



PRIEST-IN-CHARGE PROFILE
FOR
ST GEORGE'S & ST MARY'S
NORTH DEVON

Stepping **OUT** *in* faith to
show and share
the love of Jesus

www.stggeorgeham.org

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1. The Archdeacon's Foreword

This post presents a fantastic opportunity for an imaginative and creative priest to work with a committed group of parishes seeking to deepen their working together as a Mission Community, to bring together churches and communities, and to grow in faith and discipleship. We would hope that the right candidate will bring experience, energy and innovation to this role of Priest-in-charge, as part of a committed ministry team, lay and ordained.

This is a half-time appointment which is supported by the Team Rector Designate, Revd Steve Painting.

You will be joining a dynamic team and a Mission Community which is committed to finding new and exciting ways to making a difference in their communities, grow new disciples and enable disciples to grow in their discipleship.

Our Diocesan Vision

We seek to be people who together are:

❖ Growing in Prayer

Prayer is conversation with God and is part of a healthy Christian life. Prayer is a life-giving activity that opens up deep places within us to God's transforming grace. It is essential if we are to become the people and the Church God calls us to be.

❖ Making new disciples

As the Christian story is less and less known, we must find new ways of telling the story, of explaining the faith and giving a reason for the hope that is in us. With Jesus Christ as our companion and guide, we can travel through life differently.

❖ Serving the people of Devon with joy

As followers of Jesus Christ, we want to make a difference in the world and make God's love and justice known. In our church life, we seek to be local, participatory, and outward-looking.

Further information regarding our Diocesan Vision can be found in our Next Steps document at

www.exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/vision-strategy

Living in Mission Communities

Our strategy centres on Mission Communities - parishes working together to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ more effectively in Devon. The phrase Mission Communities sums up what we need to be as a Church in the 21st century: **mission-orientated, community-focused, and locally-rooted.**

Mission Communities help us to work together and support one another better. They enable us to be more flexible in our mission and more responsive to the different contexts and cultures of Devon.

A Mission Community aims to express the fullness of the life of the Church **locally**. This will include:

- regular prayer and worship
- pastoral care
- evangelism and mission, often in collaboration with ecumenical partners
- opportunities for learning, teaching, nurture and growth for disciples of all ages
- youth and children's work and worship
- equipping members for ministry in the community and the local Church
- connecting with the local community, especially in service to the poor
- good administration and stewardship of time, resources and buildings

If our Mission Communities are to flourish, they need to be more than just a structure. They need to live and embody the life of Jesus Christ and to share that life with others. Jesus came so that we can have life in all its fullness. That is our vision and our hope for the Church in Devon.

In this Profile, you will find something of the vision and challenges of this Mission Community. I commend it to your study and prayer as you seek to discern your next step in ministry.

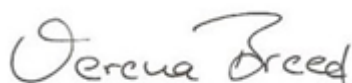
Deanery & Diocese

The Mission Community falls within the Archdeaconry of Barnstaple, and so under the care of the Bishop of Crediton. The North Taw MC is in the Barnstaple Deanery of which I am currently Acting Rural Dean, Assistant Rural Dean is The Rev'd Shirley Paterson. Shirley is Associate Priest at Holy Trinity, Barnstaple.

In the Diocese of Exeter, we are working together to live out our three diocesan priorities - to grow in prayer, to make new disciples and to serve the people of Devon with joy. We aim to be a diverse and truly representative diocese, and particularly welcome applications from women and those from black and minority ethnic groups. Not only is Devon a beautiful place to call home, but we believe the Diocese of Exeter is a great community of which to be a part.

You are warmly invited to contact me directly if you would like a confidential conversation about the post.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Diocese.



The Venerable Verena Breed
Archdeacon of Barnstaple

2. The Church in the Community

The Churches of St. George's and St. Mary's lie at the heart of each village, but for many years they have worked together with the wider Christian Community in Georgeham and Croyde, including Croyde Baptist Church and St. George's House Christian Outdoor Activity Centre. This group (together on occasion with Christian Surfers UK), is the Church in the Community, and seeks to bring the good news of Jesus Christ, and to offer practical help and support to all those living here.

The Parish Church of St George's in Georgeham



Dating back to the 13th century, the church is actively used for Sunday worship each week, and is open daily. The Grade 1 listed building is in good condition and has some multi-media facilities which we are looking to upgrade soon. There is a small kitchen and toilet at the rear of the Church, and a dedicated area for children at the front. There has been a recent quinquennial inspection, with some recommended repairs to be undertaken in the next couple of years, but nothing urgent.

