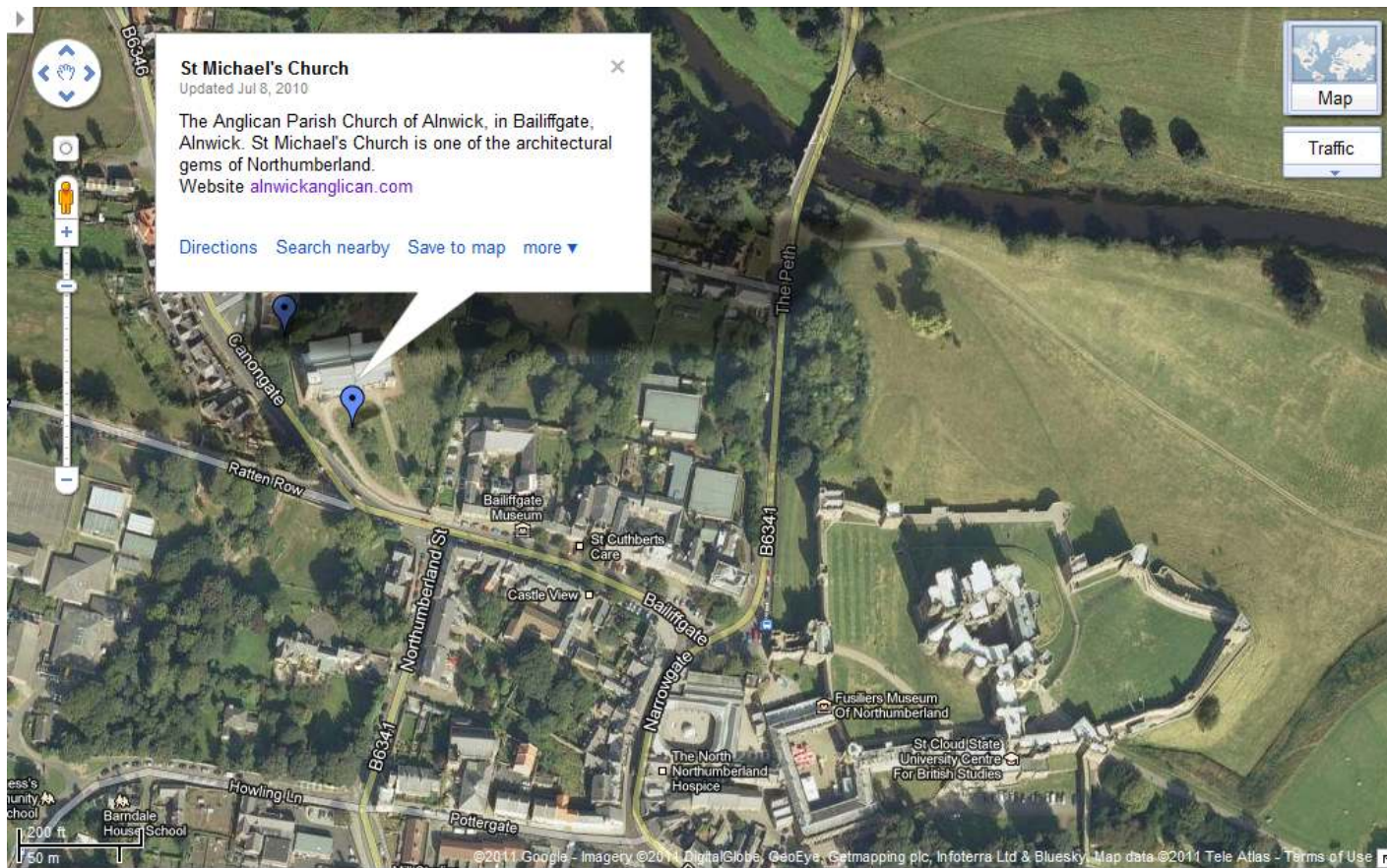


Alnwick Parish Profile 2011

The Church of England Parish of Alnwick St. Michael

www.alnwickanglican.com

Registered Charity Number 113129



OUR INVITATION

There is no permanent city for us here; we are looking for the one which is yet to be. (Hebrews 13:14)

We love St Michael's, the people, the parish and the town of Alnwick. We are the only Anglican Church in the town and celebrate more than 1000 years of Christian mission and worship in this special place. We have thought and prayed about the challenges we face today and last year we brought out our parish development plan. In the middle of this year our vicar retired. Now we need inspirational leadership and drive to turn plans into effective action.

