introduced by John Main OSB, a Benedictine Monk who opened a Christian Meditation Centre in London in 1975. A few of us meet once a month on the second Thursday at 10.00am in St. Mary's, Downe. We still ourselves, sitting on upright chairs and listening to some worshipful music, having a short talk read out, then meditating in silence for 20-30 minutes. Everyone is invited to join us even if you have never used this way of prayer before. Do give us a try. We can show you how it is done. You would be most welcome. For more information www.wccm.uk

Carol Harris

Monthly Prayer Meeting at Downe

Our joint Prayer Meeting is held on the first Tuesday morning of the month at 10.00am in St. Mary's and lasts for 30-45 minutes. There are currently five of us and we pray for the needs of both churches, St. Peter & Paul Cudham, and St. Mary's, Downe as well as the wider world. We feel that this prayer meeting is a very important part of our church life. If anyone would like to join us you will be most welcome.

Carol Harris

Housekeeping at Cudham

❖ CLEANING

The cleaning of the church carried on through 2025 just as it had done, believe it or not, since 2020, with Ann Johnson and Sue Nettlefold doing it between them. Then just before Christmas Ann handed notice that she would no longer be able to do her share, suffering as she was with a painful leg. Stretching the report into the early weeks of 2026 I have advertised for help, both in Church circulations and via the Parish Magazine, even suggesting we establish a Church Cleaning Party to meet monthly at the same time as the Churchyard Working Party, but a couple of months in and there have been no offers.

Please let me know if you can help in any way.

In last year's report I said that it would be good to organise a Spring Clean early in 2025. We did, and thank you to everyone who helped. Everywhere looked so much better for it.

❖ FLOWERS

Throughout 2025 it has been the same ladies continuing to help me with the flowers – Brenda Holbrook in particular, Emily Halifax in between childcare and her work, and Sharon Peake and Kate Webb when their work and family commitments permit. Some would say that we don't need flowers in the church but it does look very bare, even unwelcoming, without them. We are masters at keeping the cost down; the foliage is from our gardens and flowers can be kept going for weeks with judicious snipping, trimming and re-arranging.

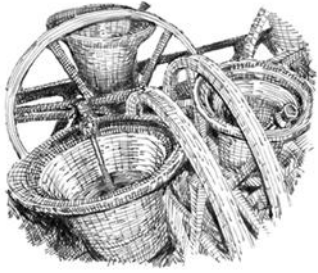
Stepping over into 2026, General Synod has passed a motion encouraging Churches to use sustainable materials in their flower arrangements. Taking this to the extreme we fail but, as I've just said, we make flowers last as long as possible. Sharon sources hers from her allotment. The floral foam is the biggest no-no; Cudham Flower Club will be trialing alternatives at the upcoming Spring meetings.

❖ OTHER JOBS

There are a multitude of other things that are done day-to-day to keep our church functioning - tidying up, shopping, putting out the rubbish, minor repairs; all the sorts of things that need doing in any household. It is not just a case of turn up for a service and leave when you've had your drink and biscuit. Thank you to everyone who plays a part.

Diane Kemp

Downe Bellringers



I wish this year I could report that ringing was back to how it was pre-Covid, but unfortunately that is not the case.

I am now the only Downe ringer and so I am so grateful to the Cudham ringers and those from other Towers for their continued support. Without them there would be no ringing in Downe.

Where possible we continued to hold practices on Mondays (1st and 3rd in Cudham, 2nd and 4th in Downe). However, this year we saw an increasing number of Downe practices having to be cancelled due to low numbers.

The lack of ringers again meant we were unable to ring on the 1st Sunday of the month.

Our learners are progressing though due to a number of circumstances we have not get been able to have the them elected as full members of the KCACR.

During the year we also rang for the following:

- Easter Sunday
- National ring for peace on the 80th anniversary of the VE Day
- Remembrance Sunday
- Carols by Candlelight
- Christmas morning

In December a visiting band rang a full peal on our bells, it took them 2 hours 56 minutes.

Once again, I would like to thank Alison Wilson for all her support, organisation and training. Also Jon Fry (Cudham) and Rob Hodgetts (Bickley) for their help in training the learners.

Caryn Newell
Downe Bell Ringers

Cudham Bellringers

Due to the vacancy for Tower Captain no report has been provided for this year.

The PCC's extends sincere and grateful thanks to all the church memberships who work so very hard to make our churches the worshipping, witnessing and welcoming community it is, and their help and support in so many ways throughout the year is greatly appreciated and valued, especially in this time of vacancy. Thank you everyone.