

Parish Fact Sheet

Incumbent



This form is designed to give an overview of a parish to be used in a vacancy to help it find an appropriate incumbent. 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 a Parish Profile document.

PARISH: Christ Church Higher Bebington DATE: 30th April 2025

DEANERY: Wirral North

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

1. Number of C of E churches/places of worship in the parish: 1
2. Population. 10,898
3. Number on electoral roll. 273 (April 2024)
4. Usual Sunday attendance (*taken from last annual return*)
under 16 years of age: 8 16 and over: 97
5. PCC ordinary income (*i.e. total of voluntary income and other ordinary income taken from last annual return*): £ 264,630
6. Average weekly gift per regular giver: £ 16

PERSONNEL

1. Name of (former) incumbent: Rev. Michael Loach
2. Name(s) of Assistant Clergy (*indicate whether stipendiary (SM) or self-supporting (SSM)*): Associate Minister (SSM) Rev Eunice Blackmore
3. Name(s) of Readers, Pastoral Workers and any other licensed lay workers:
READERS: Helen Byrne, Pamela Hollinshead PASTORAL WORKER: Lynn Ion
4. Name(s) and office of any other staff (*such as Church Army Captain, community worker, administrator*) employed. Please state number of hours worked per week:

1. Victoria Gleave: Parish Secretary - 16 hours/week
2. Staphanie Carr: Centre Supervisor - 10 hours/week
3. Jane Dalziel: Centre Administrator - 7 hours/week

THE PARISH

1. Is the parish inner urban/urban/suburban/village/scattered rural?

Suburban

2. Is the population

(a) static rising or falling? Static

(b) settled or mobile? Settled

3. Is the population

(a) Predominantly retired/middle-aged/young families?

Settled - school's rolls broadly maintained

(b) Does it include: professional/executive/manual/unemployed?

Diverse with Exec/Prof. adjacent to church with manual workers to the north of the parish

(c) Describe any ethnic groups resident in the parish:

No significant cohesive ethnic groupings. Parish ethnicity would broadly correspond with the ethnic distribution reflected in the latest census data across the Wirral.

4. Estimate the proportion of housing:

(a) owner-occupied: 80%

(b) local authority: 15%

(c) privately rented: 5%

5. Please list:

(a) number and types of schools in the parish:

1.Brackenwood Infants School
2.Brackenwood Junior School
3.Town Lane Infants School
4.Higher Bebington Junior School
5.Co-Op Academy

(b) number of nursing homes/elderly persons' homes ONE

(c) any youth centres? NONE

(d) any community centres? ONE - plus Christ Church Community Centre

(e) name(s) of hospitals in the parish: NONE

6. Name of hospital, if any, of which the incumbent is chaplain:

Claire House Hospice

7. Does the incumbent have specific civic responsibilities? If so, what?
NO
8. Are there any links with local industry?
Previous incumbent sat on the ethics committee for Unilever Plc
9. Does the parish have any significant social problems, e.g. high unemployment?
The Town Lane/Brackenwood areas of the parish have some more complex social needs.

CHURCH SERVICES

1. How do you describe the church tradition? Traditional catholic / modern catholic / central / open evangelical / conservative evangelical or some other label?
CENTRAL
2. Give the pattern of Sunday services:

See Appendix A
3. Which prayer book is used for the services of Holy Communion – if both, please State? Book of Common Prayer or Common Worship: BOTH - see Appendix A
Is there a traditional use of
 eucharist vestments? Yes/No NO
 coloured stoles? Yes/No YES
 scarf and hood? Yes/No YES
4. What hymn book(s) is/are used?

