

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

PATRONAGE (BENEFICES) MEASURE 1986

Statement prepared by the P.C.C. describing the Church's ministry and mission within the parish

This form is designed to give an overview of a parish to be used in a vacancy for the appointment of a new parish priest. It will be accepted as the 'statement describing the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish' required by the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. Additional information may be given by way of printed documents or written submissions.

I. Parish Information

1. *Name of Parish:* Shotley
2. *Name of Parish church(es):* St John's, Snods Edge
3. *Name of other C of E churches/centres for public worship in the parish:* St Andrew, Greymare Hill: former parish church, now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust
4. *Group of parishes in which you work (formally or informally):* the new 'Derwent Valley Group'
5. *Deanery:* Corbridge
6. *Population:* approx. 300
- 7.(a) *Number on Electoral Roll* 73
- (b) *Date of APCM at which this number was declared:* 28 May 2023
7. *Attendance at worship in 2023:*

Average Sunday Communicants 24
Average Sunday attendance 26
Average weekday Communicants – no regular weekday worship
Average weekday attendance – no regular weekday worship
8. *Occasional Offices:*

Number of baptisms in the last 12 months: 3
Number of persons confirmed in the last 12 months: 0
Number of weddings in the last 12 months: 4
Number of funerals in church in the last 12 months: 2
Number of funerals taken by clergy not in church in the last 12 months: 1

II. The Local Community

- 1.(a) *Briefly describe the population in terms of any predominant age and/or social groups, the ethnic mix etc:*

This is a rural parish whose population is overwhelmingly White British. As well as the longstanding farming communities, there are commuters and some numbers of retired people.

(b) *Are there any special social problems, e.g. high unemployment?*

This is a farming area with scattered and isolated settlements, and accompanying isolation.

2. *Please list:*

Local schools: None in the parish. The nearest schools are in Whittonstall, Slaley and Shotley Bridge.

Youth centres: None as such in the parish, but there are a number of youth events hosted at St John's Church Hall

Hospitals: None in the parish: the nearest hospital is over the diocesan boundary at Shotley Bridge.

Nursing/residential homes, sheltered housing: None in the parish; several in neighbouring parishes.

Places of worship of other faiths: None in the parish

Local businesses: Other than farming the main employers within the parish are the nearby Derwent reservoir treatment works, Derwent Manor Hotel and the Manor House Inn.

Neighbourhood initiatives: Many community-run events in the parish, including beer festival, flower festival, local sports teams, monthly coffee mornings

Local associations: The Church Hall is managed by an independent committee.

Any civic responsibilities of local clergy: None.

III. The Church Community (please give details for each church)

1.(a) *What percentage of the congregation lives outside the parish?* 90-95%

(b) *Describe the congregation in terms of age, employment, culture, ethnicity and gender:*

The congregation are virtually all aged 60+ and mostly retired. The majority come from Shotley Bridge and Consett, some from other rural areas or further afield. There are more women than men but not a huge disparity.

2. *Please describe the tradition of your church and give details of robes/vestments worn by officiants:*

Middle-of-the-road Anglican: officiants will normally robe, with cassock-alb or cassock and surplice, but there are no hard and fast expectations.

3. *Give details of Sunday services with times and form of service used:*

We have one service each Sunday, at 10:45am. In the past this has been a Eucharist (Common Worship order one) every week; in recent years we have sometimes had a non-Eucharistic Service of the Word one Sunday per month. This has been a subject of some controversy, with some members of the congregation welcoming it, but others strongly preferring a weekly Eucharist.

4. *Give details of weekday services:*

In recent years there have been no regular weekday services, except on major feast days.

5. *List any authorised ministers (e.g. Reader, Church Army Officer, Ordained Local Minister, Non-stipendiary Minister, Curate in training, retired Clergy):*

There is an experienced Reader who has been in the parish since 2007 and who has assisted with worship across the new Group since 2023. A former Reader, now retired, is currently in formal diocesan training to take on a leadership role. There is a retired priest living in Blanchland who is regularly assisting with worship across the new Group.

6.(a) *What is the average weekly giving of those aged 16 years and older, and what proportion of the giving is gift aided:*

24 regular donors give an average of £10.60 per week, plus an average of £62 in loose plate collections. 54% of total giving is gift-aided (with a further 18% given by pre-tax GAYE), realising an additional £60 per week.

(b) *When did the parish last have a stewardship campaign:* No formal campaign in recent years

7. *How does each church supplement direct giving in order to meet financial needs (eg fundraising events, hall lettings, occasional offices, investments):* No regular fundraising events for church funds. In 2023 weddings and funerals raised £4820 and the church magazine made a net profit of £941 (from sales and advertising).

8.(a) *Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full.* The parish is accustomed to meeting incumbents' travel and utility expenses in full.

(b) *Is there an annual discussion about the level of expenses as part of the budgeting process:* No.

9. *What amount of Share has been (a) requested and (b) paid:*

Last year: £16,000 (paid in full)

Current year: £16,000 (paid in full)

Next year: £17,000

10.(a) *Is there any capital project in hand at the moment:* At present we are planning three projects: (1) rewiring the church building; (2) refurbishing the historic Commandments boards; (3) relaying churchyard paths.

