

# LINK

The magazine for the Diocese of Newcastle

SUMMER 2025

**INSIDE:**

**PAGE 4** Petertide  
Ordinations 2025

**PAGES 6&7** A special visit  
to Botswana

**PAGES 12&13** Talking net zero  
with Marion Schooler

**PAGES 18&19** Learning to  
cook at church

## Queen Camilla visits Hexham Abbey

Full story and more  
pictures. Page 5



Picture: Nick Thornton



[www.newcastle.anglican.org](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org)



@ncldiocese



## Contents



**Page 16: Be Real – a fun-filled introduction to faith**

<b>Page 3</b>	A message from Bishop Helen-Ann
<b>Page 4</b>	Petertide Ordinations 2025
<b>Page 5</b>	Queen Camilla visits Hexham Abbey
<b>Pages 6-7</b>	A visit to our link diocese in Botswana
<b>Pages 8-9</b>	A Royal appointment for Maundy Money recipients
	Bishop opens school peace garden
<b>Pages 10-11</b>	Moral Injury conference
	Maggi Creese – Lead Officer to our Chaplaincy to Survivors
<b>Pages 12-13</b>	Talking net zero with Marion Schooler
	Eco-friendly heating at St John's Backworth
<b>Pages 14-15</b>	Coldstream Guards return to Berwick
	Newcastle Cathedral's first Anglican Communion Canon
	Chrim Eucharist and Small Sounds at the Cathedral
<b>Pages 16-17</b>	Beyond Youth's Be Real initiative
<b>Pages 18-19</b>	Holy Cross Fenham – a Lent success story
	Nourish Food School - Learning to cook in church
	Firefighters' Memorial Day
<b>Pages 20-21</b>	Future plans for St George's Jesmond
	Medieval art discovery at Hexham Abbey
<b>Pages 22-23</b>	Ramping up facilities at St John's Wallsend
<b>Page 24</b>	School celebrates 300th anniversary

## Link and eBulletin

Link magazine is published quarterly and is also available digitally at [newcastle.anglican.org/link](http://newcastle.anglican.org/link). If you would like to submit content for Link, please contact [communications@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:communications@newcastle.anglican.org).  
Receive news about the Diocese directly to your inbox by subscribing to our monthly eBulletin at [newcastle.anglican.org/ebulletin](http://newcastle.anglican.org/ebulletin)

## Contact us

[www.newcastle.anglican.org](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org)

**Email:** [info@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:info@newcastle.anglican.org)

**Facebook, Instagram & X:**

@ncldiocese

**Telephone:** 0191 270 4100

Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm

**By post:** Diocese of Newcastle, Church House,  
St. John's Terrace, North Shields, NE29 6HS

**Safeguarding:** If you have a safeguarding concern about an adult or child, please contact [safeguarding@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@newcastle.anglican.org) or telephone on **0191 270 4166**.

For more information visit:

[newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding](http://newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding)

**Bishop's Diary:** The latest diary can be found on our website [newcastle.anglican.org/bishops-diary](http://newcastle.anglican.org/bishops-diary)

**Prayer Diary:** The monthly prayer diary can be found at [newcastle.anglican.org/prayerdiary](http://newcastle.anglican.org/prayerdiary)



## About this magazine

### Feedback:

[communications@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:communications@newcastle.anglican.org)

**Sustainability:** This publication is printed by a carbon balanced printer, in partnership with the World Land Trust (WLT). The WLT offsets CO<sub>2</sub> impacts from fossil fuels, transport, and electricity by supporting the protection and regeneration of threatened habitats.

# A message from Bishop Helen-Ann

**T**ravel, light, and generosity are three words that characterise recent weeks in my life and ministry. Visits to our diocesan link partner dioceses of Botswana (where we experienced extraordinary generosity of heart and vision) and Møre in Norway (where the extended hours of daylight challenged sleep patterns whilst illuminating the snow on mountain tops) have, to borrow a phrase shared with me by our Cathedral Dean enabled the world to become smaller and God to become bigger.

The value of travel lies in experiencing other contexts, broadening horizons, and renewing perspectives on home and self. It is important to acknowledge that travel has an environmental impact, however the experience of electric ferries and cars whilst in Norway taught me that greener ways of moving around do exist and wherever possible it is important to use them.

The Botswana visit was a direct response to an invitation extended by Bishop Methla to preach at the ordination of the first women as deacons in his cathedral in Gaborone (*see photos on pages 6-7*). It was then with immense joy that together with our Dean Lee, Archdeacon Catherine and diocesan clergy Sarah Lunn and Chris Minchin our diocese took part in the joyful ordination of 14 women in a packed cathedral in early May. In my sermon (based on the reading from 1 Samuel) I said this:

"I wonder my sisters, what you thought when



you first felt called by God to ordination. Were you expecting it, or were you surprised? I can sort of understand Samuel's situation: the misheard call of God – it's not Eli on the line, it's actually God! Samuel doesn't quite get it, but when he does, everything changes. We can (well I can, anyway) relate to that. Life's journey is full of all sorts of stuff; sometimes the way ahead is clear, but most of the time it isn't. But that's the point. We don't know what lies ahead, but we do have a hope that is grounded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, everything that preceded it, and its light that illumines our path in the present."

Of course, this applies to the vocation of all the baptised and gives food for thought in this season after Pentecost in our continued season of Seeking. Where are we noticing God's Spirit at

work, even right now as you read this? Noticing, as Paula Gooder shared during last year's clergy conference in Hexham, is an act of the imagination.

If we don't notice, where might we imagine God could or would be? Imagination is also an act of courageous hope. Our global partnerships remind us that we are not alone, and we have much to rejoice in and bear witness to as we engage in joys and challenges faced daily and locally. I'm deeply grateful for our Links and look forward to all that lies ahead as we develop and sustain our relationships forged in a shared commitment to engaging in God's mission in our world.

**Bishop Helen-Ann**



Bishop Helen-Ann and Bishop Ingeborg attend an outdoor service in Frei to celebrate Ascension Day



Bishop Helen-Ann and Bishop Ingeborg sign a renewed partnership agreement in Grip Stave Church



# Petertide ordinations – meet the deacons



**Fran Bell**



**Emily Emmerson-Finch**



**Yvonne Gardner**

**C**ongratulations to our ordinands who became deacons and priests this Petertide. Ordinations took place on Saturday 28 June, Sunday 29 June and Tuesday 1 July at Newcastle Cathedral with six people being ordained as priests and five as deacons.

