

*Local Ecumenical Partnership and
Registered charity: 1105783*



“Supporting and engaging with people in the workplace”

ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

***Kent Workplace Mission is a registered charity,
which is an LEP and Mission Partner of Churches in Kent.***

Introduction

Archdeacon of Canterbury, The Ven Dr Will Adam - Chair of Trustees

Kent Workplace Mission continues to flourish and 2025 has seen new chaplains commissioned and plans for expansion of the work of the charity across the county. Once again, the message from KWM is that chaplaincy in the workplace makes a difference.

This is a liminal ministry – a ministry at the threshold – meeting people where they are rather than expecting them to come to us. Jesus sent out his disciples in pairs to proclaim the message that ‘the Kingdom of God has come near to you’ (Luke 10.9). These disciples didn’t have much to carry, or much to offer save that message of closeness – the closeness of the Kingdom and the coming of Jesus himself.

KWM provides a structure for those who are sent out in today’s world to proclaim that same message and to offer care and counsel to those in need who they come across. This is a ministry that is truly ecumenical. We are a partnership of different churches and denominations united in a ministry of service. The trustees remain grateful to their donors who enable this work to happen – work that, to say again, makes a difference.



KWM is a community of Christians from different denominations.
who are committed to living out Jesus’ discipleship in the workplaces of Kent.

By the end of 2025 Kent Workplace Mission had 69 chaplains serving a variety of workplaces across Kent, some working individually, others as part of a team.

The locations where KWM chaplains serve are varied and include:
shopping centres, large transport hubs and a power station.

Locations of KWM chaplains:

▫ ASDA stores in Ashford	▫ Gravesend Town Centre
▫ Ashford Designer Outlet	▫ Gravesham Borough Council
▫ BAE Systems, Rochester	▫ Medway Council, Chatham
▫ Bexleyheath Town Centre	▫ Penge and Anerley Town Centre
▫ Bluewater, Dartford	▫ Port of Dover
▫ Carroty Wood, Tonbridge	▫ Royal Victoria Place, Tunbridge Wells
▫ Dungeness B Power Station	▫ Tunbridge Wells Town Centre
▫ Eurotunnel, Folkestone	



Weekly Fellowship

Our online Weekly Fellowship gathers on Wednesdays 10am -11am. We facilitate chaplains and supporters to share in reflective Bible reading and prayer. The access details are uploaded to the website, and everyone is welcome to join any time:

https://www.kentworkplacemission.org/page-weekly_fellowship.html



Co-ordinating Chaplain Report - Penny Culliford

As I looked back over 2025, I was delighted that each month held new opportunities and new challenges, so I decided to write a month-by-month recap of the year.

January - In January, KWM Chair, The Venerable Will Adam visited Bluewater and held a successful meeting with Centre Director, James Waugh.

February – The Methodist Church kindly allowed us to participate in their Mental Health First Aid training which allows people to assist those with mental health needs or in crisis.

March - I attended an excellent networking event run by the Free Churches Group. Speakers included the Reverend Canon Mark Birch, speaker's Chaplain in the House of Commons, Julia Burton-Jones speaking on Anna Chaplaincy, Reverend Chris Upton from Waterways Chaplaincy and a doctor who talked about chaplaincy being offered to patients in a doctor's surgery as part of social prescribing. There was a presentations on impact assessment (measurability of outcomes and impact for chaplaincy).

April - The new Easter cards were well received. On Good Friday, I participated in the Dartford Church Leaders open air service in Dartford Town Centre. The new Rochester Archdeacon, The Venerable Sandra McCalla, visited Bluewater and met a good selection of KWM trustees and chaplains. She has since been appointed as one of our Trustees from the Church of England Rochester Diocese.

May - Bean Primary School, visited Bluewater and learned about the Place of Quiet. We had some good feedback on Christ the Worker. I used the resources to preach at my own church in Wilmington, and they kindly made a donation towards KWM. Rev Kevin Taylor and I spoke to a group of Archdeacons in Ashford. David Slater, Richard Oliver and I attended the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum and learned about planning for emergencies.

