



Sharing Your Ideas

*A collection of some of the ideas and approaches
being used within our Partnerships*

Foreword

Partnerships are still a relatively new feature of the landscape within our Diocese. In the words of Bishop Séamus, *'They offer our Diocese unlimited potential as we seek to ensure viable and flourishing communities of people who want to deepen their commitment to Jesus and witness to him in our world.'* They also offer the opportunity for us to try out new approaches and think differently about how we do things.

Just one year on from establishing our 18 Partnerships it is encouraging to see that already many creative and practical ideas for building and developing them have emerged. This document provides an insight into some of the ideas that have come to our attention. We know that there will be many more that we haven't yet heard about and would encourage everyone involved in Partnerships to share their ideas with the rest of our Diocesan family.

We have drawn heavily on the responses to the *'Partnerships – One Year On'* reflection and are very grateful to everyone for their contributions to this. Indeed, we are hugely grateful for the time, energy and commitment that so many people are putting into ensuring that our Partnerships are built on firm foundations.

Introduction

The majority of the ideas and approaches presented here are taken from the responses that Partnerships made to the *'Partnerships – One Year On'* review process, particularly drawing from two areas of the document, namely:

- *What Partnership developments or activities have been particularly fruitful, successful and energising?*
- *Please describe any specific activities or approaches that you feel would be of interest to other Partnerships.*

Contributions have been grouped into themes and reference is made to the Partnership or Partnerships providing each example. When collating the responses we were conscious that this was very much a 'snapshot in time' of just some of the many activities taking place. It is in no way comprehensive or fully representative and some Partnerships have offered several examples while others have offered few. Nevertheless we hope you find the resource of value and something to be built upon as we work together to develop our Partnerships.

... 'we seek to ensure viable and flourishing communities of people who want to deepen their commitment to Jesus...'

Bishop Séamus

Worshipping Together

- Worshipping together at **Partnership Masses** was highlighted by *Brinkburn, Seaton Delaval, Bede, John Ingram, Monkwearmouth* and *Benedict* with the patronal feast of the church or Partnership often being the focus. *Heavenfield's Lenten Station Masses* have helped Parishes to become more aware of each other and have strengthened friendships and contacts. The celebrations are often followed by a social event.
- *Hogarth* referred to bringing Parishes together for **joint Triduum celebrations** and a **Women's Day of Prayer**.
- An **Advent Service** in *Finchale* included each Parish contributing leaves for a Jesse tree while in *Bede*, **Advent Candles** were distributed to every household in Partnership Parishes on the First Sunday of Advent along with a short invitation to encourage families to pray together for a few minutes each day in preparation for Christmas.
- The positive impacts of **Area Missions** were highlighted by the Partnerships where these have taken place. In *Pontop* the Mission gave the opportunity for parishioners without a connection to the primary schools to see 'some of the wonderful things that are happening within our faith school communities'. In *Benedict*, a Mission that was already in the planning stage for some of the Parishes in the Partnership was widened with invitations to the other Parishes once the Partnership had been announced. This became an effective early step in establishing the Partnership and sharing activities. *Escomb* made reference to the intergenerational praise and song, anointing service and **Family Night with the Youth Ministry Team** which featured as part of their Mission.

Communications

- Several Partnerships have developed **Partnership-wide newsletters or bulletins** including *Lindisfarne, Benedict* and *Finchale* who also highlight making **good use of Parish**

newsletters for Partnership items. *Monkwearmouth* produce a colourful quarterly **Partnership Magazine** and *Escomb's Partnership Note* is produced weekly.

- **Partnership logos** have been designed in a number of Partnerships including *Ovingham, Blackfriars, St Mary the Virgin* and *Pontop*. They are seen as helping to create a sense of belonging across the Partnership.
- *Ovingham, Escomb* and *John Ingram* are among the Partnerships to have developed and distributed a **Partnership Prayer** for use across all Parishes in the area.
- Use of **websites** for Partnership information is mentioned by *Jesmond St Mary, Heavenfield, Monkwearmouth, Tynemouth Priory* and *Finchale*.
- *Finchale* has produced A5 flyers with **Partnership diary dates** for Christmas and Easter celebrations and events over the summer.

Time to Reflect

- Several Partnership Development Groups highlighted the benefit of '**away-days, study days and retreats**' with the common theme being the importance of an extended time together to reflect, pray, plan and get to know one another.
- *Lindisfarne* decided to arrange their 'away-day' in a non-church venue and *Benedict* held a **residential retreat** at the Emmaus Youth Village where they explored the theme of Discipleship in a Missionary World. Their time together was a very effective team building exercise and helped with identifying key areas that fed into their Vision, Mission and Partnership Development Plan.
- *John Ingram* held their **initial PDG gathering** at Minsteracres with a focus on prayer and reflection and *Blackfriars* also used an 'away day' as a reflective way of getting the PDG started. *Tynemouth Priory* held a **study day** to plan the way ahead and *Finchale* organised a **facilitated half-day** at Ushaw College which

gave everyone the chance to get to know one another on a more personal level and the opportunity to speak openly and objectively about concerns and anxieties.

