

# Curate Profile

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## HARRINGTON, DISTINGTON AND WESTFIELD



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Diocese of Carlisle

# CONTEXT - MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF CARLISLE

The Diocese of Carlisle is committed to the God for All vision. Launched in 2015, it is underpinned by a commitment across four denominations in Cumbria to grow God's Kingdom through the development of ecumenical Mission Communities. The vision is based on four values: Follow Daily (helping each other to follow Jesus more closely); Care Deeply (listening to our communities to serve them and to challenge injustice); Speak Boldly (sharing our faith in Jesus in everyday ways); and Tread Gently (seeking to sustain and renew the life of the earth).

Carlisle Diocese includes 351 church buildings and 105 schools, and is led by the Bishop of Carlisle. The Rt Revd Rob Saner Haigh has led the Diocese of Carlisle as Acting Bishop since 31 August 2023 and will be formally enthroned as Bishop of Carlisle in Autumn 2025, continuing his oversight of all parishes, clergy and lay ministries across Cumbria.

Though we cover a large region, Cumbria only has a population of 500,000. In turn, this makes us a friendly Diocese where relationships are often strong.

Mission Communities are the way in which the Church in Cumbria seeks to live out this vision. They are deeply collaborative: traditional ministries and forms of church, working intimately alongside innovative and pioneering expressions. They are collaborative between denominations, between clergy and laity, and between different communities. The ability to work collaboratively and ecumenically, as well as the ability to encourage all believers to discover their calling and use their gifts in ministry is essential to a thriving ministry in a Mission Community context. Harrington, Distington and Westfield belong to the Workington Mission Community, alongside two parishes in Workington and The Parish of Camerton and Seaton with West Seaton.



Rt Rev Rob Saner-Haigh,  
Bishop Designate of Penrith



St Mary's, Harrington



Church of the Holy Spirit, Distington



St Mary's, Westfield



# IS THIS YOUR CALLING?

These are exciting times to be part of this Mission Community.

### Who are we looking for?

Do you sense a call to ministry at the edge?

We're seeking a **creative, compassionate, resilient and community-minded curate** to serve across three distinctive parishes — **St Mary's Westfield, St Mary's Harrington, and The Church of the Holy Spirit Distington**—on the rugged coast of Cumbria.

Someone who can offer new perspectives using their life experience to further the kingdom of God. Who sees the beauty of mixed ecology and values both time-honoured church and pioneering new worshipping communities.

### What we can offer.

- A Warm Welcome
- A great team of colleagues across Churches Together.
- Churches that are prayerfully seeking to see God's Kingdom come afresh in this generation.
- The space to think outside the box, dream dreams and try new things.
- The chance to invest in community.
- An opportunity to develop worship and think deeply about connecting with those people who are unchurched.



# WHERE ARE WE?

Harrington is on the west coast of Cumbria, and Distington is slightly inland from Harrington. Both villages are on the south side of Workington. The parish of Harrington includes High Harrington and Salterbeck, whilst the parish of Distington includes Pica and Gilgarran. Both have areas of affluence and deprivation. Westfield is immediately north of Salterbeck.

There is a regular train service from Harrington Station, north to Carlisle and south to Barrow-In-Furness, a regular bus service between Westfield, Harrington and Distington and of course, there is easy access to the Lake District National Park.

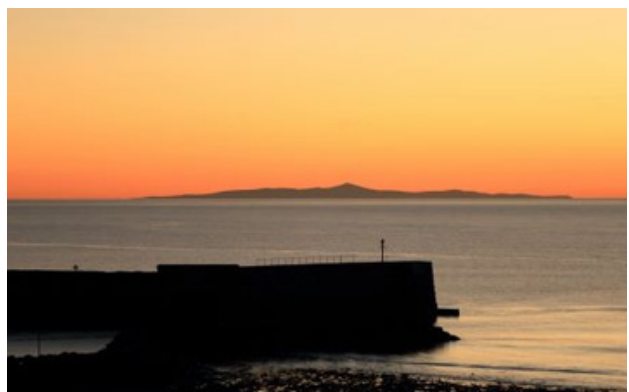
Perhaps unusually for a post-industrial area, we have a very strong sense of community and this post would suit someone who enjoys being at the heart of a community. The communities in the main, are made up of people who have remained local all their lives. We are a resilient people, who have seen major industries close down in the area in recent history and a great deal of adjustment has been accommodated. The current main employer in the area is Sellafield Ltd, who are responsible for decommissioning the Nuclear installation there. Our communities are very friendly and welcoming. Harrington has a growing community with many new housing developments emerging and Distington has a village feel with a strong community spirit. People who come to us from outside the local area often fall deeply in love with us and don't want to leave.

