



## DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

### PATRONAGE (BENEFICES) MEASURE 1986

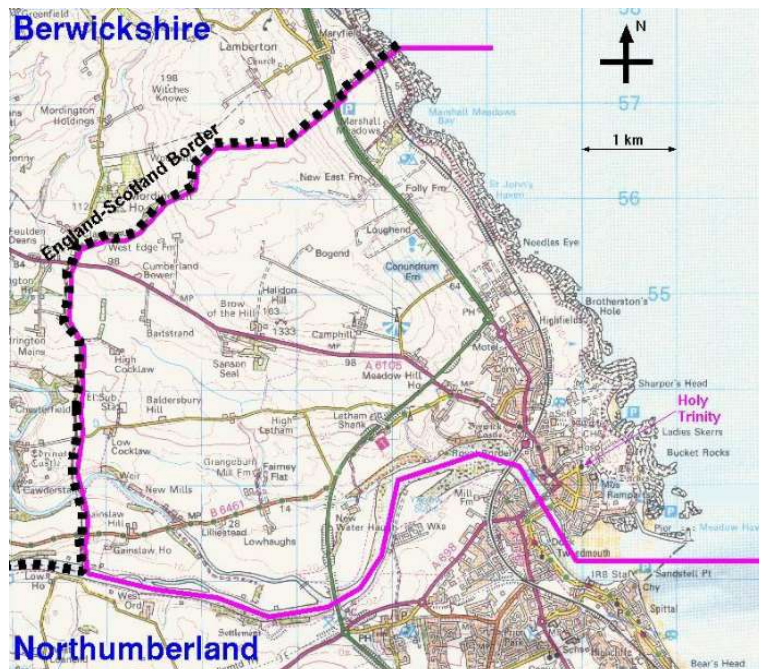
#### Parish of Berwick Holy Trinity and St Mary PCC

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

### 1. The Local Community

*Please describe the size and physical features of the parish, the industry, the principal institutions, all schools, and the general category (e.g. UPA inner city, UPA housing estate, urban, suburban, market town, commuter village, village/rural).*

*Also details of any predominant age and/or social groups, the ethnic mix, and any special social problems, e.g. unemployment, etc.*



Parish Boundary & "Liberties of Berwick-upon-Tweed"

Berwick-upon-Tweed is the most northerly town in England. Situated where the River Tweed reaches the North Sea and barely 2 miles from the Scottish border, it has experienced a turbulent history, the evidence of which can readily be seen in the remains of its mediaeval castle and the town's massive Tudor fortifications. In medieval times, the town changed hands thirteen times between Scotland and England before finally settling as English in 1482.

South of the Tweed lie the distinct communities of Tweedmouth and Spittal, each a separate ecclesiastical parish and where the majority of the population of 'greater' Berwick (11,671 at the time of the 2021 census) lives. The parish of Holy Trinity and St Mary covers the town of Berwick itself and its surrounding rural area north and west of the Tweed to where the steadily rising hills meet the Scottish border. The population of the parish is around 4,600.

Berwick's history and location (on the A1 and the East Coast Main Line, roughly equidistant between Newcastle and Edinburgh) has given it a rich heritage and a strong sense of being different – and sometimes a feeling of being neglected too. It suffers the problems of many seaside and market towns: a hollowed-out retail centre; a diminished manufacturing base; a higher proportion of both short and longer

term rented (rather than owner-occupied) housing; and a serious shortfall in social housing provision. Nonetheless, tourism, retail services, and agriculture and its related services continue to be important sources of employment (the largest local employer is Simpsons Malt, which malts barley for export and the whisky trade) and are complemented by smaller scale manufacturing and construction sectors all supporting Berwick's continuing role as a centre serving the eastern Borders. Fishing and sea food processing, both locally and in nearby Duns and Eyemouth, are other traditional employers.

