

# Willington Team Parish Profile

St Paul Willington Quay, St Mary the Virgin Howdon and  
Church of the Good Shepherd Battle Hill



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

 Seeking.  
 Sharing.  
 Sending.

# Welcome to the Diocese of Newcastle!

Thank you so much for your interest in this role, and I hope you enjoy reading the information contained in this brochure and will find it helpful for your discernment. I am three years into being Bishop of Newcastle and I rejoice in this calling. Our diocese is a vibrant and varied blend of parishes, chaplaincies, schools, and ministry-contexts and is home to diverse geographical contexts with rich history and Christian spirituality. Our Northeast region is known for its friendliness and creativity, in city, coastal and rural areas. Our Diocese has responded to the challenges and joys of our region with imagination and resolve, mindful of our own financial challenges but undeterred in our hope and trust in God's generous provision. Shaped by the Five Marks of Mission and upheld by the dynamics of seeking, sharing, and sending, we are attentive to the need to speak the good news of God's Kingdom, and to be faithful stewards of our environment.

You will be joining us at a crucial point in our mapping out and implementation of vision and strategy: to be confident Christians enabling more and different people to experience life in all its fullness. Your role in this will offer opportunities to grow and develop in your own ministry. The Diocese of Newcastle has a long and proud history of inclusion and speaking up for the vulnerable and marginalised. We are the only diocese in the Church of England to have a paid chaplain to the victims and survivors of Church-based abuse, and our work with victims and survivors has been upheld as pioneering and ground-breaking. We also have a paid chaplain to the LGBTQI+ community, and our Diocesan Synod passed a motion in 2025 to express its full support for progress towards full inclusion of LGBTQI+ people.

Following a refresh of our Diocesan vision, to be confident Christians enabling more and different people to experience life in its fullness, we are working towards a bid to the National Church for strategic funding. Additionally, having received a generous legacy from the 10 Bishop of Newcastle (+Alec Graham) we are in the process of establishing a new 'Bishop of Newcastle Foundation' and developing a new partnership with the Community Foundation Northeast (a major philanthropic convenor in our region). It is hoped this will enable parishes across the diocese to bid for funding for projects that are within areas of interest to Bishop Alec (education, and children and young people being two such areas). Additionally, the diocese is undertaking a major review of its governance structures to ensure we are working efficiently across all areas of our engagement in God's mission, and to reduce silo working.

**The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley**  
**Bishop of Newcastle**



*Patronage of the Willington Team belongs to the Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury on behalf of His Majesty The King in right of His Crown*

The Diocese of Newcastle is the Church of England’s most northerly Diocese. Formed in 1882, the Diocese covered an area almost equivalent to the then County of Northumberland. With 169 parishes across 2,110 square miles, the Diocese covers the local authorities of Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside and also small parts of County Durham and Cumbria. Under the episcopal leadership of our Diocesan Bishop, The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley and the suffragan Bishop of Berwick, The Rt Revd Mark Wroe, we are resourced by two Archdeacons, and a team of lay and ordained officers who support the development of mission and ministry across the Diocese. Our Cathedral, under the leadership of The Very Revd Lee Batson, is a vibrant place of worship and outreach and plays a vital role in the life of the City of Newcastle.

There are 12 deaneries within 2 archdeaconries (Lindisfarne and Northumberland), which serve a population of 831,600 people across a variety of communities ranging from sparse rural to market towns, coastal, suburban, and larger inner-city areas. We have a current cohort of 95 stipendiary clergy (office holders), 20 self-supporting clergy, and 47 Readers, alongside a number of chaplaincies, pioneers, and new and emerging worshipping communities. A small administration team is based at Church House, North Shields. Church House is also the base for the Joint Education Team and Joint Communications Team (serving the Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle), the Lindisfarne College of Theology and a Religious Resources Centre.

The Diocese has recently increased its resourcing of safeguarding in the light of its INEQE safeguarding report, which was published in 2024. Our new Director of Safeguarding works alongside two assistant staff members in the areas of case work and training, with separate administrative support. The Diocese and its Cathedral are rightly proud of their work with the victims and survivors of church abuse, and we are the only Diocese in the Church of England to resource a chaplaincy to victims and survivors of church abuse.

The Diocese also has a new chaplaincy support for the LGBTQI+ communities, which is part of our diocesan-wide commitment to foster a climate of inclusion and welcome.



