

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:* Bedlington St Cuthbert
2. *Name of Parish church(es)* St Cuthbert's
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):* Cambois & Sleekburn
5. *Deanery:* Bedlington
6. *Population:* 16,191 (2021 census)
- 7.(a) *Number on Electoral Roll* 83
- (b) *Date of APCM at which this number was declared:* 18th May, 2025
7. *Attendance at worship at each church:*

<i>Average Sunday Communicants</i>	45
<i>Average Sunday attendance</i>	40
<i>Average weekday Communicants</i>	10
<i>Average weekday attendance</i>	10
8. *Occasional Offices:*

<i>Number of baptisms in the last 12 months:</i>	35
<i>Number of persons confirmed in the last 12 months:</i>	6
<i>Number of weddings in the last 12 months:</i>	9
<i>Number of funerals in church in the last 12 months:</i>	30
<i>Number of funerals taken by clergy not in church in the last 12 months:</i>	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.:*

From 2021 Census:

The median age for Bedlington is 49.

15.9% of people in Bedlington Town (Northumberland) are under 16 years old, and 24.7% are aged 65 and over.

98.1% of people identified with a White ethnic group

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

The 2021 Census identified 67.5% of individuals had not worked in the past 12 months. There are a large number of families needing support from our local food banks and help with housing. There is a Women's Refuge within the parish.

However the situation is very similar to that which is found in other towns in South-East Northumberland.

2. *Please list:*

Local schools in the Parish:

Primary & First Schools & Academies

Whitley Memorial Church of England Primary School

Bedlington West End Primary School

Meadowdale Academy

St. Bede's Roman Catholic Primary School

High Schools

St. Bede's Roman Catholic High School

Bedlington Academy (the Academy is in St. John's parish but we are within its catchment area)

Special Schools - None

Youth centres: None

Hospitals: None

Nursing/residential homes, sheltered housing:

Nursing/Residential Care Homes

Birkenshaw Manor

Meadow Park

Chester Court

Sheltered Housing

Woolsington Court

Willow Vale

Wansbeck Court

Learning/Disability Centres None

Places of worship of other denominations and faiths:

St. Bede's Roman Catholic Church

Bedlington Salvation Army

Trinity Church

Bedlington Christian Fellowship

Local businesses:

Post Office/Newsagent, Petrol Station/Garage, a number of Hairdressers/Beauty Salons, Estate Agents, Convenience Stores, Artisan Bakery, Card & Gift Shop, Pet Groomers, Betting Shop, Pharmacy, Dentist, Physiotherapist, Public Houses, Cafes & Restaurants, Aldi, Lidl, Morrisons Supermarkets

Neighbourhood initiatives: None

Local associations:

Uniformed Organisation include 1st Bedlington St. Cuthbert's Brownies, Bedlington Guides

Bedlington ATC Squadron, Bedlington Army Cadets

Bedlington History Society

The Bedlington Singers

Bedlington Brass

Bedlington Ukulele Band

Various Sports Groups

Any civic responsibilities of local clergy:

Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial, there have also been occasional Civic Services held in our church in the past.

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

1.(a) *What percentage of the congregation lives outside the parish?*
39.8%

(b) *Describe the congregation in terms of age, employment, culture, ethnicity and gender:*
Our congregation age range is mainly 60s to 90s, a small number of couples with the majority being individuals, a small number of children (most of whom attend Messy Church) and occasional young people during University Holidays. Ethnicity is mainly white British. The congregation is mostly retired, with some employed and a few unemployed.

2. *Please describe the tradition of your church and give details of robes/vestments worn by officiants:*
 Our church tradition is traditional Anglican “middle of the road”.
 Our tradition has been that officiants wear vestments of a Chasuble and Stole, colour according to season, although our last incumbent often preferred Cassock Alb & Stole. All our licensed Readers also robe

3. *Give details of Sunday services with times and form of service used:*
 Sunday:
 8.00 am BCP Said Holy Communion (although this has been suspended during the Vacancy)
 9.30 am Morning Prayer with Hymns (1st & 3rd Sundays of the month)
 9.30 am Common Worship Sung Eucharist (2nd & 4th Sundays of the month)
 Fifth Sunday United Benefice Common Worship Sung Eucharist – time depends on hosting church
 3.00 pm Messy Church (1st Sunday of the Month)

4. *Give details of weekday services:*
 Wednesday 9.15 am. – Said Eucharist - Common Worship

5. *List any authorised ministers (e.g. Reader, Church Army Officer, Ordained Local Minister, Non-stipendiary Minister, Curate in training, retired Clergy):*
 Two Licensed Readers, Two Readers with PTO, One Reader Emeritus (who is no longer able to attend), One Ordinand in Training and One Retired Clergy without PTO who does not attend worship

- 6.(a) *What is the average weekly giving of those aged 16 years and older, and what proportion of the giving is gift aided:*
 £440.00, of which approximately 50% is gift aided

- (b) *When did the parish last have a stewardship campaign:* Approx 2010 In 2022/23 a member of the Generous Giving Team preached at our Sunday Morning Eucharist and in 2024 we had a United Benefice Generous Giving service in which one of our Readers preached on Generosity in faith, spirit and finance.

