DRYBURGH DISTRICT CHURCHES

(Church of Scotland) SC010210

www.dryburghdistrictchurches.com

Parish of Maxton, Mertoun, Newtown & St Boswells

Uniting in serving God by welcoming you,
sharing His love and reaching out in service to our communities

PARISH PROFILE

We are looking for a new minister to lead us, following the retirement of our minister at the end of September 2025 after 18 years.

INDEX

Our Community 2

Mission 3

Vision 3

Values 3

Strategy 3

Minister's Profile 4

Church Life 5

Worship Life 8

Stewardship and Finance 10

Staffing 10

Manse 11

Church Hall 11

Act 1: 2015 11

Links 12

OUR COMMUNITY

The Charge of Dryburgh District Churches (DDC) lies in the beautiful Scottish Borders, under the watchful eye of the Eildon Hills. The parish spans the north and south sides of a section of the River Tweed.

The united Charge of Dryburgh District Churches came into being when the former linked Charge of Maxton & Mertoun, linked with Newtown, linked with St Boswells, united in 2020 – no mean feat during a Covid pandemic! The union has proved to be very successful and we have built on our excellent working relationships within the Kirk Session and the wider community.

Our rural community consists of two large villages, St Boswells and Newtown St Boswells, the small village of Maxton and the hamlet of Mertoun, with surrounding farms.

Church of Scotland Parish statistics: link on page 12.

MISSION

Uniting in serving God, by welcoming you, sharing His love and reaching out in service to our communities.

VISION

The five-year vision for Dryburgh District Churches is to build on the ongoing goodwill with senior adults and primary school aged children. To this end, we aim to focus worship services and community events through the filter of welcoming, belonging and wellbeing.

VALUES

The values identified as predominant are:

- **Warm and welcoming**
- **Belonging**
- **Participation**
- **Safety**
- **Inclusivity**
- **Accessibility (Social, theological, liturgical, intellectual and physical)**

STRATEGY

Like many Scottish Churches, we are an ageing congregation with an ageing Eldership. Unlike many congregations, we see this as the source of our missional advantage. Our rationale is that this demographic set has time, skills, experience and resources that coincide with their life stage of religious interest and a desire for belonging.

We plan to minister to our older parishioners because they are intrinsically valuable in their own right, whilst engaging with those people who move into the older age groups.

We are blessed to have good relationships with our local schools *(see page 7)* and with Messy Church, *(see page 6)*.

Our plan is to maintain and develop these ministry opportunities and strengthen these community links as follows:

- work with our new minister in focusing our style of worship and content to facilitate participation in a meaningful and authentic experience for our congregation
- this ministerial focus also requires increasing our skill and capacity for pastoral care and we intend to develop our team around the minister
- excel at welcoming our congregation
- refurbish our Sunday morning worship practices and facilities
- update our audiovisual systems
- provide more comfortable seating

MINISTER'S PROFILE

In our discernment process, we will be weighting our assessment as follows:

- **Missional Passion**
- **Preaching and Leading Worship**
- **Pastoral Care**
- **Strategic Leadership**

Missional Passion is the overarching attribute under which the remaining 3 headings in the profile develop the type of ministry envisaged for the next five years at DDC. It refers to an intrinsic bias towards exploring and delivering outreach, worship services and pastoral care to senior adults within the congregation and across the parish, whilst continuing to welcome young adults and families. Together we wish to consider the most effective means of engaging senior adults. We hope that our new minister will be able to lead DDC to strategically develop our church life and outreach to fulfil this vision.

Preaching and Leading Worship is primarily with senior adults in mind as detailed under our Strategy. Our vision is to offer meaningful and accessible worship including welcoming, belonging, participation and safety. To achieve this, fixtures and furnishings, hymn selection, sermon style and duration and fellowship, all work together. At present, this is only partially realised in DDC worship services and our hope is for a minister who will lead us and contribute to this vision.

Pastoral Care: As senior adults are the focus of our vision for the next five years, appropriate Pastoral Care will be a crucial element. We envisage the development of a pastoral care team who are committed and competent to work with the congregation, specifically addressing the spiritual, social and logistical needs of senior adults.

We are looking for a minister who is adept at pastoral care and able to train and encourage new team members. As a member of the pastoral care team the Minister's work load in this respect will be shared.

Strategic Leadership: DDC is blessed with a number of passionate and competent Elders and members who will benefit from the leadership of a minister to draw out their best. We seek a minister who can help us to hold the vision for the next five years and roll out the improvements and innovations that will achieve these goals.

