



THE DIOCESE OF  
DURHAM

*Bensham & Teams St. Chad  
Parish Profile 2023*



# *The Parish of Bensham and Teams St Chad (Gateshead Deanery).*

## **Parish Profile**

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# Welcome to the Parish!

We are looking forward to welcoming and supporting a new priest who will work with us in aiming to fulfil the Diocesan priorities of ***Energising Growth, Caring for God's Creation, Engaging with Children, Youth, Young Adults*** and ***Challenging Poverty*** and to realise the aims and objectives of the Gateshead Deanery Plan.

We are hoping to find someone who can nurture and encourage our church in mission, who will help us to develop our existing links with local schools and help us to both renew and strengthen our commitment to the young, to families, indeed to people of all ages.

We are looking and praying for a mission priest who will help us to build on our existing ecumenical links and extend our work in this community in social action, community engagement, prayer and evangelism.

St Chad's is a church with a long standing commitment to serve its community and to be salt and light in a diverse and interesting community in the heart of Gateshead in a Deanery keen to collaborate, pray and work together to serve God and extend his Kingdom.

We look forward to meeting you and working together to make the love of Christ known to everyone in our parish



## I, Our Diocesan Vision - An introduction from Bishop Paul

At the end of 2019 we gathered representatives from every parish, including St Chad's and from the wider Gateshead Deanery, for **The Waymark Conference** - to pray, talk, share stories and reflect on how we might best respond to God's call to us to be his Church here in the Diocese of Durham. We reflected on our learning from our previous vision and priorities. We agreed to maintain our Vision

***'From the Tyne to the Tees and the Dales to the Sea,  
blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the  
transformation of us all'***



Through prayer, conversation and sharing our stories we resolved to maintain and sharpen our three priorities and (in response to the voice of our children and young people) we discerned that we should add a fourth, *Caring for God's Creation*.

The result is our missional strategy which we describe as **Renewing Pilgrimage** – an opportunity and invitation for each of our parishes to step out in faith together, responding practically to the call to **Challenge Poverty, Energise Growth, Care for God's Creation** and **Engage with Children, Youth and Young Adults**.

In 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 and Teams 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 Mission Priest for St Chad's we are looking for someone excited by and wanting to be part of this vision who can help nurture and grow the congregation in number, discipleship and reach. The **Waymark Prayer** sums up this hope -

*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,

+Paul

**Bishop of Durham**

# OUR VALUES

TO BE WILLING & FAITHFUL  
SERVANTS OF GOD  
IN BENSHAM AND THE TEAMS

THROUGH  
PRAYER, SERVICE, DEDICATION, COLLECTIVE EFFORT,  
SACRAMENT;  
CONTRITE & GIVING IN HEART & SOUL

And to  
PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION & WELCOME  
to EVERYONE WE ENCOUNTER



### 3, Our building and our missional vision

Of the five churches originally serving the area, St Chad's 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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, in recent years developing a purpose built contemporary community centre with gardens to provide a base for the St Chad's community project , providing local families with a professional range of care services as a joint venture by all the Churches in the Bensham and Teams area. (Having grown the project is now mainly housed off site in a separate building on Liddell Terrace, just a short walk away).

Liturgically and theologically influenced by the Oxford Movement, St Chad's have always followed the Anglican catholic tradition. The church was built for liturgy. An ambulatory gives the illusion of a cruciform design and was used for processions. A singing loft behind the high altar enabled choir members to sing the Sanctus unseen – the voice of angels praising God. The church also has two thuribles and a monstrance for occasional use.

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 Chad's 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.

We are looking for is 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.