Our new priests, who began ordained ministry as deacons last year, will continue to serve their existing parishes as curates. They are James Bartle (Horton and Newsham, Blyth), Deborah Ehala, (St Bartholomew's, Newbiggin) Jon Grogan (St John's, Percy Main and St Peter's, Balkwell), Lee Kirkby (St Thomas', Newcastle), Claire Lewis (St Mary's, Monkseaton) and Francesca Walsh (St Peter's, Monkseaton).

Our new deacons will be serving their titles in parishes across our diocese. Please give them a warm welcome if you see them in your parish.

## Read about our new deacons:

### Fran Bell

Fran was Church Development Officer for the Diocese of Lincoln but after studying part-time at St Hild College, she is excited to start a new adventure in the North East, serving her curacy at St Michael and St Paul's in Alnwick.



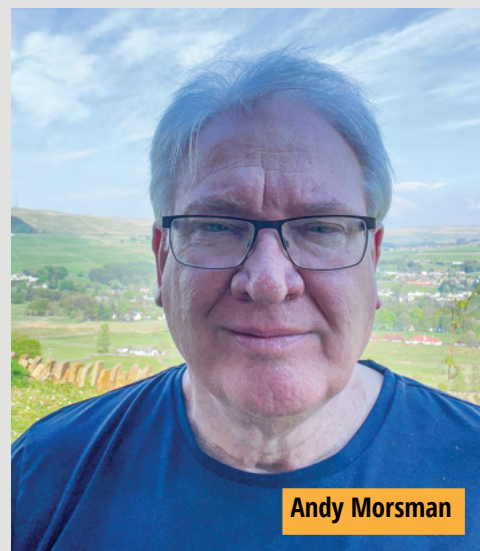
**Phil Keates**

### Emily Emmerson-Finch

Emily first felt called to ordination as a teenager during a visit to her school's career advisor but put off exploring this calling until her mid-20s when she felt God nudging her to consider discernment. After studying at Lindisfarne College, Emily will be serving her curacy at Holy Saviour, Tynemouth.

### Yvonne Gardner

After many years as a nurse, upon retirement, Yvonne felt God was not yet finished with her. This led to her taking on the role of volunteer hospital chaplain and it was here she felt unexpectedly called to ordination. Yvonne is excited to return to her home parish, serving as assistant curate at St John's, Killingworth.



**Andy Morsman**

### Phil Keates

After 20 years serving through lay ministry, Phil was becoming increasingly aware that he felt called to parish ministry. Studying at Lindisfarne College, he particularly enjoyed his placements where he was able to join people on their journey towards Jesus. Phil will serve his curacy at St Mary Magdalene, Prudhoe.

### Andy Morsman

Andy had enjoyed serving as a reader in recent years, but after many friends suggested that his calling might lie in ordained ministry, he undertook an extended period of discernment. This led him to study at Lindisfarne College. Andy will serve in the parish of Alston Moor.





Local Army and Air Cadets stood to attention as The Queen and the Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland walked by

# Royal Visit to Hexham Abbey

**H**er Majesty The Queen visited Hexham Abbey on Thursday, 5 June, where she met with local heroes — representatives from community groups and charities including NDAS, Chrystalis, Holly's Hope, WECAN, and Tynedale Hospice at Home.

Following the visit, Queen Camilla spoke with stallholders at Hexham Farmers' Market and delighted crowds during a walkabout, greeting members of the public and local schoolchildren.

*With thanks to Nick Thornton Photography for all images of the Royal visit.*



David Glover, Rector of Hexham Abbey, welcomed Queen Camilla to the Abbey



The Queen signed a certificate of attendance at the Abbey and was shown the certificate signed by His Majesty The King during his visit to the Abbey in 2018



Queen Camilla met representatives from local charities including WECAN, which provides support for children, young people and adults by taking part in local leisure activities and events based in the community





The two deans: Dean Lee of Newcastle and Dean Celestino of Botswana

# A visit to our link diocese of Botswana

In early May, a small group from our diocese was delighted to visit our link Diocese of Botswana — a partnership first established in 2003. The delegation included Bishop Helen-Ann; the Dean of Newcastle, the Very Revd Lee Batson; the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne, the Ven Catherine Sourbut Groves; Revd Chris Minchin; and Revd Canon Sarah Lunn.

During their visit, the group explored a variety of Anglican churches, projects and communities in and around Gaborone. Highlights included Botswana's first hospice, Holy Cross — established around thirty years ago — as well as St. Peter's Church and day care centre, and the St Michael and All Angels project.

The visit began on a celebratory note as the group attended the first ordination of women deacons in Botswana, where Bishop Helen-Ann was honoured to preach at the service.

Words and pictures from the recent visit to our link diocese of Møre in Norway will feature in the next edition of Link



Bishop Helen-Ann at the first ordination of women deacons in Botswana



Outside the Parliament of Botswana





The Three Dikgosi Monument – a bronze sculpture located in the Central Business District of Gaborone. The statues depict three tribal chiefs who played significant roles in Botswana's independence



The group visited a range of Anglican churches, projects and communities in and around Gaborone, including the St Michael and All Angels project



Bishop Helen-Ann with some of the first women deacons to be ordained



# Bishop's blessing for Peace Garden at grand opening



An idyllic space in natural surroundings has been created at a church school – for the benefit of pupils and the wider community.

Bishop Helen-Ann was delighted to open the Peace Garden at Tritlington Church of England First School near Morpeth. She blessed the amazing new space, which will support children's mental health and wellbeing as they connect with nature.

It is part of an exciting spiritual journey at the school, which is led by joint headteachers Jill O'Dell and Katherine Stephenson. The wider community has also played a part in supporting the project, including local churches.

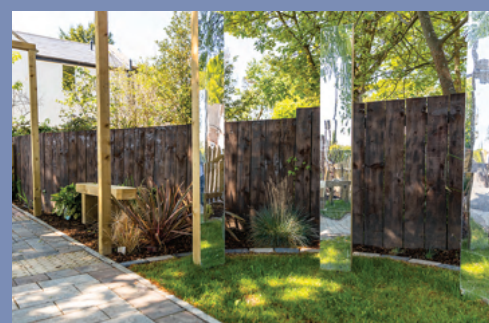
The Peace Garden is an enclosed area which features a textured pathway made with mosaic pattern designs and planters. It has



various forms of seating and archways to explore, as well as outdoor musical instruments to aid the sensory experience, exciting the senses of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing.

The garden will be made available for use by community groups and organisations.

