

Deanery Report

Much of 2021, inevitably, was overshadowed by Covid and the ongoing crisis we all lived under. We met as a Synod both in person and on Zoom and tried to make as many meetings as possible meetings which were open to anyone who was interested. Reading back through the minutes, I realise exactly how much we achieved in 2021 as a Deanery:

1. We agreed to end the system whereby parishes paid the Deanery a Quinquennial Levy each year and the Deanery then paid for the QI. We reimbursed everyone the money they had paid but not used, and from now on, every parish will pay for its own Inspections.
2. Lynne Paine (Woosehill) became Treasurer and has done an excellent job of working through past years of accounts and is now presenting the accounts to the Standing Committee and Synod on a regular basis with clarity and control.
3. John Sutton (St Paul's, Wokingham) was elected as Lay Chair of the Deanery in July 2021. He is a Primary School Teacher and has made a very bright start, bringing together his ability to listen and his ability to think.
4. Our meetings have dealt with some very big contemporary challenges facing the Church of England and our own churches- our response to the environmental crisis (which has led to the launch of a Deanery Grant for projects which seek to reduce the carbon footprint of a church), engaging with the LLF process (around issues in human sexuality) and also helping the Church to face up to its record on racial discrimination by discussing the powerful report From Lament to Action. We also had a session on how Churches work in Schools, looking at both a chaplaincy model and also things like assemblies, being a Governor and offering practical support.
5. The Deanery Plan was meant to run from June 2021 to June 2022 but the extended nature of the pandemic means that we need to adjust our expectations as to what we will achieve. We are focusing in on the first two sections as a result of the consultation we had with parishes on what their priorities were- rebuilding relationships and then preparing for the next, longer Plan.
6. In terms of Parish Share, the Deanery paid the lowest percentage of Share in the Archdeaconry but not the lowest in the whole Diocese. We paid 87.5% of what we were asked for- £964, 693 out of £1,102, 617. Winnersh and Bearwood and Owlsmoor are trying to pay in full but not getting there. (Winnersh and Bearwood will not be replacing their last minister with a full-time appointment in part as a result of this). Hurst had a shortfall which was largely linked to issues with the property they own, and Arborfield and Barkham and Sonning choose not to pay in full because of long-

running issues they have with the Diocese and/ or the Church of England. Thank you for everything that was paid- it really does help the Deanery and Diocese to emerge well from the pandemic- and let's look to overtake some of the other local Deaneries in 2022.