Pastoral Strategy & Mission Discernment

The Finchale Partnership



In April, each of our parishes sent a report to the Diocese, setting out their **priorities for mission** in their area, and considering the **challenges** of stewardship, of our people, buildings and finance. The Diocese has now asked us to look at the mission and challenges in the wider area of our Partnership.

What should be done together? What should be shared? What may need to change? What needs deanery or diocesan support?	Are there areas where parishes disagree? Do parishes depend on one another? Are some things loved but no longer sustainable?

Since the parishes sent in their reports, representatives from each parish have been getting together to talk about the plans we will need to take forward in the next few years to ensure that the church is thriving in our area.

Facts and figures	**Beacons**
What area does the Finchale Partnership cover?	**What are the things that we are good at?**
Blessed Edmund Duke Coxhoe Sedgefield Trimdon **Durham Martyrs** St. Godric's St. Joseph's. Gilesgate **Durham St. Cuthbert's** **Langley Moor St. Patrick's** **St. John Boste** Esh Langley Park Newhouse Ushaw Moor **St. Bede's & St. Cuthbert's** Chester-le-Street Sacriston	Green Team (St. John Boste) Ministry mornings to recruit volunteers (St. Bede's & St. Cuthbert's) Financial Support Fund (Durham Martyrs) Confirmation Programme (Durham Martyrs) Youth Group (Durham Martyrs) Adult formation (St. Cuthbert's) Young adults (St. Cuthbert's) International Community (St. Bede's & St. Cuthbert's, Durham Martyrs) Outreach to local community (St. John Boste & Bl. Edmund Duke)
Total Mass attendance: 1435	**We can share these things, and help each other across the Partnership**

Overleaf you will find the actions we are proposing for the Finchale Partnership. Please take some time to think about them and let us know what you think. You can talk to the representatives in your parish or email Margaret Doyle (margaretdoyle1066@sky.com)

Proposals

1. If there were only 3 priests to cover our 6 parishes, how would we support their ministry?

We currently have 5 priests, 3 retired priests who help with ministry, and 2 permanent deacons. But in just a few years, we may have only 3 priests.
So we will carry out a review to consider how the priests and people of our partnership can support each other.

We will look at

- Mass times and locations
- Where priests would live
- Worship in communities without a resident priest
- What other activities would need to be reviewed (pastoral and administrative)

2. Buildings & Stewardship

We have 13 churches, 13 presbyteries and other buildings too. The estimated cost of essential repairs to our buildings is £1.7m.
3 of our 6 parishes are currently spending more than their income each year – and that's before we pay for any of the repairs. The surplus income across the whole partnership was only £6,168 last year.

We will carry out a review of stewardship looking at

- Churches: locations & condition
- Other buildings
- Expenditure on current buildings taking account of long-term future
- Buildings: practical skills
- Financial position of our parishes

3. Volunteers and involvement

One parish estimated that only 15% of the people who come to church get involved, in ministries or in practical help in the parish – 85% don't. We think that may be true across the partnership.

We will identify what we need to do to get more people involved in all our parishes, including

- Succession Planning
- Training and formation for people in ministries and leadership roles
- Renewing Pastoral Councils at parish & partnership level
- Identifying Leadership roles and tasks priests do not have to do

4. Communications & Digital

Some of our parishes already have good websites and social media, but this is an area where we can help each other. It's not just about technical skills. It's also the chance to think about how we use these tools to proclaim the good news, in particular to the younger generations.

We will

- Identify what we want to communicate
- Support each other with websites and social media
- Improve communication across the partnership
- Identify where we can work with the Diocese

We also have 2 issues to raise with the Diocese

Lay led services on Sundays

We don't believe we are yet at the stage of needing to talk about regular lay led services on Sundays, but with fewer priests, there will be fewer supply priests available, and our priests will need the occasional holiday!
We will ask the Diocese to consider whether planned lay led services in this situation may be necessary.

Relationships between schools and parishes

In the parish reviews many people raised the issue of our Catholic schools. People don't understand the new management structure in schools and believe there is increasing distance between the schools and the churches.

Chaplaincy in schools may be excellent – but we believe it is worth looking at why this does not translate into children (and their families) coming to church.