"We have been overwhelmed by the welcome we have enjoyed since moving to Georgeham in late 2021 and St George's has played a huge part in that welcome. Such a warm and friendly congregation - a joy to be amongst everyone."

Prior to the Covid Pandemic, initial discussions had begun between the PCC and the DAC to make some changes to parts of the building, to allow for more flexible worship opportunities, and more options for community use and involvement. The PCC is keen to revisit this, as restrictions ease, and look forward to working with a new Vicar on this project.



The people of St. George's feel that 2022 offers a new start post-covid, and with a new Vicar coming soon, to 're-set' to new challenges and take advantage of new opportunities. The Parish enjoys a varied Churchmanship but would place itself in the 'open evangelical' tradition overall. Over many years, the Church has benefitted from strong Bible teaching, and has experienced some Ministry of the Holy Spirit. The members are open to new ideas and look forward to a new leader helping them grow in faith, service and spirituality.

Weekly, 11am services are informal in style, with words and images projected onto a screen allowing for variety and flexibility. Our monthly service pattern is currently:

- ❖ First Sunday - All age, family worship, all generations celebrating together.
- ❖ Second Sunday - Morning Worship with Kids' Church and youth group.
- ❖ Third Sunday - Morning Worship.
- ❖ Fourth Sunday - Holy Communion (Common Worship) with Kids' Church and youth group, and shared with the congregation of St. Mary's.
- ❖ Fifth Sunday – varied, but sometimes worship together with Croyde Baptist Church, either in St. George's, or in the Baptist Church.



The music is led by a small but committed Music Worship Group most Sundays, using a wide range of songs, and regularly introducing new ones. The group currently consists of musicians playing piano, bass guitar, violin/viola, and drums some weeks, and two singers, but the group would love to welcome more participants! Music on the fourth Sunday for Parish Communion is led by an excellent organist and is more traditional in style.



Services have been led by our Interim Vicar (generally without robes), a Reader, a retired Vicar from the congregation with PTO, as well as occasional visits from clergy from the wider Mission Community. Over the years, there has been some involvement in leading the services from other members of the congregation from time to time, and members are keen for this to be expanded and grown in the future. After the service, there is always coffee, tea and cake/biscuits, with time for fellowship and chat. There is also usually an invitation from the front during the service, for anyone needing quiet prayer after the service, to speak to whoever is leading that day.

From a group of 70 regular worshippers our weekly attendance is around 40, but much larger when the community join us for Easter, Christmas, Remembrance and other important events. In addition, we are often joined by holiday makers during busy times of year, and frequently by those who have second homes in the villages, and see St. George's as their 'second Church'.

*"I felt like I'd come home when I first came to St George's.
Now it feels like a supportive encouraging family environment."*

Kids' Church is for children from 3-11, which currently meets on the second and fourth Sundays, but may increase to include the third Sunday in the future. There are currently up to 9 children attending this group. For young people of secondary school age, there is a Sunday youth group that grew out of a Youth Alpha course, which was a joint venture between St. George's and Croyde Baptist Church. This group meets twice a month, is run as a joint ministry between both Churches, and there are currently 3 members of St. George's attending.



The PCC has recently committed to employing a part-time Children's and Families worker, and this is in the early stages of advertising. The cost of this is underwritten for two years by an existing legacy, but it is hoped that it will be covered by donations.



The PCC currently commits 12% of its income to supporting mission at home and abroad via its linked charities and organisations, and before Covid restrictions, there were regular visits from a number of our Mission Partners, or their representatives, to update the congregation on the work their money is contributing to. We are also a collection point for the local foodbank, with a shopping trolley donated by a supermarket at the back of the Church to collect contributions!

Homegroups have always been an important part of our Church, but during Covid restrictions, not all groups were able to continue meeting online, so this year there is a move to encourage attendance once again, starting with a new series on the work and person of the Holy Spirit.



A small group of people have recently begun again to meet weekly to pray for the Church in Community, with the emphasis being particularly on prayer for growth, both in numbers, but also within ourselves. Over the years preceding the pandemic, this group of faithful prayer warriors had met most weeks, and are committed to continuing to do so in the future!



