

Go Away!

Over the last few years, there are probably quite a few of us who have wished that all the changes and challenges in our Diocese would do just that! They won't – and we still have to work out ways of grieving our losses, facing the realities of the present and daring to dream of a future in which God's Kingdom flourishes in our region again.

Many people have worked hard in the year since our Partnerships were established, but now is a time, perhaps, for us to say to each other "Go away!" That might be to physically get away on a holiday – or simply to take a break from the work we have been doing around the Diocese. This gives us a chance to clear our heads and our hearts and to return refreshed to whatever lies ahead.

You may like to try one of the Prayer Walks around our Diocese. You can find them under the Spirituality section of the diocesan website. They vary in length and most can be adapted to suit the time and energy you have. As you walk on the land made holy by the presence of so many saints, pray for the people of our Diocese. If you do a walk that would make a good one for people to "Go away" to, send it in to the Department for Spirituality and we will add it to our list. At least one for each Partnership would be brilliant!



'Hello' from Fiona

Our new Chief Operating Officer, Fiona Standfield, offers some thoughts about her first few weeks in the Diocese.



Over the past few weeks I have had the privilege of meeting and listening to many people across the Diocese. Thank you for your warm welcome, kindness and support. I have been truly impressed by your commitment, energy and enthusiasm, and your generosity in sharing with me some of your thoughts and aspirations about our future. In the coming weeks and months I will continue to listen and

learn so that I develop a clear understanding of how in the Curia / Diocesan Services we may better serve our worshipping communities throughout the Partnerships. I look forward to speaking and working in collaboration with you as we continue together on the journey of renewal for the Diocese.

Partnerships One Year On

At Pentecost we asked all Partnerships to reflect on their first year – to celebrate everything that has been achieved, to identify the challenges that lie ahead and highlight any additional support needs. Many thanks to all those involved in completing the short review which will provide a coherent picture of progress and help us to focus our efforts on the support that partnerships will find most useful moving ahead.

It is really encouraging to see the huge amount of good things already happening in our partnerships.



Communications Project

Mgr Andrew Faley, (Head of the Department for Communications) provides the latest update on the Diocesan Communications Project.

The Bishop and Diocesan Board of Trustees received the report of the main findings of the communications research project in March, and asked that a working group would take the report's recommendations and construct a framework of Strategic Principles for adoption by the Diocese. The working group has met several times, and is now writing a series of main policies including Information Technology, Management Information Systems and Training. These will be presented to the Bishop and Board of Trustees at their autumn meeting. These policies will inform the way forward for a more integrated approach to communications across the Diocese.

Further updates will be provided in due course, but if you have any questions please contact the Department for Communications by email at:

webmaster@rcdhn.org.uk



SHARING ACROSS

An Away Day for Lindisfarne *by Dorothy Brett*

Dorothy Brett (Partnership Chair) describes the Lindisfarne Partnership Reflection Day on Saturday 14 July.

On a beautiful sunny, warm Saturday, clergy and lay members of the Lindisfarne Partnership met at St Paul's RC Primary School, Alnwick, to explore key issues for our partnership. Amy Cameron and Kathryn Turner ably helped the group to explore the possibilities and opportunities available.

Kathryn set the spiritual scene with a reflection based on a reading from Ephesians. Amy helped us to explore ways forward, including how to manage pastoral change through discipleship and invited us to consider whether we were: "**Caretakers, undertakers or risk takers.**" Finally, we reflected on Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, as a basis for partnership work. We left feeling involved, supported and inspired.

(You can read more of the article, and about the key issues the partnership will take forward for further exploration, on the [Partnership Sharing Page](#) of the Diocesan website)



Bede Celebrates Patronal Feasts *by John Hardy*

We are conscious that if partnership is to be meaningful it is important that parishioners in the worshipping communities that form our 'Bede Partnership' have opportunities to become partners by getting to know each other: to find out where the church buildings are situated; to learn about the history and the present of the parishes; and, to appreciate the people forming the Church. To gently support this relationship building, we extended a practice that had developed in our clusters. On the patronal feasts of the churches in our partnership, only one Mass is concelebrated that day in that church, which is a celebration for the whole partnership.



