

Moorland Parishes

Parish of Danby with Castleton, Commondale and Westerdale and the Parish of Moorsholm

Parish Profile



St Michael & St George,
Castleton



St Mary's Church Moorsholm



St Hilda's, Danby



Christ Church, Westerdale



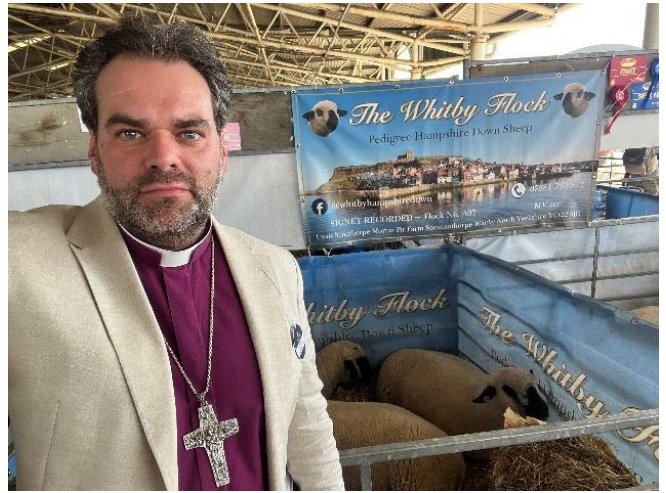
St Peter's Church, Commondale

Our Churches

An introduction from Barry, the Bishop of Whitby

I am delighted you are exploring applying to be Incumbent of the Moorland Parishes in the beautiful North York Moors. Be assured of my prayers and those of Archdeacon Amanda and our colleagues as you do.

The profile the parishes have compiled reflects well the context, history, hopes and reality of life across Castleton, Moorsholm, Danby, Westerdale and Commondale. As parishes they work well together with both a great deal in common alongside the specific contexts of each village. There are very good links with the two primary schools (I had a wonderful morning with Danby school last year, whose headteacher serves as part of the Diocesan Board of Education).



There is a realistic pattern of services (one per Sunday, to which people travel well from across the five villages), and two of the five churches are festival churches with more occasional services. There is also a realistic expectation of what a 0.2 stipend role means (a Sunday service and a day a week, either spread across a number of days or all on one, as mutually agreed between preferred candidate and parishes). The parishes are very ably served by a range of lay and ordained ministers, including a deacon who has very generously worked almost full-time over recent years but is now cutting back to a still hugely generous two days a week, an Authorized Lay Minister and many capable church officers and other volunteers. It will be important the next incumbent sees their role as to support and lead this team rather than assume they need do it all! The parishes are part of a wonderfully creative and collaborative deanery, with additional support available on occasion from a number of retired clergy and stipendiary clergy colleagues.

The Moorland Parishes joins 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 cultural humility and faith-filled confidence, inviting our classmates and colleagues, neighbours and friends to know the love, purpose and hope which has blessed us;
- **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, but being a 'community of the sent' is most effective and best reflects the Kingdom of God when everyone is known and needed, honoured and participating.

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



For an informal conversation about this post, contact the Bishop of Whitby, Barry Hill

(bishopofwhitby@yorkdiocese.org or 01642 593273) or the Archdeacon of Cleveland, Amanda Bloor (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

