

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: *Edmundbyers and Muggleswick*
2. Name of Parish church(es) *St Edmund, Edmundbyers; All Saints, Muggleswick; St Matthew, Waskerley*
3. Name of other C of E churches/centres for public worship in the parish:
4. Group of parishes in which you work (formally or informally): *Derwent Valley Group*
5. Deanery: *Corbridge*
6. Population: *Edmundbyers: 178 (2021)
Muggleswick: 113 (2021)*
- 7.(a) Number on Electoral Roll
*Edmundbyers: 38
Muggleswick: 16*
- (b) Date of APCM at which this number was declared: *officially updated 2020 (Electoral Roll officer subsequently unwell and records lost. Roll informally revised from other records in 2022 and due for complete revision 2025)*
7. Attendance at worship at each church:

Edmundbyers, St Edmund:

Average Sunday Communicants *10 - 12 (2 services a month)*
Average Sunday attendance *10 - 12*
Average weekday Communicants *N/A*
Average weekday attendance *N/A*

Muggleswick, All Saints:

Average Sunday Communicants *0*
Average Sunday attendance *8.5 (8 x monthly service)*
Average weekday Communicants
Average weekday attendance
Carol service 2022 *33*
Carol service 2023 *54* } average *36*
Harvest 2023 *22*

Waskerley, St Matthew:

Carol service 2022 *26* } average *35*
Carol service 2023 *45*



8. Occasional Offices:

Edmundbyers:

Number of baptisms in the last 12 months: 0

Number of persons confirmed in the last 12 months: 0

Number of weddings in the last 12 months: 1

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: Burials of ashes 3,
Burials 1

Muggleswick:

Number of baptisms in the last 12 months: 0

Number of persons confirmed in the last 12 months: 0

Number of weddings in the last 12 months: 0

Number of funerals in church in the last 12 months: 0

Number of funerals taken by clergy not in church in the last 12 months: 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:

Muggleswick is a rural farming community; residents vary in age from children to retired; people work from home or commute to work.

Edmundbyers residents are predominantly white, well-educated and retired (many of them professional people); there are proportionally fewer families with children; a few people work from home and others commute

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

Ageing population. No public transport in Muggleswick, limited bus service in Edmundbyers. No shop.

2. Please list:

Local schools: The nearest schools are at Whittonstall, Slaley, Shotley Bridge, Castleside and Stanhope.

Youth centres: None

Hospitals: nearest - Shotley Bridge Community Hospital (urgent treatment centre, approx 7 miles); Hexham General Hospital (incl. urgent treatment centre); Durham University Hospital (full range of services)

Nursing/residential homes, sheltered housing: None

Places of worship of other faiths: None

Local businesses:

Edmundbyers has 2 pubs with accommodation (one youth hostel type), farms, holiday accommodation of various types.

Muggleswick has farms, pallet manufacturer, racing stables, grouse shoot, water treatment works, kennels.

Neighbourhood initiatives: None, but there are community-run events held in Edmundbyers Village Hall including visiting music and drama groups; regular table tennis etc. largely organised by the hall committee. The church holds coffee mornings for the community as well as a summer fête and other events open to all.

Local associations:

Edmundbyers: Women's Institute, Village Hall Association, Edmundbyers Parish Meeting (instead of civil parish council)

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?**

Edmundbyers: Up to 25% (from within the group, on Sundays when there is no service at their local church, and larger percentage for major festivals)

Muggleswick: 25%. St Matthew's Waskerley, especially, attracts people with connections to the previous railway community

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

Edmundbyers: Mostly retired (over 70), female (3 or 4 regular male attendees), white British

Muggleswick: over 40yrs, retired, farm, work from home or commute.

- 2. Please describe the tradition of your church and give details of robes/vestments worn by officiants: Low Anglican; cassock and surplice or alb , and stole.**

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

Edmundbyers: One family non-eucharistic service of the word and one service of Holy Communion (Common Worship Order 1) a month

Muggleswick: All Saints - monthly family type service (weather permitting).

St Matthew's - carol and Harvest services only 2023/2024

Both parishes prefer the traditional version of the Lord's Prayer and neither has ever adopted the custom of physically sharing The Peace

- 4. Give details of weekday services:**

Edmundbyers: occasional Holy Days, as arranged

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

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

Edmundbyers: £5.50/86.5% from gift aided donations; GASDS applied to small donations

Muggleswick: £5, gift aided, based on monthly service

- (b) When did the parish last have a stewardship campaign: Within the last 5 years, without effect. It is intended to bring the various possibilities to people's attention again via the parish magazine, "Crossroads".**

- 7. How does each church supplement direct giving in order to meet financial needs (eg fundraising events, hall lettings, occasional offices, investments):**

Edmundbyers: fundraising events such as a summer fête and raffle and Christmas raffle (these are very well supported by the community and raised £1325 in 2023), monthly coffee mornings (more for social outreach purposes), Easter egg hunt, concerts. Weddings and funerals are few, but bring welcome income.

