

Our Partnership Proposals





**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 In it we are reminded that Pope Francis speaks of ‘parish’ as ‘*not an outdated institution precisely because it possesses great flexibility; it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the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](http://www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk).

***One completed document for each proposed partnership* should be returned electronically to** [**hope@diocesehn.org.uk**](mailto: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](mailto: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**

***The parish is not an outdated institution precisely because it possesses great flexibility;***

***it can assume quite different contours…***

**Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium**

*(Please refer to Section 2.1 on Page 6 of ‘From Parish to Partnership’)*

* 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. Anne’s | Harlow Green  Gateshead | Fr. Brendan Kelly | - | 187 |
| St Peter’s | Low Fell | Fr. Keith Walker | Malcolm Jackson | 360 |
| Corpus Christi | Gateshead | Fr. Keith Walker | Tom Rooke | 178 |
| St. Oswald’s | Wrekenton,  Gateshead | Fr. Kevin Cummins | - | 186 |
| Holy Rosary | Gateshead | Fr. Kevin Daly | - | 25 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL MASS ATTENDANCE | | | | 936 |

\* 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.

Mainly historic connections and all communities within reasonable travelling distance. There have been previous partnership arrangements through “clustering” and currently St Anne’s and St Oswald’s work together as do St Peters and Corpus Christi who share a Parish priest. Historically these communities have strong links.

The socio-economic and demographics of these communities varies quite significantly representing the very diverse make up of this part of Gateshead.

There is a strong sense of community and it would be our intention to build on this to sustain and develop locally based Catholic Communities in our partnership.

This “small” Partnership was not our preferred choice, as we envisaged the Partnership being significantly bigger. This means that the proposed partnership now presents us with some new challenges that we will address but means that currently we do not wish our proposal to be too prescriptive on our local communities.

It is important that our local communities own whatever Partnership proposals we make and are fully engaged in what we propose to do and given the information they need to fully understand the process.

**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 |
| Ensuring each community fully involved | Create varied opportunities for involvement. Ensure that all communities feel equal partners |
| Different understandings of what FTIH is about | Develop a communications strategy |
| Clergy Changes | Ensure strong message to Diocese to work with us in preparing for any changes in a timely manner. |
| Partnership viewed as too small and the “old” Cluster | Present in a positive way and start asap preparing |
| Some communities not able to actively take part (numbers/age) | Create varied approaches to involvement and consultation. |
| Un planned for events | Ensure we are robust enough to deal with the unexpected both spiritually, financially and resourcefully |
|  |  |
|  |  |

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

Yes (Please delete as appropriate)

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

Along with the rest of the Deanery and its neighbouring Parishes we considered 3 proposals. The deanery opted for 2 partnerships. We had hoped that Our Lady’s and St Philip cluster would join us – but they have decided to form their own partnership. We respect their decision but feel that we have lost some vitality and vision to help us move beyond our historical relationships.

***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**

**Section 2: New Ways of Working Together**

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

**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.

There already exist some very good examples within our Partnership of people taking on leadership and pastoral roles and there is a lot we can share.

We would propose to:

* Review each parish structure.
* Identify Reps for common areas (e.g. Liturgy, Finance, etc.) to come together to decide way forward.
* Without being too prescriptive we will identify the key elements of a local catholic community and then decide on a common structure both at a local and a Partnership level.

**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.

* Identifying the roles and ministries of all the baptised in our communities as well as those of the order of Priest and Deacon.
* Develop a programme across the partnership of ongoing formation to support our discussions/decisions particularly around Sunday Mass/ Obligation and alternative celebrations.
* A priority will be to identify the best time and place for the individual communities to gather for the Eucharist on a Sunday.
* Administration: Secretarial; communication; representation; planning meetings, etc.
* Social: Community events; development; common parish commitments (e.g. music/SVP/fund-raising.
* Youth: Give them space and responsibility.
* Establish a common approach to Partnership/Parish/School links
* Establish a group to look at Evangelisation

