Parish Profile



St Andrew's Church, Barming Heath







St Nicholas' Church,

Deanery of Maidstone Diocese of Canterbury

JOINT PARISH PROFILE

for

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, BARMING HEATH and

ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH, ALLINGTON both in the Maidstone Deanery of the Canterbury Diocese

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1. TOGETHER FOR GROWTH

St Andrew's and St Nicholas' have been adjacent parishes since the 1930s; both were established to serve growing communities. While conducting their independent ministries, the two churches have over the years shared occasional services and social events, and have maintained a friendly

relationship.

St Andrew's Church building was originally a school which has since been extended. The present St Nicholas' Church building was purpose-built in 1975 to cater for the growing population in the ever-expanding Allington suburb of Maidstone.

St Andrew's Church

Recognising our need to grow spiritually, numerically and financially, both churches have agreed to work together and grow under the leadership of a new priest. The new Priest-in-Charge will be appointed to each parish with a view to possible closer union in the future.



St Nicholas' Church

Our shared vision is to continue to:-

- Develop ways of working better together
- Deepen the discipleship of our existing members by, for example
 - o A rich variety of worship
 - Prayer groups and house groups
 - o Thriving children's work
- Grow our numbers by, for example
 - Schools and families outreach
 - Community projects
 - Occasional offices

2. THE CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES OF OUR NEW PRIEST

At a joint meeting of the St Andrew's churchwardens, St Nicholas Profile Steering Group and Area Dean the following characteristics were agreed for our new minister:-

- An experienced and inspirational team leader.
- A forward-looking person willing to accept, and be excited by, the challenge of working in the two parishes.
- Sensitive to the stories of each of the parishes and a willingness to work from where people are.
- Able to lead all-age worship and a variety of Anglican services.
- Able to motivate and encourage us to grow in our faith and discipleship.
- Effective in identifying and enabling the ministries of others.
- Relates well to people of all ages and backgrounds
- Strengthening the links with local schools.
- Able to relate to the un-churched
- Able to explain God's Word to young and old.
- Able to deepen and develop the prayer life of both churches.

3. PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

Both Churches

Curate Rev. Ian Parrish

Since May 2012, Ian Parrish (a self-supporting curate in training) and his wife, Frauke, have helped and encouraged the members of St Nicholas' Church during their interregnum. Following the recent retirement of the Priest at St Andrew's Church, Ian has extended his ministry to both churches. Ian is expected to stay until Spring/Summer 2014, when he will finish his training.



Ian and Frauke

St Andrew's Church

Lay Reader

Lay Reader, John Sweetman, leads Family Services and provides Morning Prayers five times each week.



John

Authorised Lay Minister

Jean Sweetman is an ALM for Wholeness and Healing. She and John are the first contacts for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals.



Jean

Accredited for the Laying on of Hands

Marion Lakeland is accredited for the Laying on of Hands for Healing. She is also the Branch Leader of the Mothers Union and the Wives Group.



Marion

Churchwardens

Stella Blackburn and James Lakeland actively support the ministry team in their role as Churchwardens.



Stella & James

St Nicholas' Church

Lay Readers

Lay Readers, Mary Garrett and Dianne White, lead services, preach, conduct occasional funerals and undertake a range of other duties, including baptism preparation, within the parish.



Mary



Dianne

Authorised Lay Minister

Esther Venn, our ALM for Wholeness and Healing, runs the monthly Healing, Prayer and Study meetings, and is involved in the bi-monthly Wholeness and Healing service.



Esther

Accredited for Laying on of Hands

Alan & Pat Pentecost, Julie Waller and Mary Cook are accredited for the laying on of hands for Healing.



Alan Pat



Julie

Our Children and Families Worker

Fiona Higgs is employed for 20 hours per week and contributes enormously to the ministry of St Nicholas Church. She has encouraged many younger families to become a part of our congregation.



Fiona

Churchwarden

Currently, Peter Norman is our only churchwarden (now in his fourth term of office). In addition to his churchwarden duties, Peter shares in the leadership of the 'Hosanna' All-age services. (Alan Pentecost is presently acting as the deputy churchwarden).



Peter

Parish Administrator

Assisting us all, Lizz Meredith is employed to work in the Parish Office from 9am to noon on every weekday morning. She handles all halls bookings, produces the weekly pewsheet, orders materials for church and halls use and supports church officers and the congregation as needed.



