

AUTUMN 2024

LINK

The magazine for the Diocese of Newcastle

INSIDE:

PAGES 4&5 Introducing
'A Year of Seeking'

PAGES 8&9 Celebrating one year
of Beyond Youth

PAGE 14 Cycling to all our
churches dedicated to St Cuthbert

PAGES 22&23 New Diocesan
Director of Education appointed

Sycamore Gap: one year on

**A sapling for local
church school**

Full story plus more pictures: Pages 10&11



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Contents



Page 15: Bishop Mark blesses the solar panels at Berwick Parish Church

Page 3	A message from Bishop Helen-Ann
Pages 4-5	Introducing 'A Year of Seeking'
Pages 6-7	New appointments at Newcastle Cathedral
Pages 8-9	Celebrating one year of Beyond Youth
Pages 10-11	Sycamore Gap sapling for local school
Pages 12-13	Exploring Holy Island's future with the Revd Canon Dr Sarah Hills
	Hexham Abbey's 1,350th anniversary – a thank you
Pages 14-15	Cycling to all our churches dedicated to St Cuthbert
Pages 16-17	Solar panels are blessed by Bishop Mark
Pages 18-19	Church's biggest upgrade in almost a century
Pages 20-21	In the spotlight - Street Pastors Newcastle
Pages 22-23	Generosity Week with a focus on Mitford
	Focus on youth ministry at Holy Cross Fenham
Page 24	New Diocesan Director of Education appointed
	An exciting future for All Saints Muggleswick

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We'll be printing Link magazine quarterly but will continue to publish Link Extra in-between, which will be available to view or download on our website newcastle.anglican.org/link. If you would like to submit content for Link Extra please contact communications@newcastle.anglican.org

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About this magazine

Feedback: communications@newcastle.anglican.org or 0191 270 4100 and ask to be put through to the Communications Team.

Sustainability: We use a Carbon Balanced printer to produce this publication. The printer works with global



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A message from Bishop Helen-Ann



The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley

Recently, I was delighted to attend the first anniversary of Beyond Youth, a project in the parishes of Ashington, Cresswell and Lynemouth, Seaton Hirst, and Woodhorn with Newbiggin.

Beyond Youth supports the parish churches to develop and grow their work with children and young people and it is a marvellous thing! The celebrations took place in the atrium of Duke's Secondary School Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust (NCEAT) in Ashington, and immense thanks are due to Dave, Sue and Becca, supported by Tara Russell, our Diocesan Children and Youth Team Leader, for such a splendid evening.

Wearing my vibrant blue Beyond Youth hoodie, I looked the part and arrived in good time. I was directed into the entrance area to discover several teenagers either on the floor or

whizzing about on office chairs. It was definitely exuberant!

But then it happened: one of the teenagers shouted out 'what's your name?' to which I replied, 'Helen-Ann' and in response I was greeted loudly as 'Nana Helen'. Now, to be honest I was immediately concerned about this new title (I don't have that many grey hairs, do I?) but as is so often the case in ministry, I just went with it.

I was now 'Nana Helen'. A little later on, one of the young people asked where the Bishop was because they knew the Bishop was meant to be there. Upon being told that the Bishop was in fact 'Nana Helen' much hilarity resulted.

The evening, as I said was fantastic fun. It was so good to see such a spread across the generations (including some actual 'nanas').

Amidst the chaos of balloon fencing (yes), there were moments of profound grace. Recognition of the gratitude felt of one another, huge appreciation for Dave, Becca and Sue. For me though, the highlight was listening to one mum expressing her pride in how much her daughter's confidence had grown because of her involvement in Beyond Youth.

Our young people are very much the church of today as well as its future leaders. I am delighted that at the heart of our diocesan vision is our desire, discerned in God's time to be a church that is younger and more diverse. As we enter fully into our season of Seeking, I pray we can continue to come alongside our schools, children and young people and enable them to become more fully the people that God is purposing them to be.

Thanks be to God for Beyond Youth!

Bishop Helen-Ann

Exploring an invitation together



**By the Revd Canon Dr Ric Whaite,
Director of Mission and Ministry**

At the clergy retreat in Hexham earlier this year, colleagues in the Diocese were encouraged to reflect on the place of imagination in our Christian faith.

This encouragement was not towards 'make-believe' but - using prayer and scripture - to explore where and when God was inviting us to discern the alternatives to the world's agenda and priorities. It was an invitation to acknowledge the fears we often have about scarcity ("we don't have enough" people, money, resources) and then to explore where God's action in our lives and communities reminds us of the alternatives and how we might celebrate and amplify these together. In this way, imagination becomes a part of discerning where God is working and how we might participate in God's work: as individuals, in parishes and across deaneries.



Scan this QR code to find out more

'Signposts' as we begin a Year of Seeking

In any process of discernment there needs to be attention given to whether we are enabling one another to be articulate about where we have noticed God working. This might mean we develop existing activities but it might also mean discerning things that move us faithfully in unexpected directions. In such circumstances, the Diocese will look to provide support for developing and beginning activities you have discerned together. Here are some dates and events to support our beginning a 'Year of Seeking.'

28 September

Sharing Year of Seeking resource with a newly constituted Newcastle Diocesan Synod.

5 October

Deanery Development Groups check-in with

Revd Mary Hawes on Seeking God's work inter-generationally with children and young people.

19 October

'Seeking the gifts of others,' Licensing Lay Ministry and the Year of Seeking.

1 November

Launch of a revised Authorised Lay Ministry scheme, including learning communities on Seeking, Sharing, Sending - proposed for 2025.

27 November

"It came to pass..." The Bishop of Newcastle's Clergy Study Day examining some themes around the Year of Seeking through Luke's Gospel.

1 December

Launch and distribution of further shared resources for discerning prayer in the Year of Seeking.

This discernment is central to the next stage of our life together in the Diocese. Under the heading of 'Year of Seeking', we are being invited to share together in prayer that helps us notice where God is working.

