

## 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:*  
**The Parish of Cowpen, Saint Benedict**
2. *Name of Parish church(es):*  
**Saint Benedict**
3. *Name of other C of E churches/centres for public worship in the parish:* **None**
4. *Group of parishes in which you work (formally or informally):* **None**
5. *Deanery:* **Bedlington**
6. *Population:* **6,944 in 2018, however since then 450+ houses have been built**
- 7.(a) *Number on Electoral Roll:* **21**
- (b) *Date of APCM at which this number was declared:* **26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**
7. *Attendance at worship at each church:*  
  
*Average Sunday Communicants:* **9**  
*Average Sunday attendance:* **9**  
*Average weekday Communicants:* **5**  
*Average weekday attendance:* **6**
8. *Occasional Offices:*  
  
*Number of baptisms in the last 12 months:* **5**  
*Number of persons confirmed in the last 12 months:* **0**  
*Number of weddings in the last 12 months:* **3**  
*Number of funerals in church in the last 12 months:* **1**  
*Number of funerals taken by clergy not in church in the last 12 months:* **8**

#### II. The Local Community

- 1.(a) *Briefly describe the population in terms of any predominant age and/or social groups, the ethnic mix etc:*  
**See attached document relating to Parish Demographics**

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

**High Unemployment in Cowpen Estate**

**Deprivation Ranking; 391 (1=most deprived & 12,307=least deprived)**

**Historic medical conditions causing disability– many are a hangover from old heavy industries and coal mining**

**Lack of opportunity for many**

**Substance abuse**

**Youth gangs – No sense of purpose or direction – Often results in vandalism**

**A contrast of the have's and have not's – Cowpen Estate V New Housing Estates**

**(Although this can sometimes be a misconception, as there are working poor in the Parish)**

2. **Please list:**

*Local schools:*

**The Blyth Academy**

**Horton Grange Primary School**

**The Dales School – Specialist Education**

*Youth centres:*

**Briardale Community Hub, however not especially for youth.**

**Silx – Youth Project - Based in Blyth town centre**

*Hospitals:*

**None in the Parish**

**Blyth Community Hospital is located in town**

*Nursing/residential homes, sheltered housing:*

**Blythgate Manor**

**South Bedside**

**Tynedale Care Home**

**Thornton Way – Specialist Care**

*Places of worship of other faiths:*

**In the Parish:**

**St. Cuthbert – Roman Catholic Church**

**Cowpen Methodist Church**

*In wider Blyth:*

**St. Mary. Blyth – C of E**

**St. Cuthbert. Blyth – C of E**

**St Bede, Newsham w St. Mary the Virgin. Horton – C of E**

**St. Wilfrid. Blyth – Roman Catholic**

**Central Methodist Church**

*Local businesses:*

**A range of retail & food businesses are dotted throughout the Parish.**

**The small retail park is anchored by Homebase along with Aldi & KFC & Pure Gym.**

**At the northern gateway into Blyth via Cowpen Road, there is a large Asda supermarket and Starbucks drive thru. McDonalds & Greggs live side by side half way down Cowpen Road.**

**A large industrial and enterprise park lies to the northern edge of the Parish, bounded by the River Blyth. This park has a wide variety of engineering, industrial, retail and service providers**

Neighbourhood initiatives:

**None currently**

Local associations:

**Empire School of Boxing**

**Hell Angels clubhouse! – Bikers meeting place for Tyneside & Blyth branch.**

**Territorial Army Barracks**

Any civic responsibilities of local clergy:

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

- 1.(a) What percentage of the congregation lives outside the parish? **45%**
- (b) Describe the congregation in terms of age, employment, culture, ethnicity and gender:  
**60% over the age of 70, predominantly women,**
2. Please describe the tradition of your church and give details of robes/vestments worn by officiants:  
**Modern Catholic Tradition, vestments are worn, Incense is used, The Sacrament is reserved. The church possesses a range of vestments, copes, monstrance etc to celebrate The Mass throughout the church year and for use at occasional offices.**
3. Give details of Sunday services with times and form of service used:  
**Sunday Mass @ 3pm – Previously this was 10 a.m, however it was changed to 3pm to facilitate clergy cover during the vacancy. This will need to be reviewed when a new priest is appointed.**
4. Give details of weekday services:  
**Mid-week Mass @ 10am. In past years we have had the daily offices of morning and evening prayer, occasional Compline, a Healing Mass with the laying on of hands. As we grow again, we would like to re-establish a Parish rhythm, whether with the familiar or something new.**
5. List any authorised ministers (e.g. Reader, Church Army Officer, Ordained Local Minister, Non-stipendiary Minister, Curate in training, retired Clergy):  
**We do not have any ALM, OLM, NSM, Curate or Reader directly attached to the Parish.  
We have been blessed by the various retired clergy, Priests & Bishops, who have supported our services during a long vacancy, however all live outside of the Parish.**
- 6.(a) What is the average weekly giving of those aged 16 years and older, and what proportion of the giving is gift aided: **Average Weekly £58 – Gift Aid 79%**
- (b) When did the parish last have a stewardship campaign:  
**Approx. 10 years ago.**
7. How does each church supplement direct giving in order to meet financial needs (eg fundraising events, hall lettings, occasional offices, investments):  
**Fundraising and hall hire**
- 8.(a) Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full.  
**During the vacancy we have paid visiting Priests their fee and mileage. Historically, the Parish Priest has had his Council Tax, Water, Telephone and an agreed expense paid. This can be discussed with a new Priest.**
- (b) Is there an annual discussion about the level of expenses as part of the budgeting process: **N/A**