7. *How does each church supplement direct giving in order to meet financial needs (eg fundraising events, hall lettings, occasional offices, investments):*
 Fundraising & Social Events, a small amount from Community Space Hire, Occasional Offices, Restricted Investment Income (Church Fabric)

- 8.(a) *Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full.*
 We have always paid the incumbent’s expenses in full
 Our previous incumbent claimed little in expenses mostly due to the fact that he didn’t drive

- (b) *Is there an annual discussion about the level of expenses as part of the budgeting process:*
This is an annual item on our PCC Agenda, which includes a recommendation that expenses are claimed monthly in arrears.
9. *What amount of Share has been (a) requested and (b) paid:*
Last year: £42,500
 (NB some of this was paid in Jan/Feb 2025 due to the death of our Treasurer at the end of 2024 resulting in difficulties accessing bank accounts and an inability to undertake internet banking)
Current year: £42,500
Next year: £42,500
- 10.(a) *Is there any capital project in hand at the moment:*
Repairs to Church Clock Strike Mechanism
- 10.(b) *If so, please give brief details with costs and state how they are to be met:*
Initial Quotation £13,726 plus VAT, cost to be met from Restricted Fabric Fund Investment Income and some donations.
11. *Please attach a copy of the latest statement of accounts. – See separate document*

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

- 1.(a) *What is the general state of repair of the churches:*
Church is in a good state of repair
- (b) *Please give details of any major maintenance needed following the last Quinquennial Inspection:*
All works identified in the 2022 Quinquennial Inspection for completion within 12 months have been completed.
2. *Please give details of church halls and any other ancillary buildings (and an indication of the level of their use).*
None
3. *Is there a churchyard to maintain and who is responsible for its maintenance?*
Yes - Our Churchyard is closed (except for the burial of ashes) and is the responsibility of Northumberland County Council. A small number of the congregation also undertake work to keep it tidy, weed free and maintain the flower tubs and planters

V. Outreach and Mission

- 1.(a) *What are the regular mission and outreach activities of the parish:*
Our Schools ministry, our links with our uniformed organisations and our engagement with the local community through our fund raising and social events

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

Faith on Thursday Group (based at St. John's Sleekburn) but with members from across the United Benefice, Pub Group, Bible Study, Thought for the Week Booklet (published quarterly)

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

Bible study groups mostly at Lent and Advent, but occasionally at other times too

Confirmation classes (2024)

Baptism Preparation

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

Encouraging people to lead intercessions, read lessons and to consider Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM)/ Reader Training.

2.(a) Please give details of support for the church overseas:

We have an annual coffee morning for Christian Aid each year and have had special events in response to particular disasters (e.g. Earthquake Appeal, Support for Ukrainian Refugees).

(b) How much is given annually:

Christian Aid Coffee Morning approximately £350

Special Appeals between £500 - £1,000

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

We hold an annual Charity Quiz, support the Royal British Legion by having a box of poppies in Church, a Christmas Card Tree each year for St Oswald's Hospice.

We also have collection boxes in Church for the Bedlington Food Bank, Toiletries for the Women's Refuge and have an Annual Toy Service at Christmas with the toys being distributed in partnership with the Salvation Army

(b) How much is given annually:

Approximately £700 (this does not include the value of the donations to the Food Bank/Women's Refuge or Toy Service)

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

No

(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:

We have Sidespeople to welcome people each Sunday morning and at all other services

A printed Welcome Leaflet with details of service times and activities is given to all newcomers together with a copy of our Parish Magazine. At Christmas a postcard detailing all the services for Advent & Christmas is delivered to homes in the parish (over 3,000 in 2024, concentrating particularly on the new housing estates, who also received a Welcome Leaflet)

