

MINUTES OF THE ROMSEY DEANERY SYNOD - WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2013 AT SHERFIELD ENGLISH VILLAGE HALL

1. Bishop Jonathan led worship, and commissioned the Revd Tim Sledge as Area Dean and the Revd Ron Corne as Assistant Rural Dean.

2. Present:	House of Clergy	11	Apologies:	House of Clergy	3
	House of Laity	22		House of Laity	12

3. The **minutes of the previous meeting** of 17 June were agreed and signed.

4. **Matters arising** - None

5. Committee reports

5.1. General Synod

- Unfortunately, John Davies was again unable to attend, and there is no short summary report on the General Synod website of the July General Synod.

5.2. Overseas Mission Committee

- Angela Jones' report had been circulated. A visit of two people from South Rwenzori is confirmed for June 2014. A volunteer is needed to organise this – including arranging visas etc and the programme for the visit. Please contact Angela Jones with offers or suggestions.

5.3. Children's Group

- The Revd Pitkin's report had been circulated. The next **Shoebox Service** for Operation Christmas Child will be at St John's, Lockerley on **Sunday 17 November at 3pm**. Posters and leaflets (including the labels for the boxes) were available to take away.

5.4. Youth Advisory Group

- The notes of the last meeting on 2 October had been circulated, including information about progress in schools and also future events .

5.5. Deanery Vision Group

- Steve Pittis reported on the recent meeting. The website is up and running – please use it, and provide information, pictures etc to encourage shared ministry.
- Plans for the pre-Advent Course were well underway, and publicity would be circulated soon. Parishes were asked to give a rough indication of numbers expected to attend to help with planning. Details will also be on the Deanery Website.
- The Group will review the Deanery Vision in line with the outcomes of the Diocesan Conference.
- The intention is to run perhaps three attractive, accessible events for the Deanery each year. Already in preparation are
 - Training session for lay worship leaders
 - Faith sharing courses for all
 - Developing healing ministry in local churches.These had all been asked for in previous Deanery Synod discussions. A further event could look at "re-imagining Church".

5.6. Parish Share Group

- The Group had a positive meeting recently and confirmed that the Deanery intends to pay its share in full and on time for 2013. Commitments for 2014 were agreed and have been submitted to the Diocese.

6. Deanery Treasurer

6.1. Garry Hedley was unable to continue with this role due to other commitments. Information about the work involved (including approximate workload) was circulated with papers for the meeting and volunteers or nominations are invited. Please let any member of the Standing Committee know if you are able to help or can suggest any likely candidates for this important role. We need to have someone in place in time for the February Synod.

7. Report from Diocesan Synod Conference – September 2013

7.1. Those who attended the Conference each gave a summary of one aspect of the Conference.

7.2. David Livermore, who is a member of Houghton church, and also the Chairman of Diocesan Finance and Property, gave an overview. He explained that Diocesan Conferences happen every three years, but this year Bishop Tim wanted something different. The event ran from 3 – 6 September at the Hayes Christian Conference Centre, at Swanwick in Derbyshire and was attended by about 200 people made up of Synod members and others from the Diocese including a number of young people. The Conference had 5 aims –

- To endorse the overall ministry of the Diocese
- To agree priorities for mission - this was achieved in three working sessions
- To agree the principle of a Diocesan rule of life
- To endorse the Theology of Christian giving
- To accept a 3-year budget.

All five issues were put to the vote and passed by acclamation

7.3. Sarah Boothman explained that the hall for this meeting was arranged with members sitting around tables to give members a flavour of the Conference, which had used this format. All delegates were allocated to a table, which mixed people by area, age, gender and type of church. Each table had a host to facilitate discussion. This helped to ensure people felt involved, because they quickly got to know a small group of people. Tables were given opportunities for five minute discussions on points raised by speakers. Other discussions were conducted in “world cafe” style, in which the table cloth was used to note down points, then all table members except the host moved on to other tables, and shared views, and the host summarised the findings to new table members who then shared additional views. However, it was clear that there was considerable consensus, perhaps as a result of the amount of prayer – before and during presentations and discussions.

