

**THE BENEFICE OF CHATTON with CHILLINGHAM, EGLINGHAM,  
SOUTH CHARLTON and INGRAM,  
informally known as the BREAMISH & TILL BENEFICE.  
PARISH PROFILES 2020/21**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our church life, but in order to give a broad picture of the Benefice, it was decided to use the pre-pandemic parish profile with additional notes. Many people have not been able to engage with online worship, so there is much work to be done once services can fully resume, but it has been encouraging to see that when church services have resumed numbers of people from all the parishes have shared worship together.

**EGLINGHAM with OLD BEWICK**

The Church of St. Maurice, Eglingham and Holy Trinity Church, Old Bewick, are part of the rural Breamish and Till Benefice in North Northumberland. (For a brief history of the churches please see the attached Heritage sheet)

The population of the parish is approximately 400 (2011 census) with around 100 living in the village of Eglingham. We have 40 people on the Church Electoral Roll of whom a maximum of 22 attend services in one or other of the churches.

At Christmas and Easter the churches are well attended, and although Eglingham has attracted more and more retired people, few attend church. There are some families with children in the countryside around, but again they do not attend church, except possibly at Christmas.

The school was closed several years ago and there is no shop in the village now. There is however a thriving village hall, with Art and Craft classes and regular exercise classes, many live music, and Travelling Theatre performances with a bar and often food. There are Film Nights and Artisan Markets as well as a Christmas Market each year. The hall has been hired for Children's Parties, Birthdays, Family Events, and even Wedding Receptions. The church has limited space for social events as there are no Parish Rooms, but there is cooperation between the Village Hall and the church for social events.

There is also a Community Field with access opposite Church Lane, for open air events and recreation. This is owned by the Parish Council and managed by the Eglingham Community Association (ECA). There is a barbeque, tennis court, a shed for a changing room, one for tools, as well as a soil/ compostable toilet and a fully planted and well-tended garden slope with wooden bench seats around the path.

The popular Tankerville Arms pub is central to Eglingham and provides excellent food for locals and visitors. It also has rooms above the bar for overnight Accommodation, and it serves lunchtime and evening meals. There is another B&B in the village and some Holiday Cottages to rent. The current vicarage is a recent build and spacious, using local building materials of Northumberland stone. It is situated next to the church with access directly through the graveyard.

**PRE- COVID PATTERN OF WORSHIP:**

St. Maurice's Church: **sung Eucharist (Common Worship) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday each month @ 9.30 a.m. (12-20 attend);**

**Lay led service on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday each month @ 9.30 a.m. (6-10 attend)**

Holy Trinity Church: **sung Eucharist (BCP) on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday each month @ 11a.m. (12-15 attend)**

**Benefice Service on 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday rotates around the 4 parishes.**

Once services resumed after the first 2020 lockdown a pattern of worship emerged with a Communion service in one church each week, alternating around the four parishes. These were all well attended. During the spring of 2021 a revised pattern has emerged which includes some lay led worship and at least one Communion service each week in the benefice.

#### **LAY INVOLVEMENT:**

We have three Lay Worship Leaders who take it in turn to lead the monthly service at St Maurice's. They also write and lead the Intercessions at the Eucharist at St. Maurice's. We have a rota of people who read the lessons at both churches.

Five people are licensed to assist with the chalice and one is also licensed to take the Sacrament out to those in the Benefice who are unable to attend church.

**MUSIC** – We have no organist but a well maintained organ! Hymns are selected and recorded weekly on a memory stick and played via a Media Player to good effect. The same memory stick is used at St. Michael's, Ingram, as their service follows ours on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday.

We have a small but very talented group of flower arrangers, and in the past have had a successful Flower Festival at St Maurice's with exhibits from more than twelve associated groups in the village, and local churches, including the Cricket Club, The Tankerville Arms, and The Eglingham Community Association.

#### **WHAT IS GOING WELL IN PARISH/CHURCH LIFE?**

The chapel of Holy Trinity at Old Bewick is situated at the top of a remote lane and attracts many walkers/pilgrims, as well as those making the climb to the now deserted Blawearie and the Cup and Ring rocks near the Hill Fort.

