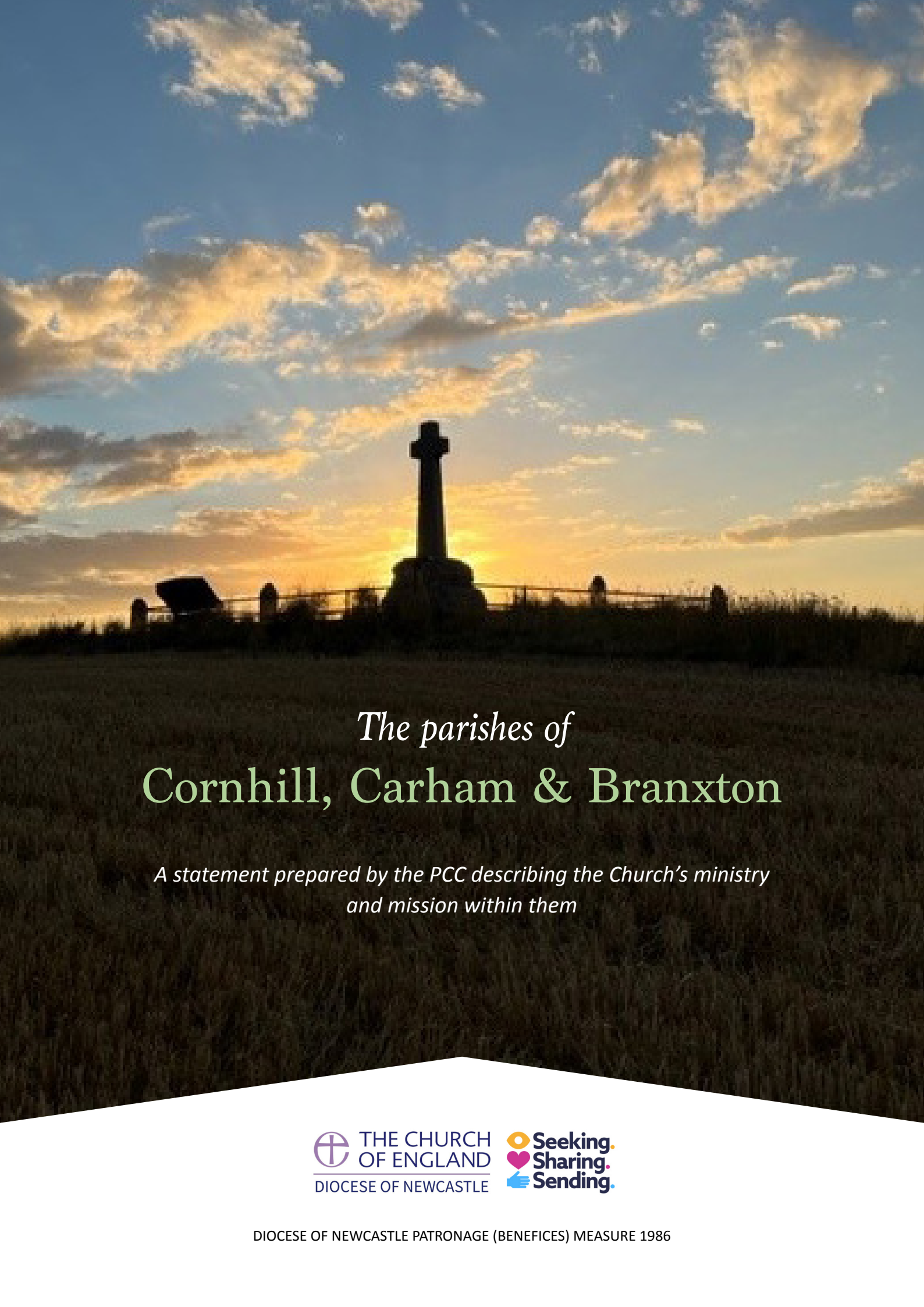




The parishes of Cornhill, Carham & Branxton

*A statement prepared by the PCC describing the Church's ministry
and mission within them*

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Welcome to the Diocese of Newcastle