# Overview

Our Willington Quay Team serves a population of 24,366 people and our churches have been at the heart of the community for 150 years. We run the Church of the Good Shepherd, Battle Hill, St Mary the Virgin Church, Howdon and St Paul's Community Partnership. We offer activities and practical help for all ages, including those who attend church and those who only attend infrequently or never. We work hard as we feel this is our mission and have experienced many blessings.

Julie Mooney is Team Vicar at the Church of the Good Shepherd. Kim Wears is Associate Priest at St Mary's Howdon and Pat Bragg is a Licensed Reader. We have two methodist lay preachers Margaret and Chris. With our Churchwardens, Stewards and Pastoral Assistants we are a strong team who communicate well and look after each other. Additionally, Kim is the Chaplain for the Seaman's Mission and Pat the Area Leader for Prison Fellowship for the North-east. St Paul's is run by Kim, Corrie and Angela with support from many volunteers.

Ecumenical work is very important to us as the Church of the Good Shepherd is an ecumenical partnership between the Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed churches. Julie is chair of Wallsend Churches Working Together. On Good Friday all the churches come together for processions and a joint service in Richardson Dees Park and we meet for carol singing at Christmas. A member of our clergy often leads the Wallsend Remembrance Day procession and service. We hold services in the Rising Sun Country Park at Easter and as part of forest church.

We have trained four curates and many ordinands and readers on placement from Lindisfarne Theological college. Many of our trainees' comment on how rich their experience is with us and we enjoy seeing people develop in confidence and thrive.



Our children's work at St Paul's received an award for the best collaborative children's work in the North-east and our Digi Drop In, where Dot helps people to use computers, won an award from the House of Lords. We were thrilled when Sue McCormack, our last Team Rector was made a Canon at Newcastle Cathedral in recognition of our community work.

We consulted with our congregation and the attributes we are looking for in a new Team Rector are friendliness, approachability, compassion, humility and a forgiving nature with a good sense of humour. We would like them to have deep spiritual maturity and be able to deliver theology in an interesting and down-to-earth manner. They will need good leadership skills to both guide the congregations and support healthy churches which encourage spiritual growth. We are looking for clear and precise communication skills and good organisational skills. As a person from St Paul's said, "Someone with a heart for those in the greatest need." Our priorities going forward are to continue to build unity and flexibility within the churches. Each place has its own distinct culture and over the years we have found that it is very difficult to persuade people to attend a different church even for a special service.

We want to continue to place a strong emphasis on ministry and outreach, to build up our youth work whilst continuing to value and care for our older members.

We have a strong tradition of practical care and support, especially through all the work at St Paul's Community Partnership and Walking With, a local charity supporting asylum seekers. Our congregations support many people in a quiet respectful way, truly Christian faith in action.

We want to continue to do good pastoral care and to keep building long term relationships with people inside and outside of the church. There are good safeguarding policies and officers in place.

Challenges will be managing change as new Rector cares for both the Willington Team and the people of St John's. Some people may be upset and unsettled and need help and reassurance. We hope to be honest and realistic and manage the expectations of the congregations. We may need to reduce the number of services across all our churches as our staffing levels will be lower than in the past. We take Clergy, Reader and Churchwarden wellbeing seriously and encourage our clergy to take their days off and regular holidays and retreats. Julie, Kim and Pat have husbands and family responsibilities for children and grandchildren which are important and are priorities for them.

Another challenge is the amount of administration involved in running a District Church Council for St Mary's, a Management Board at St Paul's, an Ecumenical Church Council at the Church of the Good shepherd and a PCC for both the Willington Team and St John's. We do not have the funds for a Parish Administrator.

# St Mary's the Virgin, Howdon

St Mary's Church was founded in July of 1876 and has been serving the people of Howdon for 150 years. We are an inclusive church and welcome people into our church family from a very diverse range of backgrounds and ethnicities. Members of our congregation are employed as doctors, nurses and carers, and we have retired scientists and accountants as well as students. We have many wise older people who share their experience and we welcome refugees and those who are unemployed and struggling with ill health.

Our church tradition is middle of the road Anglican. Our priests dress in albs and stoles and our Reader wears her robes on special occasions. We preach from the lectern and have a relaxed style which enables people to feel at home. Our young people help by reading the Old or New Testament reading, helping with welcoming, serving at the altar and tidying up after the service. We operate an open table and encourage everyone to come to the altar to receive communion or a blessing and don't use bells or incense.

