

Joint profile for the parishes of Cresswell & Lynemouth and Widdrington

SUMMARY

Welcome to our joint Parish profile. In this document we set out a description of our churches and our Parishes. We hope this will form a good basis for helping you to discern if we are the right churches for you.

Who are we?

We are two small Anglican churches based close to the Northeast coast in Northumberland. We are very sociable, welcoming churches, inclusive to all and value our close sense of community.

Where have we come from?

Cresswell & Lynemouth

We are a fusion of two churches whose style and ethos were similar. Over recent years, we have become more pioneering and seen a decrease in sacramental traditions.

Where do we need to go from here and what are our greatest challenges?

We are keen, and expect, to see further growth working together and our desire is to achieve more. We want to see a growth in numbers, as our current membership is predominantly over retirement age, as well as depth of personal discipleship. We want to achieve this while maintaining our strong sense of community and traditional sacramental values which are still highly regarded.

We have some established outreach ministries and share a vision of a multi-purpose building which could be used by our communities in a more central position. We envisage it being used for messy play, youth activities, mother and toddler groups etc. as a form of outreach which in turn could bring people into Church.

We are a committed congregation that responds well to encouragement, teaching and practical leadership. We don't have the answers to all the challenges we face, but we are willing to find them



with help from the right priest. We always offer a warm welcome to all our visitors; we often find people returning throughout the year to take part in our services, for example, holiday home and caravan owners from Cresswell.

Widdrington

Until now we have shared a priest with Ulgham Parish and retain many links with members of Ulgham congregation especially ministering to Widdrington Station which is part of Ulgham Parish where the majority of the population live.

We are....

- A collaborative group, with responsibilities for running the church shared out widely.
- Inclusive, helpful, friendly, welcoming, enthusiastic & encouraging.
- Outward-looking and prepared to be innovative and adaptive.
- Supportive of mission work and growing and developing greater connections with our local community.

We have....

- A healthy and growing degree of lay involvement during services e.g. lay worship leaders, sidespersons, intercessors, chalice ministrants and lesson readers.
- An open door to the community including School, Widdy Welcomes (a venue for regular drop-in coffee and other events), Food Bank, Money Advice Service.
- A Sunday School prior to Covid.
- An enthusiastic Local Ministry Development Team which works jointly with St John's to promote 'mission' in the community.

Our Challenges include....

- Adapting our worship to suit modern life styles.
- Attracting both children and parents.
- Encouraging those on the 'fringe' of church life to become more involved.
- Noticing and following up those who fall away.
- Spotting newcomers and engaging with them.
- Offering more opportunities for bible study and Christian development.
- Encouraging more people to share their time and talents within the church.
- Navigating the impact of Covid on the mission work amongst our community.
- Maintaining a good working relationship with the congregation of St John's, Ulgham, whilst forging new links with Cresswell & Lynemouth.

Representation by the Parishes on Morpeth Deanery Synod provides opportunities for us to both inform and influence discussion at a strategic level across the Deanery and to learn about current initiatives and issues that are relevant to us.

‘Growing Church, Bringing Hope’ has been embraced by the Parish and its congregation over the last three years and has opened up conversations involving congregational members about how, as a church community, we can reach out more meaningfully and effectively into our communities. The importance of finding ways to engage with children and young people is a key priority both at Deanery and Parish levels. The benefits of engagement with the William Leech Church Academy School and holiday club in Lynemouth, Easter-tide crafts activities for children at Ellington Village Hall, Christmas Crib Service at St. Bartholomew’s and Messy Church at Widdrington are strong examples. There is general consensus that continuing to build on these and the relationship with community partnerships that complement, promote and add value will be important.



Concurrent with the focus on ‘Growing Church, Bringing Hope’, the Diocese of Newcastle is encouraging Deaneries and Parishes to engage in discussions on the steps the Church of England is taking in relation to transformation in ministry and mission. Within this context, there is clear recognition that the Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted how disruption to established conventions is acting as a challenge and catalyst for change. A spirit of new possibilities in terms of how we might do things differently, including encouraging a culture of stronger collaboration and the potential for moving forward with new ideas and initiatives have become a focal point within Deanery and Parish discussions. The next section on ‘Church Ministry – Outreach Activities and Community Involvement’ highlights the progress the Parishes are making in this regard.

