

Re-Igniting Faith in Cowpen

Role Description: Benefice of Cowpen St Benedict

1 Introduction

The role description gives an outline of the responsibilities of a position. These may develop while someone is in post and this document will need to be kept up to date. It should be reviewed as necessary at Ministerial Development Review, alongside the setting of objectives.

2 Details of post

- 2.1 Role title: Priest in Charge of Cowpen St Benedict (5 year interim post)
- 2.2 Name of benefice: Cowpen St Benedict
- 2.3 Patronage: The Bishop of Newcastle
- 2.4 Deanery and archdeaconry: Bedlington; Northumberland
- 2.5 Initial point of contact on terms of service: The Archdeacon of Northumberland

3 Role purpose: General

- 3.1 To share with the Bishop in the cure of souls.
- 3.2 Ever prayerful and mindful of the responsibilities laid upon you in the Ordinal, the Canons, national Safeguarding policies, and all other relevant legislation, in accordance with the Archbishops' statement *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*, your ministry will be shaped by the Diocesan vision Seeking, Sharing, Sending and marked by a generosity of spirit, an engagement with the people and situations you serve, and an openness to the promptings of God's love.
- 3.3 Your priestly vocation demands the careful preparation for, and the leading of public worship, the imaginative proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the loving service of all God's people entrusted to your care. Together with your priestly colleagues and lay ministers, you will work collaboratively to enable the gifts of all God's people to be developed in the Service of his Kingdom.
- 3.4 In your priestly ministry you will take an active part in the Diocesan strategy Seeking, Sharing, Sending. This will include collaborative parish conversations and planning for mission and ministry as well as working with colleagues across the Deanery and more widely in the life of the Diocese. A number of supports are available to you through the provision of work consultants, spiritual directors and Continuing Ministerial Formation programs, and you will be expected to participate in the scheme of Ministerial Development Review.
- 3.5 Above all, you will remember that we are called to minister by a gracious, generous self-giving and loving God, as together we seek the Kingdom, share the faith, search for truth, serve our neighbour and follow Jesus in his suffering love for the salvation of all people.

Role Purpose – Generic and Specific

- 3.6 To take responsibility for pastoral care, occasional offices and leading of regular public worship in the parish of Cowpen St Benedict and to build confidence and enable growth in faith and in numbers through preaching, worship, teaching, prayer, evangelism and engagement with the community.
- 3.7 To be part of re-igniting faith in Cowpen, re-engage creatively with the communities of the parish and to seek out new missional opportunities, particularly with schools, existing community organisations and shared community spaces, as well as areas of new housing, and discern potential for fresh expressions of church.
- 3.8 To work with the congregation and current church hall users to assess the current role of the church in the community, explore new purpose and vision for mission and enable the development of its vision and strategy for growth.
- 3.9 To work with the Area Dean (also based in Blyth) and the Archdeacon / Director of Mission and Ministry to set targets for growth and community engagement in order to build a sustainable future for mission and ministry in the parish and enable clear reporting back to The Additional Curates Society on the impact of their funding.
- 3.10 To encourage and develop existing work with children and young people in the church and build on engagement with local schools across both parishes to work towards our diocesan aim of growing younger.
- 3.11 To lead the parish and church community into creative and active partnership with the deanery in a time of change, and to be open to closer cooperation with neighbouring parishes and communities than previously and the sharing of wider responsibilities in mission. Active engagement with Deanery Chapter, Synod and the Deanery Development Group is expected.
- 3.12 To encourage and enable the congregation in the principles of stewardship and giving as part of discipleship.
- 3.13 To ensure that you continue to access new resources for ministry and that personal spiritual nurture and refreshment is given priority in your ministry. Regular meetings with a Pastoral Supervisor is expected.

Key contacts and relationships

4.1 Generic

The Bishop of Newcastle and the Archdeacon of Northumberland;
The Bishop of Beverley and his representative in the diocese
The Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council;
The Deanery Chapter and Synod.

4.2 Specific

Current hall users – particularly the Dinotots Day Nursery
Head teachers of local schools, particularly Blyth Academy

Local Funeral Directors
 Briardale Community Hub
 Residential care homes in the parish

4.3 Supportive

The Archdeacon of Northumberland
 The Area Dean, Lay Chair and colleagues in the Bedlington Deanery
 Pastoral supervisor, spiritual director and work consultant.

5. Role Context

This post is a new partnership between Additional Curates Society and Newcastle Diocese to revitalise the Christian community in one of the parishes rated most deprived on the basis of IMD score. Cowpen is a traditional, predominantly white, working-class community, with a strong sense of local identity. There is a continuing sense of goodwill towards the church and the place of the church in community life, particularly around life-events. Some traditional infrastructure and institutions still remain and this is also a time of significant investment in Blyth and a new trainline linking the town to Newcastle. There have been some past difficulties and Covid has increased fragility, but a lively, faithful, if small, congregation continue. They have a commitment to catholic mission and are ready to try new things. The church building is modern, well placed, with a great community garden space. Whilst the post is initially for five years there is a strong commitment from the diocese and ACS to support mission and ministry in the parish and build on work begun in this initial five-year period.

This is a time of change for the deanery and diocese with a new diocesan Bishop a vision of seeking, sharing sending and priorities to turn outward in mission, growing younger and more diverse. Parishes in Blyth have worked together previously and there is an increased need to work across Blyth in partnership whilst valuing the distinctive ‘callings’ of each of the churches across the town. This is an opportunity for an energetic, entrepreneurial priest to build something from the ground up – to discern where God is already at work and to join in and work with the Spirit to share faith and be part of building the Kingdom in Blyth.

6 Benefice summary as at time of compilation

Number of parishes	One
Churches and listing	St Benedict, unlisted
Parsonage	Modern house adjacent to church
Other buildings	Parish Hall
Churchwardens	Two (currently one vacancy)
Ministers (including local ministry)	No licensed ministers. Two eucharistic assistants.
Population (2018)	6,944
Usual Sunday Attendance	9
Parish Share offered (2023)	£3,000, paid in full
Resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priest?	Yes - extended episcopal care from the Bishop of Beverley
Church tradition	Modern Catholic
Pastoral Reorganisation Proposals	None

Outreach/service to the wider community	The church is a focal point in responding to national and local events. Support for national and international charities, Hall is used by community groups.
Business element	Hire of parish hall
Ecumenical links	Member of Churches Together in Blyth.

7 Review

The Archdeacon will review this role description with you when you have been in post for six months.