While cheaper housing and an attractive location have attracted a number of 'incomers' to live in Berwick, the town's economy is vulnerable, characterised by poor quality job opportunities, part time and seasonal working, low wages (Northumberland is in the bottom category for wages in the UK) and limited education facilities. The population – 97.8% white – tends to be skewed towards the young (aged 0-17, 18.9%) and those aged 65 and older (26.6%). Skill levels among the working population are lower than the national average.

Scratch the surface, however, and Berwick is a strong, caring, indeed vibrant community. Many artists, authors and others with creative skills are drawn here and the town is currently enjoying significant public investment. A recently opened sports centre, a new, small local hospital currently under construction, the planned multi-million-pound redevelopment of its Maltings arts and theatre complex and of its Grade 1 listed Barracks, and its selection as one of the North East's three Culture and Creative Zones are tangible signs of a concerted push to further its 'culture-led' regeneration.

Educational provision is confined largely to the primary and secondary sectors. The school system – currently strong at first and middle school levels – is in the process of changing from a three to a two tier system, which will affect the two church first schools in the parish. Berwick Academy, situated in Tweedmouth and currently a non-church Academy, had a poor reputation locally but is now showing signs of improvement. Over £40 million of investment in local schools is intended, in part to enable the move to a two-tier system. Just outside the town, Longridge Towers School is a non-selective co-educational independent day and boarding school for children between the ages of three and eighteen.

All major services (apart from utilities such as electricity, gas, water) are provided by Northumberland County Council (NCC), a unitary authority and part of the North East combined authority. Locally, Berwick Town Council provides some park and recreational opportunities and maintains the traditions of the town, as does the Berwick Guild of Freemen, which was for centuries responsible for local administration and the Berwick-upon-Tweed Corporation (Freemen) Trustees continue to own significant land and other interests within the town.

## **2. The Church Community**

*Please give details of the congregations*

*e.g. any predominant age/social groups, what proportion live outside the parish.*

The electoral roll has 156 names of whom 71 are resident in the parish. Those not resident in the parish reside primarily in Berwick South of the Tweed or in the Scottish Borders.

The congregation is a mixture of local residents and incomers, many retired, mostly middle class.

Most of the congregation is aged over 60, with only a handful of younger members. The number of children under 16 at weekly services is usually less than 4.

### 3. Statistics

Population : 4,592

Electoral Roll : 156

Average Sunday Communicants : 78

Average Sunday attendance : 8:30 communion 15

10:00 Parish Eucharist 75

18:00 Evensong 28

Average attendance at Thursday Communion: 18

Average baptisms per annum : 7

Average Confirmations per annum : 0

Average weddings per annum : 4

Average funerals per annum : 30

Average house communions for the sick or housebound : 4-5 per month

### 4. Church Buildings

*Please give details of the churches and licensed places of worship.*



Berwick Parish Church is a Grade 1 listed parish church of national importance as the only parish church to be built during Oliver Cromwell's first Commonwealth period. Built between 1650 and 1652, much of the pale pink sandstone used in its construction came from the ruins of Berwick Castle.

Originally built as a galleried Puritan 'preaching box', it was without external or internal ornamentation but was significantly adapted during the Victorian period by the addition of a short chancel (in 1855) and the installation of stained glass windows. An organ, first installed in 1773 and subsequently re-modelled, is well-maintained and in fine condition.

Externally the building is of fairly severe design, without a tower or peal of bells. (These were later installed in the Town Hall.) Internal features now include a 16th century style pulpit (removed from an earlier church and said to have been preached from by John Knox); valuable Dutch/Flemish roundels in the West window; a reredos designed by the young Edward Lutyens (1893); and a Millenium window commemorating the northern Saints Aiden and Columba (2000).

The church was originally dedicated to the Holy Trinity, but in 1990, following the closure of the Victorian St Mary's church in the North of the town, it was rededicated to the Holy Trinity and St Mary.

The Quinquennial Inspection (QI) undertaken in 2019 found the building to be in a generally satisfactory condition with a need for only minor additional work, thanks to the substantial work and regular maintenance undertaken by the PCC over the past 50 years (latterly with the financial help of the Parish Church Trust, which has also funded work to the organ and the recent installation of new sound and audio visual equipment). The next QI is due in 2024. A group of volunteers from the church continue to undertake general maintenance work to keep the building in generally good condition.

