*Clergy Role Description*

**Diocese of Durham**

*Role description signed off by:* Archdeacon of Auckland Date: 25.2.23

To be reviewed 6 months after commencement of the appointment, and at Ministerial Development

Review, alongside the setting of objectives.

• **Details of Post**

*Role Title:* Priest-in-Charge of:

*Name of benefice:* • All Saints, Hurworth (ASH)

• St George & St Laurence’s, Middleton St George (MSG)

• All Saints, Girsby

• St John the Baptist, Low Dinsdale

*Deanery:* Darlington

*Archdeaconry:* Auckland

*Initial point of contact on terms of service:* Diocesan Secretary

1. **Role Purpose**

**The vision of the Diocese is 'Blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all'. Within this the four core priorities are to:**

* **Energise Growth**
* **Engage with Children, Youth and Young People,**
* **Challenge Poverty and**
* **Care for God’s Creation.**

**These are outlined and expressed in the Diocesan Mission Strategy, 'Renewing Pilgrimage'.**

**General**

* To share with the Bishop in the cure of souls in these parishes, in line with the Diocesan Vision, Priorities and Plan described above.
* To be Priest-in-Charge of these parishes, having regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy of the Church of England as described in the Ordinal, the Canons, national safeguarding policies, and all other relevant legislation, and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy 2015.* Specifically, the Priest-in-Charge must give due regard to safeguarding policy and practice.
* To work with the PCCs towards the development of the churches (both the people and their buildings) so that the churches are sustainable and effective in mission.
* To ensure that a high standard of worship, preaching and pastoral care is provided so that people are enabled to live as disciples of Christ.
* To nurture discipleship and develop the ministry of all God's people, through training, cooperation, delegation, support and example, so that they take more responsibility for the mission and ministry of the parishes; to seek to identify potential future leaders and ministers. .
* To encourage all church members to participate in generous giving for the mutual support of one another across the diocese, and the wider Church of England.
* To collaborate within the deanery in mission and ministry and, through the Deanery Plan, participate in the shaping of ministry as resources and opportunities may require. (See further under “Role Context” below.)
* To be proactive and persistent in seeking the fullest degree of ecumenical cooperation wherever possible.

**2. Specific (in line with the Parish Profile)**

* Work with the lay leaders of ASH and MSG to translate their vision into concrete mission action plans.
* Work with the people of Girsby and Dinsdale to develop realistic, positive visions for their future; this will include consideration of seeking “Festival Church” status for both.
* Further develop the partnership of the churches with one another as they share one stipendiary minister.
* Build on the careful relational work undertaken by the Interim Minister (2017-20), and continue to work with the members of the body of Christ in these places to develop healthy, loving and honest relationships.
* Prioritise the development of church members as disciples, including the growth and extension of home groups to do this.
* Prioritise the development of lay ministry and lay leadership in all aspects of church life.
* Prioritise the development of work with children and young people, seeking ways to engage them with the good news of Jesus Christ and (particularly in MSG and ASH) draw them and their families into active membership of and participation in the life of the churches.
* Prioritise the churches’ relationships with and work in the local schools, especially St George’s CofE Academy and Hurworth Primary.

**3. Key Contacts**

* The Churchwardens and members of all the Churches’ PCCs
* Readers (MSG: Ruth Sansom; ASH: Paul Mallett) and APA (ASH: Jill Bramwell)
* Darlington Civic leaders / MP.
* Heads of all local schools, especially St George’s CofE Academy MSG and Hurworth Primary.
* Churches Together Forum Darlington
* Area Dean of Darlington
* Archdeacon of Auckland
* DACYM (Darlington Area Churches’ Youth Ministry)

**4. Role Context (notes written from the perspective of the Archdeacon)**

This is a potentially exciting post, though within it the successful applicant will need to have a firm hold on a number of different strands, present and historical! There are tremendous opportunities, here – as the PP makes clear – including relationships with schools that are both good and open to further development, and the significant expansion of the population that is underway (especially in MSG) through new house-building. The additional notes here need to largely focus on MSG:

Some years ago, the congregation at MSG was significantly larger. It has since then had some very challenging times. This included the closure in 2008 of St Laurence’s church building. This was controversial in the village, with vocal opposition to closure from the community (not the congregation). As is often the case, the stated desire to save the church was not matched by offers of active support or giving. The other church building in the parish, St George’s, is a chocolate-box church: ancient and beautiful … but situated in a field, over a mile from the village itself, and without any amenities! While lovingly cared for, and loved for occasional offices (at least in the summer!), it is wholly impractical for regular Sunday worship – hence MSG meeting in the school.

For complicated reasons, there was also some conflict within the church. Excellent, careful, loving work, was undertaken by the Interim Minister and Assistant Curate (2017-20) and the members of the church themselves. The care taken in building better relationships has been very fruitful. Continued attention to nurturing healthy churches in all the congregations will be an important element of this role, as will building on the very good foundations that have been laid in working together as churches sharing an incumbent.

The building of a Parish Centre for MSG – as an office-base, with meeting rooms – is detailed in the PP. The PP states, “As plans for our new church centre progress, we will find that there will be a need to support the team tasked with leading this project on our behalf. The project is likely to divert time and resource from PCC and church members, and there will be a need to fundraise locally to ensure the project’s success.” This is undoubtedly the case. It will be important that the Priest-in-Charge – while giving leadership and support – is not drawn into detailed project-management here; otherwise, this can only detract from their capacity to lead the churches in mission.

ASH has come through the turbulence of recent years well, and – as the PP shows – has the largest regular congregation.

Girsby and Dinsdale have small congregations – though these are actually high proportions of their village populations! Exploring Festival Church status for both as valued places of worship will be an early priority in this role.

Lay development is highlighted as a priority above. One area in which this is relevant is that of identifying and enabling those who would be willing to take on key roles as church officers. As in many churches, some have exercised roles here for a long time simply because successors have not come forward.

It had been the clear plan for the Diocese to appoint a successor to the Interim Minster within months of his departure. There was indeed an interview planned for this post in April 2020 (three months from the Interim Minister’s final service); however, the intervention of Covid led to this being cancelled, and it has taken three years to get back to this point (through no fault of the parishes, NB). This was hugely unfortunate, and the patience and understanding of the members of all four churches is to be commended. They have now undertaken a rigorous Vacancy Audit Process (VAP), introduced throughout the diocese for appointments in the last three years. The post is now advertised only because of a clear recommendation from the independent facilitator of that VAP that a minister in this situation could both enable the churches to thrive and thrive themselves.

*Riverside Darlington PiC RD*

*02.2023.v01*