Introduction and Welcome

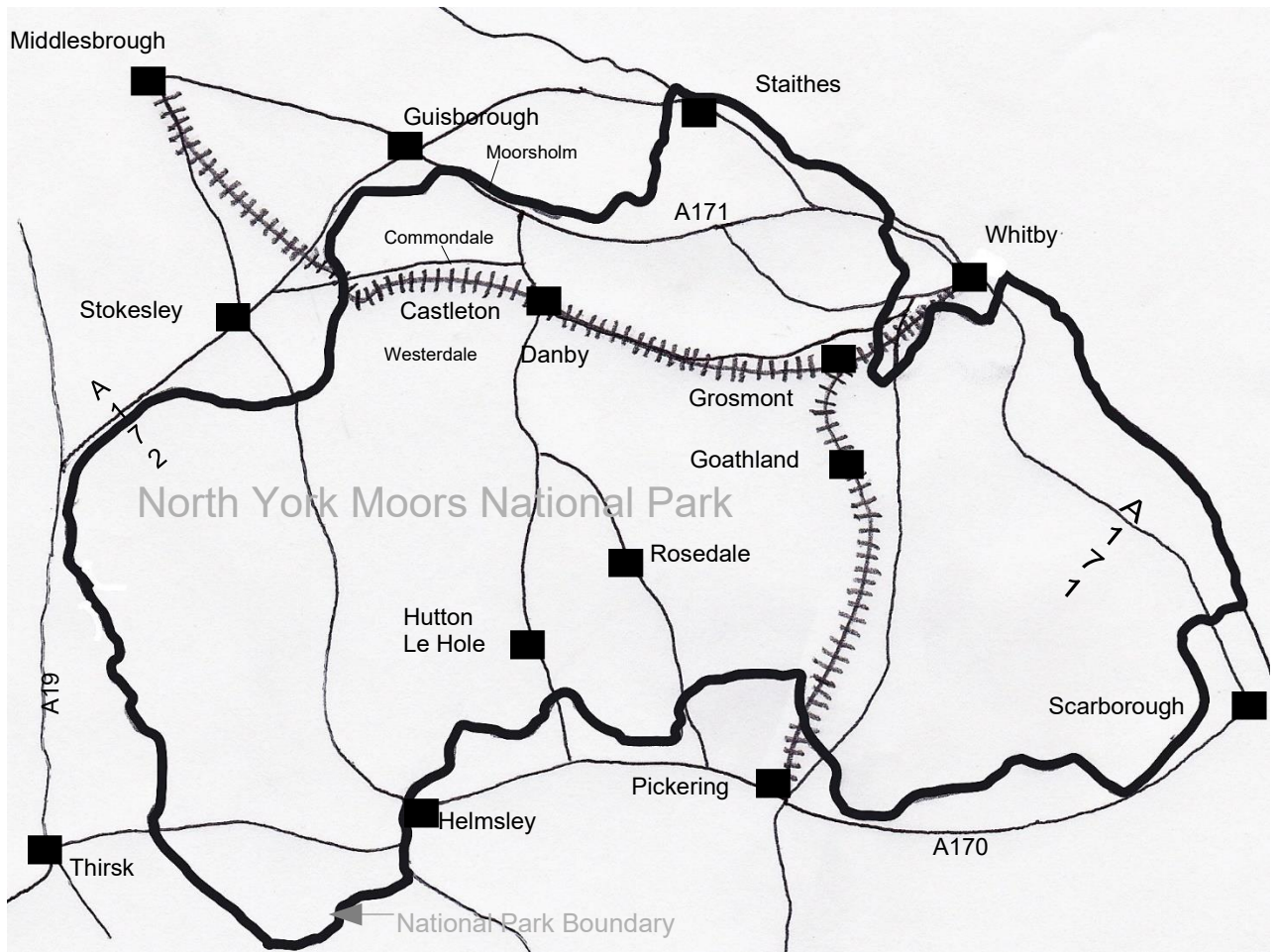
Thank you for showing an interest in this 0.2 vacancy, which equates to one full day (this can be a whole day or spread over several days) and a Sunday service, and we hope this profile of our benefice will be both stimulating and useful.

We are a group of five moorland villages in the North York Moors National Park, clustered around the River Esk which rises within our parishes and flows down to the sea at Whitby 15 miles to the East. This is no sleepy hollow – community life is vibrant with a positive response to the challenge of change in rural amenities.

The National Park is a treasured landscape, a working environment and a tourist attraction: Grouse moors also grazed by sheep, ancient and managed woodland on the hillsides and small farms with a mix of arable, cattle and sheep in the fertile valleys – all provide work.

Farmers, diversifying, and others provide B&B and self-catering cottages for tourists. The National Park's principal visitor centre is in Danby. 61% of our 2000 population are of working age and many of them work in Teesside.

A Stunning Location



LOCATION Danby, Castleton, Comondale, Westerdale and Moorsholm are moorland villages in the upper Esk Valley. The market towns of Guisborough, Stokesley and Whitby are all within 15 miles; the Teesside conurbation (Middlesbrough, Stockton) 20 miles; York 45 miles; Durham 48 miles; Newcastle upon Tyne 63 miles.

ROADS Good moorland roads connect with A171 (Middlesbrough- Guisborough- Whitby) and A172 (Stokesley). Access to A1(M) is via A19 trunk road at Dishforth (south) and via the Tyne Tunnel (north).

TRAIN The Esk Valley line links the benefice to Whitby, Grosmont (North York Moors Railway to Pickering) Middlesbrough and the East Coast Main Line at Darlington) with stations at Danby, Castleton and Comondale.