Mass in the church is followed by refreshments, which encourages the celebration to continue in conversation, sharing and meeting new (and old) friends. Often connections are discovered across the generations and between the parishioners so that within a few minutes it seems everyone is related, but is that just a North East thing?

(To read the whole article, go to the [Partnership Sharing Page](#) on the Diocesan website)

John Ingram - Inclusive About Development Planning *by Katie Wilkinson*

The Partnership agreed the importance of generating a meaningful, workable, adaptable Development Plan - the main discussion was 'How?' We decided to subdivide the plan into five sections, *Worship, Stewardship, Formation, Youth and Communications* - each section had a goal and three objectives. To establish how we would achieve these, five 'one off' three hour workshops were held, each facilitated by a PDG member or a willing parishioner. ALL parishioners were invited to come along to these workshops and contribute. It was felt this provided an exciting opportunity for everyone to become personally involved in developing our Partnership for the future.

Parishioners are the Partnership - it's up to all to develop its future. Without parishioners' gifts and personal skills our Partnership will struggle to thrive.

The goal and objectives were enthusiastically reviewed and discussed by all attendees - a mix of parishioners and members of the PDG.

Workshop contributions are yet to be collated and transferred into a Development Plan which, as a working document, will evolve over the months ahead.

'Parishioners are the Partnership'

THE DIOCESE...

Brinkburn Partnership Reflects on its First Year *by Chris Smith*

As the end of the first full year in our new diocesan structures, Brinkburn Partnership has worked creatively in each of its working groups: *Development, Finance* and *Spirituality*. It has been so good and very constructive to work together, making new relationships, and sharing gifts, ideas and expertise.

The Partnership Development Group (PDG) has been greatly exercised by the re-thinking of our Worshipping Communities and the revision of Sunday Mass times. After considerable discussion and reflection, we gathered as our Partnership in St. Aidan's school in Ashington on 14 May to hear the proposals. Fr. Peter Stott gave an inspiring presentation which was extremely well received and the new proposals accepted most positively.

The PDG is working at a more coherent approach to Justice and Peace issues as well as establishing a Communications Group to explore the best ways of communicating "*good news*" as well as the more mundane.

...explore the best ways of communicating "*good news*"

The Spirituality group has met regularly over the past year and planned events in different parishes which have succeeded in bringing people together and establishing new friendships. In November, a Service of Remembrance brought many people to Morpeth; Stations of the Cross, led by representatives in each parish helped in our Lenten Reflections. The *Rosary on the Coast* was different and uplifting, and our Partnership Mass of Affirmation in Amble in May was a way of gathering us together in Communion and Friendship.

We are looking forward to a Partnership Day of Recollection on 20 October, when we hope we can celebrate all we are doing whilst looking to exciting and challenging times ahead.

Benedict Partnership Celebration Mass *by Maria Bryne*

Instead of watching England playing in the World Cup, the Benedict Partnership celebrated the first year together. Maria Bryne gives an account of their Celebration Mass held on 11 July at St Michaels, Houghton-le-Spring.

Reflecting on the themes of Conversion, Stability and Obedience (or attentive listening) of our Partnership Patron, Benedict, Fr Mark Millward's homily focused on the '*tensions*' and similarities all communities face as they seek to live and grow together in dynamic and creative ways.

The Partnership priests and deacons led the celebration. Fr Paul Hopper was installed as priest of the partnership and was welcomed on behalf of each church community. Fr Paul then continued as the main celebrant for the remainder of the Mass.

Mick Davison (PDG Chair) spoke of the work of the PDG to date and what it means for us to be missionary disciples. All church communities in the Partnership had been invited to send representatives to each of the sub-groups as we sought to extend these ministries out into the wider arena, and we were looking forward to our '*Celebrating Partnership*' road-shows starting in September.

Acknowledging that the work to date had brought us near to the 'end of the beginning', it is hoped that the Annual Patronal celebration will become a Partnership tradition.

The celebration was accompanied by musicians and a choir from around the Partnership and each church contributed to the Eucharistic celebration. There was food, drinks and football viewing in the Church Hall afterwards.



By Mark Harris

These pages feature some recent items from partnerships around the Diocese. You can find these and items from other partnerships on the [Partnership Sharing](#) page on the Diocesan website.



To contribute to future editions or provide feedback, please contact Nancy Gash or Tony Sacco
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