7.4. Jane Thompson reported on the three hour-long bible-based teaching sessions by Bishop Tom Wright, on the theme of our call to be a Missionary Diocese. Jane’s summary of that teaching is attached at Annex 1 for perusal.

7.5. Maddie Sumsion spoke about the worship in which the whole conference was immersed. Worship was described as “the place where heaven and earth overlap”, and we should approach it with expectation. A huge range of worship was offered – traditional and less familiar forms, including Compline at the end of each day. There were presentations from pioneer pastors, which are available to view from the Diocesan Website <http://vimeo.com/user14041210>. Delegates were challenged to find what works where we live, to reach those whom “traditional church” does not reach.

7.6. The Revd James Pitkin presented the four motions which were adopted by the Conference. These, with a short explanation are at Annex 2.

-
- Diocesan Rule of Life - yet to be fleshed out
- Theology of Giving – there had been good consensus on the theology and principles of giving, but disagreement among delegates about what such giving should look like – for example how share should be allocated.
- Three year budget – this would allow the Diocese to plan ahead, and also to some extent give parishes a feel for what would be required in share in future years.

- Outcomes of Mission and Discipleship review – one of the recommendations was already being actioned: some of the Mission staff would be relocating from Old Alresford Place to Wolvesey in about three weeks time, to allow closer working with Bishop Tim.

7.7. The Revd Tim Sledge summarized the strategic priorities adopted by the Conference, and linked these to the priorities we have already discussed and agreed for our Deanery Vision (See separate document Annex 3 for more details).

- Growing authentic disciples – we need to be salt and light in our communities and the world; to put our heads above the parapet; to go out into the world.
- Re-imagining Church – every community needs a Christian community, but our churches do not relate to many people; we need to explore new ways for relating to those we are currently missing;
- Social transformation - Archbishop Justin has set an example, with his engagement with the pay-day lenders issue;
- Sacrificial giving – not just money, but all our resources.

8. These were a mandate for all of our churches, and not just for this year, but setting the direction of travel for many years to come. Tim described these priorities as mannequins which we need to clothe, by adopting and adapting them locally. The Diocese would be issuing more material, which could be used for further discussion and development at future meetings of the Synod.

9. Each table was then asked to discuss one of the four priorities: -

- What inspires you about the Conference and its outcomes?
- What are we doing already?
- What worries/fears do you have?

10. The following points were made:

10.1. Growing disciples

- We need encouragement if we are to go out confidently and courageously to share our faith.
- We need to be creative. Wellow are planning to use a fund raising/stewardship campaign to also meet new people, identify needs.
- Deanery vision wording “whole-hearted and whole life disciples” preferred to the term “authentic disciples”.

11. We are all responsible. This is exciting but also frightening!

11.1. Re-imagining church

- Stockbridge church has an opening to re-engage with young people at Test Valley School and the primary school. While there are currently insufficient resources to do so, there was a recognition that this opportunity should be taken while it lasts.
- With small numbers of young people in rural areas, it is difficult to provide support – more resources are needed.
- Romsey is developing a range of services – Way in, Sundays@4, which is aimed at young families who don't otherwise come to church providing a non-threatening environment. A discussion group meets at Cafe Nero.
- We struggle to find people to do all the things that need doing. Training is needed.
- We should pray that specific needs are met.

11.2. Social Transformation

- The Deanery Vision focussed on local initiatives, whereas the Diocesan Conference seemed to be looking to the wider world. Perhaps by addressing local needs in practical ways, we can free others to address the bigger picture.
- This is easier to co-ordinate in bigger villages than in scattered rural communities.
- Not a new idea, but good to be reminded.

11.3. Sacrificial giving

- Excited by the challenge of looking after our lovely environment.
- Considered twinning of urban and rural areas
- Need to consider imaginative use of our church buildings – for communities, homeless
- Worried about continuing demands for more money – this needs to be explained.
- Any “pruning” needs to be sensitively done.

12. In summarising the challenge from the Conference, Tim gave the illustration of re-building an aeroplane while it is still flying. We have churches which we need to maintain and continue to run, and look after our existing congregations, but we have at the same time a major overhaul to carry out.

