

PARISH OF ST PETER & ST PAUL TONBRIDGE
With St Andrew, St Philip and St Saviour

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
SUNDAY 18 MAY 2025

REPORTS

- Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)
- Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the church buildings
- Tonbridge Deanery Synod
- Mission Action Group (MAG)
- Safeguarding report

REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ST PETER & ST PAUL TONBRIDGE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
May 2024-April 2025

The PCC, comprising 21 members, has met 10 times during the year. Commitment was very good with nearly 50% members having a 100% attendance record. The Standing Committee has continued to meet regularly between PCC meetings with its minutes being received by the PCC.

In July 2024 the PCC agreed to the appointment of an outside consultant to undertake a review of the parish. After an extensive consultation and much research during the autumn, John Truscott presented his report to the PCC in January 2025. Subsequent PCC meetings considered the recommendations of the report in detail and agreed them in principle. The report was released to church family in advance of the whole church family meeting on 23 March 2025. At its meeting on 31 March the PCC confirmed its decision in principle to proceed with implementation of the review report recommendations. It was now considering the implementation phase and the transition to the new congregational structures.

In addition, normal PCC business has included regular reports from each of its sub-committees and a safeguarding report at each meeting. It has been kept informed of developments in the wider Church of England, notably regarding the discussion and decisions on 'Living in Love and Faith'. The PCC has also been involved, as appropriate, in discussion of, and decisions on, the future of the vicarage garden Coach House and car park.

If anyone would like any further information on PCC discussions etc please in the first instance contact the Secretary (mussonsally@btinternet.com 07713 352017)

Sally Musson

PCC Secretary

REPORT ON FABRIC GOODS AND ORNAMENTS

This report draws on information from the Deputy Wardens.

St Peter & St Paul

A significant event was the departure of the bells in autumn 2024 for refurbishment and they were back and ringing for Easter.

The necessary faculty approvals were obtained for the re-pointing work on the external wall (including the tower) and for the installation of solar panels on the south facing roof. Work started in April.

Other work to be completed includes the fire alarm system and the velux windows.

All three pianos and the organ were tuned.

Maintenance of the churchyard has continued by the team which meets monthly.

St Andrew

There have been no changes to goods and ornaments at St Andrews during the last year, except for donations of seven-day timers for the heaters and new hymn card numbers.

St Philip

St Philip's building has had regular maintenance work done to heating installations and gardening has been ongoing

It has been identified that a new roof covering will be needed in the next five years.

St Saviour

A major addition has been a new glass inner door provided for in a legacy to St Saviour's church. A large print lectern bible was also funded through a legacy.

Following storm damage a new noticeboard was erected at the Dry Hill Park Road entrance.

A rowan tree has been planted in the grounds, for which an Archdeacon's faculty was obtained, in memory of Peter York.

TONBRIDGE DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2024-2025

This year was the first under the new Area Dean, the Rev'd Lisa Cornell, Rector of the High Weald Churches. Sally Musson stepped down as Deanery Secretary in May and formal thanks were recorded to her and to the retiring Area Dean, Rev'd Miriam Barker, at the Ascension Day service in St Paul's Church Four Elms.

The Deanery Synod has met twice since the report to the 2024 APCM. At a poorly attended meeting in October 2024 it received updates from Diocesan Synod and General Synod. David Mote was elected as a lay representative on the Diocesan Synod.

In February 2025 the Deanery Synod heard an engaging presentation from the Bishop of Rochester, Rt Revd Jonathon Gibbs, on the Diocesan vision and the way forward. He said that when he first came to be our diocesan bishop in 2022, he arrived with three words - change, serve, and grow. Three words he believed were

placed on his heart by God as he took on his ministry within the Diocese of Rochester.

Do continue to pray for Tonbridge Deanery, especially for those parishes in vacancy, for the Area Dean and for roles to be filled.

Sally Musson

Deanery Synod representative

MISSION ACTION GROUP (MAG) REPORT

The Mission Action Group has met regularly over the last year to discuss details of our mission partners and distribute money from the MAG fund which is supported by tithing regular giving to the general account. Our regular main partners are: Kondoa – Bishop Given and the bible college; OMF Gelsthorpe family in Japan; Langham Partnership; Bishop Ken Barham; High Hopes.

In addition, 20% of the tithe is distributed to local and international Christian groups as needs are identified. As information is received throughout the year from our mission partners it is put on our website for all to see.

A major contribution from a donor has seen the completion of a secondary school in Chemba which students from the primary school will be able to attend.

Ray Tanner

Interim Chair of MAG

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

We cannot afford to ignore the impact the Makin Report has had since it was published in November 2024. It describes how the Church of England mishandled allegations of abuse committed by John Smyth QC, a barrister involved in Christian children's ministry through the Iwerne Camps in the 1970s and 1980s.

The report highlighted the failure to report concerns which some people were aware of at that time. In 2013 new information emerged about Smyth but the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, failed to check this had been followed up which resulted in his resignation in January this year.

You may have asked yourself why John Smyth was able to influence so many young boys. Mark Stibbe who was abused by him wrote:- "First and foremost the abuse was 'spiritual abuse'. Without the spiritual dimension to his behaviour, there would have been no abuse at all".

For us, there are **four lessons** from this very serious failure in safeguarding:-

1. If we attend the Church and have any safeguarding concerns, **we have a responsibility to report them**. This may not be something you feel comfortable doing; you may be unsure of the facts; you may be worried about the possible consequences & what the outcome could be. But in the light of the Makin Report we can see why reporting is so important.
2. The second lesson is to **be sure your concerns have been taken seriously & followed up**. In the first instance, you can report safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or to anyone in the Safeguarding Team. We will do everything we can to ensure your concerns are taken seriously & followed up.

3. **We need to be aware of the impact any type of abuse can have on survivors &, where appropriate, seek ways of supporting them.**
4. **As a church, we have a responsibility to ensure that anyone who has a role in the Church completes safeguarding training.**

The Safeguarding Team consists of Rev'd Ben Thorndike, Vicar; Rev'd Wendy Carr; Alyson Bleakley; Pam Calvert, Parish Safeguarding Officer. Paul White is the Lead Recruiter and Alison Minton provides our administrative support. We aim to meet every two months and at other times depending on the need. We work closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors who support us whenever we encounter safeguarding issues in the Parish.

One of our tasks is to prepare policies which are related to safeguarding and we have recently been working on a 'Lone Workers Policy' to present to the PCC for approval. There are boundaries in home visiting which people may not be aware of and this is why the policy is very important. It aims to safeguard those who work alone, either in a church building or in someone's home & also to safeguard those who are receiving a visit.

The Makin Report raised awareness of the need to safeguard people who come to church and use church spaces. It has had one positive effect in that many people in our Parish have since completed one or more of the online safeguarding courses. I am very aware that for some people, completing these courses may not have been that straightforward but I admire their commitment & perseverance. However, safeguarding training is of little use if people do not follow the guidelines therefore we all need to be alert and be committed to reporting any concerns we may have.

A huge thank you to everyone who contributes towards providing a safe church community for us all.

Pam Calvert

Parish Safeguarding Officer.