

## MINUTES OF SONNING DEANERY SYNOD

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Time:** 8.00pm held on Zoom

**Chair:** the Rev'd Richard Lamey (Area Dean)

**Present:** Richard Lamey, Cara Smart, Karen Lloyd, Carolyn Fox, Charlotte Wilde-Smith, David Horrocks, Felicity Workman, Janet Rogers, Jenny Beasley, John Hopkins, Brenda Bowring, Christine Ransom, Leigh Welham, Lia Davies, Lisa Cornwell, Anna Pearce, Carol Frost, David Hare, Julian Bidgood, Katie Wakeman-Toogood, Lynne Paine, Sue Campbell, John Sutton, Jane Kraft, Peter Thompson, Tonia Elliott.

### Apologies for absence:

David Hodgson and representatives from All Saints, Wokingham due to their APCM which was arranged before the date of Synod was changed, Peter Wells, Catherine Vaughan, Penny Crane, Sue Griffiths, Leigh Welham, Sue Payne, Margaret Walker, John Congram, Michael Byrne, John Cook, Steve Lewis, Nicola Alder, Andrew Marsden, Judi Hattaway, Michael Byrne

#### 1. Welcome and Opening Worship

Richard welcomed everyone and explained that this was the Synod AGM and would also look at forward planning. He hoped that the September meeting would be able to take place in person, if the situation allows that to happen.

The opening worship was based around John Ch. 21 v 15-19 which was read aloud and followed by discussion in break out rooms on the phrase "feed my sheep" and what the Deanery and each individual church is being called to do in this context. This time of worship concluded with saying the Lord's Prayer together and a time of silent prayer for our parishes.

#### 2. Minutes of the last meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Lisa pointed out that Crowthorne was incorrectly spelt.

With this correction the minutes were agreed and signed.

#### 3. Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no Matters Arising.

Richard made an announcement about staffing. In addition to Becky Medicott (going to All Saints) Richard Eves, who trained at Oak Hill, will also be ordained deacon to serve at Wargrave. Hugh Barne is moving to Truro Diocese and Gemma Donnell to Salisbury Diocese to take up new posts. Leonard Onugha is being licensed at Finchampstead on 19<sup>th</sup> July and James Warren retires on 27<sup>th</sup> June.

Katie Toogood, who is ½ time at Sonning Parish and ½ time chaplain and maths teacher at Blue Coat School, has joined the Standing Committee as a vision enabler.

Lynne Paine has agreed to serve as the Deanery Treasurer and was co-opted onto synod.

Proposer Janet Rogers: Seconder Tonia Elliott: Vote - All in favour

#### 4. Financial Report

Lynne has put the accounts for 2018 and 2019 and 2020 in order and had them Audited.

There being no questions, Lynne explained that at present there were 2 current accounts- one of which covers the Diocesan Levy and the other for the Quinquennial Levy. We know how much should be in each account but, over the past few years, some money has moved from one account to the other. It is hoped in future that there will only be one current account, now that we are no longer funding QIs. The aim is also to set up online banking.

Adoption of accounts

2018 Proposed by Caroline Fox: Seconded by Janet Rogers: Adopted unopposed

2019 Proposed by David Hare: Seconded by Leigh Welham: Adopted unopposed

2020 Proposed by Carol Frost: Seconded by David Horrocks: Adopted unopposed

Appointment of the Auditor Ian Parker

Proposed by Carolyn Fox: Seconded by Katie Toogood: Passed unopposed

It was hoped that 50% of Parish share would be paid by the end of June but by end of May we were still 15% short: if we manage to pay 50% by end of June we can get a 1% rebate although that is not looking likely at this moment. Therefore, if any further money is about to be paid, then it would be helpful if this were done before the end of June.

#### 5. Deanery Plan.

Richard had sent round the 2018 Deanery Plan with notes in blue as to what had been achieved and what had not happened.

With Covid ongoing, we need time to work out where we are as a Deanery and how to best support parishes to work to their best potential.

The Deanery is there to help the Church of the future to emerge.