Lizz

4. INTRODUCTION TO MAIDSTONE

Maidstone is the county town of Kent, England, 32 miles (51 km) south-east of London. The River Medway runs through the centre of the town, linking it with Rochester and the Thames Estuary. Historically, the river was a source and route for much of the town's trade as the centre of the agricultural county of Kent, known as the Garden of England. The town is backed by the North Downs and to the south lies the Weald of Kent with its many attractive villages and countryside.

In 2011, the town had a population of 113,137. Maidstone's economy has changed over the years from being involved in heavy industry, to more light and service industries.

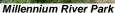
There are three mainline railway stations in the town linking with London (1 hour) and Ashford (20 minutes). The M20 motorway passes close to the town and provides good connection to the M25, Folkestone (for the channel tunnel) and Dover.

There is a new central library, cinema complex, theatre and several shoppingcentres in the town; a medieval grouping of buildings around All Saints Church in the town includes the Archbishops Palace and a Carriage Museum. Mote Park is adjacent to the town providing leisure facilities and Leeds Castle lies a few miles to the east.



Saints' Church & Archbishops' Palace on the River Medway







ΑII

Mote Park



Leeds Castle

5. PARISH DETAILS OF ST ANDREW'S CHURCH



St Andrew's Church Barming Heath Maidstone Kent



The interior of St Andrews

Summary

St Andrew's is a small family oriented Church on the outskirts of Maidstone. The Parish contains both established older housing and new developments, with further planned infill housing proposed for the future. The congregation reflects this mixture of old and young, born here and 'travelled from afar'. There is work to be done in establishing stronger links to the newly arrived and creating ways to reach out to the 'Christian but I don't go to church' people living in the new estates and gated communities.

The incoming Cleric will have to balance evangelistic work against the pastoral care of the

older more traditionally minded congregation members. The opportunity exists however to work with people from across the world who bring their own experiences and variations of the Anglican Community to flavour the worship at St Andrews.



Description of the Parish

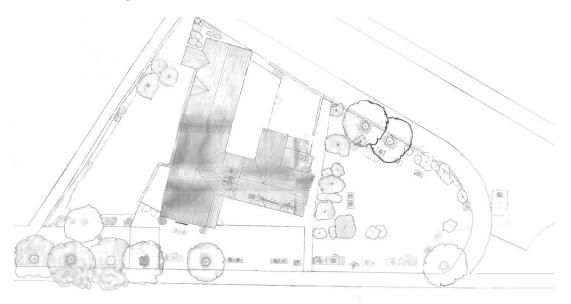
St Andrew's is the most Westerly parish in the Maidstone Deanery, and is comprised of the core of the old area of Barming Heath. There is a population of some 10,000 people. The parish contains a mixture of houses, some dating from the 19th century and some from last month. The site of the former Oakwood Psychiatric Hospital has recently been redeveloped for housing and the County Plan contains further proposals for the development of farmland on the boundary of the parish.

The Maidstone District General Hospital lies within the parish as does 'Priority House', a Psychiatric Unit. The Trevor Gibbons Secure Unit is located adjacent to the main Hospital site. There are a number of residential nursing homes in the area and some sheltered housing. Schools in the parish are Westborough Infants and Primary Schools and Bower Grove School, which provides for children with special needs between the ages of five and eighteen.

Vulnerable people

St Andrew's takes its responsibility for the vulnerable very seriously and publishes policies for the safeguarding of children and adults. All who work in this field are CRB checked or supervised by someone who has been checked.

The Church and its Buildings



The Church

St Andrew's Church was originally built as a School, hence the non-standard orientation of the complex. It is situated at the junction of St Andrews Road and the A26 (Tonbridge Road). Since neither the Church nor Hall has a letterbox we do not have a postcode. You may however use the code for No 2 St Andrews Road which is **ME16 9AN.**

The grounds are roughly triangular in shape, as seen in the sketch above. The buildings are predominantly constructed of Kent Ragstone with later additions of brick. The roof of the main building is of earthenware tiles. The toilet area and the base of the Bell tower are roofed with glass reinforced resin over marine ply. There is no Graveyard associated with the church as the surrounds were originally the playground of the school. The Complex has no on site parking.

The Church Hall

Although joined to the main building the hall is separately programmable for heating and has its own entrance. There is a retractable partition wall between the Hall and the Church. The kitchen and toilet facilities are shared with the Church. The Hall and Church are well used by Congregation and Community. You can sing, slim, dance or deal as takes your fancy by joining the appropriate club.