The Eglingham Village Hall Committee and the Church are beginning to work together to support one another. Facilities in the Village Hall are much better than those in church so in the future more coffee mornings and table top sales could take place there. The WI has been meeting there regularly for nearly 100 years!

There is a very successful free community magazine – Hear Abouts – which is a great way of keeping people in touch with what is happening in and around the villages. Church notices, and regular articles about the churches and events in our Benefice, as well as Local Council Reports, Village Hall events and items of interest , all written by members of the local community.

#### **WHAT COULD BE EVEN BETTER IF ONLY...**

We need to address the visiting of those who live alone, bereaved, or ill at home. Somehow we need to dispel the strongly held belief that it is only the Vicar does this.

We are in the process of drawing up plans to install a toilet in the church at Eglingham. The PCC have agreed this and once plans are finalized we shall apply for funding from the local Wind Farm, and for faculties from the diocese. We would like to be able to open up the church building to the wider community, making it more accessible to the old and young, a place where people can feel welcome and comfortable, coming in for worship or 'events' e.g. concerts, - the church has excellent acoustics for choral works and music.

We need to raise money for the upkeep of the churches through offering the building as a venue – the amount needed is vastly more than the present congregations can afford. (See Heritage Fund information attached)

We want to encourage the village to feel that this is their church too, and they are welcome to come into the church at any time to pray or just sit quietly, dealing with whatever is on their mind.

It has been suggested that once we have the new facilities, the church could offer a 'Wayside Tea/Coffee Stop' for walkers or cyclists with an 'honesty box' for donations – and information to read about the church and area. There is a great deal of local history which is of wider interest.

We have an enthusiastic PCC who care deeply about the future of the Church here in this parish. Sadly we have felt more and more challenged with an ageing congregation, and beautiful buildings to keep in good order despite dwindling finances. We are very much aware that the Church is not just about buildings and money, that there are people out there with needs and hurts who are struggling to make sense of life – and somehow we, the Church, need to reach them.

## **CHATTON & CHILLINGHAM**

Chatton and Chillingham parishes are situated in a rural area of north Northumberland, roughly halfway between Berwick-Upon-Tweed and Alnwick, with easy access to the beautiful coastline. Situated in the Till Valley, the population is approximately 550. The Electoral Roll had 41 on it in 2021.

There are many second homes and retirees are attracted to the parishes. There is no school in Chillingham and the school in Chatton closed in 2008 and is now a very well used village hall. Chatton also has a shop with post-office facilities, a pub with accommodation and a 5 star B&B. Chillingham has the attractions of the Castle and the wild cattle.

Both St Peter's Church, Chillingham and Holy Cross Church, Chatton are historic and each have features which encourage visitors. St Peter's still has box pews and a 15th Century tomb for Sir Ralph Grey while Holy Cross has beautiful stained glass windows.

Agriculture and Farming with its associated occupations is a significant aspect of rural life, but younger members of the community often move away for further education and jobs. St Cuthbert's Way passes through the parish of Chatton to the north on the way to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne.

Both Chatton and Chillingham within their very historic churches have congregations that on a weekly basis are small, with a very small core of regular worshippers. However the religious festivals attract more, especially the Carol Service, which has numbered up to 100 in the last few years.

Pre-Covid there were services each week, with the exception that while the parish was in vacancy Evensong on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday did not take place. A Holy Communion Service was held at Chillingham on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Holy Communion was held at Chatton with a Lay Led service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday. These Services were at 9.30 am.

On a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday the Churches of the Benefice held a joint service at 10.30 am, taking it in turns to host it.

Once services resumed after the first 2020 lockdown a pattern of worship emerged with a Communion service in one church each week, alternating around the four parishes. These were all well attended. During the spring of 2021 a revised pattern has emerged which includes some lay led worship and at least one Communion service each week in the benefice.

The Parochial Church Council looks after both Churches and meets 3 times a year but extra meetings can be held when necessary.

Chatton and Chillingham are part of the Breamish and Till Benefice, but work alongside The Cheviot Benefice – Wooler northwards – as part of the Mission Initiative North Northumberland, the aim to be part of the Diocese's Growing Churches Bringing Hope initiative and to work alongside local bodies e.g.

