

FORWARD TOGETHER
IN
HOPE

Our Partnership Proposals

North Tyneside



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**



Partnership in the Gospel

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
always in every prayer of mine for you all
making my prayer with joy,
thankful for your partnership in the gospel
from the first day until now.

And I am sure that he who began a good work in you
will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:2-6

Prayer resources have been developed to accompany this stage of our *Forward Together in Hope* journey. They are available from the resources section of the website and are designed to be customised for use within parishes and emerging partnerships.

Our Partnership Proposals

For almost two years we have all been exploring what it means to be a disciple of Jesus within a viable and flourishing community. In the short time between now and the beginning of Advent we need to draw upon our exploration and look very practically at how resources can be shared and leadership developed to enable our communities to flourish into the future. Every parishioner has been asked to contribute to this by thinking and praying about partnership and offering their practical suggestions through the tear-off slip from the *Imagine new ways...* leaflet.

This document, *Our Partnership Proposals*, requests information from a **group of parishes** about their initial proposals for developing new partnership arrangements. Please read this in conjunction with the booklet *From Parish to Partnership* published in June this year which sets out detailed information about these partnerships and their benefits. In it we are reminded that Pope Francis speaks of 'parish' as '*not an outdated institution precisely because it possesses great flexibility; it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and community*'. We now have a real opportunity to follow this call to be flexible, open, creative and missionary as we travel together on the next stage of our journey.

Electronic versions of both of these documents are available within the resources section of the *Forward Together in Hope* website at www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk.

One completed document for each proposed partnership should be returned electronically to hope@diocesehn.org.uk by mid-day on the First Sunday of Advent (27th November) at the latest. It is essential that all areas adhere to this deadline to ensure that their proposals are taken into account within the diocesan-wide proposals that will be developed as a next stage.

We welcome completed documents ahead of this date. Please copy your proposals to the Dean(s) with responsibility for the parishes in the proposed partnership.

All information received by 27th November will be worked with during December to produce the first draft of a 'Flexible Plan' for consideration by Bishop Séamus and the Diocesan Board of Directors at their residential meeting. Prior to that meeting we may need to communicate with the contact person for the proposed partnership (usually the Dean or his nominee) to clarify particular issues or to ask for further details.

We are conscious that in parts of the diocese all of this is very new and that some proposals presented will be very much an outline. Other areas may well be able to go into a lot more detail. In all cases it is important to remember that the documents submitted at the end of November represent *initial proposals*. Once they are all received, these proposals have to be brought together to arrive at a position that works well across the diocese as a whole. While this is likely to mean that some proposals may not be accepted in their entirety, all thoughts and ideas received by the deadline will be brought to bear on the recommendations put forward to Bishop Séamus and the Diocesan Board.

When Bishop Séamus has considered everything, his decisions will be communicated widely across the diocese. Partnership arrangements will then be firmed up and each area asked to commence detailed planning and implementation.

For advice about completing this document, or for any other queries, please feel free to contact the *Forward Together in Hope* team by e-mail at hope@diocesehn.org.uk or by telephone on 0191 243 3304.

Thank you for everything that you are doing to make *Forward Together in Hope* a success.

Section 1: Details of the Proposed Partnership

(Please refer to Section 2.1 on Page 6 of 'From Parish to Partnership')

The parish is not an outdated institution precisely because it possesses great flexibility; it can assume quite different contours...

Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium

1.1 Please list the parishes that you envisage being involved in the proposed partnership.

(Please extend this table if necessary)

Parish Name	Location	Priest(s)	Deacon(s)	Mass Attendance*
St Mary	Cullercoats	Fr Martin Stempczyk	Rev Terry McGann & Rev Frank Forde	
Our Lady & St Oswin	Tynemouth	Fr Martin Stempczyk	Rev Terry McGann & Frank Forde	310
Our Lady & St Aidan	Wallsend	Fr John McElhone		273
St Bernadette	Wallsend	Fr John McElhone		179
Our Lady & St Columba	Wallsend	Fr Anthony Donaghue		292
Our Lady Star of the Sea	Backworth, Monkseaton & Whitley Bay	Mgr Andrew Faley	Rev Terry McGann & Frank Forde	594
St Cuthbert & St Joseph	North Shields	Fr Chris Hughes	Rev Terry McGann & Frank Forde	455
TOTAL MASS ATTENDANCE				2,103

* Please include the average Mass attendance figure for each parish as reported in October 2015. (We are aware that there are sometimes seasonal variations in Mass attendance).

1.2 Why is this grouping seen as the most appropriate for your area?

Please provide as much information as you can in presenting a rationale for the proposed partnership arrangement. You may wish to consider, for example, complementary skills/experience, historical connections, distances, existing joint activity, finances, numbers attending Mass etc.

