

MINUTES OF THE ROMSEY DEANERY SYNOD - WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2014 AT ROMSEY CHURCH ROOMS

Present: House of Clergy	11	Apologies: House of Clergy	4
House of Laity	14	House of Laity	10

1. The Area Dean welcomed all to the meeting and asked members to share information about the flooding problems in their communities. Prayers were made for all who were affected and who are working to help them.
2. **Going deeper with the Diocesan Strategy – Focussing on “Re-imagining Church”**
 - 2.1. The Area Dean referred to John 3.16, as an indication that God acts in order and has priorities – the Diocesan Strategy is not just “management speak”. The Diocese is investing huge amount of effort to support Deaneries and Parishes in implementing this strategy.
 - 2.2. He introduced the 2nd Strategic Priority agreed at the Diocesan Conference in September 2013:
 - ***We re-imagine the Church, intentionally connecting and engaging with our local communities in culturally relevant ways. We will rejoice in the richness of the “mixed economy” of all ministry and proactively promote vibrant parochial and breath-taking pioneering ministries amongst “missing generations”, e.g. children, young people, under 35s.***
 - 2.3. Two examples were given of “re-imagined” Church.
 - **Messy Church**
 - 2.3.1 Mary Savage talked about her experience of introducing and running Messy Church initially in Awbridge Parish and then across the benefice of Awbridge, Braishfield, Farley Chamberlayne, Michelmersh and Timsbury. There are other “Messy Churches” across the Deanery, some run by other denominations.
 - 2.3.2 Messy Church is an international movement, providing all-age worship, which is Christ-centred, hospitable, and celebratory. It is all about getting involved in order to share the love of Jesus; it uses activities including craft, looking to see things as God sees them.
 - 2.3.3 Mary showed pictures of a Messy Church Eucharist held in the Abbey last summer, where the grape juice and bread were made alongside other crafts.
 - **Sundays@4**
 - 2.3.4 Diane Kingston talked about Sundays@4 at Romsey Abbey, which is signed up to Messy Church. It meets monthly in the Church Rooms on the 1st Sunday and is lay led, with the guidance of the Abbey’s Children and Young Families Minister. It is a safe environment for leaders to try new things. Initially it was aimed at church families, but the team is experimenting with inviting families through the school, baptism families etc.
 - 2.3.5 Each meeting is planned for all ages, and some adults come without children. There is usually a gathering activity, story and crafts or activities, and always prayer and a meal. Childrens’ action songs are used, as well as Taize and African songs, avoiding written words. There is always an element of challenge, which encourages the adults and children to support each other. Take home sheets are provided.
 - 2.3.6 The groups seek to engage with the community – for example Sundays@4 had prepared gift boxes for people known to them who needed cheering up, containing items donated by members of the congregation.
 - 2.4 Both Mary and Diane said there was a wealth of resources available, both from the Messy Church website and elsewhere. The Diocesan Lent Course, Living the Mission of Jesus, includes Messy Church material for each week.
 - 2.5 Both stressed the importance of finding a time and place that suits those who wish to attend. In both cases, this was usually Sunday afternoons. Because of less frequent meetings, it was difficult to predict numbers. Preparation and running the meetings needed plenty of people. There was a

perception that this was a children's service and it took time to encourage adults to participate fully.

2.6 In discussion, the following comments were made:

- New ideas may take a long time, and a huge amount of effort to establish, and may fade naturally after a time. We have to be flexible.
- Good to hear encouraging signs from other parishes.
- It is important to set the parameters clearly – Sundays@4 invitations say that children are welcome with an adult, to avoid the perception that parents can “drop off” the children to be looked after for an hour!

3. After further discussion over coffee, the **minutes of the previous meeting** of 9 October were agreed and signed.

4. **Matters arising**

4.1. Attendance list

- The attendance list is in a new format, to help identify those who were regularly failing to attend. Attendance is important because the Deanery Synod is increasingly being asked to make important decisions, and needs people who are prepared to be involved and take responsibility.

4.2. Visit from South Rwenzori

- Two visitors are expected (subject to visas) from 11 June to 2 July. Please pray that visas will be issued, and notify Marilyn James of any events you would like them to attend. Prayer cards are available.

4.3. Deanery Treasurer

- The Area Dean recorded thanks to Garry Hedley for his excellent work over recent years. Simon Bramwell has agreed to take on the role, but was unable to attend this evening.

