

CHRIST CHURCH, HIGHER BEBINGTON



PARISH PROFILE

JULY 2025



**Christ Church
Higher Bebington**
Bringing People Together

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Note: *Quotes and statistics used in this Parish Profile are taken from the interregnum questionnaire circulated to the congregation in May 2025*

SECTION 1: ABOUT THE PARISH

Higher Bebington is a town on the eastern side of the Wirral Peninsula, close to the River Mersey.

Higher Bebington is largely a middle-class residential area and is a desirable place to live and work. The population is circa 15,215 according to the 2021 census. The housing is predominantly semi-detached and mainly owner-occupied.



Higher Bebington has much to offer with easy connections to Liverpool and Chester and the beautiful coastline of the Wirral peninsula is never far away.

Bebington, Port Sunlight and Rock Ferry railway stations are close by and situated on the Wirral line of the Merseyrail network with frequent services to Liverpool, Chester and west Wirral.

It is a safe place for children and is well served by local primary and secondary schools - there are several infant and primary schools in the area and an Academy High School in the parish, with boys and girls Grammar Schools sitting just outside the parish.

There are a several parades of retail shops within walking distance of Christ Church, both at Teehey Lane and Broadway and a number of popular food and drink establishments.

There is a strong connection between Christ Church and the local community of Higher Bebington. Many in the community see Christ Church as “their church” even if they attend church only occasionally.

We believe Higher Bebington is a great place to live and worship. As with any parish there are lots of challenges but by the same token the local community is friendly, open and enthusiastic about its community, and Christ Church is already recognised by many as working at the heart of that community.



SECTION 2: ABOUT THE CHURCH

2.1 Church as a worshipping people

Christ Church is a vibrant church, welcoming to all and open to new ideas and recognising that to grow often involves accepting the need to change. The church already runs a diverse mix of faith based and community activities which are well supported.

The previous incumbent was a keen promoter of the parish model and a lot of his focus was on forging connections between Christ Church and schools, care-homes, community groups and local businesses. That enthusiasm was infectious – both for the church and the community – and both sides have benefitted from that sense of the church being the centre of the local community.

We have managed to maintain the majority of services and activities during vacancy, though odd one-off activities have been curtailed due to the stretching of resources.

Regular services

Our Sunday services, whilst largely traditional, also include contemporary offerings accessible to a wide range of worshippers.

- 8.30am Holy Communion (traditional, sometimes BCP, no music; weekly)
- 10.00am:
 - First and Third Sunday - Holy Communion (Common Worship)
 - Second Sunday - All Age Worship
 - Fourth Sunday - Service of the Word (with Holy Communion held separately at 12.00)
- 6.30pm Sunday evening service – fortnightly rotating between Sung Evensong once per month, and otherwise Healing service or Taize service

A Wednesday morning Communion service is also held weekly at 10.30am.

“Start the Week” Monday morning prayer is run by Zoom as is Lectio Divina (roughly fortnightly).

We describe our church tradition as ‘Central’ with clergy wearing robes for the main parish services. There is a variety of worship liturgy adopted to suit the service.

There is a variety of church music adopted including hymns selected from “Hymns Old and New” and more contemporary hymns which are displayed on the video screens. The parish band is also regularly involved in All Age Worship services.

“There is an ‘open’ style of theology and acceptance at Christ Church and involvement of the congregation rather than it all being done by the priest at the front”

Why our congregation come to church

In a recent survey the congregation were asked what motivated them to come to church and the results were:

Ranking	Reason
1	learn more about my faith and deepen my relationship with God
2	participate in meaningful worship and prayer
3	join as a faith community to serve and help others in need
4	find purpose and meaning in life through faith
5	connect with like-minded individuals and enjoy fellowship
6=	receive guidance and support from spiritual leaders
6=	find support from a community of fellow believers

“One of the things I like best about the services held at Christ Church is the connection with all no matter where we are on our journey”

Special services

Naturally Christmas and Easter are focal points in the church’s calendar and offer opportunities for both traditional and alternative services. As well as Christmas candlelit lessons & carol service, Children’s Nativity and Christingle service, we also offer a Blue Christmas service for those who find Christmas a difficult period.

