

So where are we heading now?

When Bishop Séamus unveiled our 18 new Partnerships in February he set out a vision of what a partnership could be when he said:



'A partnership is a group of parishes agreeing to work together, to share resources, both human and material, to become stronger and better equipped for furthering the Kingdom of God.'

The task ahead for each of us is to contribute to making this vision a reality. The good news is that there are already some encouraging signs that things have moved forward significantly since February. Partnership Deans are in place across the Diocese, Partnership Development Groups are starting to meet and lay Chairs are being elected. The Partnership Area of the diocesan website has been launched as the 'go to place for all things partnership'. Among other things, it contains the beginnings of a series of guidelines designed to support partnerships to get up and running. Work is well underway to make available a 'menu' of formation opportunities to partnerships later this year. A Diocesan Implementation Group has been established to steer the development of partnerships and to oversee the key aspects that have arisen as a result of the work of the last three years.

However, it is the five words at the end of Bishop Séamus' vision for partnerships that really provide the challenge and make sense of everything we are looking to do. The groups, the structures and the plans are necessary but, in themselves, are simply mechanisms to help us move ever closer to where we are heading. At the very heart of all of this is our journey to become better disciples of Jesus in flourishing worshipping communities that are actively furthering the Kingdom of God.

That's where we're heading – are you on board?

Diocesan Implementation Group

Thursday 20th July saw the initial meeting of the Diocesan Implementation Group, established by Bishop Séamus to oversee and co-ordinate the work of implementing partnerships and many other issues that emerged from the *Forward Together in Hope* 'listening exercise'. It is a working group of the Diocesan Board of Trustees and has as its purpose:

To further God's Kingdom within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle through:

- Providing strategic direction and practical support to the implementation of new partnerships across the diocese.
- Developing, on behalf of the Diocesan Board, a strategic plan for the diocese.
- Overseeing and co-ordinating key strategies to ensure a viable and flourishing diocese for the future.

The members of the group are:

Fr Martin Stempczyk - *Vicar General (Chair)*, Jeff Ledger - *Acting Chief Operating Officer*, Tony Sacco - *Head of Development and Renewal, Partnership Deans*: Fr Christopher Warren, Fr Anthony Hastie, *Lay Representatives*: Vicki Bramley, Kristen Peacock.

Co-option:

The Implementation Group has the ability to co-opt additional members as and when required. This will automatically include: Kathryn Turner - *Head of Spirituality*, Amy Cameron - *Discipleship Co-ordinator*, Jon Melson - *Parish Property Outreach Advisor* and Phillip Salkeld, *YMT*.



From Maintenance to Mission

As Partnership Development Groups are beginning to meet and be formed it is really important that we take time to consider our 'Why' as Church and our 'Why' as partnerships. Developing a vision statement for your partnership enables a 'meeting of minds' and an ownership and allows different communities to express their hopes for the future.

Knowing our Why:

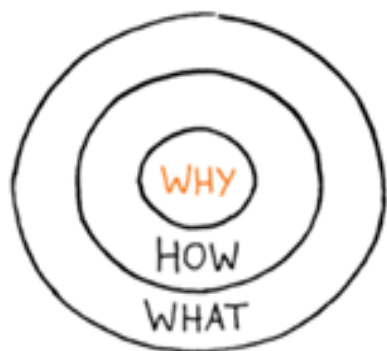


Image from Simon Sinek

It is human nature to want to dive into the 'what' and the 'how' especially if you are naturally a pragmatist who likes to get things done. However, taking time to be rooted into 'Why' we come together as Church will ensure that any future plans flow from the right values and come from a reconnection with our mission. It is strongly recommended that partnerships take time together to work through this process and to ensure their way forward is grounded in prayer. We have an opportunity to embrace a vision for the future that re-focuses our mission as Church and avoids a purely 'maintenance mode'. Through times of change people can have very different reactions; some wish to ignore what is happening, others try to slow the process down, others may go into 'organising over-drive' to see if they can plan their way out of the discomfort. As our Diocese moves forward into partnerships all of these reactions may well be at play in our communities. It is therefore really important that we keep communicating, that we acknowledge the challenges and the feelings but that we also celebrate the opportunities that the future holds.



On the 18th-19th October 2017 a very exciting conference is taking place at St Mary's, Twickenham aimed at anyone who is involved in developing parish life. All over the world the author Fr James Mallon is

making a stir in Catholic circles with fundamental questions about how we re-discover our mission as Church and how clergy and laity can work together to take joint responsibility for the development of discipleship. Fr Mallon will be leading this two day conference on his insights. As a diocese we are hoping to have significant representation from clergy and laity and that this will influence our development of partnerships. Bookings are still open and can be made through: www.divinerenovationuk.org/

Finally, if you are looking for some summer inspiration there are a number of recommended reads that focus on our call to discipleship. The following publications have been instrumental in our plans for formation that will be formally launched in the autumn.