*Please give details of church halls and any other ancillary buildings (and an indication of the level of their use).*

There is a Parish Centre located close to the church but outside the consecrated ground. It is regularly used by the church for social activities and meetings, and hired out for use by various local activities, generating an income which is sufficient for its regular maintenance as well as generating a reserve for future potential major work.

*Is there a churchyard to maintain and who is responsible for its maintenance?*

There is a churchyard surrounding the church, which was closed to burials in 1854. Northumberland County Council is responsible for its upkeep. A part of the churchyard is set aside as a garden of remembrance for the burial of ashes.

## **5. Patterns of Worship**

*Sunday services with times and form of service used.*

08:30 Eucharist (BCP)

10:00 Parish Eucharist (CW) followed by coffee in Parish Centre

*(The Parish Eucharist is live streamed on our YouTube channel [youtube.com/@holytrinityberwick](https://www.youtube.com/@holytrinityberwick) for the benefit of those unable to attend in person)*

18:00 Sung Evening Prayer or Choral Evensong (BCP) each Sunday - on the first Sunday of the month with Holy Communion

*Weekday services*

Daily (Monday-Saturday) 08:30 Morning Prayer (CW), 17:00 Evening Prayer (CW)

Thursday 10:00 Holy Communion (BCP) followed by coffee in Parish Centre

Principal Saints days and selected others: 10:00 Holy Communion (CW)

## **6. Church Tradition**

*Please describe the tradition of your church*

Berwick Parish Church sits in the broad catholic tradition of the Church of England. Welcoming of the ministry of women, it has a strong liturgical and musical tradition (with a robed choir), in which the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) retains an honoured place.

## **7. Church Activities**

*Regular groups for Bible study/other study/prayer*

Study Courses (open to all) are regularly held in Advent and Lent. Clergy and lay people from the parish are also actively involved in:

- 1) The Julian Prayer Group, which meets monthly for a time of stillness and silence with Mother Julien as guide.
- 2) The North Northumberland Spirituality Network which, steered by a core group of trained spiritual directors/accompaniers, supports those referred by the Diocesan Spiritual Adviser and arranges three or four day-long events a year. These are open to all and look at aspects of spirituality in its widest sense.

*Children & Youth Work/Sunday School/Uniformed organisations*

- 1) 'Sparklers' – a group for 3-10 year olds meets in church and the Parish Centre once a month during the Parish Eucharist.
- 2) Church Schools – there is an increasingly close relationship with our two church first schools (see section 10).
- 3) Uniformed Organisations – there are no church-based, uniformed organisations but clergy and lay volunteers from the parish are involved in various groups including the Scouts, Air Training Corps and Berwick Youth Trust.

*Clubs/Societies*

There are none which are strictly church based, but members of the congregation are widely involved in various community groups, many of which meet in our Parish Centre. The parish also actively participates in Community events such as Heritage Open Days.

*Support of home and overseas missions*

The parish is not affiliated with any one mission organisation but, taking mission in its widest sense, raises money through social events and special appeals to support those in need through, for example, Christian Aid and Water Aid, plus UK focussed bodies including Berwick Food Bank and Mary's Meals.

*Social work/Caring for others (See also Pastoral Care, s.?)*

- 1) Regular fundraising and support, as above.
- 2) 'Tea, Cake and Chat' - a monthly Sunday afternoon session in the Parish Centre offering an opportunity for those seeking companionship to find it.
- 3) Church Welcomers – the church is open all year round between 08.30 and 17.00. A team of welcomers operates between April and October to greet the many visitors who pass through.

*Faith Sharing events or programmes*

There have been none during and since the pandemic but Advent and Lent courses remain open to all.

### *Parochial charities*

Berwick Parish Church Trust (Charity No.00517699) - set up in 1986, raises money to secure the future of the church. Its principal focus to date has been on the maintenance and enhancement of the church building, including its fine organ. Separate from the PCC, it is administered by trustees who include the incumbent and up to four PCC appointees plus at least 9 others. The Trust's investments are professionally administered.