BUS Services are limited: Moorsholm is served by a 2 hourly bus service to Saltburn and there is also an hourly Express X93 service on A171 Middlesbrough-Whitby-Scarborough. EskMoors Active operates a Community Minibus and volunteer car drivers to take people to appointments.

AIRPORTS Durham Tees Valley International 30m; Leeds Bradford International 65m; Newcastle International 71m

LOCALITY A wide expanse of heather moorland incised by deep valleys with farmland, woodland, isolated farmsteads and a collection of hamlets and villages – this is rural North Yorkshire at its best.

The area has a remote feel but is not isolated with everything you would expect to need less than half an hour away by car.

SCHOOLS: Pre-School; 2 Primary Schools (one Church of England); a choice of Comprehensive schools; Independent Schools within reach.

MEDICAL: A purpose-built GP Surgery with pharmacy, community hospitals in surrounding towns and a regional hospital in Middlesbrough.

COMMUNITY LIFE is vibrant with exemplary provision for the most vulnerable by pro-active local charities. Each village has a village hall with a range of community activities; outdoor facilities include children's play parks, bowls, cricket, football, tennis and quoits. Four pubs and a Tea Room serve food and there is B&B and lots of Self-Catering Holiday Accommodation in this popular tourist area.

Our Vision

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- We use all three churches for worship in rotation plus our two Festival Churches (Westerdale and Commondale) in five week months and for special events.
- The Benefice service of Holy Communion each Sunday will have a congregation around 25-30 people.
- Congregations are from across the benefice including Botton Village residents and holidaying visitors
- Over 60s are predominant in our congregations – except on those magnificent occasions when the schools take part (Mothering Sunday is a riot!)
- We have strong ecumenical links in worship.
- We have good links with our primary schools
- Church members are active in the community and work enthusiastically in support of worship and outreaching social activity

LIVING CHRIST'S STORY – OUR ASPIRATIONS

We would like someone to guide, lead and help us to:-

- Make the Church more relevant in our community and encourage families!
- Encourage and inspire us to live and share Christ's story, both within the church and in our communities.
- Build on our strongly ecumenical partnerships
- Extend the use of our churches for cultural activities – performing arts, music, visual arts – linked to the outstanding landscape that surrounds us.
- Build on our pastoral work in the community by sharing the benefits the Church offers to all in the joys and sadness of life's events, particularly celebrating joy in birth and marriage as well as sympathy and comfort in bereavement.
- Be proactive in promoting the use of the church for weddings and funerals in contrast to creeping secularism in society.
- Build on the excellent relationships we have with our Primary Schools by encouraging school worship in church especially where parents are invited too.

The Benefice

The Benefice comprises five villages in two parishes. Each village has an Anglican Church; there is also a Methodist Chapel in Danby. Currently each parish has its own PCC who co-operate and support each other. There is a well-established pattern of shared worship with Danby Methodist Chapel.

Ministry Team

- Vicar (vacancy)
- Deacon: Rev Sally Wilson
- Authorised Lay Minister: Mr. Kevin Wall

Service pattern

- At present we have one service on a Sunday – usually Holy Communion and the congregation travel across the Benefice.
- There are two Sunday services per month at Castleton or Danby depending on the season, one at Moorsholm and one at Westerdale or Commondale in 5 week month and the first Sunday of the month at Esk Moors Lodge.
- There is midweek Holy Communion on the third Wednesday of the month at the Esk Moors Lodge (supported housing) in Castleton where residents and members of the community worship together.
- Baptisms are held either during the Sunday service or afterwards.
- There have been Family Services and Messy Church services as well.

Worship style

Service books: Common Worship is used for Holy Communion at all churches.

Hymn books/Music: Moorsholm, Westerdale and Danby use 'Hymns Old and New;' Castleton and Commondale use 'Common Praise.' There is an organ in all churches and a piano in Castleton. We are fortunate to have two main organists and a pianist who plays for services at Esk Moors Lodge. We also have equipment that allows us to select and play hymn music electronically.

Vestments are worn at Holy Communion services.