The church has av system and so a diverse range of hymns is available. Predominantly more traditional hymns selected from Hymns Old and New, New Anglican edition.
5. (a) What percentage of the congregation lives outside the parish? <40%
 (b) Does any one age group, gender or social class predominate in the congregation? Predominantly female >60
6. Average number of communicants on a normal Sunday:
97

7. Numbers during the last year
- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| of baptisms: | <u>26</u> |
| of confirmation candidates: | <u>0</u> |
| of weddings: | <u>3</u> |
| of funerals in church: | <u>23</u> |
| in crematoria: | <u>36</u> |
8. Has the parish received permission from the bishop to admit baptized children to Holy Communion before confirmation? Yes/No
NO
- If so, how many children were admitted to Holy Communion before confirmation during the last year? _____

BUILDINGS AND CHURCHYARD

1. Name of the parish church: Christ Church Higher Bebington
 Year(s) built: 1857-1859
 Date of last quinquennial inspection: July 2019
 List any urgent repair work still to be done:

No urgent works outstanding

2. Other C of E churches (*mission church/daughter church/chapel of ease*) in the parish: Name and condition of repair:

NONE

3. In your view, is the parsonage house likely to need extensive refurbishment/ replacement? Yes/No Yes, diocese has scheme in hand
4. What other buildings (*e.g. church hall, curate's house*) and land (not churchyard) does the parish own? (*Give addresses, use and condition*)

Christ Church Community Centre: Wholly new, fully accessible, low energy, low maintenance community centre linked to the church through the tower. The building, with its two halls (which can be made into a single suite), sophisticated audio-visual capability, two meeting rooms, well equipped kitchen and Parish Office, was opened in 2011 by Dame Lorna Muirhead, Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside. It is maintained in an as new condition so far as is reasonably practicable.
 Kings Road, Higher Bebington, CH63 8LX Good condition. New build completed in 2011.

5. Has the church got a churchyard? Yes/No YES
 Is it still in use? Yes/No NO
 How many new graves were opened last year? NONE
 How many re-openings were there last year? 4
 Estimate how many years are available for new graves: NIL
 Is there a special area for the interment of ashes? YES

FINANCE

1. Please e-mail (or send) a copy of last year's accounts and last year's annual report of the PCC.
2. Does the church have a stewardship, thanksgiving or planned giving scheme? YES
3. If special money-raising events are held during the year, please give details.

CCHB has a long tradition of having a (mid-teens) Rose Queen crowned at the annual Summer Fair. The custom of a Rose Queen plus retinue is viewed as a good way to involve young people in the life of the Church and to build their self-confidence. In addition, current practice is (with help from parents etc) to organise a number of fundraising/social events to support one or more charities (selected by the Rose Queen and usually including our Community Centre).

4. (a) What was the amount of expenses paid last year to the:
 incumbent £ 1,664 assistant clergy £ NIL
 (b) Were these the full amounts claimed? If not, why not
YES
 (c) Does the PCC pay a lump sum or reimburse actual expenses claimed
NO
 Is a claim form used? NO
 5. What is the current amount of Parish Share payable by the parish? £ 77,605
 6. In the last financial year, did the PCC meet its financial obligations to the Diocese in full for payment of its Parish Share? Yes/No YES
 If not, what amount was paid: £ _____
 In the current financial year, is the PCC up to date with its Parish Share?
 Yes/No _____
 7. Is there any capital project in hand at the moment? Yes/No NO
 Please give brief details with costs and how they are to be met.
-

CHURCH EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROVISION

1. (a) Is there a church school in the parish? Yes/No NO
Is it controlled or aided? Yes/No _____
(b) Number of children on roll: _____
Is the number static/rising/falling? _____

(c) What relationship/links are there between church and school?

(d) If the school is aided, what is the condition of the building?

2. What provision is made by the church for teaching:

(a) children:

See Appendix B

(b) young people:

Boulders Group - monthly event

(c) adults

See Appendix B

3. List church organisations with approximate numbers for:
- (a) children: Sunday Club <10
- (b) young people: Boulders <10
- (c) adults: See Appendix B

4. Give details of house/prayer groups:

1. House Groups - 3 meet throughout the year.
2. Morning Prayer - every Monday
Lectio Devina - fortnightly
Celtic Prayer - fortnightly

5. Are the leaders clergy or lay? Combination of Ministry Team and lay leaders

DISCIPLESHIP AND LAY MINISTRY

1. How do you rate the strength of lay leadership in the parish? To what do you credit the strength or lack of it?

Good team: comprising 1 ordained associate minister; 2 licensed Readers; 1 licensed Pastoral Worker; 1 Pastoral Worker in training. 1 OWL (Occasional Worship Leader) and two others who have completed FFM and are capable participants of out ministry team.

2. Does the parish have a discipleship course? (e.g. Alpha, Emmaus, Christianity Explored). None running at the moment. We completed an Alpha Course in 2024

3. What other opportunities does the parish provide to lay people to deepen their discipleship and vocation?

The church provides opportunities for lay people to develop their discipleship/vocation through leadership through formal Readership and Pastoral Worker training along with opportunities to lead in less formally structured All Age Worship and fellowship services. The lay membership are also encouraged to contribute through reading and prayers within services. There are also a number of leadership opportunities through the many church led community activities.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

1. State involvement in local council of churches, if any.

The church leadership has tried to re-ignite the ecumenical contacts that were broken during the covid pandemic. This has not been successful to-date.

2. Is there a formal covenant with any other denominations?

NO

3. What informal contacts are there?

There remain some personal relationship contacts between the ministry team and the leadership of some of the leaders of local churches

OUTREACH AND MISSION

1. Please give details of the support of the Church overseas. How much is given annually?

£2,643

2. Give details of the support for home missions and charities.

See Appendix C

3. Is there an organised system of evangelism in the parish? If so, please describe it.

NONE

4. Is there an organised system of follow-up to baptisms, weddings, funerals? If so, please describe.

1. Pastoral worked visit the families prior to their meeting with clergy. The MU sends cards to families on baptism anniversaries. Families are invited to church services prior to the baptism and receive their certificates at the proceeding AAW service
2. Clergy wedding preparation meetings.
3. Clergy/lay readers follow visit the bereaved family following the funeral. They are invited to the next monthly befrienders lunch and are encouraged to participate in the next Bereavement Journey course. The Bereavement Journey has had over 150 attendees since 2022

5. What part does the church play in community care (e.g. the unemployed/homeless/ drug addicts/disabled)?

The church provides a wide range of church activities and groups delivered throughout the week in the Community Centre (see Appendix B). The Community Centre is also the venue for a wide range of commercially managed uses that support community cohesion.

6. Is there an organised system of care for the sick and elderly? If so, what?

There is a monthly pastoral care meeting where needs are recognised, and the appropriate support organised which includes home visits and signposting to our various community events.

7. What work does the church undertake with young people, other than in church-based organisations (e.g. open youth work)?

The Community Centre and parish grounds are used by a number of different scouting groups. These groups take part in the Remembrance Day service. The church presents and 'Experience Easter' and 'Experience Christmas' event for local schools. The 2025 Easter even was attended by >300 children.

PUBLICATIONS

1. Is there is a history of the church/parish? If so, please e-mail (or send) a copy.
Yes/No YES

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. What are your current goals to achieve for the next 5 years?

Primary goal established at the last PCC away day was for the recruitment of paid families and youth worker. Initial attempts at recruitment were not successful. This process is currently on-hold during the current interregnum.

2. List the areas of church life which you consider are in most need of development.

Evangelism, young families and children's ministry.

Signed on behalf of the PCC: _____

Office held: Warden

Copies of this form, duly completed, should be sent to the following:

1. The Bishop of Chester, Bishop's House, Abbey Square, Chester CHI 2JD. (Hard copy)
2. The Suffragan Bishop (Hard copy and electronic copy)
3. The Archdeacon (Electronic copy)
4. The Patron (if the Bishop is the patron, he need not be sent a second copy)
5. The Designated Officer (Mrs E A Geddes, Church House). (Hard copy)
6. The Rural Dean (Electronic copy)
7. The Deanery Lay Chair (Electronic copy)
8. The PCC representatives

Appendix A

Church Services

Question 2

Service	Sunday					Wednesday
	08:30	10:00	11:45	16:00	18:30	10:00
Holy Communion (BCP ¹)	Every Week					
Holy Communion (CW ¹)		1 st , 3 rd and 5 th				Every Week
Short Holy Communion following All Age Worship (CW ¹)			4 th			
All Age Worship		2 nd				
Service of the Word often with baptism		4 th				
Praise and Play (informal service for families)				1 st		
Sung Evensong (BCP)					2 nd	
Fellowship Service (Lay led informal service to a set theme)					4 th	

Notes:

1. BCP = Book of Common Prayer CW= Common Worship

Appendix B

Church Education and Social Provision

Question 2 (a) – What provision is made by the church for teaching (a) children

1. The church ministry team have a good relationship with all the schools in the parish and attend the schools on a regular basis.
2. Children and families team meet monthly to review activities and has recently introduced half-termly Saturday Family Fun afternoons.
3. All the schools in the parish use the service for a variety of events including school services for the main festival event at Easter, Christmas, harvest. The church also hosts the children from the local schools for immersive ‘Experience Easter’ and Experience Christmas’ events. The easter 2025 event had >300 children attending.
4. Other church led children teaching activities, include:
 - Praise and Play – monthly
 - Lego church – monthly
 - Sunday Club – monthly
 - All Age Worship - monthly

Question 3 (c) List church organisations with approximate numbers for: (c) adults:

The church provides a range of community activities through its Community Centre in addition to its commercial activities, including:

Group	Numbers
Baby Group	10-12
Befriender's Group	15-20
Carer's Group	20-25
Gardening Gang	6-8
Indoor Bowls	8-10
Knit and natter	30-35
Luncheon Club	24
Men in Sheds	10-12
Mother's Union	18-20
Oasis (mental health group)	5-7
Sewing group	8-10
Singing café	25-30
Toddler group	25-30

Appendix C

Outreach and Mission

Question 2 Give details of the support for home missions and charities.

Christ Church Higher Bebington has ongoing relationships with a range of home missions and charities. CCHB supports the Birkenhead-based Wirral Churches ARK Project (funding accommodation, community projects, healthcare and activities to help tackle homelessness) and the Wirral Foodbank (providing emergency food to local people in crisis) through a combination of grant funding and supply of goods. Direct financial support has been given to Ferry Families (supporting families in nearby New Ferry - an area of significant multiple deprivation).

Members of the congregation are encouraged to offer furniture and other household items to BESOM Wirral which supplies such items to people in need. Our Rose Queen each year chooses a local charity to support through her fundraising efforts. In recent years, these have included the Charles Thompson Mission (providing care and support, food and clothes, to those across Wirral who are living in poverty), FORUM Housing (supporting young people with housing needs) and Hayfield School which focuses on children with special needs.

Nearer to home, the Vicar and Churchwardens are the trustees of the Thomas Robinson Charity which was set up to support "the poor and needy of Higher Bebington". Grants of cash are made available to individuals or families needing special help.

Led by our Vicar, Revd Michael Loach, CCHB has developed links with the mosque in Birkenhead to build a positive relationship with another faith group.

A summary detailing the various community/charitable causes supported is detailed in table 1.

Group
Ark (homeless)
Besom (furniture collection/distribution)
Charles Thompson Mission (Homeless, poverty).
Christ Church Rose Queen (fund raising activities of the year)
Contact/relationship with local mosque
Ferry Families (family support)
Forum (youth housing)
Thomas Robinson Foundation (church foundation – offering grants for special needs of the poor in the parish) Trustees are the Vicar and Churchwardens)
Wirral Food Bank (social)
Table 1