### *Any other*

Plenty, including:

- 1) Music – the church has a robed choir and a salaried Director of Music. There are also regular organ recitals and concerts, both church-based and involving other choirs and musicians.
- 2) Social Activities – both associated with events and at various points in the church year, which are open to those not actively involved in the church as well as those who are. Recent examples include a Mardi Gras Evening, Coronation Lunch, Quiz Evening, etc., etc..
- 3) Subject specific groups – such as the Eco Group, which promotes environmental awareness and action in and through the church. Projects to date include churchyard wilding and planting, bee hives, a bird feeding station and various wildlife habitats, and recycling and composting. Hidden solar panels are planned for the church roof, following PCC and NCC approval and support from the DAC.

## **8. Ministry**

*Does the parish/locality have a Local Ministry Group?*

*If so, how long has it existed, what are its main responsibilities?*

No.

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

Reader – Anne Horne

Licensed retired Clergy:

Gabrielle Ayerst

Bishop Stephen Platten

Lyn Phillips

Ray Simpson

Christopher Smith

In addition, four curates in training have been placed in the church during the period of the previous incumbent, the last of whom (the Revd Tom Sample) has now completed his training and is seeking his first parish appointment.

*Please indicate current lay involvement in:*

*a) worship (e.g. Lesson reader, intercessions, administration of communion, serving, other)*

Rota of lesson readers and intercessors for Parish Eucharist

Administration of cup at communion: John Ayerst, Paul Marshall

*b) administration (e.g. pew sheet or magazine production, secretarial assistance, registers, other)*

Volunteers produce the weekly pew sheet and monthly messenger, and maintain the electoral roll. Various other voluntary rolls have administrative aspects, eg preparing rotas.

The post of PCC Secretary has been vacant since the 2022 APCM, and the parish is in the process of recruiting for the post of a Parish Administrator (10 hours/week) to undertake this role and support other aspects of parish administration.

*c) pastoral work (e.g. baptism preparation/visiting, home communion, visiting housebound or in hospital, other)*

There is a team of four lay volunteers who assist the clergy with pastoral work.

## **9. Finance**

*Have you had a parish funding campaign recently?*

*Is use made of Gift Aid and/or an envelope scheme?*

*Is the Parish Share paid regularly and in full?*

*Are there any major debts? Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full. Please attach a copy of the latest statement of accounts.*

The PCC is a registered charity (registration number 1182751). A funding campaign is conducted every 3 years, most recently in 2023. The vast majority of the congregation are regular givers and do so through the bank either monthly or annually. A small number use a weekly/monthly envelope system. Gift aid is reclaimed wherever possible.

The Parish Share is paid in full and there are no major debts. Incumbent expenses are paid in full and in the most recent full financial year totalled £2,586.

Accounts are prepared by a local chartered accountant on a pro bono basis based on records kept by the Honorary Treasurer.

## **10. Community involvement**

*Describe the involvement of the church in:*

*Schools (e.g. Governors, leading assemblies etc.)*

Two church First Schools are located in the parish, Holy Trinity (Aided) and St. Mary's (Controlled). As of September 2025, both will become church Primary Schools following planned reorganisation (see section 1 above).

Over the past 10 years the Vicar and Curates have developed strong links with both of these Schools and with the families and communities in the North of the Parish. This is reflected in the number of Parents and Families who attend the regular Assemblies held in both Schools.

The children enthusiastically take part in many events in Church, such as Harvest Celebrations, Christingle Services, Nativity Plays, Eco group activities, etc. Children from both Schools have assisted with Thursday morning Eucharists.

Along with our Curate, St Mary's pupils visit their local Care Home to chat and undertake activities with the residents. They also sing hymns which bring back lots of memories for the residents.