It might be you who will be starting a new life here with us soon. Moving to a new parish will be challenging and exciting. We recognise you will be leaving behind many friends, people you have ministered to and helped and who have become your family. So our invitation comes with the promise of our commitment to journey together with you to 'a place that is yet to be'.

With these thoughts uppermost we have written this invitation to our parish and statement of where we are now. Our hope is that St Michael's, Alnwick will excite you, as much as it excites us, and that it will also tell you where we think we need to grow.

... from the people of St Michael's Alnwick



THE VISION WE WANT TO SHARE

We have a Parish Development Plan which sets out our strategic direction over the next three years.

Our Vision Statement is:

“To be an open and inclusive church sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and serving the local community.”

Highlights from our plan include:

- To be a worshipping community, celebrating and sharing our life together in Christ
- To provide a place of solace, peace, healing, support and friendship to those in need
- To reach out and serve the local community as a church and as individuals
- To proclaim the healing and life-giving power of the gospel of Jesus Christ

Our values as a church are rooted in our beliefs about what is important about God, the world and the purpose of the Church.

Our values explain WHY we do the things we do. They determine what we give priority to as a church, but also the extent to which we see our own particular gifts or areas of service fitting into a bigger picture of what our church is all about. They include:

- Becoming more outward looking as a church
- Valuing diversity of expression of worship whilst maintaining the traditions of the Anglican Church
- Welcoming and encouraging young people and valuing their contribution
- Developing and strengthening our ‘Monday to Saturday’ faith
- Sharing life experiences with one another.



OUR LEADER

The Job and the person



“Whenever I come to St Michael's I am always made to feel relaxed and at ease, it is such a friendly church.”

Andy Brookes

Good communicator.

Committed to making the Gospel real to adults and young people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Combining vision and recognition of tradition.

Imaginative leadership of diverse styles of worship.

A team builder able to build partnerships with all.

We are looking for a real person – not the Archangel Michael! We work as a team of people with gifts and enthusiasm and the vicar is not expected to do everything. We are looking for someone who understands their own gifts and limitations, and has tested and developed them in previous churches but is now ready to embrace the fresh challenges and opportunities that await them in Alnwick.

Leading our worship is at the heart of our life as a church and important in the context of the town where we are the Anglican Parish Church. It centres on the traditional Sunday Eucharist but finds expression in a variety of other formal and informal and contemporary worship gatherings. We have a number of gifted leaders and preachers who work closely with the clergy.

Our leader must be able to communicate effectively. St Michael's is many different things to different people and groups in the town. We want to be able to offer people an experience of God - it's not just about where they live and their lifestyle. It's not about us having the right answers, nor about everyone becoming middle class – it's about GOD. It's about fullness of life – we want others to realise how much better their lives could be...

We need a leader who can make the Bible and the Gospel message real to people – those committed to the church or people who turn to the church at critical moments for them and their families – festivals, baptisms, school, weddings, funerals – but don't see its relevance to their daily lives.

The Role



"I feel privileged to take Home Communion to those members of our church who are unable to attend services. I enjoy keeping in touch with them so that they can still share in the life of the church."

Cath McNally

To lead us in implementing a vision that is inclusive, mission focussed, that grows the faith of every member and reaches out to the wider community of the town.

To lead the worship, preaching and teaching of the church: we seek a gifted preacher, teacher and worship leader whose work is deeply rooted in Scripture, trusting its authority and earthed in the realities of life.

To lead, encourage, equip and enable the staff and lay teams with good oversight and accountability, so all members of the church, including the vicar, are challenged, stretched, valued and effective in their service.