9. What amount of Share has been (a) requested and (b) paid:  
**Last year: £4000 – paid in full**  
**Current year: £3000 – paid in full**  
**Next year: £4000 – Anticipated to be paid in full with a view to increase the year after.**
- 10.(a) Is there any capital project in hand at the moment:  
**Creation of separate entrances for church and hall, provision of new kitchen & toilet facilities and linking the hall to the garden - in the early discussion stage as this is a 3-5 year project timeline.**
- Parish Garden renovation in progress**
- 10.(b) If so, please give brief details with costs and state how they are to be met:  
**Costing to be finalised, to be paid for with funds from the Fabric Fund, Fundraising and Grant Applications.**
11. Please attach a copy of the latest statement of accounts.  
**Attached**

#### IV. Church Buildings (please give details for each church)

- 1.(a) What is the general state of repair of the churches:  
**Predominantly good with some items in hand from stormy weather.**
- (b) Please give details of any major maintenance needed following the last Quinquennial Inspection:  
**Broken drains to east side of church – completed.**
2. Please give details of church halls and any other ancillary buildings (and an indication of the level of their use).  
**Parish Hall attached to church with modern kitchen facilities – Regular weekly use by church and community groups and we are looking to grow this further in the future.**
3. Is there a churchyard to maintain and who is responsible for its maintenance?  
**There is no churchyard, we however have substantial grounds maintained by volunteers.**

#### V. Outreach and Mission

- 1.(a) What are the regular mission and outreach activities of the parish:  
**Currently ad-hoc in response to local and national events & advertising services following the church year.**
- (b) What are you doing to help people find out about Jesus:  
**Currently there are no discipleship courses as there has been no permanent Priest. This has also meant no regular priestly community contact. This is an area that we would like to re-visit once a new Priest has settled into the Parish and got to know people.**
- (c) What are you doing to help grow people in discipleship:  
**As above**
- (d) What are you doing to grow people in leadership:  
**We do not have a program currently, as above, we hope this will change as we re-grow.**
- 2.(a) Please give details of support for the church overseas:  
**Christian Aid**

- (b) *How much is given annually:*  
**This can vary, no set amount.**
- 3.(a) *Give details of support for home missions and charities: ACS / Lent Boxes / Childrens Society*  
**ACS – lent boxes**  
**Childrens Society – Christingle candle boxes**
- (b) *How much is given annually:*  
**This can vary, no set amount.**
- 4.(a) *Does the parish have an overseas link:*  
**No, it would be nice to develop one in the future.**
- (b) *If so, please state where/who:* **N/A**
- 5.(a) *Is there an organised system of outreach and welcome to new families:*  
**No, it is informal based around welcome and general contact.**
- (b) *If so, please describe:* **N/A**
6. *What part does the church play in community care:*  
**None at present. The Church has historically hosted Age Concern events and the Parish Priest has been a regular visitor to the local residential and care homes to minister to those who ask for it, to administer home communions, last rites, etc.**
- 7.(a) *Are there Lay Eucharistic Assistants who take communion to the sick:*  
**2 Licenced Assistants but no home communions are taking place at present.**
- (b) *If so, who are they:* **Church Warden and Treasurer**
8. *What work does the church undertake with young people, other than in church based organisations (eg open youth work):*  
**To our sadness, we have not been able to resource any direct work with young people. We have been able to provide a focal point when local tragedy has struck, the church being opened to light candles for young suicide victims, ribbon wall during Covid, remembering at All Souls.**

## VI. Ecumenical Relationships

- 1(a) *Involvement in local Council of Churches*  
**Churches Together in Blyth (Ecumenical)**  
**Anglican Blyth Churches**  
**Deanery Synod & Events**
- (b) *Is there a formal covenant with any other denomination?*  
**No.**
2. *What informal ecumenical contacts are there?*  
**None in the Parish other than Churches Together. We have tried to invite other denominations to social events, but this has not proved particularly successful. It will be worth revisiting this.**

## VII. Church Education and Social Provision

- 1.(a) Name of Church School(s), if applicable: **N/A – There are no Church Schools, only Local Authority.**
- (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: None currently**

**Young People: None currently**

**Adults: None currently**

**We have not the physical numbers to do this in recent years but hope that this will change in coming years.**

- 2.(a) Give details of house/prayer groups: **None currently**

- (b) Are the leaders clergy or lay: **N/A**

- 3.(a) How do you rate the strength of lay leadership: **N/A**

- (b) To what do you credit this strength or the lack of it:.

### IX. Mission

1. List areas of church life which you consider in need of development:

**Creating sense of place for the Church within it's setting**

**Being visible and relevant to people's everyday lives**

**Re-establish the daily rhythm of the church – perhaps with a mix of old and new**

**Growing new disciples**

**Engaging in the wider community with events, direct action, volunteering.**

2. What are the main areas of mission that you think the new priest should prioritise in their ministry:

**To seek out, nurture, teach and baptise new disciples**

**To shepherd back to the fold those that have fallen away**

**To preach the good news in a way that is relevant to the everyday lives of the people of this Parish**

**To show that there is a different path to tread and life of hope to find**

3. In summary, what are the top three challenges with which you and the new priest need to engage:

**Getting the new Priest known, not just a recognisable face but someone with whom you can have a conversation on any day of the week, in a planned or unplanned setting, at a wedding or funeral, in Starbucks or Asda, or just putting in the hard yards walking the streets.**

**Working out what community involvement will best support the need to re-grow the church in Cowpen.**

**Putting together an achievable plan that aims to produce positive outcomes for engagement, mission and the start of new growth, within the first twelve to eighteen months**

## X. Additional Information

*Please see the Person Specification for information about the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish.*

## XI. The new parish priest

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

*Please refer to the Person Specification*