Thank you so much for your interest in this role, and I hope you enjoy reading the information contained in this brochure and will find it helpful for your discernment. I am three years into being Bishop of Newcastle and I rejoice in this calling. Our diocese is a vibrant and varied blend of parishes, chaplaincies, schools, and ministry-contexts and is home to diverse geographical contexts with rich history and Christian spirituality. Our Northeast region is known for its friendliness and creativity, in city, coastal and rural areas. Our Diocese has responded to the challenges and joys of our region with imagination and resolve, mindful of our own financial challenges but undeterred in our hope and trust in God's generous provision. Shaped by the Five Marks of Mission and upheld by the dynamics of seeking, sharing, and sending, we are attentive to the need to speak the good news of God's Kingdom, and to be faithful stewards of our environment.

You will be joining us at a crucial point in our mapping out and implementation of vision and strategy: to be confident Christians enabling more and different people to experience life in all its fullness. Your role in this will offer opportunities to grow and develop in your own ministry. The Diocese of Newcastle has a long and proud history of inclusion and speaking up for the vulnerable and marginalised. We are the only diocese in the Church of England to have a paid chaplain to the victims and survivors of Church-based abuse, and our work with victims and survivors has been upheld as pioneering and ground-breaking.

Following a refresh of our Diocesan vision, to be confident Christians enabling more and different people to experience life in its fullness, we are working towards a bid to the National Church for strategic funding. Additionally, having received a generous legacy from the 10 Bishop of Newcastle (+Alec Graham) we are in the process of establishing a new 'Bishop of Newcastle Foundation' and developing a new partnership with the Community Foundation Northeast (a major philanthropic convenor in our region). It is hoped this will enable parishes across the diocese to bid for funding for projects that are within areas of interest to Bishop Alec (education, and children and young people being two such areas). Additionally, the diocese is undertaking a major review of its governance structures to ensure we are working efficiently across all areas of our engagement in God's mission, and to reduce silo working.

The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley
Bishop of Newcastle

About the Diocese of Newcastle



The Diocese of Newcastle is the Church of England's most northerly Diocese. Formed in 1882, the Diocese covered an area almost equivalent to the then County of Northumberland. With 169 parishes across 2,110 square miles, the Diocese covers the local authorities of Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside and also small parts of County Durham and Cumbria. Under the episcopal leadership of our Diocesan Bishop, The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley and the suffragan Bishop of Berwick, The Rt Revd Mark Wroe, we are resourced by two Archdeacons, and a team of lay and ordained officers who support the development of mission and ministry across the Diocese. Our Cathedral, under the leadership of The Very Revd Lee Batson, is a vibrant place of worship and outreach and plays a vital role in the life of the City of Newcastle.

There are 12 deaneries within 2 archdeaconries (Lindisfarne and Northumberland), which serve a population of 831,600 people across a variety of communities ranging from sparse rural to market towns, coastal, suburban, and larger inner-city areas. We have a current cohort of 95 stipendiary clergy (office holders), 20 self-supporting clergy, and 47 Readers,

alongside a number of chaplaincies, pioneers, and new and emerging worshipping communities. A small administration team is based at Church House, North Shields. Church House is also the base for the Joint Education Team and Joint Communications Team (serving the Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle), the Lindisfarne College of Theology and a Religious Resources Centre.

The Diocese has recently increased its resourcing of safeguarding in the light of its INEQE safeguarding report, which was published in 2024. Our new Director of Safeguarding works alongside two assistant staff members in the areas of case work and training, with separate administrative support. The Diocese and its Cathedral are rightly proud of their work with the victims and survivors of church abuse, and we are the only Diocese in the Church of England to resource a chaplaincy to victims and survivors of church abuse.

The Diocese also has a new chaplaincy support for the LGBTQI+ communities, which is part of our diocesan-wide commitment to foster a climate of inclusion and welcome.

Welcome to Norham Deanery

If the diocese of Newcastle is the most northerly diocese, then Norham Deanery is the most northerly deanery in the Church of England. Running along the (often contested) border between England and Scotland, and bounded in the East by the North Sea, it is a liminal place of possibility. Recognised as the cradle of 'Christianity in the North', we have a rich heritage with our northern saints.

Over the centuries, innovation, renewal and reform have become bread and butter up here in the north, and the Golden Age of Northumbria touches on just the tip of the iceberg. The heritage, spiritual tradition, and innovation in this and neighbouring deaneries are of national and international significance.

