



# ST HILDA'S CHURCH

Parish Profile 2026



# Heart of the Headland



DIOCESE  
OF DURHAM

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# Introduction

Built atop a 7<sup>th</sup> century monastery on the striking Hartlepool Headland, St Hilda's is a wonderful place to live and serve the Lord. The Headland is a place of both old and new, with historic streets and new housing developments, wrapped by a beautiful rugged coastline.

We are a congregation of around 40-50 people with a strong eucharistic tradition, however we are open to exploring new ways of worshipping together.

In the last year, our neighbouring church Holy Trinity voted to close. In the not too distant future, the parish of St Hilda's will extend to incorporate much of the old Holy Trinity parish, including their church hall. Though there will be a challenge as we try to fully integrate the congregants from Holy Trinity into our community it also brings several missional opportunities. We will start a new partnership with the CofE Secondary School St Hild's with a voluntary youth chaplain as well as new build estates coming into the parish.

This is an exciting time to be joining St Hilda's Hartlepool. Having undergone a large refurbishment and beginning several exciting partnerships, we are hopeful that this is the beginning of a new chapter in our church life. We are praying for a priest in charge who can help us be a sustainable hub for social, civic, and spiritual life, that continues the legacy of St Hilda in Hartlepool for generations to come.



**Rebecca Shakeshaft**

Churchwarden

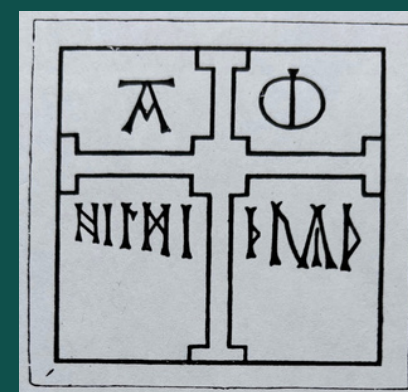


**Ann Turner**

Churchwarden



# Worship



The heart of worship at St Hilda's is the 10.30 Eucharistic service on Sundays. The Eucharist is central to our worshipping life and we love gathering around the Lord's table together. We also have a Eucharist at 10.30 on Wednesdays, but we have paused this during vacancy. The services are either organ or piano-led, with a choral accompaniment, combining a healthy mixture of traditional and contemporary hymns. There are many of us who appreciate and value our worship style, but we are open to exploring new ways of worshipping.

We have around 40-50 people worshipping with us on any given Sunday, with around 80 in our wider worshipping community. Attendance has been slowly declining over the past 10 years which is something we are keen to address. We are also looking forward to welcoming and incorporating congregants from Holy Trinity into our worshipping community in the near future.

On top of our weekly rhythm of worship, we celebrate seasonal services, including Holy Week and Christmas. Historically, our carol services have been very popular, with attendance figures well north of 200. Having a large and striking building, St Hilda's is also a popular venue for many special worship services. We have played host to a wide range of carol services such as the Churches Together Carol Service and the Mayor's Carol Service.

St Hilda's is a member of the Headland and Central Estate Churches Together group involving the local Baptist and Methodist churches. We meet regularly to plan events as well as worshipping together such as the recent Good Friday service led by the leader of the Baptist Church.

Usual Sunday  
Attendance

**40-50**

Services a  
Week

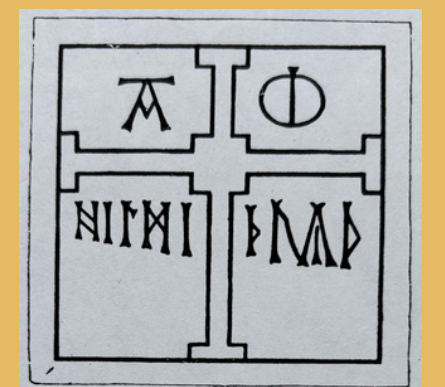
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# The Buildings



# The Church

St Hilda's is an historic, Grade I listed church and has been a site of Christian worship for over 1500 years.

