

Role Profile for Associate Minister (part-time) in the Western Dales Mission Community



Gathering at the summit of Winder for our annual Easter Day Western Dales Mission Community (WDMC) Dawn Service.

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Role Overview

The Western Dales Mission Community (WDMC) is looking for a part-time Associate Minister who delights in leading ecumenical worship across a broad range of traditions, cares about pastoral ministry, and will enjoy making connections with the local farming and rural community.

Set in the beautiful landscape of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, this role will involve working closely as part of a wider ministry team to help discern God's work in this place, and to help grow the local church together. As a WDMC wide post, the Associate Minister will experience leading worship across the twelve churches and chapels of the Western Dales.

Key responsibilities include:

- Leading Sunday worship across our churches and traditions, through the celebration of Holy Communion, and Services of the Word.
- Engaging in pastoral care of those in our community.
- Taking baptisms, weddings, and funerals (as working hours permit).
- Working creatively with the wider ministry team on special outreach opportunities and events.

All of our paid ministry roles are jointly funded by three denominations, Anglican, Methodist, and United Reformed Church.

As an ecumenically funded role, we welcome applications from ordained Anglican priests, Methodist presbyters, and United Reformed Church ministers.

NB If the applicant is a Methodist presbyter in the active work, they will need permission from the Stationing Advisory Committee to apply; such permission will not be required if the applicant is a supernumerary presbyter (since the appointment would be limited to being a 0.49% post).



At Pentecost, to celebrate the birthday of the church, we have a joint WDMC Service at St Andrew's Church in Sedbergh, followed by a Community BBQ.



In recent years, WDMC has put on a Live Nativity for Sedbergh 'Late Night Opening' at the beginning of December.

The Associate Minister will report to the WDMC Leader, and will work collaboratively alongside other paid and lay ministers, and members of our local congregations. The role is part-time, with the expectation of three days work a week, including Sundays. Housing is provided in the Vicarage in Dent (see page eight) as well as a modest stipend (£4,531 per annum). The role will be expected to attend a fortnightly staff meeting, a monthly ministry meeting, and other meetings as required and as working hours permit. Being based in Dent will give the role a special interest in the community and churches of Dentdale, however the role will be expected to work widely across all the churches in the WDMC.

The Western Dales Mission Community

The Western Dales Mission Community (WDMC) covers twelve churches in and around Sedbergh, Dent, and the surrounding dales. WDMC enables the close working together of churches of different denominations.

The three partner denominations in the Western Dales are Anglican, Methodist, and URC. Alongside this we welcome our Roman Catholic and Quaker companion denominations. This is



A WDMC retreat day.

part of the county-wide 'God For All' ecumenical movement (<https://godforall.org.uk/>).

The ministry team includes three other paid roles:

- Revd Andy Burgess (WDMC Leader, Vicar, and Methodist Minister, full-time)
- Ben Maunder (Children, Youth, and Family Worker, full-time)
- Emma Brown (Administrator, part-time)

Alongside these, we are supported by retired clergy, Lay Readers, Lay Pioneer Ministers, and Local Preachers. We hold four special WDMC joint services throughout the year, where all twelve churches are encouraged to come together. Our Methodist and Anglican congregations often worship together: in Sedbergh there is a joint service once a month, and in Garsdale and Dent, there is a joint service every week, alternating between the Anglican and Methodist premises. Many of our smaller churches gather for worship either once a fortnight or once a month.

The WDMC makes recommendations to local Church Councils through the WDMC Steering Group, and our termly Open Meetings.



Act of Remembrance on Remembrance Sunday at Sedbergh War Memorial.



Three of our churches. Clockwise from top left: Aurora Borealis over St Andrew's Dent; A joint service in Cornerstone Community Church, Sedbergh; Hawes Junction Methodist Chapel, one of our smaller churches, which holds six services a year.

Our churches are:

Church of England

Parish of Sedbergh and Lune

- *St Andrew's Church, Sedbergh*
- *St Mark's Church, Cautley*
- *St John the Baptist's Church, Garsdale*
- *Holy Trinity Church, Howgill*
- *St John the Evangelist's Church, Firbank*
- *All Saints Church, Killington*

Parish of Dent with Cowgill

- *St Andrew's Church, Dent*
- *St John the Evangelist's Church, Cowgill*

Methodist Church

Methodist Church in the Western Dales

- *Cornerstone Community Church, Sedbergh*
- *Low Smithy Chapel, Garsdale*
- *Dentdale Methodist Church, Dent*
- *Hawes Junction Chapel, Garsdale*

In 2018, Sedbergh Methodist Church and Sedbergh United Reformed Church became one ecumenical congregation in Sedbergh. The new congregation is called 'Cornerstone Community Church', and it gathers to worship in the Methodist Chapel in Sedbergh.

Worship, Prayer, and Outreach

As a mission community, we seek to live out Christ's command to love God, and to love our neighbour. Heartfelt worship and holistic outreach are key values to us.

There is a range of approaches to worship across the WDMC. Many of our Sunday services offer liturgical worship according to Common Worship (Anglican) or the Methodist Worship Book (Methodist). Anglican services are usually Holy Communion, and Methodist services have communion once a month. Our liturgical services usually feature traditional hymns with organ accompaniment.

Alongside our liturgical worship, there are also services which are more informal, featuring a worship band, extempore prayer, and a more relaxed style. We also have a number of contemplative services, drawing from sources such as the communities of Iona, Northumbria, and Taizé. Intergenerational services and events are held throughout the mission community.



A joint choir for one of our Harvest Festivals.



Our annual Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday at Sedbergh People's Hall.

Morning Prayer is said on Mondays in Sedbergh, Tuesdays in Dent, and there are other more informal prayer groups which meet at other points during the week.

