

## **Role Description: Associate Priest in the Benefice of Hexham, St Andrew**

### **1. Introduction**

The role description gives an outline of the responsibilities of a position. These may develop while someone is in post and this document will need to be kept up to date. It should be reviewed as necessary at Ministerial Development Review, alongside the setting of objectives.

### **2. Details of post**

- 2.1 Role title: Associate Priest and Missioner, Hexham St Andrew
- 2.2 Name of benefice: Hexham St Andrew
- 2.3 Patronage: Joint Patronage, Lord Allendale and the Mercers' Company
- 2.4 Deanery and archdeaconry: Hexham, Lindisfarne
- 2.5 Initial point of contact on terms of service: The Archdeacon of Lindisfarne

### **3. Role purpose: General**

- 3.1 To share with the Bishop and Rector in the cure of souls.
- 3.2 Ever prayerful and mindful of the responsibilities laid upon you in the Ordinal, the Canons, national Safeguarding policies, and all other relevant legislation, in accordance with the Archbishops' statement *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*, your ministry will be shaped by the Diocesan vision – Seeking, Sharing, Sending – and marked by a generosity of spirit, an engagement with the people and situations you serve, and an openness to the promptings of God's love.
- 3.3 Your priestly vocation demands the careful preparation for, and the leading of public worship, the imaginative proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the loving service of all God's people entrusted to your care. Together with your priestly colleagues and lay ministers, you will work collaboratively to enable the gifts of all God's people to be developed in the Service of his Kingdom.
- 3.4 in your priestly ministry you will take an active part in the development of Mission Action Plans, in the work of the Deanery through the Deanery Development process and more widely in the life of the Diocese. A number of supports are available to you through the provision of work consultants and spiritual directors, and you will be expected to participate in the scheme of Ministerial Development Review.

- 3.5 Above all, you will remember that we are called to minister by a gracious, generous self-giving and loving God, as together we seek the Kingdom, share the faith, search for truth, serve our neighbour and follow Jesus in his suffering love for the salvation of all people.

#### **Role Purpose – Generic and Specific**

- 3.6 To share in the leadership of Hexham Abbey's ministry to the parish, its people and institutions, through a close working relationship with the Rector.
- 3.7 To lead worship, teach, and preach regularly in collaboration with licensed colleagues, lay and ordained.
- 3.8 To take an active role within the life of the Abbey, including the work of the PCC, contribution to faith exploration opportunities, and congregational events.
- 3.9 To work collaboratively with the Abbey staff, assistant and retired clergy and laity on the church's mission and ministry and where appropriate grow new teams around particular projects and pieces of work.
- 3.10 To take a lead responsibility for key areas of mission within the Abbey's life and to agree the scope of this responsibility with the Rector.
- 3.11 To further develop lay pastoral ministry, including the training and supporting a greater ministry of lay people in all aspects of the parish's life.
- 3.12 To foster journeys of faith beyond Sunday worship by further developing, signposting and co-ordinating the delivery of a broad programme to encourage discipleship and deeper spirituality.
- 3.13 To grow new ways of reaching young people and children and in particular develop the offer of a fun and thoughtful engagement with the Christian faith to choristers and their families.
- 3.14 To support one's own development of spirituality and to continue accessing fresh resources for ordained ministry.

#### **4. Key contacts and relationships**

##### **4.1 Generic**

- a. The Bishop and Archdeacon of Lindisfarne;
- b. The Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council;
- c. The Deanery Chapter and Synod;

##### **4.2 Specific**

- a. Rector
- b. Other clergy and Readers
- c. Churchwardens, members of PCC and sub groups of PCC

- d. Hexham Abbey Staff
- e. Directors of Hexham Abbey Trading Ltd
- f. Hexham Community Partnership
- g. Community groups

#### 4.3 Supportive

- a. The Archdeacon of Lindisfarne
- b. Clergy and staff colleagues
- c. The Area Dean, Lay Chair and colleagues in the Hexham Deanery
- d. Work consultant or spiritual director

### 5. Role Context

Hexham is an historic market town of approximately 12,000 people some 20 miles west of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is the commercial and social centre for a wider rural community. There is a diverse population and a broad demographic range, with many young families (there are over 2,000 under 16s) and some 20% of the population are retired. The footprints of town and parish are broadly the same.

The town has a High School, two middle schools, three first schools and one special school (none of them are Church of England schools). Housing includes historic properties in the centre of town, many Victorian houses, a number of estates built in the 1970s to 1990s, some housing association properties, as well as some farms on the edge of the parish. A significant new housing development has very recently been built on the eastern outskirts of the town, with more in the pipeline. Two thirds of homes are owner-occupied and 17% are social housing. There are a number of residential care homes. The ethnic profile is predominantly white British. Often hidden from descriptions of the town are two significant areas of social housing which contain some pockets of deprivation.

Many of the town's residents are professionals commuting to Newcastle and further afield. Others work in and around Hexham itself, including at Egger's woodchip plant which offers employment to several hundred people. There is a regular train service to Newcastle and Carlisle, buses connect Hexham and surrounding villages with Newcastle, and for those seeking to travel further afield, Newcastle International Airport is only 30 minutes away.

Hexham has a new local General Hospital and primary care centre. The people of Hexham benefit from a lively cultural life, with a cinema, concerts, theatre, a library, an annual book festival and Hexham Abbey Festival, as well as numerous community events. An excellent leisure centre and swimming pool, many sports clubs and England's highest race course supplement the offer. Hexham Community Partnership and voluntary organisations are very active and together with local businesses give expression to a strong sense of community. The proximity to Hadrian's Wall, Kielder Water and Northumberland National Park as well as the historic importance of the town itself draws thousands of visitors from all over the world to Hexham.

