



THE DIOCESE OF
DURHAM

*The Parish of St. Chads Gateshead
Parish Profile 2024*



The Parish of St Chads Gateshead (Gateshead Deanery).

Parish Profile

Contents

Welcome to the Parish!

1. Our Diocesan Vision – An introduction from Bishop Sarah
2. Our building & our missional vision
3. Worship
4. Children, Youth & Schools
5. Mission & Social Action
6. Wider Relationships
7. The Vicarage
8. The Role

Appendices

- i. The Community in more detail
- ii. The prioritisation process – Gifts, challenges and opportunities
- iii. More details and useful contacts

Welcome to the Parish!

Our Diocesan Vision - An introduction from Bishop Sarah

This is an exciting time to be exploring joining the Diocesan family in Durham Diocese. We are on the cusp of a fresh chapter in our mission and ministry together. We are currently discerning with the National Church who will be the next Bishop of Durham, called to lead as we seek to make real our vision for the transformation we so desire across our Diocese. We are deeply encouraged by the award this year of significant national funding, demonstrating real confidence in our vision. *You can read the Diocesan Statement of Needs here...*

Our strategy for transformation and missional growth ('Called to Fruitfulness') is an opportunity and invitation for each of our parishes to step out in faith together, responding practically to our priorities to **Challenge Poverty, Energise Growth, Care for God's Creation** and **Engage with Children, Youth and Young Adults**. Making this a reality it will look different in every community. In some places it will come about in collaboration with others. Nobody is expected to do everything immediately or alone, but we are all invited and expected to find ways to respond relevantly.

In Bensham this feels particularly relevant. We sense the importance of **Energising Growth** – in discipleship and in the number of people served by and engaging in the life of our churches. We also sense the importance of **Challenging Poverty, Engaging with Children and Young People** and **Caring for God's Creation** in an area with lots of families, with some significant pockets of poverty, and with deeply rooted communities that still look to, and are open to, the local church.

In praying for a new Priest for St Chad's we are looking for someone excited by and wanting to be part of this vision and new future. Together we pray hopefully

*Loving God, guiding the people of Durham Diocese faithfully through the years:
We thank you for saints who have marked our path,
young and old, known and unknown, from all places and in all walks of life.
Help us to find your way in our generation:
transformed by your truth, sharing your life, blessing our communities.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen*

We look forward to meeting together and sharing in this with you.

In Christ,

+Sarah
Bishop of Jarrow
Acting Bishop of Durham



2, Our building and our missional vision

Of the five churches originally serving the area, St Chads is the only one remaining, serving the amalgamated parish of Bensham and Teams. Built in 1903 by William Searle Hicks (a well-known local architect and devout churchman) the construction of St Chad's Church in the early 20th century was the crowning achievement of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Gateshead, the building being highly regarded locally for its outstanding design and furnishings which combine Arts and Crafts Movement influences within late English Gothic styling.

The congregation are very proud of the building and recognise and value both its history and its ongoing ministry and responsibility as a centre of Christian mission and service in this busy and sometimes needy community.

As a community we have worked hard to develop our building, investing in the church and community areas, redeveloping our kitchen and redecorating in order to make St Chads a welcoming and accessible place in which the community begin to sense God at work. Our congregation includes a number of asylum seekers and refugees many of whom are temporarily based in the area and have become active members in Church.

We are looking for a committed Priest to enable us to realise our vision of a mission based Church serving the community of Bensham and Teams in Jesus' name for the blessing and transformation of all.

3, Worship

In a typical week our **normal pattern of services** would be:

Tuesday	12 Noon	Midday Prayer	St. Chad's Church
Wednesday	9.00am	Morning Prayer	St.Helen's Church, Low Fell
	12 Noon	Mass	St.Helen's Church, Low Fell
	4.00pm	Evening Prayer	St. Helen's Church
	8.45am	Morning Prayer	St.Aidan's School (during term time)
	9.15am	Mass	St.Aidan's School (during term time)
Friday	9.00am	Morning Prayer	St.Helen's Church, Low Fell
	4.00pm	Evening Prayer	St.Helen's Church, Low Fell
Saturday	4.00pm	Fun at Four	<i>Monthly messy church at St Chads</i>
Sunday	9.00am	Morning Prayer	St.Helen's Church
	9.30am	Mass	St Helen's Church
	10.30am	Mass	St Chad's Church

Baptisms are normally arranged to follow Sunday Morning Mass at 11.45pm as required.