This is the first (2024-25) of three years where we collaborate to explore Bishop Helen-Ann's summary of 'Seeking, Sharing, Sending'. The summary doesn't come with prescriptions of lots of new roles or activities but begins with a simple invitation to pray attentively together. And rather than to focus on what we think we

'should' be doing, to turn together regularly in prayer to discern where God is working in our midst and to continue to seek to clarify the signs of God's kingdom and how we might join in.

As we begin the 'Year of Seeking' together, a simple prayer resource has been prepared. It includes a card with a prayer cycle, a collect prayer and two postcards through which you can collate what you have noticed of God's work and share it with the Mission and Ministry team at Church House. These materials are available in print and also on our website: newcastle.anglican.org/seeking-sharing-sending

An invitation to 'Seek' with Lay Ministry in the Diocese

By Nic Denyer, Lay Ministry Development Officer and Stephen Tranter, Director of Ordinands and Vocations

In early November, we'll be sharing news of the revised Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) scheme. This update is part of the Diocese's focus on the Year of Seeking (2024-25), supporting lay-led mission and ministry across

our parishes. The new ALM programme will begin in January 2025, building on the experiences of previous participants and the insights of both lay and ordained colleagues.

The updated scheme aims to make the pathway to ALM clearer, providing better support for those discerning a call to ministry.

Two new handbooks—one for PCCs and clergy, and one for participants—will help guide this process.

Training will now have two parts. From January to Easter, a Core module will be offered, exploring themes such as prayer, the call to serve, biblical study, and God's mission among us.

in a Year of Seeking



After Easter, participants can choose between two electives: Pastoral Care or Leading Worship. Each will include practical exercises and opportunities for reflection.

Existing ALMs are also encouraged to participate, with a supported pathway available. More information, including handbooks and application forms, will be

available on our website and sent to area deans and lay chairs.

● For any questions, please contact Nic Denyer at: n.deny@newcastle.anglican.org

● For more information visit: newcastle.anglican.org/authorised-lay-ministry/

Ordination at St Bartholomew's, Newbiggin



The Revd Anthony O'Grady, the Revd Deborah Ehala and Bishop Mark

The Revd Deborah Ehala has been ordained as a Deacon at St Bartholomew's Church, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, where she will serve as assistant curate.

Congratulations to Deborah, who was ordained by Bishop Mark during a service at St Bartholomew's on Saturday 28 September.



The Revd Deborah Ehala pictured with Bishop Mark

All change at the Cathedral

By the Very Revd Lee Batson,
Dean of Newcastle

On Holy Cross Day, 14 September, Revd Zoe Heming was installed as the new Canon for Mission at Newcastle Cathedral.

Two months earlier, Revd Ruth Hulse was installed as Canon for Worship and Congregational Life – and it is not yet a year since I took up my position as Dean! Together with Kate Sussams (Chief Operating Officer), we are the new senior team at your Cathedral.

All three of us clergy come to Newcastle Cathedral with extensive experience of parish ministry in other dioceses, and none of us thought we would be ministering in a cathedral two years ago.

We were all attracted to this place because of its emphasis on being an outward-looking expression of a cathedral, with a deep commitment – embedded by our predecessors – to focusing our work on ministry to those on the margins and promoting social justice.



We are also convinced that the Cathedral exists primarily to be a resource for the Diocese, and that it should be a place that acts as a second home for all those who worship in our parish churches.

Zoe's role means she will be overseeing the Lantern Initiative, which enables ministry to the street community; those recovering from addiction; adults with learning disabilities; sanctuary seekers; and – increasingly – those affected by domestic abuse. She will lead the

Good causes take centre stage in Cathedral's Advent programme

This Advent, Newcastle Cathedral will once again welcome people from across the Diocese to participate in a variety of services, concerts and special events.

The first of these special events is the Marie Curie Lights to Remember service, on Sunday 8 December at 3pm. Newcastle Cathedral has been chosen from venues across the country to host this year's filmed service, which will be shared nationwide via the Marie Curie website.

This poignant event offers those affected by terminal illness or bereavement a chance to come together with hospice staff and dedicated supporters. During the service, attendees

receive a paper memory lantern to personalise with a message, drawing or the name of a loved one. These lanterns will be lit, creating a poignant collective tribute to friends and family who are living with terminal illness or who are no longer with us.

On Wednesday, 11 December at 7pm, the Crisis Skylight Newcastle Carol Service returns. In recent years, the Cathedral has deepened its commitment to supporting the street life community, actively offering sanctuary and support with established service providers.

Homelessness charity Crisis works year-round to help people in Newcastle rebuild their lives beyond homelessness. This service will bring

together supporters, campaigners and service users for an uplifting evening of carols.

On Thursday 12 December at 7pm, Christmas at the Cathedral will once again support the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation, a charity dedicated to advancing cancer detection and treatment. This much-loved event is known for featuring surprise celebrity performances, with the line-up kept under wraps until the night.

● For a full programme of services and events, visit:
newcastlecathedral.org.uk/whats-on

Illuminated Sheep shine a light on community champions

Learning and Engagement team as it works with schools and other groups.

Ruth's role is to effectively act as the vicar for the regular worshippers who attend the various services at the Cathedral and to oversee the life of our music team. Ruth will also be the principal link with the Deanery within which the Cathedral sits.

Ruth's focus on the congregation means that Zoe and I can be available on Sundays to other parishes – whether they be in vacancy or want a visiting preacher. We will be available at least one Sunday a month each from January, so please contact us if you would like us to come.

The Cathedral exists as a free gift to the Diocese from the national Church. As such, we want to make sure we play our part in supporting the work others are doing, and we would be keen to hear from you about how we can best do this.

We are also one of the three most visited Church of England buildings in the Diocese, and we would love to know how we could use this privileged position to promote the work of our parishes. So do please be in touch!



