

Sonning Deanery Plan: September 2021 to July 2022

“Peter said to Jesus, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said: “Feed my lambs.” John 21.15

This Deanery Plan is deliberately focused on the short to medium term as we emerge from a pandemic and step into a world in which we learn to live with Covid-19. It runs from September 2021 to July 2022 with a new and fuller plan to be drawn up and agreed after Easter 2022, which will run for multiple years. This next plan will include more structural things, such as the possibility of exploring parish structures and long-term training supported by the Diocese and delivered locally.

The plan for 2021/22 aims to do the following things:

- 1) To highlight and address the things we need to focus on in order to regain our sense of direction and momentum after 18 months of separation and uncertainty, while treasuring and continuing the things we have learnt during these last months,
- 2) To prepare the ground for the plan to be agreed in 2022, deciding priorities and beginning to open up possibilities.

Overall, everything in this plan is built on enabling and supporting each congregation in the Deanery to emerge confidently and boldly from the pandemic, secure and refreshed in its vision and calling and clear on where it can find the resources and ideas it needs to fulfil its vocation of being the Church of God for the community. Much of the plan was shaped by comments from PCCs in response to the questions “How can the Deanery support parishes? And the local communities?”

We think the biggest challenges we face in the Deanery in this moment are

- a) deepening relationships which have become more tenuous because we have been unable to meet in person,
- b) discerning what is vital and sustainable, what (given a changed series of inputs in terms of personnel, income and resources) is no longer sustainable or part of our mission to the community and what new possibilities God is inviting us to be part of in a post-Covid world: the mission is still the same but if the market has moved so must our method,

c) delivering high-quality pastoral care in an age of increased isolation and loneliness, when we have begun to forget how to be together.

In terms of our 2021/22 plan we will focus on these three areas under these four headings (the three from above and the fourth looking to the next plan):

- 1) Rebuilding relationships
- 2) Doing business, by attending to the regular life of the parishes, Deanery, Area and Diocese
- 3) Encouraging a focus on pastoral care for those who are lonely and isolated
- 4) Preparing the ground for what we will focus on beyond this short-term plan

Invitation/ Appendix: A Question from Bishop's Council Meeting, 7/21

How do we make accepting change or living with change the easy option, the line of least resistance, because change is here and we cannot avoid or overlook it. We can only accept it, or fight it. We have been given disruption and now we need how to react to it. Our call as a Deanery is to help and inspire each other to thrive in this age of unsettling and uncertainty.

1) Rebuilding relationships

a.	To strengthen and deepen relationships in Chapter	Meetings in person Commitment to engage with neighbours Develop WhatsApp group 24 hour retreat together in Feb or March.	Area Dean, Asst Area Dean, Clerk, Chapter	4/ 22
b.	To enable the new Synod to develop a sense of coherence, friendship and shared pilgrimage, and also to grasp the detail of its role and purpose	Deanery Away Day in Advent 2021, or early 2022 More group work in Synod meetings Ownership of this plan Openness to asking and answering questions A social at the start of our first Synod meeting with time to chat What information do people need to lead well?	Synod Standing Committee	7/22
c.	Encourage local networks of Wardens, Treasurers, Parish Administrators etc	Identify person to organise it Support them with admin support and ideas as they gather those interested in being part of the group Check that the meetings are happening each term	Synod Standing Committee	7/22

2)

2) Issues facing the whole Church

Who is coming back to Church? What is never coming back?

What resources have vanished? And what new income might be possible?

What are the issues facing the Church nationally which are invited to join in with?

[Synod Reps will need a short Intro to both Living in Love and Faith and From Lament to Action so that they can speak confidently of them in their parishes in terms of both content and timetable]

a)	<p>Engaging fully with the Living in Love and Faith process</p> <p>Living in Love and Faith The Church of England</p>	<p>Mapping what each parish is doing Ensuring that every Church and every Church member has had the chance to be part of the conversation either as run by a parish or by the Deanery A five-week Deanery Course would be a key part of this (And clearly this all has to tie in with the quality of our relationships too)</p>	Synod Standing Committee	4/22
b)	<p>Responding to From Lament to Action</p>	<p>We need to gather questions and ideas from each parish and consider a Deanery response to the paper</p>	Synod	10/21

c)	Finance	Are there lasting implications for the finances of the Deanery through the last 18 months? And should we be daring more in a changing and desperate world?	Synod SC People in pairs or small groups?	2/22
d)	Supporting each other to engage with the changed and changing world	Supporting each other to decide what is coming back and what is not- services, events, parish life, and sharing good practice in the things we want to hold on to Bishop Steven has talked of re-evangelising the congregation we have	Chapter (and Synod?)	Ongoing
e)	Work together on growing leaders and finding volunteers to fill roles which will stretch and excite them and help them to deepen their faith	What can the Diocese offer? Conversations in Chapter Discussion at Synod Shared courses offered by parishes working together	Synod and Synod SC	7.22

3) Encouraging quality pastoral care

a)	To hold a Synod and Chapter meeting on isolation and mental health- or an Away Day	Drawing on wisdom in the room, and in parishes, and from the Diocese, and local charities like the Link, to challenge each parish to consider its practice and to identify areas it can grow in	Deanery SC, Chapter and Synod, Tonia Elliott	3/22
b)	To help parishes take forward the areas they have identified for growth	Linking in with the Diocese and local charities	Deanery SC	5/22

c)	To draw up a resource sheet for websites and courses in this area	With the Diocese	Deanery SC- and a volunteer from Synod?	5/22
d)	Liturgical change	How do we respond well to the bereavement of the last 18 months, liturgically, socially and practically?	Chapter	7/22

4) Preparing the ground (as in, gathering evidence which we can then confidently build on in our next planning exercise- and be more consciously outward looking)

a)	Preparing to think about viability across the Deanery in the next plan	Are clergy in the right places? How many posts can the Deanery support? How can parishes be more consciously focused for mission? Where are there gaps that a new Church community could fill? What can we learn about Church planting from experience within the Deanery? We might ask: if we had to lose 2 FT clergy posts where would we start?	Deanery Standing Committee	6/22
b)	A review of Greenhouses	Are they right for the Deanery? Where can they most effectively be focused? How can the Deanery support and encourage them, if we decide that they are vital for the future.	Tonia Elliott	4/22
c)	A review of PDPs, including working out why they did not 'take' in the Deanery and how to present them afresh	How can parishes hear about PDPs from the Deanery in a way which encourages them to engage?	Katie Wakeman-Toogood	4/22

d)	School Chaplaincy as a focus for mission and growth in the Deanery, and looking more broadly at positive relationships between schools and parishes	Drawing on the experience of Wellington, Bluecoat, Ranelagh (and Charlie Kerr, the Diocesan Officer), and Soulscape, to think about how we can structurally support Schools, possibly through chaplaincy. RE in Schools another resource and idea.	Deanery Standing Committee	6/22
e)	Engaging with the Diocesan Vision and Workstreams	Have we been conscious enough of these areas and the focus of the 3 Cs? Is discipleship the window through which everything else must be seen and understood?	Deanery SC	7/22