



Hi Hennie, lovely to meet you. Tell us about yourself.

I am the vicar at St Marks Anglican Church in the Lache. I've been the parish priest for 11 years, having trained as a vicar in Durham. Before joining the church, I spent over 20 years living in London working for an MP.

What is a Racing Chaplain?

A chaplain is a voluntary role, which I fulfil on as many race days as possible with my colleagues from within the church. Many sports have chaplains – not just racing – including football and rugby. I've been volunteering at Chester Races for eight years now. The role of a chaplain is a pastoral one, so I'm here to offer support to CRC colleagues, customers and owners and trainers. The role of Racing Chaplain is particular to Racing Days, but in my role as a local vicar I have also provided additional pastoral support outside of racing.

What does a Racing Day look like for you?

I am visible as a chaplain – I will be wearing my collar as well as a pass indicating I am here in an official capacity.

After checking in with the control tower, I will spend the day around the Racecourse. I am often approached by people who need help or directions from a friendly face. I may work with the police or support medics if someone is struggling and needs some non-medical support and company.

I say a prayer for jockeys at the start of the races, wishing them a safe race. In the event of an accident, I will be available to support as required.

People will sometimes approach me to ask me to say prayers for them or their loved ones to support them during a difficult time, which I am happy to do. As the day goes on, I increasingly get asked to bless their betting slips, which I must politely refuse!

What made you want to become a Racing Chaplain?

I love racing – particularly jump racing – and have ridden all my life. I love how accessible racing is – it's a sport for everyone. When I come to Chester, I meet members of my congregation in every area of the Racecourse, from hospitality to the Tattershalls!