The Revd Elaine Jones, priest in charge at the



Mitford, Hebron and Upper Wansbeck Group of Churches, said: "The Peace Garden offers a sacred and inspiring space where children and the whole school community can connect with God in a personal and meaningful way.

"It nurtures spiritual growth, supports worship, and enhances learning across the curriculum—inviting reflection, creativity, and a deeper sense of peace in every heart."



# Royal appointment for Maundy Money recipients



**The King greets Maundy Money recipients**

*Picture: Royal Maundy Service 2025 at Durham Cathedral*

There was a Royal appointment for Maundy Money recipients in Newcastle Diocese – in acknowledgement of their exceptional Christian service.

They attended Durham Cathedral on

Thursday, 17 April where they met His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen.

It was a joyous occasion, with a total of 152 people receiving the honour this

year. There were 76 men and 76 women, reflecting the King's age.

Profiles of some of the recipients from Newcastle Diocese are on the diocesan website: [www.newcastle.anglican.org/news](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/news).

The joint headteachers have expressed their appreciation to the wider community for supporting the project.

Jill O'Dell said: "The Peace Garden is a place where children and adults can sit quietly and enjoy the peace and calm of natural surroundings.

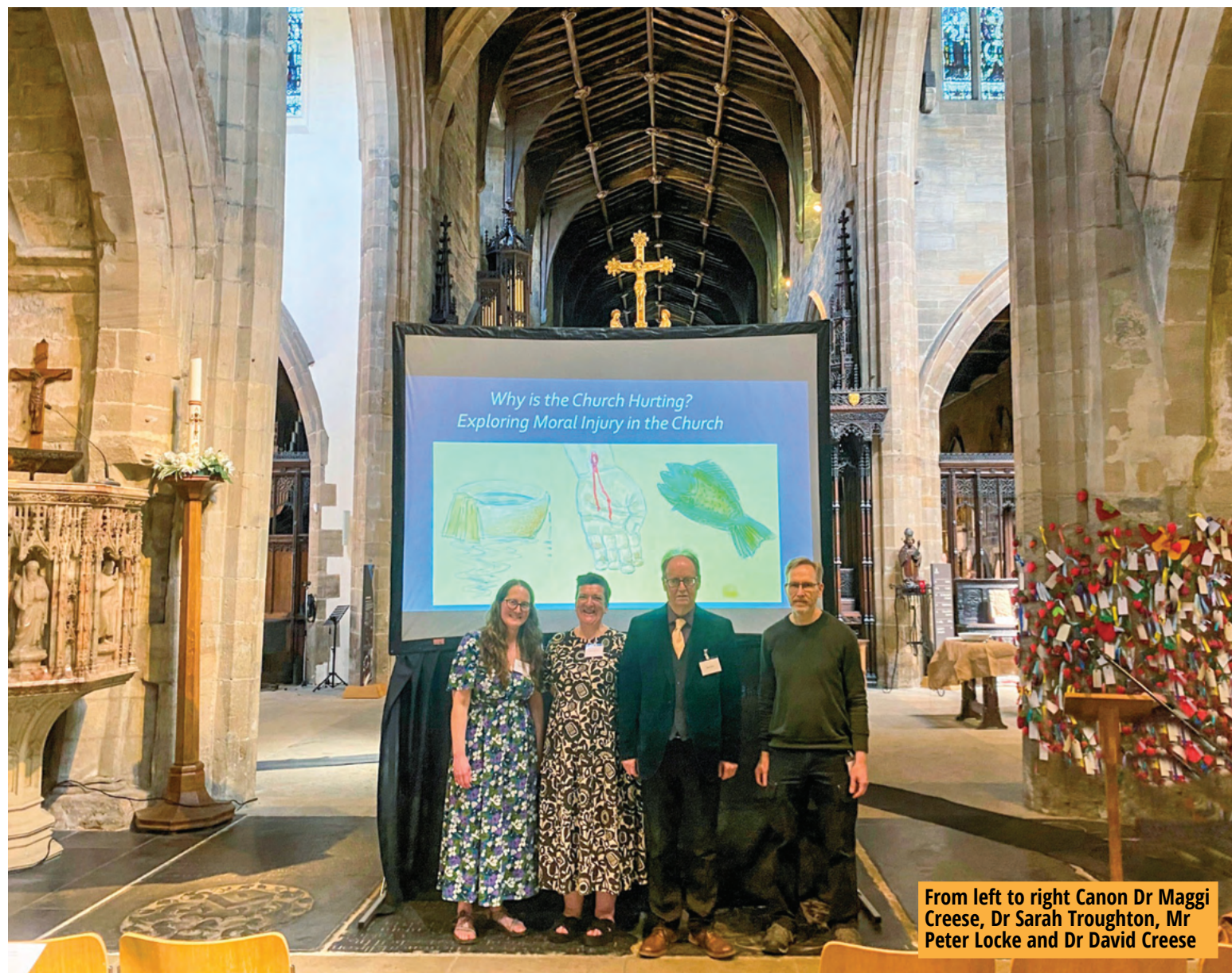
"We're really thankful to have been supported by our local community in bringing together the Peace Garden. It is such a wonderful place for our children and the whole school community to take time to enjoy quiet moments to relax, reflect and rejoice."

Katherine said: "This is a wonderful space for children to stop and reconnect with the world around us and allows space, time and opportunity for spiritual growth."





# Conference is the springboard as voices get louder on moral injury



**S**enior clergy and lay people from Newcastle Diocese and beyond attended a conference to raise awareness of moral injury.

The Diocese works proactively with survivors of church-based abuse, and in 2023, launched a dedicated Chaplaincy to Survivors.

The chaplaincy is also raising awareness of moral injury, which refers to the emotional or psychological distress caused by a sense of broken trust within a church setting. Even if they have not been directly abused themselves, some feel

betrayed by individuals in a position of trust and may have lost faith in the Church as an institution.

The conference took place at Newcastle Cathedral on 13 May and was attended by 65 people. The event highlighted the negative impact of moral injury and included the launch of resources to support people affected by it.

The one-day conference was organised by Maggi Creese, Lead Officer for the Chaplaincy to Survivors. Guest speakers included those with first-hand experience of betrayal in the Church,

as well as clergy, academics and authors, each offering a different perspective.

It followed an exhibition in April at Shieldfield Art Works in Newcastle, where prints, poetry and music created by survivors of church-based abuse were on display for over two weeks, significantly including Easter. The artists drew links between their own experiences and the story of Jesus as he approached his crucifixion.