Bring and Buy business after a Family Service

A longer history of the Church and hall including upgrades and alterations can be read on the Church website at http://www.standrewsbarming.co.uk

Worship at St Andrews

St Andrew's has a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere.

St Andrew's currently has 1 Reader and 1 Authorised Lay Minister. (Healing Ministry) and 2 people licensed for the ministry of laying on of hands for healing

The current standard services:

Daily

09:00 Morning Prayer, Except for Tuesdays

Sundays

08:00 Communion to the Book of Common Prayer.

09:45 Parish Communion with Hymns.

A Family Service followed by refreshments and a 'Bring and Buy' replaces the 09:45 service on the 4th Sunday of the Month.

16:00 Baptism on the first Sunday of the Month if there are any candidates.

Other Services

Nativity presentations, Lent Courses, Alpha Courses, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Christingle and Midnight Eucharist at Christmas



An Easter Flower cross at St Andrew's

We offer the laying on of hands with prayer for healing at all communion services. All who are Confirmed in a Christian Faith may take Communion and anyone may receive a Blessing at any Eucharist Service. We have a number of lay members licensed to administer home Communion.

There is a Prayer Group that meets regularly away from the Church and a Worship Committee that meets with the Priest to discuss the way ahead. Our Worship Committee and our Prayer Group both seek God's help to share the message of hope with those we meet in our daily lives

Music at St Andrew's:

St Andrew's has a small but capable Choir, occasionally adding anthems to enhance the Family Services. Our organist is unwell at the moment, but we have had help from a musician from St Nicholas, among others, and have occasionally sung to the backing of CDs. Our Choirmaster is Tony Deane.



Tony

Children at St Andrew's

Children are welcome here and you will need to be able to cope with 'noises off' as our youngest children play at the back of the Church during services.

We have a small children's corner, much used, at the back of the Church. We run a Sunday Club for children aged 4 to11 which meets in the Church Hall during our 9.45 a.m. Parish Communion. Our programme provides games,



colouring and drawing, songs, bible passages and their application and prayer. Material is obtained from the web site of the Family Trust, a Christian charity for children's activities which operates in Maidstone and the Medway Towns. The number of youngsters wishing to come is increasing and we would love to do more work with children, so we badly need more leaders to look after them.

Outreach at St Andrew's:

We delivered Christmas Cards to over 800 dwellings in 2012. 'The Anvil', our Church Magazine, has a circulation of about 400. We have a website that is well received, and even used by ex parishioners in France.

We need to find ways of reaching out to the new 'gated communities in the parish, and to improve our links with those who only contact us for hatch, match and dispatch occasions.



Goodies at a St Andrews Strawberry Tea

Strategies for achieving growth.

We are a welcoming church. There is a committee set up specifically to devise Social events to which everybody in the Parish is invited as a way of showing the love of God in the community.

We run a Confirmation Course each year. Classes from the local schools visit to see what a Church is like and hold Harvest Festival services. The Oddfellows Society holds services twice each year on a Sunday afternoon.

We have links to the Mission to Seamen and the Church Missionary Society.

Projects at St Andrew's

St Andrews parishioners like projects that they can see the results of. They have contributed time talent and money to many improvements to the Church and Hall. For instance:-

The replacement of the Church Organ

The replacement of all of the windows of Church and Hall. Plus a new Back Door to the Hall.

The creation of a toilet for use by those in wheelchairs or needing a carer's help.

The replacement of the central heating boiler system.

The installation of a Hearing aid loop as part of the new sound system.

Refurbishing the kitchen.

There is an ongoing project to redecorate the exterior of the Church and Hall. This requires us to exercise our considerable talent in the foraging for grants amongst the Council departments, Community minded charities and Commercial firms.

Financial Matters

Over a number of years we have struggled to pay our Parish Share. The partnership with St Nicholas will allow us to build from a more secure financial base, and help us to find a sustainable pattern of ministry and mission.

Where are we going?

Our Congregation is slowly but steadily increasing in numbers both adult and children, a trend that we wish to continue during the interregnum and beyond.

Help and leadership will be required of the new Priest-in-Charge as we look and pray for guidance as to the future of God's work in this Parish. Working with St Nicholas offers many opportunities, and we need faith as we step out into unknown territory.

