

The Parish of the Hodder Valley



Saint Andrew's, Slaidburn and Saint Michael's, Whitewell
with
Saint Bartholomew's, Tosside and Saint James', Dalehead

Address

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Church Street, Slaidburn
BB7 3ER

www.achurchnearyou.com/church/6925/ St Andrews

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Facebook, St Andrew's Slaidburn

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1. Introduction

Dear applicant

We are delighted to commend this new Parish of The Hodder Valley to prospective applicants. The Pastoral Scheme creates a distinctively rural single parish with one PCC, formed by the joining of the former Benefice of Whitewell St Michael in Blackburn Diocese and the former Benefice of Slaidburn with Tosside formerly in Leeds Diocese.

New rector will work three days plus Sunday in return for a half stipend and an attractive Rectory. The new parish covers one of the most beautiful and unspoilt parts of Lancashire. There are two parish churches and two small mission churches where worship has been suspended since Covid, but where there is potential to restart a monthly service.

The village of Slaidburn, where the parsonage can be found, has an excellent Church of England Primary School which was rated as 'Good' in its last OFSTED inspection and a church building rated by Simon Jenkins as 'one of England's thousand best churches'. Whitewell is a beautiful small building adjacent to the famous Inn at Whitewell and offers great opportunities to develop contact with the local community and beyond through Occasional Offices.

The successful candidate will enjoy the support of a friendly deanery with a number of rural specialists in it already and a diocese committed to seeing rural parishes flourish as they seek to fulfil our Blackburn Diocesan Vision of having healthy churches which transform their communities.

If you would like to talk to someone about this post please contact the Revd Liz McLean, Area Dean, on 01254 782886 / 07397 785611 or email areadean.whalley@blackburn.anglican.org

Or, The Venerable Mark Ireland, Archdeacon of Blackburn on Mark.Ireland@Blackburn.Anglican.Org 07866 778791

Please be assured of our prayers as you discern the will of God for the next stage in your ministry,



*The Bishop of Blackburn
The Rt Revd Philip North*



*The Bishop of Lancaster
The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff*

2. Diocesan Vision

Vision 2026 is an agenda for growth and change agreed by the Blackburn Diocesan Synod in 2015. It challenges our parishes to be healthy churches that transform their communities as we look ahead to our diocesan centenary in 2026. It also lays out four ways in which this over-arching goal can be achieved: Making Disciples, Being Witnesses, Growing Leaders and Prioritising Children and Young People.

All that we do as diocese is focussed on the delivery of Vision 2026. To make disciples we are raising levels of prayer, helping regular patterns of bible reading to be established and encouraging generous giving of time, talents and treasures. To be witnesses, many parishes are setting up new local congregations at different times and in different places to reach out to new groups of people as well as showing God’s love in action through projects that meet a local human need. New leaders are emerging as we seek to enable and equip those God is raising up in our midst for lay and ordained ministry. And our focus on children and young



people is enabling creative thinking to raise up a new generation for Jesus Christ.

Over 85% of our parishes have a ‘Vision Champion’. This is usually a lay appointment and the Champions’ role is to encourage and support their parish leaders in pursuing the goals of Vision 2026 in a way that is appropriate for their local community.

In the Diocese of Blackburn we are inspired by confidence in the Gospel and are ambitious in our desire to make new disciples for Jesus Christ. We are committed to mutual flourishing, to maintaining clergy numbers and to investing in training for new curates.

Through prayer we see the grace and power of God who can alone bring renewal and growth. Our Diocesan Vision Prayer is:

***“Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses,
 to grow leaders and to inspire children and young people.
 Give us eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit
 and courage to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen”***

You can find out more by visiting the Vision 2026 pages on our website:

www.blackburn.anglican.org

Carolyn Barton
 Director Vision Delivery
 Deputy Diocesan Secretary



3. We Look After You

If you come to Blackburn Diocese we will look after you...

- We have a great property department, who will do their best to ensure your house works for you and your family and is well maintained.
- We encourage all clergy to take their full annual leave entitlement, and also to use creatively the overtime we all put in to take an extra day off once each month, to enable you to have a midweek 'weekend' away.
- We have a beautiful diocesan retreat house in the grounds of a ruined Cistercian abbey, where clergy are welcome to have personal reading days without charge (bring your own lunch).
- We offer a Clergy Assistance Programme to all our Stipendiary and Self Supporting Clergy, more information about this can be found on our [website](#)
- We encourage all parishes in vacancy to consider how they will 'pastor' and support their new priest. The diocese has an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy.
- We offer an Annual Conversation in which every licensed priest spends 90 mins with a Bishop or Archdeacon discussing ministry and wellbeing.
- If you are looking for a spiritual director or a mentor we have an excellent Warden of Spiritual Direction and have networks of people with whom we can put you in touch.
- We are always looking for ways for clergy to mix apart from work – including reading weeks, regular hospitality, a cricket team and a clergy walking group. Further suggestions are welcome.
- We offer first incumbents a mentor and participation in our 5 year Start of Ministry Programme.



