

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:* Tweedmouth
2. *Name of Parish church(es):* St Bartholomew and St Boisil
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):* The Benefice of Scremerston, Spittal and Tweedmouth.
5. *Deanery:* Norham
6. *Population:* 6,113 ('22 Census)
- 7.(a) *Number on Electoral Roll:* 53
- (b) *Date of APCM at which this number was declared:* 14th April 2024
7. *Attendance at worship at each church:*

Average Sunday Communicants: 45 (based on average figures Sep 23 – Aug 24)

Average Sunday attendance: 46 (based on average figures Sep 23 – Aug 24)

Average weekday Communicants: During the vacancy, midweek communion services are held at St John's Church, Spittal.

Average weekday attendance: as above

8. *Occasional Offices:*

Number of baptisms in the last 12 months: 0

Number of persons confirmed in the last 12 months: 5

Number of weddings in the last 12 months: 1

Number of funerals in church in the last 12 months: 14

Number of funerals taken by clergy not in church in the last 12 months: 5 by other officiants.

II. The Local Community

- 1.(a) *Briefly describe the population in terms of any predominant age and/or social groups, the ethnic mix etc:* Tweedmouth's 6,113 inhabitants occupy 2769 households. This includes a wide range of socio-economic groups but includes areas of social deprivation. About 21% of the population are children (0-19); over 54% are over 45. Over 97% are of white ethnicity. A number of Ukrainian refugees have settled in the

area since the war there began. 53% of the local population self-report as Christian and the remainder are mostly declared as “no religion” or are unstated. (2022 Census.)

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

Youth unemployment is high; children emerging from Berwick Academy have limited opportunities locally. A number of people will have two or more part-time low paid jobs.

2. *Please list:*

Local schools:

This part of Northumberland currently operates a three-tier system of schooling. In the parish there are three first schools: Tweedmouth West First School, Tweedmouth Prior Park First School and St Cuthbert’s Catholic First School. The first schools all have nursery provision and there are two private nurseries and a family hub. Most pupils then attend Tweedmouth Middle School followed by Berwick Academy, both of which sit at the border between Spittal and Tweedmouth Parishes. Sweeping changes to the education structure in the area were announced in July 2023 to reorganise into a two-tier system from September 2025.

The Grove School caters for pupils of all ages from a wide area who have complex needs.

Longridge Towers is a non-selective co-educational independent day and boarding school for children between the ages of three and eighteen just outside the parish.

Youth centres:

Tweedmouth comes under the umbrella of the Berwick Youth Project.

Hospitals:

There is a GP Practice and two dental practices in Tweedmouth, although currently no NHS availability for the latter. Berwick Infirmary (Community Hospital) across the river is open for minor injuries, offers many ancillary services and includes an inpatient ward for patients needing rehabilitation, continuing care and palliative care. Work is now well underway with the replacement building for the original Berwick Infirmary. Once completed the new improved hospital hopes to provide a wider range of local services. Meanwhile the nearest large hospital with cutting edge A and E provision is in Cramlington. General and excellent specialist care is in Wansbeck and Newcastle.

Nursing/residential homes, sheltered housing:

There is provision for residential (and some nursing care) in Tweedmouth House, Turret Villa and Hillside Lodge.

Sheltered housing provision – Bernicia is the main provider of social housing and the Askew Trust has a small number of properties for people who have served in the Armed Forces. There is a recognised shortage of social housing, especially one-bedroomed and properties for larger families.

Places of worship of other faiths: None

Local businesses:

The church endeavours to support local businesses whenever possible.

Tweedmouth boasts a small, but popular retail park with several high street brands, plus two large supermarkets. There are a small number of food outlets and pubs. The Garden Centre at East Ord provides another popular meeting place and café venue. Tweedmouth Dock, (in the process of an expansion of facilities) and Simpson’s Malt Ltd (a major local employer) are both significant elements of the community.

There is also an industrial park with a mix of industry and businesses.