At Easter we run a Good Friday witness at the local shops and British Legion alongside a Maundy Thursday foot washing, Service of the Last Hour and Easter Sunday All Age Worship.

Every November a service for bereaved parishioners is held - “Time to Remember” - which is appreciated both by those recently bereaved and those remembering past losses. The service combines reflections, poetry and music in a creative way to bring comfort and solace.

The church’s Remembrance Sunday service is extremely well attended and is supported by the British Legion in Higher Bebington, local businesses and uniformed groups in the parish (Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Guides, Brownies and Rainbows). It has become

customary for the congregation to process along Kings Road after the service (with the permission of the police) towards the British Legion for a second short service to be held in the Legion car park as an act of witness. Many remain at the British Legion and enjoy refreshments, sometimes well into the afternoon!

The artistic displays inside and outside the church to mark Remembrance Sunday always garner particular praise and offer a very visible sign of remembrance to the community.



This last year the church developed two new services:

- (i) a Toy Service at Christmas, attended by Father Christmas, where members of the congregation and community donated new toys for the benefit of Ferries Family Groups, a local charity supporting families facing hardship and breakdown;

- (ii) a Sunday service dedicated to the work and mission of Christian Aid which was joyful and well received.

Pastoral care

We have a small team who take communion into people's homes, visit residential/care homes and undertake hospital visiting. Each month some of the Pastoral Team visit Bebington Care Home which is within our parish and good relationships have been established with staff and residents alike. Typically between 12-20 residents attend. The Team also occasionally visit Birch Tree Manor, Port Sunlight (outside of the Parish but with local agreement).

Bible Study

There are three housegroups running fortnightly, along with a Men's Group who meet along the same lines. Each housegroup chooses its own materials for study and in addition to the more traditional resources some have studied "The Chosen" TV series, and others Frank Skinner's "Comedian's Prayer Book".

The church ran an Alpha course in 2024 which was well received though those attending (circa 35) were largely already members of the congregation who wanted to experience Alpha and learn more about their faith.

A more recent addition has been "New Testament in a Year", started by the previous incumbent and continued by Rev Eunice Blackmore (our Associate Minister) and assisted on occasion by guest clergy. This takes place monthly and attracts around 25 people and involves study of one or two books of the Bible each session.

Choir and Band

There is a willing choir of about 12 members of the congregation who practise once a week in preparation for the Sunday service and then lead singing at our 10.00am service. We also have a band of amateur musicians who lead music at our All Age services and occasionally at special services.

Work with young people

Traditionally the church has run a Sunday Club for primary age children of families attending Sunday morning services. In the past these have been well attended but in recent years, and following the impact of COVID, the numbers have diminished quite significantly and now is rarely more than half a dozen children. During All Age services held in church crafts are offered in the children's corner.

Once a month a service for young children – "Praise and Play" - is run by Jackie Jones a member of the Ministry Team and soon to be commissioned as a Pastoral Worker, and supported by Rev Eunice Blackmore. This takes place on Sunday afternoons and

concentrates on a specific Bible reading or character each session and involves scripture, music and food.

In addition the church also runs Lego Church once a month which is great fun and a creative way for youngsters to engage with the Bible.

Recently the church has introduced half-termly Family Fun afternoons. The last event, held on a Saturday afternoon and involving craft, pizza and cake, welcomed 60 people (children and parents/carers). Whilst primarily aimed at young children these events also offer an opportunity to engage with their parents and carers, and it is often surprising just how much they are willing to share about their challenges and struggles.

On All Hallows Eve we held a drop in event on the theme of “Happy Pumpkin Patch” to promote a positive attitude to Halloween. 40 children attended with their parents/carers.

The annual Nativity service is very well attended regularly attracting 250+ people to the church. The church also runs a Travelling Crib which moves throughout the Parish during Advent.