New for 2022 is our Men's Ministry, with St. George's being affiliated to 'Christian Vision for Men', a charity dedicated to equipping and growing men in their walk with the Lord. The first event of 2022 was a curry night in the back of the Church, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who came! We are keen to develop this into regular get togethers and start an equivalent Women's Ministry.

The Mission Church of St Mary Magdalene in Croyde

Built in 1875, this Grade 2 listed building was completely reordered in 2002 and has services on 2 out of 4 Sundays, but with plans to increase this to 3 out of 4, maybe with the development of more lay involvement.

The current pattern of services is:

- ❖ Second Sunday – Holy Communion (BCP)
- ❖ Third Sunday – Morning Prayer (BCP)
- ❖ Fourth Sunday – Join with St. George's Church for Holy Communion in Georgeham

The Church has an average attendance of around 10, and services are held at 9am. They are led by the same Team as those at St. George's, and music is normally led using CDs operated by the service leader.

"Small but committed congregation, traditional services."



The building has an open feel with chairs rather than pews, and is used for Church meetings such as PCC and the weekly prayer group. It is also used by the community for occasional summer exhibitions, courses, and local organisation meetings. Planned improvements to the kitchen facilities will hopefully make it more community-use friendly. The building has a telephone and wi-fi connection, and has until recently been used as the Church Office.

Croyde Baptist Church



'Croyde Baptist church has an active membership of 40+ people (from across the area) with a further 10-20 people regularly connected to the church. We have a good number of children and young people attached to the church too. We are exploring new expressions of church and mission and Andrew, the part-time Pastor, has been specifically appointed to help them through this process. Our main church centre is in Croyde and we have a chapel in Georgeham – we are in the process of refurbishing them both. We are committed to 'church in the community' which is an expression of Christians together including St George's and St Mary's, Croyde Baptist Church, Christian Surfers UK, and St George's House. We regularly share services with St George's and the youth in the two churches meet at least twice a month.'

Andrew Macausland – Pastor

Georgeham Baptist Chapel while no longer used for services, provides opportunities for a range of activities such as the pre-covid Friday night meetings for families and young people. A local Charity 'The Wave Project' has offices in the building, and the Sunday morning Youth Group meets here.

St George's House

St. George's House is an independent interdenominational Christian Charitable Trust housed in the former Rectory, which is adjacent to St George's Church. It provides residential accommodation for outdoor activities and Christian outreach to young people from all over the country, including schools and youth clubs. Members of staff from the House run 'The Point' youth club weekly for Years 6-9, and there are links to South Street Evangelical Church in Braunton who run a club for older teenagers in there too. Several staff from the House attend Churches locally, and St George's Kids' Church is accommodated at St George's House.



Here are a couple of quotes from a young person and an adult leader, who have recently stayed at St. George's House:

'I'd like to thank you all for an incredible week at Active Revision. I got a lot of revision done but I also gained a lot from the week spiritually.'

'Both the children and us adults had a great time. The activities, the centre itself, the food and most of all the attitudes, warm welcome and friendliness of the staff all added to making our time there so memorable.'

The School in the Community



Georgeham Church of England Primary School enjoys a good reputation locally, with around 100 children on roll. It was judged as 'Good' recently by both Ofsted and SIAMS. Links to the Churches are strong, with a team from the Anglican and Baptist Churches visiting the school on the 'Open the Book' project. Local clergy from both denominations lead collective worship at the school, and historically, there has always been Church representation on the governing body. The Headteacher is very supportive of Church links, and children join us for Easter and Christmas services, as well as 'The Crib on the Green' produced by local families, and celebrated with an outdoor carol service around the village.

The Rector of Georgeham Parish is an ex-officio governor on the governing body of the school, and there is room for 2 foundation governors from the Christian community. The ex-officio post is currently held by a retired ordained minister from the village.

3. The North Taw Mission Community

In 2018 the parish of Georgeham and Croyde joined with the Benefice of Heanton, Marwood and West Down to form the North Taw Mission Community. Mission Communities are informal rather than legal entities introduced by Exeter Diocese in the early part of this century to encourage mutual support between parishes and to facilitate the mission of the churches in a given locality.

The Benefice of Heanton, Marwood and West Down is currently served by a full-time stipendiary minister alongside a self-supporting minister who is also licensed to serve in the parish of Georgeham and Croyde.