6. PARISH DETAILS OF ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH

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6.1 ABOUT THE PARISH OF ST. NICHOLAS'

The River Medway acts as the parish boundary to the east, from the M20 in the north down to the centre of Maidstone, and includes, on its western bank, the picturesque

Allington Castle, built in the 13th century and now a private residence.

The town centre is about one mile from the church; Junction 5 of the M20 is less than a mile away. Many buses pass along the London Road and there are four railway stations within easy walking distance.



Allington Lock



Typical housing near the church

Around 12,000 people live in the parish in a mixture of housing, dating from the 1920's. In recent years the population has increased in size owing to many new housing developments; this growth is likely to continue. There is a good social and age mix, with retired, middle-aged and young families occupying the different types of residential development, the majority of which (over 90%) is owner-occupied.



Library



Shopping centre (incl. Waitrose)

The parish includes the Mid-Kent Shopping Centre and library, several nursery and pre-school playgroups, three primary schools, one private school, a girls' grammar school and a comprehensive school. Maidstone Hospital, several nursing homes and a private hospital are all located within the parish.

A map of the parishes of St Andrew's and St Nicholas' is shown in the Appendix to this document.

6.2 THE CHURCH AND ITS BUILDINGS

The **church**, which was consecrated in 1975, is light, pleasant and airy and can seat 300 people; the seating is mainly pews except for the back of the church where there are chairs providing an adaptable space which can be used for small meetings and groups. There are two vestries, one of which is used as the Parish Office; and a toilet.

The prayer corner around the font includes a votive candle stand. There is a sound system, a loop facility for the hard of hearing and a wall-mounted projector screen.

The church building is linked to the adjacent halls by a stepped and covered walkway and is surrounded by open-plan gardens with lawns, shrubs, flowerbeds and trees. At the back is a useful-sized area that is used for the Family Fun Day and by youth organisations for games and outdoor activities.



St Nicholas' sanctuary



Font and prayer corner

The Main Hall, next to the church, was built in 1937 and was the first St Nicholas' Church, pre-dating the current church. It can seat 140 people and has a good range of facilities including a stage with new lighting, store rooms and a fully-equipped kitchen. A corridor leads to a slightly smaller hall built in 1993 which has a small tea-bar and toilets including a facility for the disabled. External access to this hall is via a concrete ramp.



Church Hall

There is a good-sized car park adjacent to the halls which are in regular use for a range of both church and community activities. The halls are in good condition and are managed by Chris Cook, the Halls' chairman; we also employ Ron Russell as our caretaker. The halls are an asset both to the church and to the community and provide useful income for the church.

Last year's quinquennial survey of church and halls did not reveal any major defects.

6.3 THE CHURCH - ITS WORSHIP AND PEOPLE

Our congregation includes many lively and active over-60's and a core of young families.

The current service times are shown below -

Time of service	Type of service	Typical attendance	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
SUNDAYS							
8:00am	Holy Communion (said)	17	√ (1662)		√		√
9:30am	Hosanna! (all-age worship)	44 (and 9 children)	~		✓	✓	
9:30am	Hosanna! with communion	51 (and 8 children)		√			
11:00am	Parish Communion (sung)	40	✓		✓	✓	
11:00am	Morning worship or Service of Wholeness & Healing	32		√			
10:00am	Combined service with Communion	80 (and 12 children)					√
WEDNESDAYS							
10:00am	Holy Communion (with Mothers' Union on 1 st Wednesday)	8 (22 with MU)	V	V	√	√	√

- There are currently 109 people on the Electoral Roll
- Baptisms are normally conducted at Hosanna! on 4th Sundays
- Parade services (with Guide and Scout units) are held 3 times a year at the Hosanna! service.
- Home communion is available for those who are unable to attend services in church and is taken to some of the residential care-homes in the parish.
- In 2012 there were no weddings, 9 baptisms and 2 funerals.
 (The low numbers of weddings and funerals reflect the absence of a full-time Priest. In 2010 there were 3 weddings and 11 funerals)

Throughout the year we attract many additional members of the community to our other special services, including:-

- St Nicholas' Day celebration
- Service of Lessons and Carols
- Blessing of the Crib
- Midnight Christmas communion
- Christingle
- Mothering Sunday
- Holy Week & Easter
- Harvest

Recent special services have included:-

- Queen's Jubilee
- Back-to-church Sunday
- Celebration Sunday for the Book of Common Prayer
- Annual Service of Commemoration & Thanksgiving for the bereaved

Our all-age **Hosanna!** lasts about 45 minutes and is often led by Fiona Higgs, our Children and Families' Worker, and also by other members of the church. We provide, in an informal setting, songs and hymns led by our talented music group. Worship includes Bible teaching, and encourages active participation by the congregation. The service uses Powerpoint projection onto a wall-mounted screen.