We are a small, friendly deanery and would welcome a new colleague who will be a team player within the deanery, contribute to our deanery plan alongside lay and ordained colleagues, and lead and challenge us in new areas.

As a deanery, we are excited to continue our ministry in the chaplaincy areas of pilgrimage, children and young people, and we hope that you are equally excited to take the lead for the Deanery on Agricultural Chaplaincy. The land, farming, the River Tweed, fishing, sustainability, and pastoral care of our agricultural communities are all part of the lifeblood of North Northumberland, and this role sits at the heart of what we can offer those whom God has called us to serve here."

Fr Lee Taylor

Area Dean of Norham Deanery



Agricultural Chaplaincy Role

The House for Duty Priest will work with the Parishes of Cornhill, Carham and Branxton, supporting their church services and pastoral care, and will also have a deanery-wide role as an agricultural chaplain. This new role will be developed in discussion with the Area Dean and Lay Chair, and its purpose will be to offer pastoral support to farmers, including young farmers, farming families, agricultural communities and ancillary services, primarily across Norham Deanery.

Key opportunities for development

Agricultural Chaplaincy

- Chaplaincy presence – Provide a visible, regular and supportive presence at livestock markets, agricultural shows, seasonal gatherings and other significant events throughout the farming year.
- Seasonal worship – Coordinate, create and lead acts of worship and supportive events during key agricultural seasons (e.g., Plough Sunday, Rogation, Beating the Bounds, Lammas, and Harvest).
- Rural fellowship – Develop new opportunities for Christian fellowship and social connection for those whose working patterns make regular Sunday attendance difficult.
- Understanding farming issues – Cultivate a strong working knowledge of the pressures, challenges and opportunities facing the farming community, and offer proactive and responsive pastoral and spiritual care to agricultural and rural communities
- Stakeholder relationships – Develop and maintain links with external stakeholders and ecumenical networks, building relationships with local agencies, charities, support organisations and ecumenical partners.
- Communications – Provide appropriate communications content at parish, deanery and diocesan levels and strengthen connections between local churches and rural businesses, organisations and communities.
- Training – Attend relevant Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) training as agreed.
- Support agencies – Maintain working knowledge of key support agencies such as the Addington Fund, the Agricultural Chaplains Association, the Arthur Rank Centre, the Farming Community Network, the NFU, RABI, the Royal Countryside Trust, Young Farmers Clubs and You Are Not Alone.





View from Cornhill looking towards Coldstream in Scotland

The Local Community

The three Parishes of Cornhill, Carham and Branxton are situated at the top of Northumberland, adjacent to the beautiful Cheviot hills.

Cornhill village, which is one mile from the Scottish border, has a population of c.400 people, with a further 150-200 living in outlying farms and hamlets. This is a splendid rural community set in pretty countryside. The village has a well-known and hugely popular shop, with Post Office and delicatessen, which attracts people from far and wide. The family that runs it is energetic and outward looking.

There is a strong sense of community spirit, which is further amplified by the Collingwood Arms, a hotel and restaurant. Northumberland family business Rickerby Ltd is an agricultural machinery company located in Cornhill, and is one of the larger employers of people living in the area.

There is a village hall which is used by local groups for a range of activities including bowls, sewing, soup lunches, choir, snooker as well as space for meetings. The village school closed in 2012 because of falling numbers of students. This has now been transferred to a community trust where the former classrooms are now business units, which range from jewellery making workshops, craft shop and Pilates studio. The former school playing field is now the Village Green.

Carham Parish is a scattered, very rural community bounded on two sides by the Scottish border. There are two villages in the parish: Carham is a small hamlet of 10 houses, mostly rented; Wark has 50 houses. The rest of the parish is made up of about 15 farms of various sizes and has about 300 inhabitants, of which about a third live closer to, and look to the churches of Cornhill, Branxton and Kirknewton.

Branxton is a small Parish comprising Branxton village and surrounding scattered farm-based communities. Whilst farming is the main industry in the parish, some small home-based businesses also operate. There is also a popular beauty salon, called The Beauty Room, which is set in the heart of the village. The population is a mixture of families and retirees. There are approximately 11 children in the village. There is very little ethnic mix in the population; it is a low-income area with limited job opportunities and high travel costs. There is a village hall and a community-run play park.