Joint services/events throughout the year – with Methodists

- Covenant Service/Holy Communion (2nd Sunday in January) Danby Chapel
- Mothering Sunday – Alternates with Danby Chapel
- Sunday walk of witness- Castleton Church to Danby Chapel
- Maundy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday – Alternates with Danby Chapel
- Harvest
- Remembrance

Church life and our churches

Church Life

- The Deacon and ALM take Communion to the housebound and visit the sick.
- Mid-week Communion - third Wednesday of each month at Esk Moors Lodge.
- Prayer and outreach to those in the community with particular needs: names are added to the Sunday Service sheet.
- The bi monthly church magazine, *Esk Views*, is compiled by a team of lay people and includes a message from the Incumbent or Deacon and information about Services and activities within the Parishes. Circulation 360 copies – readership about twice that.
- Traidcraft. A church member runs a Traidcraft stall on the 1st Sunday of the month and at other community events.

- Social fundraising activities across the churches include Coffee mornings, Lent Lunches, Pie and Peas quizzes, winter warmers, concerts for our local communities and other fundraising events as determined by the fundraising group. Collections are made for the local food banks.
- Danby Church is a venue for the North York Moors Chamber Music Festival, which takes place in August.
- Witness through active participation by church members in community organisations – especially the Caring Charities, Charitable Trusts and Patient Participation Group

ECUMENICAL LIFE

- We have strong ecumenical ties with our Methodist friends at Danby. We all share worship during Holy Week and Easter, Mothering Sunday, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Eve and the Methodist Covenant service. Churches).

Statistics

Benefice	
Average weekly attendance	25 – 30
Baptisms 2025	2
Weddings 2025	3
Funerals 2025	8

Our Churches

- **St. Hilda's Danby** – The remote location reflects a history of dispersed hamlets in Danby Dale. There has been a church on this site since the 12th Century. There is a graveyard adjacent. The tower is 15th Century (there are Saxon remnants too) and there have been many recorded alterations through the centuries with a major restoration in 1903. A less formal meeting area with kitchen and toilet was created at the west end of the nave in 2015. St. Hilda's is a very special place – as visitors' comments show:
 - 'an unexpected find and what a treasure, nestling in the countryside - such a beautiful, tranquil spot ... '
 - 'a beautiful, hidden gem ... '
 - 'We are moved by your very special church ... '
- **St. Michael and St. George Castleton** - A 1st World War Memorial Church designed by Leslie Moore and built by local craftsmen with locally sourced materials. The pews are by Thompsons of Kilburn renowned for their craftsmanship and trademark carved mouse. Visitors to the Arts & Crafts Church see how many mice they can find! A small meeting room with kitchen facilities and toilet has been created at the west end. 2026 sees Castleton Church celebrating its centenary and we look to use this event to involve the local community in and around the church, We plan to publish a booklet on the history of the church as a memento for local people and those from further afield who have links to the church.
- **St. Peter's Commondale (Festival Church)** - Consecrated in 1898 when the village was a hive of industry this small simple church is faced both externally and internally in Commondale hard brick. There is a stained-glass east window depicting St Peter and a small stained glass window depicting Bishop Coleman who rested here while attending the Synod of Whitby. There is a graveyard adjacent.

- **Christ Church Westerdale (Festival Church)** – The church was rebuilt in 1838 in the Gothic style on the site of an earlier church dating back to the Middle Ages. Restoration and additions took place in 1875 and 1896 (porch added); in 1911 the vestry and organ chamber were added. A fine church, appropriate in size for the community it serves. There is a graveyard adjacent.
- **St. Mary's Moorsholm** - The Church was built in 1892 as a Chapel of Ease for the parish of Skelton It stands next to the church hall built in 1864 at a time of an influx of ironstone miners to East Cleveland. It joined the Moorland Parishes in 2009. The Churchyard has won the 'Best Grounds of a Religious Establishment' award in the Northumbria in Bloom awards.

Church buildings

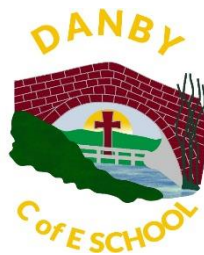
All church buildings are in a satisfactory state of repair. Significant improvements have been made at Danby and Castleton churches to provide toilets, kitchen and flexible space for meetings other than services. A new heating system has been installed at Castleton

Churchyards

Four of the five churches have adjacent open graveyards. The upkeep of these is a PCC responsibility. Danby receives an annual contribution from the Parish Precept.

Links with Primary Schools

Danby Church of England Voluntary Aided School



Danby Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School which is partnered with Egton CE VA Primary School in St Hilda's Moorland Federation. We are a small rural primary school with around 45 pupils situated in Ainthorpe in the Moorlands Benefice of Upper Esk Valley.

