

CLUSTER 2 (HAWICK, JEDBURGH, KELSO, DUNS, EYEMOUTH)
CLUSTER MEETING 2 - "A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF JOINT
RESOURCES"
SATURDAY 21ST JANUARY 2017 - KELSO

Present

Fr Hugh Purcell, Fr Jeremy Milne

Ca. 60 parishioners with at least one person from each of the communities.

Welcome and Prayer

Fr Jeremy welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer. The scripture reading was read and everyone was asked to reflect briefly on it in silence. They were then asked to spend five minutes talking with their neighbour after which the meeting was opened to comments.

Comments

- There is no communication between the parishes of the proposed cluster.
- Deanery meetings of the parishes helped communication in the past but these have stopped. Why?
- The clustering model may work in urban setting but not so well, if at all, in rural areas such as the Borders.
- The Borders is different and the model will be determined largely by geography.
- Handbook appears to have been written for urban setting.
- It has taken a long time for Catholics as a congregation to be integrated and become part of Borders communities. This positive development would be lost if churches were to close leading to dissipation of Catholic communities.
- We must recognise that the population in the Borders both Catholic and non is increasingly elderly.
- Travel is difficult unless you drive and even then in hard winters and times of flooding.
- Travelling any distance to Mass is difficult for families with young children.
- Parishes must manage themselves
- Laity should take care of administration
- Promotion of deacons should be encouraged

- There is a fundamental need to query the practicality or even possibility of the proposed cluster. It is just too big geographically.
- Some priests are worried about becoming “Mass machines” if they are asked to simply travel large distances offering Mass and other sacraments. They feel this would be spiritually unsustainable for themselves.

Joint Resources

A compilation of available figures for the various reflection questions posed in the handbook was handed out.

The handbook asked us to discuss the information under the four broad headings of people, plant, celebrations and finance, guided by the following questions:

- *What does this study reveal about the current resources in the cluster parishes?*
- *What do these indicate for the future?*

PEOPLE

- Not much confidence in the figures for Estimated Catholic Population.
- Mass time affects attendance. Eg, Jedburgh attendance decreased with move to Sunday morning Mass.
- Need to highlight seasonal variations. Eg, effect of summer visitors
- Agreed to count Mass attendance at the four Sunday Masses between 22 Jan and 12 Feb.
- Numbers engaged in active apostolate to be determined and brought to subsequent meetings. Defined as number of people who volunteer in some way in the parish.

PLANT

- Numbers and condition of buildings was obtained during the meeting.
- Upkeep costs of buildings to be obtained from 2016 financial report. This should consist of the cost of heating and lighting, routine maintenance and insurance. It was agreed that when the Cluster Planning Team meets the end of year financial summary should be brought by each parish so that figures will be consistent.

CELEBRATIONS

- Low numbers of baptisms reflects Borders demography generally. Small, ageing communities.
- Lack of Catholic primary schools

FINANCE

- Operating income and expenditure figures to be obtained from 2016 financial report. Parish representatives/priests to bring financial summary for 2016 to Cluster Planning Team meeting to agree definition of operating income/expenditure.
- Operating income should include Gift Aid.

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL FIGURES TO BE OBTAINED FOR EACH PARISH

1. Mass Attendance, four Sundays 22 Jan, 29 Jan, 5 Feb, 12 Feb
2. Number of children under 16, four Sundays 22 Jan, 29 Jan, 5 Feb, 12 Feb
3. Number of volunteers
4. 2016 figures for Mass attendance, baptisms, first holy communion, confirmation, RCIA participants, funerals, marriages.
5. Special collections total for 2016 for each parish
6. Estimation of buildings liabilities over next five years
7. Number of housebound in each parish
8. Upkeep cost of buildings + operating income and expenditure
(figures to be agreed from financial return summary statements for 2016 at Cluster Planning Team meeting)

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Saturday 18th February, 11am, Abbey Row Centre Kelso