Children from the parishes mostly attend Ford School, about four miles away. There are middle and high schools in Berwick, about 15 miles away, and a couple of children travel to Alnwick, about 30 miles away.

In all three Parishes, the land is mostly good to moderate arable land with a proportion of permanent grassland supporting sheep and cattle. The River Tweed is renowned as a superlative salmon fishing river with an international reputation for its ecological management. The area benefits from low rainfall (the hills round the Tweed valley create an effective rain shadow) – comparable to East Anglia without being quite as warm!

The three Parishes are only about an hour by car from Edinburgh and Newcastle and London is 4 hours by train from Berwick upon Tweed. The local bus services offer a limited service. Whilst there are local taxis, it is essential to have a car to get around.

The Church Community

Cornhill Church has had an average congregation of 11 people for the past 150 years. They do well on high days and holidays, with 20 people attending worship at Easter, and more than 200 attending the 'must do' Christmas carol celebration, which has been run by the congregation for many years. Unsurprisingly, the congregation is elderly.

Carham Church has a regular attendance of 5 to 12 at its fortnightly services. These are mostly of a higher age group.

At Branxton the congregation at St.Paul's is predominantly middle aged and older. Attendance varies according to the type of service, with 6-12 people for the Sunday morning services and 20-40 for special services.



View of Cornhill and the Cheviots

Statistics

	Cornhill	Carham	Branxton
Population	450	300	130
Electoral Roll	14	14	20
Av Sunday Communicants	9	n/a	8
Av Sunday Attendance	9	7	8
Av Sunday Baptisms per annum	0-1	0	0-1
Av Confirmations per annum	0	0	0
Av Weddings per annum	0-1	0-1	0-1
Av Funerals per annum	4	1	2
Av House Communicants	0	0	0



Church Buildings

St Helen's, Cornhill

[View on map](#)



St Helen's at Cornhill is on the site of an ancient seat of worship. It was enlarged and modernised in the late 1830s to provide seating for some 200 people. The congregation removed some of the pews about twenty years ago to provide meeting space for the congregation and other gatherings, together with social events. They meet and have coffee in the church before the service, as well as holding fundraising coffee mornings. They have also hosted concerts, recitals, flower shows and art exhibitions at the back of the church.

Over the last few years' St Helen's have been fundraising for the restoration of their stained-glass windows, including the locally famous 'Hemming Window'. In celebration of the completion of this project, Bishop Helen-Ann of Newcastle visited the church and led the Sunday morning worship.

Cornhill has a village hall, but no Church Hall. There are two graveyards at Cornhill. The one in which the church sits, is closed and is maintained by the council. The 'new' graveyard sits behind the Village Hall and is maintained by the PCC.

St Cuthbert's, Carham

[View on map](#)



St. Cuthbert's at Carham is a stone building dating from the 1780s, with additions in the 1860s. It has a capacity of about 110 in box pews. It is an ancient site of worship, granted to St Cuthbert in 675. The church has recently been enhanced with interpretation boards on the inside and outside, concerning the history of the area, the church building and the link with St Cuthbert. There is no Church Hall although the rear of the church is used for PCC and Parish council meetings and as a polling station for elections. The Church is the only publicly accessible building in the parish.

Whilst the churchyard is quite full, there are still several plots available. Since there are only one or two burials annually, the current capacity should last for several years yet, possibly indefinitely. The maintenance of the churchyard including grass cutting is carried out as voluntary work.

St Paul's, Branxton

[View on map](#)



St. Paul's at Branxton is a small church with seating for 70 people. A church is documented as being on the site in 1195; the building seen today dates from alterations carried out in 1849. The interior of the church was re-decorated in 2012 and the upper section of the tower re-pointed in 2013. New inner entrance doors made from local oak with etched glass panels, were made to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Flodden in 1513. The damp aisle floor has recently been replaced by timber boarding and new carpet. Most of the congregation live in the village and usually have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat after the Sunday service.