The church would like to be able to connect those families attending Praise & Play and Lego Church etc to the regular Sunday services but this remains a challenge for all sorts of reasons, mainly societal barriers.

Like younger children, the church’s experience with teenagers is that that demographic has also reduced significantly. Up until 3-4 years ago there were around 12-14 teenagers regularly attending church services and social events. That cohort have all progressed on to university education and employment and there has only been a group of 4-5 teenagers coming up behind, but they continue to meet on a Friday evening once a month. The demographic change, coupled with the impact of the pandemic on church numbers, has made teenage ministry more difficult and the church recognises there needs to be work done to re-ignite the connection with younger people, and their families, in our parish.

“The thing I like best about the services at Christ Church is the choice – quiet, reflective services if needed, and lively ones too”

Communication with the congregation and local community

The church produces a weekly newsletter and this is distributed by email ahead of Sunday services and then in paper format on a Sunday morning.

The church promotes all its special services and events through Facebook.

A Parish Christmas Card and a Parish Easter Card are produced and circulated to all 4500+ houses in the parish, publicising the services of the season, highlighting the regular events held at the church and in the Community Centre, and offering a message of hope and blessing.

The Children & Families Team has recently resolved to implement a monthly newsletter to be sent to families by email to publicise the services, events and activities specifically geared to families for the month ahead.

2.2 Church and the community it serves

CCHB is not an inward-looking collection of worshippers and does instead seek to be very much part of the wider community of Higher Bebington.

Keeping the church open

During the pandemic it was decided to open up the church during the day as a space for quiet contemplation and prayer for anyone passing who wished to pop in.

This initiative has continued and the church remains open every day between 10am and 7pm. Opening up and locking up has been more difficult since the Vicarage has been empty as the previous incumbent and his spouse would usually take responsibility for this given the proximity of the church to the Vicarage.



"I do love that the church is open to the community during the week"

Bereavement support

Bereavement support is offered through our Befrienders group who connect with recently bereaved families and offer a monthly lunch in the Community Centre. Around 20 attend.

Rev Eunice Blackmore has developed and run multiple bereavement courses using The Bereavement Journey. The 7 session course supports those who have suffered bereavement and offers a safe space to discuss grief and learn from others who are also coming to terms with loss. The course has been a brilliant success and three courses ran in 2024.

Work with children and families

The church runs a weekly Toddler Group every Monday morning in the Community Centre, welcoming around 25 toddlers with their siblings, parents and carers.

There is also a weekly Baby Group (Wednesdays) with a steady 8-10 attending with their families for most of the year.

Men in Sheds

This initiative has grown over time and is now a valuable resource to the church and the community. There are two sheds and membership is free, subsidised by the sale of bird tables, planters and the like.

The sheds support the work of the church through various DIY tasks around the church, reducing the reliance on paid contractors. Attendance can be anything from 4 to 14 on any given day and the sheds are open three days per week.



Food based outreach

A monthly “Friday Lunch Club” is held in the Community Centre offering a two course lunch at an affordable cost and attracts around 20-30 members of the community.

Also monthly is “Don’t Eat Sunday Lunch Alone” run by Rev Eunice Blackmore and involving a Sunday lunch at a local restaurant, with the aim of alleviating social isolation.

In the same vein, the “Men’s Supper Club” also runs occasionally throughout the year, generally involving around four meals per year at different venues.

For purely social reasons the church also has a Ladies Night (usually a fish and chip supper in the Community Centre with bring your own drinks) and a Men’s drinking group (frequenting local hostelrys and sometimes pubs in Liverpool).

It has become a tradition to offer a free Christmas Day Lunch in the Community Centre (first introduced in 2015). Around 90 guests joined us in 2024 and enjoyed welcome drinks, a two course Christmas lunch, carols and the Kings’ Christmas Broadcast, and all went home with a gift, kindly donated by Home Instead. Local businesses donate food and drink for the event and the volunteers from the congregation work very hard to

make sure the event is a joyful experience. It is encouraging that members of the wider community who do not regularly attend church services also offer help with taxiing, serving, and running the raffle. Christmas jumpers are obligatory!