### 4, Worship

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

Tuesday	4.00pm	Evening Prayer	St Chad's Church in the Lady Chapel
Wednesday	8.45am	Morning Prayer	St Aidan's School Chapel
	9.15am	Eucharist	St Aidan's School
Saturday	4.00pm	<i>Fun at Four</i>	<i>Monthly messy church at St Chads</i>
Sunday	10.30am	Eucharist	St Chad's Church

**Baptism's** are normally arranged to follow Sunday Morning Mass at 12 noon as required.

In addition to our weekly rhythm of worship, we celebrate All Souls Remembrance service on the Sunday following All Saints, as well as Christingle, Christmas Carol and Christmas services. We have also, in the past, provided some services for children and families with autism or learning difficulties.

## 5, 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 local schools, regularly providing collective worship, support to deliver RE lessons and hosting school visits. Our relationship with St Aidan's (our local C of E school) is of particular importance, giving us a valued point of connection to local families through the weekly Wednesday morning Eucharist and where our Priest is a **Governor**.

Once a month our Saturday afternoon *Fun at Four* event has provided a Godly-Play style experience for 4-11 year olds and their families to play, grow and learn together. Based on a bible story these are a "hands on" sessions involving painting, creative play, crafts and a shared tea. Whilst this is currently on hold, *Fun at Four* has been well received but needs renewing and relaunching in order to 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.

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 Mission, Discipleship & Ministry team based at Cuthbert House.

## 6, Mission & Social Action

Prior to the pandemic St Chad's supported a diverse range of social activities to 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 in order to be able to teach and provide culinary skills to the community. 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 which include a weekly **Lunch Club** (providing lunches for 60 people each week), a **Warm Space** and drop-in once a week as part of our vision to be a '**safe haven**' at the centre of the life of our community.

The community hall provides us with two meeting rooms and a hall for both church use and for rental to outside organisations. These are used on a regular basis by a Lunch Club, private functions and occasionally by the Local Authority.

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, bible studies 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 a quite transient community we see this as an important element of our shared mission, and one of the ways God continues to enrich and bless us.

## 7, Wider Relationships – Churches Together and the Deanery

St Chad's is part of the Bensham and Teams **Churches Together** group. Formed about 30 years ago, Churches Together provides the church and clergy with wider mutual support and has been a valuable context for forging close ecumenical links. The three churches continue to meet regularly hosting weekday services during the national Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, an annual Good Friday walk of witness and outdoor service (followed by Hot Cross buns), a joint Lent Group and planning Pilgrimage walks. We also work together to support the Bensham Community Food Co-op.

More widely, 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 this work 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 Chad's and St Helen's Low Fell have enjoyed a close and productive working relationship over the past 5 years which we look to continue – sustaining shared support, 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.



## 8, The Vicarage

The Vicarage (situated adjacent to the church) is a four bedroom detached brick built family house with a study, two adjoining reception rooms, kitchen, utility, bathroom and toilet upstairs and toilet downstairs.

The house stands in its own grounds with a double garage, an attractive landscaped garden and pathway leading out to the church. Dusk to dawn lighting on the church illuminates this path.

The Vicarage is a well maintained, modern property which we have recently updated and redecorated in an area that is being redeveloped. Several excellent primary schools, a swimming pool, library and Saltwell Park (an extensive historical park with tennis courts, bowling, play areas, café and pond) lie within easy walking distance.

## 9, The Role

We are praying for an incumbent willing and able to -

- 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** in matters of mutual interest.
- Attract the wider community to church activities, initiatives and worship
- Support our church to **grow** in number, reach, depth and service.
- Work with the **children** in our church **school** and support the teaching staff and school governors in their mission, ministry and in their positive connection with our (and their) church.
- Help us to **redevelop our mission and vision** for the Parish of Bensham and the Teams.

Who is –

- A good **team leader**, able to encourage, enable and consolidate the attributes of the PCC.
- 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 local **schools, community projects, and Care Homes** and ready to participate in the management of St Chad's Community Project as an active member or Chairperson
- With pastoral skills, able to engage with the community and congregation
- Able to work with the congregation to provide ministry to asylum seekers and refugees (mainly Iranian) seeking Christianity in the UK
- 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
- Committed to developing our relationship with local schools and serve as a School Governor at St Aidan's.