Berwick leisure Centre (part of a social enterprise business) opened in 2023 with exceptional facilities including 3 pools, an extensive gym, exercise studios for classes and a well-appointed spa.

The Co-operative Funeral Care operates from premises in Tweedmouth. A second, independent funeral director operates from premises in Berwick. Together they provide nearly all the funerals for the community. Tweedmouth has its own county council run cemetery but funerals with cremation need to travel into Scotland or some distance down the A1 in Northumberland where there is also a woodland burial site.

Neighbourhood initiatives:

Berwick Town Council (a parish council in legal terms) is currently creating a Neighbourhood Plan involving consultation with residents and businesses to help determine the future look of Berwick, Spittal & Tweedmouth. Planning decisions are within the remit of Northumberland County Council.

Local associations:

Berwick Rangers Supporters' Club.

The Bowling Club

A number of clubs and associations operating out of Berwick Leisure Centre.

The Pipe Band – which regularly rehearses in Tweedmouth church.

There is congregational involvement in many local associations for example U3A, textile Groups, the history society, language groups, musical and theatre groups.

Any civic responsibilities of local clergy:

Each year Tweedmouth celebrates the Crowning of the Salmon Queen with an open-air midweek service to which civic dignitaries are invited. This is followed by a Civic Sunday service in church.

There is civic involvement of local clergy in the various acts of Remembrance, including in East Ord which sits within the boundary of Tweedmouth Parish.

Similarly, there is clergy involvement in civic events related to the military association of the town, including cadets and veterans.

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

1.(a) *What percentage of the congregation lives outside the parish?* 17%

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

The congregation whilst predominantly of retirement age remains active and engaged. Whilst there are more women than men, the imbalance is not significant. There are some younger members of the congregation and generally, a reasonable proportion of the congregation are still in employment. The ethnicity reflects that of the local area (97% white ethnicity.)

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

The tradition of the church is broadly evangelical, but with a diverse congregation, many of whom came to faith elsewhere and contribute the depth of their Christian experiences to the lay ministry within and beyond the services. Word based liturgy provides a helpful and authentic, but not restrictive framework to worship. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming. A PCC decision during the incumbency of the last but one vicar confirmed robes would only be required for occasional offices and the celebration of Holy Communion.

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

Currently, during the vacancy, Sunday services are at 10am every week. Morning Worship is celebrated on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month, with a joint, Benefice service of Holy Communion on the 4th Sunday, followed by Benefice lunch.

4. *Give details of weekday services:*

During the vacancy, all weekday services, with the exception of special seasonal services, are held at St John's Church Spittal.