Other outreach and activities

Other regular church organised activity includes:

- 4Cs Carers' Group – monthly, Tuesdays, with a trip to the seaside in the summer
- Connect Café - weekly, Wednesday mornings
- Indoor Bowls – monthly in the winter months
- Knit and Natter – fortnightly
- Ladies in Stitches sewing group – fortnightly, Tuesdays
- Mothers' Union – monthly, mornings
- Oasis (mental health support group) – fortnightly, Wednesday mornings
- Singing Café - fortnightly
- Welsh Café (Caffi Cymraeg) – monthly
- Walking Group – monthly, Fridays

Rev Eunice Blackmore regularly holds communion services at local residential homes. At Christmas the church visits those homes to sing carols, usually accompanied by Father Christmas despite his busy schedule!

In the week before Christmas it has become customary for the choir, a keyboard player and anyone who enjoys singing to visit the Travellers Rest pub (at the invitation of the landlord) and sing Christmas carols. This attracts a strong response from the local community and the pub is generally standing room only. We even get some community soloists for a verse or two!

Additionally there is an annual Friendship weekend in Grange over Sands each May, generally with around 40 members of the congregation, mostly in the older demographic, enjoying time away to enjoy evening reflections and homespun entertainment.

The previous incumbent also established a Church Chats service for anyone needing mental health support or a confidential chat, staffed by professional therapists and available for anyone in the Bebington area.

“There is a danger of spreading ourselves too thin – instead spend more time consolidating what we have, particularly pastorally which Christ Church and the local community”



Rose Queen

The church supports the crowning of a Rose Queen each year at our Summer Fair. The Rose Queen nominates a couple of charities of their choice and, with the support of their family and retinue, organises social events throughout the year to raise funds for those charitable causes. Bingo nights, beetle drives, afternoon teas, and quiz nights are regular events.



Special relationships

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.

The church has established a community fridge in the foyer of the Community Centre. Daily donations are received from the Co-op shop on Teehey Lane and the community are encouraged to come and help themselves to anything that is available that day.

Direct financial support has been given to Ferries Family Groups (supporting families across the Wirral and particularly in nearby New Ferry and Rock Ferry - areas 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.

The church also has strong links with Charles Thompson Mission (providing care and support, food and clothes, to those across Wirral who are living in poverty), and Forum Housing (supporting young people with housing needs).

Nearer to home, the Vicar and Churchwardens are the trustees of the Thomas Robinson Charity which was set up by an endowment many years ago to support 'the poor and needy of Higher Bebington'. Grants of cash are made available to individuals or families within the parish who need special help.

Relationships with local churches have existed over time but were interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and never really recovered.



The previous incumbent forged strong links with the local Muslim community and mosque, the Deen Centre in Birkenhead. The PCC would like to maintain those links but time pressures currently during vacancy make that challenging. Nevertheless the congregation is keen to re-kindle the connection and is open to the learning that can be found in dialogue with other faiths.

Links with local schools

Christ Church enjoys strong connections with 3 primary and infant schools in the parish – Higher Bebington Juniors, Town Lane Infants and Brackenwood Juniors with which Christ Church enjoys strong connections. We also have a strong connection with Brackenwood Infants, which is just across the parish boundary in Bebington, by agreement with the Incumbent there.

The local primary schools regularly welcome members of the ministry team and others to lead their assemblies. Links with the Co-op Academy (secondary school) are also strong, particularly with their Special Educational Needs (SEN) students who regularly participate in events at the church. It is particularly encouraging that one of the local primary schools is seeking to link their religious studies curriculum with events at Christ Church.

Schools have organised eco-visits to our woodland, looking for tadpoles and bug hunting.

In recent years the church has strengthened the links with the local primary schools with the development of immersive Christmas Experience and Easter Experience events. These run over 4 days and are attended by over 300 children. Around 25 volunteers from the congregation run these events through creative set designs, costumes, montages, role play and singing.

