**Parish of St Clement & All Saints Old Town Hastings**

 **Parish Profile**

The Parish is one of the most socially diverse and visually attractive in the area. It forms the ancient medieval town of Hastings, still containing many houses dating back to the 15th & 16th centuries and some newer houses, early to mid 20th century to the north. Much of the Parish is in a Conservation area. Hastings Old Town has a mixed social structure, a rich cultural scene and a close-knit physical fabric. There are also second home owners and holiday lets. There are art galleries, a thriving small theatre and a small cinema in the Old Town. These all provide opportunities for the church to touch the lives of residents and visitors in informal welcoming ways.

Employment in the parish consists mainly of privately owned small businesses, many of which are shops or cafes and restaurants. Old Hastings House directly employs 100 people. The fishing industry, though smaller than in the past, continues to thrive and its fleet remains the largest in the country that is beach launched.

There is a vibrant local community which hosts many local events attracting people from across the Borough and beyond. These include Jack in the Green, Carnival and Bonfire Night. The Parish priest is seen as central in the community. During Old Town Carnival Week there are daily activities and events. During the week St Clement is open every day from Morning Prayer until Evening Prayer. Refreshments are served throughout the day.

There are three schools in the parish, a county infants’ school, a junior school for children with special educational needs, and a church junior school named after All Saints, for which the parish has some responsibility, including taking Assembly regularly. We have a Parish-School link worker who visits the school, developing class-based activity, student worship group and church-based activity. The Parish also has a strong traditional link with the Ark Alexandra Academy, which is located outside of the Parish.

The Borough of Hastings is an area with a considerably higher proportion of social deprivation than the national average. There exists a range of problems associated with higher unemployment, homelessness, family breakdown, and numbers of vulnerable, isolated people. There are also problems related to alcohol and substance abuse. Rough sleepers are often present in the general area. We hold Night Church once a month in St Clement which is run by volunteers from the church and can attract between 30 – 100 visitors (see attached leaflet). We also collect for the Food Bank.

**The Parish**

The present parish is a result of a merger of the parishes of St Clement and All Saints, which took place in 1978, and a large part of All Souls parish, Clive Vale. Both St. Clement and All Saints church buildings are of medieval origin and Grade II\* listed, and strongly supported by the congregation and wider community. The buildings are in good repair, the parish has raised over £300,000 to complete the generation-long work of restoring St. Clement, and to refurbish the 1878 Father Willis organ in All Saints. Necessary work has been undertaken at All Saints, and further work as detailed in the Quinquennial report is planned. Attached is a plan of the current boundary of the parish. The Old Town Parish is best described as having a moderate liberal Catholic tradition.

The Electoral Roll contains 102 names, over half living outside the parish. Sunday morning attendance averages 55 adults and younger people, including both the 8.00am and 10.00am services. Attendance is growing and becoming younger in its demographic. Many of the special services held throughout the year, attract much higher and more diverse attendance. The Electoral Roll is at its highest for at least three years.

Lay involvement is encouraged and we now need to further develop and support people’s gifts and talents. There are four committed and active Churchwardens, one of whom is Lay Vice-Chairman of the PCC. There is also a Diocesan Lay Reader. There are two ALMs. There is a small team of accredited lay assistants of Communion, servers, lesson readers and intercessors. Each church has an organ and there is a robed choir, including an enthusiastic Junior Choir. There is one permanent house group and 3 others that meet less frequently but always in Advent and Lent, all led by laity and attended by 28 people.

An important part of our mission is Open Church, held in St Clement weekly. This is attended by church members and also others from the community, including visitors to Hastings. Refreshments are served, currently coffee/tea, cake and light lunches.

The church is open to all, some coming to look at the historical building and others to have a quiet time of prayer. It is an opportunity for outreach to the community with time to chat informally.

Each church is equipped with a peal of eight bells, which are rung before the 10am Sunday service and on other special occasions. We also have an enthusiastic team of handbell ringers from different churches who perform in concerts, services, care homes and other venues. They practice in St Clement on a Saturday during Open Church hours.

