

## Mission Clusters in Ecclesfield Deanery

Partnership is a gospel imperative. Being “in Christ” is foundation to our identity as Christians. Being “one” in the body of Christ is foundational to our identity as Church. Being sent by God in the power of his Spirit is foundational to our mission. We can do nothing alone.

Paul speaks of his “gospel partnerships” and it is arguable that his top priority after preaching the gospel was the sharing of resources between churches.

Becoming who we already are is the Christian calling. It is also our calling in Ecclesfield Deanery – we are one church, but how do we express this. We are partners in the gospel but how do we make this a reality.

### 10 keys to developing partnerships

1. **Every partnership needs a vision** – a reason for partnering (beyond the foundation of expressing the unity of the church). This vision needs to be specific to this particular partnership e.g. a vision for working together in a local secondary school; a vision for working together in preparing couples for marriage; a vision for working together on a fresh expression of church
2. **Every partnership starts small** – no one will commit major resources to a partnership until they know it works and brings real benefits to all concerned. We start small with limited, achievable objectives.
3. **Every partnership has a focus outside the church** – we do not start by trying to write a common theological statement or by having joint services. We start by identifying a common need in the communities we serve.
4. **Every partnership needs a champion** – one person who acts as coordinator, facilitator, encourager. They will need to be someone each party trusts, someone who can enthuse others, someone who is committed to making the partnership work (like an Area Dean).
5. **Every partnership has a champion in each church** – someone (or group) who works with the overall partnership champion to promote the partnership in their church (could be a Deanery Synod Representative?)
6. **Effective partnerships are a process not an event** – a one-off event does not make a partnership. There is a process of relationship building, exploration, formation, operation.
7. **Effective partnerships are made up of partners with clear identities** – the clearer each partner is about their own identity, the better they can work with others who are different.
8. **Effective partnerships acknowledge and celebrate differences** – we each have our own histories, vision, activities. These need to be celebrated not watered down.
9. **Effective partnerships do not come free** – time and money will be necessary to make them work. However the return on this investment can be greater than the sum of the parts.
10. **Effective partnerships expect problems and pro-actively deal with them** – there needs to be a process built in to the partnership to deal with changes (particularly in personnel) and to deal with the unexpected.