

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: Blanchland with Hunstanworth
- 2. Name of Parish church(es) The Abbey Church of God and St Mary the Virgin, Blanchland, and St James, Hunstanworth
- 3. Name of other C of E churches/centres for public worship in the parish N/A
- 4. Group of parishes in which you work (formally or informally): The Derwent Valley Group
- 5. Deanery: Corbridge Deanery
- 6. Population: (as at 2021) Blanchland: 124, Hunstanworth: 106
- 7.(a) Number on Electoral Roll 13
- (b) Date of APCM at which this number was declared: 13 April 2023
- 7. Attendance at worship at each church:
Blanchland
 Two Sunday services per month with average of eight attendees; carol service 100+.
Hunstanworth
 Only special services held, three during 2023: Easter Vigil 32, St James’s Patronal 36, carol service 44.

8. Occasional Offices:

	Blanchland	Hunstanworth
Number of baptisms in the last 12 months:	1	0
Number of persons confirmed in the last 12 months:	0	0
Number of weddings in the last 12 months:	4 +1 renewal of vows	0
Number of funerals in church in the last 12 months:	2 + 1 burial of ashes	0
Number of funerals taken by clergy not in church in the last 12 months:	0	0

II. The Local Community

- 1.(a) Briefly describe the population in terms of any predominant age and/or social groups, the ethnic mix etc: mixed age, some young families, predominantly white British, socially diverse
- (b) Are there any special social problems, e.g. high unemployment? none
- 2. Please list:

Local schools: 0

Youth centres: 0

Hospitals: 0

Nursing/residential homes, sheltered housing: none, but 5 units of social housing in Blanchland

Places of worship of other faiths: 0

Local businesses: agriculture and forestry, field sports, tourism and accommodation, farming, post office, inn, tea room, gift shop. Cottage industries include jewellery-making, publishing and graphics, builders.

Neighbourhood initiatives: community-led regeneration project in Blanchland funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (£160,000), currently on phase 2 (assessment of viability and sustainability)

Local associations: Blanchland Community Development Organisation (BCDO), Blanchland Village Hall, Hunstanworth and Townfield Village Hall, Blanchland and Hunstanworth Annual Show

Any civic responsibilities of local clergy: none

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

- | | Blanchland | Hunstanworth |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| 1.(a) What percentage of the congregation lives outside the parish? | 40% | no regular congregation |
| (b) Describe the congregation in terms of age, employment, culture, ethnicity and gender: | mixed age, retired and working, mixed gender, white British | |
| 2. Please describe the tradition of your church and give details of robes/vestments worn by officiants: | liberal Anglican; alb and stole, choir dress. There is access to chasubles. | |
| 3. Give details of Sunday services with times and form of service used: | Blanchland 1 st Sunday of month – Holy Communion, 3 rd Sunday Service of the Word, both at 9.30 am | |
| 4. Give details of weekday services: | N/A | |
| 5. List any authorised ministers (e.g. Reader, Church Army Officer, Ordained Local Minister, Non-stipendiary Minister, Curate in training, retired Clergy): | retired non-stipendiary priest with PTO (1), reader (1) | |
| 6.(a) What is the average weekly giving of those aged 16 years and older, and what proportion of the giving is gift aided: | £8. All giving is gift aided, either by completion of gift aid form or under GASDS. | |
| (b) When did the parish last have a stewardship campaign: | never | |
| 7. How does each church supplement direct giving in order to meet financial needs (eg fundraising events, hall lettings, occasional offices, investments): | tourism and occasional offices at Blanchland; Hunstanworth has investments and occasional visitors | |
| 8.(a) Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full. | Blanchland £118, Hunstanworth £30 (these represent part shares with other churches in the group) | |
| (b) Is there an annual discussion about the level of expenses as part of the budgeting process: | yes | |

9. *What amount of Share has been (a) requested and (b) paid:* these figures are for Blanchland; Hunstanworth currently pays no parish share
Last year: £4,500 request, paid in full
Current year: £4,788
Next year: £5,000
- 10.(a) *Is there any capital project in hand at the moment:* 6As project: heritage-led regeneration of the village with the abbey as its focus to sustain the church and village of Blanchland
- 10.(b) *If so, please give brief details with costs and state how they are to be met:* £160,000 in two grants, for phases 1 and 2, from National Lottery Heritage Fund
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:* mainly good
- (b) *Please give details of any major maintenance needed following the last Quinquennial Inspection:* still awaiting Blanchland report from QI October 2023; last Hunstanworth QI 2021 highlighted roofing and pointing work required – in hand to be completed in next few months
2. *Please give details of church halls and any other ancillary buildings (and an indication of the level of their use).* none
3. *Is there a churchyard to maintain and who is responsible for its maintenance?* Yes, churchwardens. Hunstanworth churchyard maintained by villagers