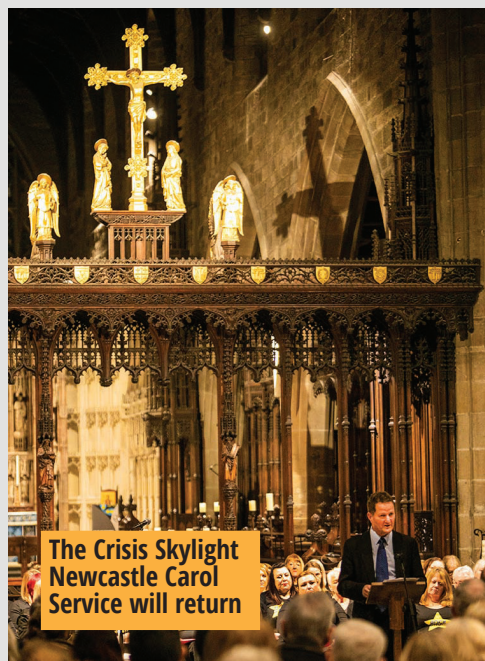
Newcastle Foodbank's sheep



Sheeping Up Together by Speaking Up Together



Dean Lee Batson with two of the flock



The Crisis Skylight Newcastle Carol Service will return

Newcastle Cathedral welcomed a flock of 30 illuminated sheep in October, as sculptures designed by artist Deepa Mann-Kler took centre stage.

Prior to the exhibition (22-24 October), community groups were invited to decorate a single sheep at the Cathedral, with each showcasing their unique identities and roles within the local area.



Baaa-bra by the Heaton Hookers craft group

Participating groups were Newcastle Young Carers, the Heaton Hookers craft group, self-advocacy group Speaking Up Together, and Newcastle Foodbank, of which Bishop Helen-Ann is a patron.

● For more information on Newcastle Cathedral's community partnerships and ongoing initiatives, visit: newcastlecathedral.org.uk/community



First anniversary celebrations



Above and below, Active Church held at St. Andrew's Church in Ashington



Board games at a Beyond Youth session in Lynemouth



An exciting new youth project in Newcastle Diocese has celebrated its first anniversary. Beyond Youth was launched a year ago to work with children, young people and their families in South East Northumberland.

Over the past 12 months, the Beyond Youth team has made a big impression on communities in Ashington, Seaton Hirst, Woodhorn with Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, and Cresswell and Lynemouth.

The dedicated team has supported parishes in developing and growing their youth work, spending time in schools, parks, churches and on beaches, offering opportunities for children and young people to grow, explore faith and have fun.

A special evening to mark the anniversary took place at Duke's Secondary School in Ashington on 11 September. Bishop Helen-Ann joined the Beyond Youth staff and volunteers, while many children and teenagers were also



Pizza goes down well in Lynemouth

in attendance.

There was food, fun, laughter and space to reflect, while the Bishop was even invited to participate in a balloon fencing match. Despite losing, she felt warmly welcomed by the children and young people.

The evening provided everyone with the opportunity to look back over the past year and share their hopes for the future.

Dave Johnson, Youth and Children's Coordina-

for Beyond Youth



tor for Beyond Youth said: "The young people who shared were incredibly brave and spoke so confidently in front of an audience. It's been so precious to see them grow.

"We're so excited for what comes next and are so grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside these fantastic children and young people."

If you would like to find out more about what Beyond Youth is up to, follow the Beyond Youth page on Facebook @BeyondYouthNE or contact the team via the diocesan website: newcastle.anglican.org/beyond-youth

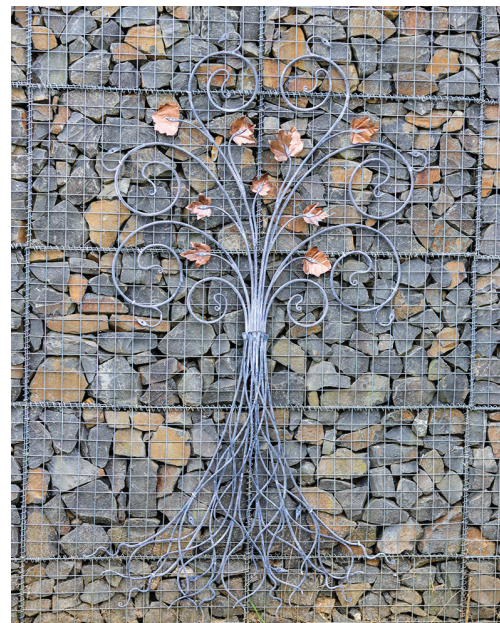
Launched in autumn 2023, Beyond Youth was commissioned by Bishop Helen-Ann at a service at St Bartholomew's Church, Newbiggin, in January of this year.



School will ensure Sycamore Gap



Bishop Helen-Ann with the largest section of the original tree's wood installed at The Sill



Artwork created by Wark CofE Primary School with support from local blacksmith artist Stewart Dives

A church school in the rural Tyne Valley will receive a sapling from the iconic Sycamore Gap tree. Henshaw Church of England Primary is the closest school to the site of the world-famous sycamore on Hadrian's Wall, located less than three miles away.

Now, a year after the tree was illegally felled in September 2023, the National Trust has launched the 'Trees of Hope' initiative, which will see 49 saplings grown from the tree given to communities in different parts of the country, ensuring its legacy lives on for future generations.

The number 49 represents the height of the tree in feet, and in addition to Henshaw Primary, the saplings will be given to all 15 UK National Parks, as well as two other locations, which were specifically selected.

Other individuals and community organisations were invited to apply for the remaining saplings (before 25 October), so they can be planted in publicly accessible spaces.

Bishop Helen-Ann joined pupils from Henshaw school at The Sill Landscape Discovery Centre on 27 September, where they learned more about the project.

legacy lives on



Mike Glenton (Headteacher of Henshaw & Greenhead schools), Gill Booth (Interim Diocesan Director of Education), The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley (Bishop of Newcastle), Paul Rickeard (Chief Executive of Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust) with pupils from Wark, Greenhead, Henshaw and Newbrough CofE schools in front of artwork created by local schools



Pupils proudly shared their knowledge of the tree with Bishop Helen-Ann



A pupil from Henshaw CofE Primary School admires Sycamore Gap inspired artwork created by his school

On the same day, the Northumberland National Park Authority unveiled the first phase of its 'Sycamore Gap: One Year On' exhibition, which will be open to the public until Sunday 3 November.