Maggi said the conversations from both the conference and the exhibition, as well as the results of a survey completed by people who



# Maggi Creese – Lead Chaplain to Survivors

In a significant move to demonstrate the Diocese's commitment to supporting survivors of church-based abuse, Maggi Creese was appointed in November 2023 to lead the newly launched Chaplaincy to Survivors.

The role is the first of its kind, not only in the Diocese of Newcastle but across the Church of England.

Maggi's role has two main objectives. One is to be there for survivors and their loved ones – to listen and to provide all the support they need. The other is to work with our church communities, to help them understand survivors and make them feel safe within a church environment.

As part of this, she has developed a set of workshops for parishes, enabling them to become familiar with the *If I told you, what would you do?* resources.

It's early days for the chaplaincy. While Maggi already offers pastoral care and advocacy for survivors, it is anticipated that eventually she will lead a team of chaplains.

Originally from St Louis in Missouri, USA, Maggi moved to Canada in her twenties before spending time in the UK, initially as a post-graduate student and then permanently from 2011.

Having worked as a Latin teacher in high schools and universities, leading a Chaplaincy to Survivors marked quite a shift in career. But Maggi had experience of sup-



porting a close family member who had suffered church-related abuse.

She explained: "That is how I came to learn about trauma. I became interested in safeguarding in the Church and I came to develop a sense of calling towards ministry to survivors.

"I wanted to help others who were going through this. Since taking on this role, I have never felt such a sense of purpose and fulfilment."

On her role being the first of its kind, she

added: "It is unique. What we are doing is new. It is a significant step and one which underlines our commitment to supporting survivors and building strong church communities where everyone feels safe."

In 2024, Maggi was made a Non-Residential Honorary Canon of Newcastle Cathedral.

For more information about the Chaplaincy to Survivors and the *If I told you, what would you do?* resources, visit:

[www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding/chaplaincy-to-survivors/](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding/chaplaincy-to-survivors/)

*"I am proud to lead a diocese that has been so innovative and visionary when it comes to supporting victims and survivors of church-based abuse"*

- Bishop Helen-Ann

attended, will be used as key ingredients for further discussion.

She added: "Moral injury is about broken trust in relationships that should be trusting. Several people have said to me since the conference that they are carrying moral injury but did not

realise it.

"I have been really encouraged by the level of support from our diocese and further afield. Moving forward, it is very important that we support each other as we engage in these difficult but crucial conversations and find ways to challenge and change the institution and its practices, so as to promote healing throughout the Church.

"I hope and pray that this conference was the beginning of a much-needed conversation about the broken trust in our relationships and

what we need to do to repair it"

Bishop Helen-Ann said: "I am proud to lead a diocese that has been so innovative and visionary when it comes to supporting victims and survivors of church-based abuse.

"The conference was a day of listening and learning on the profound issue of moral injury, while the Jagged Edges exhibition bore witness to the story of the passion that leads us to Easter, documented in word, art and music. It opened wide the gates to what it is to listen as a Church in humility and in courage."



By the Revd Tim Mayfield,  
Parish Environment Champion  
Coordinator and Vicar of  
Earsdon and Backworth

# A warmer welcome to Backworth St John

**'G**ood morning, and a warm welcome to worship at St John's.' For long enough, there was a bit of a hollow ring to those words. When we came to heat St John's Church in Backworth in October 2023, we found that the gas boiler had conked out. The parts we needed to repair the boiler were obsolete, so we had a choice. We could either install a new gas boiler. Or do something different.

The Diocese of Newcastle has the aim of reaching net zero by 2030, so there seemed no point in installing a new boiler that would burn fossil fuels. In fact, the Church Council voted unanimously to go electric. We called in our architect, Christopher Blackburn, and he pointed us towards Dunphy Ecclesiastical Heating.

In February 2024, Dunphy quoted just under £35,000 (ex VAT) for a scheme using 14 radiators. Thanks to the generous legacy of the late Gladys Cross (given on the understanding that it would be used to protect the fabric of St John's) we knew we would be able to pay this in full.



Churchwarden Ali Griffiths with one of the new electric radiators

There was, however, a potential snag. We were told that St John's required a three-phase power system, which provides a higher electrical power than a more conventional, single phase system.

Dunphy estimated that this might cost any-

thing between £3,000 and £75,000. In the end, Northern Powergrid first quoted £6,264.45 to do this work. It was – later – a very happy day when Northern Powergrid rang again to say that there already was three-phase power to the building. Having shivered through two long winters, we could crack on as soon as Dunphy were available.

On Monday 10 February, work commenced. In a case of 'feast or famine', the church was comically hot on Sunday 2 March. But then we had our tutorial in how to use the new system. And on Ash Wednesday, 5 March, the new system was working perfectly. We were finally able – after a very long gap – to offer a welcome to St John's that was warm in every sense. Backworth now has one of the Diocese of Newcastle's first net zero churches. We are heated electrically, using Green Tarriff Octopus Energy.

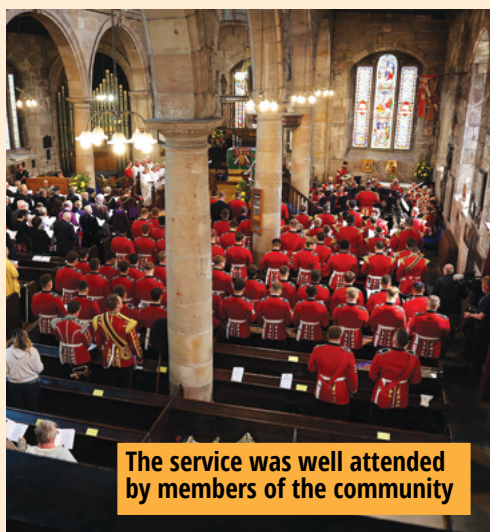
Another very happy spin-off of this new development is that we are once again able to welcome the local primary school to worship at St John's and the children joined us for an Easter service.

## 'A real buzz' as Coldstream Guards make historic return to Berwick

Berwick Parish Church was packed for a special service to celebrate 375 years since the Coldstream Guards were founded in the town.

Around 300 people attended the Service of Thanksgiving. The Revd Lee Taylor, vicar of Berwick said: "It was a wonderful day for the church and the town. The Coldstream Guards were delighted with the welcome they received and there was a real buzz about the place."

The day kick-started celebrations for the church's own 375th anniversary, which will take place in 2027.



