

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: **Cramlington**
2. Name of Parish church(es) **St. Nicholas'**
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): **Bedlington**
5. Deanery: **Bedlington**
6. Population: **35,000**
- 7.(a) Number on Electoral Roll **156**
- (b) Date of APCM at which this number was declared: **7.4.2024**
7. Attendance at worship at each church:  
  
Average Sunday Communicants  
**61 averaged over a full month**  
**74 when there is a double Holy Communion service.**  
  
Average Sunday attendance **84**  
Average weekday Communicants **9**  
Average weekday attendance **10**
8. Occasional Offices:  
  
Number of baptisms in the last 12 months: **Baptism 1 Thanksgivings 4**  
Number of persons confirmed in the last 12 months: **None**  
Number of weddings in the last 12 months: **4**  
Number of funerals in church in the last 12 months: **13**  
Number of funerals taken by clergy not in church in the last 12 months: **7**

**II. The Local Community**

- 1.(a) Briefly describe the population in terms of any predominant age and/or social groups, the ethnic mix etc:

## Ethnicity

Cramlington's population is 97.8% white which is in line with Northumberland as a whole but much lower than the England rate of 81.0%

## Age profile - Cramlington figures first; England in brackets

0-19 21.2% (23.0)

20-39 21.9% (26.3)

40-59 27.3% (26.3)

60-79 24.8% (19.3)

80+ 4.6% (4.9)

These show a lower percentage than the England average in the under 60s and slightly higher in the over 60s, however, compared to Northumberland as a whole the population of Cramlington is a little younger.

The census showed a population breakdown by ethnicity to be 97.7% white (rate for England being 81%). Similarly the breakdown by religion showed 49.9% Christian (46.3%); 43.8% none (36.7%) and others 6.3% (16.6%).

In comparison with both England and Northumberland there is a rather higher rate of owner occupancy and fewer private rented homes. Social housing is concentrated in two main areas of the town.

These are taken from the 2021 census.

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

Unemployment is broadly similar to the rate in England and Northumberland.

2. *Please list:*

*Local schools:*

*Senior school:* – **Cramlington Learning Village**

*Primary schools:*

**Burnside**

**Beaconhill**

**Shanklea**

**Northburn**

**Cragside C of E**

**Village**

**Hareside**

**Eastlea**

**St Peter's and St Paul's Catholic Primary**

*Full age range:*

**Hillcrest Special School**

*Youth centres:*

**Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project,**

*Hospitals:* **Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH)**

*Nursing/residential homes, sheltered housing:*

*Nursing homes*

**Hartford Court  
Northlea Court  
Cramlington House  
Astor Court  
Scarborough Court  
Jane Percy House (disability support)  
Sheltered / Retirement Housing  
Jubilee Lodge  
Grenville Court  
Rosebrough Court  
Carew Court**

*Places of worship of other faiths:*

**Doxford Place Methodist Church  
Welcome Methodist Church  
The Church of the Nazarene  
St Paul's Catholic Church  
Salvation Army  
Oasis Life Church**

*Local businesses:*

**Manor Walks in the town centre is an indoor shopping mall with two major supermarkets, a Post Office, several banks and a range of shops, services and eating places. Adjacent to Manor Walks are a retail park, a leisure centre with swimming pool, a multiscreen cinema, a library with cafe and community meeting areas and two health centres. Also in the town centre is the Hope Centre, which is the base for the Parish Social Ministries including the Food Bank. In the village area, where St Nicholas' is situated, are several small businesses, pubs and clubs. There are other smaller shopping areas in the town along with some corner shops.**

***Industry is mostly centred on the industrial estates in the north-west of the town.***

*Neighbourhood initiatives:* **None**

*Local associations:*

**There are numerous local associations, including WI, Townswomen's Guild, Scouts and Guides, community choir, Army Reserve centre, Air Training Cadets, environmental groups, u3a, Royal British Legion, craft groups, sports clubs, etc. There are also several community centres around the town in which a range of activities take place.**