June - Tony Fitzpatrick and I interviewed a new chaplain for the Tunbridge Wells team. We met another candidate who is considering chaplaincy and said goodbye to a chaplain and wished her well in her new job.

July - KWM chaplains attended the County Show in Detling. Our Chaplains' Quiet Day was again facilitated by Jan Foreman at St Benedict's. The feedback was once again positive, and we are grateful that KWM supports this event.

August – Chaplains Jeff, Verity and I had a local team meeting to pray, talk and offer support. The Venerable Allie Kerr, the Bromley and Bexley Archdeacon will visit in January.

September - Our first new basic chaplaincy training took place in Gravesend. It was well attended and provided a starting point for members of the new Gravesend team.

October - I am assisting with the mentoring of young people from a local school with employability and confidence issues.

November - As part of Bluewater's 25th anniversary legacy project, I was delighted to welcome a beautiful carved wooden sculpture as a place to put memorial plaques on Bluewater's nature trail. It is designed to hold around 20 plaques.

December – The Bluewater chaplains and friends provided Carol singing at Bluewater, with a small but enthusiastic group accompanied by Michael Dale on guitar.

I thank God that he was with us through the ups and downs of the year and pray for his continued presence into 2026.



Here follows reports from some of our chaplains.



Ashford – ASDA

Chaplain: Joy Brumwell

Very little has changed at Asda in Ashford since I last reported on the chaplaincy two years ago. Because of other commitments I am only able to visit once a week but during that time I have built up a good relationship with those I do see. They are happy for me to pray for them and having seen the prayers answered they have shown their gratitude. Unfortunately, colleagues have died or lost loved ones, as did I when my husband died. We have all supported each other.

Cards at Christmas and Easter are appreciated and, with a change of manager, religious booklets I provided have re-appeared in the canteen.

Colleagues did go through a difficult time when the computer system was changed and gave them added work whilst learning to use it.

Like a lot of people in the retail industry abuse, mainly verbal, has increased but as their workplace chaplain I know I am appreciated.



Ashford Outlet Centre

Chaplain: Kevin Taylor

Kevin, Claire, Diana, Ruthie, Sophie

Another encouraging and interesting year for us and I think that we have become even more integrated with the lovely staff whom it is our privilege to serve. Essentially, it is about becoming 'known'. This is something that will probably be 'old news' to KWM colleagues with much more workplace chaplaincy experience than I possess at this stage but from our occasional team meetings and chats, I have come to the conclusion that we are regarded as 'family' by many of the shop staff. It is exemplified in the trust that they appear to invest in us – e.g. more profound conversations in some instances and certainly the welcoming reception we receive in many of the shops.

Owing to the variety of hours, shifts and days of the week staffed by the large number of employees, there are obviously some people who know us much better than others. However, when we witness the gratitude and welcome with which many receive our Easter and Christmas cards and their willingness to talk about their working day (when they aren't inundated with potential purchasers, of course) it is quite clear that many of those who work at the outlet, including cleaning, security and customer services reception staff, now have an understanding of *what* it is that we are seeking to do for people *of all faiths and none* – and *why* we are doing it.

Our encounters with employees (and frequently with shoppers) have been as varied this year as they were last year. Some are small incidents where people have asked for prayers or just wanted a chat. Other interactions can be more complicated and prolonged. I never cease to be amazed by the patience, kindness and resilience of my lovely colleagues in our small team.

In alphabetical order, our team is Claire, Diana, Ruthie and Sophie and myself. Then there's our 'furry chaplain' Ben – my 4-year-old Labrador Retriever in his chaplaincy harness, who has been cuddled and/or sobbed upon more times than I can remember. It is often when people are upset and perhaps feel less embarrassed about crying on a friendly dog than on a Chaplain. Well, whatever the reason, there have been instances where Ben has been a far more effective 'calmer'

or 'soother' of souls than I could ever be. That's when I become *his* assistant and God works wonderfully through him while I get the coffees.

We struggle to cover all the days of the week but are easily contactable on email via the KWM office, where Madeleine Shepley is a brilliant support to us. We also continue to receive kindness and enthusiastic support from McArthur Glen – usually in the person of dear Paul Mott.