Muggleswick: MPCA (CIO) donates half its fundraising to All Saints' and St Matthew's.

- 8.(a) Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full. This will need re-negotiating. Previously the incumbent's expenses were divided between all the churches in the Moorland Group and we paid the amount requested. We would expect a similar arrangement.**



- (b) Is there an annual discussion about the level of expenses as part of the budgeting process:
9. What amount of Share has been (a) requested and (b) paid:
Edmundbyers:
Last year: £3000.00 paid in full
Current year: £3192.00 (£266 paid monthly by standing order)
Next year: £3192.00
- Muggleswick:**
Last year: } £612 paid
Current year: }
Next year:
- 10.(a) Is there any capital project in hand at the moment:
Both St Edmund's and All Saints' are on the "Way of Light" pilgrimage route and the projects are aimed at providing a better experience for both pilgrims and other visitors, including those attending weddings, funerals etc. as well as the regular congregations.
Edmundbyers: We are working towards a major project to refurbish the church roof and to provide better heating, lighting and other facilities (small kitchen, toilet, storage) within the building. The steering group is helped by a church architect and a local freelance funding advisor.
Muggleswick: All Saints' camping project to provide accommodation, for pilgrims in particular, and other appropriate facilities. Planning permission from Durham County Council was granted 17/11/24 and a Faculty 2023 for the Champing project.
Waskerley: the future of St Matthew's is still under discussion. The sale of the building has been considered as it depends heavily on All Saints for its upkeep. It is something of an anomaly, having never had a faculty and its precise standing is unclear.
- 10.(b) If so, please give brief details with costs and state how they are to be met:
Edmundbyers: This is still in the process of being ascertained. We intend to apply for grants to cover the costs.
Muggleswick: Roof fund restricted and grants
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:
Edmundbyers: St Edmund's is generally well cared for but the pegs holding the stone roof tiles are failing and there is danger of slippage. Complete refurbishment is needed as soon as possible. This is inhibiting some other maintenance due to safety issues.
Muggleswick: All Saint's is roof nail sick and urgently needs a new roof.
Waskerley: St Matthew's is in good order
- (b) Please give details of any major maintenance needed following the last Quinquennial Inspection:
Edmundbyers: the roof, rainwater goods; general maintenance of electrical system, woodwork, removal of plant growth etc.
Muggleswick: roof and window repairs
2. Please give details of church halls and any other ancillary buildings (and an indication of the level of their use). **None, both parishes have halls run by independent organisations.**
3. Is there a churchyard to maintain and who is responsible for its maintenance?
All three churches have open churchyards maintained by the PCC with the help of volunteers

V. Outreach and Mission

- 1.(a) *What are the regular mission and outreach activities of the parish:*
Edmundbyers: regular social events such as coffee mornings, Harvest Supper etc. parish magazine "Crossroads" (distributed to 60+ people, mainly by email). Magazine email list is used to spread useful information to the community. For the last two years we have joined in the Heritage Open Days.
Muggleswick & Waskerley: social events, with refreshments, usually take place after special services like carol service and Harvest Festival.
- (b) *What are you doing to help people find out about Jesus:*
Involvement of families and children in Christmas and Easter festivals when possible. Updated presence on A Church Near You website. Zoom courses. Website and Facebook both need updating due to change in group organisation.
We would welcome help and leadership from a new incumbent to do more in these areas.
- (c) *What are you doing to help grow people in discipleship:* As above
- (d) *What are you doing to grow people in leadership:*
- 2.(a) *Please give details of support for the church overseas:*
None at present (previously there was good support for Christian Aid Week)
- (b) *How much is given annually:*
- 3.(a) *Give details of support for home missions and charities:*
Edmundbyers: A small number of parishioners collect items for a local food bank; the food collection at Harvest Festival also goes to the food bank.
We would like to explore doing more.
- (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:*
Edmundbyers: No; they are very few and an informal system exists - people tend to talk to each other. When possible, newcomers are invited to join the email list for the monthly parish magazine. Churchwardens welcome new church attendees.
Muggleswick: Parish magazine "Crossroads" emailed since Covid restrictions. Churchwardens meet and greet. Personal invitations to social events, both to the whole parish and to supporters from outside.
- (b) *If so, please describe:*
6. *What part does the church play in community care:*
Edmundbyers: Members of the PCC visit elderly/sick residents and those living alone, often regularly.
Muggleswick: Camping project has a separate project group involving more than Church of England attendees and regular worshippers.
- 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):* There are not enough young people for this to happen on a regular basis. They are encouraged to take part in Christmas and Easter events etc. We would like to explore more that we could offer to the few local young people.