The old churchyard surrounding the church is now closed and is maintained by Northumberland County Council. A new churchyard was opened in 1950, opposite the church and this is maintained by the PCC. A car park opposite St Paul's has recently been installed to help with Church parking and to further accommodate visitors to the site of the Battle of Flodden.

No additional church buildings exist in Branxton, but there is an excellent village hall which is used for PCC meetings and the annual Harvest Thanksgiving supper.

Patterns of Worship

	Cornhill	Carham	Branxton
1st Sunday in the month	11.00 Morning Worship	–	9.30 Holy Communion
2nd Sunday in the month	–	11.00 Morning Worship	–
3rd Sunday in the month	11.00 Holy Communion	–	9.30 Morning Worship
4th Sunday in the month	–	11.00 Morning Worship	–
5th Sunday in the month	11.00 Joint Service rotating between the three parishes		



Scenes from St Paul's, Branxton

Other Services

Cornhill Church hosts a Christmas Carol Celebration on Christmas Eve, followed by wine and mince pies. Their Harvest Service has, in the past, been followed by a Harvest Lunch at the Collingwood Arms. The congregation are invited to meet before each service for coffee.

Carham holds a Harvest Thanksgiving Service and a Carol Service. There are Communion Services at Christmas and Easter.

Branxton's Harvest Festival is held on a Friday evening in autumn, followed by a meal in the village hall. Both the Harvest Service and Carol Service attract large numbers.

A joint service is held for Remembrance Sunday at Cornhill Church and War Memorial, which attracts a large number from the three parishes, including the congregation of the Methodist Chapel at Donaldson's Lodge. Every 5th Sunday of the year, the congregations come together for a service at one of the three churches, with each church taking a turn.

Church Tradition

Cornhill, Carham and Branxton, are low to middle Anglican. Branxton and Cornhill use the Common Worship liturgy for Communion and Carham normally uses the BCP (at Christmas and Easter only), and all use a simple sheet for Morning Worship.

Church Activities

- Lent and Advent courses in recent years have attracted a small number of regular attenders.
- The PCC of Cornhill Church donates the collection on Remembrance Sunday, which is a joint service, to a Service Charity (such as BLESMA, Veteran's Aid and the Royal British Legion).
- The PCC at Cornhill occasionally revisits its policy on the handling of collections at funerals. The long-standing policy has been to give 50% of the collection to a charity of the bereaved family's choice.
- Cornhill Church also operates a community and project fund, which is used to support both church projects and community initiatives.
- Across the three parishes there are a number of regular activities and meetings. These include archaeological and history societies; a community choir; a monthly film and afternoon tea; indoor bowls; flower and produce shows and walking groups. Members of the church are involved in most of these organisations and they provide a fruitful source of connection into, and contact with the wider community.
- Once a year, one of the joint Fifth Sunday services is a Christian Aid Service, with a collection for Christian Aid.



Ministry

Ministerial oversight will be provided by the incumbent of a neighbouring parish within the Deanery.

- Lay people lead worship about 50% of the time.
- At Cornhill lay people take it in turn to read the lesson. 1 or 2 lay people lead the intercessions.
- At Carham lay people take it in turn to read the lesson, and lead many Morning Worship services.
- St. Paul's at Branxton has four lesson readers and one person who leads intercessions. Morning worship services are lay-led.
- Retired clergy from elsewhere in the Deanery provide cover for Holy Communion when necessary.

Left: St Cuthbert's, Carham

Finance

Each church holds a funding campaign. Branxton church recently supported the local foodbank, donating both food and 25% of the Harvest Supper fund.

No major debts exist in any of the Parishes and all pay their Parish Share regularly and in full and collect Gift Aid.

