

An Ecumenical Partnership in an Extended Area: Sheffield

Preamble

This agreement is made between the Sheffield Methodist District and Circuit and the Bishop of Sheffield and Diocese of Sheffield. The intention is to create a Covenant Partnership in Extended Area covering the city of Sheffield.

This agreement has been entered into following a recommendation from the Sheffield Circuit to the District Synod and from the four deanery synods to the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee.

1. Context

An Ecumenical Partnership in an Extended Area (EPEA) is intended to provide a framework of commitment for joint strategic thinking and action within an overlapping area of a diocese and a Methodist district. The aim is to bring together the following elements within the area:

- Congregational sharing, worshipping, witnessing and working together;
- The strong personal commitment and collegiality of church leaders at all levels;
- Joint strategic planning.

Within an extended area the emphasis should be on shared vision and common purpose, rooted in shared common life.

The area of benefit is the City of Sheffield. The work will be undertaken by those parts of the Sheffield Methodist Circuit that fall within the City boundaries and the four Anglican Deaneries that fall within the City boundaries: Attercliffe, Ecclesfield, Ecclesall and Hallam.

2. Vision

In light of the above, in recognition of the four key priorities of sharing mission, worship, ministry and resources as set out by the Methodist-Anglican Panel for Unity and Mission, and in gratitude for the trust and co-operation that already exists locally between our denominations we commit ourselves to:

- seek new opportunities for shared witness, worship evangelism and service;
- collaborate in the sharing and deployment of ministry;
- work together for a more effective use of our resources;
- empower the leaders of the Circuit and Deaneries to work together for the development of our covenant partnership;
- work together to partner with other faith and non-faith bodies for the benefit of all in our communities subject to the appropriate Standing Orders of Methodist Conference and to the Canons of the Church of England. Furthermore we hope for, and will seek out, opportunities to extend the spirit of this covenant to all Christian denominations and traditions in the city of Sheffield.

3. Aims and Approaches

To work as:

1. Partners in mission and ministry (including local Mission Action Planning, joint mission to a locality, sharing deployment of local preachers and licensed lay ministers)
2. Partners in strategic planning (including those exercising both lay and ordained ministries. Structurally, this planning will work through the co-superintendents and the area deans meeting together regularly for the purposes of consultation and exchange of information. In addition the Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham and the co-superintendency also meeting together at least twice a year to monitor the progress of the partnership.

4. Structures and Powers

1. The Canons of the Church of England, particularly canons B43 and B44, and the relevant appropriate authorisations.
2. Methodist Standing Orders, and other relevant appropriate authorisations.
3. Church of England parishes can enter into the EPEA at its commencement or any time thereafter.
4. Methodist Church Councils have the power to agree as part of the EPEA to collaborate with their local parish(es). Collaboration between multiple parishes and / or churches is possible.
5. Where projects have legal, financial or property implications the churches shall use the usual denominational approval processes.

5. Duration of Agreement

This agreement is entered into with no fixed end point however either partner or any future partner may withdraw from the agreement but will only do so after appropriate consultation with the other party or parties.

For further background, clarification and possibilities, reference is made to “Being Real about the Anglican/Methodist Covenant: Relating in Mission, Ministry and Discipleship”

Signatories..... (The Bishop of Sheffield)

..... (The Chair of Sheffield District)

..... (The Co-Superintendency, Sheffield Circuit)

Dated of 2016