St Mary's has recently been Inspected by OFSTED and SIAMS. Both judged the school to be Good, with inclusiveness and caring for Special Needs pupils being highlighted. Holy Trinity School's most recent OFSTED inspection was in 2018 when it was judged "good" (another inspection is due shortly) and the most recent SIAMS inspection (in 2016) judged it outstanding in all areas, noting particularly the strong leadership and Christian ethos. These results were due in no small part to the active support, dedication and encouragement of the Clergy, Church-appointed School Governors and other members of the PCC.

*Other institutions (Industry, Old People's Homes, Hostels, Civic life etc)*

### 1) Civic Life

As the parish church of Berwick, Holy Trinity and St Mary plays an active role in the civic life of the town and has strong relationships with Berwick Town Council, the Berwick Guild of Freemen and local uniformed and other organisations. It is the setting for various civic events - including civic services and, in alternate years, the Remembrance Day Service - as well as major concerts and other local activities.

Situated close to Berwick's Grade 1 Listed Barracks, the church has historically had strong links with the armed forces, including the Kings Own Scottish Borderers Association and the Coldstream Guards. Members of the congregation are actively involved in local civic life; in community organisations, such as Berwick Civic Society and Berwick Rotary; and in major local annual events, such as the Berwick Literary Festival and Berwick Heritage Open Days programme.

### 2) Chaplaincies

In the past, the incumbent has acted as Chaplain to the local hospital, although at present this role continues to be filled by the predecessor of the retiring incumbent.

The retiring incumbent was chaplain to the Air Training Corps and our present curate is a volunteer with the local lifeboat (RNLI – although the chaplaincy to the lifeboat is held by the Vicar of Tweedmouth).

There are, in short and depending on time and inclination, other opportunities for involvement in the community beyond those which formally come with the role of parish priest.

### 3) Old People's Homes

Clergy are not formally appointed as chaplains to any of the local care homes but are regular visitors for pastoral reasons. Our curate holds a monthly communion service at Tweed View care home and is currently exploring the possibility of introducing a regular service at another local home.

## **11. Relationships with neighbouring parishes**

The deanery licenced clergy meet together regularly as the deanery chapter to discuss diocesan and deanery strategies or other topics relevant at the time. A number of times a year deanery chapter is open also to inviting PTO's and retired clergy. Also, the deanery meets in form of Synod with elected clergy and lay members, sometimes open for all to attend.



The Norham deanery works closely together, most recently in relation to the diocesan transformation focus on worship, pilgrimage, pastoral and social. The deanery also shares joint chapters and social events with the Bamburgh and Glendale deanery.

Confirmations are done jointly within the deanery once a year. Clergy and readers assist each other in providing cover for services in other Parishes when required. Holy Trinity, Berwick, has made it part of its training programme to allow curates freedom to take services in other Churches within the Deanery to gain understanding of different traditions and contexts.

Holy Trinity and its closest neighbour, Tweedmouth benefice, work together within the ecumenical set up of Berwick Churches Together. Tweedmouth has invited Berwick clergy to be part on a number of occasions of worship and fete days within their RNLI chaplaincy.

*Are you aware of how these relationships fit in with any Deanery Plans, and the implications such Plans may have for future ministerial deployment in your parish?*

Yes, and the latest plans are fully consistent with recruitment of a new vicar for Holy Trinity and St Mary, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

## **12. Ecumenical Relationships**

Holy Trinity is part of Berwick Churches Together, currently chaired by the curate. Berwick is notable for the number of denominations it has in such a small area. Berwick Churches Together includes – Berwick Baptist Church, St Andrew’s Church of Scotland, Berwick Methodist Church, Waypoint church, Salvation Army, the Benefice of Tweedmouth Church of England, and Our Lady and St Cuthbert’s Roman Catholic Church. Berwick churches have worked together in ecumenical charity work in our town with local food banks and youth organisations. One shared initiative this year was in setting up warm spaces in the winter months in each of our churches.

Berwick Churches Together each year holds a walk of witness around the town on Good Friday and recently have formed a dawn service together on Easter Day. The Berwick festival “Party on the Parade” invites Berwick Churches Together to lead sing-along hymns on the Parade each year, which is always well attended by all the community.

