Diocese of Rochester
called together

ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

for the Archdeacon of Tonbridge

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A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP JONATHAN

Welcome to the Diocese of Rochester and thank you for your interest in these exciting roles. Our three Archdeacons play a vital part in shaping and implementing our Diocesan vision and in helping to ensure that our churches flourish and God's kingdom grows among our wonderfully diverse communities.

As a Diocese we share the vision that we are Called Together to change, serve and grow the church across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Much work has taken place to understand what these three themes mean for the life of the Diocese and our priorities, and to define what and where resources will need to be allocated to deliver them.

Through prayerful engagement and discernment, what has begun to emerge is an understanding that we are a community:

Seeking first the Kingdom of God, and called together by God to change, serve and grow with compassion, courage and creativity.

- **Change** is about the need for us to adapt in a changing world, so that our churches can play their full part in serving God and drawing people once more to faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Serve** is about the attitude we need to adopt if we are to earn and gain that cherished place in people's hearts and at the heart of our communities.
- **Grow** is about what God wants to bring about in us and through us, as people growing into the likeness of Christ, and as churches where people are being drawn to follow Jesus through our words and through our deeds.

Our objectives

Within this overall vision, our emerging key objectives are to grow missional churches, with missional leaders and missional disciples, that are:

- Growing younger and more diverse
- Growing spiritually and numerically
- Impacting their communities
- Releasing financial resources for mission
- Planting and growing new missional churches
- Creating a safe and healthy culture for all

This is the latest phase in developing our strategic plans, which are vital to our seeking to grow the kingdom of God across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent, and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Central to these plans is sustaining and growing a flourishing and well-resourced parish structure, so as to enable our local churches to take their full and rightful place at the heart of their communities: serving God and serving the people, loving God and showing his love in and to our communities.

If this vision excites you and you believe God may be calling you to be one of our new Archdeacons, then we would love to hear from you.

With prayers and best wishes,

+ Jonathan,

The Rt Rev Dr Jonathan Gibbs
Bishop of Rochester

St Stephen, Tonbridge

Photo by Jim Drew

THE ARCHDEACONRY OF TONBRIDGE

The Archdeaconry of Tonbridge lies in South- West Kent, and covers all or part of the Boroughs of Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Maidstone – all within the County of Kent. Focal centres of population are the towns of Tonbridge, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Edenbridge and Paddock Wood, and the communities of the A20 corridor between West Malling and Aylesford.

The Archdeaconry has six deaneries, 62 benefices, encompassing 90 parishes and some 122 churches/congregations. 24 benefices have more than one church/parish; 15 have a parish priest who is less than full-time.

There are some 60fte stipendiary clergy posts (excluding training curacies), around 8fte employed youth/children's workers, and around 9 self-supporting clergy offering varying amounts and kinds of ministry.

There are a number of larger congregations, particularly in Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks, some of which have a profile which is wider than local. There are also congregations serving some relatively small rural communities.

Among the clergy and parishes are those representing almost every ecclesial tradition within the Church of England. In two parishes, the Bishop shares oversight with the Bishop of Richborough; in three others, the Bishop has put in place arrangements to share ministry with the Bishop of Ebbsfleet.

In all such cases, relationship with the Diocese is positive, with clergy and lay people from those parishes making important contributions to the wider life and mission of the church.

TONBRIDGE ARCHDEACONRY IN NUMBERS

Population
331,043

Contribution through Parish Offers
£3.26M

Church schools
49

Deaneries
6

Churches
122

Benefices
62

Curates
13

Stipendary clergy posts
60fte

Employed youth, Children's workers
8fte

Self-supporting clergy
9

Tonbridge Archdeaconry

- Malling deanery
- Paddock Wood deanery
- Sevenoaks deanery
- Shoreham deanery
- Tonbridge deanery
- Tunbridge Wells deanery

Source: Population Census 2021 and Clergy and Financial figures 2023

There are 46 Church of England Schools in the Archdeaconry (including the Bennett Memorial Diocesan Secondary School), and one ecumenical secondary free school. A number of significant independent schools also lie within the Archdeaconry, some with Church of England chaplaincy. In many places there are also excellent links between the churches and community schools and academies. As elsewhere, the pattern of schools is changing significantly through the creation of new school academies.

The parishes of the Archdeaconry serve a population of some 300,000. Projections suggest that this will increase steadily, especially within the Borough of Tonbridge and Malling. A completely new community has been built at King's Hill over the last 15 years, and further large developments will follow, especially in the A20 corridor.

Within the Archdeaconry are to be found some of the most affluent communities in the country. Alongside that, there are places of real social and community challenge. For the last few years, the churches of Tunbridge Wells have offered winter shelter for homeless people; there are other Christian projects working with the homeless and with vulnerable young people; others offer debt advice, and rehabilitation of those with addictions.

Among these initiatives, particular mention might be made of two residential centres: the Kenward Trust which offers residential rehabilitation for those with drug or alcohol dependency; and the Pilsdon at Malling Community which offers a welcome and accommodation for homeless and other vulnerable people.

