

FORWARD TOGETHER  
<sup>IN</sup>  
**HOPE**

# Parish Questionnaire



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**

## Forward Together in Hope – Parish Questionnaire



This questionnaire provides a framework for each parish community in the Diocese to explore its vitality and future direction. The prayer, consultation and reflection that lead to your responses are of central importance to this whole process; the questionnaire is simply the document for systematically recording the outcomes of your deliberations.

The accompanying document, *Exploring the Way* provides further background information and guidance.

### The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is presented in 3 parts.

**Part A – *A Picture of Our Community*** – provides the opportunity to gather, explore and present facts and figures about a wide range of facets of parish life.

**Part B – *Reflective Questions*** – key questions under 10 main headings for open discussion by your parish community, and the opportunity to highlight existing good practice.

**Part C – *Our Community's Initial Thoughts and Ideas about the Future*** – where your parish community is asked to provide its first thoughts about how it might move forward.

Ultimately, we would like all parishes to provide their final responses using an on-line questionnaire as this will allow us to collate and analyse responses efficiently – and we will be providing information later in the year about how to do this. However, while drafting and sharing your responses within the parish, you may find that the electronic version of the questionnaire (on the *Exploring the Way* Resources CD and on the *Forward Together in Hope* website) proves to be the best way of recording and storing your responses.

### The Data Pack

Accompanying the questionnaire is a data pack for each parish community. This contains summary information about your parish held centrally by the Diocese. It is hoped that by providing this information communities are spared at least some of the work of collating it at parish level.

We have used our best efforts to provide information and statistics that are accurate and up to date but no matter how carefully such information is checked, inevitably inaccuracies can creep in and we apologise in advance if this is the case.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or if you have any comments or suggestions to make.

The *Forward Together in Hope* Team: Jim O'Keefe, Tony Sacco and Nancy Gash can be contacted on:  
Telephone: (0191) 243 3304      E-mail: [hope@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:hope@diocesehn.org.uk)

## Background Details

Name of parish:

**St William's and St Francis de Sales  
Darlington**

Details of  
church(es) in the parish:

Church name	Church address
St William's & St Francis de Sales	Barton Street, Darlington. DL1 2LN

Key parish contacts:

Priest(s)	Permanent Deacon(s)	Forward Together in Hope Contact(s)
Fr G. Price		Anne/Eddy Robinson
		Tim Rochester
		Brenda Marshall
		Jayne Lye

Details of main contact for this questionnaire:

<b>Name:</b>	Anne & Eddy Robinson	<b>Address:</b> 53 Woodcrest Rd Darlington. DL3 8EE
<b>Telephone No:</b>	01325 265976	

<b>Email Address:</b>	anne_robinson16@hotmail.com	
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## Part A – A Picture of Our Community

**Part A** of the questionnaire takes respondents through the 10 main headings and requests detailed responses to a number of factual questions under each.

**Please note:** The information in the data pack, unique to each parish, should prove useful when responding to some of the questions in this section. Specific references are made in the text where this is likely to be the case.

### 1 The Christian Faithful

- 1.1 Please complete the grids below to indicate how the number of those worshipping in your parish community has changed since 1985. (See Section 1 of your parish data pack).

#### Mass attendance

1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
431	0	439	400	85	101	86	102	102	99	98	107	112	106

#### Baptisms

1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
23	0	20	25	1	2	0	3	3	4	2	8	1	1

#### Confirmations

1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
0	0	7	4	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1

#### Marriages

1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
7	0	5	1	0	0	11	1	0	1	0	0	0	0

#### Receptions

1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
6	0	7	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

- 1.2 Are you aware of any significant demographic changes (e.g. a large increase / decrease in the overall population, an increase in the number of immigrants etc.) in your local area in the last 10 years that have impacted / will impact on your parish?

☐ Yes

☒ No

- 1.3 If Yes, please give a brief description of the changes and their impact on your parish community.

Brief description of change	Impact or potential impact
	The figures above are not accurate for St William's Church, because
	1985 - 2000 when we were amalgamated with St Anne's.

- 1.4 Are you aware of other significant changes in the local area that are impacting / likely to impact upon your parish? (Examples could include: major housing developments, the closure of a large employer, the development of a new industrial estate, an increase in youth unemployment etc.)

☐ Yes

☒ No

- 1.5 If Yes, please provide a brief description of the changes and their impact / potential impact on your parish community as far as you are able.

Brief description of change	Impact or potential impact

- 1.6 Based on the most recent reported average mass attendance for your parish (see Section 1 of the data pack) please give an **approximate** age breakdown using the categories below.  
*Note: We are seeking a 'best guess' here - unless you feel that taking a more systematic / survey approach would be helpful to you.*

Age range	Approximate number
0-10	25
11-18	6
19-25	10
26-49	25
50-70	20
Over 70	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	106

## 2 Leadership

- 2.1 Please provide details about the leadership roles in your parish community (e.g. Permanent Deacons, Lay Leaders, Chair of Parish Pastoral Council, SVP President, Chair of Finance Committee, Head Teacher, Chair of Governors, Music Group Leader etc.)  
Please provide approximate numbers where possible.

Role	Number
Lay Leaders	1
Music Group	2
Staff Governor St Bede's School	1
Vice Chair of Governors for Darlington schools	2 different schools

2.2 Please describe the situation in your community regarding a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) or equivalent group.

- ☐ No PPC or equivalent is in place (*Go to Question 2.11*)
- ☐ A PPC or equivalent is in place but is having little or no impact on the parish community
- ☒ A PPC or equivalent is in place and is having a significant impact on the parish community

2.3 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, please indicate the year that it was established.

1980's

2.4 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, does it have a written constitution?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

2.5 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, how frequently does it meet?

