



DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

PATRONAGE (BENEFICES) MEASURE 1986

Parish of Christ Church PCC, Newcastle upon Tyne

Statement prepared by the P.C.C. describing the Church's ministry and mission within the parish

1. The Local Community

Please describe the size and physical features of the parish, the industry, the principal institutions, all schools, and the general category (e.g. UPA inner city, UPA housing estate, urban, suburban, market town, commuter village, village/rural).

Also details of any predominant age and/or social groups, the ethnic mix, and any special social problems, e.g. unemployment, etc.

The Parish of Christ Church, spanning just 0.4 square miles, is an urban inner-city area that encompasses city centre apartments, student housing, and local authority social housing. The parish stretches from the bustling Newcastle City Centre and Northumbria University campus on its western boundary, down to the historic Quayside and Tyne Bridge along the southern boundary, and further to Shieldfield and areas of the Ouseburn Valley along the eastern boundary. Its northern boundary lies adjacent to the neighbourhoods of Sandyford and Jesmond. This diverse mix of character areas, situated in the heart of the city, makes the parish both exciting and vibrant. The student population, living alongside many long-term residents in Shieldfield, adds to the mixed character of the community.

The Christ Church Parish is home to 8,956 people and ranks 2,988 out of 12,178 in terms of deprivation. It has one of the youngest age demographics in the Diocese, with only 2.8% of its parishioners over the age of 65. The Parish has a very high proportion of people living on their own- 53.7%. At the last census 26.2% of the population identified as Christian.

The Parish contains more affluent residents when compared to those living in the local authority housing around Shieldfield. Social problems affecting the parish include social isolation impacting upon mental health and well-being, poverty, food shortages and lack of social cohesion.

Christ Church is located on the eastern side of the parish in Shieldfield, an area primarily composed of local authority rented housing in the form of blocks of flats interspersed with terraced houses and lower-rise flats.

Over the past 20 years, a significant number of purpose-built student accommodation blocks have been erected near Christ Church to address the needs of the growing student population. Many of these students are from overseas, contributing to a diverse congregation that includes local residents from Shieldfield and both British and international students studying at Northumbria University. These students often remain in the area for a short period before returning home.

The focus of Shieldfield is its local centre at Wretham Place. This parade of shops acts as a hub for the local community containing a range of local services, including the Forum Community Café run by volunteers, Big River Bakery and Shine On - a community laundrette. Members of the congregation also volunteer at the Forum Café.

The parish contains a vibrant arts scene. The city centre portion of the parish houses the Laing Art Gallery, while the Ouseburn Valley features a variety of artisan businesses, bars, cafés, and artist studios. In Shieldfield, The New Bridge Project which is an artist-led space that supports artists, curators and the community through the provision of space for creative practices and hosts an ambition programme of exhibitions and events is located, The Biscuit Factory Art Gallery located in the parish is a well-respected art gallery.

There is one primary school in the parish- Christ Church (Church of England) Primary School - which is attached to the church buildings. <http://www.christchurch.newcastle.sch.uk/website/home/122246>
The school is a single form entry school from Nursery to Year 6 with 128 pupils of which only a quarter use English as their first language. Over 50% of pupils are from disadvantaged homes and a third having special educational needs. Christ Church appoints eight Foundation Governors to support the school and shape its vision and oversee its operation. The school has a strong leadership team, led by Sandra Furno, who has been headteacher for over 10 years. The school's vision is for its pupils to *Reach for the Stars- Living Life in all its fulness* and the parable of the Good Shepherd of creating a safe, loving environment, while building a solid foundation to encourage and inspire the children to reach for their own star. In 2023 the Church of England Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report gave Christ Church School an overall *Excellent* grade, as well as *Excellent* grade for the impact of collective worship on its pupils and on the effectiveness of religious education. In 2026 the School passed its Ofsted inspection, achieved good standards in a range of assessment areas and strong standards on its inclusion and personal development and wellbeing performance rating

The Church is an important part of school life, with pupils visiting the church for services and religious education purposes.

2. The Church Community

Please give details of the congregations

e.g. any predominant age/social groups, what proportion live outside the parish.

The Parish roll contains 14 names made up of –

- 10 Retired Persons
- 3 Workers
- 1 Student

The Worshipping Community has grown over the past 7 years from 10 to 21 members. The usual Sunday attendance has risen from 6 in 2015 to 12 in 2024.