The exhibition, developed by artist Charlie Whinney alongside Creative Communities CIC, is enabling visitors to get up close with the largest section of the original tree's wood, which is being temporarily installed at The Sill.

The exhibition launch welcomed 240 children from 13 local schools to The Sill, where they took part in a variety of creative workshops to mark the anniversary. Leading up to the event, the schools worked alongside local artists to create their own artwork inspired by the tree. The artwork was unveiled on the day.

The two other locations that will receive saplings were also revealed. One is Tina's Haven on the

Durham coast - an area of National Trust land being restored for nature with the aim of enhancing recovery for both people and nature.

The other is in south Bristol - to celebrate the life of a young boy, Fergus who sadly died of bone cancer at just 12 years old, and as a symbol of hope and recognition for all those suffering from childhood cancers and the families affected.

A project to give Holy Island a sustainable future is making good progress four years after it was first launched during lockdown.

The Revd Canon Dr Sarah Hills started the initiative back in 2020, after she became vicar at St Mary's Church on the island.

Other organisations have since got involved, including Holy Island Parish Council and the Holy Island Community Development Trust, and a list of priorities was drawn up.

The Holy Island 2050 project is looking at big issues from affordable housing and jobs, to tourism, transport links and the environment.

"It came about during the pandemic," said Sarah. "Lockdown gave us time to think and we considered how life on the island would be after Covid and beyond."

"In my mind it has always been missional, but it had to be a community project. I'm pleased that other organisations have come on board. It's a long, slow process, but we are definitely moving."

Sarah chaired the project for its first three years. It was always her intention to hand over the leadership baton, but both she and her church are still actively involved.

The initiative has put firm foundations in place, improving amenities for existing residents with the introduction of a warm hub and regular activities such as coffee mornings and film nights.

"We wanted to address social isolation," said Sarah. "The church has a good partnership with the village hall and we have been able to make a success of these events."

To address some of the wider-reaching issues, the project has also been working closely with Northumberland County Council, English Heritage, the National Trust, Natural England, Visit Northumberland, and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding

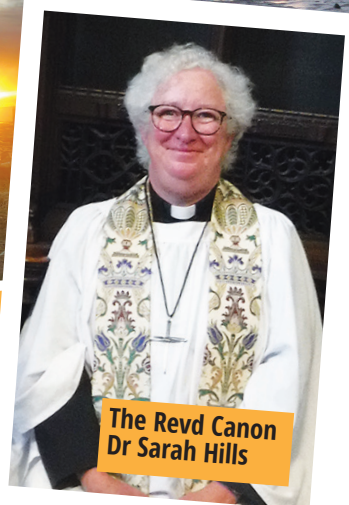
Holy Island 2050 – long term vision has 'always been missional' for vicar



Pilgrim's Way: a popular walking route that has been used for centuries



Fishing has been a mainstay of the economy for generations



The Revd Canon Dr Sarah Hills

Natural Beauty (AONB).

"We are very much looking at the future," said Sarah. "We need more sustainable jobs on the island, in addition to hospitality and fishing."

"We have commissioned a visitor management survey because we need the data to know what the island community wants."

There are plans to improve transport links to the island. Sarah said a route for people to walk or cycle onto Lindisfarne would potentially reduce the number of cars accessing the main village.

"A transport survey has also been commissioned," said Sarah. "We want to be greener, and we would love a walking and cycleway alongside the causeway road."

A huge achievement for Sarah and the island came 18 months ago, when a controversial proposal to ban fishing was thrown out, following a determined local campaign.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) had wanted Holy Island to become a designated Highly Protected Marine Area (HPMA), for nature to recover and for ecosystems to thrive.

But Defra backed down after acknowledging community feeling and that fishing had been part of Holy Island's economy for centuries, with livelihoods depending on it.

Rector's thanks for making Abbey's anniversary so special

A monumental year in the history of Hexham Abbey is drawing to a close after a successful programme of high-profile events.

But Hexham 1350 – the project to celebrate the Abbey's 1,350th anniversary throughout 2024 – will live long in the memory.

Now the Rector of Hexham, the Revd Canon David Glover, has expressed his gratitude to local schools, community groups, musicians, volunteers and everyone else involved in making the anniversary so special.

"It has been quite remarkable," said David. "I said at the beginning of the year that not many institutions get the chance to celebrate 1,350 years of life.

"We wanted to pay tribute to all who have contributed to the Abbey throughout the centuries, and so many people from near and far have joined us to make this such a special year."

The annual Hexham Abbey Festival of Music and Arts, which took place over four days at the end of September, was given a 1350 theme as it attracted singers from local schools, the Abbey's own choirs, as well as a renowned cellist, visiting jazz musicians and other accomplished performers from far and wide.

The celebrations began back in February, when a Festival of Flame included a spectacular light display both inside and outside of the building, which set the backdrop for historians to tell the story of the Abbey in a series of talks. There was also a special anniversary service, when David was joined by Bishop Helen-Ann.



The Hexham Abbey Festival of Music and Arts was a big success at the end of September



Renowned cellist Ricardo Pes performs at the festival

The opening month included the launch of Stars for Eternity – a project involving schools and community groups – which saw 5,000 origami stars suspended high above the Abbey's old choir stalls. Each star represented someone special from

past or present, nominated by local people.

There have been other concerts and events throughout the year, including a hugely popular flower festival in the summer, while the Abbey has also continued to host recitals of its Phelps organ to celebrate its 50th birthday, with renowned organists turning out to perform.

This autumn, the Threads Through Creation exhibition is taking place at the Abbey, which is hosting 12 huge, embroidered silk panels, each exploring the story of Creation in the Bible.

"It is really interesting for us to host this exhibition," said David. "I really want to thank everyone who has contributed to all we have done this year. In playing their part, they have enabled us to celebrate the Abbey's rich history – and all of the people who have been part of it."

Inspirational cycle ride showcases all our diocese has to offer

The Revd Gill Alexander discovered just how much there is to give thanks for in Newcastle Diocese as she cycled 285 miles in September to all churches dedicated to St Cuthbert in the diocese.