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Monthly                  | Every<br>2 months        | Every<br>4 months        | Every<br>6 months        | Annually                 | Other                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If other, please specify


When needed. Most things are sorted as they arise

2.6 What is the process for setting the agenda for the PPC or equivalent?

- ☐ The agenda is agreed at the beginning of the meeting
- ☐ The agenda is set at the previous meeting
- ☒ The chair seeks items in advance
- ☐ The chair determines the agenda
- ☐ There is a standard agenda for every meeting

2.7 Who chairs the PPC or equivalent?

- ☒ Priest
- ☐ Deacon
- ☐ Lay person
- ☐ Religious

  
**Glory be to the Father –  
in whom we live  
and move and have our  
being.**

2.8 How are people in the parish informed about the membership and work of the PPC or equivalent?

By word of mouth or weekly newsletter

2.9 Which parish(es) is / are represented on the PPC or equivalent?

St William's



2.10 What is the number and approximate age profile of members?

Age range	Number
Under 40	2
40 -70	4
Over 70	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	9

2.11 Is there a Finance Committee in place in the parish?

☒ Yes ☐ No

2.12 If Yes, how frequently does it meet?

Monthly	Every 2 months	Every 4 months	Every 6 months	Annually	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify

or more if required

2.13 What is the process for setting the agenda for the Finance Committee?

- ☒ The agenda is agreed at the beginning of the meeting
- ☐ The agenda is set at the previous meeting
- ☐ The chair seeks items in advance
- ☐ The chair determines the agenda
- ☐ There is a standard agenda for every meeting

2.14 Who chairs the Finance Committee?

Priest	Deacon	Lay Person	Religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.15 How are people in the parish informed about the membership and work of the Finance Committee?

By word of mouth or through the weekly newsletter

2.16 What is the number and approximate age profile of members?

Age range	Number
Under 40	
40 -70	2
Over 70	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	3

Glory be to the Son -  
whose name we bear and  
who calls each of us to be  
his disciples;

### 3 Active Involvement of People

*Note: Section 3 of the accompanying data pack includes information about the number of people in your community whose ministries are subject to a DBS check and details of paid roles in parishes.*

3.1 How many people in your parish community are registered for ministries that were subject to DBS (formerly CRB) checks in 2015?

29

3.2 How does this compare with the position in 2010?

5 more

3.3 Are there any paid workers for your parish community?

☐

Yes

☒

No

If Yes, please provide details below.

Role Title	Number	Total hours contracted per week

- 3.4 Please indicate approximately how many lay people in your parish, in the age categories shown, are involved with delivering parish / deanery programmes.

Role	Under 40	40 - 70	Over 70	Total
Baptism preparation				
Holy Communion preparation	1	1		
Confirmation preparation				
Marriage preparation				
RCIA programme delivery				
Other (please list these below)				

- 3.5 Please list below other non-liturgical\* lay voluntary roles that are present in your parish community along with numbers in the age categories shown. Please think widely here (e.g. PPC members, church cleaners, welcomers, Finance Committee members, musicians, flower arrangers, gardeners etc.)

\*Note: Question 4.4 will ask for information about liturgical roles.

Role	Under 40	40 - 70	Over 70	Total
PPC members	2	4	3	9
Church Cleaners	4	6	4	14
Welcomers		4		4
Finance Committee		1	1	2
Musicians / choir	5	2	5	12
Flower Arrangers		4		4
Maintenace team		2	2	4

- 3.6 Please identify the full range of social activities that take place in the parish community along with their frequency (where relevant).

Social Activity	Frequency
Bingo	runs on a fortnightly basis
	six months of the year
Fayre	once or twice year
Sunday Morning Coffee	every week
Sunday cake stalls and raffles	2 or 3 times year
Music Concerts	Annually
Bar b Cue	Annually
Quiz	Annually
Childrens Parties	when asked
Carol Concert and Nativity	Annually

## 4 Worship and Spiritual Life

- 4.1 Please indicate the venues and times of masses currently celebrated each weekend.

Venue	Day	Time
St William's Church	Sunday	9am
St William's Church	Monday	9.30am
St William's Church	Holy Day Vigil	7pm

4.2 Please provide details of any planned changes to these arrangements.

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4.3 Please provide details of other regular services celebrated in the parish community along with an indication of their frequency and venue.

Service	Frequency	Venue
Exposition of Blessed Sacrament	Weekly	St William's Church
Stations of the Cross	Weekly /Lent	St William's Church

4.4 Approximately how many lay people have specific roles in the planning, preparation and celebration of masses and other liturgies?

Contribution	Number
Readers	14
Eucharistic Ministers	10
Funeral Assistants	
Children's Liturgy leaders	4
Altar Servers	6
Musicians / Choir	12
Leaders of Morning / Evening Prayer	2
Sacristans	3
Homily Preparation	
Other, please specify below	
First Communion Preparation	2

- 4.5 Please identify the range of other activities that contribute to the spiritual life of your parish community. Please think widely about the full range. (e.g. Prayer groups, Rosary groups, Parish Pilgrimages, Retreat Days, Accompanied Prayer etc.)

Group / Activity	Frequency	Venue
Prayer Group	Advent/Lent	Persons Home
Course on Bible Reading	over the year	Persons Home
Retreat Days		Done on a Deanery basis
Pilgrimages	when arranged	Deanery basis or other Church

## 5 Education and Continuing Formation

### Adult Formation

- 5.1 Please identify the Adult Formation activities (offered by the parish, deanery or diocese) that people from your parish have participated in over the last 3 years. Where possible, please indicate the approximate number of people who have participated.

Adult Formation Activity	Yes / No		Approximate Number
Catechist Training Programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Eucharistic Ministry Training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Reader Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CCRS Courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lenten Study Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other Formation Activities ( <i>please list below</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5.2 Does your parish offer a Journey in Faith programme to support Catholics who wish to learn more about their faith?

☐

Yes

☒

No

### Young people in schools and their families

*Note: Section 5 of the accompanying data pack includes information that should assist with the completion of this section.*

#### Catholic primary school(s) serving your parish

5.3 For each Catholic primary school serving your parish please complete the following information:

<b>School Name:</b> St Bede's			
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total no. of Pupils	217	207	230
% of Catholic Pupils	90.32	90.82	91.30
Total no. of Teachers	11	11	12
% of Catholic Teachers	72.73	72.73	66.67

<b>School Name:</b> St Teresa's			
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total no. of Pupils	272	270	284
% of Catholic Pupils	57.72	70.37	83.10
Total no. of Teachers	12	18	15
% of Catholic Teachers	50.00	33.33	40.00

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

School Name:			
	2007	2011	2014
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

School Name:			
	2007	2011	2014
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

- 5.4 Please describe briefly how the primary school(s) and the parish work together to prepare children for the sacraments.