*Any civic responsibilities of local clergy:*

**Air Cadets chaplaincy  
Remembrance Day Service**

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

1.(a) *What percentage of the congregation lives outside the parish?* **20% approx**

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

**There is reasonable ethnic diversity which reflects the dynamics of the town. There are usually 10-11 young children on a Sunday morning, a few families with young children, a few teenagers and a good mix of other age ranges.**

2. *Please describe the tradition of your church and give details of robes/vestments worn by officiants:*

**An Evangelical tradition. Our services incorporate a mix of traditional and modern. In Terms of Eucharistic theology we come somewhere in the middle between high church tradition and low.**

**The priests wear full robes when conducting weddings and funerals and on high Holy days but are less formal during other services. The choice to robe or not is the decision of the priest. This decision was adopted by the PCC when the previous incumbent came.**

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

**Weekly 8am traditional Holy Communion. 10.30am Second and fourth Sundays - Holy Communion, one traditional and one contemporary. First and third Sundays - morning worship, with the four to five fifth Sundays being available for thanksgiving services.**

4. *Give details of weekday services: **Wednesday 10am weekly communion service***

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

**Rev Linda Butler - retired priest with PTO, Rev. David Gray - team vicar, Liz Allen – LLM (reader), John Brierley – LLM and Barry Stewart - reader emeritus.**

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

**Our figures are monthly.**

**The average (mean) donation pcm across both Parish Giving Scheme & Standing Orders is £98. (£4,230 from 43 donations in August. Roughly 60/40 between PGS/SO)**

**However, this is donations, not people. I think the 43 donations reflects approximately 57 people, which brings the mean value down to £74 per person, pcm. Approximately 93% of this (by value) is gift aided.**

6(b) *When did the parish last have a stewardship campaign:*

**We devoted 2 Sundays to preaching about giving, and followed this up with a pledge Sunday in the late Autumn of 2023.**

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

**Fundraising - There has been some fund raising for the current building work (see 10(a)), but other than that, we have not done much. A biennial Flower Festival raises money for church and other charities.**

**Hall lettings - In 2023 letting gross income was £800. So far in 2024, income is £1,687 (costs of halls £736, so net £950)**

**Occasional offices - the number of funerals and weddings has fallen drastically in recent years. As of end of August 2024, we have done 13 funerals and 4 weddings. This has generated £1,203 from funerals and £433 from weddings.**

**Investments - We do not have any investments.**

8.(a) *Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full.*

**Clergy mileage expenses are refunded at the HMRC approved rate (Currently 45p/mile). Other reasonable miscellaneous expenses are refunded in full on receipt of a receipted claim. We pay the Council Tax and water bill for clergy housing. We refund 80% of clergy telephone/internet bills.**

8(b) *Is there an annual discussion about the level of expenses as part of the budgeting process:*

**No**

9. *What amount of Share has been (a) requested and (b) paid:*

**Last year: £60,000 requested. £60,000 paid**

**Current year: £56,000 requested. Currently paid £38,000 - we hope to pay £56,000 at YE, but it will be close.**

**Next year: We have offered £56,000**

10.(a) *Is there any capital project in hand at the moment:*

**We are about to embark on extensive restorative work on the tower and other parts of the church roof. (Full details at 1a/b under section**

10.(b) *If so, please give brief details with costs and state how they are to be met:*

**We do not yet have fixed quotation, but we expect it to be in the region of £80,000-£100,000. We have £71,000 remaining from a legacy which we can use towards this. We have also raised further £1,500 so far towards this. We hope to apply for grants towards the cost.**

11. *Please attach a copy of the latest statement of accounts. See attachment in email*

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

1.(a) *What is the general state of repair of the churches:*

**According to the latest Quinquennial inspection report of October 2022 'The interior is in good order. The fabric of the church has been kept generally in good order both externally and internally'.**