Ensuring there is a balance between the religious traditions of the Church of England alongside progression of new ideas and approaches is a feature of Deanery deliberations as we enter the next two-year period. At Parish level, conversations highlight a positive attitude towards mission and ministry in the community, sometimes referred to as ‘a church without walls’. Equally, congregational members value conventional religious worship and St. Bartholomew’s church building as a place of religious worship, communion and spirituality. Understanding that these two Christian values are not mutually exclusive and can sit side by side in complementary ways are at the heart of our approach and as we seek to appoint a new Priest in Charge.

Cresswell & Lynemouth

- **Books and Bakes.** This monthly event is held in St Bartholomew’s Parish Church, during the summer months.



- **Bacman’s Community Ltd.** We work with this established charity in Lynemouth to support those who need help in overcoming barriers and to enable people living in disadvantaged areas whatever their background, to enhance their skills, attitudes and experiences, to achieve their goals.

- **Cresswell Tiddlers.** This group was established in 1999 for pre-nursery children and their parents/carers to meet weekly in Cresswell Village Hall on a Tuesday morning at 10.30am. Our tiddler team aim to provide a safe environment in which babies and young children can learn, socialise and play together. Parents/carers, as first educators, are encouraged to take part in all activities with their children. Sessions take the format of welcome, free play, tidy-up time, songs, rhymes and prayer, snacks and home-time. A small contribution towards the hire of the hall and for refreshments is taken from parents. There are organised events throughout the year where funds for local charities are raised.



- **Church Magazine.** This is currently published electronically on a monthly basis with a hard copy being provided for members without electronic communication.

- **Coffee Mornings.** Prior to Covid-19, usually held in people’s homes around the Parish.

- **Christmas Carols.** At the Plough Inn, Ellington and in the streets of Lynemouth.

- **Café Church.** This meeting is held on the 3rd Sunday of each month at the Institute in Lynemouth, between 10am-12noon. Its aim is to reach out to those on the fringes of the church community and experience the love of Christ through creativity, fellowship and worship together. The meeting takes the following format – refreshments (coffee and bacon sandwiches), welcome, prayers, story, craft activity, questions and answer session, prayers and close. It is free and open to all ages. It is in the early stages of development.



- **Debt Advice.** Training in debt advice in conjunction with the Parishes of Widdrington and Ulgham with help from 'Together Newcastle' and 'Community Money Advice Centre'. This is based in Ulgham.
- **Lent Group.** Lent groups are held in Ellington and Widdrington leading up to Easter, studying various elements of prayer and current religious topics.
- **St Aidan's Award Scheme (Rudge Legacy).** A substantial monetary fund, overseen by the PCC of Cresswell and Lynemouth, for the benefit of the Lynemouth community to encourage outreach, mission and ministry to connect people and communities. Its aim is to enable projects to blossom and grow and bring hope and God's presence to the community.



Widdrington

Pre-Covid our church and congregation have been involved in establishing and developing a range of projects and activities designed to support our communities in faith. These include:

The Widdy Welcomes Project:

- Securing the Widdy Welcomes Venue that was once the Roman Catholic Church in Widdrington Station. This has provided a venue and opportunities for community engagement with non- church goers through the Pop-up Café, Mini Medics, local Food Bank, Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival activities and a woman's supper club. This venue is now run by a community leader (negotiated with the Roman Catholic Church) but we hope will still provide opportunities for faith-based input and support. The lead church was St. John's supported by Holy Trinity.



- A programme of Community activities linked to the church calendar :

Community Advent Calendar – during pandemic- co-ordinated with the school, PCC members and the local CO-OP.

Christmas Tree Festival within the church at Holy Trinity

Angel Festival

Lent & Advent Courses held in community venues open to all

Children's Christmas card making

Supporting Local Foodbanks

- Helping to collect donations for Widdrington Station Foodbank



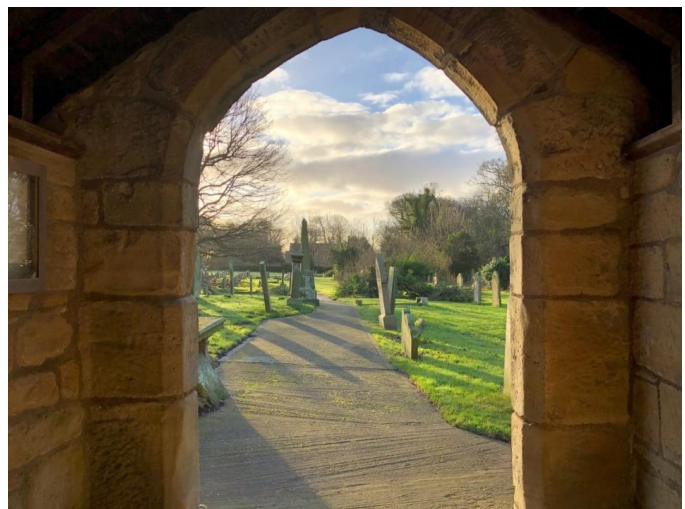
The Coastal Community Money Advice Service (CCMA)