St Bede's School do their part and Our Leaders do their part.

- 5.5 How is / are the primary school(s) involved in the adult faith formation of the children's parents?

Parents have meetings with School .

- 5.6 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists is there representation from the Head Teacher(s) or other staff member?

☐ Yes ☒ No

- 5.7 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists does the membership include school governors?

☐ Yes ☒ No

**to build his Kingdom  
and to go out into the world  
and bear its fruit.**



- 5.8 Please describe how the primary school promotes links with the parish community and how the parish community promotes links with the school (e.g. Mini Vinnies, Fair Trade, joint social activities etc.)

Link	Brief description
<i>Example: Joint Social Events</i>	<i>Termly joint fund-raising social events held in school hall</i>
Social events in St Bede's School	Parishioners and parents are invited
End of term Masses	Parishioners and parents invited
St Bede's School Website	Advertise our events
St William's Website and Newsletter	used to promote St Bede's School News

- 5.9 Please give details of any joint parish / school celebrations of the Eucharist. Please include frequency and location.

None held currently but working towards bringing them back. Due to distance between our School and Church organisation for transporting the children would not be simple.

- 5.10 Please give details of any joint school / parish non-Eucharistic celebrations. Please include frequency and location.

- 5.11 Please describe any ways in which the school and parish share their buildings and other resources. (e.g. Hall, meeting rooms, minibuses etc.)

Neither St Bede's School or ourselves have any need to use each others building.

## Catholic Secondary (including Middle) school(s) serving your parish

5.12 For each Catholic secondary school serving your parish please provide the following information:

<b>School Name:</b>	Carmel College		
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total no. of Pupils	1117	1176	1217
% of Catholic Pupils	71.62	72.78	68.78
Total no. of Teachers	76	82	91
% of Catholic Teachers	65.79	68.29	63.74

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

5.13 Please describe briefly how the secondary school(s) and the parish work together to prepare young people for the sacraments.

Confirmation Preparation done on a Deanery Level
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5.14 How is / are the secondary school(s) involved in the adult faith formation of the children's parents? (Include any joint work with the parish).

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5.15 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists is there any representation from the secondary school(s)?

☐ Yes ☒ No

5.16 Please describe how the secondary school(s) promote links with the parish community and how the parish community promotes links with the school(s) (e.g. Fair Trade, John Paul II Award, joint outreach activities etc.)

Link	Brief description
<i>Example: Lenten Fundraising initiatives</i>	<i>Joint fundraising effort between parish and school with a specific outreach cause identified each year.</i>
sent by emails	any events that need advertising

5.17 Please give details of any joint parish / secondary school celebrations of the Eucharist. Please include frequency and location.

Invitation to Parishioners to attend Year 7 Mass at the start of term.  
Took place in School Hall end of 2015

5.18 Please give details of any joint parish / secondary school non-Eucharistic celebrations. Please include frequency and location.

5.19 Please describe any ways in which the school and parish share their buildings and other resources. (e.g. Hall, meeting rooms, minibuses etc.)

No need to

## 6 Outreach

6.1 Does your parish / deanery offer a RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) programme?

☒

Yes

☐

No

6.2 If Yes, how often does this take place?

yearly

6.3 Please indicate any outreach activities that your parish is involved with *in the local area* (e.g. Food banks, Homeless projects, Asylum Seekers / Refugees, Prisoners / the families of prisoners, Drop-ins, Chaplaincy, Justice and Peace, Lourdes Youth etc.) Please indicate whether the parish makes a financial commitment.

Outreach activity	Brief description	Financial Commitment (Yes / No)	
<i>Example: Elmwood Food Bank</i>	<i>10 parishioners are involved on the weekly rota for this ecumenical project across the Town. All parishioners are asked to contribute canned goods which are collected each week.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grange Rd Baptist Church Food Bank & Homeless Charity	Food and items collected weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HCPT Group 25	fundraising is done during the year to send children to Lourdes at Easter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Family Help	donations given and fundraising done	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 6.4 Please describe any active involvement your parish has in the cultural and political life of the local neighbourhood / district (e.g. local governance, social action, ward meetings, community forums etc.)

N/A
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- 6.5 Please describe any links that the parish community has *with other parts of the world*. (e.g. CAFOD, MISSIO – Red Boxes, Aid to the Church in Need, Little Way Association, parish overseas projects etc.) Please indicate whether the parish makes a financial commitment.

Outreach activity	Brief description	Financial Commitment (Yes / No)	
Example: Kenya Project	A strong link has been in place for 10 years with Community in Kenya resulting in the development of various activities including a village-based water project and a chicken farming project for	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cafod	Mini Vinnies/Liturgy Children involved in Virtual Village	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Missio	Red Boxes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mill Hill Missions	Donation given at Christmas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 6.6 During the past 12 months in what ways has the priest / deacon / religious engaged with other Christian faith leaders in the locality?

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- 6.7 During the past 12 months in what ways has the parish community engaged with other Christian communities in the locality? (Please include activities / services as part of Churches Together, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Joint acts of witness / shared worship, joint social activities and joint outreach activities.)

Activity	Brief description
<i>Example: Good Friday Walk of Witness</i>	<i>Around 70 people from all Christian denominations in the town walked behind a cross being carried between the churches concluding with prayer in the Town Centre.</i>
Christian Unity	Parishioners attended local Church of England Service
Social Activities	Parishioners help out and attend local Church of England Church
Social Activities	People from the local Church of England Church help out and attend St William's Church .

- 6.8 Over the past 12 months in what ways has the parish community engaged with Faith communities other than Christians in the locality? Please include visits, talks, joint activities etc.

Activity	Brief description
<i>Example: Talk about the Jewish Passover Festival</i>	<i>Well attended evening talk at St Michael's Church with invitations to all Christian denominations in the area.</i>

- 6.9 In what ways does the parish publicise itself and its activities to the wider community locally? (e.g. local media, posters in public buildings, website, leaflets etc.)

website, local media, website, leaflets through doors and leaflets through local Church of England School .
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## 7 Finances

Note: Section 7 of the parish data pack includes information about parish income, expenditure and Gift Aid.