We are very fortunate to have the support of the Two Towers Trust (TTT) which is a charity that has been formed specifically to raise funds for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the two ancient buildings.

Our very active and hard-working Fund-Raising Committee has raised thousands of pounds each year with numerous events including a Spring and Christmas Fair.

Both churches are used for concerts and occasional performances. All Saints Church has the newly refurbished Father Willis Organ, and a concert series of recitals is organised each summer by our organist, at which internationally acclaimed organists perform. These attract a wide audience of between 70 – 130, and the proceeds go towards the Organ Fund.

All Saints church has its own hall, used by local groups and for parish purposes. We raised £200,000 to achieve the recent refurbishment.

The Fishermen’s Museum is a 19th century former mission church on the Fishermen’s beach. It is used by fishing families for Baptisms and their Christmas Carol Service.

Our children’s work is under review, following Covid. We are looking at recreating the children’s group as JAMS (Jesus And Me Sessions) and looking for ways to attract new members. The Junior Choir is attracting younger members and families, attending our services not only as choir members but as Servers.

The parish is supported by a part-time administrator who works in the parish office one morning each week and in addition covers telephone enquiries. We have recently developed the use of the Internet and social media as outreach to the community during the pandemic. This has continued to grow, with a Facebook page having over 300 subscribers and 62 regular subscribers to the parish Mailchimp account. We have a new website, containing full information about the parish, the churches, services and “what’s on”. The weekly pew sheet, sermons and the Parish Magazine are all online as well as paper copies. The Parish Magazine [10 issues a year], is distributed by volunteers free to all homes and shops in the parish. Digital giving is available online and in both churches.

During the pandemic, online reflections and versions of the nativity and the Good Friday Witness were available when these were unable to take place. This presence is an area that we are working to continue and develop further.

The Parish is in a Deanery which has Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical churches. The Old Town Parish has a moderate liberal Catholic tradition and is now the only one of this tradition on this side of Hastings. The Deanery is committed to mission and encourages co-operation between parishes in both regular and special outreach events, giving the incumbent the support and opportunity to develop his or her own skills. The Parish works well with neighbouring churches from other denominations and would want to continue to develop this cooperation.

Please note: as this is not a full-time parochial post, the postholder will not be entitled to claim tax relief on heating, lighting, cleaning and garden upkeep (HLC) costs of the Rectory. It is likely that this loss will be offset by smaller NI payments.

Current Pattern of Worship

In order to use both churches equally, Sunday services move from one church to another every four months, thus ensuring that the celebrations of major festivals are evenly distributed between the two churches. Logistically this works well.

**Sunday Services**

8am Holy Communion [1928 Rite]

10am Parish Eucharist [Common Worship]

Also, pre covid, Evening Prayer was held on the 2nd Sunday in the month in the residential home, (to be resumed when conditions allow).

Taize service held 2-3 times a year

**Weekdays**

**Fridays**

Holy Communion services are held fortnightly at 10am in the local residential care home.

Holy Communion services are held monthly in the local Nursing Home, and will be reinstated in the local sheltered housing scheme as conditions allow.

**Occasional Services**

These are mentioned in the Parish Profile. In addition, the Eucharist is celebrated on major saints’ days. Healing services may be reintroduced.

Baptisms are usually held during or after the Sunday service either in church or the Fisherman’s Museum.

At present we have no regular non-Eucharist Services, and there is a need to develop services suitable for families, young people and seekers. Some special services, Mothering Sunday and Harvest are not Eucharistic.

**Special Services**

* A Nine Lessons and Carols Community Carol Service
* Blessing of the Sea, held at the harbour
* Good Friday Stations of the Cross procession through the Old Town acting out the passion
* Daily services during Holy Week
* Civic Service attended by the Mayor, MP, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Councillors and others involved in civic life.
* Participation by Morris Dancers at a service during the May Day Bank holiday
* Service for blessing of the animals during Old Town week and Songs of Praise held on The Stade open Space at the end of Old Town Week.
* Commemorative occasions: e.g. Remembrance, Thanksgiving
* Hastings Week Reflection service