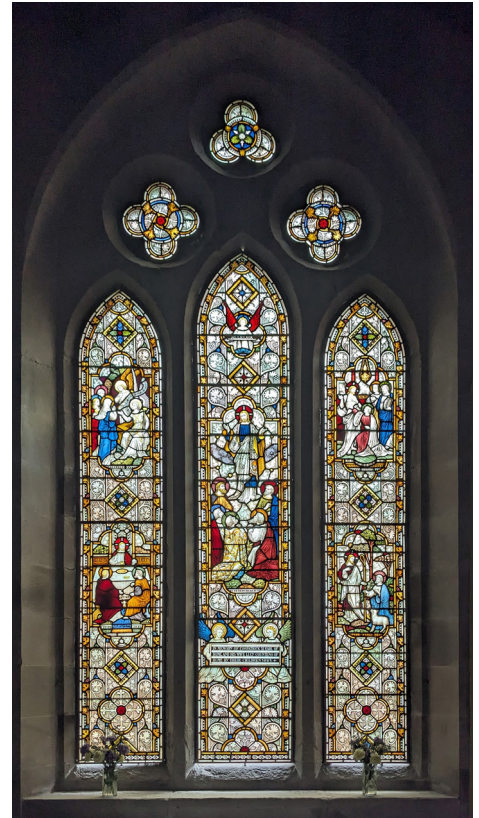
The three Parishes work together with Norham to pay expenses from a common purse. Expenses include council tax, water rates, a percentage of the phone and all travel expenses.

Community Involvement

At Cornhill, local people who don't necessarily worship support the Church in other ways, such as by mowing the grass, cleaning the church and winding the clock. They enjoy friendly and mutually supportive relations with the village shop and the Collingwood Arms Hotel. The back of the Church is available for tourist and community information. Cornhill Village Hall hosts a monthly 'Soup and Sandwich Lunch' in conjunction with Bell View Charity. Some church members help with this, and also an annual Christmas lunch and summer tea. The church is always open.

Carham Church is always open. The church participated in the 1000th anniversary of the Battle of Carham in 2018 and there are interpretation and information boards about the battle. There are ongoing investigations into the history of the area of which the church is a part

St.Paul's in Branxton is always open. There is a visitor's book to leave comments in. Postcards and a booklet with an account of the Battle of Flodden, written by a late member of the congregation, are for sale. There is a card machine and honesty box, which on the whole works well. The Church is designated as one of the main sites of the first English and cross border eco-museum. (Please visit www.flodden1513.com.) Branxton participates in the Flodden ride-out, part of the Coldstream Civic Week, every August and has a special service in early September around the anniversary of the battle. Church news and events are publicised in the local *Fourum* newsletter (covering Ford, Etal, Crookham and Branxton communities).



Hemming Window in St Helen's

Relationships with Neighbouring Parishes

Norham Deanery Development Group is working actively on its plan for mission and ministry. We seek a priest who will engage with the Deanery through Chapter and Synod, and play a role in working with agricultural communities, developing relationships, and supporting those who are challenged in their environments.

Ecumenical Relationships

We have good informal relations and our congregations include individuals from other denominations e.g. the Salvation Army, the United Reformed Church, the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church. The only Church of a different denomination is a Methodist Church in the Parish of Cornhill, situated in the next village. The Methodist congregation joins the Remembrance Sunday Service each November.

As a legacy of the Flodden 500 Commemoration, church ministers from both sides of the border have good relations, and have worked together to produce a tourist leaflet about the local churches. Until one of their number retired, they met about three times a year for fellowship. The Priest in Charge is part of a cross-border Pioneer Ministers' Learning Community.

A high proportion of the border Parishes include people who are affiliated to the Church of Scotland.

The Parishes and the Future

The PCCs would like to see the current lay involvement in services built upon with the support of the new house for duty Priest.

We would like to continue the strategic development of identifying one or more 'unique selling points' for each church, and how/what each church has to offer might contribute to a larger whole, both within the group of parishes and in relation to the rest of the deanery.





The War Memorial (right) is located opposite The Collingwood Arms in Cornhill (above).



The New Assistant Priest

We are looking for someone who can lead and care for the congregations within an agricultural mission context.

The Vicarage is a 4-bedroom traditional stone house with a medium-sized garden and a garage, situated in the picturesque village of Branxton, just off the A697. There is a local shop at Cornhill, and a wider range of shops and small supermarkets at Wooler and Coldstream. Health centres are available at Wooler and Coldstream. The larger towns of Berwick upon Tweed and Kelso are approximately 14 miles from Branxton and offer a wider range of shopping facilities. Berwick-upon-Tweed also has a small theatre..

More information can be found at:

www.cornhillchurch.org.uk

www.carhamparish.org

www.stpaulsbranxton.org



The Vicarage, Branxton

