

Parish Amalgamation Consultation St Brendan, Harwood and St John the Evangelist, Bromley Cross

Paper 2: Considering Parish Boundaries

The diocesan proposal (published in January 2017) put forward two amalgamations that affect our three parishes: (1) St Brendan and St John; (2) St Columba and Holy Infant

Descriptions of these proposed parishes, together with maps, are given on an interactive site for all diocesan boundaries (<https://boundaries.stjosephsmanchester.co.uk/>) where you need to select “St Joseph – Bolton” deanery.

The amalgamation of two or more parishes to form a new parish normally means that the existing boundaries of the parishes are simply combined into one new overall boundary. However, part of the consultation process regarding amalgamation requires us to ask the questions:

- Are the new boundaries the most appropriate?
- Are there any particular boundary issues arising from the proposal or that precede it?
- Do the boundaries of the new amalgamated parish still raise any pastoral issues?
- In the light of local knowledge, are any future amendments to be suggested or noted at this time?
- Are there other boundaries which need to be considered? (Topographical, LEA, etc.)
- Are there any significant changes in population you can envisage for the next five to ten years?
- Do you anticipate any future changes arising from the “*Strengthening our Presence as Church: A Journey in Hope*” planning process that will impact further on your new boundaries?

So the amalgamation process gives us the opportunity to make either minor or major adjustments to the proposed boundaries of our new parish, so that we can best address the pastoral and spiritual needs of the people in this area.

Minor Adjustments

For some time now I have been concerned that, whenever amalgamation was to occur, we should seek to resolve a small issue regarding the boundary between St John and Holy Infant. This relates to a small area down Eagley Way. At present, Eagley Brook forms the boundary between our parishes but this results in two issues. First of all, vehicular access to that part of Eagley which is in St John’s parish is only possible by travelling via Holy Infant’s parish. At the same time, the small area down there which is in Holy Infant (i.e. Threadfold Way) can only be accessed by crossing the brook twice (i.e. into and back out of St John’s). It therefore makes sense to propose a minor adjustment of the boundary as follows:

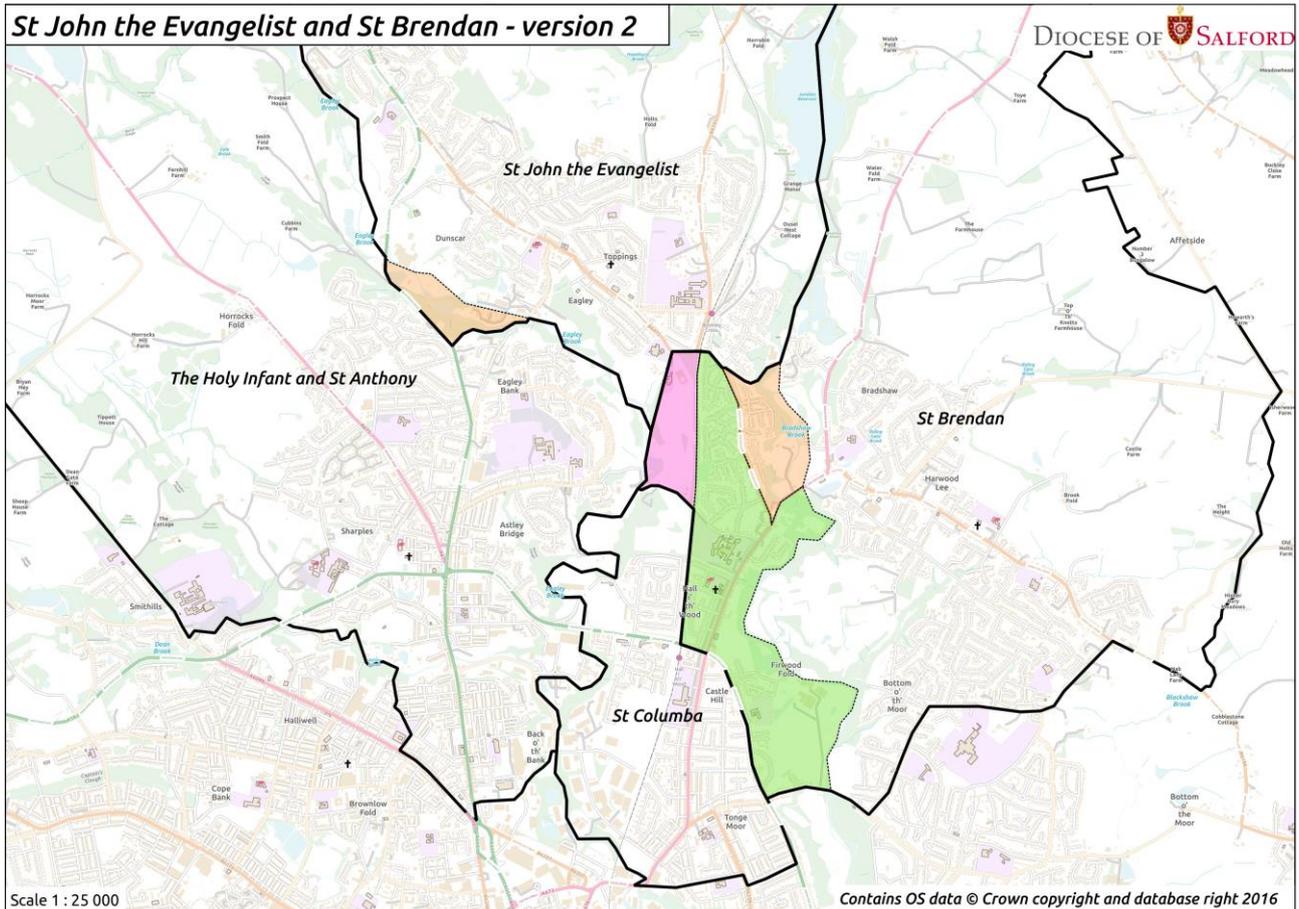
- Instead of simply following Eagley Brook, follow Eagley Brook to Eagley Way, then Eagley Way and Blackburn Road (A666) to the point where Eagley Brook crosses it at Dunscair (where we then pick up the existing boundaries)