13. See <http://www.winchester.anglican.org/diocesan-life/2013-conference/> for papers and more information.

14. Closing prayers were led by Sarah Boothman (Lay co-Chairman)

15. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday **12 February 2014** at Romsey Church Rooms.

Bible-based teaching by Bishop Tom Wright

We had the enormous privilege of hearing Bishop Tom Wright address the conference three times.

Each time we were amazed and challenged by the depth of insight that he brought to scripture; we were also absolutely captivated as he shared his understanding of God's call on us to be a missionary diocese: As the Father sent me so I send you!

Here are some nuggets:

- Try to read scripture missionally!
- The resurrection is the turning point of all world history, church is to be both transforming society and evangelistic.
- God is sovereign and we are mirrors angled to reflect God to the world and then the groaning and moaning of the world to God.
- In Ezekiel we see the powerful image where the temple is restored. When the glory of the Lord returned to the temple the river flowed out of it, making even the Dead Sea fresh.
- So it is when God's glory touches earth, it flows in and out of the temple, in and out of our churches.
- It is possible to meet doubters half way, but we need to recognize that half of the problem is that the doubts they express are in us as well.
- The Kingdom of God – is not just going to heaven, the whole world is now God's holy land, the Holy Spirit is with us now like God's presence was in the Old Testament tabernacle.
- Which means that that Salvation is God's gift not just to the church but through the church and on out to the world. We are going to need strategies to work out how to be and do this in our culturally confused society. It'll be costly but we become most our true selves by being most like God. We need to be: lovers, forgivers, givers.
- The last scene in Bible is about the new Jerusalem coming to earth – but that isn't just in the future ... you and I get to practice being the real new you and me right NOW.
- The river, in Revelation, is flowing out, as the river did out of the temple but now it is flowing out of our hearts.
- This is a project not a tableau!
- God is the heart surgeon, He is in the business of changing hearts. So our worship life must be real - it should be the means whereby heaven and earth mysteriously overlap. Our worship life is not an escape it must fit the reality.
- People don't want Christianity they want spirituality.
- Do things differently, discern the difference between when it is gospel and when just tradition.

- We, the church, are part of the recruitment for the royal priesthood, we are His image bearers, made for relationships but they are difficult; we will know pain pastorally and personally.
- So if we are to be involved in the church's ministry and mission it will be far tougher but also far more glorious than we think it will.
- Thank God we don't have to get it all right before God does anything.

As the Father sent me so I send you!

Let's start living the mission of Jesus NOW!

The motions discussed and adopted by Conference

A Diocesan rule of life

This Synod, approves the principle of adopting a Diocesan rule of life and requests the Bishop and his Staff produce a final version for use across the parishes and communities of the Diocese

In the third century the first Christian monasteries wrote rules covering all aspects of life on their walls. The goal was to keep God at the centre of their individual and collective living. The word 'rule' really means 'regular' and so a rule of life is something to help us live our lives in regular contact with God, welcoming each new day/week as an opportunity to love and serve God and our neighbour. A rule of life should enable us to develop a balanced, sustainable and enjoyable rhythm of life. Its purpose is to map out for us in a few practical ways the different dimensions of our calling, helping us to balance, rather than be driven by, the many demands of life. In this way we may live in every area of our lives.

The Bishop agreed to bring back the final version for agreement by Synod.

Theology of giving

This Synod, approves the principles of generosity in giving as presented by the Theology of giving working party, and formally requests that a new parish share allocation system be developed based on these principles.

It should be noted that there was little agreement as to what such a system might look like.

3 Year financial plan

This Synod authorises the Diocesan Board of Finance to expend the sum not exceeding £33,478,000 net of non-parish share income in 2014-2016.

This means that the budget we have had the chance to look at was approved for the next 3 years. This confirms what the increases each year should be.

Mission, ministry & discipleship review

This Synod,

- Approves the direction of travel as set out in the summary of the Mission ministry & discipleship review;
- Approves the creation of an Archdeacon for Mission Development, to be responsible for those areas of work summarised in the report;
- Requests the Bishop's Council to continue to work through the more detailed recommendations in developing a new mission and ministry strategy.

There are 67 recommendations in the review and involves a move of location for some Diocesan Staff (from Old Alresford Place to Wolvesey – now to happen in the first week of November)