St. Augustine's Heanton is located Northwest of Braunton and comprises the residential areas of Heanton Punchardon, Wrafton and Chivenor. Marwood is located north of Barnstaple and comprises several rural hamlets. West Down is a self-contained village lying between Braunton and Ilfracombe.

Whilst each of the Churches in the Mission Community has a unique character and geographical context, we have found that sharing in the various areas of church life has been rewarding. It has been particularly helpful in providing the basis for mutual support for ministers and to reduce multiplication of particular areas of ministry across the churches. Each church within the Mission Community is keen to develop further its shared ministry as well as explore a working relationship with the Parish Church in Braunton.

Since the formation of the Mission Community, our churches have worked together in the following areas of ministry:

- ❖ Weekly meetings of licensed ministers to develop shared vision and provide mutual support and encouragement.
- ❖ Shared acts of worship at different points in the Church calendar e.g. Ash Wednesday, Pentecost, Ascension Day.
- ❖ Ministers from each Benefice leading services in all the churches across the Mission Community.
- ❖ Nurture courses (Big Questions – our own course for people new to Christianity) and Alpha.
- ❖ Discipleship teaching days.
- ❖ Marriage Preparation Days including some via zoom during the pandemic.

Going forward It is our desire that our new Vicar would contribute to these areas of ministry and be part of a conversation about other areas in which our churches could work together. Possibilities include:

- ❖ Elements of Church administration e.g. weddings, funerals, and safeguarding.
- ❖ Extension of the Baptism preparation and follow up team currently established in the Heanton, Marwood and West Down Benefice.
- ❖ Leading of various aspects of worship including that undertaken by the laity.

Collaborative ministry will be an important aspect of the life of MC in the coming years and will hopefully provide practical support for all its ministers.

Revd Steve Painting, Team Rector Designate



Much has been said throughout this document about what happens in and around our Churches, and there are many good things, but there is always more that can be done, and improvements to make! This section outlines the key areas of development identified, but there is openness to the direction of the new leadership, and to the Holy Spirit's guidance into new areas of ministry:

- ❖ Spreading the good news of Jesus to our community, visitors, and further afield.
- ❖ Caring for the church family across the generations in addition to the wider community, by developing a Pastoral Team and growing Men's and Women's Ministries.
- ❖ Growing our understanding of the Bible and development of prayer life, including further development of Homegroups, and a Prayer Ministry Team.
- ❖ Developing our church buildings to be more accessible, welcoming places to the community not just on Sunday!
- ❖ Developing the ministry among the younger generation – providing a families and children's worker.
- ❖ Developing the working relationship with the North Taw Mission Community.
- ❖ Enhancing the working relationships with Croyde Baptist church.
- ❖ Continuing to provide a safe, secure environment, with Safeguarding given a high level of priority.
- ❖ Developing an Administrative Team to support the working life of the Church.

4. Role Description

We believe the key tasks are:

- ❖ To be the hub, or centre, of the leadership of the Churches and to be able to discern God's will for them through prayer, strong Bible teaching and listening to both God and his people.
- ❖ To help us to understand more fully and respond more deeply to the Father's heart for the lost, inspiring, and leading our outreach to both residents and holiday visitors.
- ❖ To nurture, support and develop the Children's and Families Worker role.
- ❖ To build on and strengthen links with the primary school.
- ❖ To work collaboratively as part of a team, alongside ordained, lay and North Taw Mission Community partners.
- ❖ Re-ordering of the Church buildings to facilitate mission vision and links to the community use of the buildings.
- ❖ To live and work as an integrated member of our community.

5. Person Specification including skills and experience

We believe that what we need is a person:

- ❖ Who is collaborative and energetic, with a people-centred approach to ministry, who has vision.
- ❖ Understands the opportunities and challenges offered by the close community of village life and a rural Church setting.
- ❖ Who enjoys working in a team, and who has a commitment to collaborative working with lay, ordained and ecumenical colleagues.
- ❖ Who has a heart for mission, a love for Jesus, and a willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit. A person who cares about people, and who wants to show the love of God to them.
- ❖ Someone with resilience, courage and conviction who can respond to the needs of a mature congregation who are nevertheless keen to embrace change and grow.
- ❖ Who inspires and supports with understanding. A person who enables and develops gifts, helping those in the Church to develop so that they reach out to others in the wider community.
- ❖ Who is a Bible-centred teacher, and can communicate effectively with those who are not regular Church goers, as well as those who are.