Junior Church meets during the 10am service, the numbers attending are currently lower than usual. Some of the baptism families attend Little Shepherds on a Tuesday morning. Our "Talking Donkeys" youth group paused after Sue retired. Eight young people attended a "Start Course" last November and were baptised. Many of our young people are now young adults and have moved on to college or university. We encourage our congregation to ask questions and deepen their own faith and distributed over 100 Draw Near for Lent booklets in February 2026. Several young men were baptised last year and we are preparing them for confirmation this year.



Open the Book is delivered in three schools every half term and Denbigh School organises church visits for the primary school children where they learn about baptism and ask questions about Christian faith.

We were awarded silver by A Rocha in 2024. We have done an energy audit, obtained a grant for new windows in the care centre, continued to preach and teach on the environment and worked with the Ripple Effect charity and the Northumberland Wildlife Trust. We hope that the Scouts will use our church garden.

Our average Sunday attendance is 48 with 44 communicants. 18 people come for Holy Communion and fellowship on a Monday afternoon. These people tend to be older and it is a wonderful friendship group. There is a separate friendship group which meets on a Friday morning.

There were 32 baptisms last year, 2 weddings, a renewal of vows and a blessing of rings. Our clergy did 3 funerals in church and 19 in total.

## Vicarage

The Vicarage is opposite St Mary's church. It was built in early 1900s and is south facing, detached with 4 bedrooms, a study, 2 reception rooms, kitchen and separate garage.



# St Paul's Community Partnership

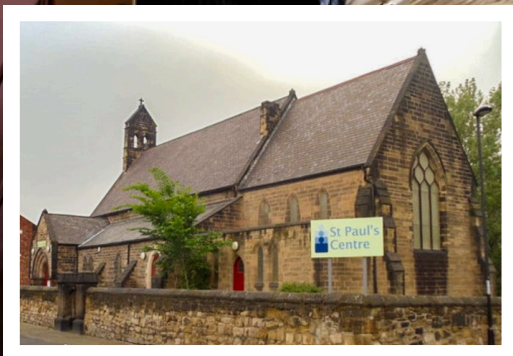
St Paul's Community Partnership has been in existence since 2009 and was formed to build on the work of St Paul's Church. It is a registered charity and St Paul's Church is a chapel of ease with a small sanctuary and a large community space. There is a Chair and a Board of Trustees.

The Partnership aims to:

- encourage the social, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of all those living in and around Willington Quay by bringing together the local residents and organisations who will listen to local concerns and find ways to improve the quality of life in our area.
- Include people from all faiths (and none) and backgrounds, whilst furthering the Christian faith.
- Run St. Paul's Community Partnership and Centre.

Kim, our Associate Priest, spends 15 hours a week at St Paul's, Corrie is paid for 30 hours running the activities and Angela is paid for 11 hours. They all contribute more than this as needed.

Angela describes the work at St Paul's as the Gospel in action, quoting from Matthew 25:34-36, "I was hungry and you fed me, naked and you clothed me." Longterm relationships are built, where people are listened to and not judged. Many people who come are living below the poverty line and St Paul's gives them space to be treated fairly and helped with problems and signposted to other agencies as needed.



Volunteers are mainly from the local community, people who have lived experience of poverty and social injustice which enables them to get alongside those who come.

Kim, Corrie and Angela find that the work is rewarding and one of the great joys is seeing people blossom and knowing that we have helped.

There are rogue landlords in the area and Kim especially has been involved in obtaining justice for people through work with the local Councillors and MP.

Current news from St. Paul's

- Corrie has set up a Toddler Group which is beginning to grow. Through her networks with North Tyneside Council, she has arranged for the Council's "Mini Movers Team" to run a series of active workshops in our Toddler Group sessions which help to develop children's motor and literacy skills.
- The Seated Exercise Group that Corrie got going at Eldon Court has proved to be a huge success. It's not only a social activity but physical activity and some participants are recovering from strokes and the exercise is helping their recovery.
- Corrie and Angela have secured further funding of a total of £10,500 which will enable the youth and children's work and other activities to continue. This includes running an expanded playscheme for the Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays offering food, company and activities.
- The YMCA are running a series of boxing sessions for young people at St Paul's on a Monday evening. A 15-week programme. This is going well.
- We are preparing to host a return visit from Walking With to introduce asylum seekers within the area to the activities and services on offer at St. Paul's.
- We have supported a very vulnerable service user into serviced accommodation - ending 10 years of trying to break free from the unsafe living conditions he has been existing in. Support has included donations of furniture and household items, emergency food parcels, as well as support to apply for benefits and guidance re: type of accommodation that would be best suited to his needs. As always, it is hard work, and yet such a privilege to walk such journeys.