The church is also often attended by 2 to 4 full time students during term time. However, by their nature, the students often stay for short periods while attending university.

There are several residents who also attend services on a more infrequent basis.

3. Statistics

Population : 8,956

Electoral Roll : 14

Average Sunday Communicants : 11

Average Sunday attendance : 12

Average baptisms per annum : 2

Average Confirmations per annum : 1

Average weddings per annum : 2

Average funerals per annum : 0

Average house communions for the sick or housebound : 0

4. Church Buildings

Please give details of the churches and licensed places of worship.



Christ Church and its attached hall are both Grade II* listed buildings. Built in the Gothic revivalist style, the church has a distinct broach spire with clock face and fine stonework detailing both inside and outside. It acts as a distinct feature on the skyline of Shieldfield.

The church was consecrated in 1861 with the hall added shortly afterwards. The church contains several notable features of interest, including fine early 20th century stained glass windows and 1960s leaded glass windows, a reredos by Charles Edgar Buckeridge (an esteemed Victorian religious painter), Christ the King figure suspended above the sanctuary by renowned church artist Martin Travers. The original Nave church pews and choir stalls remain. A side Lady Chapel is used for mid-week services with the Nave and Chancel used for Sunday worship. The two side aisles are free from furniture and are used for exhibition spaces and social events spaces.

A considerable amount of work has taken place over the past ten years on the church fabric-

- *In 2015 re-roofing of the Nave and side aisles of the church
- * In 2018 rewiring and new heating system
- *In 2019 replastering and part internal redecoration
- * In 2022 repairs to church windows and

*In 2024 repointing and stone repairs undertaken to west window

The church has a fully operational electric Allen organ built in 1974 and refurbished in 2024 which is played on Sunday services.



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

The hall is attached to the church and connects to the adjoining Christ Church (C of E) Primary School.

The Church also has use of the adjoining school car park.

The Hall covers 115 square metres and provides attractive multi-function space available for use by the wider community. In 2017 the hall was refurbished and reconfigured with a new kitchen, including commercial oven and hob and kitchen units as well as WCs and large storage area for hall users.

The Hall Users comprise of:

All Ways Good Company Circus Skills (three times per week)

Bangshees Drumming Group (weekly)

Newcastle Gamers Society (bi-monthly)

Yoga Class (weekly)

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

No- only small hard surfaced forecourt area to church and hall with raised planters maintained by the parishioners. The shared car park with Christ Church Primary School is the responsibility of the school.

5. Patterns of Worship

Sunday services with times and form of service used.

Sundays- 9.30 am Sung Eucharist- Common Worship comprising four hymns and sung responses (all accompanied on organ) and fellowship afterwards in church. Normally approximately 1 hour service in length. The congregation participates in the service through readings and serving at communion.

Benediction and Holy Hour is held quarterly around main Holy Days prior to the vacancy.

Services are held on major festivals, including carol services and the Eve of Christ the King celebration.

Weekday services

Mid-week Mass- On a Thursday at 12.30pm a said Mass is held in the lady Chapel lasting 30 minutes. This is attended often by members of the congregation who do not attend normal Sunday worship.

6. Church Tradition

Please describe the tradition of your church

Christ Church has a strong Anglican tradition centred upon formal sacramental Anglo-Catholic worship with vestments worn by clergy. The use of incense on main Holy Days and Festivals is a feature.

Music to accompany the service is Murray's New People's Mass setting with a mix of traditional and modern hymns- using the new English Hymnal and the Complete Celebration Hymnal and supplemented by hymn sheets and accompanied on the organ.

7. Church Activities

Regular groups for Bible study/other study/prayer

Lent and Advent Groups have been held in the Vicarage.

Children & Youth Work/Sunday School/Uniformed organisations

None at present. Historically there were uniformed organisations associated with Christ Church but these ceased operating. A Youth Group is operated by Dwellbeing in Shieldfield.

Clubs/Societies

Men's Club- Meets quarterly with St Ann's church prior to vacancy.