One of the key tasks for the next priest will be to work with our congregation and other partners to find creative ways to extend our capacity and reach, in line with local hopes and the Gateshead Deanery plan (which includes a commitment to collaboration and resource-sharing in order to extend mission).

## 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.

**Amenities** - 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 Aidan's 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

<b>General</b>	<p>St Chad's 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.</p>
<b>Mission</b>	<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 (working with external partners) they facilitate a weekly Community meal distribution. They have experience of running Bible classes, work with the local community food co-op and are involved in the Good Friday walk of witness and associated events.</p> <p>In recent years the church has felt a loss of identity without a vicar but recognises and values their work together as parishes with both St Helen's Low Fell and other ecumenical partners.</p> <p>St Chad's want to renew their community involvement through partnership with external agencies (Bensham and Saltwell Alive. Community allotments &amp; St Chad's 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>
<b>Finance</b>	<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. 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>
<b>Building</b>	<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 (14 baptisms, 8 funerals but no weddings in 2022) 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. With external support the Church has been successful in securing extensive external funding to enable work to be carried out on the roof and are in the process of developing a Heritage Lottery bid to bring this to completion.</p>

## Governance

*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.*

*Safeguarding is embedded and practiced by all, Safeguarding notice is visible with contact information etc. on. There is a 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.*

## Vacancy Audit Facilitator recommendations -

1. The next appointment for St Chad's should be the appointment of **Mission Priest** in order to ensure a clear and wide focus upon sustainable missional endeavours via creative projects with external stakeholders and schools. I recommend that this parish pursue this option with the support of their Area Dean and Archdeacon. It will be important that the direction of travel/parameters/expectations are agreed again before an appointment is made.
2. St Chads need support for Treasurer in the light of i. its financial challenges; ii. the limited resources within this (very diverse) congregation
3. Continue to rotate PCC chair annually.
4. Continue to disseminate financial, DAC and Safeguarding information in a way that the basics are understood by all.
5. Keep working to ensure that a 'clique' mentality continues to not exist.

## Appendix 3 – Financial overview

Parish of Benham and Teams (St Chad's) accounts snapshot (receipts and payments for the year 2022). Correct at 31/12/22. Please note this does not include the reserve *Christchurch* account (which is valued at the same date as £4,522.56) any company shares or charitable trust funds.

General Fund		YEAR TO DATE ACCOUNTS	2022
		Starting bank balance	43,211.78
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
Giving	Envelopes		3,384.00
Loose	Offerings		1,056.30
Occasional	Collections		929.25
Roof	Fund		341,312.42
Candles			22.25
Donations			262.40
Fees	Income		2,294.00
Trust	Funds		5,444.27
Coffee/Tea/Soup	Mornings		-
Fund	Raising		-
Room Hire			5,565.00
Other Grants	and Bequests		24,068.00
Phone Mast			12,601.53
Sundry	Income		8,504.67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>RECEIPTS</b>		<b>405,444.09</b>

### PAYMENTS

Altar		1,220.63
Clergy	Expenses	281.51
Telephone	Account	1,318.18
Insurance		7,950.59
Quota		13,002.00
Utilities		5,285.25
Bank	Charges	-
Donations		40.00
Stationery	& Printing	790.92
Organist		-
Organ		-
Repairs	Maint	8,415.02
		-
Mission		-
Clergy Fees	to Diocese	1,262.00
Safe Haven	Project	2,322.00
Roof	Project	351,719.21
West End	Project	-
Sundry	Expenses	6,083.50
Sundry	expenses deducted from income	-
	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>399,690.81</b>
	<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>5,753.28</b>
	<b>Ending Bank Balance</b>	<b>48,965.06</b>

## Appendix 4. 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](mailto: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](http://www.gatesheaddeanery.com/churches) or through our Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/GatesheadDeanery/](https://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