- This programme is in its development phase, spans three parishes and has received funding for set up costs, from the Diocesan Partners in Community Action grant. It is being led by Holy Trinity's lay community engagement worker but is a joint project between Ulgham, Widdrington and Stobswood and Cresswell and Lynemouth parishes /PCCs. (Although Holy Trinity is the responsible /governing PCC for the project). Our community money advice service is affiliated to the national Christian based charity - Community Money Advice, has its own management committee and will operate from community bases within Widdrington Station and Lynemouth. Community members, groups and local services, are very supportive of the developing service, with volunteers attracted from outside our congregations. The service will hopefully open in late spring following financial conduct authorisation and volunteer training.

Using social media

- During the pandemic the congregation of Holy Trinity embraced, and supported services delivered via zoom, recorded and posted on You Tube. This helped to sustain our worship and fellowship during a difficult time. We have proven ourselves able to adapt.
- The church has an active Facebook page – events are also posted regularly on the villages secular Facebook and chat.

We have to acknowledge that COVID has had an impact on the momentum, continuity and progress of some of the above activity but there is a willingness to try and get things back on track.



THE NEW VICAR

We need someone who:

- Is motivated and can demonstrate experience and a track record of engaging with all sections of the community.
- Would get involved in our schools and youth activities to try to bring younger people into the Church, for example through family services. There has been limited involvement in Ellington Primary School over the past few years. The Church was once used by the school for seasonal services during Autumn, Christmas and Easter etc. There has been considerable efforts and outreach into the William Leech (Church of England) Academy in Lynemouth, with the establishment of holiday clubs and breakfast clubs for the local children. In Widdrington there is a C of E first school (see separate page for schools)
- Has energy and thrives on challenges to grow our Church, making it appealing to all ages without losing its traditions.
- Can engage with all members of the parish, especially those who cannot get to church.
- Can work among the 4 villages of Cresswell, Ellington, Lynemouth and Widdrington to unite the communities and bring them together as body of Christ.

THE VICARAGE



The vicarage is located in Widdrington Station, in a quiet part of the village, off the main road. It is within walking distance of the school and one and a half miles from Holy Trinity.

The vicarage is a detached family home with:-

- * 4 bedrooms and a box room
- * 2 reception rooms
- * a study
- * fitted kitchen
- * bathroom, with shower
- * downstairs cloakroom
- * storage space
- * double glazing
- * single garage
- * spacious garden, mainly set to lawn, with borders

The two parishes cover four villages: Cresswell, Ellington, Lynemouth and Widdrington

Cresswell is a village on the coast of Northumberland. It is about 5 miles to the north of Ashington and approximately 22 miles North of Newcastle Upon Tyne. It is situated on the southern tip of Druridge Bay, an area of outstanding natural beauty on the North Sea coast. It has a population of 206 (2011 Census). The village has one ice cream/sweets/gift shop which closes out of season. The village also has two caravan holiday home parks called Cresswell Towers and Golden Sands. Cresswell Towers takes its name from the old tower nearby. There is also a cafe called the “Drift Cafe”, a popular ‘watering hole’ for walkers, cyclists, locals and visitors.

Ellington is a village a mile inland from Cresswell which until the sale of their estate in 1924 was mostly owned by the Baker-Cresswell’s. It has a population of 2,778 (2011 Census). It has a school, a public house, a village hall, a miner’s institute, two village shops, a launderette, a hairdresser, a take-away and some small businesses. Up until 26th January 2005 it also had a deep coal mine, employing over 2000 people (mostly from outlying areas). Currently, Ellington is predominantly a sleeper village, people mostly commute to the nearby towns and as far as Newcastle/Gateshead. It is considered reasonably prosperous. In 2021 350 new houses, a football pitch and a new play area for the children have been completed. A further 50 houses are still to be built. Ellington has had a school since 1837; the current school was built in 1976, was extended and remodelled in 1986 and moved from being a three tier first school to a two-tier primary school. The school consists of six classrooms and has a nursery. In 2019 OFSTED rated the school as ‘Good’.

