***Clergy Role Description***

**Diocese of Durham**

*Role description signed off by:* Archdeacon of Auckland Date: August 2023

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

Review, alongside the setting of objectives.

**1. Details of Post**

*Role Title:* Team Rector

*Name of benefice:* Upper Skerne Team Ministry

*Deanery:* Stockton

*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 Strategy described above.
* To be the parish priest 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 parish priest must give due regard to safeguarding policy and practice.
* To work with the PCCs towards the development of the local 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. Where there is a Shared Ministry Development Team, to work with it as described in the SMDT agreement.
* 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.
* To be proactive and persistent in seeking the fullest degree of ecumenical cooperation wherever possible

**Specific**

• To develop and lead a strong and flexible ministry team, ordained and lay, built on good, positive relationships and collaboration.

• To work well with the House for Duty Minister and any future ordained colleagues, sharing the tasks and objectives listed in this document, agreeing together on any particular areas of responsibility.

• To work with the PCC and people of the churches in further developing their vision for mission and ministry in the parish.

• To help identify and encourage the growth of new areas of mission and ministry, as indicated in the Parish Profile.

• To help nurture the discipleship of the current congregation, and help church members identify and developing their gifts for serving God in the church and the world.

• To help the congregations to engage with their local communities, and develop service and evangelism within these communities.

• To prioritise the development of work with schools, children and families.

• To review the current provision of worship and develop a pattern of worship which is accessible, inclusive and inspiring.

* To help the churches continue developing their understanding and ways of working as a single parish, sharing and developing common resources.

**2. Key Contacts**

• House for Duty Minister, Churchwardens, other parish ministers, and members of the PCC.

• Area Dean and clergy colleagues of the deanery.

* Parish administrator.
* APA.
* Worship Leaders Team.
* Shared Ministry Development Team.
* Head teachers of schools:

St Michael’s Primary C of e school, Bishop Middleham

Fishburn Primary school

Hardwick Primary school, Sedgefield

Rectory Row Primary school, Sedgefield

Deaf Hill Primary school, Trimdon Station

Bluebell Meadow Primary school, Trimdon Village

Sedgefield Community College

* Sedgefield Area Churches Together.
* Local elected civic leaders, and local MP.
* 3 care homes.

**3. Role Context**

The parish was established in 2005, uniting the former parishes of Sedgefield, Bishop Middleham and the Trimdons. A founding principle of the new parish – which remains the intent of the PCC – was that it would be based on a partnership between clergy and laity. The Parish of the Upper Skerne joined Stockton Deanery in January 2018 (Sedgefield Deanery was dissolved in December 2017). There are c. 20,000 people in the parish, with 350 new homes planned in the Sedgefield area.

The (Team) Rector position has been vacant for most of the last seven years. It proved difficult to appoint when the post became vacant in 2016, and the minister eventually appointed in October 2018 only remained actively in post for a brief time. It is also not clear whether good missional aspirations expressed in the 2018 Parish Profile were embedded and owned throughout the congregations of the churches.

However, the PCC and key leaders have done some very significant work in the last two years. First, working with an external facilitator, they have examined tensions that had arisen and worked on the establishment of good patterns of decision making and relating. Then the PCC undertook the Diocese of Durham’s rigorous Vacancy Audit Process (VAP), examining mission, money, governance/relationships and buildings. If serious concerns are raised in the course of the VAP about any of these areas of this, the appointment process does not begin. However, the clear recommendation was made to the Bishop that the parish were ready to proceed to an appointment.

The fruit of all this work is also visible in the Parish Profile, where there is absolute honesty about where the church is and is not in relation to mission and ministry, and the confidence to share the good news in action and word more effectively with the communities of the parish. What is also clear in the profile is the clear, owned desire to develop the vision, confidence and vehicles for this renewal of mission. There are also a number of green shoots, where new work has been tried in recent years. The parish are already working on how to develop baptism ministry and stewardship with the support of diocesan advisers (arising directly from the VAP recommendations). They have also already held a course on speaking about faith, addressing the recognised lack of confidence members of the churches have in this area.

So this is a situation where the church members are asking a new minister to come to work with them to develop vision and mission. The Profile says: “There is an acknowledgement that in order to move forward we need a change of culture. We will need support and guidance in managing change.” There is openness and willingness to change and develop mission, ministry and worship in positive ways. The new minister will need to work **with** people to do this; a collaborative approach, respecting the partnership of all in the mission of the church, is essential here.

The VAP report also noted that a review of buildings would need to take place – are all needed, and sustainable? – and that this recommendation should be noted in these appointment papers. This could, of course, be challenging. However, when the next Team Rector has got to know and understand the parish, s/he will need to be able to help all the churches work out the relationship between their developing mission and their very different buildings.

***A note on stipendiary clergy provision:***

*The Deanery Plan of 2019 provided for 1.5 FTE posts in the Upper Skerne Team Ministry - a Team Rector (1.0 FTE) and Team Vicar (0.5 FTE). While the TR and TV were both appointed in late 2018, the TR worked for only a year. In the difficult situation this created, we were very fortunate that a House for Duty priest became available to serve in the parish. The 0.5 TV has now retired. However, along with all dioceses, Covid reduced our income, and as a result there is now a long waiting list for clergy appointments to be filled. In this situation, we do not at present expect to appoint a 0.5 TV. It should be noted that the time commitment of that post would be 4 days a week, while that of a House for Duty priest is not significantly less than this, at 3 days a week. So, while many parishes are waiting for any stipendiary clergy provision, if Upper Skerne is being served by a TR and House for Duty priest, that is very close to the provision set out in the Deanery Plan. We therefore do not expect currently to be able to also appoint the 0.5 TV (which would lift the provision of clergy here well above the proposal in the Deanery Plan).*

*Upper Skerne TR RD*

*2023.08 v02*