10.(b) *If so, please give brief details with costs and state how they are to be met:* Costs for all of these will be met from a substantial bequest received in 2023.

11. *Please attach a copy of the latest statement of accounts.*

IV. Church Buildings (please give details for each church)

1.(a) *What is the general state of repair of the churches:* The church is in generally good repair.

(b) *Please give details of any major maintenance needed following the last Quinquennial Inspection:* Rewiring; some roof maintenance (completed).

2. *Please give details of church halls and any other ancillary buildings (and an indication of the level of their use).* There is a large Church Hall with two rooms plus kitchen and bar 100m from the church. This is managed, funded and maintained by an independent Hall Management Committee which is separate from the church. The Hall is available for church events but is also used by a wide range of community groups, some on a commercial basis.
3. *Is there a churchyard to maintain and who is responsible for its maintenance?* There is an open churchyard, with an option to purchase further land to extend it should this be desired. The PCC is responsible for maintenance.

V. Outreach and Mission

1.(a) What are the regular mission and outreach activities of the parish; (b) What are you doing to help people find out about Jesus; (c) What are you doing to help grow people in discipleship; (d) What are you doing to grow people in leadership:

A lively pattern of mission and outreach activities pre-COVID has been interrupted by the departure of key individuals and by extended periods of vacancy / ministerial sick leave since 2021. Current outreach activities are restricted to: provision of community-facing services at Christmas and Easter; provision of a monthly open shared lunch in the Hall during the winter months; production of a parish magazine. The church's online presence has also been in abeyance and is currently restricted to a Facebook page and an A Church Near You page; we hope to be able to revive the church website in 2024.

2.(a) Please give details of support for the church overseas: No regular or systematic support at present.

(b) How much is given annually:

3.(a) Give details of support for home missions and charities: The church collects donations and raises funds for PACT House in Stanley, a food bank and community hub, notably at the Harvest Festival but also throughout the year. The Ladies' Group raises funds for various medical charities.

(b) How much is given annually: Giving is direct, decentralised or in kind.

4.(a) Does the parish have an overseas link: Not at present.

(b) If so, please state where/who

5.(a) Is there an organised system of outreach and welcome to new families: No; the focus is on supporting and welcoming those who come to the church.

(b) If so, please describe:

6. What part does the church play in community care: The incumbent (or in vacancy, the churchwardens) has access to a community emergency fund for support to parishioners in acute need.

7.(a) Are there Lay Eucharistic Assistants who take communion to the sick: Two members of the congregation have been licenced to perform this role, but it has not been operational since before COVID.

(b) If so, who are they:

8. What work does the church undertake with young people, other than in church based organisations (eg open youth work): None at present.

VI. Ecumenical Relationships

- 1(a) *Involvement in local Council of Churches*
- (b) *Is there a formal covenant with any other denomination?*
2. *What informal ecumenical contacts are there?*

There are no non-Anglican churches in the parish, nor any in the immediate area with which we have a live relationship.

VII. Church Education and Social Provision

- 1.(a) *Name of Church School(s), if applicable: n/a*
- (b) *Aided?*
Controlled?
Foundation?
- (c) *Number of pupils on roll (approx.):*
- (d) *If aided, does the PCC support the school:*

VIII. Lay Education and Participation

1. *What education and training work takes place in the church for the following (give approx. numbers):*

None

- 2.(a) *Give details of house/prayer groups:*

An informal prayer group meets regularly in members' houses and prefers to avoid publicity.

- (b) *Are the leaders clergy or lay:*

- 3.(a) *How do you rate the strength of lay leadership AND (b) To what do you credit this strength or the lack of it:* The church has a strong tradition of lay and collaborative leadership which has managed through extended periods of vacancy / clerical sick leave (over four years since 2017). However some of the key personnel have since left the community.

IX. Mission

1. *List areas of church life which you consider in need of development:*

Following a difficult period in 2020-22, including COVID, an extended vacancy and some pastoral disruption, lay and interim clerical leadership has settled the community into a much more positive and forward-looking mode. Our principal challenge at present is to turn our eyes to the future and form a vision of where we ought to go from here.

2. *What are the main areas of mission that you think the new priest should prioritise in their ministry:*

- Strengthening links and relations with the local community

- Making the church a sign of the Kingdom in the world – in various ways: raising our sights from the ‘maintenance’ mindset

3. *In summary, what are the top three challenges with which you and the new priest need to engage:*

- Demographics. As active and committed as our members are, at present there are very few under the age of 60. This is a hard pattern to break
- Connected to that: the need to develop and empower lay leadership, and in particular to draw in a wider range of active contributors
- Maintaining and nurturing the strong sense of goodwill, collaboration and community cohesion that has long characterised the church

X. Additional Information

Please add here, or on another sheet, anything else which you would like the Patron and the Bishop to know about the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish.

XI. The new parish priest

List the qualities and skills you would like to see the new priest:

- Vision and hope: a person with ideas and energy for what can be done here
- Collaboration and encouragement: more first-among-equals than Old Testament prophet
- Prayerfulness: we need a pastor, not a manager
- A sense of humour and an easygoing, approachable manner: someone who does not take him- or herself too seriously
- Willingness to engage with and attend community and church events