

Vacancy: Vicar, Parish of Starbeck, Harrogate, North Yorkshire

Bishop of Ripon's Letter – February 2026

Thank you for your interest in the above post. This is an opportune and hopeful time in the life of this single church parish and an exciting vacancy for any who feel called to consider it. The people of St Andrew's are in good heart, praying for someone who will love, lead and journey with them in enthusiasm, determination and imagination.

Starbeck is a varied, dynamic and interesting community for a priest who wants to live incarnationally amongst all sorts of different types of people, with diverse gifts and needs. The parish is situated between the well-known Spa town of Harrogate and the historic town of Knaresborough, both vibrant and appealing communities in different ways. There will be no end of leisure, cultural and heritage interests to engage with as well as beautiful countryside (including the Yorkshire Dales and Moors), visitor attractions and appealing cities (including Ripon, York and Leeds) all within very easy reach.

The Diocese of Leeds is the newest diocese in the Church of England, formally created in 2014. There is a growing appreciation of the ways in which the breadth of vision and depth of resources of a large diocese can support the ministry of parishes in our various contexts. The Barnabas programme, supported by central funding encourages and enables clergy and lay together be confident Christians, growing churches and transforming communities. For more information visit [Barnabas](#).

In the Diocese of Leeds you'll find, as I did, a warm welcome, supportive colleagues and an enabling culture. There is a sense of 'youthfulness' in the structures which encourages creativity and innovation and is not hampered by deep seated tradition which can limit openness to change. In the Ripon Episcopal Area, and especially in the Deanery of Harrogate of which Starbeck is part, clergy and ministers are deeply committed to mission and ministry and appreciate the collegiality they enjoy with one another, working together to overcome challenges, develop vision and implement plans. In my opinion, and based on my experience, this is a very positive and hopeful time for someone to consider joining the Diocese of Leeds (or moving within it).

In Starbeck we hope the new Vicar will work with committed clergy (including a current curate) and lay people to further grow and develop a strong foundation of worship, discipleship, community outreach, good stewardship and hopeful vision. I encourage you to take time to read the beautifully produced and attractive brochure and explore in detail the facts and figures in the profile because there you will see not only the obvious strengths, but also more hidden treasures of love and care already at work, and the overwhelming potential for growth and development in mission and ministry. For example, you will notice that the worshipping community is relatively small for a sizeable local population which includes a large proportion of 'Cultural Christians'. You will also see that almost half of those who attend worship travel into the parish, so there is much scope to draw more local

people God's love through the church. The area has more deprivation than nearby Harrogate. Starbeck uses well the recently re-imagined, welcoming, versatile and accessible church building and other well-maintained rooms and facilities it has - but there is plenty more scope to meet local need, hunger and searching.

Members of the congregation are committed, energised and hopeful about the future. They have worked hard in the vacancy and look forward to welcoming a new Vicar who will care for them, pray with them and lead them to share and preach the good news of Jesus Christ; nurture new and long-standing disciples; bring the compassion of Christ to those in need; and grow ministry amongst families, children and young people.

As you explore the parish publicity I hope and pray you might discover opportunities for growth in your own discipleship and ministry and that you will be able to sense if the Spirit is stirring in you and calling you to take further this process. If you wish to have an informal conversation with the Archdeacon (details in the papers attached), or myself, we would be glad to hear from you. With all good wishes in your discernment.

Please pray for us in ours too.

With grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Ripon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon