

# Parish Profile

## The Church of Ascension



Penrith Road, Berwick Hills, Middlesbrough, TS3 7JR

[www.churchofascension.co.uk](http://www.churchofascension.co.uk)

# Contents

Bishop's Welcome

Our History

A Great Place to Live

The Parish and Community

A Welcome for All

What our Worship looks like

What is Our Church Looking For?

Middlesbrough Deanery

# An introduction from Barry, the Bishop of Whitby

I am delighted you are exploring applying for to be Priest-in-Charge of The Parish of the Ascension, serving Berwick Hills, Park End and Pallister Park in Middlesbrough. Be assured of my prayers and those of Archdeacon Amanda and our colleagues as you do.

Middlesbrough is mostly a relatively new town, whose growth and identity was largely forged by the discovery of iron stone not far from where the parish now stands in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The iron rush that followed saw people coming from far and wide to Middlesbrough, and Middlesbrough responsible for construction of iconic sights across the world – the Sydney Harbour Bridge was designed in Middlesbrough, built by people from Middlesbrough and mostly made from materials mined close to this parish! As the community grew, new housing was needed, with the parish being built in response to that need. The church and community centre was a further missionary and visionary step in that journey and now we seek God's leading for the next chapter.

Although a new narrative is now growing (Boro on track for promotion, new green industries are thriving, jobs are being created), the demise of the iron, steel and latter chemical industry has left a deficit - financially, of aspiration and of hope – the cost of which is visible across the Parish of the Ascension. Although the congregation is quite modest in size considering the number of people who live in Berwick Hills, Park End and Pallister Park, as a diocese we are intentionally making a full-time appointment just for this parish. This is made possible by the very significant investment we receive for overlooked communities from the national church, so as to build on how the church community have been at the forefront of helping address needs and foster community: a vision to be ambassadors of the hope of Jesus Christ, and witnesses to the wonderful reality that God calls and needs everyone and especially those the world sometimes ignores.

Here is much good and potential for much more. As a further sign of diocesan commitment to the parish, we are keen to minimise the length of vacancy (the previous priest only left in mid February). There are gaps and fragility in the church, just like in the estates, but here you will find a worshipping, loving and serving community open to being led into the next chapter of God's book, a deeply collaborative and supportive deanery, and space to grow into God's call.

The Ascension join with the parishes of the Diocese in seeking to invite the 1.5 million parishioners we serve to know the joy of Living Christ's Story. This means each church focusing on what it means to:

- **Become more like Christ** – knowing we are God's beloved children, that Jesus came to seek, serve and save, and actively participating in worship and witness Monday to Sunday;
- **Reach people we currently don't** - living and telling the story of God with humility and confidence, inviting our classmates and colleagues, neighbours and friends to know love, purpose and hope;
- **Grow as churches of missionary disciples which are younger and more diverse** – knowing we are sent to every place and person to which we go, individually and as a 'community of the sent' – a place where everyone is known and needed, honoured and participating.



May you know the surrounding and upholding of the Spirit of God as you discern,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+Barry Hill'.

For an informal conversation about this post, contact the Bishop of Whitby, Barry Hill ([bishopofwhitby@yorkdiocese.org](mailto:bishopofwhitby@yorkdiocese.org) or 01642 593273) or the Archdeacon of Cleveland, Amanda Bloor ([adcl@yorkdiocese.org](mailto:adcl@yorkdiocese.org) or 01642 706095).

This post is open to Anglican priests who are eligible to work in the UK, subject to satisfactory episcopal reference and enhanced DBS.

Applications to Jacqui Gunter, [Jacqui.Gunter@yorkdiocese.org](mailto:Jacqui.Gunter@yorkdiocese.org)



## Our History

Whilst the future of our church is hugely important to us, we believe the history of The Ascension is of equal importance and provides an insight into the type of people who have worshipped and continue to worship here.

The Church of the Ascension sits in the heart of three housing estates: Berwick Hills, Park End, and Pallister Park, Middlesbrough. These housing estates, which were built in the post war years of the 1950's, cover an area of four-square miles and has a population of about 17,000 people.

Back in the 1950's, these brand-new estates were a welcome addition to the town, with indoor bathrooms, gardens and fields of green grass for children to play. However, there was something missing. The nearest churches were in Central Middlesbrough, and it was a long walk there and back for Sunday morning worship.

Residents started meeting in each other's houses but before long, there wasn't enough room for their ever-growing congregation. They moved into a wooden hut and began their weekly worship there. But the need and longing for their own church continued, and the residents started raising money to build their own church. They raised enough money to build a dual-purpose building on Penrith Road – a church and a community centre. Numbers continued to grow and the Diocese of York decided to establish a new parish – The Ascension of Christ the King, Berwick Hills. This fuelled the desire of a permanent place of worship, and so the congregation set about raising more funds for parish church. Members of the congregation knocked on doors asking people to 'buy a brick' and eventually, through hard-work and dedication, they had raised enough money to build the church they had worked so hard for, for almost a decade.

To this day, many of our congregation can claim a direct familial link to those original church members, retaining the core values of their ancestors: faith, love, hope and determination, with Christ at the centre of everything we do.



## A Great Place to Live

Middlesbrough is a great place to live, with the MIMA art gallery, Captain James Cook Museum, Ormesby Hall, as well as some beautiful parks, our vibrant town is suitable for people of all interests.

Within 20 minutes you can enjoy the stunning beauty of the North York Moors, and the Yorkshire coastline with the popular sea-side towns of Redcar and Saltburn.

An hour's drive will take you to some fantastic places to visit, such as Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the historic cities of Durham and York, and the coastal port of Whitby.

The Cleveland Hills, Teesdale and Yorkshire Moors and Dales are perfect for family days out, catching up with friends, or escaping from the hustle and bustle of modern-day life.





## The Parish and Community

There are three primary schools and a secondary Academy within the Parish. We have good relationship with two of the primary schools and the Academy has used our church building for Christmas services.

Directly behind the church is Ormesby Grange Care Home which now has access via a gate to enable residents to visit the church with ease. Next to the church is a building which gives temporary refuge to the homeless.

There is a good shopping area close by with a supermarket, small shops, a chemist, post office, doctor's surgery and a dentist. The Neptune Centre has sports facilities with a swimming pool and a library. There are also two parks within the parish.

Hastings House has a number of flats for retired people and two members of our congregation have been instrumental in hosting events at Christmas and Easter when we have held services there.

All three housing estates within the parish are in areas of socio-economic deprivation and members of the community can often need help. To help assist with this, we opened a Foodbank which is run by volunteers.





## A Warm Welcome

The church stands as a warm and welcoming gathering place where everyone is greeted with open hearts and open doors.

We host monthly Pie and Pea Supper and Bingo events, which are attended by people in the community, as well as members of the church.

Summer, Autumn and Christmas Fayres, are the highlight of our social calendar and always good fun.

We have the Cuppa and Company group which runs on a Thursday afternoon and the Foodbank which is on a Wednesday afternoon.





## What Our Worship looks Like

Our worship is centred on the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, and we have two Eucharist Services each week. The liturgical style of our formal worship is distinctively modern Anglo-Catholic, using the rites of the Church of England.

Sunday mornings are attended by 12-18 people and Wednesday afternoons with 6-8 people attending.

The parish has not currently passed any resolutions regarding the ordination of women or alternative episcopal oversight and therefore would welcome candidates from women and men.

Our organist has been in post for more than 40 years but is keen to work co-operatively with the priest and is open to using a variety of styles of music.

The church organ, built by Geoffrey Coffin of York, was fitted in the new church as part of a gift from Morrison's supermarket and is acknowledged as the finest classical-style organ in the area.





## The Vicarage

Nestled at the end of a peaceful driveway, The Vicarage enjoys a quiet, private setting while offering excellent accessibility. The generous parking area ensures that both the vicar and visitors will always feel welcomed.

A beautifully detached family home, The Vicarage is thoughtfully designed to blend comfort and functionality. Offering a welcoming space for ministry and family life, this home is ideal for a vicar seeking both tranquillity and a space to host parishioners, guests, and loved ones.

### Ground Floor:

**Spacious Hallway:** A light-filled entrance, setting the tone for warmth and hospitality as you step inside.

**Study/Office:** A peaceful and private space, perfect for prayer, reflection, or handling parish work.

**Downstairs WC:** Convenient and practical for both family and visitors.

**Large Lounge:** This bright and airy lounge offers doors that open directly into the garden, creating a seamless flow between indoor and outdoor spaces—ideal for relaxing or informal gatherings with parish members.

**Separate Dining Room:** A perfect setting for both formal dining and welcoming guests, be they parishioners or family.

**Generously Sized Kitchen:** Well-equipped for preparing meals for both your family and parish gatherings. The adjoining Utility Room offers additional storage and access to the double garage, making it practical for everyday needs.

## First Floor:

**Four Double Bedrooms:** Spacious, comfortable rooms providing ample space for both rest and reflection.

**Family Bathroom:** A family-friendly bathroom conveniently located for easy access from all bedrooms.

## Exterior:

**Large Rear Garden:** The garden is a private sanctuary surrounded by shrubs and hedges, offering a peaceful space for contemplation, prayer, or simply enjoying the beauty of nature. It's an ideal space for outdoor parish events or quiet moments of solitude.

**Driveway & Double Garage:** The large driveway and double garage provide ample parking and secure storage, accommodating family vehicles and equipment.