Once again, we look forward to a new year in 2026 at the Ashford Outlet.



Bexleyheath Town Centre

Chaplain: Marilyn Ormes

Marilyn, John, Jennie, Dorothy, Cathy

BEXLEYHEATH TOWN CENTRE CHAPLAINCY ...

... has changed again! Last year we lost Vicky when she moved away from Bexleyheath. But we have gained Cathy, who has been a huge asset to the team, visiting ASDA as well as the smaller shops.

We continue to visit ASDA three times a week but instead of one chaplain, they now have three! Cathy visits on Mondays, Dorothy on Wednesdays and John on Fridays. Luckily for us the Community Champion who retired last year has started work again on a part-time basis. She is a huge support to the chaplaincy, so we breathed a sigh of relief when she returned!

In some ways we have had a sad year visiting the smaller shops in Bexleyheath. A staff member in one shop died in rather tragic circumstances and is hugely missed by us and by his colleagues. We were privileged to attend his funeral and have increased the frequency of our visits to the shop to support the rest of the staff.

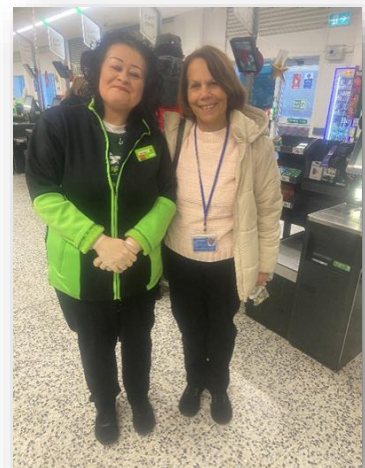
We were also sad when our much-loved Wimpy was sold, which has resulted in a complete change of staff (some of whom we are thankfully still in contact with). The new owners have declined our offer to continue with our visits.

On a happier note, we were delighted to welcome our Archdeacon Allie when she visited us in Bexleyheath. To know we have her support is so encouraging. We are looking forward to continuing our ministry to the shops and businesses in 2026 and praying about making approaches to new ones.

Chaplain: Dorothy Merrifield

I have been a chaplain at a local Asda's supermarket for just over a year and a half now. Although it has taken time to get to know people by name and to come to a position of trust, it's really encouraging that people are starting to open up to me and want to share their concerns whether at work or in their family situations.

I have also had the privilege of praying with some of them. I praise the Lord for being able to support someone during a health situation concerning one of their children. Just recently a member of staff was really upset about something, and they appreciated that someone was there to be a listening ear just when they needed it.



Dorothy with one of the ASDA staff members.

I really enjoy going in every week and seeing the regulars as well as meeting some new members of staff, including recently the new store manager. My desire is not only to be there for them but that through the love of God being expressed to them some will come to know the Lord Jesus personally as their Saviour and Lord.



Birbeck and Anerley

Chaplain: Jeff Hawthorne

Our Lord continues to bless the chaplaincy as we develop fruitful links with both individual businesses and the local community. Starting off with wishing everyone a Happy New Year is always wonderful and being able to bless people with cards and small gifts is very helpful. These include the KWM Christmas, Easter and Blessing cards which are particularly useful in developing new contacts and are very well received by all the businesses and different communities. This year potted lemon geranium cuttings (as well as packs of sunflower seeds) were given away in the early Spring months as a symbol of the new life and hope that Easter brings. One business was very keen to tell me that theirs flowered on Easter day! Another named theirs Mavis, whom they delighted to show me on subsequent visits, and they also took their own cuttings, so they had quite a crowd!

Community links continue to develop, and the local Friends of Betts Park again invited us to do two services at Easter and late November. The Way of the Cross at Easter was well attended by the community and involved the Mayor of Bromley, local councillors and different churches as we carried a large cross around the park with frequent stops to remember the scriptural Stations of the Cross. Light in the Darkness in November was our fourth annual blessing service for the park, held in the local Christ Church Anerley due to inclement weather. Our local MP, Liam Conlon, began the service with a prayer and we sang Amazing Grace accompanied by bagpipes, followed by prayers from different churches. The Deputy Mayor of Bromley and local councillors also attended.