The church is built on the site of Hartlepool Abbey, and owes its name to St Hilda, who was Abbess for around 8 years before her move to Whitby. Though no trace of the medieval abbey remains, the current church building dates from the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and is an architectural gem. St Hilda's sits on a prominent position on the Hartlepool Headland and is one of the many visible buildings on Hartlepool's skyline.

The interior of the church is large and flexible, with the nave comfortably seating in excess of 200 people and is an in-demand venue for concerts and ceremonies. This demand brings substantial financial income to the parish.

We have recently installed LED lights, a new porch that keeps heat in, and a glass meeting room at back of the church. This increases the flexibility and usability of the space, as well as reducing the heating bill! The building has underfloor and under-pew heating, and given sufficient time to heat up, makes the space comfortable when in use.

a glory of Early  
English  
architecture

Alec Clifton-Taylor



The church requires a fair amount of input to keep it in good working order but we have a caretaker and a maintenance architect to support this work. Our attitude to the upkeep of the church is very much 'do it sooner because it will more expensive later'. Despite the grant funding, there is still outstanding work on the south clerestory windows and tower. However, we are confident that we will find the funds required to keep the building open as a place of worship and space for mission for generations to come.

The combination architectural beauty, historical intrigue, and spiritual significance makes St Hilda's one of the most alluring parish churches in the country.

## The Church Hall


With the closure of our neighbouring church, Holy Trinity, we will inherit the use and upkeep of Holy Trinity's church hall.

Located 2.5 miles from St Hilda's Church, and half a mile from St Hild's School, the hall is equipped with catering facilities and offers us the chance to explore missional opportunities in the West View area of Hartlepool.





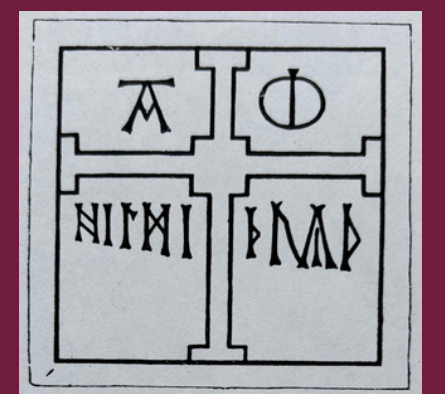
**ST HILDA'S  
CHURCH**



**Heart of the  
Headland**



# Heritage and Community





Join us for a friendly drop-in afternoon

# KNIT AND NATTER

## AT ST HILDAS CHURCH

Saturday 31 January 12:00-16:00

Bring your current project or start something new!  
All skill levels welcome.  
Free tea, coffee and cakes provided

Let us know you're coming here:




Visit the **FINAL DAY** of the  
**Knitted Bible Exhibition**  
36 Knitted bible scenes, 100s of knitted figures

ST HILDA'S CHURCH



In partnership with  
**DigVentures**

## Heritage

Being a place of Christian worship since the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, St Hilda's is a site of great historical and religious interest. St Hilda's holds one of the best preserved burial name stones uncovered during the 19th and early 20th century - artefacts which are unique to the North-East and significant for Anglo-Saxon Northumbria.

With the help of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and DigVentures we have been able to secure the future of the church by combining urgent investment and repair to the deteriorating fabric of the building with a programme of free, exciting, interactive, family-friendly, and participatory heritage and creative events. Alongside DigVentures and their group of work experience students, we recently hosted a pop-up museum exploring faith and female influence in the church over the past 800 years.

This an exciting development in our church's life and we want to make this sustainable beyond the end of our partnership with DigVentures, which comes to an end in July 2026. We have been receiving help with digital engagement and resource management, as well as volunteer recruitment, training, and management but having clergy buy in for this is crucial for the long-term.

We do not want to be a museum but a church made of living stones. Our vision is to be a sustainable hub for social, civic, and spiritual life, continuing the legacy of St Hilda in Hartlepool for generations to come.



# Community

From coffee mornings to craft fairs, from concerts to carer support groups, we put on a host a range of events and groups to connect with wider Hartlepool population.

St Hilda's has a strong connection to the local community and the popularity of the church as a venue for concerts, carol services, and civic events is a fantastic opportunity for us to contribute to the life of the Headland.