7.1 With reference to the parish data pack please complete the details below.

### a) Income and Expenditure

£'s	2005	2009	2014
<b>Income:</b>			
Offertory	8733	9871	10910
Gift Aid	1131	1258	1431
Donations			443
Other income	3720	3962	4612
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>13584</b>	<b>15091</b>	<b>17396</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>			
Property	6769	5101	11179
Personnel			
Other costs	4777	8132	8465
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>11546</b>	<b>13233</b>	<b>19644</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>2038</b>	<b>1858</b>	<b>(2248)</b>

### b) Surplus / deficit ignoring any extraordinary income or expenditure

£'s	2005	2009	2014
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>1938</b>	<b>1858</b>	<b>2248</b>

NB. This represents income minus expenditure, ignoring any extraordinary income or expenditure, e.g. one-off legacy or significant property repairs, etc.

Please answer the following questions based on the information collected above.

7.2 Does the current annual income for the parish meet its annual expenditure?

☒ Yes ☐ No

7.3 How has the parish income changed since 2005?

Increased Mass attendance and other events.

7.4 What are the major factors that have impacted upon parish income since 2005?

Maintained low running costs due to use of internal volunteer skills
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7.5 With reference to the data pack please provide the following information about parish balances:

£'s	Amount at March 2005	Amount at March 2009	Amount at March 2014
Parish Deposit (or loan)	3886	15006	8240
Parish Current Account	16639	7749	7429

7.6 What is the percentage of people in the parish community who are signed up to Gift Aid?

26%

7.7 What is the average offertory per head each week?

£.87

7.8 Please describe how parishioners are informed annually of the parish finances.

- ☐ By verbal statement
- ☒ By a displayed written statement
- ☒ By each person receiving a written statement (e.g. in bulletin)
- ☐ Through a general meeting
- ☐ Other – please describe

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7.9 Please describe any significant fundraising activities that are in place within the parish at present.

Purpose of fundraising	Method(s) used
<i>Example: To subsidise costs for young people going to Lourdes</i>	<i>Raffles and sponsored walk</i>
Raising money for Parish	Bingo / Annual Christmas Fayre
Cafod Virtual Village	mini vinnies and liturgy children doing craft and cake stalls
Helping HCPT Group 25 get to Lourdes	raffle, quiz, and donations
St Teresa's Hospice	Music Night, Candles at Christmas.
Darlington Family Help	collection at Carol Service



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- 7.10 Please identify any factors (e.g. population shift, changes in local employment etc.) that will have a significant impact on the *financial position* of the parish over the next 5 years.

Factor	Potential Impact
The area has already undergone major changes in population and employment	nothing of any scale forseen
Area undergoing re generation with a Retail Park and large areas of potential housing on old Industrial land.	

- 7.11 Please describe any expenditure (excluding property costs) of more than £15K per individual project, anticipated within the next 5 years.

Nature of Expenditure	Anticipated Cost
nothing that we know of.	

Glory be to the the  
Holy Spirit –  
pouring out grace and guidance,  
forming us and renewing us.

## 8 Facilities

*Note: Where there is more than one church within a parish, this section will need to be repeated for each church site. Additional copies of this section and the next (Section 9 – Geographic Distance) are available on the Resources CD and website. Please use as many of these as you require.*

- 8.1 Please provide information about the buildings associated with each church site within the parish. (Note: Section 8 of the data pack will assist with some questions)

Parish Name	Church Name	Capacity
St William's	St William's	300

In your opinion	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	
8.2 What is the overall state of repair of the Church?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8.3 What is the overall state of repair of the Presbytery?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8.4 What is the overall state of repair of the Church Hall?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes	No	
8.5 Is there a car park?				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.6 If Yes, how many parking spaces are there?					
8.7 Is there a parish office?				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.8 Are there secure on-site storage facilities for confidential documentation?				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.9 Is there an appointed Welfare Officer?				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.10 Are the following regular check-ups up to date:					
• Portable electrical appliances?				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Gas safety				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.11 Are the following facilities available for people with disabilities?					
• Accessible toilets				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Level access				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Ramped access				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Loop system				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.12 If any of the above provision is lacking are there plans in place to improve the facilities?				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.13 If Yes, please elaborate:					

8.14 Does the church have a cemetery?

☐

Yes

☒

No

8.15 If Yes, who has responsibility for its care?

8.16 Please identify any other land / property for which the parish is responsible. (e.g. Residential lettings etc.)

Property / Land	Description

8.17 Please describe the meeting spaces that the church has and how many people they can accommodate.

Meeting Space	No. of people
Attached hall	100
small meeting room	15

8.18 Is there a place for smaller weekday masses?

☒

Yes

☐

No

If Yes, please provide details

8.19 Does the community have property that is in excess of its requirements?

☐

Yes

☒

No

Inspire us all  
in the Diocese of  
Hexham and Newcastle  
to live the Gospel,

8.20 If Yes, please give details and any suggestions of ways to realise its potential.

Property / Land	Details / Suggestions

8.21 Are your premises used by external groups / organisations?

☐ Yes ☒ No

8.22 If Yes, please provide details of the nature and frequency of the activity and whether the organisation pays a hire charge.

Group	Activity	Frequency	Hire charge (Y / N)	
<i>Example: Scouts</i>	<i>Pack Meeting</i>	<i>Weekly during term time</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8.23 Does the parish collaborate with other denominations locally regarding use of buildings?

☒ Yes ☐ No

8.24 If Yes, please elaborate.

we do advertise that the premises are available

it was investigated some years ago before the Ordinariate split with St James Church of England Church.

8.25 Do you anticipate any instances of expenditure on property (£5k or more on a single item / project) in the next 5 years?

