

CLUSTER 1 (PEEBLES, INNERLEITHEN, GALASHIELS, MELROSE, SELKIRK)

CLUSTER MEETING 1

TUESDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER - GALASHIELS

### **Present**

Fr Kevin Murray, Fr Wojciech Rybka, Fr Jeremy Milne

Ca. 30 parishioners with at least one person from each of the five communities.

### **Cluster Planning Team**

It was suggested that each of the five communities put forward two representatives to form the Cluster Planning Team together with the cluster clergy. This team is to see the consultation process through, attending all of the meetings and coming together to agree and write a report to be sent to the Archbishop by Easter 2017. Parish representatives are also to liaise between the cluster planning meetings and their parishes by whatever means they think best (newsletter, letter to congregation, social media, website etc). Please note that all parishioners are welcome at any of the three Cluster Planning Meetings.

### Parish representatives

Selkirk - Peter Field, Dougie Turnbull

Melrose - to be determined

Galashiels- to be determined

Innerleithen - to be determined

Peebles - to be determined

Parishes to nominate representatives as soon as possible and give contact details (preferably email) to the priests.

### **Cluster Planning Meetings**

Meeting 1 - Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 7pm, Galashiels

Meeting 2 - Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 7pm, Peebles

Meeting 3 - Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017, 7pm, Melrose

### **What works at a cluster level?**

#### Currently

1. SSVP
2. Confirmation
3. Family faith day (Borders Pastoral Forum)
4. Pilgrimages (Lourdes, Carfin)
5. Catholic Union of the Sick (Mass for the Sick)
6. Training (eg, safeguarding awareness)
7. Marriage Preparation

#### Previously

8. Deanery Pastoral Council

#### Potentially

9. Communication (meetings, newsletter, website, social media etc)
10. Special shared liturgical or other events that strengthen cluster relations, build spiritual vibrancy and demonstrate Catholic witness. Eg, anti-abortion Mass/procession/rally/march.

### *Comments*

In general things that work well at cluster level are those things that benefit from gathering together a larger number of people to create a critical mass for events. For example gathering children and their families together for Confirmation in one place makes for a much more vibrant celebration.

The question posed in the handbook is 'what works well in the cluster'. It is important to note that with the distances involved between parishes in the Borders some shared activity can be managed but is never easy.

### **What needs to be retained at parish level?**

1. Mass (as often as possible)
2. Prayer and devotions
3. Children's Liturgy
4. Sacramental Preparation of children
5. Children's First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion (it was also suggested that Confirmation should be retained at the parish level though it was understood that since the Archbishop is now doing Confirmations this may be unrealistic)
6. Funerals

7. Weddings
8. Baptisms
9. Pastoral care of the sick
10. Administration
11. Social events
12. Financial accountability
13. Ecumenical relations/activity

### **General comments and considerations**

1. Cluster planning requires clear guidance from the Archdiocese on a number of issues.
  - a) Cluster working practices - any guidelines available?
  - b) What laity can and can't do themselves with regard to liturgy, finance, administration, mission & evangelisation.
  - c) What are the limits within Canon Law regarding lay responsibility and autonomy to act?
  - d) What is possible in the absence of a priest on Sundays and/or weekdays - eg, Communion services?
  - e) Would it be possible for the main community Mass to be celebrated on days other than Sunday?
  - f) What is the Archbishop's timetable after receiving the cluster planning reports at Easter 2017?
2. Borders needs effort to be focused according to geography which mostly means at individual parish level.

3. Need to overcome memory of past bad experiences with regard to lay involvement and self-administration of parishes. Things have been set up in the past which have subsequently been stopped by incoming clergy or the Archdiocese.
4. Need to change attitudes of clergy and laity regarding collaboration.
5. Need to put in place training for laity with regard to specific roles and leadership.
6. Nominating individual lay leaders in parishes might be problematic. Parishes will rather need strong parish councils to keep things going.
7. We should be building up parish capacity to face the future now and not waiting.
8. Instead of talking always in terms of managing decline let's talk more about mission, evangelisation and building up the Church.
9. What is the practice of restructuring elsewhere? We don't want to reinvent the wheel.
10. Be wary of the danger of losing a proper sense of community if a parish becomes a Mass station. Would need to work to overcome this.