This proposal is shown as an orange shaded area on the left side of the map (overleaf).

A second minor adjustment suggests itself at the point where St John, St Columba and St Brendan meet. This would, of course, not have been an issue if all three parishes were amalgamating (as we originally hoped and requested). The issue arises now because to travel between the two churches (St John and St Brendan) it is necessary to pass through St Columba parish. Whilst that is not an impossible situation to live with, it might just be a bit of a tidier arrangement if the boundary was moved slightly so that there is a vehicular route between the two churches within that boundary (even is only when going one way). The current boundary is Bradshaw Brook, running from Bradshaw Bridge up to Printers Lane. The proposed adjustment would be:

- From Bradshaw Bridge continue along Bolton Road and then north up Turton Road to the current boundary with St John at Printers Lane

This proposal is shown as an orange shaded area on the right side of the map (overleaf).



Major Adjustment

The green and pink areas are more radical and proposed on the basis that we might now close St Columba church and divide the parish territory between this new parish and Holy Infant:

- The green shading is a basic division using the railway line and main road (A58)
- The pink bit takes account of the westerly part of Oaks Lane which (if we just took the green bit) would be isolated (and, although in Holy Infant, only accessible via this new parish)

These suggestions are incorporated in the following written description which gives the overall boundary of the new proposed parish with this major adjustment included:

From the point where Broadhead Road crosses Twitchels Brook, S along Blackburn – Rossendale District boundary, Blackburn - Bury District boundary and Bolton - Bury District boundary to and NW along Arthur Lane, Stitch-Mi-Lane, New Lane, Blair Lane, Thicketford Road to Crompton Way (A58) to intersection with railway line at Hall-i-th-Wood and N along the railway line to its crossing with Oaks Lane and then W along Oaks Lane to the River Croal and N along the River Croal to Eagley Brook. N by Eagley Brook, Eagley Way, Blackburn Road (A666), Dewhurst Clough, Delph Brook and by Blackburn – Bolton District boundary to Blackburn Road (A666). N by Blackburn Road to Cadshaw Brook and along northern boundary of North Turton civil parish to the crossing of Broadhead Road and Twitchels Brook.

Considerations

Obviously we can only go for the major adjustment if the decision is made to close St Columba church. If that is the decision, then it makes more sense to divide the parish territory as described here, rather than the whole of the parish going with Holy Infant. Making that decision now, rather than at a future date, means that we can begin the life of our new parish with all the potential territory included (rather than having to redefine boundaries at some future date). It would also mean that Holy Infant could simply take in part of St Columba parish without having to undergo a full amalgamation process and without having to change its name.

Rev Canon Michael Cooke VG
Parish Priest
18 August 2017

You can respond to this consultation via www.sbsj.org.uk or via <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/797FSP3> or using a paper response form available in church.