VI. Ecumenical Relationships

- 1(a) *Involvement in local Council of Churches*
- (b) *Is there a formal covenant with any other denomination? No*
2. *What informal ecumenical contacts are there? Villagers of all denominations and none often rally round to help with tasks like churchyard tidying, and support fundraising events.*

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):*

*Children: Insufficient children in village
Young People:
Adults: previous group of parishes held regular ecumenical Bible Study courses. Lent course run in 2024, with Zoom sessions.*
- 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: Moderate; warm, welcome and comfortable*
- (b) *To what do you credit this strength or the lack of it: one good lay reader, one retired non-stipendiary minister and willingness of churchwardens to lead when necessary*

IX. Mission

1. *List areas of church life which you consider in need of development: We need help forming a vision for future development, combining support and growth of our existing congregation, as well as an enhanced rôle within our community and wider outreach.*
2. *What are the main areas of mission that you think the new priest should prioritise in their ministry:*
*a) going beyond the “survival” approach
b) building stronger links within the communities
c) wider outreach*
3. *In summary, what are the top three challenges with which you and the new priest need to engage:*
*1) dealing with the fact that our congregations are ageing and therefore finding more people willing and able to contribute to life and leadership in our churches
2) engaging with the local and wider communities
3) the renovations taking place in our churches*

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.

Muggleswick and Edmundbyers have been closely linked since at least the Middle Ages. Muggleswick was the location of a grange belonging to Durham Cathedral Priory (some upstanding ruins remain and archaeological excavations have been undertaken) and has not had a "nucleated" village since the 14th century. At the Dissolution it was divided between 5 of the Prebends of Durham Cathedral with the result that it mainly consists of scattered farms. Edmundbyers remained nucleated with most farms situated within the village and running a gradually disappearing variation of the mediaeval strip field system, of which there is now little evidence. Waskerley was an important railway village on the Stanhope-Tyne Railway. When the railway closed the village was demolished apart from a few buildings; St Matthew's is one of those remaining and was built at the request of Muggleswick to serve the people of Waskerley. It is still cared for by the parish of Muggleswick.

The two parishes have worked amicably together with one PCC for many years but maintain separate identities and finances for all 3 churches.

Despite the new Derwent Valley Group of parishes having more in common than in the previous grouping, each parish/church is very different in character and has different traditions. At St Edmund's we have inherited a simple church, both in building and practices. Edmundbyers and Muggleswick tend to prefer a more traditional approach, probably due to the strong Non-Conformist influence in this area since the mid-seventeenth century.

Muggleswick, as stated, mostly consists of scattered farmsteads and dwellings which bring the parish its own character but there is still a strong community element. Edmundbyers has a rather strange character - even the longer term residents (30 years plus) comment on this. It broadly divides into those who engage with church and community and those who only sleep here. Most do engage, at least by attending events if not running them, but tend to be older, probably because they have more time, although some of the younger residents are community-minded. There are relatively few younger couples with young children. People who stay for more than a year or two tend to move in, their children grow up and leave home but the parents remain. Possibly more than half the residents are over retirement age although many are very active in the church and community. They might be older in years but they are not elderly in their activities and interests and are prominent on the PCC, village hall committee and W.I.

Both parishes are much more proactive and forward-looking than in the past, working at engaging more with the wider community, partly through the very good village halls and, in Edmundbyers, starting to forge a closer relationship with the W.I.

St Edmund's steering group has only recently begun to work on the actions required for the repairs and renovations to the church building but has a vision in place and we are currently collecting information to enable us to apply for a faculty and funding. The new incumbent would not be expected to take responsibility for this project as it is already in hand, but their support would be most welcome. All Saints', Muggleswick, is further forward with their project, having started it earlier. Good progress has been made, despite some setbacks, and some funding has been secured. Again, the support of the new incumbent will be welcomed.

St Edmund's is proud to have been the first church in the country to receive the Aspire Award for good governance. This award was developed as part of the Rural Churches for Everyone project in Newcastle Diocese and is similar to the Hallmark award given to village halls.

XI. The new parish priest

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

- 1) Vision for our small rural parishes, friendliness, empathy, listening skills, energy and a good sense of humour.
- 2) Willingness to get to know us and our ways, understanding that rural areas differ from urban parishes, then to have the skill to work with us and help us develop,
- 3) A presence in our communities, able to engage with everyone, whether or not they are currently part of church life.