So we are looking for, and praying for:

- Someone with a track record of building strong relationships across the church and the wider community.
- Someone with a vision for, and experience of, recruiting young families and adults from across the town's population to re-balance our age-skewed demographic.
- Someone who believes a strategy for God's work in Alnwick is necessary, that it may take time to get right and will need constant review, including reviewing their own work.
- A priest who is innovative and prepared where necessary to be radical, who is able and willing to effect and manage change, executing new initiatives and ideas through collaboration and effective leadership.
- An enabler and encourager, able to help people to develop according to their gifts and capabilities and the needs of the church.
- Someone who can lead and train a curate, and ordained and lay members of the church.
- A good public communicator who is also able to listen to and persuade adults and young people at a personal level so that the vision is owned by the whole church and engages the wider community.
- Someone who will help us to reach out to people in the town with the good news of Jesus.
- Someone who will be deeply committed to the church family, the parish and the town.

OUR STORY

“Being part of the mettle youth group has brought me closer to God and given me a fantastic opportunity to meet and worship with young people who are also on fire for God.”

Laura Jayne Cross

St Michael’s Parish covers the built up area of Alnwick, a market town in rural North Northumberland with a population of just over 8,000. There has been a place of worship on the site for over 1,000 years and much of the current building dates back to the 15th century, and replaced earlier Norman and Saxon churches. This is the historic church of the Dukes of Northumberland, and is one of the architectural gems of the county.

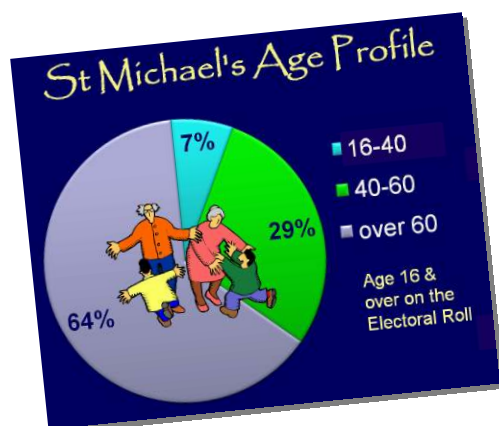
Our Alnwick

That’s the historic Alnwick. But there is more than one ‘Alnwick’. For holiday visitors, it’s a pretty town in a beautiful undiscovered part of the country, with an internationally famous garden and castle, annual international folk music and food festivals. For most residents this is the pleasant market town where they live, relatively safe and with good local amenities. But there are other sides of Alnwick visitors do not see: with its share of poverty, social deprivation, unemployment, domestic violence and drug and alcohol issues. The church has a history of involvement in community building in the large housing estate near the church, and good contacts with parents and families through St Michael’s School and through baptism and wedding preparation, funerals and seasonal services.

St Michael’s and the town

St Michael’s is one of eight church groups in Alnwick, whose total membership is approximately 1,000. St Michaels has over 300 on the electoral roll and attendance at Sunday services averaging over 200.

Nearly two-thirds of our active church members are over 60, a little less than a third between 40 and 60 and about 7% below 40. Children and teenage young people account for around 10% of attendees. More young families have got involved in the last year or two and we now run two ‘Sunday School’ classes as well as a crèche at the 9.30 Sunday Eucharist. On the other hand teenage and children’s attendance at 11.15 Worship for All has declined. We have a good group of 22 secondary school aged young people involved in ‘Mettle’, some of whom also attend our church services.



Sport – culture - leisure

Alnwick Historical Society
Choral Society
Sports centre/ Gym /fitness
National Trust Volunteer Warden
Art class
Talks to local groups
Alnwick Garden volunteers
Alnwick International Music
Festival
U3A/ U3A – walking group
Northumberland & Newcastle
Society
Alnwick Playhouse/Friends of
Northumbrian music nights
Northern Sinfonia/Sage events
Various local clubs and societies...

Enterprise – economy – work

Farmers' market supporter/
promoter
Alnwick Markets
Market Town Welcome
Talking Newspaper
Food Local Food
Business Consultancy
Fair Trade/ Fair Trade
consultancy
Tourism/heritage consultancy
Tourism businesses
Rotary Club, Civic Society etc...