Westfield is a post-industrial area, immediately south of Workington, with a population of around 6,000, a high deprivation index and (by Cumbrian standards) a high population density. In recent years, Housing Associations have been using demolition and new-build to accommodate increasing numbers of young families in low cost housing, and to provide elderly people with bungalows or apartments. Westfield, Harrington and Distington are exploring ways of working collaboratively together.

It is expected that your ministry would be conducted across all three parishes, alongside Rev Sharon, Pioneering Priest-in-Charge of Westfield, who will be your training minister and Rev Dom de Mattos, Rector of Harrington and Distington,



View across Distington

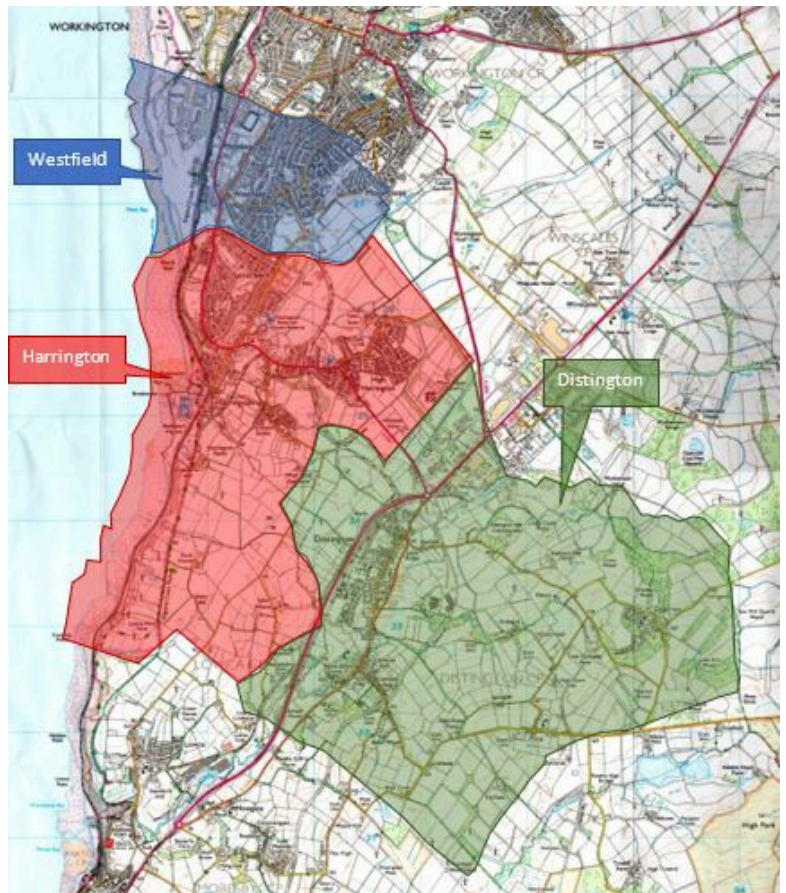


Harrington Harbour at sunset

# PARISH BOUNDARIES AND DEMOGRAPHICS



General location of Distington



Harrington, Distington and Westfield  
approx. parish boundaries

	Harrington		Distington		Westfield	
Population (2018)	6019		2320		6505	
Households	2458		1025		2943	
Deprivation index (where 12307 is least deprived parish)	1276		1593		299	
Area (square miles)	3.8		5.0		1.2	
0-4 year olds	6.0%	361	5.6%	130	6.9%	449
5 – 17 year olds	14.6%	879	12.8%	297	16.0%	1041
18 – 29 year olds	13.8%	831	13.2%	306	16.3%	1060
30 – 44 year olds	18.2%	1095	17.5%	406	17.5%	1138
45 – 64 year olds	28.2%	1697	28.6%	664	25.6%	1665
65+ year olds	19.2%	1157	22.2%	515	17.7%	1152

Harrington, Distington and Westfield population demographics



## OUR WORSHIP, MISSION AND COMMUNITY LINKS



Refreshments after Communion in  
Harrington Church Hall



Messy Church's

### ST.MARY'S HARRINGTON AND HOLY SPIRIT DISTINGTON

We have a variety of Sunday services and those at St Mary's Harrington are live-streamed. During the week we have a mid-week communion, a stay and play toddler group, as well as Toddler Praise (worship for 0 to 4 year olds). We have a monthly Messy Church and a Warm Welcome cafe at both Harrington and Distington. In September 2025 we are aiming to re-start Lazy Sunday breakfasts in an innovative joint venture with the Rugby Club in Distington.

We have established very good links with local schools and have an enthusiastic Open the Book team taking dramatised bible stories into primary schools in Harrington, Distington and Westfield. We have good relationships with the Scout Association, including Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers. There are six parade services each year, with each section of the association taking turns to take part. We have a thriving care home ministry, with monthly services of Holy Communion in four local homes.