The National Park.

Plus Points of Holy Cross Church Chatton & St Peter's Church Chillingham:-

- Major building works, attracting HLF funding, have been completed in Holy Cross Church.
- Good congregation numbers at key times especially Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Sunday, and popular for weddings and christenings.
- Both churches have successful giving and good stewardship.
- Both churches enjoy excellent community support.
- There is a good relationship with Chillingham Castle and its owner, Sir Humphrey Wakefield.
- Both churches attract visitors from all over the world.
- Holy Cross has a web site including a self directed QR code tour of the building

Challenges facing the churches:-

- Both churches have small overall congregations.
- It is difficult to fill Lay PCC roles and the current Churchwardens have too much to do.
- Insurance and upkeep of the churches is very expensive as is repair and maintenance of structures such as the tomb in St Peter's and the historic organ in Holy Cross.
- There is a lack of decent heating in Holy Cross, poor disability access in Chillingham and neither has access to fresh water or toilet facilities making it difficult to hold community events in either.
- The rise in second homes may be contributing to smaller congregations.

## **ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS**

### **Introduction**

This profile covers St. Michael and All Angels' church which is situated in Ingram, Northumberland and is within the Bamburgh and Glendale Deanery Synod and a member of the recently formed Benefice of Breamish and Till.

### **Overview**

The village of Ingram is located in the Cheviots by the River Breamish and on the edge of the Northumberland National Park. There has been a church on this site for many centuries, probably being founded before the Norman Conquest. At one time the church fell into a state of disrepair but by the late C19 substantial restoration work was carried out to the existing structure. Despite these changes the interior has retained the atmosphere of a small medieval country church.

Over the years St. Michael and All Angels' church has been cared for by the local community which is small and much dispersed throughout the length of the Breamish Valley. Despite this geographical dispersal the community is close knit and one which greatly values the presence of the church at its heart. An example of this was clearly evident three years ago when following major restoration work, this community came together to form a very effective cleaning party to prepare for the church to reopen.

As Ingram is the gateway to the National Park, many visitors come to the church and according to the visitors' book, find peace there. The church is used for weddings, baptisms and funerals and the occasional musical event. The regular attendance at Sunday Services, is usually between 10 to 12, with many more attending at Easter, Harvest and Christmas services.

### **Pre-Covid Worship**

A Lay Led service is held on the first Sunday of the month and is taken by four members of the congregation. Following these services a parishioner kindly provides coffee and biscuits and we gather round for an informal chat which is always enjoyed by our members and gives us further opportunities to welcome visitors to our church and the local area. Communion services are held on the second and fourth Sunday of the month and a service of Evensong is taken on the third Sunday except during the winter months when travelling in the evening in winter conditions can be challenging. There are occasions when members of the Lay team take the Evensong service as well. As we are a confident parish we are always willing to assist in services, work collaboratively and regularly lead intercessions about which visiting clergy have commented very favourably in recent months.

The congregation host and also attend Group Services on fifth Sundays when we meet up with fellow worshippers from the other churches in our Benefice. The previous incumbent Rev. Marion Penfold instigated these joint services and they have become an invaluable way of forging and maintaining links with fellow worshippers within the Benefice.

Once services resumed after the first 2020 lockdown a pattern of worship emerged with a Communion service in one church each week, alternating around the four parishes. These were all well attended. During the spring of 2021 a revised pattern has emerged which includes some lay led worship and at least one Communion service each week in the benefice.

St. Michael and All Angels' is a friendly and welcoming church and is open to considering new ways of worship and encouraging people to become involved in the life of the church.

### **Statistics**

According to the Census of 2011 there is a population of 119 people living within the parish boundaries.

There are currently 60 people on the electoral roll.

During 2019 there were:

- one baptism
- two weddings
- one funeral
- one memorial service & burial
- one memorial service

Parish share £3,000 which we have paid in full.

Our churchyard is open for burials, however there are now limited plots available. It is well maintained by a team of volunteers from the community. The church is opened up every day and closed before nightfall thanks to the kindness of local person who lives close by.

### **Community Links**

The Parish of St. Michaels and All Angels' is looking for someone who is *passionate* about rural life and appreciative of the strong contact we have with local farms, farmers and their families in the area.