Our services follow the seasonal variations of the agricultural year. Harvest time is very important for our local communities, drawing large congregations to our Harvest Festivals, that are often accompanied by a Harvest Supper. In the Spring we have a number of Lambing services. We hold a Pet Service annually in Sedbergh, around the feast of St Francis.

We have a number of initiatives to reach out to our community with the love of God, both evangelistic and social. This includes services and events focused on young people, such as Ignite Youth Group, Messy Church, Teatime Church, and our annual Holiday Club. There are weekly coffee mornings in Sedbergh and Dent, and the weekly



Kids Club @ Cowgill meets roughly once a month on Saturday mornings with activities for children linked to the Christian calendar.



One of five prayer stations for a special service at Cornerstone Church.

‘Open House’ seeks to enable those in the community to explore spirituality in a relaxed setting. We also occasionally run enquirer courses for those interested in exploring faith.

There is an active Anna Chaplaincy team who minister to elderly people across the Western Dales, through links to hospitals, home visits, and community groups.



The Vicarage is situated in the heart of Dent on the village green.

Housing & Practical Considerations

A comfortable and modern Vicarage in the village of Dent is provided. The ground floor includes a dining room, living room, kitchen, utility room, pantry, and WC. The first floor has four bedrooms, a bathroom, and a WC. The property also has an outside patio area and small garden, and a garage. The council tax and water rates are met by Carlisle Diocese.

Being in a remote rural area, having a valid driving licence and vehicle is essential to this role. Travel and office expenses can be claimed from the WDMC treasurer.



Dent is known for its picturesque location in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Challenges

- Our congregations are largely elderly, and as such we are seeking to grow the church across all generations. At the beginning of 2025 we appointed our new Children, Youth, and Family Worker, and we aim to have a holistic, team-based approach to meeting this challenge.
- The Associate Minister role will be based in Dent. Dent is a small and remote village in the rural Yorkshire Dales National Park, and the candidate will therefore need to be able to form good relationships in a small community. Although a picturesque village, Dent experiences many of the issues faced by tourist hotspots – an ageing population, the challenge of keeping a small primary school running, and an increasing number of holiday homes which limits the intake of new residents.
- We are committed to working ecumenically together. This calls for a commitment to listening, collaborating, and building trust across traditions, and requires the ability to hold different theological convictions with grace and integrity. This role requires someone who is able to come alongside people with diverse viewpoints, and hold a neutral stance when helping our congregations grow in relationships with one another.



The Yorkshire Dales is a great location for walking, fell running, and cycling. Photo: Simon Wilkinson

Support

The role will be line managed by the WDMC Leader, and will involve monthly supervision meetings to ensure good support. The role will also be able to draw on the support of other team members, local Church Councils, and wider Diocesan (Anglican) and Circuit (Methodist) resources.

About the Local Area

We are situated in the county of Cumbria, at the western edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, in a spectacular landscape

of fells and valleys. The area covered by WDMC is roughly 70 square miles, with a population of c.3,500 (2018 figures). The Dales Way, a popular walking route, runs down Dentdale, through the picturesque Dent village, and on to Sedbergh. This is an ideal place to live if you enjoy being active outdoors, especially for fell-walking, fell-running, and cycling.



An outdoor Holy Communion service at St John's, Firbank.

In Dent, you'll find a village shop, two pubs, a Heritage Centre, a Meditation Centre, and two cafes. The churches hold Coffee Mornings on the first and third Saturday of each month. The churches also run 'Community Corner' every Wednesday afternoon.



A view of Dentdale.

Sedbergh, nestled at the foot of the Howgills and five miles east of the M6, is the largest town in the National Park. Sedbergh still retains many traditional shops including a butcher, greengrocer, sweet shop, a hardware shop and large bookshop. The weekly market has been held since 1251. Other services include a library, post office services, a pharmacy and a vet, as well as a Medical Centre and supermarket. There are two pubs, a hotel and two cafes.

The proximity of the M6, the West Coast Main Line at Oxenholme/Kendal and the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle line at Garsdale and Dent (Cowgill) is a major bonus for this rural community. There is a regular, but limited, bus service to Kendal from Sedbergh, and the bus goes twice a week from Dent. Lancaster, Penrith, Carlisle and the Lake District are within an hour's drive. Hyper-fast broadband (1000 Mbps) is available in Dent.

There are two primary schools within the Benefice: Dent CE voluntary aided primary school and Sedbergh primary school, both of which have Good OFSTED ratings. Settlebeck School is Sedbergh's mixed 11–16 comprehensive school with Specialist Technology and Science status. Settlebeck also has a Good OFSTED rating. For post-16 education, students transfer to schools in Kirkby Lonsdale and Kendal, or Kendal College. Sedbergh School, founded in 1525 is a co-educational independent boarding school, with many different buildings and playing fields around the town. The school has its own chaplaincy and chapel.

Music is quite outstanding in the area, with a biennial

Music Festival, Sedbergh Brass Band, Sedbergh Orchestra and the Dentdale Choir. There is a training brass band for children and adults to learn to play, and generous grants for children's music lessons are provided by the Trott Musical Foundation.



St Mark's, Cautley, celebrates its 175th anniversary with friends from the WDMC.

Next Steps

We hope you have found it helpful to read through this role profile. We believe the right candidate will find the Western Dales to be a welcoming, affirming, and supportive environment to live out a vocation of worship, prayer, and pastoral care.

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All applications need to be received by **9am, Monday, 9 June 2025.**

Interviews will take place on **Monday, 30 June 2025.**

Full details can be found by visiting: **www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/vacancies**

More information about the Western Dales and our churches can be found online at: **www.westerndales.org.uk**

For any questions or a conversation, please contact:

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