Occasional offices are a very important part of our outreach in all three parishes. Confirmation services are held annually in the Mission Community and Harrington & Distington have passed resolutions to allow children to take communion before confirmation. Remembrance Services at Harrington & Distington are important civic and community events. Christmas and Easter cards are delivered by the Church to each house in Harrington & Distington, and both churches are particularly well attended at the Christmas Eve Crib services and the Christingle services.



Cuppa and Chat Cafe



Warm Welcome Cafe at St Mary's Church  
Hall, Harrington



## ST.MARY'S, WESTFIELD

Led by Pioneer-Priest-in Charge, Rev. Sharon Murphy, St. Mary's Westfield describes itself as having played a part in many people's lives over the years, often known locally as "our family church." St. Mary's has historic connections to the steel industry. We seek to be welcoming and loving to all as we explore together what it is to be loved by God. Sharing stories of our lives together. Some of us have been journeying with God for a long time, some of us are not sure if God even exists and some of us are somewhere in between. Anglo-Catholic in tradition. Inclusive in welcome. Embracing creativity. Dynamic in mission.

### **Sunday Services and New Worshipping Communities.**

Sunday 11.30 Holy Communion

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month. Breakfast Church. New Worshipping Community.

Every Monday at 4'oclock during term time. Monday@4 New worshipping Community for families.

Every Thursday at 7pm. Connect Workington New Worshipping Community for those facing the storms of life.

Second Thursday of each month Salisbury Court New Worshipping Community for older people living in supported accommodation.

The Parish Rooms at St. Mary's are used by the church and local community, third sector partners and strategic organisations. From birthday parties to local elections and everything in between.

Some of the groups that the church run from the Parish Centre include St. Mary's Baby and Toddler Group, Wednesday Warm Welcome Breakfast, Mental Health Support Group, Craft Group and Bible Study.



Christingle



Steel Workers  
Memorial Cross



Westfield Community Choir

# THE MISSION COMMUNITY

Harrington, Distington and Westfield belong to the Workington Mission Community, sitting at the southern end of it. Rev Dom de Mattos leads The Mission Community

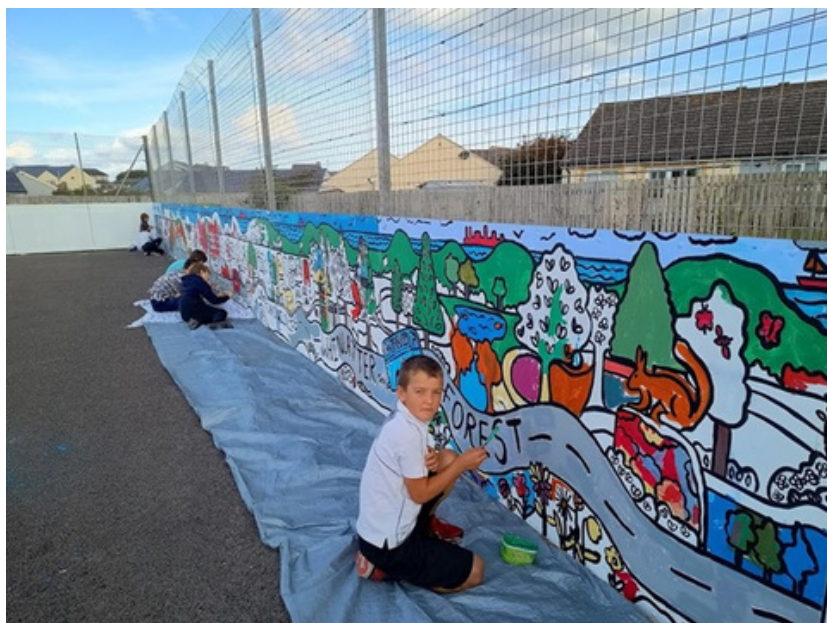
The single benefice of St John's and St Michael's, Workington as well as the parishes of Camerton and Seaton complete the Mission community.

The Mission Community was launched shortly before the disruptions of Covid and the disruption has meant that, for all practical purposes, the Mission Community is just beginning its journey of working together. Building collaboration is our first priority,

The Mission Community also benefits from the oversight of our Network Youth Church leader, Yvette Ladds, but the youth church locally is under-resourced, so a significant mission priority for the Mission Community will be to establish more locally-grown youth work. As part of this, the Mission Community is looking to appoint a parish youth worker.

We will also be exploring ways to work more collaboratively with the Methodist Churches in Workington, Seaton and Harrington, and the URC Church in Workington.

You will be arriving at an exciting time in the development of the Mission Community and the ability to work collaboratively, creatively and ecumenically will be key. Churches Together in Workington meet weekly for mutual support and too work together on bigger outreach events.