Her week-long journey started and finished at Haydon Bridge, where she is Associate Priest at the village's St Cuthbert's Church.

Her mission was to raise vital funds for two related projects in her parish – new toilet and kitchenette facilities at St Cuthbert's, and a new roof for Haydon Old Church, which dates back to the 12th century.

Gill's fundraising has raised more than £2,000 to date - and she is extremely grateful to all who have made contributions so far.

"People have been wonderful," said Gill, who was accompanied by her partner Bev on a challenging journey through stunning countryside.

"We were given such a warm welcome everywhere we went, and I want to thank everyone for their kindness and support, and also the accommodation providers we stayed at for their hospitality."

The journey by land and sea took Gill and Bev to 14 churches and two chapels.

Gill added: "I learned so much on our journey about the importance of creating connections and learning from each other. All PCCs face similar challenges in maintaining the fabric of their church buildings, growing their congregations and reaching out and supporting their respective communities.

"Yet our journey took us to churches where God's presence felt particularly close and where we heard many stories about creative ways of building up the church in our communities. There is so much to celebrate in our life together. The people we met were generous in sharing their ideas – as well as cake, tea and biscuits!

"There is a lot to be said for journeying beyond our boundaries and comfort zones and



Above, The cycling camino started with a service of blessing at Haydon Old Church. Right, Gill and Bev received a warm welcome on their return to St Cuthbert's, Haydon Bridge

The Route

Haydon Old Church, Brunswick Village, Blyth, Bedlington, Hebron, Amble, Inner Farne, Norham, Carham, Elsdon, Corsenside, Bellingham, Allendale, Beltingham, Greenhead, Haydon Bridge.



with me and navigating our way along the route."

talking to people. St Cuthbert did this, and so must we. It can only make us stronger."

Gill's cycling camino did include punctures, a battle with the elements and some challenging hills.

"It was a truly inspiring journey," she added. "We learned a lot about endurance and faith. It was wonderful to return home to St Cuthbert's Haydon Bridge on Harvest Market Day where we were safely gathered in with a Haydon holler, a line-up, poppers, a banner and lemon drizzle cake.

"A huge thank you also to Bev for journeying

The Harvest Market also raised over £1,500 for the buildings project at the Haydon Bridge churches – but sources of capital funding are also being explored.

Despite its prominent tower and a generous amount of space, the 18th century St Cuthbert's Church building has never previously offered toilet or kitchen facilities.

Haydon Old Church – the parish's historic original church located to the north of the village, needs a new roof to ensure it continues to host occasional special services.



Bishop Mark on the roof of Berwick Parish Church

Bishop Mark led a service of blessing for the recently installed solar panels on the roof of Berwick Parish Church, following the completion of an exciting project.

The Bishop of Berwick was delighted to be at Holy Trinity & St Mary's Church for the service, on Sunday 22 September. He addressed the congregation, which included members of local churches and the wider community, on the Fifth Mark of Mission.

The installation of new panels at Holy Trinity & St Mary's is the most recent step towards becoming carbon neutral.

The panels are estimated to reduce carbon emissions by the equivalent of 6,897 car miles per annum, while the financial benefits are also significant, reducing current electricity

Bishop Mark scales church roof to bless new solar panels

bills and enabling money to be made through feedback into the national grid.

The Church's Environmental Champion Anne Horne said: "The congregation and wider community have embraced this and other eco projects at Berwick Parish Church, fulfilling the Fifth Mark of Mission, 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth'.

"We owe it, not just to future generations, but to those most affected already by climate change, the poorest and most vulnerable worldwide, to reduce our emissions and show in practical ways, God's care for us reciprocating by our care for his creation."

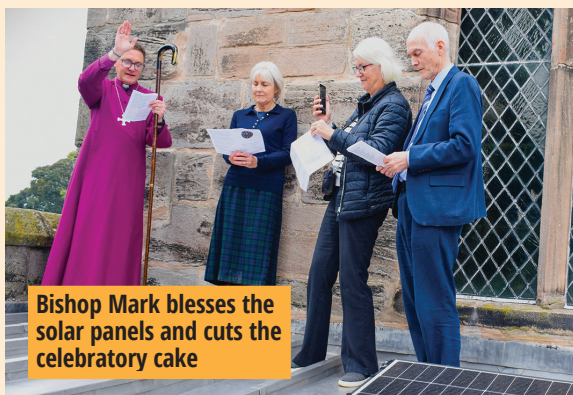
ed by our care for his creation."

PCC Lay Chair Dr David Mason said: "The successful installation of solar panels on our church, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our eco group is a testimony to their commitment and persistence and is a significant step in our journey to carbon neutrality."

The project is the legacy of the Revd Canon Dennis Handley, who retired from Holy Trinity & St Mary's last year. It was made possible by grants from the CoRE Legacy Fund, Garfield Weston Foundation and Benefact Trust, and through the generosity of the congregation and wider community who supported a variety of fundraising events.

It's quite a landmark for this distinguished 375-year-old church, with some of its historical features assisting the process. Thanks to the Cromwellian parapet around the roof, the solar panels are hidden from view even from the nearby town walls.

The service is available on the Holy Trinity & St Mary's Church, Berwick upon Tweed YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/3YdaEb6>



Bishop Mark blesses the solar panels and cuts the celebratory cake





The entrance to the community café



Enjoying the surroundings outside

Church gets biggest upgrade in almost

A church which is a community hub as well as a place of worship, has undergone its biggest upgrade of facilities since it opened 93 years ago.

St James' and St Basil's Church in Fenham runs a community café, hosts groups and organisations, while also supporting local businesses by providing space in its church hall basement.

This summer, the toilet facilities at St James' and St Basil's were upgraded and now include an accessible convenience, the heating system was overhauled, and the lighting and electrics in the vestry were upgraded. There is also a new secure storage area.

A small kitchen has been added to the vestry, which has also been decorated, while drainage systems and water pipes in the basement have been renewed.

"We have between 300 and 400 people using the church every week," said the Revd James McGowan. "It's essential that we have suitable facilities and we are delighted with the work that has been done."