The service was well attended by members of the community



The Revd Lee Taylor welcomed the Coldstream Guards as they arrived for the service

Pictures: Cameron Roberston



## Net zero carbon – Marion appointed to lead new team



Marion Schooler

Marion Schooler has been appointed as Net Zero Carbon Programme Manager for Newcastle Diocese.

It's an exciting appointment that underlines our commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Following her arrival in the spring, Marion will head up what will become a new carbon net zero team, with further appointments set to follow.

Parish Environment Champion Coordinator, the Revd Tim Mayfield, said: "We are delighted that Marion has accepted the post of Net Zero Carbon Programme Manager for the Diocese of Newcastle.

"She brings a wealth of relevant experience, and is already plumbed into significant networks across the North East. On behalf of the Environmental Working Group, and the network of Parish Environment Champions, I welcome Marion into post. We're cheering you on!"

The part-time role will complement Marion's

voluntary work with the environmental sustainable charity Groundwork North East and Cumbria, of which she is vice-chair.

She has valuable recent experience with Northumberland National Park, working to make tourism, farming and rural communities more sustainable. Elsewhere, Marion was part of a regeneration project in South East Northumberland, where she played a key role in community and stakeholder engagement.

"I am delighted to have joined the Diocese and have received a lovely welcome," said Marion. "It's early days because we haven't appointed the team yet, but it's an exciting time as we focus on supporting parishes and the Diocese as a whole on environmental priorities."

Marion will play a key role in the appointment of the team, which will assist parishes by offering advice and expertise in areas such as energy efficiency and accessing fundraising for environmental schemes.

"Each parish is unique," she explained. "There's a wonderful mix of old, historic build-

ings and new ones. They are all at different stages in their eco journeys but we can help them to identify key priorities, relating to energy use, heating, lighting and travel."

Churchyard management and conservation are also key priorities, as well as encouraging young people to get involved with environmental matters.

In addition, Marion and her new team will work closely with external organisations who are key stakeholders and have a vital role to play.

She added: "There are lots of really positive ideas about how we can take things forward collectively and learn from what is going on within our church communities, locally and tapping into wider networks.

"It's much bigger than net zero. It is how we live sustainably. It's about wildlife, conservation, reducing travel costs, using local suppliers and reducing food miles. I'm looking forward to working with our parishes on these matters and more."



# Welcoming our first Anglican Communion Canon

The Revd Canon Dr Kelly Brown Douglas has been installed as Newcastle Cathedral's first Anglican Communion Canon.

Bishop Helen-Ann is delighted to welcome Dr Douglas, who met people around the diocese in the days leading up to her installation service in March.

Dr Douglas joined morning prayer and enjoyed breakfast and Eucharist with members of Newcastle Cathedral's College of Canons. She then travelled by Metro to Byker to learn about the Lighthouse Project, where work is ongoing at St Michael's Church to create a state-of-the-art youth and community hub.



The Revd Canon Dr Kelly Brown Douglas



Exploring the interactive features at St Aidan's, Bamburgh

Our new Anglican Communion Canon

went on to visit both St Aidan's, Bamburgh, and Hexham Abbey, before finally

being installed by Bishop Helen-Ann at Newcastle Cathedral.



Visit to the Lighthouse Project, Byker



# Toddler singing group offers first step on a musical journey



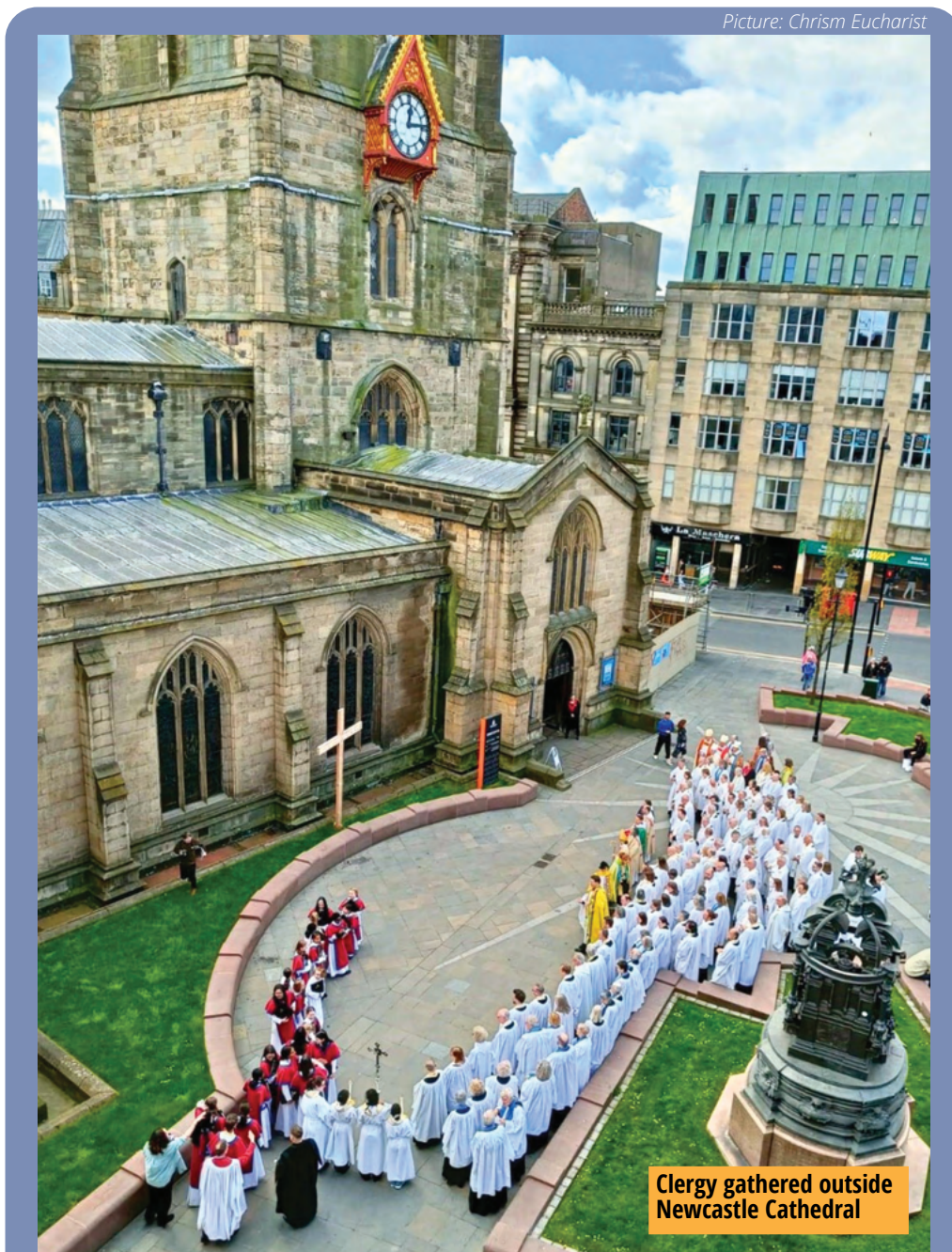
**A** free music-making group at Newcastle Cathedral for children aged 0 to 5 and their grown-ups has been running for more than 9 months, with the eventual aim of introducing children to Cathedral music.

