

READING DEANERY SYNOD

Minutes of the 11th meeting of the 2011 - 2014 Synod.

Held at Emmer Green, St Barnabas Church on Monday 23rd September 2013 at 20.00 hours

Present:

Clergy	Lay members	Apologies	
The Revd Joy Atkins	Mr Peter Jeal (Chair)	Dr Christopher Mott	The Revd Canon B Shenton (Chair)
The Revd Derek Chandler	Mr Eric Anderson	Mrs Sue Mott	The Revd Nicholas Cheeseman
The Revd Penny Cuthbert	Mr Ian Bate	Mrs Pat Nash	The Revd Leon Collyer
The Revd Margaret Dimmick	Mr Mark Burton	Dr Diana Matthews	The Revd Pads Dolphin
The Revd Graeme Fancourt	Mr Ken Deane	Dr Sally-Ann McDowell	The Revd Dan Heyward
The Revd Peter Grosse	Mr Robert Dimmick	Mr David Paine	The Revd Nigel Jones
The Revd David Harris	Mr Mike Eggleton	Mrs Marian Pitman	The Revd Nick Jackson
The Revd Chris Leslie	Mrs Ruth Farrel-Hyder	Mr David Potter	The Revd Jane Lewis
The Revd Sean Riordan	Dr David Fulford	Mrs Janet Potter	The Revd Eddie Marquez
The Revd Chris Russell	Dr Philip Giddings	Mrs Terry Pitt	The Revd Carol Morgan
The Revd David Smith	Mrs Chantal Haigh	Dr Tony Pretlove	The Revd Eddie Orme
The Revd Derek Spears	Mrs Sonia Higgs	Mr Les Pullen	The Revd Vernon Orr
The Revd Neil Warwick	Mr Mark Hinckley	Mr Chris Rimmer	The Revd John Rogers
The Revd Jonathan Wilmot	Mrs Mary Hudson	Mr Peter Shirley-Quirk	The Revd Maurice Stanton-Saringer
	Mrs Margaret Jeal	Mr Kim Slater	The Revd Jeremy Tear
	Mr Jim Johnson	Mrs May Smith	
	Dr Alison Johnston	Ms Nicki Tinniswood	Mr Ayo Akintoye
	Mrs Sheila Jordan	Miss Joan Walker	Mr Tony Bartlett
	Dr John Ledger	Dr Elaine Watts	Mrs Anne Bingham
	Mrs Margaret Lowe	Mr Bill Watts	Mrs Rosemary Cooper
	Prof John Missenden	Mr Anthony White	Mr David Cox
		Mrs Gillian Wilson	Mrs Mary Ellaby
			Mrs Dru Maynard
			Mrs Jenny Searle
			Mr Gordon Summers
			Mr Brian Wynn

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Welcome:

Mr Peter Jeal welcomed everyone to the meeting, and tendered apologies on behalf of the Revd Canon Brian Shenton who is retiring this month. A card is available at the back of church for Synod members to sign thanking Brian for all he has done during his time as Area Dean. Donations to enable the purchase of John Lewis tokens should be given, or sent to Joan.

Two New Curates were welcomed in their absence - The Revd Jane Lewis based at St James, Woodley and the Revd Carole Morgan based at St Matthews.

Opening Prayers:

The Revd. Derek Chandler led opening prayers.

Minutes of the last Synod:

Minutes of the Synod held on 26th November 2012, previously circulated were agreed with the following amendments having been received.

- Amend Mr David Fulford.tp Dr David Fulford
- The 'unanimous' outcome on the vote proposed by the Revd Nicholas Cheeseman, seconded by the Revd Neil Warwick regarding Parishes preparing their Ministry and Action plans was questioned as a clergy member felt that he would have abstained. Agreed that this could be amended to read majority instead of unanimously.