In addition to our weekly rhythm of worship, we celebrate an All Souls Service on the Sunday following All Saints, Christingle, Christmas Carol and Christmas services and provide services for children and families with autism or learning difficulties.

4, Children, Youth and Schools

As a church we are keen to renew our engagement with and outreach to children, youth & young families. We have a positive and longstanding relationship with our schools including St Aidan's C of E primary) regularly providing collective worship, support to deliver RE lessons and hosting school visits, giving us an important point of connection to local families.

Once a month our Saturday afternoon "Fun at Four" event provides a **messy church** style experience for 4 to 11 year olds and their families on Saturdays at 4.00pm to play, grow and learn together. Based on a Bible Story or theme these are a "hands on" sessions involving model making, painting and crafts which we would love to see grow further.

Engaging with Children, Youth and Young Adults has been identified by the Diocese as being a key missional priority. Locally, there are a high number of young people, families and schools. Supporting local families has always been an important part of our sense of purpose as a church but feels especially important at this time and for the future of the church.

St.Aidan's, Kelvin Grove, Brighton Road and Eslington Infants Schools regularly use the church for school services and religious learning sessions, and a number of outside organisations hold carol services etc. We regularly support and provide for local food co-operatives and food banks in the area and strive to reach out to the community with food-based initiatives and a weekly Lunch Club.

The Diocese is committed to engaging with Children, Youth and Young Adults as one of our Diocesan Missional Priorities and provides support to churches and clergy wanting to develop children's, youth, schools or chaplaincy work through the MDM team based at Cuthbert House. The expectation is that, working with St Helen's Low Fell, that a co-ordinated ministry for young people can develop across the two parishes.

5, Mission & Social Action

At St.Chad's there is a lengthy if sporadic history of complementing our worship life with social activities which appeal to the wider community with events ranging from Russian Choirs, Classical Music performances, hosting the BBC's "Any Questions" and Classical Dance to Whist, Domino Drives, Bingo, Ukulele band, BBQ's, singing groups, themed suppers and charity events and fundraisers.

In line with our vision to encourage the mission of the church through food and hospitality, we have recently completed a project to enlarge and enhance the existing church kitchen facilities with a view to teach and provide culinary skills and practice in the community.

The community hall provides us with two meeting rooms and a hall for both church use and for rental to outside organisations..

Whilst historically (like much of the North East) the area has been a very white community, both Bensham and Teams have changed a lot in the last 20 years with the arrival of new families from North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. In response to this we have developed strong relationships with the Farsi speaking community (mainly from Iran and Afghanistan) through English classes, Alpha and other community events. A number of our Farsi speakers have been baptized and we regularly use bi-lingual resources in our Sunday services. Whilst the refugee community is often quite a transient community we

see this as an important element of our shared mission, and one of the ways God has enriched and blessed us

6, Wider Relationships – The Deanery

As part of the **Gateshead Deanery** Five Year Plan each of the individual parishes has committed to work together in partnership and as a **single locality area** in order to focus together on our Diocesan priorities of

- Energising Growth
- Engaging with Children, Youth and Young Adults
- Challenging Poverty and,
- Care for God's Creation

Our Deanery clergy meet regularly for mutual support, prayer and development. Gateshead Deanery is well known for its positive relationships and history of collaboration and joint working. During the lockdown we worked to support Gateshead Foodbank and the production of a weekly (and widely used) shared online service which ran throughout the lockdown.

It is hoped that this collaborative work at Deanery level will focus on some particular elements of this Children and Youth, responding to Poverty, Mission and Growth and Elderly and Infirm, including Dementia. As a Deanery we have collaborated to support the Gateshead Foodbank, deliver a significant community theatre event and produce shared online worship resources during the lockdown.

Within the wider area, St Chads and St Helens Low Fell have enjoyed a close and productive working relationship over the past 5 years and it is expected that our new priest will develop and increase sustaining shared support, cover, mission and worship.

Gateshead Deanery takes an inclusive approach to ministry and the contribution of every church is seen as essential in developing and growing ministry in Gateshead.