Whalley Abbey Centre for Christian Discipleship and Prayer



Bishop Philip leads a clergy walk

4. Executive Summary

In an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Forest of Bowland lies The Parish of the Hodder Valley. Comprising the communities of Slaidburn, Whitewell, and including the chapels of ease at Tosside and Dalehead, the Parish covers one of the most unspoilt parts of Lancashire, rich in its history and deeply rural context. Each church is situated in its own beautiful location, from St Michael's at Whitewell nestled on the banks of the river Hodder, to St Andrew's in the picturesque traditional village of Slaidburn, to St Bartholomew's in the half Lancashire half Yorkshire hamlet of Tosside.

The worshipping life of the newly formed parish takes place across the two churches with occasional services at St Bartholomew's, Tosside and St James, Dalehead. The churchmanship is 'Traditional Church of England', with services taken mainly from Common Worship. The Parish has one PCC, a huge advantage in planning the future for the churches and their communities. The church buildings and graveyards are all in good order. St. James' is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, owing to the biodiversity of its wildflower graveyard.



There are community halls in each area which offer various entertainments throughout the year by which residents enjoy opportunities to meet and socialise. The Parish is keen to continue engaging with their various communities. There are two primary schools within the Parish and secondary schools nearby in Clitheroe. The local Church of England primary school at Slaidburn is now a Forest School, offering an example of the churches opportunity to develop creative forms of ministry rooted around its rural context.

All churches are now within Blackburn Diocese where the vision for 'Healthy Churches Transforming Communities' is at the core of its mission to hold out the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people and places. The friendly and supportive Deanery of Whalley offers clergy colleagues in nearby rural villages of similar church context.

We are looking for a Priest who has a heart for rural ministry and a spirit of adventure. Who will bring new ideas, engage fully in village life and work closely with the school and families to ensure the future well-being of the Parish. The Parish of the Hodder Valley can offer warm, welcoming communities and a readiness for a new lease of life together in Christ.



5. The Parish and Wider Community

THE PARISH COMMUNITIES OF SLAIDBURN, TOSSIDE WITH DALEHEAD AND WHITEWELL

Slaidburn is a traditional village, owned mainly by the Slaidburn Estate, managed by the resident Squire. In nearby Newton, properties are mainly privately owned and it is becoming a commuter village. Between Slaidburn and Whitewell lies Dunsop Bridge, part of the estate of the Duke of Lancaster. In 2011 across the three villages 65% of houses are rented (many Estate Owned), 35% are owner occupied and 0.5% are local authority houses.

Being split between two counties, the statistics for Tosside are more difficult to ascertain. It has a significant number of retired people, and much of the area is covered by the Forestry England's Gisburn Forest and upland farms. The chapel of ease at Dalehead has a fascinating history, being removed from its original location and re-planted following the flooding of the village of Stocks-in-Bowland for what is now Stocks Reservoir, a place rich in bird watching, fishing and walking.

Whitewell's population is mainly comprised of farms. The Parish is part of the Duchy of Lancaster and includes the *Browsholme Estate*, Lancashire's oldest ancestral home, and the famous *Inn at Whitewell*, a favourite of her late majesty the Queen.

Tosside Community Hall and Slaidburn Villiage hall are high quality venues which cater for local community functions and other groups. Arts, crafts, sewing, bowling and gardening groups are offered in these venues as well as badminton at Newton Village Hall. The Young Farmers group and Rainbows and Brownies groups meet at Slaidburn Village Hall. A children's playgroup is hosted at Dunsop Bridge Village Hall. Both centres host Women's Institute gatherings. St Michael's Parish Hall (opposite the church) offers a good space for community gatherings such as, Parish Council meetings, Art Exhibitions, Book Sales and a Fishing Club.



6. The Church Community

The Parish is in the early stages of its life together in Blackburn Diocese. Previously, St Michael's at Whitwell was part of Blackburn Diocese with the churches of St Andrews and St Bartholomew's with St James being part of Leeds Diocese. On July 3rd 2023 the Parish of the Hodder Valley was instituted. Worship in each church remains independent and there is a vision for more joint ministries which serve the area. The worship style is common across the church communities: Common Worship liturgy for Holy Communion, Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, with BCP also used at times. Robes are worn. Services patterns ensure worship is spread over the churches and there is room to develop this further.