The historical and cultural ties between our parishes mean that we share a strong sense of where we are and what we can sensibly develop to support our communities.

The distances between our neighbouring churches are minimal and, despite public transport difficulties, can easily be covered by partnership provision.

There is already good joint activity between the three clustered parishes, which can easily be developed across the proposed partnership.

Mass attendance, finance, the condition of buildings, lay leadership and ministry, primary and secondary schools, pastoral outreach and faith formation are generally strong. There is a willingness across our parishes to work for effective partnership for the good of the Gospel and the mission of the Church in this area.

1.3 What issues might get in the way of effective joint working in this partnership area and how might these be minimised?

Issue	Minimising the impact
Reluctance regarding declining numbers of people & clergy.	Consistent communication of the facts and open discussion regarding appropriate solutions.

1.4 Were there any alternative partnership combinations that were seriously considered as part of your deliberations?

No

If 'Yes', please describe these arrangements, their advantages and disadvantages and why they are less appropriate than your preferred option.

Section 2: New Ways of Working Together

(Please refer to Sections 2.2 and 2.3 on Page 6 of 'From Parish to Partnership')

*There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit;
there are all sorts of service to be done,
but always to the same Lord,
working in all sorts of different ways
in all sorts of people.*

1 Cor. 12:4-5

2.1 What leadership/co-ordination arrangements are proposed for the partnership area?

Please think about possible leadership structures, roles and responsibilities and associated training and development etc.

Learning from what we have already achieved as active, engaging parishes in a cluster.

Key areas to be considered should be:

- Catechesis
- Young people
- Formation
- Developing lay leadership

2.2 What initial areas of joint working are proposed for the partnership area?

Please identify the main areas that are seen as initial priorities for joint working across the proposed partnership. It is important to share the 'Observations on Parish Questionnaires' and draw upon these.

Having been part of a successful Cluster and seen the advantages of activities such as Baptism and Confirmation preparation, joint services Penitential Services in Advent and Lent, a cluster council, regular meeting of clergy, the initial priority would be to extend these shared activities across the partnership

2.3 What approaches will you use to ensure plans and developments are communicated well across the proposed partnership area?

Taking into account the expected decline in the number of priests and people over time you may wish to think about this in relation to the short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5 years) and long term (up to 2030).

a) Short term:

Model of the cluster, albeit that the cluster council will cease to exist, should a similar forum need to be formed?

b) Medium term:

- Identifying needs/areas
- Training people
- Financial sustainability
- Preparation for the reduction of Clergy in the partnership area.

c) Long term:

Joint meetings with the partnership with feedback given at Week-end Masses

2.4 We are seeking to ensure that our worshipping communities nurture disciples to witness to Jesus in our world. What resources will be necessary to ensure this takes place and is co-ordinated across the proposed partnership?

Note: People often think about administrative support – but please think more widely about how the various facets of the partnership (e.g. Young People, Outreach, Lay Leadership, Spiritual Development etc.) could benefit from co-ordinated voluntary or paid support and what training might be required.

People being trained to in areas such as Catechesis, youth leadership, co-ordinating social outreach, leading non Eucharistic worship, spiritual development

2.5 What proposals / initial thoughts are there for new ways of working within the proposed partnership area?

Please remember that these new partnerships are not simply groupings of a number of current parishes with their existing arrangements and structures - they offer the opportunity to look at things differently and innovatively to ensure viable and flourishing communities. You may wish to consider, for example, bringing together existing groups/creating new groups, committees and Councils and strengthening links with schools. In some areas it may be desirable for the parishes within a partnership area to merge over time.

Once again, conscious of the gradually reducing number of priests and people, you may wish to think about this in relation to the short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5 years) and long term (up to 2030).

a) Short term:

Develop the Cluster Model

b) Medium term:

An audit of skills and resources in the partnership, to see how they can be used across the partnership

c) Long term:

To explore how building can be used and exploring where Masses will be celebrated

3.3 What thoughts are there about the use of the current places of worship in the proposed partnership area?

If we have around 50 active priests in the diocese in 2030 it is inevitable that Mass will be celebrated in fewer churches and less frequently. Please present your thoughts, however tentative, about the places of worship currently in use across the proposed partnership area and what the future arrangements might look like. In time it will be important to consider which buildings will be retained for worship (not necessarily for the celebration of Mass) and which might close or be used for other purposes.

It will become necessary for some churches in the partnership area to not have a celebration of Sunday mass, however weekday mass in other Churches could be a possibility.

Further discussion is needed on this and possible easier to answer once working closer together as a partnership has been achieved

3.4 Are there any thoughts about where the priest(s) would reside in the partnership area?

Some have suggested clergy living together, however the consensus would be preferable clergy live across the partnership area.