6. What we offer

- ❖ A warm welcome, with all the love and support we can give you in your new post, in both the joys and the challenges.
- ❖ A supportive PCC with a unity about moving forward as a Church.
- ❖ Support from clergy colleagues within the North Taw Mission Community, taking Sunday services, weddings and funerals.
- ❖ Buildings in reasonably good order, and a sound financial position.
- ❖ A friendly village and beautiful countryside, with beaches within minutes. The area is served by a good village school, and a local bus service to Barnstaple and beyond.
- ❖ A variety of worship opportunities and the scope to develop these and other activities in Church and community.
- ❖ Good links with schools, our partners in the mission community and other local Churches.
- ❖ Committed and willing congregations who are flexible in their vision for the future, and open to fresh ideas and input from a new Vicar.
- ❖ A four bedroomed Rectory in the heart of the village.

We realise that the post being offered is a part time one, and so we are committed to support the ministry of a new Vicar in any way we can. This will no doubt develop over time, but in addition to the points already made, the following are also in place:

- ❖ A team dedicated to looking after the buildings.
- ❖ A new Pastoral Team being developed from Autumn 2022.
- ❖ Experienced Church Wardens and Treasurer.
- ❖ Lay members of congregation keen to help with leading or taking part in services, as well as a Reader and a retired Vicar with PTO.



The 4 bedroom detached Rectory was built in the late 1970's. It is situated in the centre of Georgeham village, with easy access to the Church, school, shop, park (and pubs!).

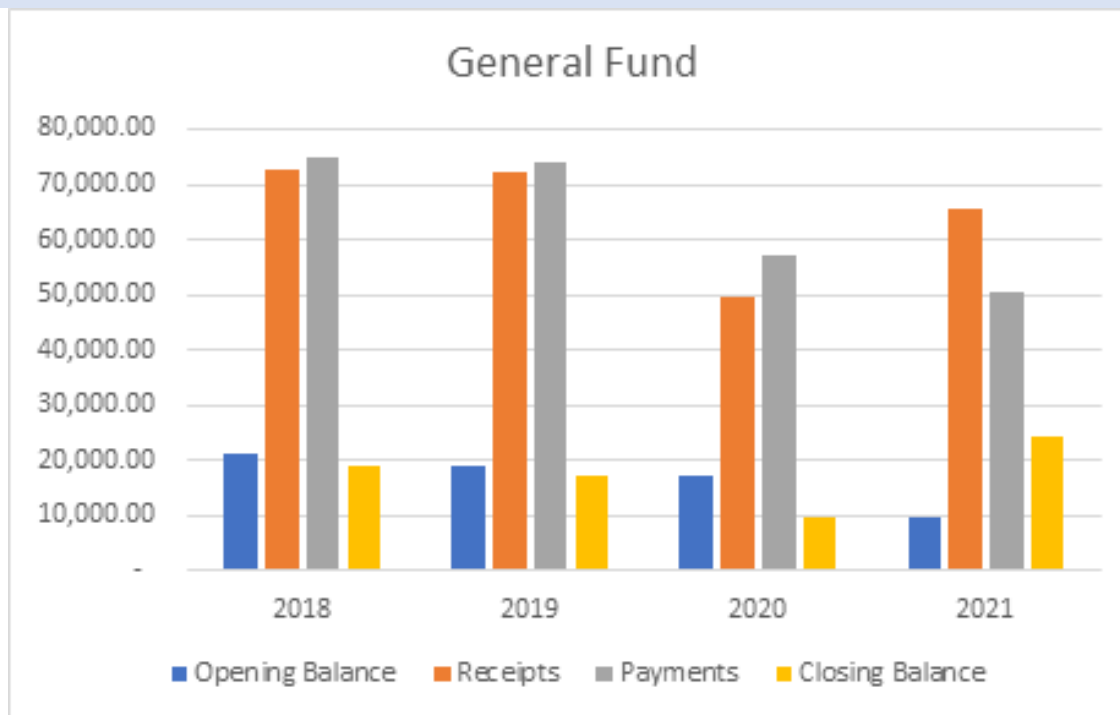
'The rectory is a typical CofE dwelling, in reasonable decorative order, but not without its quirks at times, even housing squirrels in the loft on occasion! But fear not, it has 4 bedrooms, a lovely lounge complete with open fireplace and it is only a short drive or a lovely walk from the best beach in the world (might take longer in the summer due to traffic!) The bathroom is new which as you know is a complete bonus in vicarages, so we all rejoice that one. It has a big garden to enjoy working or relaxing in on your day off each week! Despite the quirks and squirrels, it is comforting to know that this home has been saturated in prayer for half a century.'