We know the church is not sustainable in the long term if we do nothing. We know it is cold in winter, uncomfortable and a difficult space to work in. We also know that doing nothing is not an option for a church called to **go into all the world** telling people the gospel and making disciples.

We are very aware that our current Sunday worship services attract only a minority of the people in Alnwick. A strategy based on people attending traditional church services will not reach the majority. We need to develop different ways in which we can serve them, help them to experience the love and forgiveness of God, and help them to share in the fellowship of local Christians. This has been the focus of **The** Parish Plan we have been developing.

Our communities

Having said that, St. Michael's is not disappearing into obscurity and redundancy - far from it. Many people in the town, who do not attend regular Sunday services, see St. Michael's as 'their church'. We baptised 38 children and adults last year, at which attendance often reached 200, and conducted 40 funerals with attendances of 20-400. Then the church is packed for major church festivals and for special services for the launch of the Tourism Season, The Alnwick Music Festival, Harvest, etc.

Other points of contact/influence are:

- Denwick chapel
- The Parish Hall
- St Michael's School (200 pupils, services, financial support, Church Mice outreach)
- Work in local schools including teaching at the Duchess' and using church building and people as a resource – Easter Art Project
- 8 residential homes with 50 monthly communicants
- Visits to hospital
- Open Church - over 2000 visitors each year tourists, holidaymakers and day visitors
- Holiday visitors attending our services
- Clubs and organisations using our Church Hall
- Christians Together in Alnwick
- And the places where people work, volunteer and spend their leisure time



"I have been part of the team of servers for several years. I feel it is a privilege to be part of the service in this way. It is good to work closely with clergy to ensure the service runs smoothly."

Pat Taylor

This contact with the local community is one of the strengths that we have as the Parish Church. The lists on the page above were assembled during a planning session with members of the church council (PCC). Whilst this does not cover all of our church members, it serves to illustrate the wide range of ways in which the congregation of St Michael's is engaged in the life of the community.

We are a sociable and caring community. Visitors often comment on the warmth of the welcome they receive and we have very positive relationships with 'the Castle' and 'the town'. St Michael's is where most of the town's civic church occasions take place.

Many St Michaels – Our future

But just as there are many 'Alnicks' there are many different 'St Michaels' for those who belong or make use of what the church has to offer. That is both an opportunity and a very real challenge.

In developing our Parish Development Plan we identified some of the opportunities as:

- Building on community links
- Alnwick continues to attract retirees, a good source of new members, skills, income, etc.
- New ways for us to use the buildings
- Scope for wider community use of buildings if facilities are improved
- Local people may be willing to support the maintenance of heritage assets

We also identified some of the challenges we face:

- Much of the workload depends upon a few key people
- The age profile of our membership and the small numbers of younger people & young families
- Limited contact with non-churchgoing people
- Church building difficult/expensive to heat and maintain
- Not comfortable compared with more modern venues

We have a Parish Development Plan. We worked hard as a PCC to engage the whole church and the wider community. Now we need leadership and inspiration to implement, change and move on...

WHERE WE ARE



Alnwick is a small historic market town in the heart of Northumberland – a largely rural county that stretches from the Scottish border to the fringes of Newcastle in the south, and westwards to the Cheviot Hills. Its long sandy beaches, quiet friendly villages, wide open landscapes, many castles, historic churches, country houses and gardens make it an attractive area for visitors as well as a good place in which to live and work. Alnwick itself is renowned for its magnificent Castle, home of the Duke of Northumberland, and Alnwick Garden.

The town evolved from medieval times as a market centre and a staging post en route to Edinburgh. It still retains many of its old cobbled streets, narrow alleys and fine stone buildings, which nowadays house a range of specialist shops, cafes, restaurants, independent family businesses and lively pubs and inns.

With a stable population of around 8,000, Alnwick has good facilities for its size. The Market Place is the hub for local events including weekly markets, a monthly farmers' market and occasional specialist markets, Alnwick International Music Festival and Alnwick Food Festival. Other amenities include The Playhouse, Barter Books, Bailiffgate Museum, Willowburn Leisure Centre with pool, health suite, etc., several local gyms, and some private art and craft galleries.