One area we do need some support in is making the step from people seeing St Hilda's solely as an event venue to a living community that they are invited to become part of. As part of this we have begun to develop a Friends of St Hilda's group but will need some input to foster that sense of community.

Nevertheless, we are proud to feature so prominently in the annual rhythm of the Headland and we enjoy hosting such a variety of events in our building.



© DigVentures

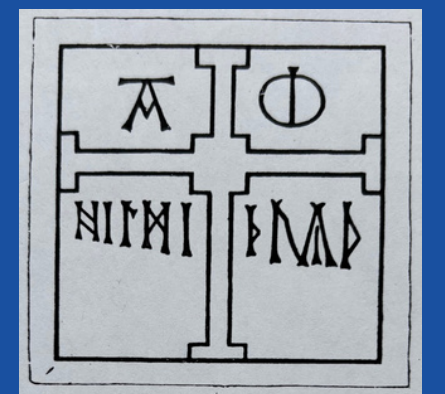


Royal Northern Simfonia





# Mission and Discipleship





Sensory Nativity

Mission at St Hilda's is currently centred around our building. By virtue of its history as well as being the beginning point of 'The Way of Love' Northern Saints Pilgrim trail, the church naturally draws people to it. Recently we had a Heritage Open Week, with doors being open every day for an 8-day period. There was a steady footfall of visitors, drawing people from Northumberland, North Yorkshire, and places in between. We have several knowledgeable parishioners and are designing plans for future guided tours of the church.

We hope that our partnership with DigVentures will create more opportunities for us to share our faith with the people of Hartlepool. Despite the number of people we have from visits, concerts, and special services, we struggle to see the same level of interest reflected Sunday by Sunday and would value some help in this area.

An area of our mission we are wanting to develop is our engagement with children and young people. We have vibrant and growing Boys' and Girls' Brigades, good links with local schools and we are hoping to take this foundation to the next level.



Church Tours

**FREE Art workshop**  
**PRINTMAKING FOR KIDS**  
 At St. Hilda's Church  
**Saturday 16 August 11:00-13:00**

Make a piece of hand printed art inspired by the stunning stained glass windows of St. Hilda's Church

Lead by local Hartlepool Artist Abigail Rogers

Booking required  
 Participation is free  
<https://digventures.com/product/sth-kids-printmaking/>

Book HERE

ST HILDA'S CHURCH

Heritage Fund

In partnership with DigVentures



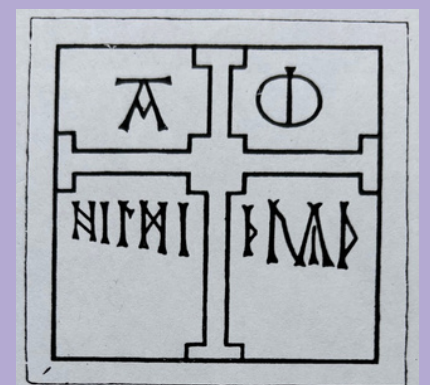
We recently established a schools' visit ministry and have a new team led by a former headteacher in place to help local children learn about the history of the church and offer a gentle opportunity for spiritual reflection. We have good links with local primary schools and are keen to build on these. This Christmas we joined in with the staff and pupils from our local SEND school for a fabulous sensory nativity.

With the closure of Holy Trinity church, St Hilda's CofE Secondary School will become part of St Hilda's parish. We are excited to begin a new arrangement with the school and, with diocesan funding in place, now have a volunteer youth chaplain working with the school for one day a week. This is a promising development for us and we want to build a flourishing, two-way relationship with the school that bears long-term fruit.

A recent audit by the diocese highlighted that our PCC have good missional instincts. We are hoping an enthusiastic and supportive priest can bring their own ideas to the table and take us forwards in our mission and outreach.



# The Parish



Hartlepool Headland is a place steeped in history, with roots stretching back well over a thousand years. Once home to a thriving medieval port and monastic settlement, it played a key role in the North Sea's maritime heritage. The Headland is a place of both old and new, with historic streets and new housing developments, wrapped by a beautiful rugged coastline.

