*Clergy Role Description*

**Diocese of Durham**

*Role description signed off by:* Archdeacon of Auckland Date: July 2024

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:* Priest-in-Charge (House for Duty)

*[NB: the expectation (which will be made clear in the*

*Statement of Particulars) is that House for Duty clergy in*

*the diocese will work for three full days or their*

*equivalent (including Sunday duties) each week on*

*parish duties]*

*Name of benefice:* St Columba Darlington

*Deanery:* Darlington

*Archdeaconry:* Auckland

*Initial point of contact on terms of service:* Diocesan Secretary

1. **Role Purpose**

**The vision of the Diocese is 'Blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all'. Within this the four core priorities are to:**

* **Energise Growth**
* **Engage with Children, Youth and Young People,**
* **Challenge Poverty and**
* **Care for God’s Creation.**

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

**The Diocese of Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.**

**General**

* To share with the Bishop in the cure of souls in this parish, in line with the Diocesan Vision, Priorities and Plan described above.
* To be Priest-in-Charge 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 Priest-in-Charge 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 building) so that the church is sustainable and effective in mission.
* To ensure that a high standard of worship, preaching and pastoral care is provided so that people are enabled to live as disciples of Christ.
* To nurture discipleship and develop the ministry of all God's people, through training, cooperation, delegation, support and example, so that they take more responsibility for the mission and ministry of the parishes; to seek to identify potential future leaders and ministers.
* To encourage all church members to participate in generous giving for the mutual support of one another across the diocese, and the wider Church of England.
* To collaborate within the deanery in mission and ministry and, through the Deanery Plan, participate in the shaping of ministry as resources and opportunities may require. (See further under “Role Context” below.)
* To be proactive and persistent in seeking the fullest degree of ecumenical cooperation wherever possible.

**Specific**

* To help the PCC and the congregation to develop their mission and ministry, showing leadership in this area while working collaboratively.
* To enable people to grow as disciples, nurturing new and established Christians and helping the church to become better at discipleship-development in and through its worship and activities.
* To encourage and enable lay ministry, recognising the vocation of all God’s people, identifying and developing the gifts that God has given his people.
* To develop in particular ministry among children, young people and families.
* To be creative and innovative in leading worship, including the exploration of all-age worship, whilst also being mindful of the needs of those who value existing, traditional forms of worship.
* To work with the congregation in serving the parish, including their ongoing loving response to the significant deprivation that is a part of this context.
* To actively seek partnerships and collaboration with local people and organisations in pursuing the mission of the church.

**2. Key Contacts**

* Churchwardens and members of the PCC.
* Clifton Centre Community Association and its part-time caretaker.
* The head-teacher and staff of Skerne Park Academy school.
* Clergy of the deanery, Area Dean of Darlington and Archdeacon of Auckland.
* Ecumenical colleagues.
* Local elected members and community leaders.

**3. Role Context**

Until 2013 St Columba’s had a full-time stipendiary minister. From 2019, they shared a minister with St John’s. However, sadly, St John’s closed in 2022, and we are now seeking a House for Duty minister for this parish.

These changes reflect some of the challenges facing many churches and indeed the Diocese currently: the traditional route by which most people have become adult church members has been baptism and nurture as children in the life of the church. However, we have largely seen decline in many parish church congregations, with very few younger adults and children engaged regularly in the life of the church. St Columba has not been immune from this (while St John’s ceased to be viable, unable to continued the financing and governance of a large church building from within reduced, aging congregation). The Parish Profile makes it clear that the congregation and lay leaders of St Columba understand this reality, and that are determined to enable the people of their parish to find faith today. They know this is a challenge, and they seek the enabling leadership of a new minister to help them to develop their mission. They are clear that they particularly want to see mission among and worship that includes children and young people re-established, and the new minster will need to want to be part of this and offer leadership within it. They do not need to be an expert in mission to children and youth, but they do need to *want* to be involved directly in developing this.

The new minister will need to attend to growth. Like many congregations, there needs to be growth in number – and growth younger. While it is true that there is a need to live out the love of God in practice as part of this church’s mission (see below), there is a pressing need for the committed body of Christians who want to do that in this pace to grow: the body of Christ can only keep on serving in this place in future generations if that body has members. This means there need to be new members who will have been enabled to find faith, grow in it, and come to serve in the community as part of their discipleship. Love in action and the fresh proclamation of the faith are both needed here, and the long-term possibility of the former depends on the development of the latter.

This is a congregation who care for one another and the parish around them, which is a context of considerable need. While this feels like a settled and safe community, there is real poverty here. Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which takes a wide range of factors into account, St Columba ranks 317 out of 12239 (see <https://cuf.org.uk/parish/130229>). This places it in the top 3% of parish nationally in terms of the combined indices of deprivation.

In this context, the location of the Church and Community Centre in a shared building is a great resource and opportunity. Already, with the range of community activities and groups taking place there – and the absence of other public buildings locally – this is a real focal centre for the parish, and known to be a place to which people can come for support and care in a number of ways and through a number of groups, seven days a week. This can be built on further. It is notable also that the cooperation between the Church and the Community Association is excellent – they are very happy partners.

So, while there are missional challenges in terms of the church’s loving response to human need and the very real need to share the good news effectively and enable people to come to faith, this is a genuinely exciting opportunity. There is just one church building for the congregation and minister to manage, and it is both absolutely fit for purpose and relatively easy and cost-effective to maintain and manage – not least because of the sharing of these costs with the Community Association. There is a very willing congregation, who really desire to serve and reach out to their parish, who want to work collaboratively with a new minster, and are ready for development and change as part of this. The parish population – 6,500 – is relatively small for an urban setting.

All this means that there is the opportunity for a minister to give really focussed energy to the development of discipleship, ministry and mission here, in a positive and supportive context, with far fewer administrative demands than in most other roles – even most House for Duty roles. In short, this is a really good House for Duty job!

**4. Person Specification:**

St Columba’s seeks a minister who will help us to embrace the opportunities for mission in our parish and energise growth. They will work with us in developing our faith, gifts and mission, helping us to fulfil our mission statement:

“Here to worship and serve God

by sharing the good news of His love

with the people of the community

by witness, teaching and fellowship.”

Specifically, our new Priest in Charge will:

* **work with us and alongside us** in our mission in this parish;
* give us **leadership and confidence** in developing that mission;
* be committed to that mission, leading by example in helping us **engage with our community**;
* be able to support and be part of our **work with children and young people**, and help with further development in these areas;
* be an **encourager**;
* help us in **nurturing the faith and discipleship** of those who are involved in the life of the church;
* be committed to and skilled in the **development of lay ministry, lay leadership**, and helping church members to identify and grow in the use of their gifts;
* be a **prayerful person**, and able to encourage others in prayer;
* be a person who **models love and care** for the people of the congregation and the parish.

*SC Darlington PiC RD*

*2025.08 v02*