

## READING DEANERY SYNOD

**Minutes of the 5th meeting of the 2011 - 2014 Synod (Subject to approval by synod).  
Held at St Michael and All Angels Church, Spencers Wood, on Thursday 9th February 2012**

### Present:

Clergy	Lay members	Apologies	
The Revd Canon B Shenton (chair)	Mr Eric Anderson	Mrs Dru Maynard	The Revd Derek Chandler
The Revd Pads Dolphin	Mr Ian Bate	Dr Chris JB Mott	The Revd Leon Collyer
The Revd Nigel Hardcastle	Mr Derek Benham	Ms Marion Pitman	The Revd David Harris
The Revd Chris Leslie	Mr Mark Burton	Mr David Paine	The Revd Eddie Orme
The Revd Beatrice Pearson	Ms Anne Bingham	Mr Peter Pearson	The Revd Jon Salmon
The Revd Stanton Saringer	Ms Rosemary Cooper	Mr Peter Politzer	
The Revd Denis Smith	Mrs Mary Ellaby	Mr Les Pullen	Mr P Jeal (Chair)
The Revd Jeremy Tear	Mr John Godden	Ms Jenny Searle	Mr Ken Deane
The Revd Rachel Wadey	Mr Trevor Greaves	Ms Nicki Tinniswood	Mrs Margaret Jeal
	Mr Jim Johnson	Miss Joan Walker	Dr Joanna Laynesmith
	Mrs Sheila Jordan	Mr David Webster	Mrs Sue Nallon
	Dr John Ledger	N White	Mrs Pat Nash
	Ms Jane Lewis		

Also in attendance:

Liz, Peter Pearson, Peter Ratcliffe, Debbie as speakers for Café Church at St Michael and All Angels Church and Janet Shury as speaker on behalf of Greyfriars Church.

### Welcome:

The Revd Canon Brian Shenton welcomed everyone to the meeting on a cold, snowy evening.

### Opening Prayers:

These were led by the Revd. Beatrice Pearson

### Minutes of the last Synod:

Minutes of the Synod held on November 16<sup>th</sup> 2011 were presented and agreed with the following amendment: to add Mrs Mary Ellaby and Mrs Sheila Jordan to members present. Dr Chris Mott paid tribute to the writer of the minutes, noted by the Revd Canon Brian Shenton.

### Notices:

- a) **Area Dean** – invited the Revd Pads Dolphin to deliver a notice: There is to be a ‘Child Protection’ meeting on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 19.30 hours at St Matthew Southcote, which will include speakers from the Diocese, all who have an interest / involvement are welcome to attend.
- b) **Lay Chair** – On behalf of the Lay Chair, the Treasurer, Joan Walker, reminded everyone to complete an attendance form, noting that at the last meeting more people voted than were present at the meeting! Joan also requested email addresses for her to forward to the Secretary as some members had not been receiving information re the Synod.
- c) **Treasurer** – Joan reported that the 2011 accounts were currently with the Auditor and would be presented at the next meeting. She apologized to a number of churches which had not received notification of the fees due to the Deanery for 2011, the only possible explanation being that these were still somewhere in the Royal Mail system. The majority of churches had now paid 2011 fees and the late payments would all be reflected on the 2012 accounts.

### Parish Share Rebate:

On behalf of the Lay Chair Joan informed the meeting that the rebate had been received from the Diocese mid December and Peter Jeal had received details of payments from churches at the end of January. When Peter returns from holiday rebate due to churches will be calculated and distributed noting that not all churches had paid in time to achieve the rebate.

## **Presentation – Church cafés – their role in outreach to the community**

The Revd Beatrice Pearson introduced her team of Peter Pearson to present an overview of the project, Liz to present Mission, Peter Ratcliffe to present financial matters and Debbie management of the café.

The vision began in 2006 when there was a small congregation of around 20, two children, no toilets or kitchen in the church and water obtained from an outside tap. In essence the church was invisible. Church visibility improved once a large decaying tree was felled and the project gained momentum. Over a long period of time the vision slowly developed with an architect appointed from the 6 interviewed, discussions with the local community especially parents with young children, discussions with the Diocese, visits to churches which already had similar projects up and running. With £45,000 set aside and a grant from what was the South East England Development Agency the building work in the church began with the café finally opening in 2010.

The café is viewed as God manifest in a practical way, showing that church members care and God takes care of local issues. It affords time and space for people to enjoy refreshments and to have conversations with others in a welcoming, restful, relaxed and in some cases a neutral or non-threatening environment. The manager and volunteers, around 19 of them, value the time to spend with people and in particular the manager is seen as a minister in the Christian context but only raising Christian matters if the person being talked to raises them first. Not all of the volunteers are church members but have discovered the café and have gradually become involved in its running.

In 2010 the café showed a profit of £3180, this was added to by renting out the balcony area above the café, which also has wifi computers, the holding of special events such as a Spanish evening and selling items which in the main were donated. Altogether over £6000 was given to Church Council enabling it to pay its way to the Diocese as well as meet the increased cost of utility bills because the church is now in use everyday. It has to be remembered that not all income is profit as equipment needs to be replenished and repairs effected. The café open 09.30 til 14.00 Monday to Saturday (except Tuesday when opening is at 11.00) and the rented space being used beyond those hours.

Les Pullen from St John and St Stephen contributed how the café there had been running for 5 years and had benefitted from an expanded and enhanced kitchen. Links with the community had built up especially with parents who have children at the adjacent church school. In some ways there is a disconnect between church and the café but simply by being there and seen as a support and is valued, albeit an ongoing challenge.

Janet Shury spoke re the café at Greyfriars which has been running for 30 years, initially not intended to be a café but the Greyfriars centre was developed so that the church was seen to be open 7 days a week. The bookshop opened and then the rooms and hall were in use and people needed refreshments so within six weeks of providing drinks it was noted that lunches were being served. There had been many ups and downs. Church members were the initial volunteers but now established links with Yeldhall mean that volunteers from there can have work experience which in turn benefits them in seeking to return to employment. Admittedly some of the Yeldhall volunteers have not had successful outcomes as they have reverted to their addicted habits. Other volunteers have been those recovering from long term disabling illness which has helped them to regain confidence. The challenge has been to maintain standards and training and pay the employed staff. Use of the café has been by those from all walks of life.

Questions were answered pertaining to the increase of the number of children at St Michael which was positive with activities for children now in place; recruiting and retaining volunteers with positive results; advertising which for St Michael's was within the community magazine and like the others word of mouth plays an important part; access for disabled users to upstairs areas was not a problem as in each instance an area of the church could be used instead. Conflicting responses were in the areas of whether a person holding a food hygiene certificate has to be on duty and whether or not a first aider has to be available, possibly these matters are local Council decisions.

The Revd Canon Brian Shenton thanked all those who had contributed to the evening and closed the meeting in prayer.

Signed  
(chair)

Date