**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).

Short term:

* Common Newsletter, etc.
* Full use of modern technology
* Partnership Liturgical Celebrations Lent/Advent.
* Look at possible joint social events.
* Medium term:
* Develop best of concepts to be found in our own Partnership.
* Improve inter-partnership links
* Evaluation of Facilities and resources to ensure best use and access to modern technology/media and communications
* Long term:
* Through the proposed links above a closer scheme of Diocesan progress should be aimed for to avoid the need for another weighty ‘FTIH’ project in a few years’ time
* .Review local structures to see if they remain appropriate eg, number of separate Parish Boundaries may well become an obstacle to communications and partnership as it develops.

**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.

We accept that there will be fewer priests but if they have less admin, etc. taking up their time, to use this wisely so they are spiritually leading a more active Church.

If we are effective in identifying the key areas of community activity and establish the network of Partnership Leads – then we would need to look at the role of Parish/Partnership Coordinator – but this role would rightly be a coordinating not a liturgical/catechetical one..

**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).

1. Short term:

* Develop thoughts on points already detailed in previous questions.

1. Medium term:

* as (a

1. Long term: as

* (a)

**Section 3: Facilities**

***I will be looking carefully and seriously at any necessary restructuring, including: the closure of some of our church buildings; use of our building for other purposes and the need to reduce the number of Masses being celebrated.***

**Bishop Séamus - July 2014**

*(Please refer to Section 2.4 on Page 7 of ‘From Parish to Partnership’)*

**3.1 Please list each of the churches in your proposed partnership along with their maximum capacity and details of any existing issues/future plans that might have a bearing on their use.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Church Name | Location | Max. Capacity | Existing Issues/Future Plans |
| Holy Rosary | Teams | 45 | Multi-Purpose parish Centre  Good model to learn from |
| Corpus Christi | Bensham | 530 | Creation of adequate community/social area |
| St Peter’s | Low Fell | 330 | Capacity if move to one Community Celebration on a Sunday. |
| St Oswald | Wrekenton | 250 | Structural repairs |
| St Anne’s | Harlow Green | 250 | Plans to increase Capacity between Church and Hall |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**3.2 Please list any other buildings (e.g. schools) that are currently used, or which could be used, for worship.** *Please feel free to add any notes to explain your thinking.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Venue | Parish/Location | Max. Capacity | Used Now (N) /Could Use (C)  Include any notes here |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**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.

* To be discussed as part of the proposed review of Buildings in the Partnership.
* Corpus Christi, St Peter’s, St Anne’s and St Oswald’s all have schools within walking distance of the Church.
* Initial thoughts on use of these buildings for worship is that unless they have a dedicated community l use area this is not currently an option

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

All of the communities in the Partnership have experienced times of sharing priests, having no resident priest and combinations of Priest/ Deacon. Because of this we do not think this question will pose a problem and can be determined as and when we need to.

**Section 4: Next Steps**

***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**

*(Please refer to Section 2.5 on Page 7 of ‘From Parish to Partnership’)*

**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.**

* Formation meetings to decide what is the next step forward –
* getting to know each other as a community –
* How to meet and make it work – groups, etc.

**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?**

* Clear messages, Not been driven by tight timescales.
* Development of a range of short leadership and ministry training opportunities at a local level. We need to acknowledge that not everyone can give up whole days.
* Training in multi-media

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

We are open to a wider partnership and acknowledge that in the future Gateshead will need to consider a much larger partnership.

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

* **The process has been too weighty and long-winded. We can appreciate the wish to involve as many people as possible in the process but at times the result has been chaotic.**
* **An outline structure from the Diocese from which everyone could work may have eased the situation.**
* **The biggest challenge we face in the short term is fostering a sense of one community coming together to celebrate the day of the Lord at a local level. This is particularly true in those communities that still have more than one Sunday celebration.**
* **We need to bring everyone on the Journey BUT we cannot afford to move at the pace of the slowest or indeed the fastest.**
* **We need to enliven our communities, restore a sense of mission and belief in our Church,**

**We pray that our Partnership will have “Memory of the past, courage for the present and to have (and) be hope for the future” (Pope Francis).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.**

We have arranged numerous meetings at Parish and Deanery group level. Open discussions have resulted in ample opportunities for all views to be looked at. These meetings have also encouraged informal groups to consider various viewpoints.