5. *List any authorised ministers (e.g. Reader, Church Army Officer, Ordained Local Minister, Non-stipendiary Minister, Curate in training, retired Clergy.):*
 Rev Michael Johnson (Retired Clergy, PTO in Parish and Diocese.)
 Rev Linda Chapman (Retired Clergy, PTO in Parish and Diocese.)
 Phil Rowett (Reader – Licensed to Officiate.)
 Gordon Chapman (Reader – PTO.)
 Barbara Donaldson (Authorised Worship Leader.)
 Jennie Ritchie (Authorised Worship leader.)
- 6.(a) *What is the average weekly giving of those aged 16 years and older, and what proportion of the giving is gift aided:*
 Regular giving through PGS, SOs and envelope scheme: Weekly average gift: £19.65 - 86% of this giving is eligible for Gift Aid. (Figures based on August 2024)
 This does not include anonymous plate or digital donations – Gift Aid Small Donations is claimed on all such appropriate additional giving.
- (b) *When did the parish last have a stewardship campaign:*
 Generosity Week 29th September – 6th October 2024 was observed. This included preaching on generosity and the importance of using the gifts God has given us to serve and bless others within and beyond the church. Information was provided by the treasurer and the opportunity to ask questions about church finances. Members of the congregation were asked to prayerfully consider their own giving and how they might best give their gifts of time.
7. *How does each church supplement direct giving in order to meet financial needs (eg fundraising events, hall lettings, occasional offices, investments):*
 Supplementary income comes from a variety of sources, principally:
- Generous grants, both regular and occasional from our patrons - the Honourable Company of Mercers.
 - Rental income from Rascals Nursery – the sole tenant of our church hall.
 - Significant gifts from members of the congregation, particularly in respect of Children and Families work
 - Occasional Offices
- 8.(a) *Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full.*
 The total personal expenses paid to our incumbent in 2023 amounted to £1,167. This comprised mileage, telephone, internet and miscellaneous expenses (printer ink, laminates, materials for services etc.) What was submitted, was paid in full.
- (b) *Is there an annual discussion about the level of expenses as part of the budgeting process:*
 No. A detailed expenses claim is submitted monthly, debited to “Church Running Expenses.”
9. *What amount of Share has been (a) requested and (b) paid:*
 Last year: Paid £22,500 representing a 10% voluntary increase on 2022’s Share. (Paid in full.)
 Current year: Paid £24,750 representing a 10% voluntary increase on 2023’s Share. (Paid in full.)
 Next year: An 8% increase was requested by the diocese; a 10% increase has been offered, which will equate to £27,225.
- 10.(a) *Is there any capital project in hand at the moment:* No
- 10.(b) *If so, please give brief details with costs and state how they are to be met:* N/A

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:*

The present church was built in 1783, within a churchyard which was closed in 1864. Originally dedicated to St Boisil, tutor to Cuthbert and Prior of Melrose, this dedication was lost and the church was known as St Bartholomew's for many centuries, deriving from St Bartholomew's Leper Hospital in Spittal (which was then part of Tweedmouth Parish). In 1995 an opportunity came to reinstate St Boisil, so the church is now dedicated to St Bartholomew and St Boisil. There is only one other church in the whole country dedicated to Boisil. The building is in generally good order with a historic Georgian gallery and a chancel added in Victorian times. The building is Grade II Listed by Historic England.

In recent years the following improvements have been made:

- a toilet was installed in the tower vestibule.
- after the removal of the organ from the transept, a neat servery lining two walls was installed providing much greater opportunity for hospitality.
- a high-quality audio-visual system comprising a digital sound desk, four large video screens, cameras and all associated equipment has been installed.

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

The only outstanding major maintenance recommendation from the last Quinquennial inspection (August 2023) relates to:

“Specialist tiler to re-bed and grout areas of loose tesserae around margins of sanctuary tiled floor” investigations have revealed extensive misalignment across the floor; releveling and replacing all tiles now required. Work has begun to explore grant options; quotations have been obtained.

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

The church hall is opposite the church, built on the site of an old tithe barn. It features disabled access and facilities, an upper room for meetings and a fitted kitchen. It is used exclusively by Berwick Rascals Nursery on weekdays throughout the year, closing only at Christmas and New Year. We have a 5-year lease in place which is just commencing its third year. Excellent relations have been established with the Management and Staff, and rental income has proved to be very useful for the Main Church and the upkeep of the Hall itself.

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

The churchyard (closed) is maintained by the Northumberland County Council. An annual Biodiversity Survey is conducted in the churchyard (also in the other two parishes) as part of a national initiative – “Caring for God’s Acre.” A small team of church volunteers maintain the flower borders; a path winds through the churchyard, used by appreciative passers-by.

V. Outreach and Mission

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

Advances are being made in several areas in this respect.

A small team goes into three First schools in the parish to lead assemblies using Open The Book material, with a very positive response from children and staff. These schools have asked us to lead services at key points in the year eg, Christmas, Easter, Harvest. These are sometimes in church and sometimes in school. During lockdown we began taking cakes for the teachers, made by members of the congregation, into schools at the end of each half term to show our appreciation of all the staff do. This has had a big impact in deepening our relationship with the staff and we see it as a way of mirroring God's love for them.

