

Role Description: Benefice of Cornhill with Carham and Branxton

1 Introduction

The role description gives an outline of the responsibilities of a position. These may develop while someone is in post and this document will need to be kept up to date. It should be reviewed as necessary at Ministerial Development Review, alongside the setting of objectives.

2 Details of post

- 2.1 Role title: Assistant Priest (House for Duty)
- 2.2 Name of benefice: Cornhill with Carham and Branxton
- 2.3 Patronage: (1) EM Straker-Smith (2 & 3) Chapter of Durham Cathedral
- 2.4 Deanery and archdeaconry: Norham; Lindisfarne
- 2.5 Initial point of contact on terms of service: The Archdeacon of Lindisfarne

3 Role purpose: General

- 3.1 To assist the incumbent in attending to the cure of souls.
- 3.2 Ever prayerful and mindful of the responsibilities laid upon you in the Ordinal, the Canons, national Safeguarding policies, and all other relevant legislation, in accordance with the Archbishops' statement *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*, your ministry will be shaped by the Diocesan vision – Growing Church Bringing Hope – and marked by a generosity of spirit, an engagement with the people and situations you serve, and an openness to the promptings of God's love.
- 3.3 Your priestly vocation demands the careful preparation for, and the leading of public worship, the imaginative proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the loving service of all God's people entrusted to your care. Together with your priestly colleagues and lay ministers, you will work collaboratively to enable the gifts of all God's people to be developed in the Service of his Kingdom.
- 3.4 In your priestly ministry you will take an active part in the Diocesan strategy – Growing Church Bringing Hope: Next Steps. This will include collaborative parish conversations and planning for mission and ministry as well as working with colleagues across the Deanery and more widely in the life of the Diocese. A number of supports are available to you through the provision of work consultants, spiritual directors and Continuing Ministerial Formation programs, and you will be expected to participate in the scheme of Ministerial Development Review.
- 3.5 Above all, you will remember that we are called to minister by a gracious, generous self-giving and loving God, as together we seek the Kingdom, share the faith, search for truth, serve our neighbour and follow Jesus in his suffering love for the salvation of all people.

Role Purpose – Generic and Specific

- 3.6 To minister to the people of and to lead public worship in the parishes of Cornhill with Carham and Branxton.
- 3.7 To be present in the life of local communities and to play a key part in activities and events in the three villages.
- 3.8 To support and to work closely with the priest in charge and in particular to agree on appropriate levels of delegation within the life of the three parishes.
- 3.9 To help existing church members deepen their commitment as disciples through informal education and training and to develop their gifts and skills within the church's mission and ministry to the local communities.
- 3.10 To continue to develop a rural fresh expression of church across the three parishes, that will (a) connect with the communities of this part of north Northumberland and (b) enable others to fulfil their potential for ministry and leadership.
- 3.11 To be responsible for your own spiritual refreshment and development as a Christian priest.

Key contacts and relationships

4.1 Generic

- a. The Bishop and Archdeacon of Lindisfarne;
- b. The Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council;
- c. The Deanery Chapter and Synod;

4.2 Specific

- a. The Vicar of Norham who is also priest in charge of Cornhill with Carham and Branxton
- b. Churchwardens and PCCs of the three parishes
- c. Parish Councils in all three parishes
- d. Village Hall Committees in Branxton and Cornhill
- e. Cornhill Community Action Group
- f. Owners of Cornhill village shop and cafe
- g. Manager of the Collingwood Arms Hotel
- h. Editors of 2 local newsletters

4.3 Supportive

- a. The Archdeacon of Lindisfarne
- b. The Area Dean. Lay Chair and colleagues in the Norham Deanery
- c. Work consultant or spiritual director.

5. Role Context

The three parishes of Cornhill, Carham and Branxton are in 'the Borders' and the boundary between Northumberland and Scotland runs along 2 of the 3 parish boundaries. There are naturally close links between communities on either side of the border, and the church context is influenced by the Scottish Presbyterian tradition. The Borders has a distinctive culture and unique outlook, but it is important not to overlook the fact that Scotland is a very different place and any ministry in this area needs to be sensitive to these cultural factors.