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

No

**Comments: There was too short a time span for consideration of partnership parishes to arrange co-operation meetings, although we did manage one such meeting at St. Joseph’s, Birtley, which was very successful in permitting us to understand their position and choices.**

**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 |
| 11 Oct | St. Anne’s | Parish consideration of Partnership | 30 |
| 17 Oct | St. Joseph’s, Birtley | Further consideration of composition of our partnership with particular reference to St. Joseph’s | 11 |
| 3 Nov | St. Anne’s | Parishioners’ consideration of various possible partnerships | 30 |
| 5 Nov | St. Anne’s | Gateshead group meeting to form choice for Parish Partnerships | 40-45 |
| 13 Nov | St. Anne’s | Information session to assist parishioners in making their selection | 25 |
| 16 Nov | St. Joseph’s  Gateshead | Meeting of all Gateshead parish reps to announce and discuss chosen partnerships | Approx. 100 |
| 17 Nov | St. Anne’s  St Oswald’s | Follow-up meeting re completion of St. Anne’s return. | Reps |
| 21 Nov  22 Nov | St. Peter’s  Low Fell  St. Anne’s | To complete partnership documents  To complete St. Anne’s section of return | 8  3 (reps) |  |  |  |

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

).In the short space of time that we have had we have tried to ensure that we have consulted as widely as possible. Each parish has had a presentation from the lay rep and in most cases this was followed by follow up meetings and group consultations.

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

**To date the completed document has been discussed by lay reps and clergy.**

**As we have a good track record of consultation we will now ensure that it is shared widely.**

***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 |
| St Peters | John Briers | Lay rep |
| Level of knowledge of proposals - High  Any comment | | |
| Level of consensus with proposals - High  Any Comment: Parishioners just want to get on with it! | | |
| Parish perspective (250 Words or less)  We have had many opportunities to discuss FTIH over the last 2 years. It has been the subject of sermons and talks/discussions and we have embraced the need for change. We need to sustain the momentum and would hope for a quick response from the Diocese.  As stated: this was not our parish preferred Partnership. We thought that Gateshead should form one large partnership now rather than have to do so in 10 years’ time. We do however; accept that we may need some smaller groupings along the way. | | |

Corpus Christi

Eileen Barrass

Parish contact/representative.

Level of knowledge of proposals -Medium

Any comment: Parishioners are aware of the partnership proposal for our parish and the other parishes involved.

Level of consensus with proposals - Medium

Any Comment: the Partnership Proposal being put forward was not our number one choice but we are open to compromise and therefore went with the majority vote of parishes involved.

Parish perspective (250 Words or less)

We would have preferred the option of the bigger partnership which would have included Whickham, Immaculate Heart & St Philip Neri, but unfortunately they withdrew from the process with the Gateshead parishes.

St. Anne’s

Margaret Davidson

Named Parish Rep

Level of knowledge of proposals - High

Any comment: Longer time scale for in-depth discussions with wider range of those involved.