Another team, of an Anna Chaplain and four Anna Friends, visits our local care homes – three in the parish and one in Spittal. Our mission is to support the spiritual wellbeing of all residents through regular stimulating services, occasional communion services and visits. Prayer at the end of life has been offered and appreciated by staff and families. Excellent relationships have been built with the staff, particularly the activity managers in each home.

Members of Tweedmouth church support the Children and Young people's work in the Benefice, physically located at St John's Church, Spittal. The Benefice is currently seeking to recruit a Children and Families Leader for a 3- year period, thanks to a very generous anonymous donation. Much of the current work (Coffee, Chat and Play for pre-school age children and their carers, Teatime Church and Youth Group) happens in St John's, Spittal, but Tweedmouth PCC will be the employer of the Children and Families Leader once appointed.

Advances have been made in establishing missional links with the seamen at Tweedmouth dock – located directly opposite the church.

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

In addition to the regular mission and outreach activities outlined above, the church arranges a variety of additional events with the aim of developing and maintaining relationships in the life of the whole parish. Many, although not all, of these are in the church building, but create opportunities for guests to be invited to experience love, care and fellowship. Examples include:

- Sea Sunday – a Benefice wide event - for the past two years this has been celebrated in the grounds of St John's, Spittal. A wonderful combination of worship, refreshments, stalls and games. Close links have been forged with the RNLI who support on the day and to whom all funds raised are donated. Traditionally the incumbent fulfils the role of Chaplain to the RNLI Station which is located at the boundary of Spittal and Tweedmouth.
- 2024's Try Praying Initiative.
- The Crowning of the Salmon Queen in July, the date of which is set by Tweedmouth - traditionally the Sunday closest to the Feast of St Boisil. We are invited by the organisers to this event, to bless the open-air service/ ceremony.
- A monthly Benefice lunch hosted in the church, made possible by the wonderful new servery.
- A bi-monthly women's prayer breakfast – breakfast, a speaker and prayer.
- The annual Tear Fund Quiz
- Maundy Thursday Holy Communion and Supper for the three parishes.
- Other one-off events such as hosting Christian musicians for concerts, including Celtish, Resound Music, or attendance at larger worship events elsewhere.
- Support for and involvement in LifePath.

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

Home Groups meet regularly for fellowship, prayer and bible study across the parish, currently one in West End, one in Goldstone and one in East Ord. Groups choose their own content for study, but seasonally line up with the wider congregation to share a Lent or Advent resource as appropriate.

- (d) *What are you doing to grow people in leadership:*
Lay ministry is encouraged at various levels and activities. Informal leadership opportunities exist in Home Groups, mission outreach groups, hospitality etc.
- 2.(a) *Please give details of support for the church overseas:*
We provide prayer and financial support to a German family, the Joswigs, working in Ethiopia with SIL. (Bible translation.) They attended Bible College in Berwick and establish enduring links with the church at that time.
Financial support has also been given to Tear Fund, Sunflowers Scotland (Ukraine,) and international disaster appeals.
The PCC continues to encourage increased missional awareness in the congregation, whether at a diocesan, national or international level.
- (b) *How much is given annually:*
Mission giving overall is budgeted as 5% of unrestricted income. Budget for 2024 - £3958.
£1000 is given each year to the Joswigs, through Wycliff
£1000 is given each year to Tear Fund
Disasters are responded to on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.(a) *Give details of support for home missions and charities:*
Regular financial support is given to Resound, Anna Chaplaincy work.
Occasional donations in support of local schools attending "LifePath"
Occasional support of the Local Foodbank particularly at harvest in addition to individuals known to be in need.
- (b) *How much is given annually:*
£500 is given each year to Resound
£500 is allocated to Anna Chaplaincy work
Local mission support given as needs arise.
- 4.(a) *Does the parish have an overseas link:*
Yes, the Joswig family.
- (b) *If so, please state where/who*
Corinna & Andreas Joswig, Dachstal 10 29313 Hambühren GERMANY
- 5.(a) *Is there an organised system of outreach and welcome to new families:*
Ministry with families is taking place principally at St John's Church Spittal.
- (b) *If so, please describe:* N/A
6. *What part does the church play in community care:* The church has no formal role in community care but a number of individuals engage in mentoring and other support with people known through them.
- 7.(a) *Are there Lay Eucharistic Assistants who take communion to the sick:* The Anna Chaplaincy Team
- (b) *If so, who are they:*
Anna Chaplain – Mary Higginson
Anna Friends – Grace Miller, Hazel Heycock, Judith Jennings