☒ Yes ☒ No

8.26 If Yes, please provide details.

Expenditure	Anticipated Cost
Church Decoration in Full in the future	to look into
Routine maintenance	no cost yet
gradual upgrading of covers to windows	no cost yet

8.27 Please indicate the distances from the nearest primary and secondary schools to the church.

Name of school	Distance
St Bede's Primary	1.9- 2mi
St Teresa's Primary	2.3 mi
Carmel College Secondary	2.8mi

## 9 Geographic Distance

*Note: Where there is more than one church within a parish, this section will need to be repeated for each church site. Additional copies of this section and the previous one (Section 8 – Facilities) are available on the Resources CD and website. Please use as many of these as you require.*

Parish Name	Church Name
St William's	St William's

9.1 How many miles is it by road to the nearest 3 Catholic churches from this church?  
(See data pack)

Church Name	Distance
St Thoma Aquinas	0.8
St Anne's	1.4
St Teresa's	1.5

9.2 From which parish church was your parish originally founded?

St Augustine's Darlington
---------------------------

- 9.3 With which local parish / church communities does your parish have the strongest relationship(s)

St Teresa's and St Anne's

- 9.4 Please describe any significant geographical obstacles between this church and other Catholic church(es) in your locality.

lack of buses going past St William's Church

- 9.5 Based on the experience of your parishioners, how accessible is this church using public transport?

Easily

Moderately

With difficulty

Not at all

☐☐☒☐

Please elaborate.

Limited Bus Service past the Church. The main bus route is 400yds away.  
No buses for the time of Sunday Mass

- 9.6 Does the parish provide any regular transport to church services?

☐

Yes

☒

No

- 9.7 If Yes, please explain.

## 10 Young People

10.1 Please describe how work with young people is co-ordinated within your parish.

- ☐ No co-ordination in place
- ☐ Co-ordinated by the priest
- ☐ Co-ordinated by a permanent deacon
- ☐ Co-ordinated by a paid youth worker
- ☐ Co-ordinated by a volunteer
- ☐ Co-ordinated by a group of volunteers
- ☐ Co-ordinated by the Parish Pastoral Council
- ☒ Other (please describe)

to be open to change  
and to move  
forward together in hope.



Any activity for young people is instigated by parents and Liturgy Leaders

10.2 What activities, opportunities or projects are currently in place specifically for young people in your parish?

Activity	Brief description
Children's liturgy	operates on a Sunday morning
Mini Vinnies	meet once a month & organise many events to raise money for Cafod
Choir	we have some of our young people joining in the singing
Children's Garden	Hoping to set this up in conjunction with Cafod

10.3 How are young people involved in the wider planning / decision-making within the parish?



Not so much at the moment, but  
It is our wish for the future as identified in the Parish Survey.

10.4 Please describe the level of involvement that your parish has with opportunities provided by our Diocesan Youth Service (YMT) and other Diocesan opportunities for young people.

Activity	Not involved	Limited involvement	Quite involved	Very involved
Area / School missions programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Source	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Retreats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flame Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
World Youth Day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult Co-workers Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
John Paul II awards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lourdes Pilgrimage – Youth Section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Others – please specify:</p> <p>The children get involved in some of the above more through primary and secondary school than the parish.</p>				

Thank you for completing Part A of the questionnaire.  
Part B is very different, encouraging more reflection and discussion.



## Part B - Reflective Questions

When Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee and called his first disciples (Mt 4:18), they must not have had a clue what they were getting into. Four fishermen became 'apprentices' to an itinerant leader, teacher and healer, overnight. In Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:21) the first thing they did was to accompany Jesus into the Synagogue in Capernaum, where he proceeded to break the Jewish law by healing a possessed man on the Sabbath.

There is something exciting about being a disciple, an 'apprentice' of Jesus. There is so much to learn and discover. Jesus walked around the countryside with his followers, both women and men; they were a community, a community on the move. The disciples were formed and shaped within this community.

Once Jesus died and rose from the dead, the disciples were terrified. They ran away (to Emmaus) or hid in an upper room or reverted to their previous job – seven of them went back fishing. Time after time Jesus came among them and reassured them. They were totally taken over by the Holy Spirit and began their work as missionaries; they are instructed to go out into the world and proclaim the Gospel.

We live in a very different world today. But as a result of our Baptism, we are called, gifted and sent. We too are sent into the world. We are missionaries within our local population, disciples among all the residents in our neighbourhood.

The local priest looks after the already gathered flock. The flock, the rest of us, is immersed in the world; we engage with each other, with those hurt by the Church, those separated from the Church for whatever reason and those beyond the institution of the Church. Every one of us has a particular pathway of discipleship to follow, and many of us discover it through the communities within which we live.

It is only right that we pray for more men to respond to the call of God to become ordained priests; indeed there is a prayer for vocations to the Priesthood in the spirituality resources available with these documents. It is also true that we all need to explore how God is calling us to make a difference in the world we live in. This calling (or vocation) may be to marriage, parenthood, the single life, nursing, policing, taxi-driving, professional football or any mixture of any of those. God has an infinite imagination; there is a unique calling for each one of us. We become disciples when we learn to look at our world through the eyes of Jesus.

This questionnaire will help us to look at our community and discover how it can help each and every one of us become an apprentice of Jesus.

We have heard the facts and figures, the prospect of having 50 priests in our Diocese in 2030, the need for a wider variety of leadership in the Church and the very basic need to become more open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is leading us into the future.

Pope Francis gives us clear guidance when he says in *Evangelii Gaudium* (para 20):



**"Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel".**

With this call in mind, let us begin to explore the questions before us.

### Notes:

- The accompanying *Exploring the Way* document contains suggestions for how you might go about consulting with members of your parish community on the questions in this section.
- Please use a maximum of **250** words in response to each of the questions.

## 1 The Christian Faithful

The Christian Faithful are the heart of every worshipping community. If it is to flourish, a community needs a core of members who are committed to the Gospel of Christ and are willing to make the community a priority, giving generously of their time, imagination, gifts and other resources. A viable parish needs a minimum of active members.

### a) How can your community look to sustain and increase the number of people worshipping with you towards 2030?

Underpinning our communication links is a drive to continue to make the discussion between parish members and priests clear, open and honest. In doing this, and in increasing our numbers, St. William and St. Francis's will strive to embrace everyone who walks through its doors in the celebration of the Mass and the need "to love and serve" our neighbour socially and sacramentally. In response to the Teacher of the Law's question, "And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29), the Parish recognises that through the means of social media and by producing a booklet of deanery activities that can be easily distributed we can welcome into our church new members who may or may not have been regular worshippers in the past.