A new mural at the Oval Centre celebrating a holiday club last year



# WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

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## A CURATE WHO WOULD BE INVOLVED IN BOTH SUPPORTING PARISH MINISTRY AND ENGAGING IN INNOVATIVE MISSION

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This curacy offers not just the broad range of ministerial experience necessary to fulfill the training objectives at IME2, but a chance to stretch the wings and learn to fly.

The purpose of curacy is:

To allow mistakes to be made in a safe context

To fill the gap between training and experience

To allow for opportunities to grow fully into priesthood and form a sense of “self”,

To develop a clear understanding of distinctions between diaconal and priestly ministry and how diaconal ministry should be carried through into priesthood

The curacy will specifically provide experience of planning for and conducting traditional and contemporary services and occasional offices, including the pastoral support that goes with them, pastoral care, civic and ecumenical engagement, experimentation with prayer and mission within the God for All framework. Our Curate will be encouraged to be diligent about setting aside their study time and safeguarding their day off. The Training Minister will ensure that quality time is set aside for supervision and open discussion.

Our curate will be encouraged to learn to operate within a busy ministerial team and to learn to take on leadership responsibility. We seek to equip and develop in our curate a potential to become a leader of mission communities, with the management and leadership skills to encourage and equip others for ministry.

We are looking for someone who has the confidence to try new things and to step outside their comfort zone, someone who is ready to learn and is willing to be honest about their struggles. Our curate will have a heart for the community and a passion for prayer. Enthusiasm, optimism and a sense of humour will go a long way.

# YOUR TRAINING MINISTER

## REV. SHARON MURPHY

Sharon is married to John and they have eight children and eight grandchildren.

She was licensed to St. Mary's Westfield in July 2023 having moved from Derby where she led a BMO, Derwent Oak for the last 18 months of her curacy. Sharon trained part time at St. Hild's Theological College, completing an MA in Ministry and Mission, her dissertation title was 'Baiting the hook: using storytelling to increase engagement with the Eucharist' which embraced her passion for creative use of language and liturgy.

Whilst in Derby, Sharon facilitated the Derby Poverty Truth Commission allowing stories of lived experience of poverty to be heard by those in power.

Sharon has been involved in Christian Ministry for 27 years. Having previously led an EDEN Team of urban missionaries in Manchester, co-ordinated youth work for a local church and worked for a Christian Charity, Hope UK, educating young people, parents and youth workers about drugs and alcohol.

Prior to this Sharon qualified as a nurse specialising in working with people with addictions.

She is passionate about walking with people on their journey of faith, meeting them where they are, listening and using creativity to enable them to encounter the love of God.

When not working Sharon loves to walk on the fells, cook Persian food, read, write poetry, eat chocolate and drink great coffee.



# THE REST OF THE TEAM

The team consists of;

Rector of the benefice Harrington and Distington, the **Rev'd Dom de Mattos** who was licenced to the benefice in November 2022, and who is also the Workington Mission Community Leader.

Part time associate minister, the **Rev'd Alison Riley**, who is also Network Youth Church Minister for Calder Deanery.

Reader, **Richard Wilkinson**, who is also a Chaplain at West Cumberland Hospital and Whitehaven Rugby Club.

Curate **REV'D Ruth Illman**, who was priested in 2025 and works part time across the three parishes.

Each parish has its own PCC and two church wardens

There is an excellent tradition of music supported by

- Two organists
- One regular robed church choir at Harrington and a group of unrobed singers at Distington
- A fledgling worship group at Westfield
- The Westfield Community Choir

'The Tuesday Gang' is a group of volunteer parishioners from Harrington who carry out maintenance of Harrington church, hall and grounds, and who help out at the other churches on an occasional basis

## Support for pioneering.

Carlisle Diocese support pioneers through an established local network of informal and formal meet ups as well as one to one supervision.



Rev'd Dom de Mattos and grandson!



Rev'd Alison Riley - Part time Associate Minister



Richard Wilkinson, Reader



Rev'd Ruth Illman, Part time Curate



# CURATE'S HOUSING



You will be housed in the The Rectory, Church Road, Distington CA14 5TE. The Rectory is an attractive four bedroomed house with a dedicated study and enclosed garden, situated at the heart of the community between Holy Spirit Church and Distington Primary School. Floor plans are available on request.





- <https://www.stmarys-harrington-and-holyspirit-distington.co>
- <https://www.facebook.com/stmarysonthehillharrington>
- <https://www.facebook.com/holyspiritdistington>
- <https://www.facebook.com/stmarychurch,westfield/>
- <https://www.carlisediocese.org.uk/>
- <https://www.godforall.org.uk/>



Looking north from Harrington Harbour



# Would you like to arrange a visit?

**Contact**

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