The PCC is comprised of nine elected members with two Deanery Representatives and three churchwardens. Both churches have a resident organist and members of the congregation assist with leading intercessions, readings and assistance with communion.

There is a well-produced and informative Parish News magazine collating and publicising the various of events of the Parish. Events, such as Flower Festivals Harvest Lunch, Harvest Draw, Local produce sales, Gift Days, Afternoon Teas, Lunches and Musical Concerts help to engage the Parish with their communities and raise funds.

The Ribble Valley is a popular location for weddings and St Michael's church has a strong outreach to couples through marriage ceremonies, having built up good relationships with local hotels and venues.

Wardens:

St. Andrew's Church (including Tosside and Dalehead)

Mr. Allan Carr

Mrs. Mary Beattie

St. Michael's Whitewell Church Warden

Mr William Leeming

Mr Stuart Beattie



7. Parish Statistics

St. Michael Whitewell		
Electoral Roll		
Year	2022	
Number	29	
Occasional Offices, Celebrations etc.		
Baptisms	5	
Weddings	20	
Confirmation	Adult candidates	2
	Under 16 candidates	0
Funerals	in church	4
	at Crematorium	1
Normal weekly attendance	adult	20-25
	under 16	0
Festivals		
Christmas	65	
Easter	40	
St Andrew's with Tosside/Dalehead, Slaidburn		
Electoral Roll		
Year	2022	
Number	41	
Occasional Offices, Celebrations etc.		
Baptisms	6	
Weddings	2	
Confirmation	Adult candidates	0
	Under 16 candidates	0
Funerals	in church	2
	at Crematorium	0
Normal weekly attendance	adult	17
	under 16	1
Festivals		
Christmas	60	
Easter	30	

8. Our Services

Current pattern of Services:

At present, St. Andrew's has a Service each Sunday morning at 10am, Holy Communion (Common Worship) or Morning Prayer and on 5th Sundays of the month BCP Communion.

St. Michael's holds Communion Services at 11am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month but is flexible to include special days and festivals.

St Bartholomew's and St James's have had regular services suspended during the interregnum and replaced with services for major festivals and patronal days.

The services will need to be reviewed in the future and a sustainable pattern of worship established across the Parish. The Churchmanship of the Parish is described as being traditionally Church of England and 'Lancashire Low.'

9. The Church Buildings

St Andrew's, Slaidburn:



An ancient Parish Church which is Grade 1 listed. The Tower is the oldest part, dating from around 1200. The church having been burnt down by raiders in the 1300s, the main body of the Church was rebuilt around 1450.

It has many fine and unique features including a three decker pulpit from the 1700s and a Jacobean Chancel Screen (1630s). The East window dating from the 1860s is a much admired feature.

The first known priest was *Thomas*, inducted in 1246.

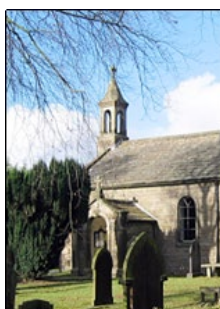
St Michael's Church, Whitewell:

The magnificent stained glass East window depicts the birth of Christ and was put in around 1900 in memory of Edward Parker of Browsholme 1846-1894. Resplendent on one wall is a 300-year-old tapestry, a copy of an oil painting by "Reubens" which shows the first Good Friday afternoon. The tapestry was in the Parker family for 200 years and was loaned to the church just before the last war. A balcony provides extra space to accommodate approx. 180 people within the building. There is a Parish Hall opposite the church.



The Chapels of Ease

St Bartholomew's Church, Tosside:



The parish serves a widespread rural community of upland farms and remote dwellings centred round the village of Tosside and part of the area known as Dale Head. The church, which stands in the centre of the village, was formerly known as Houghton Chapel and was built mid-to-late 18th century. It was fully restored in 1873.

St James' Church, Dale Head:

During the construction of Stocks Reservoir, the Church of St. James, which served the now submerged village of Stocks-in-Bowland, was moved to its present site. Though slightly reduced in size, it is now a beautiful Chapel of Ease which retains a great deal of sentimental feeling from the descendants of the farming families dispersed in the building of the reservoir. It is always open, offered as a place of respite for walkers in the area. The buildings electricity, lighting and heating are powered by a wind turbine. The graveyard is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, owing to the biodiversity of its rare wildflowers.



All the parish buildings are in good order with all essential repairs from the last quinquennial inspections completed. The graveyards at Slaidburn, Dale Head Whitewell and Tosside are well maintained. St. James' graveyard, being an SSSI (site of special scientific interest), receives a small income from Conservation Scheme.

The Rectory, Slaidburn



The Rector will live at the Rectory, built in 1954, which is opposite St. Andrew's in Slaidburn.