Lynemouth is a village a mile southeast of Ellington and two miles south of Cresswell. It is situated at the mouth of the River Lyne (pronounced Line). It has a population of 1,858 (2011 Census). It has a school, a day centre, a library, a doctors surgery/health centre, sheltered accommodation, an institute, a newsagent, a pharmacists/chemist, three take-aways and a hairdresser. It too had a deep coal mine. Lynemouth is classed as a disadvantaged area, its population is mostly older people or young families. There is a high percentage of unemployed people. There is however a strong feeling of community, in some cases spanning 3 or 4 generations. Lynemouth has a thriving Church of England Academy school, which incorporates a pre-school building catering for 3 – 11-year-old children.

Widdrington The parish of Holy Trinity, Widdrington, is situated on the Northumberland coast, approximately 20 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne, and 40 miles south of the Scottish border. Widdrington Village is a small village, set within farmland. Holy Trinity has an eclectic congregation, with most congregants driving to the church from as far away as Morpeth, Linton and Warkworth, as well as Ulgham, Widdrington Station, Ferneybeds and Stobswood.

Widdrington Station is the largest community nearby, and although it is currently within the parish of St. John's, Ulgham, it has strong historical links with Holy Trinity. This is due to the fact that many of the longer-established families of Widdrington Station were re-housed there when the houses at the former Widdrington Colliery, situated three quarters of a mile west of Widdrington Village, were demolished. Widdrington Station, alongside Lynemouth are growing villages, with new housing estates currently under construction.

A previous incumbent was given permission by the then Bishop to see the boundary between Holy Trinity

and St. John's as being fluid. Since more of the congregation who attend Holy Trinity live at Widdrington Station, it seems that we are better placed to minister to this community than St. John's. However, there has been considerable collaboration between the two parishes in recent years, eg. Messy Church, L.M.D.T., some joint services, attendance at each other's social and fund-raising activities, and the production of a "Welcome leaflet" for newcomers to the parishes. We see this fluidity as being essential going forward

Coal mining both drift and open cast, plus a local brickwork (now all ceased) have played a role in the village's socio- economic history and culture. The church, as well as other organisations within the community, has benefited from several significant grants from the coal companies, helping to secure some of the village's current infrastructure. To a degree this trend continues through the local wind farms, community funding initiatives.

There is still a considerable degree of farming around Widdrington Station and Widdrington Village, but it tends to be family-based and employs few others,. There is a busy pub in the village, and a W.I.Hall, which is well-used by the church for fairs and for other social and educational activities. The parish has a Mothers' Union, which collaborates with its counterparts in Ulgham, Longhirst, Hebron, Pegswood and Bothal. The First Widdrington Holy Trinity Guides are based in the village, and a United Reformed Church, is located about 200 m. from Holy Trinity, on the west side of the A1068.

An "Area Training and Activity Centre" (A.T.A.C.), located at the west end of the Mile Road, has worked to secure some funding to serve the needs of the community. About 30 people attend their weekly "Bacon Buttie" morning, with internet access and computer skills training on offer, line dancing, arts and crafts classes. In addition, to this facility there is also a Widdrington Station Community Centre and the centre/project Widdy Welcomes, the previous incumbent was key to this project start up.

In Widdrington Station there is a First School, which was affiliated to the Diocese in 2008. It has approximately 100 pupils. A three-tier system of education still operates in rural Northumberland and children normally progress to Middle School and High School in Amble.

There are numerous local amenities including, a doctor's surgery, with a part-time dentist and optician, several community centres, and a library which is open for limited periods in the week. There is also a small Co-op supermarket with Post Office, a local pub, pizzeria and chip shop, dance school, hairdressers, and general dealers in Ferneybeds and Widdrington Station.

The nearby towns of Amble, Ashington and Morpeth are all within a 7-mile radius of Widdrington Village and provide a wider range of eateries, social activities and retail outlets.



Cresswell & Lynemouth

We have a membership of 44 across the Parish. The average Sunday attendance is 20 of which 16 are communicants. We typically have 21 baptisms, no confirmations, 4 weddings and 16 funerals per annum. There is currently no monthly home communion. The membership consists mostly of people of retirement age, there are not a lot of members under the age of 60. There is a good mix of men and women.