On Mondays there is a craft group, baby and toddler group and singing4 fun, Tuesdays Fairshare in the morning, Squirrel, Beavers, Cubs and Ranger Scouts in the evening.

On Wednesday, Digi Drop In is run by Dot using our well-equipped IT suite or people's own computers or laptops. She teaches people digital skills, helps them apply for jobs and create CVs. They can get qualifications such as Level 2 Food Handling and Health and Safety in the Workplace. There are 40 free online courses including how to manage your money and stay healthy.

Also, on Wednesdays there is a Lunch Club, a friendship group and Brownies and Guides meet in the evening. On Thursdays, there is a Pop-up shop in the morning and a children's club and a youth group in the evening, The centre is available for hire on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Corrie and Angela's posts are funded for another year and they spend a lot of time completing grant applications.

# Church of the Good Shepherd, Battle Hill

The Church of the Good Shepherd is a Local Ecumenical Partnership comprising the Church of England, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church. The church has a full-time Anglican Minister/Team Vicar (Reverend Julie Mooney), an Associate non-stipendiary Priest (Reverend Emily Watson) and an Authorised Lay Pastoral Minister Mrs Barbara Innes).

There are two schools (Battle Hill primary school and Hadrian Park primary school), together with a college of further education, Tyne Metropolitan College, and a retail park. Upper schooling is served by Churchill Community College, within the Anglican Parish, but just outside the church's District.

The church is a modern multi-purpose building opened and dedicated in 1983. It has no fixed seating, and can be cleared to create a large open hall. Maximum seating capacity is 200. The entire building is accessible by wheelchair, there being no steps either at the main entrance or internally. A sound system, complete with a loop system for hearing aid users, is installed.

Regular use for church activities additional to regular worship include:

- 'Little Shepherds', a weekly baby and toddler group
- 'Sew and Socialise', a weekly sewing and embroidery group, which also takes an active role in organising church functions.
- 'Honest to God,' a group formed as a place where people could discuss the challenges of living out their Christian faith, meeting twice a month.
- School services and other school outreach, with local schools using the church for Christmas and Leavers services, additionally with our own clergy, and church members, involved in assemblies and 'Open the Book' visits.
- Social activities, particularly music evenings, and 'Open Mic' evenings.
- Specific study courses are normally active during Lent and Advent.
- Hot Chocolate, an informal activities group aimed at younger teenagers (for whom there is generally little provision in the area), meets each Tuesday evening from 6pm to 8pm under the supervision of trained youth workers.



As part the Wallsend Churches Working Together this church has an active witness twice a year, with a Good Friday Procession of Witness in Wallsend, ending with a short service in the local park, and Carol Singing in the Wallsend shopping mall shortly before Christmas. Wallsend Churches Working Together is also the umbrella organisation for the 'Open the Book' sessions, delivering Bible stories to 10 local schools every half term, reaching some 3000 children.

This church is also a member of the Rising Sun Neighbours, a group of local churches working together for outreach to families using the Rising Sun Country Park, to deliver monthly Forest Church services, carol singing, and to have an active presence at the summer and Christmas Festival days. Closer to home, Good Shepherd members also use a Saturday morning (usually the last before Christmas) to sing Christmas carols around the 'Coastways' local Battle Hill shopping centre.

Regular patterns of church worship include 9.30am Family Eucharist and 6pm Evening Worship. Every half-term a short 'Kidz Rock' service is prepared with young families in mind. There is also a mid-week Holy Communion service on Wednesdays at 9.30am and a monthly service for the housebound at a local care home.

## The Local Area

Although within about six miles of Newcastle upon Tyne city centre, with its theatres, cinemas, shopping centre, etc. and with excellent bus connections to take you there in less than 30 minutes, Willington Team Parish in general lies close to open, more rural areas.

Our mining heritage has left us with a myriad of footpaths and cycleways based on the old wagonways and railway lines associated with the coal mines, many of which pass through the local 'Rising Sun' country park, a large open area, both wooded and open, with much wild life, complete with its own lake, and of course, a café.

We are also within easy reach of the coast, with Tynemouth having some of the finest sandy beaches in the area, together with the 13<sup>th</sup> century Tynemouth Castle and Priory.

For those wishing to go further afield, Newcastle International Airport is within about 12 miles, and a daily ferry service from the River Tyne to Amsterdam (Ijmuiden) can be boarded (with a car, if that is your wish) at nearby North Shields.