Nicki Walter, café volunteer who was instrumental in setting up the café

"This project is the largest upgrade to the church building since it opened in 1931. It came about after a complaint by a member of one of our choirs about only having one working toilet in the building – we now have four! All the work looks excellent and we hope it enhances the experience of visiting our church."

During the works, a major fault was also identified with the main church heating system. As a result, the pump that sends hot water to the church radiators has been replaced.

James added: "Following these works, a future project might consider installing solar cells on the church roof and battery storage in the basement to allow part of the church



Visitors enjoying the community café



David Todd, café lead from 1 October

a century

to run entirely on renewable energy.”

The community café at St James’ and St Basil’s opened in 2016. As well as providing a service for local people, James said the café gives the church a vital shop front. The church also provides a base for an early years music workshop and other community groups.

The church hall has two studios, which are rented to local businesses. One is a florist and photography outlet, while the other is a joinery, which opens as a workshop for people to learn woodwork skills.

“We only have a relatively small congregation of about 30,” said James. “But it’s about outlook and intention, not just bums on seats, although we are not a community centre by any means.

“People come to church when they are ready and when they need to come. It’s a slightly different form of evangelism and mission.”

James gives thanks to Gateley Smithers Purslow, Ecclesiastical Insurance and to funders, The Northumbria Historic Churches Trust and The Catherine Cookson Trust.



The Revd James McGowan in the newly installed kitchen

A dedicated team of trained volunteers from local churches is on the lookout for new members. Street Pastors Newcastle plays a vital role in keeping people safe while they enjoy a night out in the bustling city centre on Friday and Saturday nights.

They help people who have become isolated from their friends, support those who become vulnerable due to alcohol or drugs, and work closely with the police and other organisations to help maintain the health and safety of our city. They also assist the homeless during essential night time patrols.

Since its inception 15 years ago, volunteers from Street Pastors have maintained a presence on the city centre streets every week-end. Between 10pm and 4am, they provide water and snacks, blankets, and footwear, as well as providing basic first aid to those who need it.

Street Pastors is a church-based charity. Volunteers must be aged 18 or over and have been a churchgoer for at least 18 months. A reference from church leaders is also required.

"There's always a need for what we do," said co-ordinator Paul Waugh, "It's physical witness rather than a preaching witness. It gives the church a presence outside of our churches and it shows that we care.

"We're not there to talk about Jesus to someone who might be drunk or injured. We are showing God's love through our actions. Yet it's surprising the questions we get asked about who we are, what we are doing, and the conversations that can follow. We sometimes end up having faith conversations."

Paul, who attends Regent Chapel Christian Fellowship, an independent evangelical church in Gosforth, said Street Pastors' volunteers represent a multi-

Street Pastors Newcastle: essential work is 'showing God's love through our actions'



Street Pastors on night time patrols in Newcastle city centre

tude of denominations.

He added: "I got involved 12 years ago because I wanted to do something out of my comfort zone for God. What we do is very rewarding and generally the people we help are very grateful."

Paul stepped into the role of co-ordinator eight years ago to continue the good work of prede-

cessor Sam Douthwaite, who was one of the founders of Street Pastors Newcastle.

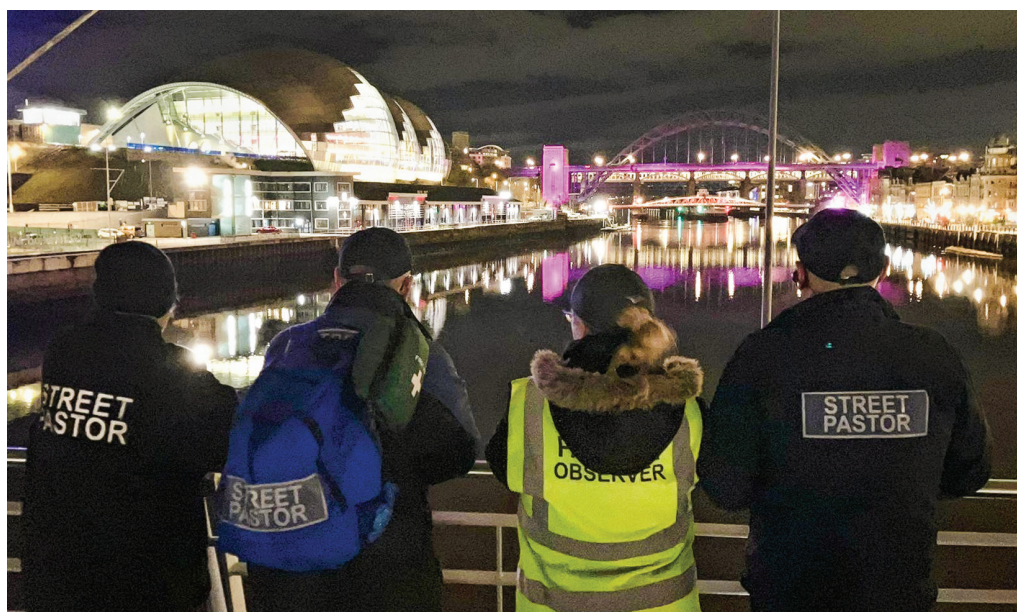
Newcastle is a hotspot for stag and hen parties. Essential tasks include taking care of people, getting them to safety by either walking them back to their hotel or a taxi rank or staying with someone until they are reunited with their friends or family.

Paul said the Street Pastors have a good working relationship with police and door staff at clubs and bars.

He added: "If we see something of concern, we are able to use the 'Pubwatch' radio sys-



Paul Waugh



tem, which links all the clubs and hotels to the police CCTV team, and they can alert the police in the city centre.

"The police are very supportive of what we

do as we can take over waiting with a vulnerable person until they are collected by friends or family, freeing up the police officers to keep the city safe."

Newcastle city centre is blessed to have a medical van, as well as a police 'safe haven' van for people to recover from injuries or illness, if it is deemed they don't require hospital attention. Street Pastors can link with both vans in providing a safe place for people who become vulnerable.