The three parishes are working together and with the priest in charge to develop effective mission and ministry in their localities:

- Cornhill Church is unlocked all the time; is used as an information point for local residents and visitors to the area; and is working with the Parish Council to explore the possibility of developing the churchyard as more of a community resource. A small group led by an active lay member of the church organises care for the churchyard and is developing plans for a sculpture – the 'Angler of the North' – that would put Cornhill 'on the map' and encourage visitors to the village and church, not least from the cross-border traffic that passes through Cornhill.
- Branxton Church has two lay-led services a month, one of which is more imaginative and creative and accessible to all ages. St. Paul's, Branxton is regularly visited by tourists and managing and developing this aspect of parish life is an important part of the joint activity of parish priest and PCC. The Battle of Flodden was fought in Branxton in 1513 and Flodden 500 was a major cross border event in September 2013. The local churches organised an extensive 500th anniversary commemoration of the battle. Branxton's parish church is now included in the new 'eco-museum' and further details can be found at www.flodden1513.com; a key task in the coming years will be to continue the legacy of the Flodden commemoration of 2013.
- Carham Church has had interpretation/information boards installed, reflecting the history of the Cuthbert connection, and is at an early stage of exploring the possibility of making the church more of a community building (given the lack of any other public building in the parish). There is scope to develop work with the fishing community at Carham.

Ideas are growing for the formation of a rural fresh expression of church appropriate for this particular rural setting. A small group has been meeting once a month to pray and ponder, and ideas are coalescing around the formation of a group of people (with worship at its heart, but including non-churchgoers) who would work with other agencies to overcome rural isolation and promote mental wellbeing. The next house for duty priest will work with the priest in charge and with the three PCCs to help continue this work, and will play a key supporting role to the leadership team, contributing to the project according to their gifts and skills. This house for duty post is a unique opportunity to be involved in both more traditional and emerging church and to work as a supportive colleague of both lay and ordained leaders. The fresh expression initiative would have been centred on the Carham Hall care home, but that closed in March. The strong community response to coronavirus might, instead, be something to build on.

The presentation to the living in the benefice of Cornhill with Carham and Branxton is currently suspended to allow a space for reflection on the future pastoral arrangements in this part of rural north Northumberland. There is no organic relationship (despite the fact that the Vicar of Norham is priest in charge) with the parish of Norham; this reflects the fact that, for various reasons, Norham Church is not the same kind of small, remote, rural church as the other three churches. The Deanery Development Group is keen to emphasise the importance of all clergy in the deanery developing and maintaining excellent mutual working relationships with each other and between their parishes.

Currently, only Branxton has a weekly Sunday service, and Cornhill/Carham have services on alternate Sundays. The parishes worship together on a fifth Sunday. Services are Common Worship except at Carham on a 2nd Sunday of the month, which is BCP Holy Communion (though this is likely to change in the near future). There are no weekday services. Church attendance is relatively small in numbers terms but the parish churches are greatly valued by the local communities. Lay persons, with good support and backup, take part in leading worship on a regular basis in each of the parishes.

6 Benefice summary as at time of compilation

Number of parishes	Three
Churches and listing	St Helen, Cornhill, Grade II listed St Cuthbert, Carham, Grade II listed St Paul, Branxton, Grade II listed
Parsonage	Stone built, four bedroomed house in Branxton Village
Other buildings	None
Churchwardens	Two in each parish
Ministers (including local ministry)	The Vicar of Norham is also Priest in Charge of the parish. There is a Local Ministry Development Team at Norham, and a Rural Churches Group that plans joint services and activities, and has acted in the past as a fledgling Pastoral Visiting Group in Cornhill, Carham and Branxton
Population	Branxton 130 Cornhill 450 Carham 300
Usual Sunday Attendance	Branxton 9 Cornhill 13 Carham 10
Parish Share (2020)	Branxton £5,162 paid in full Cornhill £5,699 paid in full Carham £ 5,128, paid in full
Resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and	No

Priests?	
Church tradition	Low church/traditional
Pastoral Reorganisation Proposals	None
Outreach/service to the wider community	Cornhill Church is used by the Parish Council and tourist agencies as an information point for local residents and tourists. Carham church is used by the parish council and as a polling station. Many church members are very active in the community.
Business element	None
Ecumenical links	These are limited but often operate through personal relationships, for example the Women's World Day of Prayer happens ecumenically. There is a small Methodist Church in a separate hamlet in Cornhill Parish, whose members have recently been invited to attend the Remembrance Day Service in Cornhill.

7 Review

The Archdeacon will review this role description with you when you have been in post for six months.