*“St. Michael's Church Of England First School is proud of its Outstanding status in terms of SIAS & Ofsted... our continued success is dependant upon the strong spiritual relationships that exist between staff, Governors, Parents and Parish community at all levels”
Sally Lamb, Head Teacher*



Major occupations in Alnwick are tourism, farming and supporting industries, pharmaceuticals, building trades, retail, education, and other professional services. There is a small community hospital and two medical practices. The Northumberland Estates owns and manages 100,000 acres of land with 100 tenanted farms in the county, and has a major influence on landscape use and conservation and on commercial development in and around the town.

Significant numbers of local people commute to Tyneside and other Northumberland towns to work. Alnwick is also home to a lively community of retired folk, many of whom are busily involved in the life of the town. There are many active local societies and organisations, including a Chamber of Trade, Tourism Association, Lions, Rotary Club, Civic Society, amateur dramatic, music and choral groups, sports clubs, U3A and many more.

The town is easily accessible by road via the A1, and by rail via Alnmouth Station, 3 miles outside the town on the East Coast mainline route. Trains link directly to London, Edinburgh, York, Leeds, Birmingham and other UK towns and cities – right down to Plymouth! Air travel is well catered for via Newcastle International Airport, about 50 minutes drive to/ from Alnwick.

More than 2,500 pupils are enrolled in Alnwick's community, Church of England and Catholic First Middle and Secondary Schools which include a Sixth Form (Years 12+13) at The Duchess High School and a special school with 36 pupils. St Michael's First School (CofE) is energetically supported by the church including our Church Mice outreach and we take assemblies there and at The Duchess High School.

As well as St Michael's Parish Church there are congregations of Roman Catholic, Baptist, URC, Methodist, Christian Brethren, Salvation Army and Society of Friends in the town, with a total membership of around 1000. Churches Together in Alnwick is active and organises public and joint church activities. There is an ecumenical youth organisation, 'Contagious', which supports a full time Christian youth worker and organises study groups, weekends away and a monthly youth service called 'The Gathering' at St Michael's.

Seniors are served by eight residential homes in the town, in which St Michael's has around 50 communicant members.

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Services



We have four main services every Sunday and a service at Denwick Chapel once a month. The services offer different styles and have distinct congregations, though there is some overlap. Morning Prayer is said in church on most weekdays at 09:00 and Holy Communion on Wednesday at 10:15. There is a youth service – The Gathering – once a month facilitated by St Michael's and Contagious, Alnwick's ecumenical youth organisation. If you enjoy services that reflect variety in 'churchmanship' you will probably want to apply!

Sunday



8.00am Holy Communion (said CW or BCP with sermon). A traditional contemplative service with a mainly older congregation of less than 20.

9.30am Parish Eucharist (sung CW with choir and procession). This is the main parish service with an attendance in excess of 75 and a small but significant number of families with small children. Children have their own teaching and activities within the service and rejoin their parents for The Communion. Adult teaching (sermon) follows a number of themes during the course of the year and is generally based on the Lectionary Readings. Refreshments are served in church after the service and most people stay.

11.15am Worship For All (informal liturgy based on CW, contemporary music, monthly Communion). The services are planned and led by a team made up largely of lay members including the musicians. Teaching and worship is lively and often interactive and planned around the church year and topical themes relating to practical Christianity. Special services are planned throughout the Summer tourist season, when we get a number of visitors. Originally set-up as an outreach to attract families unfamiliar with Anglican worship or coming back to church, attendance has diminished from 30-40 to around 20 in the last three years with very few younger families now attending.

"I love being a part of the team.... everyone is friendly and kind. I love playing in the band as it lets me give something back for all the work being put into it"

Michael Pearson



Baptisms During the past 12 months there has been a growth in mainly non-church families coming for Baptisms as part of the 11.15 Worship for All services – eight services and 38 children and adults baptised – where attendance may be 150-200. Families from the town appreciate the simple, informal style, CW baptism liturgy and contemporary music. While we encourage families to come for Baptism at 11.15 we continue to offer family attended baptisms. There have been eight services at 3.00pm in the last year.

