***Clergy Role Description***

**Diocese of Durham**

*Role description signed off by:* Archdeacon of Auckland Date: 19.6.25

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:* Vicar

*Name of benefice:* Auckland St Helen

*Deanery:* Auckland

*Archdeaconery:* 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.
* Care for God’s Creation.

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

This Parish has passed a Resolution under the House of Bishops’ Declaration.

**General**

* To share with the Bishops of Durham, Jarrow and Beverley in the cure of souls in this parish, in line with the Society and the Diocesan Vision, Priorities and Strategy described above.
* To be the priest of this parish, 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 PCC towards the development of the church (both the people and their buildings) so that the church is sustainable and effective in mission.
* To ensure that a high standard of catholic 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.
* 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 and the Society, 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 with the PCC and people of the church 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 develop their gifts for serving God in the church and the world.

• To develop service and evangelism within the community and help the congregation to engage with the local community.

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

• To promote the celebration of a Daily Mass.

**2. Key Contacts**

• All members of the PCC especially:

John Bake – Churchwarden 07809438340 [johnbake1953@outlook.com](mailto:johnbake1953@outlook.com)

Ann Skillcorn – Churchwarden 07985213489 (outside of working hours) –

a.skillcorn@yahoo.com

• Society Area Dean – Fr. Paul Kennedy rev.pkennedy@sky.com

* Society Clergy of the Diocese who have supported St Helen’s in the vacancy, details can be obtained from the Churchwardens.
* Archdeacon of Auckland
* Area Dean of Auckland and Clergy of the Deanery
* Heads of Local Primary Schools within the Parish (Auckland St Helen Primary, Copeland Road Primary, Oakley Cross Primary)
* Head Teacher of St John’s Secondary School in Bishop Auckland
* Civic Leaders, including local MP, County Councillors and Parish Councillors
* Local Businesses
* For all other key contacts in the parish please refer to the Parish Profile

**3. Role Context**

St Helen’s is a beautiful medieval parish church (Grade 1 Listed Building) tracing its origins back some 900 years. It has benefitted from three major and one minor restoration projects/extensions in the last 25 years.

This is an important parish in the Diocese of Durham, and has for some time had a tradition of conducting traditional parish ministry well, in a mission-focussed and effective way. While many other churches have struggled to retain work with children and youth, this has always been maintained at St Helen’s, and congregational life has been strong. Among the churches that look to the Bishop of Beverley for oversight, St Helen’s has often been the strongest in the diocese.

It needs to be noted that numbers of adults, children and youth are currently lower than they have been in recent years, and a number of factors play into this: Covid hit the church hard. The parish has generated vocations (good), but some key people and families have therefore moved on from the congregation in recent years, so some key leaders have been lost. The current vacancy also marks the end of the long and faithful ministry of well-loved parish priest. As Archdeacon I sense within the very faithful congregation and committed PCC a quiet confidence that the relative strength of more recent times can be recovered. Nevertheless, the next Vicar of St Helen’s should be clear about the priority of seeking to grow the congregation once again.

Auckland St Helen has a population of 6108. The church is set in a welcoming community in a beautiful area. Nevertheless, its ministry take place in a context of significant deprivation, with an Index of Multiple Deprivation rating of 1,167 out of a total of 12,178 parishes nationally (where 1 is the most deprived and 12,178 is the least deprived). Some key statistics are:

* Child Poverty 24%
* Pensioner Poverty 25%
* Working age Poverty 20%
* No qualifications 26%
* Social Housing 23%
* Older Population 20%
* Ethnic diversity 3.5%

**4. Person Specification**

The successful candidate will be an energetic person rooted in the Catholic tradition of the church, dedicated to their calling.

Mission:

* A person of mature faith, prayer and spiritual vision with a passion to communicate the Gospel.
* Someone with the ability to articulate and co-ordinate mission within the parish.
* A person who has a clear vision to enable us to grow in numbers and in outreach to and service of the wider community.
* A person who will be respectful of the church’s tradition, with reverence for sacramental worship, but unafraid to seek new ways of bringing people to Christ.

Leadership:

* Able to manage change, with a proven track record of doing so.
* Able to lead with integrity, being firm and fair.
* Someone which is resourceful, enthusiastic and energetic, who will be out and about in the community, building on existing links and creating new ones.
* A person who can recognise the many talents of the laity, and be able to trust, listen and delegate.
* Be willing to work with other Society Churches in the Diocese of Durham and with the other churches of Auckland Deanery.

Skills and Character:

* Be a person of sincerity who is discreet and approachable.
* Be a good manager of their own time, being discerning about the best strategic use of that time within the development, mission and ministry of the church.
* Have an ability to listen to people well and respond sensitively.
* Someone with proven pastoral skills across all ages and personalities, especially with children and young people within a safe and welcoming setting.

*StH Auckland V RD*

*2025.06.01 v1*