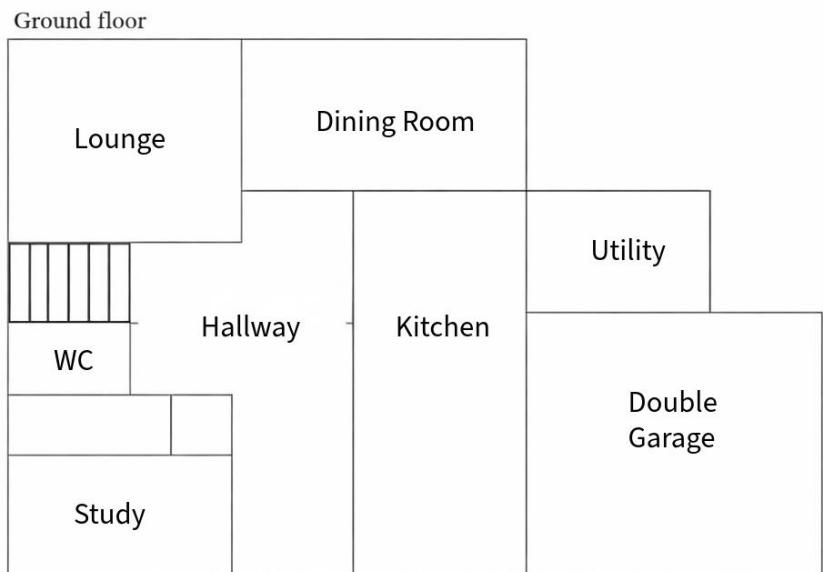
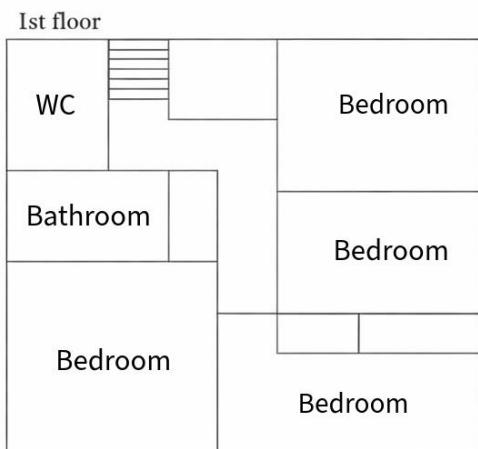
## Additional Information:

**EPC Rating: C (Energy Performance Certificate)**

**Council Tax Band: E**

## A Place of Peace and Purpose:

The Vicarage is not just a home; it is a place to nurture ministry, family life, and community. With ample space for both private reflection and hosting parish events, it offers a serene environment for the vicar seeking a sanctuary to serve their congregation and family.



The church building and centre, church grounds, Vicarage, Curate's House and car park are all part of one geographical hub. The Vicarage has a good degree of demarcation though, such as its own driveway and fencing. The Curate's House is currently occupied by a retired priest, who is in the process of applying for Permission to Officiate.

## What is Our Church Looking For?

We would like our new vicar to be a compassionate and approachable leader who values both faith and community. Someone who listens well, communicates clearly, and inspires people of all ages to grow spiritually and feel included. A sympathetic, non-judgmental person, who understands the challenges that people in our community face.

We hope for a vicar who is comfortable leading traditional worship while also embracing new ideas, engaging with the wider community, and supporting local events and outreach. Above all, we seek a vicar who leads with humility, warmth, and a genuine commitment to serving others.

We have a big desire to grow the church and reach out into the community. We have started this by opening a Foodbank and putting on events such as the Pie and Pea Supper Evenings and the Cuppa and Company group but recognise that for our church to remain vibrant and faithful to its mission, we must continue to grow—not only in numbers, but also in spiritual depth, outreach, and service. Growth will allow us to better share the gospel, support one another, and meet the needs of our surrounding community. However, meaningful growth does not happen by accident; it requires clear vision, intentional strategy, and prayerful guidance.

Though modest in size, our church family carries a powerful sense of unity, supporting one another in times of joy and hardship while reaching beyond its walls to serve neighbours in practical ways. Our mission is not measured by numbers, but by our commitment to prayer, discipleship, and living out the message of hope and grace each day. We are seeking direction so that our efforts align with God's will, strengthen our foundation, and help us move forward together with unity and purpose.

## Middlesbrough Deanery

### Welcome from the Area Dean

Middlesbrough Deanery is the northern most of the six deaneries in the archdeaconry of Cleveland. Just minutes away from the North Yorkshire Moors and the beautiful sandy beaches of the northeast coast. Due to several retirements in the same 6-month period we will have 5 vacancies in Middlesbrough Deanery in the autumn of this year. We are making the most of this opportunity and will rethink what ministry should look like across the deanery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will need to have 'porous boundaries' in the parishes and a generous spirit as we navigate the changes ahead. We are looking forward to working with people who will bring and embrace change and work with the plan to fill all the vacancies quickly. So, join us in that discernment.

We are a deanery of many church traditions. From Society through liberal catholic and evangelical. As chapter we are looking forward to welcoming colleagues who will be as committed to working together with us when we can. To share our resources and our experience to build up all our churches as we encourage our congregations to 'live Christ's story'. Our unity can be seen in the way we are each helping to cover these vacancies and others in the recent past.

Churches across Teesside have been working together for many years, culminating in Festival Teesside in 2024. We meet for a church leaders lunch each half term, and prayer weekly during term time.

The Holy Spirit is moving on Teesside, are you being called to join us in spreading the gospel in Middlesbrough?