At Christmas 2024 and Easter 2025 the Co-Op Academy also sent a small group of their SEN students to join in. We are indebted to Libby Potter for her co-ordination of these creative and joyful events.



Special events in the church building

The beauty of the church building along with its AV facilities and impressive organ mean that the church is an attractive venue for visiting choirs and performers. In recent years the church has hosted concerts by SingMe Merseyside, Bach's St John Passion, Jazz Concerts, and an organ recital from Dr Ian Tracey DL.

Community Centre users

Aside from the activities and events that the church puts on the Community Centre is also used by a wide range of third party businesses and groups, including:

- Baby and Child First Aid
- Dru Yoga
- Tai Chi
- VIBE Dance & Drama School
- Bebington Community Choir
- Bebington Bridge Club
- Brownies
- Rainbows
- Weight Watchers

2.3 The church – buildings and resources

The church

The church building is Grade 2 listed, and the Vicarage listed by association.

The church was constructed in sandstone from the local quarry at Storeton between 1857 and 1859.

The church is an attractive building, both inside and out, and benefits from a creative team who use art and crafts to enhance it.

In the main the structure of the church is sound, though as with all buildings of a certain age it is showing some signs of wear and tear. There are a number of current issues with the roof. The PCC Building and Finance committee has deferred some planned work to replace the vestry roof and guttering pending the completion of the next quinquennial inspection which will be used to inform the development of a coherent long-term strategy for the roof. The church does have some reserves but it is expected that some fundraising will be required for the roof works that will be required.

In 2019 major improvement works were undertaken on the church's AV and lighting schemes at a cost of £105,000. Two projectors and large retractable screens have been installed which now allow for services to be conducted without service cards and hymn books and also allow for use of a range of media to enhance worship. A number of

smaller mobile screens have also been purchased and linked to the main system, and the sound system benefits from both fixed and mobile microphones.

The system also supports the live streaming of our services on the church's Youtube channel, an initiative started during Covid-19 and carried on to this day and providing connection to those watching from home or sometimes abroad.

Our pipe organ was made in 1936 by Rushworth & Dreaper and In 2019 was the subject of a major refurbishment project costing £174,000. In addition to the full refurbishment, the project also included conversion the organ to electronic operation from either the original keyboard position, or from a new keyboard located in the nave.

A Quinquennial inspection is to be completed this year, having been postponed from 2024.



Community Centre

The new Community Centre was constructed in 2011 at a cost of £1.1m. This project was funded with the aid of a £500,000 Lottery grant, together with the fund-raising activity of the congregation and the local community. The capital cost of the Community Centre has now been substantially met with only a small outstanding interest free loan liability of £7,850 due back to members of the congregation. The building is fully accessible and achieved a BREEAM environmental assessment rating of 'Very Good' when it was built. There is a direct fixed connection between the church and the Community Centre through an enclosed glazed link.

The Community Centre is a sophisticated modern building equipped with air-source heat pumps driving underfloor heating, automatic windows, powered access doors, an access control and security system.

In the Community Centre there are 4 rooms of different sizes that can be employed for events and meetings. The Kings Hall is the largest room and is equipped with AV facilities and a well equipped kitchen. All Age Worship services are often held in the Kings Hall which accommodate circa 100 people. The Kings Hall is also used for Rose Queen social events, afternoon teas, coffee mornings and the Christmas Fair, and many of the church's outreach groups (Toddler Group, Lego Church, Connect Coffee, Singing Café etc). The smaller rooms are more usually used for church meetings. The Community Centre also houses the Parish Office.

All rooms in the Community Centre are available for hire by the public. The Kings Hall is the most popular booking and is used for children's parties, Dance groups, Weight Watchers, and a Bridge Club amongst other users.

Many in the parish are grateful for the fairy lights and illuminations (all 1300 of them) which dress the roofline of the Community Centre and the trees in the centre car park during the winter months.

The new incumbent will no doubt come with fresh ideas about how to move things on and engage with new and existing people in the parish in creative ways. The Community Centre represents an excellent resource to underpin these new initiatives.

