

# The Anglican Parish of Gresford Paterson

A Profile

May 2015

## **Background**

The Anglican Parish of Gresford Paterson comprises a largely rural area with some pockets of residential housing development. The South end of the Parish commences at Paterson and extends north up the Paterson river valley to Lostock and up the Allyn river valley to Eccleston.

The parish has seven churches, four church halls and a rectory at Gresford.

Presently there is no incumbent, the Parish being served by Bishop Brian as a locum.

Previously the Parish's incumbent was Rev Stephen Moore who served for approximately eight years.

The Parish Council (the "Council") feels it may be prudent to appoint a rector on a permanent part time basis for at least two days a week given that the ability of the Parish to pay for a rector is limited given the dwindling congregations and resultant offertory.

There is a belief that with the right rector meeting the present day needs of the Parish can, under God, be reversed.

A strategic plan is in the course of preparation which is expected to address how best we practice Christianity in the Parish, including, amongst other matters, engaging with families and the young.

Mobile reception in the Parish is wanting. Generally Telstra mobile reception is available.

## **Demographics of the Parish**

The following figures are taken from the Annual Return for 2014.

Population within the Parish Boundary	4123
Anglicans per 2011 census	918
Number of People on Parish Electoral Role	31
Total number of Persons on Parish Roll (incl Electoral Roll)	139
Total annual Communicants on a Sunday	1633
Weekly average of Sunday Communicants	31

The Parish has three Public Schools, namely Gresford, Vacy and Paterson, There are no High Schools in the Parish, nor Nursing Homes nor Hospitals.

## **Church Services**

Gresford and Paterson both have 2 or 3 services per month: four churches have one service per month and one church has a service on the fifth Sunday of each of the four months when this occurs.

The current Services roster is as follows

	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	Church Hall	Distance from Rectory
Gresford	7.30am	9.30am*		8.30am		Yes	1km
Paterson		9.30am	9.30am		9.00am	Yes	26km
Vacy	9.30am						12km
Martins Creek		8.00am					26km
Lostock	11.30am					Yes	20km
Allynbrook				10.30am		Yes	10km
Eccleston					11.30am		24km

There have been discussions in Council meetings relating to the need to close certain churches: this has ranged from closing no churches to closing five churches and having weekly services at Gresford and Paterson only.

The church and hall at Allynbrook is subject to lease discussions with the Boydell family (the original builders) and it appears likely that a long lease will be given to the family for use as a place of worship.

In his report to the Parish in April 2015, Rev Stephen Moore stated

“There is every likelihood that in the next few years there will be at most only three functioning churches - Gresford, Peterson and Allynbrook – with the other properties closed and ultimately sold. Bishop Peter has written to express his belief we (the Parish) should have only two functioning churches, Gresford and Paterson.”

### **Nature of Church Services and the Congregations**

For many years the services have been traditional. These services have not appealed to families and the young.

The congregations are growing older. Naturally some parishioners leave the Parish: some die.

People coming into the Parish and attending church are not in the same number as those ceasing to be members of the congregations.

Martins Creek and Eccleston both have two regular attendees: Vacy, Lostock and Allynbrook have approximately five attendees each. (The quarterly service at Eccleston has additional attendees from other churches averaging 15 attendees. (The last service held had 26 in the congregation.)

### **Parish Groups**

Attached at Appendix A is a list of Parish Groups.

### **Churches and Halls**

There is constant need for repairs to the churches and halls, some more urgent than others. Most of the churches are heritage listed. All buildings are maintained by the respective Vestries and Guilds: funds on hand held by these groups are presently insufficient to maintain the buildings in a proper state of repair.

### **Properties other than Churches and Halls**

The Parish owns a rectory, glebe land, three graveyards and two Columbaria.

Council considers that the rectory could be offered to a rector in lieu of a stipend. Alternatively it could be rented out and the income used to supplement the Parish income. However, before this is done the Parish would need to spend considerable dollars bringing the Rectory up to standard.

### **Finances**

The Parish has been operating at a loss for

some years and presently owes the Diocese approximately \$40,000.

Following the retirement of the full time incumbent, Rev Stephen Moore, the income now exceeds the costs.