The Way of the Cross, Betts Park.



Light in the Darkness, Christ Church

Friends of Betts Park are also inviting the church to be involved in other ways, including dedications of a memorial bench and the plaque for the park monument. Christ Church and St Paul's Anerley also presented Nativity scenes in the park with live animals, which proved very popular! Another exciting development occurred when the new crematorium manager invited me for coffee and we discussed how they could further support the community. This resulted in them making a significant contribution to conservation work at Betts Park by clearing the canal bank that had been overgrown for quite some time. It is also now much easier to see the visiting kingfisher!



The Peace Light



Carol singing, Anerley High St

Christmas is always a lovely time in the chaplaincy, and the community carol singing was very well attended. We stopped at the local café, the takeaway outlets, the shop selling Christmas trees (where we were given wonderful refreshments) and finished at the local pub. Ten days later the local businesses really appreciated our visits with the Peace Light (www.peacelight.org.uk). This candle, an uninterrupted flame originating from the Nativity Grotto in Bethlehem, is a symbol of light and hope at Christmas and also helps promote the businesses and the chaplaincy work through publicity on social media. As always, I am very grateful for the immense support from the local churches, the KWM team and the work of God's Spirit who regularly brings about the right conversations at the right time.



Bluewater

Lead Chaplain Bluewater and Co-ordinating Chaplain – Penny Culliford

Penny, Andrew, Dave, Hilary, Jan, Kathryn, Mary, Marylene, Mike, Paul, Siân, Valerie

2025 was a busy year at Bluewater. We reached full coverage of all areas with chaplaincy volunteers and welcomed two new chaplains to the team. We continued to build relationships with Bluewater management and staff and promoted chaplaincy as an added value for new retailers coming in.

After last year's success, we sang Christmas carols in the new "Christmas Corner" in the centre. We also supported staff through what can be a busy and stressful time.

With the new memorial sculpture installed it has been a privilege to support guests and colleagues who have been bereaved, and had a commemorative plaque installed.

At the Bluewater Community Forum, we had speakers from a local hospice, the new Lower Thames Crossing and learned how to do CPR.

Chaplain – Dele Ibidapo-Obe

As part of KWM this year, I greatly enjoyed the Quiet Day led by Jan Foreman and Penny Culliford at St Benedict's Centre on 7 July 2025. It was a deeply meaningful time of reflection and healing. I also learned a great deal about effective communication with fellow chaplains, (especially Andrew and Mary) which has been of real value in my journey and ministry.

After joining the Weekly Fellowship on Zoom occasionally (lead by Penny), I felt encouraged to begin covering my patch at Bluewater more intentionally. Some retail staff members have expressed reassurance in knowing that they can be prayed for.

Being able to listen in a non-judgmental and emotionally attentive way, while offering wellbeing support to retail staff regardless of faith, has been central to this ministry. The ministry of presence seeks to offer care, reduce stress, and improve morale, particularly during the high season.

Being approachable, listening well, and building trust gives me hope and reminds me that God is truly in the detail.

Chaplain – Hilary Brown

I first came to Bluewater in February 2025 for a 3-month placement whilst training to be a chaplain at Spurgeon's Bible College. Chaplaincy is undertaken in various locations including hospitals, schools and prisons and I was doing a series of short placements to help decide which setting was right for me. As I was only at Bluewater briefly, I was required to shadow other chaplains rather than talk to staff on my own. On one hand this was a bit disappointing but on the other hand the great benefit was learning from other chaplains. I really appreciated the weekly Bible study and the support and encouragement from Penny, and I felt comfortable with the setting of supporting colleagues in the workplace.

In July 2025 Spurgeon's College closed unexpectedly, and Penny assured me that the Bluewater chaplains WhatsApp group would be happy to pray for me as I sought a new college. I put a message on the group and felt so loved and supported by the chaplaincy team. I am now studying with Waverley Abbey College. I have also been supported in prayer by John, another KWM chaplain who I got to know at a meeting at Bluewater between Kent Workplace Mission chaplains and the new Archdeacon.