The Music Group

The **Parish Communion at 11:00** is a more traditional service accompanied by Roger Gentry, our organist, but also containing a mixture of modern and traditional hymns. Once a month the communion service is replaced by **Morning Worship or a service of Wholeness and Healing.** Both are led by a group of accredited members of the congregation.



Roger



Coffee in the hall

Between the 9:30 and 11:00 services both congregations enjoy fellowship together **over a cup of coffee or tea** in the church hall, where once a month we support a Traidcraft stall.

The work of the church is 'under-pinned' by our **Prayer Group** which meets weekly. Three flourishing **House Groups** meet fortnightly; they differ in nature but are opportunities to explore our faith in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Recently we held **Lent Groups** based on the diocesan guideline "Guides not Guards" and these were well attended. In May, a successful **Parish AwayDay** in a local church

helped us to explore our future as a church.

Since July 2012 we have been running a monthly group for enthusiastic secondary school-aged children called **JAHFA** (Jesus And His Followers Army). They led our Good Friday Hosanna! service and participate in Hosanna! services on a regular basis.



JAHFA in church

6.4 THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

In recent years we have tried to deepen our commitment to the community in a variety of ways:

- Our monthly **church magazine** "*Grapevine*" is produced in-house by a small, dedicated team. It is delivered free of charge and is distributed outside local primary schools. The magazine is also available from local surgeries, the post office and is widely available locally. *Grapevine* is also available online at www.stnicholasallington.org.uk
- Each month a group supplies soup and sandwiches to the homeless in Maidstone town centre using donations from the congregation.
- The Social and Fund-raising group was reformed in 2012 in order to coordinate our social activities throughout the year and to help generate more income. Last December we revamped our annual church Christmas Fair into a Christmas Market which was very successful both financially and as outreach to the community.



Christmas Market



Christmas Market in Church Hall

 So far this year we have held a Wine-and-Wisdom evening, a Lent Lunch (supporting our sponsored child through PLAN UK), a simple supper after the Maundy Thursday service and a Fish and Chip supper with an Auction of Promises. For the summer we are holding a Family Fun Day and a Garden Safari. We also host several concerts throughout the year. Last year we held a very successful series of events to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, including a special church service, a concert and a street party.



Jubilee street party



Jazz Concert

Our enthusiastic **Children's and Families' Worker**, Fiona, organises weekly after-school clubs (Explorers) in two of the primary schools and a monthly Saturday Club for primary school children. She has recently run a very popular 4-day Holiday Club based on the story of Moses which was attended daily by 60 children. There is also a children's drama group. Fiona organised a successful Easter Experience for children in Years 5 & 6 from the local primary schools, and is planning a harvest-themed Messy Church for October. In all these activities she is well supported by members of the church and congregation.







Easter Experience in church

Our monthly "Mums & Babes at St Nics" provides a space for mums to chat and their babes to play in church and this is appreciated by many families. We have been delighted to welcome several of these children for baptism. We also provide the refreshments for the weekly Parents and Toddler group in the church hall, again providing a link for parents with St Nicholas'.

The **Mothers' Union** meets monthly and has a membership of 37. It gives active support to the children's work in the church and is a resource to draw upon when help is needed in the church, including fund-raising efforts. The Mothers' Union supports a variety of deanery and national MU projects.

We enjoy fellowship meals together on special occasions, and throughout the year we hold our popular **Sunday Lunch Club** for those who would normally eat alone; we also run occasional couples' lunches.

St Nicholas' Fellowship mostly attracts the older members of the congregation and meets monthly enjoying a variety of speakers and occasional outings; the membership exceeds 30.

Silver Cross Club is a weekly youth club for teenagers, run by church members and young leaders of 18-plus who have remained to help with the club. Numbers attending vary from 10 to 40.

Charitable Giving. As a church we support Christian Aid Week; the salary of a nurse at a hospital in Tanzania, PLAN UK and a variety of other home and overseas charities through our monthly charity bottle. At Christmas all collections go to children's charities.

At Christmas, members of St Nicholas' Church join with Allington Baptist Church for carol singing at the Mid-Kent shopping centre. Both churches have also supported each other with help for children's Holiday Clubs.