Support of home and overseas missions

USPG/Peoples Kitchen/West end Refugee

Social work/Caring for others

Home visits and social visits

Clergy and members of congregation support the Forum Café through volunteering

Faith Sharing events or programmes

Lent lunches with other denominations in the parish

Parochial charities

West End Refugees Service

People's Kitchen

West End Food Bank

Christian Aid

USPG

8. Ministry

Does the parish/locality have a Local Ministry Group?

If so, how long has it existed, what are its main responsibilities?

Shieldfield Together

List any additional authorised ministers (e.g. Reader, Church Army Officer, Ordained Local Minister, Non-stipendiary Minister, Curate in training, retired Clergy)

None

Please indicate current lay involvement in:

a) worship (e.g. Lesson reader, intercessions, administration of communion, serving, other)

4 Lay lesson Readers

1 Lay Intersession Prayer leader

1 Administrator of Communion

b) administration (e.g. pew sheet or magazine production, secretarial assistance, registers, other)

Fortnightly newsletter with St Ann <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16226/news/notice-sheet/grid/>

PCC secretary is responsible for minutes and agenda production. Churchwarden operates as church treasurer at present.

c) pastoral work (e.g. baptism preparation/visiting, home communion, visiting housebound or in hospital, other)

Christ Church has a strong tradition of pastoral ministry, with the Parish Priest expected to take a central role in the Shieldfield community by attending and participating in community events, including volunteering at Forum Café. The Priest visits members of the congregation at home and when in hospital and is a visible presence in and around the parish.

9. Finance

Have you had a parish funding campaign recently?

Is use made of Gift Aid and/or an envelope scheme?

Is the Parish Share paid regularly and in full?

Are there any major debts? Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full. Please attach a copy of the latest statement of accounts.

2024 Parish Funding Campaign support by Diocese Generous Giving Team

Gift Aid used by five parishioners

Parish Share fully paid every year for over 10 years. In 2026 the PCC agreed to increase its Parish Share payments by 5%.

There are no outstanding debts to the Church.

Then incumbent's expenses paid in 2024 totalled £610.

All Church accounts are all managed effectively through electronic payment methods. The Church holds four bank accounts: A deposit account (c£7,000); a savings account (c£2,000); a Memorial account (c£1,100) and a Relief in Need account for use to support the vulnerable in the local community (c£5,000) managed by Parish Priest and Churchwarden.

There is also investment funds held on behalf of the Parish by the Diocese Central Board of Finance.

These legacy funds require the capital value to be retained, with the Church having access to the revenue for specific projects, subject to approval by the Bishop.

10. Community involvement

Describe the involvement of the church in:

Schools (e.g. Governors, leading assemblies etc.)

Last incumbent was vice-chair of the Board of Governors of Christ Church Primary School, where the Churchwarden is also one of eight Foundation Governors. The school attends church on a number of occasions during the year, for both formal service of worship, such as at Easter, Christingle services and Ascension Day, as well as for religious lessons.

The Parish Priest is expected to lead shared worship in school on Thursdays during term time.

Other institutions (Industry, Old People's Homes, Hostels, Civic life etc)

The Dwellbeing Project is a community group and co-operative that welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds to celebrate the Shieldfield community. The group organises regular social events and educational activities, including group walks, social gatherings, planting and growing food, youth activities, and neighbourhood improvement initiatives. Its aim is to empower community members to play an active role in shaping life in Shieldfield. By sharing knowledge about the neighbourhood's challenges, the group works collaboratively to discover new ways of organising, learning, and fostering solidarity, all to cultivate a joyful community spirit. This approach aims to lead Shieldfield, and similar neighbourhoods, toward self-reliance, interdependence, and flourishing. The Parish Priest is involved in the project, attending events and supporting its initiatives.

Volunteering at Forum Café on a regular basis as an opportunity to engage with the wider Shieldfield community and support.

11. Relationships with neighbouring parishes

Christ Church has a close and mutual beneficial relationship with St Ann's Church, Battlefield. We jointly hold evening study groups, shared worship, and participate in shared social events, such as evening socials, operate shared raffles and newsletter. We also share our skills and arrange Benefice services and meetings.

Are you aware of how these relationships fit in with any Deanery Plans, and the implications such Plans may have for future ministerial deployment in your parish?