Over the last few years we have developed strong and meaningful links with the local school, Branton Community Primary. We very much enjoy welcoming the staff and children of this school, (recently deemed “Good” by Ofsted) to lead their own Easter Harvest and Christmas services which are also well attended by parents and families.

Our main fundraising event is the annual Garden Fete and in the past we have run a local “pop up” charity shop, coffee mornings, race nights and other social events which are well supported by the local community. Monies raised help us to meet the payment of our Parish Share which we strive annually to fulfil.

In 2018 a Mission Weekend entitled “A Day of Encouragement” was organised by The Steward’s Trust and hosted by two of our P.C.C. members. People both local and nationwide were invited to this event and it offered opportunities to work towards the needs of our own community whilst welcoming the contributions of others. Following the success of this event it is hoped that a further weekend can be arranged in the future.

## **THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES IN THE PARISH OF SOUTH CHARLTON**

### **Our Village Community**

St. James’ Church is in the heart of the village which consists of 24 houses, and 3 farms (– building development of up to 10 or so houses is currently being proposed). The population is mainly elderly; though, we do have the following families:

3 families with children under 8 years

1 family with 3 children between 10 and 20 (The older two are away at college)

There are a number of other farms within the Parish boundary.

The Village is part of the civic Parish of Eglington and South Charlton.

### **Community Engagement**

The Parish accesses funding from wind-farm compensation, and both the Church building and the Village Hall have benefited from updating and maintenance work as a result of this fund.

**Church members recognised the opportunity to develop a proactive relationship with a wider community by maximising the use of both community buildings – the Church and the village hall.** (4 PCC members and another church member sit on a Village Hall Committee of 10). The Village Hall is home to Little Acorns Pre-school two mornings a week and a Mother/Carer and Toddler Group. Little Acorns visit the church at Easter, Harvest and Christmas to help with displays. Unfortunately the Primary school is in a different Parish so we lose contact with the children. Using a modern, semi commercial kitchen, Church members initiated the running of a monthly Lunch Club, which now has a Community team of excellent help. Annually, the Lunch Club team does a Harvest Meal advertised as ‘Soil to Supper’ and a Christmas Lunch. Church members have organised and led various services of Thanksgiving and Praise, always with a clear Christian message or testimony, and also ‘Carols and Candles’ at Christmas. With advertising across the area and to other denominations these have attracted congregations of up to 70. In order to develop our ministry to the community our PCC supports the training of an Authorised Lay Minister.

### **Membership, Sustainability and Mission**

#### **Membership**

Currently we have 16 names on the Electoral Roll.

### **Sustainability**

A number of Parish residents have said they would want to see the Church kept open and active even though they do not attend. Currently we have Holy Communion on the third Sunday of the month and as a result of a recent re-organisation due to Covid each church in the benefice has agreed to a new monthly rota.

Our regular church members appreciate and value our current pattern and form of worship, and the various annual festivals, including those important in an agricultural environment. We acknowledge the need to maintain a Christian focus for Marriage, Baptism and Funeral services for those outside the Church. Funding is a matter of serious concern. Community events held in the Church, such as Songs of Praise, have been privately funded, and we raise funds by donation at the event, rather than 'fundraising' for its own sake. This however, is under constant review.

We seek to value our past but we recognise the need to provide a church through which the whole community can access Christianity in a way which is relevant in today's world, and which is personally fulfilling.

### **Mission**

We are looking, intentionally, at the future of the Church in terms of mission, and we look forward to the appointment of a Vicar who will facilitate innovation and growth.

### **Current Objectives:**

1. Complete the training of at least one Authorised Lay Minister (one already PCC agreed)
2. Use MINN to provide opportunity for Lay leaders in the Benefice to meet together for training, mutual support and sharing of ideas. (arrangements were made for initial consultations over lunch, in March 2020, but cancelled due to Covid lockdown)
3. Establish regular contact and collaboration with Churchwardens across the benefice with a view to sharing in worship and streamlining outreach. (a small group already established – Government guidelines permitting)
4. Covid regulations permitting – Facing different challenges, continue to maintain the profile of the Church within our Community.