**Some remedial roofing and stone masonry work was identified and remedial action is currently ongoing. See answer below for details**

1(b) *Please give details of any major maintenance needed following the last Quinquennial Inspection:*

**The last Quinquennial identified work needed on the church roof and tower. Work is ongoing, to procure permissions to proceed with the repairs. Further pointing repairs to the stonework were identified also and will need rectifying next.**

**The estimates for the roof work vary from between £65,000 to £98,000**

**There are some funds available for this approx £70,000, from a bequest, and fundraising events have been started. Grant aid bodies have been identified and will be approached once permissions given.**

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

**We have a parish centre attached to the church with kitchen facilities. It is used mostly by the church congregation but has been hired by local businesses recently. There is a weekly baby and toddler group, a monthly dementia and memory loss support group, both run by church volunteers, as well as many outreach and fund raising activities, both internally and externally run. Three local schools use the church and parish centre each term for their celebrations and an under five day care centre uses it for their milestone celebrations.**

**We also have two meeting rooms, one attached to a church house which is hired out (not used at present) and one attached to the rectory. The latter is hired out on Tuesday and Saturday mornings every week by outside organisations and once a month on Sundays.**

**We have the use of a county council building within the town, on a rolling lease, (the Hope Centre) which we use for our social ministries.**

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

**The churchyard is owned and maintained by the county council. We do have a garden maintenance group who volunteer to keep everything looking tidy in between times.**

## **V. Outreach and Mission**

1.(a) *What are the regular mission and outreach activities of the parish:*

**‘Hope Centre’ provision includes ‘Food Bank’, ‘Baby Bank’, uniform bank, weekly ‘Friendship in Grief’ support meetings and staff meeting spaces.**

**‘Friendship Friday’: A weekly drop in event providing a loving welcome with tea, coffee, cake and often soup, within a warm space, Part of the ‘Warm Spaces’ initiative.**

**‘Little Fishes’: weekly baby and toddlers group.**

**Life Groups: (L.G.) walks around the neighbourhood to witness to the wider community.**

**‘Memory Lane’: dementia and memory loss support work.**

1(b) *What are you doing to help people find out about Jesus:*

**There are currently links with some of the local schools where we work to serve the local community. In particular with holding church services for pupils and parents to mark key Christian festivals; leading some acts of worship in school and facilitating opportunities for members of our church community to go into the schools and work with them. We have two school governors at Cragside C of E primary.**

**We are offering Alpha courses to new members of the congregation.**

**New congregants are also offered and encouraged to join one of our seven life groups where they can be ministered to in a small group setting.**

**Many social activities are organised on a monthly to six weekly basis to encourage more of the local parish to come to the church and interact.**

(c) *What are you doing to help grow people in discipleship:*

**Biblical based sermons to teach and challenge.**

**Membership of life groups is encouraged so that people can explore discipleship in a safe environment.**

**Quarterly prayer evenings that explore what God has to say to us about our walk with Him.**

(d) *What are you doing to grow people in leadership:*

**We have a small leadership team which is comprised of four lay and two clergy. They are encouraged to look for leadership potential in others and discuss further action.**

2.(a) *Please give details of support for the church overseas:* **None**

(b) *How much is given annually:* **N/A**

3.(a) *Give details of support for home missions and charities:*

**Events are held in order to raise donations towards the work of various charities. Eg. 'Macmillan' and 'Bright Red' (cancer support), 'Safer Families', 'Christian Aid', 'Royal British Legion', 'Blythwood Care Shoe Box Appeal', 'New Hope for Children UK' (which supports the overseas charity in Bogota shown below).**

(b) *How much is given annually:* **Varies**

4.(a) *Does the parish have an overseas link:*

**Not an official link but we do have contacts with a charity 'Children's Vision' that provides homes and education for children in Bogota, Columbia.**

(b) *If so, please state where/who* **N/A**

5.(a) *Is there an organised system of outreach and welcome to new families:* **Yes.**

(b) *If so, please describe:*

A contact form is given to new people upon their first visit with the opportunity for a pastoral visit or follow up phone call. This is then followed up by a welcome pack being given if the family or person attends again which gives more in depth organisational detail. There is a welcome team primed to organise this system.