The parishes of the Archdeaconry make a significant financial contribution to the resources of the Diocese, contributing some £3.8million through the Parish Offer, while also funding a range of local ministries and mission activities – and sustaining a good number of historic church buildings. That said, the direct cost of deploying ministry within the Archdeaconry amounts to some £3.5million, excluding curacies.

While congregations are vibrant, strong and outward looking in many parts of the Archdeaconry, there are places where the church struggles to sustain its life. Creative reorganisation will be needed in some places, not least so as to re-direct resources for mission and ministry into areas of new opportunity and challenge.

Bishop Jonathan at Bridge's Centre Places of Welcome, Edenbridge

Aerial view of St George, Weald parish

THE ROLE

Give attention to personal prayer, study of the scriptures, theological reflection, preparation for preaching and worship and a rhythm of sabbath rest.

- Report to, and speak on behalf of, the Bishop in archdeaconry and designated wider matters
- Build good relationships across the different communities of the Archdeaconry, regularly visiting and sharing in the life and worship of local parishes, chaplaincies, fresh expressions and community projects
- Create and develop a ministry plan which will establish effective structures for mission in the Archdeaconry, including pastoral schemes and Bishop's Mission Orders
- Chair the Archdeaconry Steering Group in its remit for mission and ministry
- Work with the relevant Area Dean to support parishes and benefices through a vacancy, including an exit interview with the departing priest; ensuring there is good, honest reflection on the parish profile and overseeing the interview process in conjunction with the patron and parish representatives
- Induct and install newly appointed ministers
- Work with the Bishops in the pastoral care of the clergy and their families
- Conduct an interim review with the archdeaconry clergy on a three year cycle
- Admit Churchwardens to office at the annual Visitation service
- Ensure that safeguarding is embedded in church culture and that policies are properly implemented across the board

- Serve on appropriate diocesan bodies, helping with strategic planning:
  - Bishop's Leadership Team
  - Bishop's Council
  - Diocesan Synod
  - Archdeaconry Steering Group
  - Called to Grow Project Board
  - Clergy Houses Committee
  - Diocesan Advisory Committee
  - Finance Committee
  - Other committees from time to time
- To be a member of the College of Canons and to take an appropriate part in the life of the Cathedral
- Meet regularly with the Area Deans of the Archdeaconry, offering guidance and support to them, Deanery Lay Chairs, Churchwardens and other parish officers
- Relate well to borough, public, private and third sector leaders
- To undertake the statutory duties of an archdeacon as laid out in Canon C22 and other ecclesiastical legislation
- Address difficulties or disputes as they arise in parishes; to seek resolutions through advice and negotiation, but where necessary take formal action under the Clergy Disciplinary Measure and other legislation concerning the conduct of Clergy, Churchwardens and PCCs
- To undertake such other duties as the Bishop of Rochester may request

St Barnabas, Tunbridge Wells

THE PERSON

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge will be someone who displays the following characteristics:

- Is a disciple of Jesus Christ with a heart for the kingdom of God and is able to inspire others to follow Jesus more closely
- Is a loyal friend and colleague who has a genuine grasp of collegiality and the spiritual fruit of wisdom, patience and kindness
- Understands the Called Together priorities and can help imaginatively with their realisation in the places of the Archdeaconry and across the wider Diocese
- Preaches and leads worship in a way that inspires and deepens faith in God
- Understands the reality of urban life and ministry and is sympathetic with this
- Can innovate and lead for change, is adaptable, relishes problem solving and is a peaceable, astute presence in the middle of conflict
- Is enthusiastic about mission in parishes, chaplaincies, schools and the mixed ecology of Church
- Has good personal experience of leadership in parish life
- Is an able communicator, both orally and in writing
- Can chair meetings in a timely manner and with attention to core tasks
- Is competent in the digital settings of worship and collegial meetings
- Can manage projects and tasks and deliver these efficiently
- Has the capacity to understand ecclesiastical and other law as it relates to the ministry of an archdeacon
- Grasps complex documents, financial and legal reports in an effective way, contributing to their content and shape
- Be a credible public representative of the Church of England in wider society and with ecumenical and other partners
- Has the ability and willingness to drive up to 10,000 miles a year on archdeaconry business
- Models a healthy and balanced life, with a good sabbath rhythm that includes a weekly day of rest, and giving time to family, friends and recreation
- We are keen to increase the diversity of our Diocesan leadership team and would particularly encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds
- Is committed to addressing racial injustice in the church and in society

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

SAFEGUARDING

The Diocese of Rochester takes its safeguarding duties seriously and views a good safeguarding culture as the foundation of a flourishing Church. Archdeacons work closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and usually chairs Safeguarding Core Groups within their archdeaconries. The role of Bishop's Safeguarding Lead is shared among the Archdeacons, changing every three years.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Diocesan teams work collaboratively and there are a series of relationships that will encourage and strengthen the ministry of the Archdeacon of Tonbridge In addition to an expected close working relationship with the Bishop of Rochester and the two other Archdeacons, further key partnerships include the Diocesan Secretary, the Finance Director, the Secretary to the DAC, the Director of Mission and Ministry Development, the Operations Management Team and the Diocesan Board of Education.