Current Rectory Occupier



7. Parish Financial Position

Receipts & Payments Accounts Georgeham PCC



General Fund				
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Opening Balance	21,419.92	19,230.94	17,432.03	9,558.99
Receipts	72,790.53	72,044.89	49,446.13	65,694.58
Payments	74,979.51	73,843.80	57,319.17	50,708.63
Closing Balance	19,230.94	17,432.03	9,558.99	24,544.94

Notes

2020 receipts £10.5k low due to late Gift Aid claim transferred into 2021

2020 & 2021 no repairs undertaken

2021 Gift Aid reduced due to lower donations in 2020

2020 & 2021 Common Fund underpaid, £5k outstanding at end of 2021

	2021	2022
Common Fund Request	£40,998	£40,452
Common Fund Payment	£36,004	YTD £3,371/month
(Under)/Over payment	(£4,994)	Plus £5,000

Statistics returned to Diocese for 2021

It took a long time to return to strength but we are now flourishing.

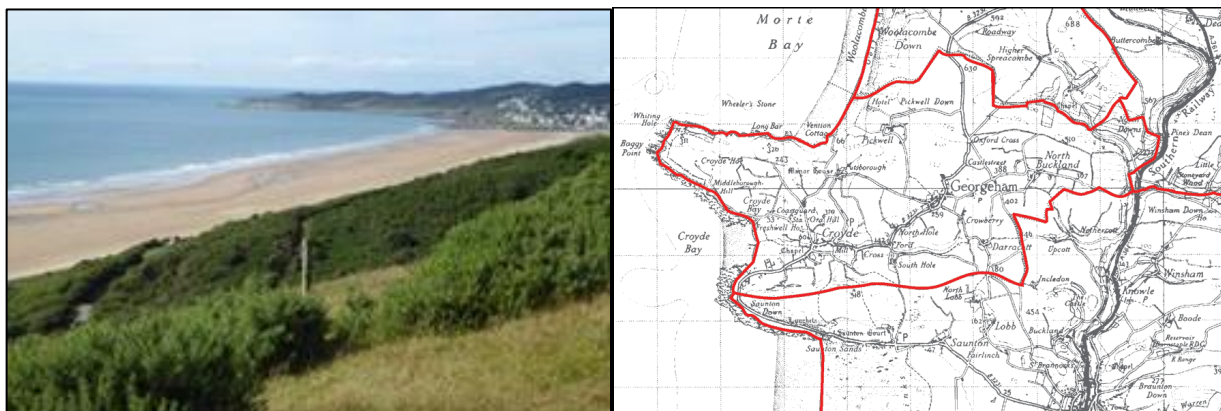
Diocese Statistics	2021
Population	1350
Electoral Roll	62
Avg Attend (Adults)	39 at St George's 8 at St Mary's
Avg Attend (under-16s)	2
Parish Participation	69
Weddings	5
Funerals	7
Baptisms	0

8. Our villages of Georgeham and Croyde



If you type 'Georgeham and Croyde' into your search engine of choice, it will tell you that they are villages on or close to the North Devon coast, near to Baggy Point which is owned by the National Trust. The beaches face the Atlantic Ocean, and in recent decades they have increasingly brought surfers and holidaymakers alike to enjoy the beautiful coastline. The villages are in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and there are many stunning walks, paths and cycle routes, as described below, written by a local couple who know the area well.

'The main villages of Georgeham and Croyde are within the North Devon AONB, which is one of only 16 coastal AONBs in England. We live in an area of great natural diversity and walkers benefit from this greatly. The South West Coast Path passes through the parish, along with a well-marked network of footpaths, which give a variety of magnificent coastal and countryside views.'



'A walk around Baggy Point will give views from Morteheo to Hartland Point, which includes Woolacombe, Putsborough, Croyde and Westward Ho!, sometimes Clovelly with a chance of seeing Lundy Island in the distance. Another good walk is known as the 'Aerials Walk' which is along Saunton Down passing two communication aerials originally sited for RAF Chivenor. There are great views of both Croyde and Georgeham to the north and a panoramic view of the Taw and Torridge estuary with Braunton Burrows to the south. If you favour other outdoor activities the parish is crossed by National Cycle Route 27 and there is a RSPB reserve at Chapel Wood with the ruins of St Annes Chapel within the reserve.'