6.00pm Evensong (BCP sung with choir,). This again is a service faithfully attended by an average of 20 or so older members of the church. Once a month Evensong includes a special part of the service for individual prayer, anointing and healing.

7.30pm The Gathering (youth service, every month). Ecumenical youth service organised by Contagious. Very lively.

Weekdays

Morning Prayer is said on most weekdays in church and a Communion Service held in church on Wednesdays and during Advent, Lent and other feast days.

Occasional Offices

Occasional Offices are a major part of the ministry of St. Michael's. We typically have about 40 funerals, 40 baptisms and 6-20 weddings a year. Funerals and baptisms really do give us the opportunity to care for and get to know the people of Alnwick, and weddings are our ministry to a much wider population.

Home Groups

One or two home groups meet during the day or evening on and off throughout the year. During Advent and Lent we encourage as many as can to participate in home based study groups.

Seniors

There are around 50 communicant members of St Michaels in the eight residential homes in town who are visited regularly. Clergy and members also visit Alnwick Cottage Hospital. We have a team of Visitors who distribute Parish Magazines and visit older folk living at home.

Mission Links

"I loved the confirmation classes... I learnt so much. The big day was special, memorable..."

"I learnt a lot. We all made friends and the big day is a day I will remember for the rest of my life."

*Honey and Merrin Hughes,
age 9 and 12*

We currently support eight UK based and overseas missions from regular church giving: The Church Army, St Michael's School, Contagious, The Spitak Project (Armenia), CMS, USPG, PICA (Partners in Community Action) and The Society of Saint Francis (Alnmouth). We also support Christian Aid, The Children's Society and The Mothers' Union by special collections and events, encourage interest and prayer for Mercy Ships, Northumberland Hospice Care and Water Aid, and respond to local national and international needs as they arise during the year.

Our Networks

People from St Michael's Church are deeply involved in many areas of life across society, both locally, nationally and internationally. These connections are an integral part of our life together, as God uses us to influence society and work for Him. We seek to support and encourage each other in our church services, home groups and at a personal level.

Among other areas, St Michael's people are involved in schools and universities as teachers and school governors; a number are health professionals; we have people who are professionally involved in sustainability issues, corporate social responsibility, small business development, and Fair Trade. Many of us volunteer and work with charities and organisations in Alnwick, the region and further afield.

We also have a number of people involved in the arts, culture, local history and the tourism industry, including the Alnwick International Music Festival, the Alnwick Food Festival, the Farmers' Market and Alnwick's Playhouse theatre. A team of volunteer stewards welcome visitors to our church during the summer months.

We are actively involved in Christians Together in Alnwick and its participation in the civic life of the town.

The church is valued by many people and organisations in the town in different ways. We have identified using these connections as an important part of our mission to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the townspeople.



Our People

"I love stewarding at St Michael's as it means we can keep the Church open for visitors from far and wide. Some have questions to ask and others want peace and tranquility... the delight in the Church and its history brings a warm glow."

Eve Jarvis



Our electoral roll membership stands at 326. Usual Sunday attendance over the past year was 181 adults and 22 children.

Our staff team, following our vicar's retirement in June, consists of our Associate Priest, our part time Parish Secretary, Organist and Choirmaster and the Parish Hall Caretaker.

We have seven retired clergy and four Readers who are licensed to officiate and play an active role in services at St Michael's and Denwick, as well as other parishes in the area.

The 11.15 Worship For All service has a team of seven worship leaders and preachers and a music team.

Other members of the church are involved in leading Mettle, our Christian youth group, Sunday School, home groups, Mothers Union, Church Mice – our after-school club – and St Michael's Bowls Club. A team of three has co-ordinated PCC Workstreams in the construction of our Parish Development Plan.

The PCC meets normally six times a year and devolves work to the standing committee, three workstreams: *Mission, Worship Education and Nurture* and *Assets*; and to a Communications sub-group and the Parish Hall group.