Subgroups and Committees

- Over half of the Partnerships referred to the benefits of putting in place effective **subgroups and committees** with examples including *Lindisfarne's* Spirituality, Finance, and Partnership Development Committees and *Finchale's* six subgroups - Outreach, Young People, Prayer and Spirituality, Communications, Formation and Building Our Community. *Heavenfield* saw a key part of the role of the PDG as **encouraging initiative from groups within the Partnership** citing their delegated Communications Group and local Justice and Peace groups.

Social Activities

- Activities with a specific social focus were highlighted as ways of building relationships across the Partnerships. For example, *Pontop* has organised a **Christmas social event** at a neutral venue, a **St Patrick's Day Ceilidh**, a **Royal Wedding Party** and a **walking group**. *Monkwearmouth* also held a **Ceilidh** to bring people together, while *Escomb* highlighted the benefit of **social gatherings of the PDG** for informal discussion prior to meetings as well as **days out** for Eucharistic Ministers.
- Other events which brought people together from across the Partnership included, for example, **Flower Festivals** in *Lindisfarne*, *Pontop* and *Escomb* and increased participation in the *John Ingram* Walk – an annual event commemorating the life and martyrdom of Blessed John Ingram, a Jesuit executed in Gateshead in 1594. *Escomb* held a **'Songs of Praise'** event while in *Hogarth* they formed the 'Partnership Players' who **performed a play 'Great Expectations'**, entertaining more than three hundred people at eight venues across their Partnership. During the interval, and after the show, actors were encouraged to mingle with the audience

giving people from different Parishes the chance to meet.

Formation and Sacramental Preparation

- *Blackfriars* is piloting **In Pursuit 20/20** a programme aimed at young people aged 25-45 exploring key aspects of discipleship delivered through monthly meetings and fellowship.
- *Monkwearmouth* has organised a **Formation event** to take place at each of their 11 churches over the next year. *Tynemouth Priory* ran the **'Come to the Well and Drink'** course exploring and experiencing different ways of praying, while **Lenten talks** at one of the Parishes in *Benedict* were opened up to the whole of the Partnership increasing the attendance significantly and strengthening relationships
- *Pontop* has this year established a **Confirmation Programme** for the whole Partnership.

Prayer and Spirituality

- *Heavenfield* organised a **Partnership Pilgrimage** with participants walking from Saint Mary's Hexham to Saint Oswald's at Heavenfield. *Finchale* and *Pontop* highlight Partnership **days of reflection** while *Monkwearmouth* have planned a **retreat** for spring 2019.
- Prior to PDG meetings *Pontop* has introduced a **time for extended quiet prayer** wherever the meeting is to be held, encouraging parishioners from across the Partnership to come and pray together. The time of prayer continues during the meeting so that all decisions and deliberations are firmly rooted in prayer.
- Several Partnerships including *Brinkburn*, *Seaton Delaval*, *Jesmond St Mary* and *Pontop* have established **spirituality networks and groups** to take a lead in this aspect.
- *Hilda* comments that the main thrust of their Partnership is in engaging people and bringing

them together and that their most fruitful developments have been centred on **prayer and liturgies**.

Finance and Administration

- In *Lindisfarne*, **detailed procedures and associated documentation** have been agreed for Partnership budget contributions and approval of expenses.
- *Blackfriars* is in the process of developing an **administration handbook** for the Partnership.

Open Meetings

- A small number of Partnerships referred to the benefits of holding open meetings, sometimes at 'neutral' venues to inform and engage a wider group. For example, *Finchale* has organised well-attended **open meetings** at Ushaw College, where people started to get to know each other, and at St Leonard's School as part of the consultation on their Partnership Development Plan.
- *John Ingram* held five **half-day workshops**, one for each key element of their Partnership Development Plan. These were open to any parishioner from the Partnership and have not only informed the development of the plan but have also helped to build new relationships.

Moving Around the Partnership

- Several Partnerships have stressed the importance of everyone getting to know the different Parishes and churches within the Partnership area. *Jesmond St Mary* has made a point of visiting and learning about new Parishes and discovering how different they are. *Brinkburn* and *John Ingram* rotate meetings around the Parishes so as to include everyone. *Bede* has coordinated Sunday afternoon services during Advent and Lent in a different Parish each week, encouraging people to move around the Partnership.

Young People

- A **children's workshop** in *Lindisfarne* created a Partnership banner which is now circulating around their churches.
- *St Mary the Virgin* has involved schools in developing their Partnership logo and prayer and also highlighted the work of their **Partnership Youth Council**.
- *Pontop* has set up a **Youth Development Group** which sees schools, Parishes and families working in partnership. They took a representative group of children from primary and secondary schools to *The Event* in Hebburn and have hosted their first Partnership youth event, intending to run a similar activity once a term in different areas.
- *Finchale* comments that the **use of school venues** for events is a good opportunity to recognise the importance of the schools in the life of the Partnership. *Benedict* invited two school Chaplains to become members of the PDG helping to ensure that the schools and their students are kept in mind in PDG discussions and plans.



A leaflet outlining key contacts for Partnerships can be found at the bottom of the Partnership home page of the Diocesan website at www.rcdhn.org.uk



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