

MINUTES OF THE ROMSEY DEANERY SYNOD – THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2015 AT ROWNHAMS CHURCH HALL

Present: House of Clergy	10	Apologies: House of Clergy	2
House of Laity	22	House of Laity	9

1. The meeting opened with worship led by the Revd Julian Williams.

2. Update on Deanery Mission Action Plan (dMAP)

2.1. Sarah Boothman drew attention to the items on the Deanery Action Plan which had been taken forward :

- The Deanery Week of Prayer (16 - 21 March) had been appreciated by those who participated, and would be repeated, but probably at a different (less busy) time of year.
- The pre-Advent Course had been held at Poppies ; another was planned for 2015.
- A Deanery Confirmation service was planned for November (adults and young people).

2.2. The Area Dean reminded Synod that one of the ideas which had come out of the Consultation Meeting on the dMAP was to have a bus which could help those without transport get to church and community events. Hampshire Collegiate School is willing to loan its mini-buses for use by the Deanery on Sundays (when not needed by the School). Parishes were invited to discuss how they could make use of this and put forward suggestions. Drivers would need MIDAS training which Deanery funds could support.

3. @spire

3.1. Andy Saunders, the Diocesan Children and Young Families Adviser, spoke about the support the Diocese can provide to work in parishes. Pete Maidment, the Youth Adviser, has recently moved to another job and his replacement is currently being recruited; Synod members were asked to pray for the appointee. A new Canon Principal for the School of Mission is also joining the team.

3.2. Members were invited to reflect on their memories of childhood, school and church, and how much things had changed since then, and the church has struggled to keep up. This provides new opportunities to develop work with children and young families. The role of the Diocesan advisers is not to provide all the answers to parishes, but to help them realise their vision, and to gain in confidence.

4. Update on Parish/Benefice Mission Action Plans (p/bMAP)

4.1. The Rural Dean invited parishes to discuss the progress they are making with p/bMAPs, and to identify any areas where the Deanery or other parishes could help.

4.2. A concern was raised about migrant workers, and whether the Deanery could do anything to support those caught up in this heart-breaking situation.

4.3. Parishes need help with using social media. The Diocese is holding a Communications Day which will provide help with making the best use of Facebook/Twitter etc.

4.4. The resources provided by the Diocese were appreciated, but the amount of material was overwhelming. It was important to keep things simple, and to make the process work for each parish in the best way – there was no standard formula.

4.5. In some benefices each parish is very different, so individual pMAPs are being developed. It was suggested that, once these were complete, it may be that one or more need/proposal was the same in two or more parishes, and working together would be beneficial.

4.6. Parishes were advised to be realistic about what they can do and in what timescale. In many cases, developing/building on existing activities would be fruitful; in others activities which have

been going on for many years but are no longer successful could be stopped to release resources for new initiatives.

5. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of 2 February 2015 were agreed and signed. There were no **matters arising** not covered by agenda items.

6. **Committee Reports**

6.1. General Synod

- The Revd Rosalind Rutherford had provided a written report of the February General Synod, circulated with papers. The Rural Dean thanked Rosalind for the information she had provided during her time as the representative for the Deanery. The current term of General Synod is now coming to a close, and elections will be held later this year.
- Jay Greene from Lockerley will be standing as a candidate for Winchester Diocese for the next term. Nominations have not yet been invited, but Winchester will be able to elect 8 lay and 8 clergy representatives. Jay undertook, if elected, to continue to attend Deanery Synod, to consult members on their views on the issues to be debated and to keep members informed. General Synod members are elected representatives, rather than mandated candidates, so are entitled to vote in accordance with their own views, having heard the debates at Synod.
- Members were encouraged to take an interest and to vote when the election came round. Hustings would be held if there were more candidates than places available.

6.2. Diocesan Synod

- Nominations are invited for the next term of Diocesan Synod.
- Sarah Boothman reported on the meeting in March (see Annex A) which was looking at various aspects of the Diocese's work in education. Bishop Pete Broadbent (Bishop of Willesden) also spoke about Reform and Renewal, and how we make it work better for the Kingdom of God.

6.3. Overseas Mission Committee

- Jane Horne presented the accounts for 2014 which showed that £14,525.55 had been transferred to South Rwenzori during the year. Notes explained how the projects supported were selected. Reports had been received from Uganda recently on how the funds are being used. Since being circulated, the accounts had been signed off by the independent examiner.
- It was proposed that the accounts be accepted by Synod:
Proposed – Julie Carlton; Seconded Ron Corne. Agreed with no votes against.
- Bishop Jackson is due to visit in October. There will be a Deanery evening, with supper at Poppies on 16 October.

6.4. Vision and Strategy Group

- A representative has now been agreed from each Benefice. The first full meeting will be held on 22 July at 11am. Actions already underway had been reported under Agenda Item 2.

6.5. Parish Share Group

- Members of the Group had expressed disquiet at the divisive nature of the current system, and this had been passed back to the Diocese (wording on the back of the Agenda). The Diocese has reported that 100 parishes across the Diocese have asked for their affluence rating to be reduced, which is not possible, so the question has been referred back to Deaneries to consider further. There would be a Deanery meeting of Treasurers and Church Wardens on 7 July at St Mark's Ampfield.
- Synod members felt continually "badgered" to find more money, and it was felt that more account should be taken of the voluntary work done to support churches on top of financial

giving. This brought into focus the challenges of continuing to afford the church as is currently structured.