ASSOCIATE ARCHDEACONS

Two parish clergy have recently been appointed in a shared role of Associate Archdeacon in the Tonbridge Archdeaconry.

These newly created posts, which are being funded by grants from the national church, aim to provide support to the Archdeacon, working as their representative in various matters including pastoral issues, complaints, recruitment, meetings, and some project boards.

The posts are for an initial fixed period of three years and will be carried out in conjunction with their existing parish ministry.

EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge will be supported by a part time Executive Administrator.

THE ARCHDEACON'S HOUSE

The Archdeaconry is located in Leigh. It is a 4-bedroom three-storey house with a separate self-contained office space and study on the 'lower' ground floor for the Archdeacon and Archdeacon's EA with toilet facilities and tea-making in the utility area.

The upper two floors are used as the family home and are separate from the workspace. The rear garden is accessed from the 'first floor'.

There is a double garage and parking for 3 further cars on the drive, with some public parking areas on the development.

The property is well located for local amenities in Leigh and extensive facilities available within Tonbridge and the surrounding area. It is also well served by the highway network together with a variety of railway stations within a reasonable travel distance.'

The current location of the archdeaconry could be reviewed in future to ensure it best meets the missional and pastoral needs of the Archdeaconry of Tonbridge.

Pet service at St Mary, Hadlow

OUR DIOCESE – THE WIDER CONTEXT

Rochester Diocese covers the areas of Medway, north west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley; a historic diocese in existence since 604AD

A diverse and vibrant community of faith, we share the vision that we are Called Together to change, serve and grow the church in this place.

The wealth of cultures in the Diocese is huge. The benefits, actual and potential, for mission and ministry flow from this rich mix; a mix which represents some of the most prosperous and poorest areas of the country. Because of this, we either have some of the biggest challenges or, as we see it, some of the best opportunities for growing God's Kingdom.

Our three archdeaconries of Bromley and Bexley, Rochester, and Tonbridge, characterise the increasing diversity found across our Diocese of varying kinds. Ethnic diversity is a growing feature of our communities, and this is reflected in many of our congregations. Diocesan-level world Church partnerships are an important component of life.

With the expansion of London and adjoining communities, we are increasingly urban and suburban, yet still retain places which see themselves as rural.

OUR ARCHDEACONRIES

One of the strengths of the shape of the Diocese is its archdeaconries. Each has significant internal coherence, with each one relating fairly naturally to a particular piece of civic, social, or economic geography.

Although the smallest in terms of geographical area, the Archdeaconry of Bromley and Bexley is the most densely populated, with around 40 per cent of the total population of the Diocese living within it.

Our most rural archdeaconry, the Archdeaconry of Tonbridge, has a number of larger congregations, particularly in Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, and Sevenoaks, but there are also congregations serving some relatively small rural communities.

Rochester Archdeaconry covers the Medway towns, incorporating local campuses for three universities (Kent, Canterbury Christ Church, and Greenwich) and the Ebbsfleet Garden City development – one of the biggest single housing developments in England.

OUR MINISTRY

We serve a population of some 1.3 million people which is likely to increase by another 200,000 over the next 15 years or so, having increased by 100,000 in recent years. We seek to be a Church that reflects the diversity of our communities both in our membership and in our leaders, and one that is a safe and welcoming space where all can flourish and be valued.

Serving this community we have approximately:

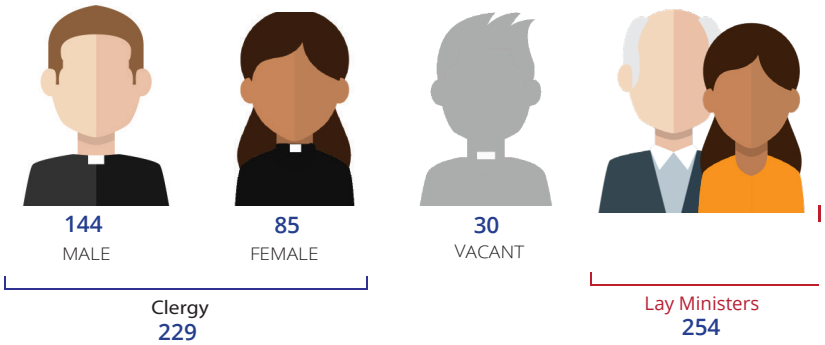
- 151 fulltime equivalent substantive stipendiary parochial posts,
- 29 substantive self-supporting posts: and,
- at any one time 28 stipendiary and self-supporting curates in training.

We believe that all Christian people have a calling from God to know and love him more, and to serve others in his name.

Indeed, we are recognised nationally as a leader in lay vocation, particularly for our creative approach to the variety, scope and training of Licensed Lay Ministers, which is unique to our Diocese.

As well as a range of discipleship and prayer courses and materials, our Diocese has pioneered opportunities in Anna Chaplaincy, which has a special focus on those who have dementia and other end of life issues.

Numerous licensed clergy and lay ministers serve as chaplains, and in diocesan and cathedral roles.



Community Hub, St Peter and St Paul, Aylesford

Diocese of Rochester
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