The Rectory consists of a lounge, a study, kitchen and dining room on the ground floor with a master bedroom and three smaller bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. It has an attached garage and a large garden. The area now has high-speed broadband B4RN (Broadband for the Rural North).

In Slaidburn village, is a GP surgery, a pub, *The Hark to Bounty Inn*, a post office and general store, tearooms and a hairdressers. There is also a Youth Hostel and a Florist in the village. Nearby in the market town of Clitheroe (8 miles away) there are excellent amenities including shops, sports centres, restaurants and a cinema. For more information about the local area: www.visithoddervalley.co.uk

10. The Church Finances

The financial situation of the Hodder Valley parish churches has improved since 2020, a year that was adversely impacted by the pandemic in relation to their overall finances. Church collections at Slaidburn St Andrew's increased between 2021 and 2022 and wedding fees, one of the main sources of income for St Michael's, Whitewell, also increased over the same period. There has been significant investment in areas such as tech and building maintenance across the parish, which has impacted the overall expenditure in 2022 and this expenditure has been supported by assets held in reserve funds, which continue to remain healthy. All buildings are in a good state of repair with money set aside for future works planned for the continuing stewardship of each place of worship.

Finance Returns: Whitewell	
Year	2022
Parish Income	£17,236
Tax Efficient Planned Giving	£4,162
Parish Expenditure	£20,455
Parish Share Assessed	£4,275

Finance Returns: Slaidburn	
Year	2022
Parish Income	£17,610
Tax Efficient Planned Giving	£10,195
Parish Expenditure	£33,456
Parish Share Paid	£12,000

11. Our Schools



There are two primary schools in the Parish. The 300 year old Brennand's Endowed CE Aided Forest School, Slaidburn and Thorneyholme RC School in Dunsop Bridge. Both accept children into their Nursery Department from the age of 3 years. These schools feed into three High Schools situated in the Ribble Valley: Bowland (Grindleton) Ribblesdale (Clitheroe) and St. Augustine's (Whalley). Clitheroe Royal Grammar is a state school for pupils selected by the 11+ examination. All have very good reputations.

The Rector is an ex-officio Governor of Brennand's Endowed School on both the Managers and Foundation Governing Bodies. For several years the Rector has taken a weekly assembly at Brennand's Endowed School has and worked with staff for special services such as Harvest and Christmas and end of term services in the church.

12. Our Links Into the Wider Community



The church communities always seek to engage with wider community events by being present at the many events across the Hodder Valley area. Events such as the annual Hodder Valley Show and Slaidburn Silver Band bring in tourists. We have links with the local Mayor, who is invited to the Harvest church service. Remembrance Day memorial services and events such as May Queen also connect the churches to their communities.



Each year at St Andrew's the Young Farmers group have a carol service (at their request) and other hosting events include a special Tea and Service at Michaelmas and we recently held a 'Big Lunch' for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the King's Coronation. We have ecumenical partnerships with St Hubert's RC church at Dunsop Bridge, St Michael's welcoming in the children from Thorneyholme RC school at Christmas, and with Mt Zion Congregational chapel at Tosside.

Our Vision

We are looking for a priest who will:

- Seek to develop and grow the congregation in line with the Diocesan Vision 2026
- Work with the congregations to develop worship, mission and ministry across the area
- Continue the strengths of patterns of worship whilst looking for fresh ways of worship
- Nurture and care for people of all ages
- Engage with the communities through new ways of ministry
- Sensitively draw our worshipping communities into greater partnership

13. What We Offer

- A half-stipendiary post in return for three days plus Sunday
- A rural parish in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Opportunities for creative mission with a church open to new ideas
- A warm and supportive welcome in all churches
- Dedicated lay people and parishioners, actively and robustly working together to spread the Good News of the gospel
- A four-bedroom Rectory in the beautiful village of Slaidburn
- Strong community life
- A wonderful place for families to grow with good schools

14. Who is God calling?

We are looking for ...

- Someone who is keen to develop fresh ways of reaching into the community and who will continue to grow the important links with schools and young people.
- A Priest who can “be a vicar for everybody” (*KS2 pupils at Slaidburn School*).
- Who has a pastoral concern for all ages, from the very young to the elderly.
- Who can encourage our working together across the churches.
- Who has an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of a very rural ministry.
- We look for someone who is able to preach in a variety of styles and offer effective worship to enhance fellowship and discipleship across the Parish and has the ability to relate to the wider community outside the Church.
- A role model of spiritual leadership to the community.
- Someone with leadership experience and preferably (but not essentially) someone with previous experience as Incumbent or Priest in Charge.
- Able to drive, has his/her own transport, and an appreciation for country life.