Small Sounds, which takes place every Thursday morning during term time from 10:15 to 10:45am, has been funded by the national charity the Cathedral Music Trust. It forms the first step in Newcastle Cathedral's free musical development pathway for children, alongside two after-school programmes: Mini ChoriStarters for Reception and Year 1 pupils on Tuesdays, and ChoriStarters for Year 2 pupils on Mondays.

Alison, who attends Small Sounds with her 8-month-old son Alec, said, "Singing with my little boy in such a beautiful and welcoming environment is such a joy."

"It's been amazing to see how curious and explorative Alec is at the group as he meets other little ones and joins in with exploring the world through making different sounds and joining in with musical play."

The sessions are led by Cathedral staff members, who have received expert training from the Cathedral Music Trust, enhancing their ability to deliver enriching early years experiences. Alessia Lotto, Chorister Supervisor and Small



## A time of renewal

On Thursday, 17 April, clergy gathered together at Newcastle Cathedral for the Chrism Eucharist led by Bishop Helen-Ann. The special mass, traditionally

celebrated on Maundy Thursday, combines the blessing of holy oils with the renewal of ordination vows for clergy and lay ministers.

Sounds Facilitator said: "It's amazing to watch the little ones light up through music and see parents grow in confidence week by week. Helping families connect through rhythm, movement and song has been so special."

Research shows that making music together helps children build lasting musical skills while boosting parents' confidence and wellbeing. Cathy Dew, Director of Programmes for the

Cathedral Music Trust, said, "Making music from a very young age helps children meet developmental milestones and sets them on a lifelong musical journey, giving them the skills they need to join a choir. We want to help more children discover the joy of singing!"

**To learn more about the Cathedral's opportunities for musical development, please visit [newcastlecathedral.org.uk/music](http://newcastlecathedral.org.uk/music).**



**Imagine a safe space where young people can learn new skills such as cookery and drama, meet new friends, and explore faith.**

Such a place has been created in South East Northumberland, following the launch of Beyond Youth back in 2023 to work with children, young people and their families in Ashington; Seaton Hirst; Woodhorn and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea; Cresswell and Lynemouth.

Late last year, Beyond Youth introduced Be Real, an initiative where children and teenagers can meet during inspirational monthly sessions.

Dave Johnson, Youth and Children's Coordinator for Beyond Youth said: "We are creating safe spaces to have fun, make friends, try new things and explore faith together.

"We established Be Real because the young people asked us to do something like this. We spent an afternoon sharing food and ideas - exploring what it should look like, and it evolved from there."

Be Real events, which take place at North Seaton Community Centre, include cooking, crafts and games, with the first half of each session very similar to that of a youth club.

Guest speakers also have a part to play. At the session in May, the Mortal Fools Drama Club put on some inspirational workshops which explored the teenage brain and how it works.

The second half of each session is an opportunity to explore faith, but as Dave explains, this is a

# Be Real – a fun-filled introduction to faith



relaxed discussion with no expectations.

"If they wish, they can just do the first part," said Dave. "There is no obligation to take part in the second half of these sessions.

"We make it clear that we're exploring issues that are important to Christians - but that all opinions and viewpoints on these issues are welcome. We want people to have the chance to Be Real with themselves, each other, and with God.

"The most important thing is that people feel safe to share their viewpoint and explore others' viewpoints.

"It makes for some fascinating conversations. We talk about prayer, we talk about whether there is a spirit, the afterlife and other engaging topics."

For some of the young people, Be Real offers a chance to further explore their own Christian faith, with a small number of the regulars having been confirmed in the last year and using this space as part of their discipleship.



Be Real runs every month except August and is for Year 8 to Year 13 (ages 12 to 17). It is not advertised as a 'drop in' - so that those who attend are already in some way connected to Beyond Youth and that everyone in the room knows at least someone there.

**To find out more, follow the Beyond Youth page on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BeyondYouthNE> or contact [beyondyouth@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:beyondyouth@newcastle.anglican.org)**





# Lent challenge supports good causes at home and abroad

Generous churchgoers gave up unwanted items from their houses during Lent, which will now be donated to charitable causes.

Holy Cross Church in Fenham set the Lenten challenge to its congregation, asking them to remove one item from their house each day during the 40 days of Lent.

It led to more than 1,000 items collected in bags. They included unused clothes and shoes, ornaments, pictures, in-date and non-perishable food items, unopened toiletries and more being donated.

All food items were taken to Newcastle's West End Food Bank, of which Bishop Helen-Ann is a patron, while clothing went to those who need them in war-torn Ukraine.

Other items went to Tynedale Hospice at Home, which provides vital care services and support for people with life-limiting illnesses and their families.

"We've had lots of positive feedback," said Karen Derham, chair of the Worship and Nurture Committee at Holy Cross.

"It's been a really positive experience for Holy Cross. People have embraced clearing out items they no longer need, while generously donating to such worthy causes.

"It is putting Christianity into action and is also environmentally minded as we find new homes and uses for these items."

Karen is hopeful that the initiative might inspire other congregations who are looking for a Lent challenge next year.

"We didn't come up with this idea," she stressed. "We came across it online, but we think it's a great idea and it has certainly worked for us. We'd encourage other churches to give it a go if they like the sound of it."





**A** tasty initiative is using food as a way of reaching out to people and supporting them – just as Jesus loved to do.

Holy Saviour at Sugley in Newcastle has enlisted the services of Nourish Food School – a community interest company, which provides mobile cookery classes. It follows the success of the project for two years previously at Church of the Holy Spirit, Denton.

Eight-week courses are available for anyone in the community who is struggling to provide wholesome, nutritious meals for themselves and their families.

The scheme is being co-ordinated by Children and Families Missioner Jac Atkinson, who has witnessed some life-enhancing results.

“In today’s fast-paced world, there are a multitude of reasons why people might be struggling with food,” said Jac. “Time may be a factor and so might be money. It could also be a lack of awareness of how to make good nutritious food when there are so many tempting alternatives in the supermarket.

