

MINUTES OF THE ROMSEY DEANERY SYNOD – WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2016 AT ROMSEY CHURCH ROOMS

Present: House of Clergy	8	Apologies: House of Clergy	1
House of Laity	21	House of Laity	8

1. The meeting opened with prayers for peace for the world, led by the Revd James Pitkin.

2. **The minutes of previous meeting (13 June 2016)** were agreed and signed.

3. **Matters arising** : None

4. **Committee Reports**

4.1. General Synod

4.1.1. Jay Greene had provided a written report of the July meeting. Jay explained something about two areas of work: the “Renewal and Reform” agenda which is about making better use of resources within the organisation of the Church; and the “Shared Conversations” initiative which is about ways of living with differences of opinion on issues of sexuality. The Bishops are currently meeting for reflection with a view to making a proposal to the next General Synod. There is always an opportunity for members to ask questions, so if there are issues that members feel are important, do please let Jay know. Church House will provide help with formulating the question.

4.2. Diocesan Synod

4.2.1. The Diocesan Conference will take place next week (18 to 21 October) and will include further consideration of a Rule of Life for the Diocese.

4.3. Overseas Mission Committee

4.3.1. Jane Horne presented the accounts for 2015. These showed a drop in income over the previous year, although this was partially disguised because the accounts include two year’s gift aid. The “Orphans” fund has been renamed the “Vulnerable Children and Orphans” Fund because many of those requiring support have at least one parent living. The notes explain what is being done with the money donated. More information is in the report of Jane’s visit to South Rwenzori, on the Deanery website.

4.3.2. Jane will visit again in January, with the Revd Andrew Ashdown who has taken on the chairmanship of the Committee.

4.3.3. There will be a concert at Rownhams on Saturday 14 October (see Romsey Deanery website for details), proceeds from which will be donated to the South Rwenzori projects.

4.3.4. The accounts were accepted by Synod.

4.4. Vision and Strategy Group

4.4.1. The Group met on 11 October.

4.4.2. **Fresh Expressions in Rural Ministry** – The follow-up meeting to the January workshop was held on Thursday 15 September. Fewer attended than in January, but it was nevertheless a good evening. A repeat event may be held in 2 years time.

4.4.3. The Group had discussed **Parish and Benefice Mission Action Plans**, and it was stressed that these need to be kept under review, and on PCC agendas to monitor progress.

4.4.4. St Mark’s Ampfield will be holding **lay worship leaders’ training** in November this year with a view to increasing their lay leadership team, but all are welcome. Information is on the Diocesan Website.

- 4.4.5. Nursling and Rownhams are offering a preaching course in January/February, led by the Revd Phil Dykes and the Revd Julian Williams. Details will be posted on the website when finalised.
- 4.4.6. Bishop Jonathan will be coming to the Deanery on Thursday 23, Friday 24 and Sunday 26 March as part of his **Mission initiative**. Plans are still being developed so Synod members are encouraged to let a member of the Group know of any suggestions to benefit the Deanery.
- 4.4.7. The Deanery will be supporting the national Church's prayer event "**Thy Kingdom Come**", from Ascension Day to Pentecost 2017.
- 4.4.8. Further details of this year's **Pre-Advent Course, "Hard questions"** (Wednesdays 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd November at Poppies, Choice Plants) are now available on the website.
- 4.4.9. This year marks the 20th **Romsey Deanery Shoebox Service**, which will be at Awbridge Church – where the first one was held - on Sunday 20 November at 3pm.
- 4.4.10. A short video was shown about the "Who Cares Hampshire" initiative. This is an ecumenical venture, based around listening and responding to the needs and concerns of the communities in which we are based: www.who-cares.org.uk/hampshire/
- 4.4.11. Jane Thompson had provided a report of the **Deanery Youth Weekend Away**. Most participants this year were from Romsey and Nursling and Rownhams, but it is hoped to increase participation from other parishes in future years. It is aimed at Year 6 and above.

4.5. Parish Share

- 4.5.1. Sarah Boothman thanked everyone for their hard work and commitment. The Deanery is generally up to date with payments at this point in the year. She reminded everyone that ensuring that members of the church understand the purpose of parish share and that funds are available was an all-parish responsibility, not just the responsibility of the Treasurer.

5. **HATCHES, MATCHES AND DISPATCHES – OUR SHARED MINISTRY THROUGH WEDDINGS, BAPTISMS AND FUNERALS**

- 5.1. The Area Dean stressed that these key moments in people's lives provide a wonderful mission opportunity, bringing together both pastoral and evangelical opportunities. The number of people coming to the church for these events is falling (22% of weddings now take place in Christian churches), but 53% of couples when asked said that they would love to get married in church but thought they were not eligible. So we need to be more open and proactive – e.g. attending wedding fairs.
- 5.2. We need to get better at seeing these services not as one off events, but as steps along the path of faith. So we need to provide appropriate preparation, use accessible language and forms of service, and ensure that contacts made are followed up – "we are in it for the long term".
- 5.3. The Church of England has produced excellent resources to support this, providing stepping stones to maintain positive contacts with the church, which are available from the Church Print Hub www.churchprinthub.org/ . There are also "church facing" and "public facing" websites. www.yourchurchwedding.org/
- 5.4. The offices should not be seen as the job of the clergy : we all have a responsibility to accompany people on their faith journey.
- 5.5. Jane Horne explained how she fulfilled her role as a baptism visitor, which included explaining the form and symbolism of the service, giving the parents information about the Toddler Group, and providing a prayer card and offering to pray with them, as well as attending the service.
- 5.6. Attention was drawn to the CoE website for choices of readings for each of the services.
- 5.7. Couples find it difficult to commit to long-running courses to prepare for weddings, so a one-day preparation may be helpful.
- 5.8. Experience at Southampton Crematorium had shown that many funeral directors do not put CofE ministers near the top of the list of ministers they will call to do funerals, but we are lucky in

Romsey Deanery to have good links with funeral directors who have an understanding of the Church.

5.9. For both baptisms and funerals it was important to provide a personalised service booklet which people can take away – Braishfield benefice has a picture of the child on the front of baptism services. They also produce cards for 'dates of banns' and 'first anniversary of weddings' which have a picture of the church on them.

5.10. The primary focus has to be the couple getting married/those bringing their child for baptism/those coming to the church for a funeral for their loved one. However, there is an opportunity to reach other people attending. In Lockerley parishioners attend the service, supporting the congregation by providing activities for/looking after children etc.

6. The meeting closed with prayer.

Dates for Synod meetings in 2017:

Monday 6 February 2017 – Ampfield Village Hall

Wednesday 14 June 2017 – Lockerley Village Hall

Thursday 12 October 2017 – Kings Somborne Village Hall

See more details about other events in the Deanery on the Calendar page of <http://www.romseydeanery.org/>.