We are proud to be a Diocese of York school and work closely with the Education Team. Our headteacher is an active member of the Board of Education and the Schools Committee.

We are a distinctively Christian school and live out our vision and values everyday ensuring everyone in our school family is able to 'live life to the full'. We are highly inclusive and welcoming to all. Have a look at our Vision Tree to understand us better! We look forward to working with new members of the clergy team to support our Governing Body, Collective Worship and our local community engagement.

The Deacon and members of the PCC / congregation are governors, along with Rev Marian Gardner who also provides support to the deacon and benefice.

Prospective candidates are welcome to make an appointment to visit the school and find out more prior to interview if they wish. Please telephone: 01287 660345 or drop us an email on: admin@danby.n-yorks.sch.uk

Further information about our federation family and Danby School can be found on:

- our school website: www.danbyceprimary.co.uk
- our facebook page: www.facebook.com/DanbyCESchool/

We wish candidates the best of luck during the recruitment process and look forward to meeting you.

Castleton Community Primary School works closely in federation with Glaisdale, Lealholm and Oakridge primary schools. It also provides a stimulating and caring educational environment.

Assembly

Danby School: The Deacon leads Collective worship once fortnight.

Castleton School: The Deacon takes assembly once a fortnight.

Both schools use the church at Harvest. Danby uses the church for a Carol service.

Both schools are keen to develop worship further.



Schoolchildren in Church on Mothering Sunday

Our Communities

- **Community Life**

We are in rural North Yorkshire! The community is challenged by rapid change and loss of amenities. The response has been decidedly positive especially in relation to the needs of the most vulnerable.

- **Amenities** - Danby has two pubs, a health food shop, bakery and tearoom; The Moors Centre (National Park Visitor Centre) information, activities, gallery, shop and cafe; Castleton has a Co-op Convenience Store, two pubs, a tearoom and a hair and beauty salon. There will be fuel and EV charging points available at the currently being developed small supermarket. Commondale has a pub and Moorsholm has a newly opened Bistro
- **Schools** – Pre-school at Danby, Primary schools at Danby and Castleton.
- **Medical** - Danby has a modern GP Surgery and dispensary.
- **Village Halls** - Each village has a village hall, and most are well used for a range of activities – keep fit, singing, dancing, talks, classes for crafts and

technological skills, study groups, social activities and fund-raising, birthday parties, wedding breakfasts, funeral teas. Moorsholm is the only church in the benefice with its own church hall which is very well used by both church and community groups.

- **Sports** – Cricket is played at Danby, Castleton, Westerdale and Moorsholm; Football at Danby and Moorsholm; Tennis at Danby and Castleton; Bowls at Castleton; Quoits at Danby and Moorsholm and hockey at Danby. There is a children's play park at Castleton and Moorsholm. Moorsholm has a licensed sports pavilion.
- **Care** - At Botton Village in Danby dale, Camphill Village Trust provides sheltered community living and meaningful work on their farms and in their workshops for adults with learning difficulties. They also have a shop and tea room. We welcome members of this community as part of our regular church congregation.
- In Castleton, the purpose built Esk Moors Lodge provides sheltered housing for people aged 55 and over – a community led venture which raised over £3M to create an opportunity for independent living in peoples own community as their needs change.
- At Moorsholm the former village pub is being converted into a residential home for children with additional needs.
- **Esk Moors Caring** -a charitable company, was set up by our community to provide domiciliary care and support for residents after the County Council failed to find a contractor willing to cover the rural area. This has provided jobs for local people and care for those who need it.
- **Revival North Yorkshire** – A community interest organisation set up with the support of volunteers to promote health and wellbeing, supporting older people to stay in their own homes, help prevent loneliness and isolation and develop community spirit.
- **Esk Moors Active**, a charitable company, runs a community minibus providing outings (social, shopping, swimming) for those without cars. Drivers and passenger assistants are volunteers.

Who are we seeking?

Our vision statement lists our objectives for the medium term. There is plenty to be getting on with but there is also scope for imagination and fresh thinking. There is also a need for prioritising and goal setting. We are looking for an incumbent who has the enthusiasm, energy and vision to teach us, challenge us and work with us in the time they have available to make the Church more relevant in our communities.

We recognise that this post is limited (0.2) and at an early stage we would look to discuss with the priest appointed the best use of their limited time. We have an excellent lay team and we very much see this role as leading and supporting Sally (our Deacon), Kevin (our ALM), Church Wardens and the PCC's to develop and make a real difference in the benefice.