7, The Vicarage

The Vicarage (situated adjacent to the church) is a 4 bedroom detached brick built house with a study, 2 adjoining reception rooms, kitchen, utility, bathroom and toilet upstairs and toilet downstairs. The house stands in its own grounds and was built in 1985. The dwelling is fenced around landscaped gardens with a pathway leading out to the church. Dusk to dawn lighting on the church illuminates this path. Other facilities include a separate garage and enclosed outside parking. Mains electricity, gas and water are available and tested, telephone and inter-net connection available. The house is of sound construction and the interior decoration in in order.

8, The Role

We are praying for an incumbent willing and able to -

- Support our church to **grow** in number, reach, depth and service and have a focus on children, families and young people.
- Develop our school's work across both parishes
- Work with the **children** in our **schools** and support the teaching staff and school governors in their mission, ministry and in their positive connection with our (and their) church.
- Lead and help us to provide a safe and Inclusive environment, accepting people irrespective of colour, sexuality, age or gender.
- Support our **Liberal catholic tradition** of worship and liturgical practice.
- Work with us to **engage with the wider community**.
- Attract the wider community to church activities, initiatives and worship
- Help us to **redevelop our mission and vision** for the Parish of Bensham and the Teams, working in collaboration with St Helen's Low Fell.

Who is –

- A good **team leader**, able to encourage and enable the P.C.C.
- Full of energy, enthusiasm and is a good communicator, with both those in church and those in the wider community.
- Is **passionate** about working with the local **schools, community projects, and Care Homes**. and will represent us on the trustees of St Chad's Community Project.
- With good IT, computer and electronic communication skills.
- Has the capacity to work with the congregation to provide ministry to asylum seekers and refugees
- Has a "get up and go" energetic attitude and is yet humble, has patience, a good sense of humour and is looking forward to a fresh challenge.

Appendix I. The Community in more detail

The Parish of Bensham and Teams is located about 10-15 minutes walk from the centre of Gateshead in a densely populated area of about 20,000 people. Our diverse and mixed population consists of a rich mixture of local families with deep roots in the area, a 5,000 strong Orthodox Jewish community (which includes a Talmudical College with students attending from all over the world) together with migrants from eastern Europe, north Africa and the middle east and a small but growing community of young professionals.

Two main shopping areas run through the middle of the parish with multi-national cuisine alongside general stores, a few cafés, a handful of social clubs and pubs.

Housing - Most local residents live in small terraced, semi-detached houses or flats. A significant feature of housing in the parish is the high number of Victorian era *Tyneside flats* (similar in appearance to terraced housing) alongside some low-rise and a small number of high-rise blocks.

Redevelopment of the area (beginning with the Village Heights estate and Staithes area nearest the river) continues with a number of streets adjacent to the church scheduled for transformation and an increasing number of owner occupiers settling into the area which provides affordable accommodation with good facilities within close reach of the centre of Newcastle.

Employment, deprivation and wealth - Those in work tend to be employed in retail, the care sector, or in manual work, factory work or the construction sector. Unemployment, however, is 40% above the national average and long-term illness 50% higher than the UK average.

Car ownership is low and often aged, and public transport, cycling, motor-cycling and walking tend to be the main modes of travel. Incomes are generally low and there is little scope for savings or investments. Drug abuse and anti-social behaviour is quite common among young people in some of the more deprived areas of the parish although alcohol abuse (historically a significant problem) is less common than it used to be.

Ammenities - Bensham is very well located for access to retail, leisure, education and cultural facilities. The Metro Centre (one of Europe's largest shopping and leisure centres) and Newcastle city centre (offering a huge range of shopping, historical, arts and education facilities) are both only a very short bus ride away.

The Parish itself is served by a number of very good primary schools (including our church school – St Aidans Primary) with several Secondary Schools within a short drive. An excellent local library, leisure centre and Art Gallery lie on the southern edge of the parish with other facilities (including cinema, several supermarkets, metro station and Gateshead stadium) available in the centre of Gateshead).

Gateshead is served by an excellent public transport system (light-rail Metro, buses and local/main-line trains) connecting residents to the Central Train Station in Newcastle and Newcastle International Airport.

The wider region - The North East is an exciting place to live, learn and be part of God's mission. There is a huge amount to see and discover from heritage centres, to outstanding countryside and the action of our cities.