8. *What work does the church undertake with young people, other than in church-based organisations (eg open youth work):*
Ministry with families is taking place principally at Spittal.

VI. Ecumenical Relationships

- 1(a) *Involvement in local Council of Churches:*
Tweedmouth Church is a member of Berwick Churches Together.
- (b) *Is there a formal covenant with any other denomination? No*
2. *What informal ecumenical contacts are there?*
Several members of the congregations belong to the Northumbria Community and the Community of Aidan and Hilda, both of which are highly ecumenical.
Many members have wider links with online prayer communities.
A member of the local Catholic church is part of the Anna Chaplaincy team.

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:
Young People:
Adults: Safeguarding Training. First Aid Training.
- 2.(a) *Give details of house/prayer groups:*
East Ord Home group
Goldstone Home Group
West End Home Group
- (b) *Are the leaders clergy or lay:* Lay
- 3.(a) *How do you rate the strength of lay leadership:*
Lay leadership is strong across various aspects of the church's ministry.
- (b) *To what do you credit this strength or the lack of it:*
Members of the congregation come from a wide variety of Christian experiences and have leadership experience in other churches – an eclectic mix which strengthens the body. There is a spirit of unity and purpose – people are willing to step up to assist each other and serve.

IX. Mission

1. *List areas of church life which you consider in need of development:*
 - a. The encouragement of further growth in the spiritual lives of the congregation.
 - b. Creating more opportunities for the congregation to explore and practise different types of prayer.
 - c. The encouragement of a wider number of people to find ways of exercising their particular gifts.
 - d. The recruitment of more team members for existing, well-established teams ministering in our schools and care homes (Anna.)
 - e. An increase in our involvement with our local communities including outreach to the seafarers.
 - f. The expansion of hospitality made possible by the recent installation of a servery.
 - g. The development of the church as part of the Deanery's work on creating a pilgrimage route.

2. *What are the main areas of mission that you think the new priest should prioritise in their ministry:*
 - a. Building on the fellowship created within existing Home Groups; encouraging greater involvement in this aspect of our shared journeys.
 - b. Communicating the deep truths of the gospel in ways understandable by those without a church background.
 - c. Working with the Children and Families Leader to reach children and adults across the Benefice with compassion and vision.
 - d. Working sensitively and inclusively in the community to develop existing relationship and to forge new ones.

3. *In summary, what are the top three challenges with which you and the new priest need to engage:*
 - a. Further developing the spiritual life of the church.
 - b. Leading, equipping and encouraging the congregation to be a power for Christ in the community.
 - c. Engaging the hard-to-reach in the town – especially children and families whilst bridging the gap between incomers and local people and across class boundaries.

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.

XI. The new parish priest

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

- A gospel focussed person with a clear vision of how we could work to put our faith in God at the heart of all we do.
- A person committed to prayer as foundational to all church life, especially vision for the future
- Good leadership skills, (servant hearted) supporting existing leadership structures and nurturing new leaders and lay ministry generally
- A person with an ability to communicate effectively
- Someone with a clear narrative of their calling to our Benefice
- Someone with a commitment to church without walls and an inclusive church community
- Good administrative skills/ organised
- Someone with a sensitivity to local history and culture