The parish is also resolute in investing in young families. The strength of our children's liturgy group and Holy Communion programme successfully serves our local Catholic primary school St Bede's and has enabled parish roles to be given to the younger members of our community. This, we feel, is a strong foundation upon which we can build strong links with Carmel College in order to promote both social events for the youth and contemporary liturgies which seek to embrace and enhance their musical talents and faith journey. In encouraging active participation from the youth, the parish would like to provide the opportunity for after Mass activities and a youth club which would assist in our young people seeing their church as a caring, nurturing and supportive influence in their development.

#### Some quotes

- Christmas, FHC and school Masses attract people who are not regular worshippers so put all the deanery activities into a booklet and distribute
- The church must embrace everybody - The church must show it respects everybody
- The Mass needs to be a celebration and less solemn
- The Mass needs to have more discussion within it – be less didactic
- Christianity should not stop when you leave the church – Love thy neighbour
- Provide more Mass times at fewer locations
- Mass needs to be less formal – less chanting – and involve young people in discussing things more

## 2 Leadership

It is certain that in the future even more communities will be sharing a priest with other worshipping communities. Priests and deacons will be working more collaboratively with people. The prospect of having around 50 active priests in our Diocese in 15 years' time (2030) certainly sharpens the mind. While we must continue to pray that men will respond to the call of discipleship as ordained priests and deacons, we also need to look carefully at the development of other forms of leadership in the Church.

### a) What lay leadership is currently viable and effective in your community?

We have an amazing group of people who do wonderful work in caring for the parish – the church and the community – these people are the back bone of the parish.  
We attract a wide range of people from all over Darlington  
The children's liturgy leaders do a very effective job  
This parish runs without a resident priest with lay/Eucharistic ministers who take the Eucharist into the community this works well  
Our community has an effective lay leadership. They create a friendly and warming atmosphere which is one of the factors that encourages me to attend.  
Excellent leadership in the parish – their dedication and warmth has kept me attending.  
Workshops set up in Lent were effective and brought people together.  
Holy Communion preparation very good, Eucharistic ministers are good  
Parish involvement in Lourdes good  
Very good young family leaders developing new areas such as Minnie Vinnies  
Our church is very friendly who make you feel important  
Lovely people who organise meetings to discuss our faith – these people encourage me to believe in our religion and why our attendance is quite good

### b) For what other areas of your community life could trained lay men and women assume responsibility?

More lay leaders to be trained -some of our most successful services were led by lay leaders e.g. Good Friday Service. These lay leaders must be supported by the parish. People to organise the youth to carry out voluntary activities in the community, care homes and to put the Mass in practice.

Develop an SVP and Mini Vinnies to get into the community and provide additional contact/care.  
Organise groups to visit the sick, elderly and bereaved encourage the youth to be involved and be missionaries in our own back yard. Develop the pastoral roles to include advice and assistance with issues such as social, economic and family/community issues.

We have good liturgy leaders/communion leaders but more are always welcome to organise more social events for children/youth to get involved in the church.

Look at good practice in other parishes - advertise it so we know where it going on. Look to the past and see what worked. Some years ago Darlington employed a community worker to work with parishes, schools, charities and all social organisations to enhance our social awareness. Although he has not worked here for many years his legacy is still active and of great value. What about a youth community worker????????????????

### 3 Active Involvement of People

In parishes where the same small, ageing group of parishioners has served the community extremely well over very many years, there may be some real anxiety about the future. As that small group retires and withdraws from active involvement, the community is at risk of floundering if younger parishioners are unable or unwilling to take their place.

#### a) How diverse and active are parishioners within the community?

The overall feeling was that our parish is one of the most warm welcoming they have ever experienced.

The church must embrace everyone in the community. We are active with St James Cof E Parish.

We have a varied involvement that is growing slowly among the younger parents and this is gradually spreading into the community through groups like 'Mini Vinnies'.

#### b) How can the parish community invite and prepare more people to support it?

Advertise what each church is doing and what the needs are – funds – volunteers.

Promote these in secondary schools RE lessons - Citizenship Form Tutor time promote it as useful addition to their CV

Parent Groups linked to schools. Recruit – Retain \_ Recover through community commitment

We have a gap with few teenagers. Learn from other parishes who have a successful youth population attending church

## 4 Worship and Spiritual Life

A flourishing community has worship at the centre of its life. The ultimate goal is to make Jesus Christ known and loved. This is why Jesus Christ is at the heart of every worshipping community. The Eucharist is the principal means in which we celebrate this. The Holy Spirit may well be leading us to discover a variety of forms of worship and devotion in the future. For this very reason a living community makes every effort to encourage parishioners of all ages and backgrounds to participate fully in prayer, devotion, worship and study.

God loves us individually. We respond to God's love in our own ways. When we come together for worship we all need to have a sense that our relationship with God is strengthened and affirmed.

**a) Are there aspects of your community's regular worship together at Mass that are working particularly well and deepen the spiritual life of those present?**

It was felt there was need for basic courses to discuss the Church's social teaching and to study the Scripture. There should be the opportunity for quiet reflection prior to Mass without interruption from other activities preparing for the Mass. The youth should feature more strongly with youth led involvement in the liturgy, music and participation in the Mass.

**b) Is there anything your community can do to encourage a deeper prayer life and engagement with Scripture?**

We should remain a practical religion and promote voluntary work in areas such as St Teresa's Hospice and community based support programmes. We should not ignore that the social time after Mass strengthens friendship and builds up strong relationships.

## 5 Education and Continuing Formation

A flourishing community will be able to show that the Catholic faith is handed on to children, young people and adults by means of regular programmes of religious education and Christian Formation.

- a) What good experiences has your community had in the past and what opportunities would you like to see for 'continuing formation' in the faith for members of your community?**

There was a wide range of responses in this section.

It was felt there was need for basic courses to discuss the Church's social teaching and to study the Scripture. There should be the opportunity for quiet reflection prior to Mass without interruption from other activities preparing for the Mass. The youth should feature more strongly with youth led involvement in the liturgy, music and participation in the Mass. We should remain a practical religion and promote voluntary work in areas such as St Teresa's Hospice and community based support programmes. We should not ignore that the social time after Mass strengthens friendship and builds up strong relationships.