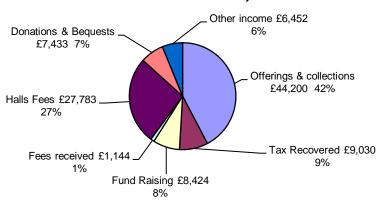
The church halls are used by a variety of local clubs including:- Guiding and Scouting units, clog dancers, fitness and slimming groups, gardening clubs, quilting groups, dancing, drama group, photography and a metal-detecting group as well as being used as a polling station. The halls are popular venues for private family celebrations.

Finance

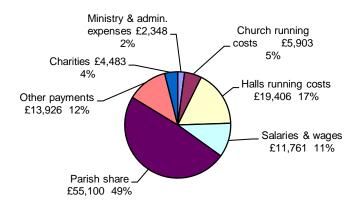
Since 2010 we have been unable to pay our full Parish Share to the diocese. This has contributed to the decision that our parish, and the neighbouring St Andrew's parish, should share the services of a full-time priest. It is expected that joining with St Andrew's will enable us to grow from a more secure financial base.

In 2012 our total income was £104,466 and our expenditure £112,927. The resulting deficit was funded from our limited reserves. £55,100 was paid towards the Parish Share (84% of that required); further details of 2012 income and expenditure are shown below:-

INCOME 2012 - £104,466



EXPENDITURE 2012 - £112,927

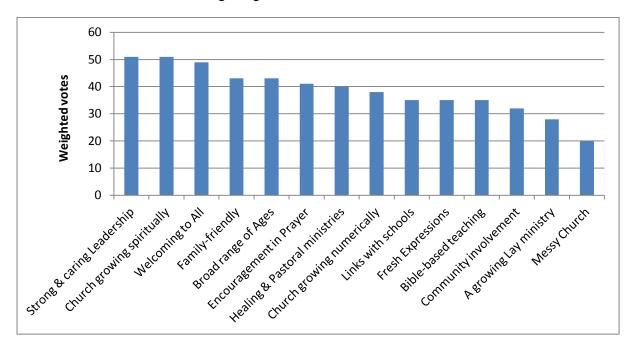


There are 78 people who give regularly to the church either through the Free Will Offering envelope scheme or standing orders.

A TRIO (The Responsibility Is Ours) campaign was run in 2010.

Input from church members

In order to give all the church members at St Nicholas' Church an opportunity to make a specific input to this Parish Profile, and to have a sense of identity with it, the PCC identified fourteen characteristics that could be considered important to the church. The church members were then invited to give to each of these characteristics a relative weighting. The results are shown below:-



7. MAIDSTONE DEANERY

Maidstone Deanery is changing as relationships improve and the desire grows to work across parish boundaries. The Deanery is actively pursuing becoming a "Group Ministry". While this would not affect each parish's basic autonomy, it would provide an overall structure in which partnerships can flourish, and would mean that incumbents "share a legal duty to assist each other to make the best possible provision for the cure of souls across the area of the group."

This means that the new Priest-in-Charge of St Andrew's and St Nicholas will not be ministering alone. Clergy in the Deanery will continue to offer support as the partnership between the two parishes takes shape. And the deanery is looking to work together on a project to explore ministry in the new Riverside developments, which fall within the boundaries of a number of town centre parishes, as well as that of St Nicholas.

None of which makes sense without looking beyond the Church of England. Maidstone has both a Churches Together group and a more informal gathering of mainly evangelical ministers, as well as countless projects and organisations which work across the denominations. A pattern of praying for each other, networking together and working alongside each other seems to be emerging, which should enable us to serve our town together without wasteful competition or needless meetings.

8. WEBSITES & THE RECTORY

Further details of both churches can be found at their websites as follows:-

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

www.standrewsbarming.co.uk



ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH

www.stnicholasallington.org.uk





The 'Rectory'

The 'RECTORY' (36 Poplar Grove, Maidstone, ME16 0DE) is a detached four-bedroomed house, next to St Nicholas Church, built in 1974 for the then incumbent Rector. It has a modern fully-fitted kitchen, utility room, dining room, spacious study, lounge and downstairs toilet. Two of the bedrooms have washbasins; there is also a bathroom and shower room. The house has gas-fired central heating and is fitted with an alarm system. The 'Rectory' has a good-sized garden, an attached garage and parking space for several cars.

9. MAP OF THE PARISHES OF ST ANDREW'S & ST NICHOLAS'

