

HEAVENFIELD PARTNERSHIP OF PARISHES

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Parishes of St. Elizabeth (Minsteracres), St. John of Beverley (Haydon Bridge), St. Mary (Hexham), including St. Mary Swinburne, St. Oswald (Bellingham) including St. Peter (Otterburn), and St. Wilfrid (Haltwhistle), agree to co-operate in a partnership of parishes known as the Heavenfield Partnership.

The Partnership agreement does not replace or override existing parish structures which remain in place subject to the usual Diocesan or canonical rules and processes.

The objectives of the Partnership are:

- To co-operate in the best use of the resources available to each community and sharing of expertise around the partnership.

Each of our communities has skills and capabilities that are of value to that community, and which may be of value to others around us. They may currently have events and practices that are effective and valued in advancing the mission of the parish and including parishioners. The partnership will aim to recognise and promote these around the partnership where appropriate, and help to foster good practice and enable others to share from these experiences.

- To co-operate in the provision of Mass, sacraments, catechetics and sacramental preparation.

Where possible the partnership should share the task of providing catechesis and sacramental preparation to all our communities to ensure that we are able to provide regular and high quality preparation to all those that need it. This includes Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), programmes, Marriage preparation, Baptism preparation, First Holy Communion (FHC) and Confirmation programmes. It would also include catechesis opportunities for those outside the scope of the above programmes, including adult formation. Given available resources we will prioritise the provision of Mass and Sacraments within the Partnership.

- To ensure effective communication between the communities to create maximum benefit from the various provisions within the partnership.

To most effectively share our different skills and experience we need to know each other better, and ensure effective communication between us. This is best achieved with opportunities to meet regularly both socially and liturgically. We also need to share information regularly and in both existing and new ways, formal and informal.

- To create an outreach programme that effectively evangelises the parishes and communities around us.

We have a role as Catholics which is strongly missionary. As individual communities and together as a partnership we should take all opportunities to meet and connect with those we meet both within and around our parish communities and in the wider world.

The Partnership will be managed by a Development Group consisting:

- One lay representative from each parish or church community, delegated from that community as appropriate. [Each community will additionally nominate a deputy for the lay representative who will attend the Partnership Development group meetings when the primary delegate is not available.]
- The Clergy (priests and deacons) from each parish or church community.
- A representative from our schools.

The task of the Development Group is to Co-ordinate and support the development of effective partnership arrangements; to develop an action plan for the partnership; and to communicate the work of the partnership across the area.

The Development group will appoint a Chair by a process agreed by the Development group. The Chair will decide the business of the meetings to be held in conjunction with the clergy and lay members of the Development group.

A Secretary will also be appointed by agreed process. The role of the Secretary will be to co-ordinate the meetings and ensure effective communication between the members of the Development group between and in advance of meetings.

A minute taker will be present at the Development group meetings to provide a written record of discussions and decisions taken.

The Development Group will meet every two months on agreed dates. Notice of meetings and deliberations will be made available to all parishioners in the communities of the Partnership.

The objectives and structure of the Development Group will be reviewed every twelve months.

22/6/17