The services are as follows:

Sunday 10.30am Holy Communion Worship is held at St Bartholomew's Church, Cresswell. The content is from the Common Worship and The New Modern Communion Service; there are printed booklets available for both of these. Hymns are sung using pre-recorded CDs, which are played through the church sound system.

Due to Covid-19 and the recent storm damage to St Bartholomew's Church, the Sunday morning Holy Communion services are being held at Ellington Village Hall every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. On the 1st Sunday of the month, there is a Service of the Word held at Ellington Village Hall, and on the 3rd Sunday, Café Church is held at Lynemouth Miners Institute.



Widdrington

Our Sunday morning service is at 9.30 a.m. Until 2020 this has always been a communion service but, in preparation for the vacancy, an alternative, lay led, Sunday morning prayer service has been introduced on alternate Sundays to reduce pressure on the local clergy. This has not been popular with many of the congregation but there is a growing acceptance that the shortage of clergy may make this necessary in the future.

Covid has had a considerable effect on numbers. Until recently we could expect good attendance at Christmas and harvest and the Christingle service would attract about 100 adults and children.

We currently have no children in the regular congregation so the monthly 'all age' service has been suspended.

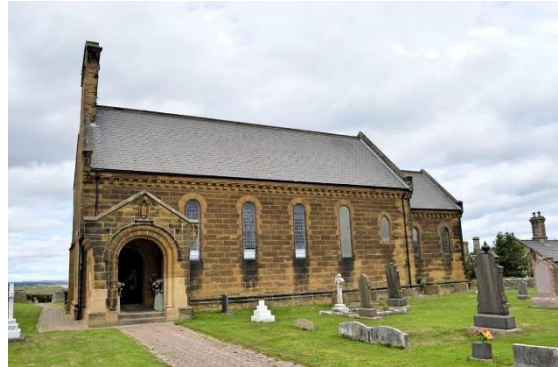
Again, pre-covid, we would share a Maundy Thursday service with St John's including a meal. This attracts about 30 people.

The church's tradition of worship is central to low Anglican. The celebrant wears alb/surplice and stole. The church has historically operated a generous policy towards baptism, and the marriage of people who have been previously divorced.

A representative from the church plays a prominent part in Churches Together and joint events and services are held throughout the year.

CHURCH HISTORY

St Bartholomew's Church, Cresswell is the only church in the Parish of Cresswell & Lynemouth and serves the villages of Cresswell, Ellington and Lynemouth. Built as an estate church by the Baker Cresswell family it was consecrated in 1836. The grade II listed church is solidly built of stone with rendered internal walls. It contains stained glass windows by Thomas Willement (1786-1871), Joseph Baguley (1834-1915) and Leonard Evetts (1909-1997) and a late nineteenth century organ made by Nicholson. The organ was overhauled in 1936 for the church centenary and completely rebuilt in 1986. There are two bells in the bellcote which were cast by J Taylor and Sons (Loughborough) in 1937; the bells were refurbished in 1986.



Holy Trinity, Widdrington is surrounded by fields on the south side of Widdrington Village. Parts of the church date back to the late 12th Century.

The church is equipped with a very effective sound system, with hearing loop. We have under-pew electric heating. We don't have mains water (yet). Water for refreshments after morning service is brought into church in large plastic containers. Although we have a fine organ, we are without an organist, so a rota of "D.J's" play hymns via a C.D. player linked into the sound system.



The W.I. Hall is a short walk away and is used for Social events.



Widdrington

Widdrington Grange View C of E First School

The School is located in Widdrington Station, which is in the Parish of St John's, Ulgham. A number of lay Volunteers assist at the monthly 'Messy Church' (about 30 children). Our previous Vicar was a member of the School's governing body.



There is currently no provision for teenagers in the parish or in Widdrington Station.



Cresswell & Lynemouth

The PCC of Cresswell and Lynemouth fully recognise the benefits of engagement with the two schools within its Parish and the importance of developing these relationships with a new incumbent in post.

The William Leech Church of England Primary School in Lynemouth, located right in the heart of the community, has been a focus for active involvement with children, staff and parents by our two previous Priests in Charge.



Ellington Primary School, which serves an expanding residential area, also provides scope for strengthening a church presence and building upon foundations made through activities such as 'Godly Play' sessions.