Section 4: Next Steps

(Please refer to Section 2.5 on Page 7 of 'From Parish to Partnership')

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God.

2 Pet. 9

4.1 Should your partnership proposals be accepted, please indicate what the key next steps would be for your area. Please add timescales where possible.

Identify key areas to work together, i.e young people, formation, catechesis

Identifying lay leaders and what training is required in the following areas:

Worship

Evangelism and Witness

Social Outreach

Pastoral Care,

Catechesis and Formation

Integrating minority Ethnic Groups within the parish

Administration and Finance

4.2 What support would be most useful to you from other parishes/partnerships/the diocese in achieving the next stages of your proposed partnership?

Share good practice from the experience of being a cluster.

4.3 Please provide any additional information you feel we should be aware of when considering your proposals.

A large majority of parishioners haven't engaged in the process, developing people to have a sense of being a missionary disciple has just begun.

4.4 What questions/concerns do you have about the next stages of the process of moving to partnership arrangements across the diocese?

Will partnerships take effect across the diocese at the same time or will this happen on a local need basis?

Bishop's resignation, due in July 2017. What effect will this have on the process?

Section 5: The Consultation Process

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.
Philippians 1:5

a) Partnership View

5.1 Please describe the process undertaken to arrive at your outline partnership proposals.

Series of parish – deanery – clergy & lay rep open meetings over the summer/early autumn, including attendance at the Vicariate pen meeting on 19 November and presentation of proposed partnership to parish/deanery open meeting on 16 November 2016.

5.2 Were the individual Parish Observations and Profiles shared with all parishes in the proposed partnership as part of this process?

Yes.

Comments:

5.3 Please list any key meetings/activities that have taken place along with numbers attending.

Date	Venue	Purpose of meeting/activity	Numbers attending/participating
July - November	Deanery Parishes	Open Meetings to consider Observations and partnership process	20 - 75
14 July	Immaculate Heart of Mary, West Monkseaton	Clergy & Lay Reps Meeting to share findings so far and agree the process for the partnership proposal	13
5 October	Immaculate Heart of Mary, West Monkseaton	Clergy & Lay Reps Meeting to monitor progress towards the partnership proposal	10
19 October	St Mary's School, Benton	Vicariate Open Meeting	
16 November	Immaculate Heart of Mary, West Monkseaton	Clergy & Lay Reps Meeting to monitor progress towards the partnership proposal	13
16 November	St Thomas More Academy, North Shields	Open deanery meeting to share the proposed partnership proposal with parishioners	

Four week-end sermon slots were used in September to feedback the response to the Diocese, with opportunities for discussion and asking question to Parish Priest An open meeting on October 1st with 18 present

5.4 Please list any specific groups or committees that have been consulted.

Moving Forward process after e received the Diocesan feedback has been discussed by Parish Council, Finance Committee and Worship and Formation group

5.5 How widely has this *completed document* been circulated prior to submission? Please provide details.

This document will be presented at an open meeting on November 8th

b) Parish View

We are keen to understand the level of awareness and consensus within individual parish communities in relation to the proposed partnership arrangements. To this end, please ensure that ***each parish*** in the proposed partnership completes the questions below. If parishes wish to, they can provide a short (maximum of 250 words) perspective on the proposed partnership. Please enter the name and role of the person completing this on behalf of the parish.

Note: Please copy and paste this section for each parish in the proposed partnership.

Parish	Name of Person	Role
<p>Level of knowledge of proposals – Medium to Low</p> <p>Any comment: An extra 3 months for this part of the process would have been useful. It does feel quite rushed</p>		
<p>Level of consensus with proposals - Very High/High/Medium/Low/Very Low</p> <p>Any Comment:</p>		

Parish perspective (250 Words or less)

In our initial open meeting to explore the notion of partnership, the Parish Priest was struck by people's openness to work with whatever partnership that helped others. There was a generosity to help other communities

Contact Details

We may need to get in touch with you for additional information about your proposals. Please provide contact information for a main contact person and an alternate (should the main contact person not be available). We would recommend that the main contact is the Dean with responsibility for the majority of parishes within the proposed partnership (or his nominee).

	Main Contact	Alternate contact
Name	Mgr Andrew Faley	
Role	Dean	
Address	St Edward's Presbytery 1 Coquet Avenue Whitley Bay NE26 1EE	
Telephone	0191 2528021	
E-mail	Stedwardsne26@btconnect.com	

Please return your proposals to hope@diocesehn.org.uk by mid-day on Sunday 27th November 2016 and copy these to the Dean(s) with responsibility for parishes in your proposed partnership.

Thank you for completing this document and for all you are doing to support *Forward Together in Hope*.



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