“Whatever anyone’s reasons are, they are welcome at these classes which are free. How much did Jesus love sharing food and meeting

# A nourishing project to get the community cooking



The Nourish Food School class at Holy Saviour, Sugley

people?”

The classes teach the very basics of cooking – from scrambling an egg to making more advanced dishes. They also provide knowledge about food, where it comes from and how to get the best out of it.

Those attending watch fascinating live demonstrations of recipes – all packed with healthy ingredients – before having a go themselves using portable hobs. All equipment is provided.

“You can learn a recipe for each day of the week,” said Jac, “and the skills you acquire enable you to learn more. It’s also about spiritual food. These classes are very social and people can open up to each other about other life matters, if they wish to do so.”

Kirsty Knox is a Royal Navy veteran who served for 34 years. Despite her highly disciplined career, she attends the classes because cooking was not something she did in the military.

“All our cooking was done for us,” said Kirsty. “I came to the class with no confidence that I could cook for people. Now I’ve learned such a



David Hardman leads a demonstration

lot and having moved here, I’m chatting to the ladies and learning about the area too.”

Nourish Food School helps a wide variety of people with cooking, including asylum seekers, those who have suffered brain injuries, teenagers from challenging backgrounds, and people



Kirsty Knox





## Remembering our brave firefighters

An important day to remember firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty has been marked in Newcastle Diocese.

On Sunday, 4th May, poignant services and acts of remembrance took place at St Mary's, Monkseaton and St Hilda's, Marden

with Preston Grange, where clergy and congregation members stood alongside local fire crews and retired firefighters to remember those who have died.

A coffee morning also took place, which raised £171 in aid of the Fire Fighters Charity, which supports fire crews and their

families.

Ahead of the day, Fiona Usher, Principal Chaplain to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, encouraged churches to observe a minute of silence at local fire stations and to offer thanks for the dedicated work of fire crews.

with learning difficulties.

David Hardman, food skills trainer for Nourish Food School, said: "We have been very happy to work with these local churches in support of people in their communities."

Food for the scheme at Holy Saviour is provided by FairShare North East, the surplus food charity, which works to eradicate waste and reduce food poverty.

For more information visit:  
[www.nourishfoodschool.co.uk/](http://www.nourishfoodschool.co.uk/) and  
[www.fareshare-northeast.org.uk/](http://www.fareshare-northeast.org.uk/)





# Exciting plans for new community hub at St George's Jesmond

**A** historic church is embarking on an ambitious project, which will ensure it serves the community for generations to come.

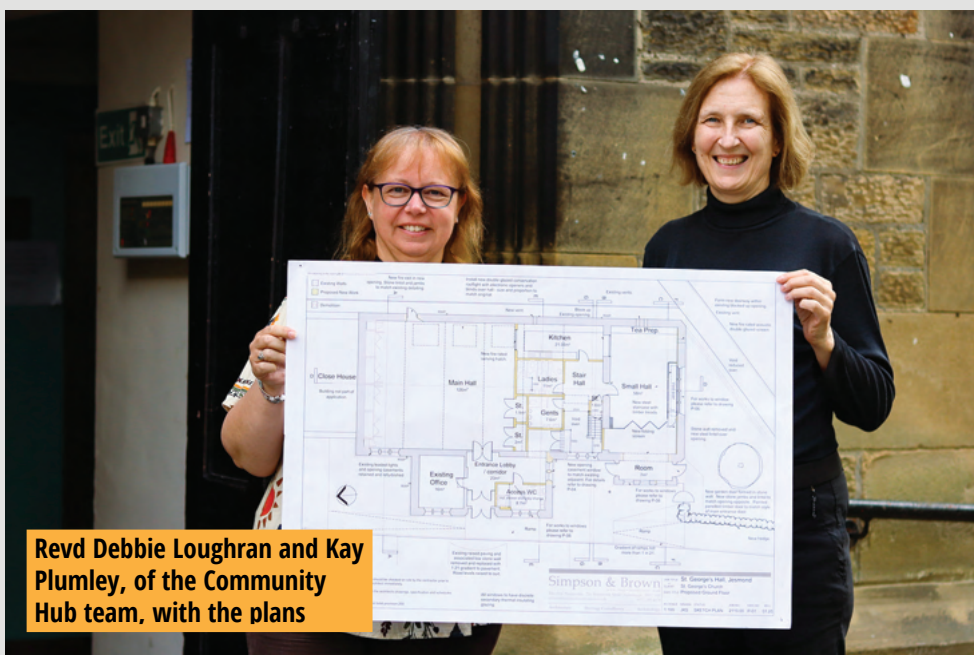
The Grade I listed St George's Church in Jesmond dates back to 1888, with its distinctive tower visible for miles around. The neighbouring parish hall was built just a few years later and is Grade II listed.

Now St George's has unveiled a two-phase scheme, which will extend the church from the north side, before the existing parish hall is extensively remodelled internally at a total cost of around £1,500,000.

Planning permission has already been secured for The St George's Community Hub project, while more than £320,000 of the capital needed has already been raised thanks to generous donations, dedicated local fundraising and grants from various sources.

"This is a very exciting project for our church and the wider community," said the Revd Debbie Loughran, vicar at St George's.

"It has been in the pipeline for over a decade



**Revd Debbie Loughran and Kay Plumley, of the Community Hub team, with the plans**

now and I am so grateful to everyone involved for their hard work in getting us to this stage."

The subtly designed church extension (phase one) will house much needed toilets for use during services and concerts inside St George's, as well as a tea bar where refreshments will be served. It will also accommodate the youth group and offer a safe space for young children to play and learn during worship.

The extension, which will look out onto the picturesque memorial garden at St George's, will also include a gentle space for people to discuss bereavement care, weddings and baptisms, as well as hosting PCC meetings.

Phase two of the scheme will see the parish hall, which already hosts a multitude of community groups, undergo an extensive remodelling. The kitchen will be moved to a more central location, while significant upgrades will give access to wi-fi and plasma screen televisions. Space for students to study will be created, while discussions are being had about the possibility of a new

social enterprise café.

With over half of the required funding in place for phase one, St George's is hoping to secure further capital this calendar year, with a view to work on phase one starting next spring.

Last year's Christmas Appeal raised £17,000 towards the total. Big fundraising events will take place this summer, including a ceilidh, Sax on the Tyne and Miley Cyrus tribute nights. Other contributions have included £15,000 from The Friends of St George's group.

