

Thinking of setting up a link in Zambia?

Before setting up a formal link it is good to do some preliminary work with the PCC or a local link group to ask some questions to help you think through the link a bit more.

Why do you want the link?

Be as simple and practical as possible; start small with your hopes and expectations. You can always build on this.

What are the hopes and expectations? What is your church/benefice hoping to offer and receive from a link?

Remember the basics:

* Commitments to prayer
* Mutual support, sharing in the Gospel and fellowship
* It is not primarily a funding relationship. When you feel you have some capacity for fundraising it is often better to focus on practical things that are needed but avoid long term capital projects and the funding of individuals especially commitment to the funding of education.

How would you like to communicate?

It is essential to have a named person at each end, ideally this would not be the parish priest, as he may move on.

Letter writing is now rarely used as a means of communication. Others have found that relationships are built and communication flows more easily through the use of:

* E-mail
* Facebook
* Texting
* WhatsApp

Where would you want you link to be?

* Urban? Rural? School?
* A parish working on specific issues e.g women, health?

What is the initial time length for the link?

It is essential to establish periodic assessments and a formal link review date at the outset. Evaluating what is and isn’t working is important for the health and longevity of the link. This should be a two-way review. A useful milestone for the formal review would be 2 years.

What is the role of money in the link?

It is best not to bring giving of money in until a relationship has developed.

What will be the initial range of activities?

* Prayer during services
* Sending church magazines
* Establishing a webpage or Facebook page for keeping all involved and interested up to date on activities
* Joint projects in each of your respective countries/towns/churches – Look to the Sustainable Development Goals for ideas of twinned activities

Don’t be too ambitious, you can always build on these later. For example, people exchanges and visits to respective countries is a wonderful way to celebrate the link and further strengthen relationships but it is something you might do later on once things are established.