6.6. Deanery accounts 2014 and Budget 2015

- Papers will be formally presented at the October meeting. A budget estimate is attached (Annex B – separate file) for information.
- The Rural Dean reported that some parishes did not pay their levy last year. This would be added on to their 2015 levy.
- The income for 2014 was £836 and the expenditure was about £1300. The £500 discrepancy is accounted for by the funding provided to EXPO.
- The standing committee has agreed to increase the levy for 2015 from £22 per 50 on the electoral role (held for 4 years) to £25 per 50 to generate £1200 income. Other than travel costs, postage, hire of halls and administration, the main costs are support for the Rural Evangelism Training Day, hosting costs for the website, and support for the Poppies course.

7. **Any other business**

7.1. The Deanery Shoebox Service will be held for the first time at St Leonard's Sherfield English at 3 pm on Sunday 15 November.

8. The Revd Tim Sledge closed the meeting with prayer.

Date of future Synod meetings :

Wednesday 14 October – venue t.b.c.

Romsey Deanery Synod Dates in 2016:

Thursday 4 February

Monday 13 June

Wednesday 12 October

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

REPORT FROM DIOCESAN SYNOD MARCH 2015

“To be unashamedly Christian”

Setting off at 8.15am on a chilly March morning for a meeting of the Diocesan Synod in Bursledon with an agenda which looked one of the driest I had ever seen I was far from full of the joys of spring. I returned 5 hours feeling very cheerful to say “That was one of the most encouraging Synods I have attended!” So what happened?

We began promptly at 8.45 am with a presentation from the Rev Jenny Nightingale, chaplain to the Bishop of Winchester Academy in Bournemouth, a secondary school which was failing, but since becoming a church school has, with much hard work and guidance from the Diocesan Board of Education over the last 5 years, achieved an outstanding rating from Ofsted. The school is now a good, safe, encouraging, successful place to be, with a Christian ethos that is clear to all, of any faith or none. Jenny spoke with great warmth about the opportunities through her work as chaplain for co-ordinating service to the school community: supporting students with very disrupted home backgrounds; feeding those who don't get sufficient food at home; even hoping to provide foster care for those who need a period of stable home life, as well as leading assemblies and carrying out pastoral duties.

Jenny told us how she had been invited to carry out baptisms, marriages and funerals for students, their families, and teachers associated with the school. She had tried to steer those who asked towards their own parish churches, but it was she whom they knew, and the school was their focus. So after prayer and thought, 5 months ago Jenny began a 'Fresh Expression' of church in the school: a group who meet in the school on a Sunday to worship together. So far just 12 in number meeting regularly, but growing into a real fellowship.

She then led us in uplifting worship, including a reading from 'The Message' (a direct, modern re-telling of the bible), the story of the man born blind. *“Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?”*

Jesus said, “You’re asking the wrong question. You’re looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the world’s Light.” (John 9)

Jeff Williams, Diocesan Director of Education, reminded us that in Winchester Diocese we have 153 church schools, teaching 32,000 children. Our schools are inclusive, for those of all faiths

and none, but educating in a Christian manner. Each school needs to have explicitly Christian values and he and his team are working with them to ensure this is so. But if every child is to flourish and achieve their God-given potential all of us need to enable our church schools to be agents of mission and change. He shared a fund of ideas for getting involved: and those of us who have non-church schools can draw on those ideas as well. Can we all pray for the school nearest to our home? As Christians, he reminded us, we should be changing the world for the better.

And that was the thread which ran through the whole morning. Bishop Tim said that as Christians we need to recover our self-confidence, and realise the impact we can have on society. Jesus calls us to be united, to be holy, to be engaged with the world. We say that we need revival, and we should see revival as not just about our church but about our nation.

The Vice Chancellor of Winchester University, one of 11 Anglican universities in the UK, used the phrase “**to be unashamedly Christian**” in the way we live, and that struck a chord with me. But she also acknowledged that being an active, prophetic Christian at work in a school, or elsewhere, is difficult.

The final part of the morning was spent hearing from Pete Broadbent, Bishop of Willesden, about the plethora of reports concerning reform and renewal recently issued by the Church of England and discussed by our General Synod in February. He gave a refreshingly direct and open, if not outspoken, commentary on current church structures and possible creative ways forward. We need to adopt an outlook of “how can we make this work better for the Kingdom of God?”

What had looked dry on paper came to life as he spoke of change which can happen through prayer, engagement and mission: “Loving God, loving one another, loving God’s world.” We in the Church of England have always changed and adapted: the current difference is that we need to change faster as the world is changing very quickly. Our response needs to be prayerful and it needs to be urgent. As Bishop Pete said, the C of E doesn’t do urgent, but we need to now! **We need to re-state the faith in our generation and we need to do it together “so that the Risen Christ can be restored to the centre of this country, its conscience and its culture.”** (Stephen Croft)

That was the call which had me driving home in a far more positive frame of mind, with hope for the future. *Sarah Boothman*

(one of the 8 Diocesan Synod Reps for Romsey Deanery)