Graveyard

The parish graveyard is closed to new burials but continues to be used for the interment of ashes and burials in family plots and is maintained by a group of volunteers and Wirral Borough Council. We have two Commonwealth war graves from World War I and one from World War II.

The Parish Office deals with all graveyard enquiries.

Vicarage

The vicarage is situated next to the church and sits in extensive grounds. The Vicarage was built in 1858 by the Rev George Troughton, the first incumbent of the church, at his own expense, and comprises a lounge, dining room, kitchen, study and cloakroom/bathroom. There is also a room that was used as a respite room by the previous incumbent which could be re-purposed. On the first and second floors there are 5 large bedrooms and bathrooms. The study and respite room are accessible from the entrance porch where there is a separate door leading to the private sections of the Vicarage.

The vicarage is an impressive, large building. The PCC are in dialogue with the Diocese regarding a scheme of improvement and which is currently awaiting local authority approval and which will make the building more suitable for modern living and more economical to heat.



Vicarage grounds

One section of the Vicarage grounds is fenced off and retained as the Vicarage garden. The remainder of the grounds are a mixture of lawns, woodland, orchard, and ponds.

The grounds are maintained by the church's Green Team, led by Pam Hollinshead, who is also the church's Eco Group leader. The Green Team have overseen the planting of an orchard and wildflower meadow, and recently have created a stumpery and a quiet paved area.

The wider Vicarage grounds are used for outdoor events including Parish picnics, outdoor services and Parish Bonfire and Fireworks. The extensive grounds are also the focus of our annual Summer Fair which regularly attracts 500+ visitors. There is also a paddock accommodating a Scout Hut.

A stage with a dedicated electrical supply was constructed in the grounds around 3 years ago which now provides a focal point for music and bands and presentations at outdoor events.

Between the church and the Community Centre lies a patio area which accommodates a number of sheds supporting the "Men in Sheds" group.

The church's Green Team are active in the care and maintenance of the church grounds and the church has achieved Gold Eco Church accreditation in recognition of its work to improve biodiversity and promote a positive environmental impact.





Finances

To date the parish has sustained and met its financial commitments to the Diocese and towards the general upkeep of the buildings and grounds. Financial sustainability continues to be a priority of the church.

In summary the parish continues to operate on a sound financial basis with a PCC ordinary income for the year ending 31/12/2024 of £264,630 with a small operating surplus. The parish continues to make full payment of its Parish Share and the PCC Treasurer, Charles Van Ingen, works diligently to oversee the financial management of all aspects of the church and the Community Centre.

We run an extensive planned giving scheme with the bulk of our voluntary income (the majority Gift Aided) coming through monthly donations straight to our bank. We run Thanksgiving Campaigns, usually annually, themed around 'Giving in Grace'. We encourage legacy giving and in recent years legacies have enabled us to take forward many capital intensive schemes.

Terry Cunningham from our PCC takes responsibility for monitoring the energy consumption of the church and negotiates its contracts with energy suppliers.

Safeguarding

The church works within the scope of the House of Bishops' guidance and good practice documents. The church is currently working to put together a Parish Safeguarding Team to deal with all DBS applications, maintaining the dashboard, handling safeguarding reporting and engagement with third party users.

The church is employing safer recruitment policies for new volunteers. We are also currently retrospectively registering existing volunteers and ensuring they have appropriate training and supervision.

The church is committed to embedding Safer Recruitment and People Management policies into the culture of the church. The church is at level 2 in the Parish dashboard.

The PCC receive a safeguarding report at all of their meetings. As the Safeguarding Team evolves it is intended that it will meet approximately monthly. Contact details for Safeguarding purposes are available on our website.

"The services often contain humour and present as personal but Christian reflections on everyday relevant issues"





SECTION 3: BROADER CONTEXT

The Parish of Higher Bebington is part of the Wirral North Deanery. The Deanery comprises 14 parishes, covering nearly as many separate population centres, and with 21 churches with a range of size, style and traditions. There are good relationships in the Deanery particularly between the clergy, for whom it provides a valuable forum for fellowship and mutual support. Synod meets three times a year, usually with a speaker on a topic of relevance, often one of the Diocesan team.