Our communications include The Gateway parish magazine and a website: <http://alnwickanglican.com>

Our Finances

You will be sent a copy of our Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2010. Our total income for 2010 was £123.7k with 67% of our income coming through the Planned Giving scheme. We are committed to meeting our financial contribution to the Diocese (Parish Share), and to give 10% of our income to local, home and overseas charities. The accounts also show Endowment Funds of £51.4k; Restricted Funds of £32.6k and Unrestricted Funds of £2.8k. The interest from the Endowment Fund is credited to the Fabric Fund in line with the donors' wishes.

Our Buildings

The church



St Michael's originally dates back to the Norman period, however, the building that now survives dates from around 1464, when a charter by Henry VI provided for the rebuilding of the church. It has always had a close association with the Percy family, the Dukes of Northumberland. The Dukes have been and continue to be the patrons of St Michaels.

The setting in a large tree-clad churchyard (maintained by the council) at the north-west corner of the town, close to Alnwick Castle is very beautiful. It is an unusually spacious and airy building inside full of historical interest and popular with townspeople and tourists. There is seating, in fixed pews, for around 500. The church is wide and long with a lot of glass and is not well served by its antiquated oil-fired heating system. Some improvement has been made but the Parish Development Plan has stated one of its aims as "Improving accessibility and comfort and enabling more flexible use of worship space in the church, while meeting Disability Discrimination Act requirements". The PCC is in discussion with the Newcastle Diocese's *Inspired North East* organisation (inspirednortheast.org.uk) set up 'to help achieve a sustainable future for church buildings in the North East: as living places of worship, buildings used and enjoyed by local communities, welcoming places for tourists and pilgrims, and unique heritage assets'.

The church is in a good state of repair. A new sound system was installed last year. We have a fully equipped parish office, clergy vestry and parish room/choir vestry with kitchen facilities and toilet.



Denwick chapel - a chapel of ease for the hamlet of Denwick, just outside Alnwick, where we hold services once a month.

Parish Hall



Our Parish Hall is 200m from the church. This charming period building was built by the Duke of Northumberland in 1913, and made available to the church on a repairing lease for which we pay a peppercorn rent. It's a fine stone building with vehicle access and in good structural repair. Internally there are a large hall, seating 120, and a small hall, seating 30, large professionally equipped catering kitchen and toilets.

The hall has resident caretakers who live in the attached flat. Apart from church use, the hall is let on a commercial basis for receptions, meetings, music and social events and various clubs and organisations, including the Carpet Bowls Club, AA and Weight Watchers. Its management is currently overseen by the Parish Hall group (under the auspices of the PCC), which is undertaking initiatives to upgrade and to market the hall.

“A small group has been looking to see how the Parish Hall could be used more effectively as part of the life of the parish. Improvement in decoration has started, and we have already seen an increase in the hiring of the hall.”

Michelle Duff

Vicarage

The Vicarage, close (300m) to the church in Howling Lane, is an attractive, modern (1988) and well maintained detached family house set in a delightful mature garden, accessed via a short private driveway. The house is well laid out with a study accessible from the entry hall, 2 reception rooms, well equipped kitchen, four bedrooms and an attached garage.



WHAT NEXT?

Some other useful links:

About Alnwick...

visitnorthumberland.com/site/Alnwick

visitalnwick.org.uk

County Council information...

northumberland.gov.uk

Local newspaper...

northumberlandgazette.co.uk

If you think St Michaels and Alnwick might be the place where God is calling you to minister, we encourage you to find out more.

You can look at our website <http://www.alnwickanglican.com> where you will find a short YouTube clip and our Parish Development Plan.

You can also learn more about the Diocese of Newcastle at <http://www.newcastle.anglican.org>

You can count on our prayers and interest if you decide to apply. Please contact our Archdeacon, The Ven. Peter Robinson, if you have further questions and to request further details and an application pack for this post:

The Ven. Peter Robinson, Archdeacon of Lindisfarne

Tel.: (01670) 503469

e-mail: pjarobinson@btinternet.com