V. Outreach and Mission

- 1.(a) *What are the regular mission and outreach activities of the parish:* Blanchland: 6As project; PCC currently working to develop a prayer ministry to visitors to church; host events/exhibitions in the Abbey and workshops for children which bring people into the building. The Abbey is part of the 'Way of Light', a long-distance footpath linking historically-significant churches between the Hexham area and Durham Cathedral. Exhibition displays in the Abbey explain to visitors about its origins as a Premonstratensian priory. The Abbey is open from dawn to dusk and offers votive candles and an area for private prayer in St Gabriel's Chapel.
- (b) *What are you doing to help people find out about Jesus:* information in church
- (c) *What are you doing to help grow people in discipleship:* online Lent course
- (d) *What are you doing to grow people in leadership:* nothing formal
- 2.(a) *Please give details of support for the church overseas:* nil
- (b) *How much is given annually:*
- 3.(a) *Give details of support for home missions and charities:* air ambulance £150 December 2023, food bank Consett, Harvest Festival donations 2023
- (b) *How much is given annually:*
- 4.(a) *Does the parish have an overseas link:* no

- (b) *If so, please state where/who*
- 5.(a) *Is there an organised system of outreach and welcome to new families:* no
- (b) *If so, please describe:*
6. *What part does the church play in community care:* none
- 7.(a) *Are there Lay Eucharistic Assistants who take communion to the sick:* no
- (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

VI. Ecumenical Relationships

- 1(a) *Involvement in local Council of Churches* none
- (b) *Is there a formal covenant with any other denomination?* no
2. *What informal ecumenical contacts are there?* none

VII. Church Education and Social Provision

- 1.(a) *Name of Church School(s), if applicable:* none
- (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
- Children:*
Young People:
Adults:
- 2.(a) *Give details of house/prayer groups:* none
- (b) *Are the leaders clergy or lay:*
- 3.(a) *How do you rate the strength of lay leadership:* Prof Alec Ryrie is an experienced LLM who makes a sustained and significant contribution to our service provision.
- (b) *To what do you credit this strength or the lack of it:* his many years' experience as an LLM and his role of Professor of History of Christianity at Durham University.

IX. Mission

1. *List areas of church life which you consider in need of development: outreach and opportunities to explore and learn about our Christian faith*
2. *What are the main areas of mission that you think the new priest should prioritise in their ministry: a priestly presence and accessibility, interaction with the community*
3. *In summary, what are the top three challenges with which you and the new priest need to engage: how to reach out to the wider Blanchland community, growing and encouraging a new worshipping community in Hunstanworth, develop learning and growing opportunities.*

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.

Blanchland, a village recreated in the 18th century from, and on the footprint of, a 12th century Premonstratensian abbey, is a very popular tourist attraction, and Blanchland Abbey (grade I listed) is a focal point of the village.

Visitors arrive by the coachload in the summer and are very appreciative of the abbey, whilst many more local people make visits and indeed pilgrimages, especially valuing, as the visitors' book shows, the peace and tranquillity of the church.

With a regular average congregation of only eight, we would obviously like to see the church used more fully by the village for worship but we recognise that we also have an important opportunity to minister to tourists, and we have begun to address this.

A few years ago the PCC voted to close Hunstanworth St James. When this was made known to the village, there was great consternation. This proved to be the driver for the villagers to come together to explore what might be done to secure and maintain the future of the church of St James.

January 2024 saw a very encouraging meeting, chaired by the Rev Canon Dr David Kennedy (Area Dean). The parish is now intending to elect two churchwardens for Hunstanworth St James and appoint Hunstanworth residents to the PCC at the forthcoming APCM, and to seek a sustainable financial response. David Kennedy has written to the DMPC, requesting a temporary halt to the closure process. The PCC voted unanimously to send its own letter in the same vein, and there is now an air of cautious optimism around the future of St James within Hunstanworth and the PCC.

Repairs to and maintenance of the church building (other than churchyard maintenance and cleaning which has always been faithfully undertaken by the village) had been in abeyance for several years, but new work has now been initiated.

There exists now the exciting possibility of nurturing a new worshipping community in the village of Hunstanworth.

XI. The new parish priest

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

Someone who is:

- enthusiastic about the role of the church in the local community, a good communicator with experience of, and an enthusiasm for, building relationships;
- able to lead in a collaborative style and foster a collective vision;
- able to see the churches and congregations in their contexts and value their individual character;
- accessible, a good listener – a ‘people person’ with empathy and caring, underpinned by a deep sense of God’s unconditional love.

Someone who:

- shows the joy of the Christian message;
- is creative and enthusiastic in outlook and is able to inspire people;
- understands the importance of a ‘priestly presence’ in the community and who is empowering, encouraging and enabling;
- appreciates the importance of maintaining a sustainable life/work balance, can manage their time efficiently and delegate effectively.