Although the primary focus of our vision is with senior adults, it is important for us to maintain and develop our good relationships with children and the schools within the parish. Our new minister will be enthusiastic and missional with children, as a secondary focus. Therefore, the day-to-day ministry to children can be delegated to the leaders of our popular and successful Messy Church, with oversight and support from the minister. We expect our new minister will serve as the point of contact and chaplain for school assemblies and children's events.

CHURCH LIFE

At the time of our Union, there were 4 church buildings in use. Since then, in line with the Presbytery Plan, Maxton and Mertoun church buildings have been sold. Discussions are ongoing about the future of the other buildings in the Charge – Newtown Church, St Boswells Church and the Church Hall which is in St Boswells. Both church buildings are open to the public, between April and October, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Our Charge is blessed with two dedicated and competent Session Clerks, well supported by our Kirk Session which has a total of 19 active elders. There are 5 sub committees which report back to Kirk Session meetings: **Finance**, **Property**, **Mission and Outreach**, **Stewardship** and **Fund Raising / Social**.

A well attended, popular **Community Lunch Club** is held twice monthly on first and third Fridays in the Church Hall, operated by 3 teams of volunteers from the community. A simple soup and sandwich lunch, with coffee / tea and biscuits, is provided for a small charge, on a non-profit making basis. Everyone in the community and the surrounding area is welcome – all ages from babes-in-arms to the more elderly! The social atmosphere is every bit as important and enjoyed as much as the lunch. The Club takes a rest in July and August!

Messy Church Play also meets twice monthly in the Church Hall, on second and fourth Fridays, during term time. Around 20 pre-school and primary school age children, along with parents/carers, enjoy snacks on arrival followed by an hour of bible based, fun, seasonal activities – songs, crafts etc. Messy Church is led by a small team of lay volunteers who share their own expertise and abilities with the children and adults. Some involvement by our Minister will be invaluable. There is no charge for attending Messy Church which is funded by our Mission Fund.

A community **'Come and Sing' Choir**, set up with Church of Scotland funding, meets weekly in Newtown Community Wing in term time. Members come from the community as well as the church, with singing led by the choir leader. All genres and types of music are covered! A small weekly charge contributes to the honorarium for the leader and the charge for the premises.

A weekly **'Tea and Chat'** afternoon in the Church Hall is well-attended and provides company and social interaction for members of the community. There is no charge and church members provide tea, coffee and biscuit refreshments, with cake occasionally on a special occasion! 'Tea and Chat' operates all year except for a short break over Christmas.

The Craft Group also meets weekly in the Church Hall. Anyone is welcome to come along for a cuppa, to do their own craft, or learn from others e.g. knitting, crochet embroidery, diamond painting etc! A small charge provides refreshments and a donation is made to the Church towards the use of the Hall. A break is usually taken in July and August and over Christmas.

A popular **Church Newsletter** is issued quarterly and, with the help of volunteers, is distributed to over 1700 homes in the parish. In addition to Church information, contributions from community organisations are welcomed for a small charge, including local advertisements on the back pages. Income contributes to the cost of printing *(see page 12)*.

The minister acts as **Chaplain to Newtown and St Boswells Primary Schools** which are attended by most of the school children in the parish. The Chaplain is welcome in both schools and the schools are welcome in both Churches. End of term assemblies are usually held in respective churches, planned and led by the children. The nearest secondary school is Earlston High School.

WORSHIP LIFE

The faith culture of Dryburgh District Churches is theologically mainstream. We are very fortunate to have an accomplished musician to lead our music during worship, primarily with organ, and piano or keyboard as appropriate. Hymns are generally chosen from CH4 although hymns from other sources are welcomed.

St Boswells Church

There is currently one service at 10.30am each Sunday alternating between St Boswells and Newtown Churches, with an average attendance of 20-30. Weekly worship is streamed live and is available on our Facebook page and through our website (*link on page 12*).

Members of the congregation are involved in reading lessons and we are fortunate to have two elders who are trained worship leaders.

Newtown Church

Families are always welcome at morning worship and in their absence a 'children's' address can be adapted for those who are young at heart! Children are encouraged to participate in regular Communion services (with juice, not wine!).

In addition to weekly Sunday morning worship, a monthly informal service, '**Worship on Wednesday**', is held in the Church Hall at 10am on the first Wednesday of the month, followed by a cuppa and a time of fellowship.

Dove Window

Rose Window

Special services and events are held throughout the year:

On **Maundy Thursday** evening a service of communion is held in the Church Hall, often attended by members of the community from other denominations.

On **Easter Sunday** morning a short, early morning ecumenical service is held in the grounds of Dryburgh Abbey which sits within our parish. We are grateful to Historic Environment Scotland for opening the Abbey grounds for us. Morning worship at 10.30am is held in one of the churches.