Fr. James Mallon

- Divine Renovation – *From a Maintenance to a Missional Parish*
- Divine Renovation Guidebook - *A Step by Step Manual for Transforming Your Parish*



Sherry A. Waddell

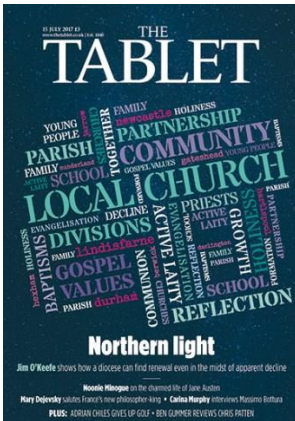
- Forming Intentional Disciples – *The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*
- Fruitful Discipleship – *Living the Mission of Jesus in the Church and the World*
- Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples

Paul Cannon and Sharon Beech

- To Know Him, To Love Him, To Serve Him - *forming Parish Evangelisation Teams*

Amy Cameron – amy.cameron@diocesehn.org.uk

Keep taking The Tablet



If you 'take The Tablet' on a regular basis you may well have noticed an article in the 15th July edition by a certain Jim O'Keefe about the *Forward Together in Hope* journey in our diocese. We even made the front cover! What you won't necessarily

be aware of is that, as a result of the article, we have been approached by a number of people and organisations interested in finding out more about how we have gone about things in Hexham and Newcastle. We've already developed a strong working relationship with the Diocese of Brentwood and have assisted in the development of their 'Stewards of the Gospel' programme. This time, enquiries have come from as far afield as Minnesota, the Diocese of Killaloe in Ireland and the Anglican Diocese of Manchester, not to mention approaches from Theos, a Christian 'think tank' and ACTA in Westminster. In addition, the article has generated a dialogue through follow-up letters in The Tablet and individual contacts.

It's really encouraging to see that the work we've all done in our communities here in the North East of England is rippling out across this country and beyond. We will support others with information and advice where possible within the capacity we have available.

Don't tell anyone...

Communication with, between and within the 18 new Partnerships is a really important aspect of putting strong foundations in place. In many respects this falls to Partnership Development Groups to establish the most appropriate approaches in their own area. We are already hearing tell of, for example, partnership-wide bulletins and plans for shared websites.

From a diocesan perspective we have now integrated a [Partnership Area](#) into the main website – placing information about partnerships centrally within the site. It contains various resources and guidelines to assist partnerships in their early days. Please take a few moments to have a look - and do provide us with your suggestions for improvement. Also, it will be important to share your brilliant ideas with others across the diocese. It would be great to hear about any partnership-wide ideas and activities that are starting to happen in your area. Please feel free to get in touch with information that we can share around the diocese.

Another long-term piece of work on the communications front will get underway in early September. As part of the development of more integrated and coherent communications across the diocese we have commissioned NE Solutions Ltd to carry out the initial stage - looking at what works well and what can be improved. Their work will include discussions with various 'stakeholders' including parishes and partnerships. To find out more or to get involved, please contact Paul Nugent by e-mail at webmaster@rcdhn.org.uk

Copies still available...



For those of you who prefer your documents in hard-copy format you might be interested to know that we still have a number of copies of each of the following 'Pointing the Way' documents available:

- Pointing the Way leaflet
- Reflections from across the Diocese
- Partnership Guidelines – First Steps

Just let us know if you would like further copies.

Our Family of Partnerships

Each parish is a valuable part of a partnership and the partnerships together make up our rich and varied diocesan family. All of the members of this family are set out below with a reminder of the source of their names. Why not pray for one partnership – and the Partnership Dean – each day?

Partnership

Northumberland

- A1 Lindisfarne (*Priory, 635*)
- A2 Brinkburn (*Augustinian Priory, c12th*)
- A3 Heavenfield (1)
- A4 Seaton Delaval
(*Anglo Saxon church, Seaton, Church of Our Lady, Delaval c12th*)

Newcastle/North Tyneside

- B1 Tynemouth Priory (*Priory, after 653*)
- B2 Jesmond St Mary (*St. Mary's Chapel, c12th*)
- B3 Blackfriars (*Dominican Friary est.1239*)

South Tyneside/Gateshead

- C1 Bede (*Jarrow, St. Paul's Monastery, c7th*)
- C2 John Ingram (*Martyred, Gateshead 1594*)
- C3 Ovingham (*Augustinian Priory, 1378*)
- C4 Pontop (2)

Sunderland/East Durham

- D1 Monkwearmouth (*St. Peter's Monastery, c7th*)
- D2 Benedict
(*Birtley and elsewhere were in the care of Benedictines after the Reformation*)
- D3 St Mary the Virgin (*Anglo Saxon church, Seaham c7th*)
- D4 Finchale (*Benedictine Priory, c12th*)

Cleveland/South Durham

- E1 Hilda (*Abbess of Hartlepool Abbey, c7th*)
- E2 Escomb (*One of the oldest Anglo Saxon churches in England, c7th*)
- E3 Carmel (*Carmelite Convent, 1830*)

(1) Location where King Oswald raised a large wooden cross and called his troops to pray before the battle of Heavenfield (AD 633). The significance of the battle of Heavenfield lies in the re-establishment of Celtic Christianity which led to the Golden Age of the Kingdom of Northumbria. The place of battle is now a tranquil hilltop church dedicated to St Oswald, a place of prayer, inspiration and pilgrimage for centuries.

(2) In the late c18th Pontop Hall was used as a refuge where students from Douai were housed and trained following the political events of the French Revolution. Subsequently, the students moved to nearby Crook Hall, then to Ushaw College.

Partnership Dean

- Fr Oliver Keyes
- Fr Peter Stott
- Fr Christopher Warren
- Fr James Dunne

- Mgr Andrew Faley
- Fr Michael Campion
- Fr Shaun O'Neill

- Fr John Gibbons
- Fr Paul Zielinski
- Fr Adrian Tuckwell
- Fr Kevin Dixon

- Fr Michael McCoy
- Fr Mark Millward
- Fr Anthony Hastie
- Fr Andrew Downie

- Fr Michael Griffiths
- Fr Dennis Tindall
- Fr Greg Price

Partnership Matters is produced by the Department for Development and Renewal.

To provide contributions or feedback please contact Tony Sacco or Nancy Gash on 0191 243 3304 or
e-mail: hope@diocesehn.org.uk