Later in the year I was informed that I need to be in the same placement for 2 whole years as part of Baptist Recognised Local Ministry (RLM). At that time, I was on placement in a prison and they could only have me for a couple of months. The Lord put in my mind the story of how Jesus told the disciples to fish on the other side of the boat, even though they had already tried that. It occurred to me that as I could now offer a long-term / ongoing commitment I might be able to go back to Bluewater. Penny kindly welcomed me back and it was definitely God's timing - my friend and chaplain Marylene was going to be away for a few months, and she was able to hand over her 'patch' to me before going. I joined the Bluewater Chaplaincy team officially on 10th November 2025 and since then I have been enjoying doing my rounds and getting to know colleagues.

Chaplain – Siân Thomas

This year I'd like to highlight the support and dedication of our lead Chaplain Penny Culliford. It is two years now since I joined the team and throughout that time I have been supported and acknowledged for the time I spend at Bluewater. Knowing that Penny steers our chaplaincy ship, creates a safe and fulfilling place to volunteer as a lay Chaplain.



**Port of Dover
(PoD)**

**Eurotunnel
(ET)**

**Kent Emergency Chaplains
Scheme (KECS)**

Port of Dover Chaplaincy

Lead Chaplain PoD: Canon David Slater

David, Richard, Jean, Sean, Billy, Stephen W

2025 was another year offering spiritual support to the many groups that make up the Port of Dover: shore & office workers; crews on ferries, cargo ships, cruise liners and lifeboat, passengers of all sorts, volunteers and people just walking on the sea front.

Channel 4 screened DOVER 24/7, a fly on the wall view of many areas, including the naming of the harbour launch in 2024.

As ecumenical chaplains we are often called when people are worried about being seen to be tied to any particular denomination. As a result, chaplains have been called on to lead prayers at many events from remembering the Zeebrugge disaster to Merchant Navy Day.

One particular service was the Remembrance Service at Cruise Terminal One, once the Marine Station where the Unknown Warrior landed on their return to England. As 2025 was the 200th Anniversary of passenger rail travel, Southeastern Railways organised for the Cavell Van which had carried the coffin to return to Dover together with a length of track. Over 300 people attended, it made the Meridian News and is likely to be in series 2 of 7. Because this was very much a 'railway' event the Port asked for a second service at 11am on the 11th November when there were a further 60 people in attendance.

Our Chaplains provided chaplaincy services at the Dover Regatta, Kent County Show and even took the funeral of a seafarer in south London where they wanted someone with a maritime link.

We started the year with 6 chaplains, but Malcolm retired due to time and health pressures, however Stephen has returned to Dover having retired from a parish in Hull and is helping at many of the public events.

Richard was paid by the Salvation Army for half his time. He has taken early retirement but is staying on as a volunteer chaplain for two days a week.

We have had a number of chaplains off sick this year from serious cycle accidents, cataract and other procedures to early bouts of Covid. We hope to actually end the year at full strength.

After years of thought and prayer things are starting to move on the possibility of getting onshore Crew Facilities for our cargo ships and cruise liners. After years of waiting for the construction of a road that would link the two sites and allow for a seafarers' centre, the possibility has now arisen for rooms in all 3 terminals. Watch this space.

A major role at the end of the year centres around the new EU Entry/Exit system with stressed staff and the potential for distressed passengers. The processes for lorries and coaches have started well, albeit in a quiet season, but the 2026 tourist season could be more challenging for us all.



Eurotunnel - Le Shuttle Chaplaincy

Lead Chaplain ET, Folkestone: Canon David Slater

David, Richard, Stephen B

The general situation has been business as usual, with exception of the appearance of a massive building for Entry/Exit System processing but there have been a significant number of changes of staff. In the last few months, a major building project has moved most staff out of the main Passenger Terminal Building – many off-site, which has made visiting rather a challenge.