5. **Committee reports**

5.1. General Synod

- A summary of the November 2013 General Synod, kindly provided by the Revd Rosalind Rutherford (Basingstoke) had been circulated. Canon David Williams (Christchurch Winchester) has agreed to attend future meetings and give a report from General Synod.

5.2. Overseas Mission Committee

- Angela Jones' report had been circulated. Sarah Boothman drew attention to the appeal for a new person to chair the Committee, once Angela retires at the end of March.

5.3. Children's Group

- The Revd Pitkin's report had been circulated.

5.4. Youth Advisory Group

- The Christian Unions continue to meet on Mondays at Romsey School and Tuesdays at Mountbatten. Any volunteers to assist would be welcome. There is still an opening to go into Test Valley School if resources can be found.

5.5. Deanery Vision Group

- Madeleine Sumsion is preparing for a day of training for Lay Worship Leaders.
- An occasional Deanery Newsletter will be circulated, advertising events and opportunities.

5.6. Parish Share Group

- Thanks to all the hard work put in, every parish in the Deanery, with the exception of Sherfield English paid their full parish share commitment for 2013 by close of books in January.
- Sarah Boothman presented the interim proposals of the Diocesan Share Group which is looking at a new way of allocating share between parishes. The Group is working from the outcomes of the Diocesan Conference on this issue: that allocation of share should be based on the ability to pay of the worshipping community (rather than the civil parish). They have

also looked at the systems in place in other Dioceses. The example chosen is from Bath and Wells. This provides “Categories” of affluence, and gives PCCs the responsibility to determine which category they fall into. (The presentation will be made available on the Deanery Website in due course.)

- Synod was asked for initial comments which Sarah will feed back to the Diocesan Group. The comments made at the meeting were:
 - Some guidance is needed on what the categories mean to avoid inappropriate, subjective judgments being made by PCCs;
 - This would leave out “occasional users” of the church (weddings, baptisms etc); but that wouldn’t prevent those people contributing to payment of share
 - Concerns about confidentiality, and possible divisiveness;
 - Is the PCC best placed to assess “ability to pay” of its congregation; in small congregations PCC members are often the core of the worshipping community;
 - Could a link be made with national data for civil parishes – i.e. is the worshipping community representative of, better off, or worse off than the wider community in the parish;
 - Use national data for benchmarking;
 - Moderation process needed.
- Further comments would be accepted up to 15 March, so members were encouraged to discuss with PCCs.
- The Diocese intends to bring in the revised assessment criteria next year (for 2015 Share), but the current proposals are subject to further consultation and agreement by Diocesan Synod.

4.7. Tim Sledge thanked Sarah for all her work in fighting the Deanery’s corner on parish share and the new allocation rules.

5. Deanery Accounts for 2013

5.1. The accounts for 2013 had been circulated (Paper for Agenda Item 5), and were tabled for acceptance subject to independent scrutiny.

- Jane Thompson proposed, and Chris Pettet seconded. The accounts were accepted with none voting against.

6. Deanery Budget for 2014

6.1. It had not been possible to produce the budget in time for this meeting, but for information, the Standing Committee had agreed that the Parish Levy would remain unchanged at £22 per 50 on the electoral role, and there would be no additional levy for youth work in 2014.

7. Forthcoming Diary Dates

- **Sunday 16 March – Test Valley Songs of Praise** hosted by Pam Rhodes. Romsey Abbey 6pm
- **Tuesday 18 March 2014 - Bishop of Kigali (Rwanda)** will be speaking. Romsey Abbey 7pm
- **Friday 21 March - Annual Lecture : Dame Wendy Hall “What a difference a Web makes”** – 7.30pm at St Margaret’s Church, Wellow. See Deanery website for details and tickets.
- **Saturday 17 May – Deanery Away Day** 9.30am to 1pm Braishfield Church Rooms. To look at Mission Action Plans with Phil Dykes, Diocesan Discipleship Adviser. Using all four Diocesan Strategic Priorities, identify a small number of concrete actions to take them forward.
- ***NB This has subsequently changed to be in the afternoon at the request of the Bishop of Southampton who would like to be there to take the day forward, and will now be 2-5pm – same place!***
- **Thursday 19 June – Deanery Synod** Lockerley School 7.30pm. Work in schools - Chris Pritchard, Diocesan Schools Officer.

8. Closing prayers

- The Area Dean thanked all who had contributed to Synod during the triennium, and prayed for the ongoing work of the Synod.