Level of consensus with proposals - High

Any Comment: As above,

Parish perspective (250 Words or less)

Although the concept of 'Together in Hope' is to be admired, we believe it sets an

impossible task. The Church's strength is in Righteous leadership under the guidance

of the Holy Spirit and has never been a democracy. We all hope for a successful outcome

over the coming years but feel that whatever the outcome, this could have been achieved

more easily. We also believe that the finale has been lengthened and confused by 'voting'

for forms of partnership before this has been defined at Diocesan level. The aims of 'Partnership' under a series of headings provided by the Diocese would have been very useful in discussing the nature of our Partnership. The Parish has recently formed

a Pastoral Group of representatives from each group in the Parish which will constitute

a strong foundation for the future. The Parish has a number of strengths, e.g. we have

4 lay leaders who lead Eucharistic Services twice a week and also the Good Friday Service; an active SVP group; Legion of Mary which has joint meetings with St. Oswald's Parish;

a strong parish choir of 30 members; there are regular social events and have recently strengthened links with the primary school. However, we recognise that there is a need for greater youth input to balance an ageing population. We look forward to working with our partnership parishes to become a cohesive, vibrant and welcoming community.

Parish St Oswald

Name of Person Maria Wilson

Role. Lay Rep

Level of knowledge of proposals - Very High/High/Medium/Low/Very Low

Any comment:

The proposals were explained at the Sunday and Vigil Masses The Rep was available before and after the Masses for comments/questions.

The Voting procedure was explained ,contact number provided .The parish had a week to think about this .The following week the vote was taken.

Level of consensus with proposals - Very High/High/Medium/Low/Very Low

Any Comment:

The vote was close 62 for 1b and 58 for p3. The parish were in their preferred partnership group with either proposal

Parish perspective (250 Words or less)

The results of the individual short questionnaire showed overwhelmingly that their preferred partnerships were with StAnne’s,St Peters and other Parishes in the direction of Durham Rd and the west.

Both proposals included their preferred parishes.

Parish: Holy Rosary

Name of Person: Fr Kevin Daly

Role: Parish Priest

As a community, we are welcoming and open and make decisions regarding the life of the community by friendly discussion and sharing of ideas and experience.

We are willing to work in the proposed partnership in any way we can, contributing to its life and work.

We have had difficulty in putting forward lay reps in the discussions which have formed part of Forward Together in Hope, primarily because of the age profile of the parish and people’s availability.

Forward Together in Hope

Partnership Proposals discussed by Deanery & Neighbours

Proposal 1

Group A

St Joseph’s Gateshead

St Wilfrid’s

St Patrick’s

St Alban’s

St Augustine’s

(St James and St Aloysius?)

Group B

Corpus Christi

St Peter’s

Holy Rosary

St Anne’s

St Oswald’s

St Joseph’s Birtley

St Mary’s Whickham

Immaculate Heart

St Philip Neri

Sacred Heart Byremoor

Loading…

Proposal 2

Group A

St Joseph’s G/head

St Wilfrid’s

St Patrick’s

St Alban’s

St Augustine’s

(St James +St Aloysius?)

Group B

Corpus Christi

St Peter’s

Holy Rosary

St Mary’s Whickham

Immaculate Heart

St Philip Neri

Sacred Heart Byremoor

Group C

St Anne’s

St Oswald’s

St Joseph’s Birtley

St Cuthbert’s Ch-le-St

St Bede’s Sacriston

Proposal 3 - 1 large group:

St Joseph’s Gateshead

St Wilfrid’s

St Patrick’s

St Alban’s

St Augustine’s

Corpus Christi

St Peter’s

Holy Rosary

St Anne’s

St Oswald’s

St Joseph’s Birtley?

St Mary’s Whickham

Immaculate Heart

St Philip Neri

Sacred Heart Byermoor ?

(St James and St Aloysius?)

**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 | Fr Keith Walker | Fr Paul Zielinski |
| Role | EV | Dean |
| Address | St Peter’s  Kells Lane  Low Fell  Gateshead | St Augustine’s  Leam Lane Estate  Wealcroft, Felling  Gateshead |
| Telephone  e-mail | 0191 4876505  stpetersrcparish@aol.com | 01914693042  Felling.staugustine@rcdhn.org |

**Please return your proposals to** [**hope@diocesehn.org.uk**](mailto: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*.





Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, Department for Development and Renewal

Tel: (0191) 243 3304 E-mail: hope@diocesehn.org.uk Web: www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk

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