Because of the size and makeup of the Deanery we do not currently have Deanery-wide initiatives involving all the churches, but some churches partner with and support one another or are involved in joint events together on a local basis.

The church has 5 PCC members acting as Deanery Synod representatives.



“The sermons come from the heart and are not teachy or preachy, rather they come from equal, fallible pilgrims not ‘supposed teachers’ with higher wisdom or authority”.

SECTION 4: THE VICAR

4.1 What ministry support we can offer the new Vicar

The church is blessed with a strong Ministry Team made up of a range of age, skills and experience:

- Rev Eunice Blackmore, Associate Minister (SSM), since 2016
- Helen Byrne, Licensed Reader, since 2021
- Pam Hollinshead, Licensed Reader, since 2002
- Lynn Ion, Licensed Pastoral Worker, since 2022
- Jackie Jones, just completing Pastoral Worker training and to be licensed in October 2025
- Ian Millington, Lay Vice Chair of PCC, completed first year of Chester Diocese's Foundations for Ministry (FFM) in 2021 *
- Colette Millington, completed first year of FFM in 2021 *
- Fiona Murphy, FFM in 2015 and Occasional Worship Leader (OWL) since 2025
- Libby Potter, volunteer children's worker
- Janet Wallace, volunteer children's worker

** Both Ian Millington and Colette Millington regularly contribute to services (sermons, prayers, leading All Age Worship and assisting with communion).*

The Ministry Team will continue to be available to the new incumbent to support the life and growth of the church. The Ministry Team meet monthly to discuss everything to do with worship and services, and separately there is a Children and Families Planning Group and an All Age Worship Planning Group.

The Ministry Team collaborate well with each other to ensure that responsibility for services and pastoral care is divided equitably and to play to the strengths of those participating. The Ministry Team is supported by an extensive rota of people to read the Epistle and the Gospel and to lead prayers and the wider congregation is always willing to join in with helping to pull together activities and events.

There are Whatsapp groups set up for the Ministry Team and Pastoral Team and a separate "God's Helpers" group promoting volunteering opportunities to the congregation.

There is a strong and dynamic PCC comprising 17 elected members and 2 co-opted members. The churchwardens, Ian Murray and June Bickford are experienced in their roles as is the PCC Treasurer, Charles Van Ingen. The church already has a successor willing to stand for election at the next Annual Meeting when one of the churchwardens intends to retire.

In the Parish Office Victoria Gleave acts as Parish Secretary (employed part time 16 hours per week) and supports everything and anything that goes on. Victoria, along with

Jane Dalziel who also assists in the Parish Office (employed part time 10 hours per week), are the first face of the church to many in the community. They are helped by a willing band of volunteers throughout the week.

Steph Carr is employed part time 10 hours per week to liaise with Community Centre users and help manage website content.

The Higher Bebington community already speak very positively about the impact the church has in the community and the connection they feel with the church. This will provide an excellent foundation for future community work and outreach that the new incumbent wants to achieve.

4.2 The Vicar we need

The church believes the new incumbent should have the following qualities:

1. An enthusiasm and energy to encourage in others a sense of the mission and purpose God has for our lives
2. A genuine desire to connect with young families and children and the skills to encourage them to come into a faithful relationship with God
3. A desire to grow the church in faith and to promote the church as an open and welcoming faith community, building on the connections already established with the local community and engaging with that community enthusiastically
4. A sincere heart for mission and outreach and finding new ways to help those in our community who are less fortunate or face significant challenges, promoting the church as a beacon of hope in our parish
5. Someone who can encourage the congregation to live out their Christian faith in daily life, Monday to Saturday and not only on a Sunday
6. A team player with the ability to motivate a diverse group of volunteers across all aspects of church life and community life, to encourage and support lay ministry, to recognise skills and resources, and to delegate and “let go”
7. Willingness to embrace interfaith dialogue
8. A desire to continue to support and champion the church’s Eco work
9. Strong leadership qualities, an ability to evaluate PCC and church priorities and to deliver sustained improvement on the key objectives identified
10. Ability to foster a strong safeguarding culture in the parish
11. Aspirational, but realistic – the PCC will be keen to enter into an open dialogue with the incumbent to review the church’s priorities and assess its resources, and in doing so is happy to consider what of the things already taking place should continue, what might stop and what might change
12. Possessing a keen sense of humour