As GetLink is a French majority company we have to be cautious about raising questions of religion with anyone on a French contract, but we are allowed yellow vests clearly saying 'chaplain' and if we get asked 'what is a chaplain?' then we can say they started the conversation!

The early part of the year was largely managed by Richard as I had a few health issues, but I am now much better. Richard has now taken early retirement and moved to Thanet and so Stephen and I are covering most things. I'm slowly rebuilding relationships – the basis of chaplaincy – with many individuals in new locations.



Kent Emergency Chaplains Scheme (KECS)

Lead Canon David Slater

David, Penny, Richard

Fortunately, there have been no live callouts this year. Faith, however, is the 'live' topic for much of the civil service Resilience world after years of 'not doing God'. Apart from the Kent Voluntary Sector Emergency Group, David, Richard and Penny have been at many meetings organised by groups from Community Resilience to the Coroner Service and the blue light organisations.



Tunbridge Wells - Royal Victoria Place

Chaplains – Tony Fitzpatrick, Steve Tunstead & Jonathan Daniell

For the chaplaincy team at Tunbridge Wells RVP and High Street, 2025 has been a year defined by transition and new beginnings.

The Lord has continued to bless this ministry as we navigated a season of change, saying goodbye to Caz, Hannah, and Zoe, who were called to minister away from the town. However, as always, God was going before us. We were delighted to welcome Steve and Jonathan to the team, which now consists of Tony, Rob, Steve, and Jonathan.

We were particularly thankful that our new chaplains were able to be introduced to their stores several times prior to the departures of our previous team members. This overlap provided vital continuity, enabling us to build upon established relationships while forming new ones through the different gifts and personalities of our new members.

It has been such a joy to reflect on the relationships formed with those we meet regularly, as well as those extra special occasions when someone working an unusual day shares a difficult

situation in their life. A significant highlight this year occurred during a church service to mark Christ the Worker, where a testimony was given regarding the difference a workplace chaplain had made to someone's life. On a number of occasions, we have also met staff from other areas supporting stores in the town who commented on how wonderful it would be to have such a presence in their usual places of work.

We feel incredibly privileged to share in the highs and lows of life, safe in the knowledge that we are reflecting the One who sent us. This year of transition has shown us once again that the Lord continues to bless the work in Tunbridge Wells as we walk alongside those in the workplace.

Now follows a short reflection from Steve, one of our new RVP Chaplains and Rob who serves the high street.



Jonathan, Tony & Steve on their rounds at RVP

Chaplain – Steve Tunstead

Since beginning my role as a chaplain in July, I have been deeply grateful for every opportunity to meet and talk with people within their various workplaces. Whether a conversation lasts only a brief minute or much longer, I have come to understand the vital importance of simply being a presence available to everyone.

I have discovered that each interaction carries its own unique dynamic and holds the potential to make a genuine difference. Deeply personal conversations, such as those regarding a near-death experience or the passing of a loved one, have allowed me to connect with others on a much more profound level. Listening to and getting to know each person is what truly sustains me in this role.

While offering to pray for someone or simply being ready to listen initially sounded like a "small thing" to me, I now realise how significant and important these moments are. Each time I visit a place of employment, I seem to learn something new, no matter how trivial it may first appear. I remain ever grateful for the Lord's help in this ministry, and I value your prayers for my visits on Monday afternoons, that a door may truly be opened for the Gospel.



Tunbridge Wells - High Street

Chaplain – Rob Byrne

I have continued to build relationships with fifteen of the stores in Tunbridge Wells High Street as a retail chaplain. It's a privilege to serve as a KWM chaplain. The conversations I have with staff are always good-spirited. Sometimes, like stereotypical British folks, we talk about the weather, but just as often I find myself listening and holding the hopes, dreams and pain staff are facing in their lives. Some examples of this over the past year have included animated conversations about faith with two store owners, as well as having the opportunity to support a staff member at another shop who had experienced a close bereavement.





Registered Office

c/o Larkfield Methodist Church
New Hythe Lane
Larkfield
AYLESFORD
Kent ME20 6PN

Telephone

07423 767 051

Email address

admin@kentworkplacemission.org

Website

www.kentworkplacemission.org