We have identified the following objectives contained in the Central Deanery Plan where Christ Church could be involved:

- work more closely with Saint Ann's and university chaplaincy to sustain ministry and mission;
- work with Holy Trinity Jesmond or other churches on supporting Christ Church Primary School;
- create Toddler group linked to school parents and possibly circus;
- new opportunity for outreach to community during the day in church and hall;
- look to encourage concerts/events to encourage new people into church;
- working with local community and partners to develop a new student congregation;
- to explore generous giving options; and
- to seek support in assessing costs of running the church etc.

12. Ecumenical Relationships

Local Churches Together working with:
St Dominic's RC Church
German Lutheran Church
Shieldfield Art Works Methodist Church Project

13. The Parish and the future

What plans does the P.C.C. have for deepening the spiritual life of the members of the congregation, and for engagement in outreach to those who do not attend church?

Our Parish vision is for Christ Church to be a living place of worship with a sustainable future, used and enjoyed by its local community, welcoming to visitors, and celebrating its unique history.

To achieve this vision, we have been working to broaden our role in the community and make our church buildings more adaptable for use. We celebrate and embrace the multi-cultural make-up of the parish. We look to be open and welcoming and arrange events to encourage the wider community into the church.

Events organised to encourage greater community interaction have included:

*barbeques for students in Freshers week

*opening the church for local history displays as part of the national Heritage Open Days

*hosting drumming and circus performances as part of Late Shows event and hosting concerts, such as Newcastle University Wind Band bi-annually.

We are looking to broaden our participation in the local community further through continued involvement with organisations groups, such as Dwellbeing, the New Bridge Project and continued participation in the life of Christ Church Primary School.

We have a faculty application awaiting approval to:

* reroof the Chancel, Vestry and Lady Chapel

* build a small kitchen/community room in place of the organ room on the north aisle

* relocate the organ to the south aisle of the church

* install a disabled WC in the tower room at the rear of the church.

Once approved, we will be looking for funding sources to progress the project in phases. All these improvements will allow for a greater use of the church building by the wider community and host more events, such as concerts and events.

We have historically hosted a luncheon club in the hall, but this ceased during the Covid pandemic and did not recommence. We have also held Lent Lunches in the hall and courses with St Ann's congregation and other denominations.

What is lacking which needs to be pursued in the next 5 years?

Over the next 5 years we are looking to develop a closer relationship with Northumbria University and its students, as well as the local Shieldfield community. To achieve this, we would like to increase our outreach support role in the community to engage with the multi-cultural diverse residents in our parish.

We need to continue our close relationship with Christ Church Primary School through hosting regular school events in church and supporting the school as both Governors and participation at church events.

The continued support of hall users is important to support the church financially.

We also need to continue our fellowship across the Benefice by hosting events to develop a deeper faith and support social change.

The parish has a rich cultural base, such as the New Bridge Project based in the Shieldfield Centre, which is home to local artists. The development of closer ties with the artistic community around the Ouseburn Valley needs to be explored further.

The on-going work to modernise the church building through implementation of our plans to include disabled toilet in the tower room and community room in the north aisle will be central to helping create a long-term sustainable use of our church building.

14. The new incumbent

In the light of the factors set out above, what are the qualities and attributes the P.C.C. would wish to see in the new incumbent?

Christ Church has a strong tradition of sacramental Anglo-Catholic worship. A new incumbent would need to embrace the Church's traditions, whilst looking at new ways to ensure it can be attractive to a younger multi-ethnic Anglican tradition congregation. The congregation recognises the need to embrace change to remain relevant in a fast-changing world. However, this should not be at the expense of traditional worship patterns. Twice-weekly services are considered a vital aspect of the Church's Christian witness, reinforcing its commitment to community and faith.

The new incumbent will need to be the spiritual leader for church members, the Primary School and community and engage with the large student population, providing an active Christian presence in the community.

15. Parsonage

*Age, number of bedrooms, heating, garden etc
Any additional information.*

12 Gibson Street is the Benefice Vicarage. It was built in the 1950s and is a substantial detached brick dwelling with surrounding enclosed garden and detached garage with gated and driveway for two vehicles. The Vicarage comprises:

Ground floor- Living room, dining room, study, WC, kitchen and utility room;

First Floor – Four bedrooms- plus dressing room to main bedroom, family bathroom and separate WC.

Gas central heating and electrical rewired in 2025. Redecorated and new carpets also in 2025.