6. *What part does the church play in community care:*
A small number of our congregation receive communion at home. The Ministry Group supported the incumbent in visiting Care Homes in the parish, but this has not continued to the same degree following Covid
- 7.(a) *Are there Lay Eucharistic Assistants who take communion to the sick:*
Yes
- (b) *If so, who are they:*
Two authorized members of the congregation as well as our Licensed Readers administer home communion which has been previously consecrated.
8. *What work does the church undertake with young people, other than in church based organisations (eg open youth work):*
Our previous incumbent went into our Church School every week and the children generally come into church at least once a Term as well as for educational/RE visits
The other primary schools in the parish come into our Church at Easter, Harvest and Christmas with the service being led by our Incumbent and Licensed Readers.
We have no church based youth work activities at present but our previous incumbent was Padre to the Bedlington ATC Squadron

VI. Ecumenical Relationships

- 1(a) *Involvement in local Council of Churches*
We are part of Churches Together in Bedlingtonshire, and work together during the year supporting the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Lent Lunches, Market Place Act of Witness on Good Friday, Remembrance Sunday, Advent Carol Service. We are usually the host church for the annual Churches Together Quiz
- (b) *Is there a formal covenant with any other denomination?* No
2. *What informal ecumenical contacts are there* A member of our congregation works at Bedlington Salvation Army and this connection resulted in us establishing our Annual Toy Service and working with them to distribute the toys. Members of our congregation also volunteer at the Bedlington Food Bank

VII. Church Education and Social Provision

- 1.(a) *Name of Church School(s), if applicable:* Whitley Memorial Church of England Primary School
- (b) *Aided*
- (c) *Number of pupils on roll (approx.):* 265. It is expected that this will reduce by 25-30 in September 2025
- If aided, does the PCC support the school:* It did in the past but does not do so currently

VIII. Lay Education and Participation

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

Children: Monthly Messy Church Service - average attendance: 8

School Visits to Church at least once a term from the Primary Schools in the parish and more frequently in the case of our CofE Primary School (*sometimes by class or year group and on occasions the whole school*);

Young People: None

Adults: We have Lent, Advent and other Bible Study Groups (average attendance 12), Pub Group, Faith Groups

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

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

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

- (b) *To what do you credit this strength or the lack of it:*
Our Ministry Team comprising of our Licensed Readers and Ordinand in Training, previously supported by our Incumbent, are committed to providing first class worship/study groups, not only at St. Cuthbert's but across the United Benefice.

IX. Mission

1. *List areas of church life which you consider in need of development:*
Build on the progress made following the creation of our United Benefice
Bring more families into Church, covering all age groups
Strengthen our links with our Care Homes and Sheltered Housing, which has reduced in recent years
Supporting the Governing Body of our Church School
2. *What are the main areas of mission that you think the new priest should prioritise in their ministry:*

Church Growth

- continuing further engagement with the residents of the parishes within the United Benefice;
- by reaching more people, encouraging them to attend church and to be "Church" in the community;
- in line with the Diocesan values of Growing Younger in the church, increase and strengthen ministry across all age groups and inspire more lay participation;
- growing youth engagement in new opportunities to explore faith by strengthening school relationships and ministry to families;

Spiritual Growth

- re-engage with the local community through creative spiritual outreach to engage new-comers to explore and deepen faith;
- provide engaging discipleship through Bible study, prayer groups and discipleship courses to help deepen faith and walk alongside people whatever their background.

Leadership & Lay Ministry

- build on the progress and “unity” achieved following the creation of our United Benefice;
- a strong innovative leader who is proactive in raising up the laity, equipping and empowering them to take on greater roles in ministry, mission and outreach;
- Good stewardship of our limited financial resources and our volunteers

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

- continuing further engagement with the residents of the parishes within the United Benefice;
- reaching more people, encouraging them to attend church and to be “Church” in the community;
- growing youth engagement in new opportunities to explore faith by strengthening school relationships and ministry to families;

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:

- An experienced priest who can be a training incumbent to our ordinand in training who will serve her curacy with us.
- A person with leadership skills, who communicates well and can work alongside as well as support our Ministry Team, Churchwardens, PCCs and committed congregations as a team within the United Benefice.
- Someone who is experienced in working with children and young people who is confident in school settings as well as with youth ministry.
- A person who can connect with the residents and communities within the United Benefice and is able to build trust with people both outside and within the church demographic;
- Someone who is committed to prayer and guided by the holy spirit, with an awareness of the needs and culture of the local community.
- A person who is an enabler and encourager, willing to be an agent of change and embrace new ways of doing church with a heart for evangelism.
- An enthusiastic person with good listening and communication skills who will provide spiritual growth, pastoral care, offer affirming religious guidance and promote faith.