Find out more by visiting <https://www.visitnortheastengland.com>

Appendix 2 - The Vacancy Audit (formerly 'Parish Prioritisation Process'): Gifts, challenges & opportunities

As part of preparing Parishes in Vacancy for a new clergy appointment, every Parish in the Diocese of Durham goes through a missional review, known as the Parish Prioritisation Process. By undertaking this, PCC's (supported by their Archdeacon and an external facilitator) have the opportunity to review their journey, identify any areas of challenge and consider how God might want them to focus in Mission and outreach as the church moves forwards.

Notes from the St Chad's vacancy audit

General	St Chads PCC members attended all meetings, diligently preparing for and engaging with the process, and engaging the wider congregation constructively as it did so. The church is in an area of significant deprivation and recognises the cultural impact of its surrounding area, so to works to its strengths.
Mission	<p>St Chad's have a long history of missional engagement, primarily through the St Chad's project and more recently through work with Asylum Seekers. Currently (through their partnership with Jane Hopkins) they facilitate a weekly Community meal distribution. They have experience of running Bible classes; run a fledgling children's 'Fun at 4' club, support Heritage Days, provide support for Asylum Seekers and work with the local Co-op foodbank. In recent years the church has felt a loss of identity without a vicar but do recognise and value their work together as parishes with both St Helens and ecumenical partners.</p> <p>St Chad's want to renew their community involvement through partnership with external agencies (Bensham and Saltwell Alive. Community allotments & St Chads Community Project) and rebuilding connections with Churches Together and reignite the Good Friday march of witness with Ecumenical Partners (post Covid) and find ways to grow their involvement with children and young families.</p>
Finance	<p>The church currently offers the majority of their Guided Pledge figure and are up to date with their payments but currently operate a budget deficit, monthly outgoings exceeding income which they are currently subsidising from their (sizeable) reserves.</p> <p>Finances are well managed although the Treasurer would value and feels the need for support from the Diocese. The Archdeacon is conscious of this and is exploring ways to address this.</p>
Building	<p>The church is proud of its building, taking particular pride in their community facilities. The building is used for about 12-15 hours per week (1x Sunday service; 1x midweek service). 30% of usage is for community mission and 30% usage is for letting out to other groups. Sadly, St Chad's have very few occasional offices: 1-2 weddings per year; 2 funerals per year and on average 6-7 baptism per year although the profile of the local community is such that this could be developed. St Chad's is concerned that currently 27% of income is spent on maintenance. Energy prices are of concern too, and their carbon footprint is currently 70-80%. Lighting has been replaced with LEDs.</p> <p>Disabilities Facilities comprise of toilet and accessible grounds. They are currently utilising match funding to uptake repairs to their roof and want to install a lift to further enhance disability access.</p>
Governance	<p>PCC meetings are designed to be fully inclusive and efforts are made to ensure 'all voices' are heard. There is a recognition that that some members find it difficult/daunting regarding their contribution to discussions re finance, DAC decision and Parish Share. They feel fractured without a Vicar as they feel they always co-operate well with their priest. St Chad's have experienced a 'slow' information sharing from the Diocese Central Office. Deanery Synod reports are shared/presented to PCC and congregation. Currently the 'take up' of roles is restricted due to congregations' numbers, capabilities re skills and language barriers.</p> <p>Safeguarding is embedded and practiced by all, Safeguarding notice is visible with contact information etc on. There is regular Safeguarding meeting with St Helen's team, and it is always a PCC agenda item re continuous improvements/updates/training from Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.</p>

Appendix 3. Useful contacts

The Parish, the post and the Diocese

Enquiries about this post can be directed to the **Archdeacon of Sunderland**, The Ven. Bob Cooper at Archdeacon.of.Sunderland@durham.anglican.org

Information about our **Diocese** is available at <https://durhamdiocese.org/>

Details about **St Chad's church** are available online at <https://www.facebook.com/stchadsbensham> or <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13661/>

Details about St Chad's **community project** are online at <https://www.facebook.com/StChadsCommunityProject>

Find out more about our **Deanery** at www.gatesheaddeanery.com/churches or through our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/GatesheadDeanery/

Our primary school

St Aidan's (our Church school) <https://staidansprimary.co.uk/>

Our local Secondary Schools

Our area is well served by a number of local secondary schools including Emmanuel College <https://www.emmanuelcollege.org.uk/> Grace College Gateshead <https://www.gracecollege.org.uk/>

Our contact details are –

The Parish of Bensham and Teams PCC
St. Chad's Church
Dunsmuir Grove
Bensham
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear NE8 4QL