The pastors meet and pray together before going out in teams. New recruits are always accompanied by more experienced volunteers.

Before becoming a street pastor, full training is provided over a three-month period. For more information, contact Paul on 07840 827 614 or email newcastle@streetpastors.org.uk

● Visit the website here:
www.streetpastors.org/locations/newcastle/

Generosity in many forms in Newcastle Diocese

Generosity Week (29 September to 6 October) was a huge success with parishes across the Diocese playing their part. Here we focus on St Mary Magdalene at Mitford.

A rural church opened its doors to the community during a month dedicated to generosity and stewardship.

St Mary Magdalene at Mitford, near Morpeth, hosted numerous activities during a busy September, which included a giving review, while the whole community turned out for a successful church open weekend.

Priest in Charge, the Revd Elaine Jones said the month was a time for everyone to think about their contributions to church life – but not only in terms of finances.

Elaine said: "There are designated roles in churches but there is always scope for more people to get involved if they want to. We encouraged everyone to think about how they might want to serve. They might have a calling to serve or they might have outstanding credentials.

"We also wanted to think about God in the context of giving. Where is God in our giving priorities?"

Whether it's time or money, and in some cases both, Elaine said the church is immensely grateful for all contributions which are essential to the sustainability of St Mary Magdalene Mitford.



Stalls in the church grounds during the open day



Cream teas and biscuits were served at the open day

included music, cake stalls, a bouncy castle and more – as well as information boards for members of the wider community to find out more about what goes on at St Mary Magdalene.

"We never take anything for granted," said Elaine. "Generosity plays a big part in what we are able to do as a church. For example, if it wasn't for people's generosity and kindness we wouldn't be able to give to the charities that we like to support.

"This has been an opportunity for us all to take stock. Some people hadn't reviewed their giving for some time. As a church we are currently in a good position but to keep things that way it is healthy for us to review, both individually and collectively.

"We have a wonderful congregation and community here. It has been great to see people engaging with us throughout this period."

The open weekend, on 28 and 29 September,

"It's about opening doors," said Elaine. "We want to encourage people to become part of the church community. We also host a Café Church on the third Sunday of each month, where people can have breakfast with us and hear what we do."

During Harvest, on 29 September, there was a thanksgiving for everything that had been given. It was also a day when people could put themselves forward for more active roles in church life.

There will be a further giving review before next Easter, for everyone to mark their progress so far.

There was also a Generosity Month at Benwell & Scotswood Team Parish, when a giving booklet was produced to give thanks for all gifts made in the past year and offering encouragement for the year ahead. In addition, there was a special service to offer harvest contributions to the local foodbank and café, while there were information sessions about the church's mission activity and how people can support this. See the video on the diocesan Facebook page.



Children and teenagers are playing an active role in the life of a Newcastle church – from reading the liturgy and leading prayers, to conducting Bible-themed puppet shows.

It's part of a thriving youth work ministry at Holy Cross Fenham, which for the past 12 years has given young people a dedicated space to grow in their faith.

The church currently has about a dozen children and young people attending its sessions at least once a month, with half from senior schools and half from primary schools.

The youth work is lay-led by churchwarden and youth leader Julie Bowman, junior church lead Karen Derham, and messy church co-ordinator Liz Tweedy – all supported by interim minister, the Revd Dan McCarthy.

Dan said the key to keeping young people involved is loosely based on the three principles of participation, encounter and belonging.

He explained: "In terms of participation, children and teenagers lead the first Sunday of the month communion service. They read much of the liturgy, lead the prayers, choose the songs and hymns, and are involved in administering the sacraments.

"In other more formal services, some are Acolytes, others are the Crucifer, whilst others help with the offertory. On the fourth Sunday of the month, the youth have a separate session in the church service to grow in their faith."

Encounter is illustrated well in the church's bi-monthly Pizza and Prayer, now based at the vicar's house. Each Saturday evening session is based around food, the Bible, questions and prayer. They are fun and yet along with the leaders, it is a great chance for everyone to experience a little of God too.

Along with this, the church takes confirmations seriously too. Preparation starts six months before the date with many exciting things to complete. These include watching, listening and writing about faith as well as getting the parents involved too, with visits

Youth ministry is flourishing at Holy Cross Fenham



The Revd Daniel McCarthy with young people and youth leaders on St Cuthbert's Island, just off Holy Island

and parental WhatsApp.

"A sense of belonging is best described by having much fun," said Dan. "Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter are big highlights in the youth calendar. In addition, visits to Longsands, Holy Island, Newcastle city centre and the Farne Islands have been great. The youth team have also had movie nights, BBQs, Bible-based escape rooms and much fun

puppetry, especially with the Bethlehemian Rhapsody."

Many underlying reasons underpin the flourishing of the youth ministry at Holy Cross. The PCC and church as a whole are committed to this expression of church and are inspired by the youth. Along with the church support, there is also a strong toddler group, Sunday school and Messy Church.

New Diocesan Director of Education for church schools

A new Diocesan Director of Education to serve Church of England schools across both Newcastle and Durham dioceses has been appointed.

David Akers, currently headteacher at Ward Jackson Church of England Primary School in Hartlepool, takes up the role in January and will be responsible for 57 schools in Durham diocese and 49 schools in Newcastle diocese across ten local authorities.

He succeeds interim DDE Gill Booth who is due to semi-retire at the end of this year.

David has been headteacher at Ward Jackson since 2013 and has held a number of leadership roles in his twenty years of experience in the education sector.

He said: "I am delighted to be taking up the role of DDE for the Diocese of Newcastle and Diocese of Durham and feel privileged to have been entrusted with this role. I have been blessed by the time I have spent studying, teaching and leading in a number of our schools and believe that together we can truly make a difference to the lives of children and young people.

"School leaders face so many challenges that at times can feel overwhelming. I would look to build on the work that has been done so effectively in recent years to ensure that schools know they are part of something bigger, they are not alone and have the unwavering support of the Joint Education Team in enabling our children and staff to flourish.

flourish.