The Headland is a friendly, tight-knit community with many generations of families choosing to live there for their whole lives. This connectedness comes with an expectation that any incumbent would need to integrate themselves well to the parish.

The parish has an IMD ranking of 219 (with 1 being the most deprived and 12,178 being the least) so is in the top 2% most deprived parishes in the country. Nevertheless, St Hilda's is a vibrant coastal parish with plenty to see and do. It is home to several beaches and is a popular spot for walking groups, as well as having several pubs and restaurants. The Headland also sports the Heugh Battery, the only WW1 battlefield site in Great Britain.

There are several primary schools in the parish and with the upcoming redrawing of the parish boundaries, there will be several more coming. Holy Trinity parish is home to St Hild's CofE secondary school.

Many once thriving industries in Hartlepool have since declined and closed. However, the maritime industry is still a key part of both the town's economy and heritage with an active port, marina, and the National Royal Navy Museum - a recreation of an 18<sup>th</sup> century naval base. Periodically, the Tall Ships Races lands in Hartlepool, bringing Europe's largest free family festival to the town, along with dozens of sailing vessels. Though the docks, slightly separate the rest of Hartlepool from the Headland, the town centre is still easily accessible. In addition to several schools and sixth form colleges, Hartlepool boasts a range of amenities from restaurants, museums, a cinema, and a hospital.

Since 2014 the Headland has hosted the annual Wintertide Festival, which is a weekend long event that starts with a community parade on the Friday and culminating in a finale performance and fireworks display.

Hartlepool is well served with transport links, with direct rail services to London, Sunderland, and Newcastle. Buses connect the town with Middlesbrough and Durham, and the A19 puts Whitby, York, and the North Yorkshire Moors just over an hour's drive away.

90,000 people call Hartlepool home; we would love to see you add to that number!

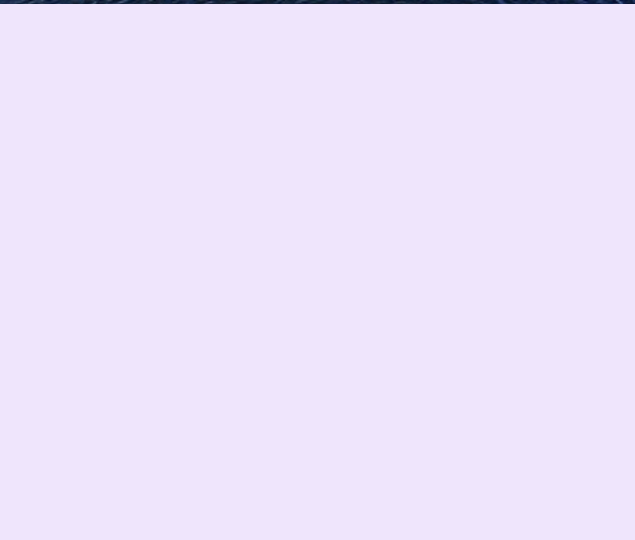




The National Museum of the Royal Navy



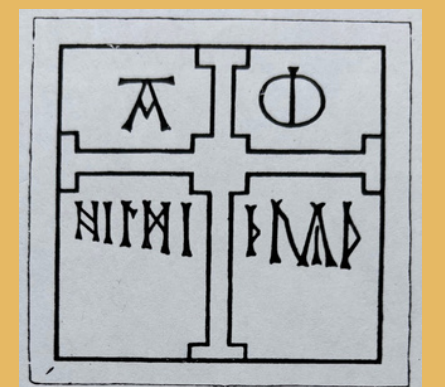
Hartlepool Marina



The Headland



# People and Assets



# People

We are a committed and servant hearted community and we want to see our parish priest flourish in their role. We have a range of roles filled by the congregation and these greatly enhance our missional and worshipping life together.