6. *What part does the church play in community care:*

- The 'Hope Centre' is our social ministries centre with a food bank and friendship in grief provision as well as other community groups which meet there. Kintsugi courses are run from here as well.
- A pastoral team which organises home visits and keeping in touch outreach.
- One of our LLM's is a P/T hospital chaplain.
- A weekly café outreach event 'Friendship Friday' – part of the warm spaces initiative but extended to all year round.
- 'Memory Lane' monthly support provision for the elderly and those with memory loss. The same team are also involved in care home visiting/event organising.

7.(a) *Are there Lay Eucharistic Assistants who take communion to the sick:* **Yes**

(b) *If so, who are they:*

**Liz Allen: licensed lay minister, Rev. David Gray: team vicar, Karin Graydon: verger  
Barry Stewart: reader emeritus Glenys Buxton: lay congregant. Jacqui Wyness: lay congregant.**

8. *What work does the church undertake with young people, other than in church based organisations (eg open youth work):* **Chaplaincy for an air cadet unit (242 squadron)**

## VI. Ecumenical Relationships

1(a) *Involvement in local Council of Churches:* **None**

(b) *Is there a formal covenant with any other denomination?* **No**

2. *What informal ecumenical contacts are there?*

**We have informal links with the church of the Nazarene, the Methodist church and the local Salvation Army, who come together to celebrate some key events, two to three times per year e.g. Good Friday witness walk and Easter morning sunrise services, Advent and Christmas events.**

**The local Catholic church sends funds to support the work of our food bank and there are some from the other churches who work as volunteers.**

## VII. Church Education and Social Provision

1.(a) *Name of Church School(s), if applicable:* **Cragside Church of England Primary School**

(b) *Aided?*

*Controlled?* **Yes**

*Foundation?*

(c) *Number of pupils on roll (approx.):* **48 place nursery 330 primary age (maximum reception intake is 2 x 30)**



(d) *If aided, does the PCC support the school:* **NA**

### VIII. Lay Education and Participation

1. *What education and training work takes place in the church for the following (give approx. numbers):*

**Children: Sunday morning teaching and learning activities organised when the main 10.30 service is on with up to 11 children attending.**

**Young People: None at present although we have some money in a restricted account which could be used for such work.**

*Adults:*

- **Alpha courses**
- **LG (life group) study materials recommended by the leadership. Sunday morning preach/teach to coincide with theme of study.**
- **Leadership training sessions and reflection away days.**

2.(a) *Give details of house/prayer groups:*

**Seven life groups with an average of 8/9 members per group**

**Weekly mid week morning prayer group, Whatsapp parish prayer support group, quarterly prayer events. Sunday morning prayer group - offering prayer ministry during services.**

(b) *Are the leaders clergy or lay:* **Both, but mostly lay**

3.(a) *How do you rate the strength of lay leadership:* **Quite strong**

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

**Historically the church has fostered good lay involvement in leading and provided plenty of opportunity for this, with good support available. Awareness and the discernment of possible leadership potential being a constant focus.**

### IX. Mission

(A) *List areas of church life which you consider in need of development:*

- **Youth work and school outreach.**
- **Pastoral work within the church and the parish.**
- **Further involvement within the local community.**

(B) *What are the main areas of mission that you think the new priest should prioritise in their ministry:*

- **Prayer – we need a healthy prayer life; to explore different ways of praying, learning to be intimate with the Lord.**
- **Prior to Covid we had a paid youth worker and ran a successful weekly youth event. So we are keen to rekindle the youth presence in church and outreach potential.**
- **To further widen outreach within a variety of settings within the local community, developing the current work that is being done in this area.**