The PCC has not made any special arrangements with the Bishop on the grounds of theological conviction regarding the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood and the

Episcopate in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests. Christ Church has previously been excellently served by a female vicar and we would have no hesitation in welcoming a female incumbent again if they were the best candidate.

It is also worth saying that we will pay in full all legitimate working clergy expenses, that we expect our incumbent to take proper holidays and days off and that we will support them as they take time for training, personal development, retreat and academic study. A happy and healthy priest means a happy and healthy church!

SECTION 5: VISION AND GOALS

The PCC recently consulted with the congregation through a survey and identified certain priorities of the church for the immediate future which the new incumbent will be instrumental in leading and developing. Out of the survey the top priorities identified were:

Ranking	Priority	Weighting
1	seek to appeal to more families and young people	27.3%
2	grow outreach and mission work in the community, seeking to make a practical and spiritual difference to people's lives	24.5%
3=	offer further opportunities to learn together about the Bible and our faith	12.7%
3=	nurture connections with other churches and other denominations	12.7%
5	offer more faith based activities in the Community Centre during the week	8.2%
6	keep things the same	6.4%
7	offer more community activities in the Community Centre during the week	5.5%
8	offer more opportunities for prayer	2.7%
9	offer more church services – whether on Sundays or during the week	0%

The PCC see the principal objectives of the new incumbent to be:

1. Engagement with young people and families. There is a significant need to encourage families in our community to move from attending our events and engaging with the church only on 'festivals' to actively and regularly participating in the life and work of the church - to "move the dial" from occasional visitor to regular congregant and active disciple. A lot of work has been put into establishing good links with the local schools but resources are thin to deliver on

that work, including delivering assemblies. The congregation has an increasingly older demographic and new younger membership is required to grow and sustain the congregation.

Many families still want their children baptised at Christ Church but often there is a missing link between baptismal attendance and regular church attendance. Developing connections and nurturing relationships between these families and the church is critical to its future.

The PCC has sought to recruit a part time Youth Worker and whilst it was not possible to fill the post on the first attempt the PCC remains committed to fund and support the role.

2. To build wider outreach into the community of Higher Bebington, especially those areas in the parish that are furthest away from the church building and that have over time proved hard to reach and engage with
3. To encourage and foster a culture of Christian learning and development among the congregation – to explain ‘the mystery’ and to lead to a clearer understanding of our identity as a community of faith and what that might mean for our daily lives here in Higher Bebington and beyond, including how we can learn from and work with other faith communities
4. Maintain and develop our pastoral care within the parish and local community, particularly pastoral ministry to the elderly
5. Encourage new expressions of faith and ministry and new use of music in our services, whilst respecting and maintaining the current patterns of worship
6. To evaluate our welcome as a church and develop sustainable practices to enhance those first connections
7. To support and encourage the development of our Parish Safeguarding Team and the implementation of Safeguarding policies
8. To bring fresh ideas on how we communicate with the community through our website and social media channels and overseeing the delivery of those developments

“One of the best things about Christ Church is the absence of ‘high church’ traditions – instead come and join in ‘just as you are’”

6. SUMMARY

The parish of Higher Bebington is a welcoming community and the work already undertaken by Christ Church to foster positive connections and relationships between the church and the people of the parish offers a new incumbent an excellent foundation for their future ministry.

We hope that having read this Profile you are persuaded that Christ Church could be the church you would like to lead and nurture, with the aim of growing the church family both in number and in deeper understanding of their relationship with God.

We look forward to working with the successful candidate to spread the good news of God's abundant love for all his people.



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