For hundreds of years, this community was sustained mostly by agriculture, and the farming community is still a vibrant and important part of the area. However, in recent years, the primary source of income is found in tourism, as more and more people are drawn to the area for its beaches and beautiful coastline. Consequently, the nature of the businesses in the villages reflect this. In Croyde, there are a number of shops providing surf-related equipment and clothing for sale and there are numerous cafes, bars and restaurants to suit all tastes with both villages boasting lively and popular pubs. There are campsites, and a myriad of holiday homes and second homes that fill up every school holiday, and most weekends of the year. Both villages have a Village Hall, and finally, there is a small village shop and Post Office in both Georgeham and Croyde.



‘Georgeham Stores has been here for many years and has seen lots of changes but has always been an important part of village life. It is more than a shop - it is an information centre, a lost and found, a place to stop for a chat, a notice board for local jobs, accommodation and events and so much more.

It has been run by Paul and Tracey and their friendly team for nearly 17 years. The shop offers a wide range of grocery and household products, locally sourced meat and fruit and vegetables as well as off licence products, newspapers and magazines.’

Like Georgeham, Croyde also has a well-stocked shop and Post Office, serving the local community and visitors to the village.



All of this will give you a fairly accurate picture of the villages, and what it might be like to visit for a holiday. But what is it like to live there?

Living the everyday

The last figures available put the number of houses in the Parish that stand empty for part of the year at nearly 60%, although in Georgeham itself there is a higher proportion of permanent residents. The static population however is made up of a mix of all ages, from young families benefitting from the excellent local primary school and pre-school in Georgeham, through those of middle years who may have moved here after careers elsewhere, to the older generation who may have retired here, or some who have lived here all their lives. This lovely mix of people, some Devon born but many not, come together to form a close-knit community who love and support each other well.

This came into its own in 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, when people from the church and community from across Croyde and Georgeham came together to help and care for those most impacted by isolation, or loss of income. It is impossible to quantify what this meant to those receiving help with shopping, medication, dog-walking, food parcels, phone calls and lifts to essential medical appointments and much more besides, but those who were part of the group of helpers also benefitted hugely, deepening those community ties that cement the villages.



Once the fear and isolation of Covid-19 receded, it was felt important not to lose that sense of belonging. The group adjusted its focus, became more formal in its structure, and now comes under the umbrella of CARA (Croyde Area Residents' Association). It now organises a monthly Community Tea in the Village Hall, held a lunchtime celebration for the Platinum Jubilee of HM the Queen and plans for 2022 include regular coffee mornings for refugees and their sponsors. The group also continues to be available to help in any situation where a villager needs support because of illness or changed circumstances.



The people who live in Georgeham and Croyde can also enjoy being part of all sorts of local groups and organisations, such as the 'Croyde Players', who put on the annual pantomime, the Community Choir, Skittles, Book Club, Surf Lifesaving Club (for all ages!), yoga and fitness classes (inside and out!), the WI, volleyball, and the Garden Society. The Village Halls in both villages are well used for all kinds of activities, such as occasional film showings by the Deckchair Cinema, local bands, jazz nights and comedy nights, Art Club, Pilates, Toddler Group, ferret racing, and regular craft and farmer's markets from Easter to October. As the Church has no hall of its own, the Village Hall in Georgeham is frequently used for events. There are also quiz nights and live music sessions in the pubs.



In spite of so much activity and the busyness of the season, it is also possible for those of us who live here to enjoy the quieter moments too, to get off the beaten track for a couple of hours, enjoying the footpaths away from the bustle of the village and the beach in summer, and the emptiness of both in winter. We can be the first to catch a glimpse of the early snowdrops and primroses that suddenly appear in the hedgerows and banks along the lanes; we can anticipate the ripening of the local strawberries that are the best you'll ever taste; we can pop into the pub for a quiet meal when it's not too busy; we can enjoy a delicious cream tea in unexpected sunshine; we can take a quiet walk along the beach once the visitors have gone, and we know what days the shop has fresh croissants delivered so we can be there early! So many of the things we love about living here can be shared when the villages are full, but it's such a joy and a privilege to have them on our doorstep every single day.