Key tasks for our incumbent

Mission and outreach

- Developing a ministry that reaches out to the whole community.

Leadership and collaborative working

- Leading the Church in setting and holding its vision by inspiring, motivating, challenging and empowering members of the church, individually and collectively, to achieve that vision and live Christ's story.
- Sharing ministry ecumenically and working collaboratively with others, (including clergy colleagues, churchwardens, PCC and volunteers) in identifying individuals' gifts and talents that can be harnessed for God's work

Worship and Preaching

- Leading worship.
- Planning, organising and conducting, alongside other members of the ministry team, a programme of worship that supports the church's vision and needs for ministry

Pastoral care

- Work with the Deacon and ALM to identify pastoral care needs and ensuring appropriate structures and skills to provide this to the community.

Stewardship and Parish Organisation

- Work with the PCC's to ensure that structures and resources for parish organisation are appropriate.
- Managing his or her time effectively.

Person Specification

Skills

- A confident and effective communicator
- a warm and welcoming outgoing personality
- generous, compassionate and community minded
- a good sense of humour

- ecumenically generous
- at ease with rural traditions in a treasured landscape
- an open mind about the use of churches for cultural and social activities
- A team leader who can help us set priorities
- a good organiser

What we can offer

Administration – The bi monthly church magazine is produced by a lay editorial team and printed in the parish by Camphill Press. Church finances are competently handled by treasurers in each parish.

Ministry team:

- Vicar (vacancy)
- Deacon: Mrs Sally Wilson
- Authorised Lay Minister: Mr Kevin Wall
- Churchwardens: Mrs Joyce Champion, Mrs Ann Gilbert, Mrs June Marsay, Mrs Audrey Muir
- Lay worship assistants (chalice): Mrs Polly Wright etc
- Organists: Mrs Ann Hartley, Mr John Whitehead plus Lyndsay Gillespie (Pianist)
- Flower arrangers: rota for full year
- Lesson Readers: rota for full year
- Sidesmen: rota for full year
- Church cleaning: rota for full year

Fundraising – A fundraising group arranges social functions that reach out into the community and raise money for the church.

Church grounds maintenance – The church grounds are maintained by a mix of paid contractors and volunteers. Danby Churchyard receives a financial contribution from the parish precept.

PCC's membership – The combined total of PCC members and officers is sufficient for the benefice.

Whitby Deanery



Whitby Deanery covers part of the North Yorkshire coast, from Staithes to Robin Hood's bay, and part of the North Yorkshire moors and the Esk Valley. There are 25 churches in the town and the surrounding villages within five Ministry Units – about half the population in the Deanery is to be found in the town of Whitby and the other churches are in villages of varying sizes

Mulgrave: Staithes, Roxby, Hinderwell, Ughorpe, Lythe and Sandsend

Whitby with Ruswarp : St Mary's, St Hilda's , St John's (Incumbent and Area Dean : Michael Gobbett)

Hawsker and Fylingdales (Robin Hood's Bay) and Lower Esk (Sleights, Ugglebarnby, Aislaby , Sneaton) (interim Priest in Charge (until 2029 and post potentially could be long term): Jo Parker

Middle Esk : Egton, Goathland, Grosmont, Lealholm, Glaisdale (Interim Priest-in charge soon to become permanent post : Anthony Bernnett

Moorland: Danby, Moorsholm, Castleton, Westerdale, Commondale (in Vacancy)

There a number of very active SSM curates, clergy with PTO, Licensed Lay ministers (Readers) and authorised Lay ministers who play a vital part in enabling ministry across the deanery.

Pastoral re-organisation has been a feature of life in the deanery in the past 25 years and more, with some churches moving between benefices and teams. Current Diocesan plans and expectations of Free Will Offer mean that each Ministry Unit should be offering at least £57,000 if it is to have a full time permanent priest. Realistically this is not possible for the Moorland parishes and reaching the expectation of £77,000 by 2031 will be a considerable challenge for all Ministry Units. So the deanery will be considering various possibilities for Pastoral re-organisation and the ways in which we work together in the coming years.. We look forward to welcoming someone into a team where people are committed to working together to see ministry flourish across the whole area.

The Area Dean is the Rev'd Canon Michael Gobbett

The benefice has four representatives on the Deanery Synod. The synod meets four times a year with an active Deanery Leadership Team also meeting four times a year.



Welcome to Worship – Indoors and Out





Out & About in our Moorland Villages