Traditionally, during **Holy Week**, a group of Northern Cross pilgrims spend the night in the Church Hall on their pilgrimage to Lindisfarne for Good Friday. Members of the congregation sometimes join them for part of their journey.

A special **'Founder's Day'** service has been held in St Boswells Church in June for the past few years to commemorate Earl Haig, the founder of the Royal British Legion. His former home at Bemersyde is also located in our parish.

Harvest Thanksgiving Services are held in October in both churches. The local schools generously contribute to the harvest gifts appeal for non-perishable foods which are donated to local foodbanks. Monetary contributions are also invited towards a named charity; gifts of flowers are distributed throughout the parish. Both Churches are decorated with a harvest theme.

The Start of **Advent** is heralded by the arrival of Mary, Joseph and the donkey as they make their way to the stable in Bethlehem (via St Boswells Church Garden). This is much enjoyed by the whole community and after the Christingle service, the children rush out to see the newly born baby in the manger. It is, after all, Christmas Day somewhere in the world!

Families and relations visiting for Christmas enjoy the very popular, child-based **Christingle** service at 4pm on Christmas Eve in St Boswells Church. It is preceded with the opportunity for children to make Christingles in the Church Hall and bring them in to the service.

One of our elders represents our Charge at meetings of **St Cuthbert's Way Churches Together**, a collaboration between different denominations promoting the pilgrimage route from Melrose to Holy Island (*link on page 12).*

Other denominations in the local area are Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and Green Hope Church.

Each year, the congregation supports fundraising for Christian Aid and The Blythswood Shoebox Appeal. In addition, three charities are chosen each year and these are supported by special fundraising appeals at Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

The Stewardship sub-committee of Dryburgh District Churches is keen to support the ideals of good Stewardship and plays a very important role in the life of the Church. We are Stewards of all that God has placed in our care. While finance plays an important role in our Stewardship, God's gifts of Time, Talents and Creation are also vital elements in the role of good Stewardship in our Charge.

There is a very active fund-raising committee who organise regular events such as Coffee Mornings (or Afternoons!), Strawberry Teas, Plant Sales and a Christmas Fair, as well as special extra events such as a Flower Festival, Church Calendar and one member has even written a couple of books which have been sold for Church funds.

Current Church Accounts are available on our website: (*link on page 12).*

STAFFING

Apart from payments to the church organist and the cleaner and an honorarium to the church treasurer, all other work is carried out by volunteers.

MANSE

Our **Manse** was purchased as a new build in 2007 and has been the home of our minister since then. It is located in a quiet residential development in St Boswells, a short walking distance from St Boswells Church and within 1.5 miles of Newtown. The very attractive property comprises, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, downstairs toilet, study, lounge, dining room, master bedroom with en-suite shower, 3 further bedrooms, one single and two large single / small double. The landscaped garden is easily maintained and a gardener can be provided if required. There is a double garage.

CHURCH HALL

The **Church Hall** is in the centre of St Boswells, opposite the church. It is well used by church organisations and also by the community for various activities – Yoga, Pilates, Community Council meetings and family celebrations. A charge is made for use by non-church organisations to help cover the cost of electricity and heating, but it is not seen as a profit-making venture.

ACT 1: 2015

The Kirk Session has decided to depart from the traditional position of the Church in regard to ministers in civil partnerships and same sex marriages. Thus, the post is open to all ministers of Word and Sacrament as well as those Candidates in Training searching for their first Charge.

Thank you for reading our Parish Profile.

For informal enquiries please contact:

Interim Moderator: Rev Mike Taylor: **godsborders@gmail.com**

Nominating Committee Convener: Jim Ross: **jmr6591@gmail.com**

Nominating Committee Clerks:
Winnie Milligan & Lucy Smith: **lucyasmith49@gmail.com**

If you would like join us, please send your application to the Clerks of the Nominating Committee including your CV, a personal statement of ideally not more than 600 words summarising the main gifts, skills and experience you would bring to the Charge, together with the names of two referees (they will only be contacted if your application progresses) and any links to recent online services you have conducted.

Closing date for applications: 31st October 2026

LINKS

Dryburgh District Churches: **www.dryburghdistrictchurches.org**

Church of Scotland Parish Statistics:
www.dryburghdistrictchurches.org/parish-profile1.html

Our Newsletters: **www.dryburghdistrictchurches.org/newsletter.html**

Facebook: **www.facebook.com/Dryburghdistrictchurches/**

St Cuthbert's Way Churches Together: **www.scwchurches.co.uk/**

DDC Accounts 2025: **www.dryburghdistrictchurches.org/parish-profile1.html**