Holy Trinity’s work with our next door neighbours, the Church of Scotland, includes a blessing of animals service and a school ‘big sing’ at Christmas.

Remembrance Sunday services are held together by Holy Trinity and St Andrew’s Church of Scotland. The morning service is held in one of the churches and the evening service at the other; then the locations are reversed the next year. Church of England and Church of Scotland ministers lead the act of remembrance together at each service, as well at the local war memorial.

### **13. The Parish and the future**

*What plans does the P.C.C. have for deepening the spiritual life of the members of the congregation, and for engagement in outreach to those who do not attend church?*

*What is lacking which needs to be pursued in the next 5 years?*

To help it formulate its vision for the next stage in the life of the church and develop the means to implement it, the PCC has set in hand a consultative process involving the whole congregation, the nature of which is described in Section 14 below.

Without prejudice to the outcome of that process, the Council has held a number of strategy sessions during recent years in which it has consistently identified the following as particular areas of focus for its work:

- 1) Liturgy – enriching the worship and music of the church, in terms both of its variety and its depth.
- 2) Children and Young People - steps to make Holy Trinity more attractive to children and young people and their families, including through strengthening links with local schools.
- 3) Outreach – through the offer of hospitality; the provision of pastoral care and support; and further opportunities to learn, both for those seeking faith and those seeking to deepen their faith.
- 4) Resourcing – careful attention to the means of resourcing the resulting programme of action, including by understanding better the skills and talents already available among the congregation and through improved communication within and beyond the church.

It remains to be seen if these areas are again identified as a priority during the consultative process now underway.

### **14. The new incumbent**

*In the light of the factors set out above, what are the qualities and attributes the P.C.C. would wish to see in the new incumbent?*

The PCC has established a consultative process to answer this question.

This will be based on a questionnaire sent to all of the congregation, and a less detailed request for input from others who may have an interest, such as local civic leaders, leaders of local voluntary groups and church schools. The PCC has planned an away-day for prayer and reflection on the outcome of this questionnaire and review of strategic priorities, following which open meetings of the congregation will be held to discuss the outcome of the survey and recommended way forward before final decisions are made by the PCC.

We do not at this stage wish to prejudge the outcome of this consultative process, which aims to produce a clear and considered response to incorporate into the parish brochure which we plan to finalise in December 2023.

## **15. Parsonage**

*Age, number of bedrooms, heating, garden etc.*

*Any additional information.*

The Vicarage – which was built in 1994 – is of local sandstone and has a tiled roof. It is conveniently located in the conservation area, to the south west of the church and immediately south of the adjacent Parish Centre, and fronts onto The Parade near the centre of the older part of the town. There is a manageable area of enclosed garden to the front and rear, with ample car parking space to the front and a single garage to the side.

In addition to a study, the house contains two living rooms, a separate kitchen, utility room and downstairs toilet, with 4 bedrooms plus bathroom and shower room upstairs. The central heating is gas fired.

The property is in need of some maintenance (including the replacement of rotting window frames; there are also worn locks and problems with the garage roof and door) as well as upgrading. An early, expert review of its condition is recommended.

## **NOTES**

1. The P.C.C. Secretary should convene a meeting of the full P.C.C. within 4 weeks of receiving notice of the vacancy. This meeting (or meetings) **shall not** be attended by the outgoing incumbent, his wife, the presenting patron, or any representative of the presenting patron.
2. The statement to be prepared is a public document and must be owned by the PC.C. though it may delegate the detailed preparation to specified persons in the light of discussions in the P.C.C.
3. The headings given in this document are only a guide and the P.C.C. should consider any other matters relevant to the local situation.
4. The prepared statement is to be sent to the presenting patron and the Bishop within the 4 weeks period.
5. Before the meeting of the P.C.C. is summoned for this purpose the bishop, or his appointed representative, will meet with the Churchwardens and Secretary of the P.C.C. to discuss the procedures which will lead to the appointment of the new incumbent.