There has been a church on this site at Hexham for over 1350 years since Queen Etheldreda made a grant of lands to Wilfrid, Bishop of York c.674. Of Wilfrid's Benedictine abbey, the

Saxon crypt and apse still remain. In Norman times Wilfrid's abbey was replaced by an Augustinian priory: the church seen today is mainly that building of about 1170-1250, in the Early English style of architecture. The choir, north and south transepts and the cloisters, where canons studied and meditated, date from this period. Since the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1537 the Abbey has been the parish church of Hexham. The east end was rebuilt in 1860 and the nave, whose walls incorporate some of the earlier church, was built in 1908. Today, Hexham Abbey is a grade 1\* listed building, attracting over 80,000 visitors every year. It is the only Anglican church in Hexham.

In 2012, with the help of a £3m Heritage Lottery grant, the Abbey re-acquired its former monastic buildings which were lost at the Dissolution. They now accommodate a visitor centre, refectory and community and function rooms. This development has enabled significant opportunities for the Abbey's mission. Hexham Abbey Trading Ltd is the trading subsidiary and its board is tasked with managing the businesses (shop, refectory, lettings/events). In the grounds is also a small building housing the Parish Centre, which is the administrative hub of the church.

Hexham Abbey sees itself as a parish church serving the town, with a civic role for town and county, a place of pilgrimage and learning, a visitor attraction for national and international visitors, and an important cultural venue. Hexham Abbey exercises effective parish ministry in the market town of Hexham and is looking to develop fresh ways of encountering the Christian faith for people of all ages.

It also sees itself as a hub for the deanery: it is already a resource for the deanery and the Church of England schools in the deanery (none of which are in Hexham Parish), and it is already developing further the role of the Abbey vis-à-vis the much smaller rural churches and communities of the deanery who are seeking to work together more closely; the Abbey has close links with Newcastle Cathedral and is also keen to develop further links with the Diocesan Resource Church in Newcastle.

Hexham Abbey has a vision of a world where God's love is enjoyed, celebrated and shared. 'Inspired by Andrew, Wilfrid and Etheldreda, we seek to grow: in breadth and numbers, in faith and learning, in prayer and generosity.

The Associate Priest and Missioner will support this parish ministry and be encouraged to experiment and go beyond. The Associate Priest will play a full share in all aspects of parish life and be an important and significant member of the Abbey Team. In addition, and depending upon their skill set, and working with very able lay leaders, they will lead in strengthening and developing one of the following two areas of Parish life (or a combination of the two):

**Ministry and Mission to children, youth, schools, young adults and young families *or* Developing outreach and Christian nurture, discipleship, the spiritual engagement of visitors, adult education and GiFT groups (home groups).**

The Abbey already has significant outreach to children, young people, schools and young families but is an area always in need of development and of fresh thinking.

In particular we want to:

- Explore and develop further all the opportunities afforded to us by

our young choristers and their families and to encourage their engagement with the Christian faith and wider life of the church.

- To bring new insight and impetus to our offering to children and families at our main Sunday service.
- To develop work amongst teenagers and young adults, ideally in collaboration with other churches in Hexham.
- To further strengthen our activity in schools.
- To help the Abbey to become a more appealing place to young adults and young families.

The Abbey also already has a significant commitment to Christian discipleship education but recognizes the need to further develop this.

In particular we want to:

- develop Christian nurture.
- enable our many “heritage” visitors to engage more fully with our Christian story.
- further develop our GiFT programme and to offer it as a wider resource to the deanery and beyond.
- further develop lay ministries and encourage lay ministry; enable Christian enquiry and to ensure that as a worshipping community we are engaging with key social, environmental and political issues.

## 6. Benefice summary as at time of compilation

Number of parishes	One
Churches and listing	Hexham Abbey, grade I* listed
House	The diocese is in the process of securing a house for the new Associate Priest.
Other buildings	Priory Buildings, Parish Centre, Abbey Shop
Churchwardens	Five
Ministers (including local ministry)	The Rector, an Assistant Curate, two Readers and a number of retired clergy who assist with worship and occasional offices.
Population	11,829
Usual Sunday Attendance	180
Parish Share (2023)	£105,000
Resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priest?	None
Church tradition	Central Anglican/liberal Catholic but intentionally embracing a wider breadth which is represented in the congregation. The Abbey considers itself to be an inclusive congregation.
Pastoral Reorganisation Proposals	None
Outreach/service to the wider community	The Abbey hosts a large number of events

	<p>including the Abbey Festival, concerts and Carol Services for local schools and organisations locally and regionally, and is open to being used in ways that draw people in to experience its peace and life. Other events have included hosting the Museum of the Moon, Gala Dinners, clergy and other conferences, numerous exhibitions, heritage events, BBC events, social functions, and a number of filming requests are received on an annual basis.</p> <p>Other outreach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Communion in local care homes</li> <li>• Support of West Northumberland Food Bank</li> <li>• Schools' education programme</li> <li>• Collective Worship and other work in schools</li> <li>• Involvement with the town's ecumenical Holiday Club</li> <li>• Church members are involved with a range of civic and voluntary organisations</li> <li>• Events held within the Abbey</li> </ul>
Business element	Hexham Abbey Trading Ltd is the trading subsidiary and its board is tasked with managing the businesses.
Ecumenical links	Active role in Churches Together in Hexham.

## 7 Review

The Archdeacon will review this role description with you when you have been in post for six months.

Date