- b) How can closer relationships be developed between the worshipping community, the school(s) the young people attend, and the families that belong to both?**

There was a need to create social events which would appeal to the youth. This could also link in with stronger ties between the parish and catholic schools and inclusion in the parish of work started in the schools. This links into the first section to encourage and give opportunity to the youth to have a greater role. Raise the awareness of HCPT, CAFOD and other charities as a route for the youth to be involved. The current children's liturgy group is seen as a strength as is the preparation for First Holy Communion which is currently parish based. We could build on successful events such as the Carol service and develop these to other events such as Harvest Festival, Lent and Easter. The Parish Council is seen as a strength and its role is recognised as a positive. In all the responses youth involvement was underlying by developing activities to encourage their attendance and giving them a greater role in the Mass.



## 6 Outreach

A flourishing community extends a spirit of hospitality and invites people to become members. It also looks way beyond itself to discover how the spirit of Jesus can be brought to bear on everything that concerns us in the world: our relationship with other Christian Churches, women and men of other faiths and all men and women of good will in our world.

Under this heading we include: hospitality; Ecumenism; Interfaith relationships; involvement in local social and political issues and much more. It explores the practical ways we have of becoming 'missionary disciples'.

**a) What good experiences has your community had regarding our call to be involved with other Christians, other faiths, all men and women of good will?**

We have supported the residents of the centre for special care near our church and the home for the elderly in the old convent.

We are seen as a friendly Parish accepting of other faiths and denominations and positively welcoming all into our church. We link with St James the Great Anglican church and each supports the other in social activities. We are seen as a charitable parish and this should be encouraged over a range of local and national charities.

**b) How can your worshipping community become more immersed in the local community?**

Historically the two churches in the area have always been linked.

The recent transfer of the Vicar of the the local C of E and many of his parish to the Ordinariate has put a strain on their church.

We saw it as our duty of care to support the remaining members of the church through the very difficult time.

We still do support socially as they do with us.

## 7 Finances

A sustainable community must have an annual income that is sufficient to cover its expenses. There needs to be a reliable level of stewardship among the faithful who willingly give of their time, gifts and energy to sustain the work of the community.

**a) How do you feel about the average weekly offertory donation in your community? Does this need to increase to enable your community to flourish in 2030?**

The consensus of opinion on the Finances of St William's Parish is that, with a reasonable, but not large, collection, we keep our heads above water, because we have an amazing group of people that do the essential day to day up-keep of the fabric of the building. However, the majority do think that richer parishes should help poorer ones.

The negative responses (only 2 ).

1. It is thought that the problem was shortage of priests not money.
2. Did not think that more money would make the church flourish, but "ALL" should share what they have.

Albert Hill was a very industrial community that has reduced as the major industry has. The area is undergoing redevelopment and it is possible that the area will grow as there is the potential for extensive housing with so much land being available.

**b) If you are a finance-rich community, how do you feel about sharing some of your resources with very poor parts of the Diocese?**

We are not a rich parish but an efficient one at living within our means and funding the needed work. However we are a generous parish and would see it as part of our role to help those in need.

## 8 Facilities

A flourishing community needs good facilities which need to be well maintained. It cannot undertake any building projects, renovations or improvements unless it has the resources to pay for them. It may be that in some places, there is a need for a plan for the community and a plan for the buildings, and they may be separate plans. It is also true to say that our buildings can be a witness to the presence of the Church in our world, or a drain on resources and energy.

**a) What sort of use can your community foresee for any unused or underused parish facilities in the future?**

Suggested uses for the hall: Youth Club, whist drives, 5's and 3's dominoes, lunch club for the elderly and family parties. Due to the reduction in the finances of the local authority we have lost a youth club and after school group which used the hall very effectively for a long time.

We have worked with Groundworks charity for some years and offered our hall, a very minimal cost, for use by them for summer activities/after school club/youth groups. They, as many charities, have lost funding and even though we were prepared to have them use the hall without cost were unable to fund their leaders.

This where a deanery worker whose full time role is to look at such areas would be valuable. He would have to be self funding through parishes but it is money well spent.

**b) How can the community develop the capacity to look after its facilities in the future?**

Looking after the facilities is not a problem we do that, maintain ensure all regulations are adhered to etc.

Finding the direction, recruiting and training volunteers needs to be done on a deanery basis.

## 9 Geographic Distance

A flourishing community may be influenced by its location. The proximity of neighbouring parishes can have a real impact on the vibrancy of a community. If several communities are in close proximity with large, ageing buildings that are only half-full, this will need to be taken into account when considering the future.

Our basic question is about how we can enable communities to flourish in order for us to deepen our sense of discipleship and service. Our parish churches are not private chapels maintained simply because the community has enough money to cover the expense.

**a) How does your community feel about the possibility that the only way to ensure flourishing in the future is to become part of a new parish community?**

St. William's is a very well established parish with a reputation as a warm and welcoming community. As it is inevitable that parishes will have to amalgamate, the feeling of many is very indeterminate. The first response on the "Questionnaire" is "If we had no other choice we would have to move" the last response is "travel to another church would be a problem for many"

**b) Are there ways in which your community can serve and support neighbouring communities?**

We are the smallest (second oldest) parish in the town. We have always been an active area for churches together and have a long history of links with St James C of E Parish.

## 10 Young People

Young people are not just the 'future' of the Church; they are very much part of the present. We all need to look at how actively young people are encouraged and affirmed in their contribution to the community throughout the year. The enthusiasm and energy of young people can sometimes be daunting to those who are older, but they are also signs of the Holy Spirit within us and among us.

### a) What good experiences regarding Church life do the young people have in your community?

The liturgy group is very popular and we have attracted families from other parishes through word of mouth.

There is also a Mini Vinnies group who are just starting and hope to be a big part of the parish community.

Once they come they recognise the warmth of welcome and friendliness of the parish.

It is the youth we find difficult to attract once they reach the age they say no to their parents to attend.