"I am determined to ensure that our schools are equipped to support our children in overcoming the challenges they face each and every day, to help reduce the impact of poverty, to ensure that support for SEN is a priority and that our early years provisions have the resources needed to provide the foundations for living life in all its fullness. Key to this work will be the partnerships we forge together and collaborative work with all stakeholders."

The Bishop of Newcastle, the Right Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley said: "This is an important and exciting appointment and I am delighted that David, who has a wealth of experience in the education sector, is joining



Update from Gill Booth, Interim Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)

We are all excited to start a new academic year and to welcome back our children and young people and staff.

Currently, the JET team is preparing for the autumn JET conference, which will take place on Friday 8 November at Holiday Inn Newcastle, Gosforth Park.

This will be an opportunity to reflect on another successful calendar year for our schools, to welcome new colleagues and other education professionals, and to share good practice.

The guest speaker will be Professor Paul Miller, director of educational leadership and social justice, who will be exploring equity, diversity, inclusion and justice within a Christian context, with a particular focus on race.



Education advisor and speaker Allana Gay

The conference will also welcome former headteacher Allana Gay, an education advisor and speaker, who co-founded the charity BAMEed Network in 2017.

She will focus on ethnic diversity throughout the education sector. Allana currently works as a consultant for the National Society for Education.

Being welcoming and inclusive is central to the ethos of Church schools. This conference will help us to explore what more we can do to ensure that everyone in our community feels welcome and to further strengthen our network as a family of schools.

● If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Susie Taylor at: Susie.taylor@drmnnewcanglican.org



Prof. Paul Miller will speak at the conference

in Newcastle and Durham

us. All our schools are at the heart of God's mission in our diocese, and our Church of England schools in particular enable the special character of faith to illuminate their local communities. David will lead our aim for them to provide an outstanding education so that children and young people across our diocese can flourish. In our season of seeking God together, as God seeks us I look forward to how our schools will help us seek God's kingdom afresh."

The Bishop of Jarrow and Acting Bishop of Durham, the Right Reverend Sarah Clark said: "I am thrilled that David has agreed to join us. His leadership will ensure we continue to provide children and young people of all faiths and none with the high quality education they deserve. Our schools are at the

very centre of our mission as a Church, enriching our communities by faithfully serving our children and their families."

Gill Booth, Interim Diocesan Director of Education said: "We are delighted to welcome David to the Joint Education Team as the new Director of Education. David brings a great deal of expertise and experience in Church school leadership and I know that our schools will give him a very warm welcome when he takes up his new role in January."



Meet the JET team

The Joint Education Team (JET) is currently headed by Interim Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) Gill Booth and supports the Church of England schools across Newcastle and Durham Dioceses.

JET comprises of key professionals who all bring different skills and experience to the team. The overall vision is to ensure that our children, young people, staff and communities in our Church schools can flourish and live life to its fullest.

Liane Atkin

Assistant Director Legal and Governance

Liane provides advice and support for schools on governance and legal matters.

Sharon Betham

Administration Assistant

Sharon supports the team with all matters relating to SIAMS as well as the route to Net Zero.

Amy Cookson

EYFS consultant

Amy works with schools to support Early Years.

James Lewis

Assistant Director School Effectiveness

James is new to the team and offers support in terms of strategy, leadership and knowledge of the curriculum. He will be featured in the next edition of Link.

Andy Pestell

Finance Assistant

Andy supports our Voluntary Aided schools with matters relating to Land and Buildings, as well as supporting all schools with any financial queries.

Tom Royle

Diocesan Head of Finance

Tom provides support for the team on all financial matters.

Paul Rusby

SIAMS consultant

Paul works with schools to help pupils and staff to live out their Christian vision and flourish spiritually. He explores ways of inte-

grating spirituality into their curriculum and collective worship.

Susie Taylor

Director's PA

Susie supports the Director of Education and two of the Assistant Directors as well looking after governance for our 106 schools across both Dioceses.

Anne Vernon

Assistant Director School Effectiveness

Anne focuses on school improvement with all schools and is also an Ofsted Inspector.

Caroline Weir

RE Advisor

Caroline focuses on RE and Christian Ethos, and each school's partnership with their local church.

The team also works with a number of external consultants to support head-teacher appraisal and school improvement.



**All Saints Church,
Muggleswick**
Picture: Caroline Bean

Church to welcome campers after funding for new scheme is secured

A rural church that has been running at a loss will receive a much-needed funding boost from the National Churches Trust.

All Saints Muggleswick will use the £18,986 grant to carry out urgent repairs, as well as making the church a more welcoming space for visitors and congregation members alike.

The 18th century building will be turned into a destination for camping as well as remaining open for worship, while improved amenities will include a new servery and an accessible toilet. The much-needed cash injection will also go towards replacing the roof at All Saints, while also repairing cracks in the building.

Claire Walker, chief executive of the National Churches Trust, said: "The trust is delighted to be able to support All Saints Church to enable them to carry out urgent repairs, as



Picture: Helen Barrass

well as add in a kitchenette and accessible toilet to their beautiful building. Not only will this protect this important heritage, but it will help to keep the church building open and serving local people."

Helen Barrass and Lynne Bean, churchwardens at All Saints, said: "We were absolutely delighted to hear that we have been awarded this grant. This completes our fundraising project. Along with grants received from other funders, it will enable us to commence the works we have planned.

"We are very grateful for the support of The National Churches Trust; this will secure the future of this much-loved church, which has been part of the community for hundreds of years."

The camping inside church, known as 'champing,' will create a new income stream for All Saints, helping to make it sustainable for the future.

There are plans to work with North Pennines Area of Natural Beauty, Durham Northern Saints Trails and the Sanctuary Network Project to help promote the church as a place to visit – putting Muggleswick firmly on the tourism map.

To support this, the church will be creating new interpretation to help share the local history of the building and surrounding area with tourists, encouraging them to spend more time in the area. This interpretation includes a self-guided walk that will take in the beautiful local nature reserve and the nearby Grade I Listed ruins of Muggleswick Grange.

This new use will create some employment and volunteering opportunities for local people.

● The National Churches Trust helps churches through its extensive grants programme. Full details are at: nationalchurchestrust.org/grants