- We have achieved some of the 2018-2021 plan.
- Some things we tried and didn't work out.
- Covid overtook events.
- So it was a "qualified success"

What next? The proposal is a 1 year plan to July 2022 as a bridge with a short, sharp focus leading onto a 3 year plan in the Autumn of 2022 which might also have to include any suggestions for pastoral reorganisation.

Richard asked for ideas for the new Plan by the end of July 2021 which will then be turned into a plan in time for Synod in September 2021, built mostly on what we can do to support ministry in the parishes. Katie Toogood has offered to help the Area Dean produce the draft, which is both kind and helpful.

Two questions for individuals and PCCs to respond to:

- 1) What can the Deanery do to support your ministry and mission?
- 2) Ask "What could we do .....e.g. about, dementia, schools etc" which the Deanery could spend the next 12 months researching as a way of putting things in place for the 2022 Deanery Plan which will contain some of these ideas.

Richard then opened the meeting up for comments from the floor.

Karen Lloyd – Wargrave had started a second service in the evening which was aimed at families and which was working out very well.

Sue Campbell - St Michael's, Sandhurst services had been going out live for a year which was good in the present climate.

Tonia Elliott -Trial of Meadow Church is happening soon. She also mentioned how keen local schools were to work with Churches and the problems with young people and mental health issues and how best to give support.

These things could be covered in the new plan.

Synod Reps and PCC secretaries will be emailed about this by the Area Dean via the Deanery Secretary and invited to reply with suggestions.

All in agreement.

## **6. Suggestions for Lay Chair**

We are still looking for someone to be Lay Chair. Richard suggested that the role could be redefined if necessary if that would encourage someone to stand.

## **7. From Lament to Action: a report from the Church of England.**

The subject of the link sent out has proved to be somewhat controversial in the wider Church.

Richard emphasised that we still need to engage seriously and think carefully about the issues identified in the Report, even if we don't agree with every recommendation. It is a 71 page report which lists the 161 recommendations made in Church reports on race and racial justice over the last 40 years.

The church reflects society so is not isolated from this issue. As a church we are called to be a place where everyone flourishes and what we are being told in reports like this is that some people, on account of their race, are not experiencing that. We may not mean it, we may not intend it, we may not see it but we need to listen to those who tell us what it is like to be from a BAME background in the Church and believe them.

There was little mention of the role of PCCs in the Report- much more is about the higher level of the institution, senior appointments and training for these. There are recommendations on training for those involved in interviews from the PCC and those involved in leading youth groups. These seem both sensible and proportional. The other recommendation is that 15% of PCC members should come from BAME backgrounds which might be more complex to achieve if that recommendation is accepted by the Diocese or the CofE.

We are called to be the Church and we will only fully be the Church when everyone feels welcome, accepted and loved. That is what Jesus wants and what the Church is for. Anything else is inadequate.

This address was followed by various questions and comments and suggestions from the floor, all of them encouraging and emphasising how important these conversations are. Some people talked about how important welcome is, others of how they have had workplace training on how to be an ally to people from BAME backgrounds. Some people wanted to know how their Church can engage with these matters, where to start. It was a positive and affirming conversation. 2 main things emerged:

1. People should read the report, or at least the sections before the Appendices.
2. This conversation should be taken further as a Deanery- how can we start as a parish? How can we learn together? How can we exert influence on the Diocese to take these things seriously?

Richard will explore this further. It is hoped that by September we will have some sense of where we should be going with this as a Deanery, in terms of how we look to the Diocese and the parishes to be genuine partners on this.

## **8. Notices**

Richard reiterated that Becky and Richard are to be ordained deacon on the weekend of July the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Becky to serve at All Saints and Richard to serve at Wargrave.

He commended the Living in love and Faith document and the Diocesan launch of that conversation this month. He stressed the importance of good listening and proposed that as a deanery we have conversations in the Autumn alongside those already being organised by parishes. He reminded the meeting that both our Deanery synod and Chapter had talked 2 years ago about these matters. It was noted St Michael's, Sandhurst is to have bible studies around this subject in the autumn.

## **9. There was no other business**

## **10. Richard lead a moment of quiet followed by prayer and all joined in saying the Grace together.**

The meeting ended at 9.08pm