As our priest in charge, you can expect the support of a wide range of people including:

- Full PCC and officers (including a youth representative)
- Intercessors
- Readers
- People able to lead service of the word
- Servers/chalice
- Organist/choirmaster
- Schools' ministry team
- Welcomers
- Flower arrangers
- Refreshment services
- Maintenance architect
- Caretaker
- Retired priest

## Finances

Over the past 4 years, the church's annual expenditure has been in the region of £100-160k, the majority of which goes either towards paying towards our Parish Share, our running costs, salaries and expenses, and capital expenditure. On the most part, income and expenditure at St Hilda's are fairly well matched with expenditure rising with increased income (or vice versa). The PCC fully understands what the Parish Share represents and we are committed to paying it in full when we feel able. Recently, significant building repairs have taken priority and as such, this year we have pledged £20,000 towards our parish share.

With a building that requires expensive upkeep, we try to keep our finances in good order with a healthy pot in reserve. At the end of the 24/25 financial year we had £76,000 in reserve, a third of which was restricted for building works.

We have recently begun utilising DataDevelopments accounting/giving software and have found that this improves their ability to monitor their accounts and provide accurate information for PCC meetings. The PCC are engaged and informed with the church's finances and we do not see financial discussion as something that is only the treasurer's remit. St Hilda's annual accounts are published for the APCM, and finances are audited annually by an independent examiner.

## Rectory

The rectory is a 4 bedroom property situated several minutes' walk from the church. It has a downstairs study, lounge, and dining room as well as a utility room at the back of the kitchen.

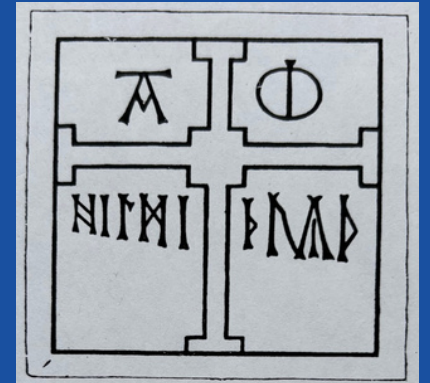


GABRIEL PRICE 1694  
JOHN LEAKE 1619  
EDWARD YOUNG 1636  
EDWARD MATHEW 1641  
STEPHEN TODDFIELD 1649  
RICHARD WERGE 1723  
JOHN MOLLAND 1755  
BENJAMIN FYE 1770  
RICHARD RIDLEY 1804  
EDWARD MOYLES 1811

PERPETUAL CURA  
NICHOLAS  
WILLIAM  
ROBERT

RECTORS  
DAVID RICHARDSON  
EDWIN ROBERTSON  
BERTRAM  
FREDERICK  
WALTER ST  
ROBERT W  
WILLIAM B  
HENRY B  
JOHN L O  
PETER Z  
JONATHAN  
CHRISTOPHER  
VICTOR J

# The Future





## Opportunities

- Upcoming link with CofE Secondary School
- Beautiful, large, flexible building
- Exciting heritage partnership with DigVentures
- New build housing estates
- Refurbishments and new parish boundaries have the feeling of the church 'starting again'

## Challenges

- Integrating congregants from Holy Trinity into the worshipping life of our church
- Historic building that requires a lot of maintenance
- Older congregation
- In need of more people to help take us forward

This is an exciting time to be joining St Hilda's Hartlepool. Having undergone a large refurbishment and beginning several exciting partnerships, we are hopeful that this is the beginning of a new chapter in our church life. In the coming years, we want to nurture relationships with schools and develop and extend our mission and outreach both in St Hilda's and the parish of Holy Trinity.

The work might not be straightforward but we are praying for a priest in charge who can help us be a sustainable hub for social, civic, and spiritual life, that continues the legacy of St Hilda in Hartlepool for generations to come.

## Who We're Looking For

- A hands on leader of the day-to-day life of the church
- An enabler who equips, and supports leaders in the church
- A wise discerner who will keep what is good and inspire us in developing new initiatives
- A loving and caring pastor, supportive of the life of our parishioners
- An enthusiastic, missionally-minded priest ready to respond to the challenge of reaching out to the former parish of Holy Trinity
- Excellent at building rapport with a wide-range of age groups

Could this  
be you?



# Contact Us

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