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

- **To foster unity and prevent division:**
  - (A) Our 2024 APCM debate on the blessing of same sex marriage showed that there was an equal split for and against the proposal. We would hope that any new incumbent would seek be able to work to unite both perspectives. (\*See additional info section below)
  - (B) Amongst some of the people in the congregation there is a residue of hurt over the way past changes have been made. However many new congregants are not really aware of this, which is reflected by recent rise in congregational numbers.
- **To improve our communication so people can fully understand and participate in all that our church has to offer. To develop a more collaborative and open atmosphere, so that more willing people can be involved.**
- **To review services:**  
We had a fundamental reorganisation of services post Covid, but feel that it is now time for a further review to help us keep moving forward. This would support our aspiration to attract a more diverse congregation.

#### **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.*

1. **The need for someone who is able to unify, as per our top three challenges above, arises due to the division that became evident during our last APCM. We were asked to vote on the following proposal:**

**\*Position Statement proposed by the PCC to be adopted by the APCGM in April 2024**

*“As a people who worship and follow an inclusive God, Cramlington Parish Church is committed to welcoming all who seek Jesus Christ and to offering the love and compassion that He would extend to them.*

*We are also committed to Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19 where He models lifelong singleness and celibacy and commends sexual relationships between persons of the opposite sex in the context of lifelong, monogamous marriage.”*

**Voting results: In favour of the proposal 25. Against 26.**

**Since the results of the vote we have lost four members of our congregation who felt very strongly that the resolution should have been passed. They felt that as a church we were going against the biblical precepts of the Word. There are many more in the congregation, on both sides of the argument, that have said they feel they would also leave if their own position is not honoured.**

2. **During our recent prayer consultation night, we asked for the Holy Spirit to give us a biblical character name for the person who we needed to take over as our new incumbent. After an extensive silence and listening exercise, we were asked to say the name we had heard in our heads and why we thought this had been given to us. There were a few who mentioned Barnabas the encourager. One or two who were given**

**Saul/Paul and Nehemiah as people who would help rebuild and ensure true worship. The vast majority said Mother Mary, as she was obedient to God over and above her own wants and needs. She was willing to do His will despite the difficult situations she encountered.**

- 3. As a church we already have an extensive cohort of lay workers involved in various roles within our community. We would hope that the new incumbent would build on this foundation and support the ministries involved.**

**XI. The new parish priest**

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

<b><u>Essential:</u></b>	<b><u>Desirable:</u></b>
<p>Biblical based teaching and modelling.</p> <p>Be prayerful, Holy Spirit led, exhibiting a good life model to those around them.</p> <p>Someone who is caring, compassionate and able to relate to people of all ages.</p> <p>To be a coach, facilitator and enabler. Someone who is comfortable discerning gifts and encouraging lay participation.</p> <p>Experience with or willingness to help support youth and children’s work.</p> <p>An engaging and effective preacher, able to work with others to encourage the growth of spiritual life and attract people to the gospel;</p> <p>Able to lead worship and prayer in a thoughtful and inspiring manner</p> <p>Able to create a shared vision for mission and ministry;</p> <p>Able to work in partnership and build strong networks and relationships with secular bodies.</p> <p>Knowledge of Parish finance/governance frameworks and systems and how risk is Managed.</p> <p>Competent with tech; particularly email, Powerpoint, Microsoft office and/or other IT software.</p> <p>Good working knowledge and adherence to Safe Working Practices and Safeguarding principles.</p>	<p>Someone with a collaborative leadership style.</p> <p>Someone happy to be visible within the Parish.</p> <p>Experienced at leading a diverse leadership team within a diverse parish.</p> <p>Previous experience of working in a team ministry setting.</p> <p>Experience of working with others to co-ordinate and manage the delivery of projects.</p> <p>To provide strategic leadership in the Church communities so as to create a shared vision that will encourage growth, deepen spirituality, and help create an affirming context for the development of the ministry of all.</p>