Debbie thanked her predecessors, the Revd Brian Hurst, and the Rt Revd Nick Chamberlain, for their contributions. It was Nick who envisioned the project.

Gratitude was also expressed to project manager Derek Nicholson and all involved with the Community Hub Team, along with all who have given generously of time, talents and finances to see dreams realised.



A wooden panel, recently found in Hexham Abbey after being lost for over 30 years, may be the missing part in a series of medieval panel paintings, according to art conservators.

The painting is believed to be part of the Abbey's historic Dance of Death sequence, a series of four wooden panel paintings that date back to around 1500, which feature powerful figures, including a cardinal, a king, an emperor and the Pope.

For centuries, scholars and art historians had speculated about the existence of a fifth panel, thought to depict the 'introducer or caller' presenting the sequence.

And in 2017, a panel in poor condition, with its surface heavily discoloured, was discovered in the Abbey's triforium – an area of the historic building rarely visited due to its inaccessibility.

The panel had not previously been seen since the 1990s and due to its poor condition, the Hexham Abbey Conservation Group enlisted the expertise of Dr Charis Theodorakopoulos, a heritage scientist at Northumbria University.

Now, following extensive research, Dr Theodorakopoulos has said that the panel may belong to the Dance of Death series.

He explained: "The discovery of this panel that may belong to the Dance of Death series of paintings is a monumental achievement for Hexham Abbey and for art conservation. This is not only a rediscovery of an important piece of art history, but it also demonstrates the potential of modern technology in unlocking the secrets of our cultural heritage."

Dr Theodorakopoulos used a specialist camera and research equipment to carry out a non-invasive examination of the panel and has been able to identify the medieval image hidden beneath decades of grime.

## Lost and found panel could be part of medieval painting series



Picture: Molly Cady

It shows a figure in a Tudor dress, thought to be the 'caller' from the Dance of Death series. The figure is identical to that in a sketch by antiquarian John Carter, dating back to the 1790s.

Dr Tom Kelsey of Hexham Abbey said: "The technical skills that Dr Theodorakopoulos and Northumbria University brought to our investigations cannot be underestimated. Melding together the spectral analysis and the history of the Abbey's mediaeval art collection has proved so helpful – and will be of enduring interest to many academics and interested observers."

The panel paintings, unique in British church art, offer a striking and poignant depiction of the medieval perspective on life and death.

They are considered some of the most important surviving examples of medieval English panel painting, a genre that was particularly vulnerable to destruction during periods of religious reform, such as the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.





# New facilities help church to serve



Care for a Cuppa invites people into the church for hot drinks and a chat



An ongoing project to upgrade facilities at a mid-century church is improving its ability to support the wider community.

St John's at Wallsend has a new access ramp, toilets that are both accessible and inclusive, and baby change facilities.

The latest phase of the scheme was completed in January, when the Venerable Rachel Wood, Archdeacon of Northumberland, led a service and blessed the newly enhanced entrance to the church.

Churchwarden Heather Smith said: "It's great that our church is now fully accessible. These new facilities have already made life easier for people who come to our church. It was wonderful to welcome Archdeacon Rachel on what was a memorable day, as we celebrated our vision for the future."



# its community



St John's has raised its own money for the project. The church is also grateful for grants received from The Barbour Foundation, Partners In Community Action (PICA), the Victor Mann Trust, RW Mann Trust, and The Northumbria Historic Churches Trust.

The next stage of the project will lead to a new servery area at the back of the church - to replace the building's outdated kitchen. Plans are being drawn up and potential avenues of funding are being explored.

At present, St John's offers a regular Care for a Cuppa event, which is open to the community and invites people inside for hot drinks and light refreshments.

But the church wants to be able to provide a warm hub - to offer meals and other services for people who need support. A new, fully equipped servery would enable such initiatives to take place.

"Our existing kitchen is very old and is in



the wrong location," said Heather. "We're very limited as to what we can do, but a new servery would enable us to cook on site because we want to provide meals for those who need them.

"It's not just church - it's what church can do for our community. Perhaps we can complement Care for a Cuppa with some sort of lunchtime event where food can be prepared on site."

Other outreach work at St John's includes members visiting a local care home to enable worship.

The project is part of a long-term vision. The first part of this was realised almost a decade ago, when the pews were taken out to create a social space inside the church.

"We are a very active church," said Heather. "We are reaching out into the community and have done a leaflet drop as well as trying to reach people via word of mouth. As a church we want people to know we are here."



**C**hildren have been learning about the rich history of their school, which is celebrating its 300th anniversary this year.

Pupils, parents and staff of Holy Trinity Church of England First School in Berwick joined together for a special service in May.

Led by the Revd Lee Taylor at Berwick Parish Church, the service was also attended by the Bishop of Berwick, the Right Revd Mark Wroe and the wider community, with former pupils and teachers turning out to celebrate and share memories.

"The service was a wonderful occasion," said headteacher Nick Shaw. "Everybody played their part and the children read out information from key dates in the school's history.

"We sung some very uplifting children's hymns and there was a lovely atmosphere at the service. It was a great way to celebrate our history and to look forward to what we hope will be a bright future for our school."

Holy Trinity School dates back to 1725, when money was donated by Captain James Bolton and other men to help educate underprivileged children in the town.

A school was established as Berwick Charity School. Its name, location and purpose changed over time (notably serving as a

## A proud history – school's 300th anniversary celebrated at special service



The Revd Lee Taylor is joined by Bishop Mark and pupils at the service

school for boys in the 19th century), but it has been on the present site, at Bell Tower Place, since 1987.

Children explored the history and changes in education generally during a successful Creative Week, which included art and a walk around historic sites in Berwick, which were part of the school's past, as well as visits from people previously associated with the school.

A specially made slideshow presentation was produced, featuring key facts and photos from down the generations.

Holy Trinity has secured funding through the Community Foundation North East from the Northern Angel Fund, and the Smail Family Fund, which, among other things, will enable an artist to work with staff and pupils on a creative art project and a separate drama project to commemorate the anniversary.



Pupils exploring bygone eras of education



Pupils are pictured visiting past school sites in Berwick

The St Hilda Trust has kindly provided funding for a project to plant a commemorative tree and create an associated artwork about the project.

This is also a significant year for the school's future. It will become a primary school from September, increasing the upper age limit to include Years 5 and 6, due to a change from three-tier to two-tier education in the area.

Two new classrooms will be added – one as part of a new extension while the other will see an existing, internal room repurposed.