### b) How can the presence and witness of young people be more encouraged and supported in the community?

The parishes and the priest need to accept that the youth see religion and practice in a different way to the older generations. For the youth obligation does not hold any sway with them. There has to be something in it for them to enjoy coming. There has to be a way to get enough of the age group to attend to make it a social activity - It has to be fun as well as everything else.

They have to feel they have a voice.

The youth mission is great but small.

Each Deanary could do with their own youth leader who works in schools and parishes. Some years ago Darlington employed Phil Watson. His was brilliant at working with socially deprived groups. He got people motivated and even though he has been gone many years his initiatives of lunch stop /night stop and the credit union are now flourishing among all versions of religion in the town.

It will be the parishes to fund this and it will be hard but without something the churches will be closed and sold off and never seen again.

## 11 What Else?

- a) Given all the findings you have explored in Part A of this questionnaire, what would you see as the priorities to ensure a viable and flourishing community in 2030?**

Look at what our future is - the youth and develop a way for their involvement.

Make sure the results of this exercise is realistic, practical and of the time.

We know that parishes will close/amalgamate as there are fewer numbers and a drastic shortage of priests. Make the changes quickly so we get a chance to settle into them before we have even fewer attending.

In many of the responses people highlighted areas such as married priests/ women priests these are areas outside our control but there is a willingness for them to happen.

Failing that develop a programme for the development of lay leaders that will appeal to those with young families where time away from their families is precious.

- b) Do you have any other observations - particularly about anything we may have missed?**

We think that the process has been overly complicated and tied up with language that did not attract an active response from all. The idea of the process is valid but the method was not inviting and the volunteers who took on the roles found it difficult.

## 12 Good Practice

There is no doubt that there are some really innovative things going on within our worshipping communities from alternative Halloween evenings for children to imaginative liturgies during Holy Week; from exciting Confirmation programmes to pilgrimages and vigils.

**a) Is there something your community is involved in which will be of interest to others in the Diocese?** *Please use as much space as you need.*

It is unlikely that our activities are unique to the Diocese and they will be present as good practice in many areas. Our circumstances are also not unique.

We have not had our own parish priest for 20 years + and so have developed our own way of surviving as an active parish. We have a priest for two masses a week and through a motivated and active community we are self-financing.

For the size of parish we attract many younger families and will regularly have children making up 20% of the attendance. They are attracted by the warmth and friendliness of the parish and the liturgy group is very successful and expanding into Mini Vinnies - a children's garden - Cafod Virtual Village.

We know we need to move more for the youth and invite and listen to their ideas as a parish but also as the clergy. We all need to listen to them or we will lose them.

We need a stronger two-way link with schools especially Carmel to develop a programme to support and encourage the youth to be active and attend. For this to happen they need to feel there is something there for them. We need to live in their world of social media and embrace the new technology into our services/parish.

What we have is a strength of purpose to exist as a parish and we bring our friendship, welcoming and support to all who attend. Many come but few leave us.

Thank you for completing Section B.

The final section is brief but does need serious thought.

## Part C

### Our Parish Community's Initial Thoughts and Ideas about the Future

*Based upon the wide consultation and reflection that has taken place in completing parts A and B of this questionnaire, please use this section to provide an indication of your parish community's initial thoughts about its future. You are also asked to provide information about the consultation process that has taken place to inform these views.*

#### **a) Our initial thoughts and ideas**

Based on everything you have prayerfully and carefully considered so far please set out below the initial thoughts and ideas from your community about the way forward for your parish. You may also wish to provide a view about anything that is emerging regarding the ability of your parish to flourish into the future – either on its own or in conjunction with another community.

*Please feel free to use as much space as you need.*

St William's Parish will echo many of the older parishes in the Diocese. The people who attend come from all the other parishes in the town. It is a single building with a hall and courtyard. The presbytery was sold many years ago.

Yet the attendance at Sunday Mass far exceeds the 'parish' size. We attract many young families and the children will regularly make up 15-20% of the congregation. We are financially sound and the church is in fair condition for its age.

Our church welcomes all. They are made welcome and they appreciate the friendly nature of the church. In many ways we can exist and progress as we are but with the reducing number of priests we recognise what might have to happen. If that happens we will deal with as we can.

We know we need to develop the parish so there is a greater attendance of teenagers/youth and would welcome examples of where parishes have been successful.

We see the appointment of a Darlington based youth community worker as a positive step that would have the potential to echo the success of the Youth mission team on a local level. This would draw all the parishes together and support them and schools. The financial cost would be small in relation to the potential benefits.

The future holds what it does and many of the decisions will be made on one single factor - the number of priests available and their ability to support a certain number of churches. Many of the parishioners commented their desire to see married priests/women priests/permanent deacons/lay leaders supporting the existing clergy. That decision is out of our hands.

The review process has felt cumbersome and many felt the language and surveys difficult to complete. We hope the outcome is beneficial and we pray for the decision makers.



**Our initial thoughts and ideas (continued)**

## b) The Consultation Process

Please describe the process used within your parish to consult widely with the community on your responses to this question. Please include the dates of meetings and other activities you have held, their purpose and the numbers attending. Thank you.

Date of meeting or other activity	Nature of activity (e.g. open parish meeting)	Purpose of meeting / activity	Numbers attending / participating
	member of group introduced FTiH to the Congregation at the end of Mass	awareness raising	100
	update and encouragement as parishioners finding questionnaire difficult to understand	support for parishioners	100
	Video shown to parishioners after Mass	information	60
	people discussing FTiH	group members available to support and answer questions	60
	key members of the group available after every Sunday Mass	support !	
	next step to feed back overall results of the questionnaires		

We expect to receive completed questionnaires by Advent (29 November 2015). We will then begin to analyse all of the findings and be back in touch with every parish once this task has been completed.

Thank you so much for all your work and observations.  
We hope this whole exercise has been fruitful and enlightening.  
Please continue to pray for all those involved in the next stage of  
*Forward Together in Hope.*





FORWARD TOGETHER  
<sup>IN</sup>  
**H O P E**

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, Department for Development and Renewal  
Tel: (0191) 243 3304 E-mail: [hope@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:hope@diocesehn.org.uk) Web: [www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk](http://www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk)

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