Matters Arising, not covered elsewhere in agenda: none

Notices:

- a) **Area Dean** – none,
Dr Philip Giddings asked what arrangements had been made to cover in the absence of an Archdeacon and an Area Dean. Mr Peter Jeal reported that he was unable to answer as, to his knowledge, no provision had been made. The meeting generally felt that this was a totally unsatisfactory situation, respecting the fact the Mr Peter Jeal had pursued this matter with Bishop Andrew. Additionally with the Minster being in an interregnum it is not known whether the next Area Dean will be based there and again the pressure on a clergy member being expected to undertake this role as well as own parish work was recognized as untenable.
Dr Christopher Mott asked why the retirement of the Revd Brian Shenton had not been announced to which Mr Peter Jeal replied that Brian had refused to have any announcement or recognition made in any way. The meeting remained unhappy that this was the position.
- b) **Lay Chair** – none .
- c) **Treasurer** – none
- d) **Secretary** – Notified the meeting that the Revd Margaret Dimmick, who has ably represented the Deanery on the Methodist circuit will be retiring in January hence it was requested for members to consider a replacement Deanery Synod member for this role.
- e) **General Synod report:** Dr Philip Giddings reported sharing that the Archbishop of Egypt returned home from General Synod when a priest in Egypt had been murdered. The Archbishop returned to General Synod and made three requests a) not to feel sorry; b) to pray for peace and reconciliation; and c) to pray for a new heart in witness and in service. He emphasised the importance of following safeguarding procedures, especially when pastoral shortcuts are seen to be available. Whilst welfare reforms are on political agenda issues like Women in the Episcopate proceed through different processes and when next considered all material will be presented for consultation. The consultation process has been widened and a 2/3 majority decision will be required. Dr Giddings is on the committee examining all this work and he requested prayers for the right guidance and in decision making. Further consultation will take place during 2014/2015.

Parish Share 2014:

The following motion to be considered:

This Deanery Synod agrees the Parish Share allocation for 2014 to churches within the Deanery as proposed on paper Parish Share 2014 Proposal.

Mr Peter Jeal reported that in 2013 the situation had changed and it was now anticipated that a rebate would now exceed any shortfall. This was due to a change in programme for repair work at one church and a delay in new-build work at another it now seemed likely that the Deanery would be able to meet its total Parish share quota for this year, providing that parishes paid their totals by the end of November. This would enable a 2% refund to the Deanery. The total refund to churches could be less than this depending on the Deanery contribution. For 2014 the anticipated need of St Catherine of Siena and St Birinus had changed therefore the Deanery contribution would be reduced by £15,000, giving some leeway.

Re-calling that Synod had agreed for the 2014 Paris Share to be calculated using the currently used formula with a revised presentation later using a revised formula for which the initial costs of ministry of £43,000 would be the basis.

Professor John Missenden contributed that figures provided by Experian which were being used by the Diocese reveal Reading to be 12% below average.

Mr Peter Jeal responded that currently the Deanery contributes 90% of its costs of ministry.

Dr Christopher Mott asked whether Holy Trinity was in a position to contribute at all. Mr Peter Jeal responded that discussions were ongoing at Bishop level, one proposal had been put forward but the patrons were not supporting this. There not being an easy solution the situation is likely to be ongoing for a long time. In the meantime there will be contributions as and when possible. Professor John Missenden asked how ministry was being provided to which it is known that St Marks with All Saints are providing pastoral care.

Caversham Thameside had been instructed by their Parochial Church Council to vote against the proposed Share figures due to their interregnum and two empty rectories which they had calculated to be a 7.1 % increase rather than the 4% shown. The Revd Chris Leslie informed the meeting that the Diocese does assume vacancies when calculating the allocation to each Deanery.

A vote on the above motion proposed by Mr Peter Jeal, seconded by Joan Walker was then carried with 33 votes in favour; 6 against and 10 abstentions.

Mr Peter Jeal then requested the submission of names of anybody whom would like to be or should be involved in developing the revised formula for usage in future.

Presentation: “The Church in the Public Space”

The Revd Canon Angela Tilby, based at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, presented the subject. She gave an in-depth and thought provoking address beginning with an appreciation of allowing her to sit in on the business meeting which was a reminder to her of what the business of Synod is.

She reflected on the title she had given to her talk, questioning if it was geographical, such as buildings or hoardings; institutional; governmental, such as decision making; or conceptual, such as media, schools or questioning and concluded that it was all and more.

Unlike other faiths the Church of England (C/E) has a relationship with the State in that Bishops sit in the House of Lords and the Queen is the head of the church. It would take considerable legislation to change this. The C/E tries to be cross cultural, as we are told in John’s Gospel ‘in the world but not of it’.

Similar to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) the church is a mature democracy, where tolerant and robust debate takes place albeit uncomfortable at times. Other countries differ in this respect and she was glad not to be colonised such as the right political parties where we could find ourselves embroiled in religion and ethnic issues.

The C/E is never static but always evolving, although some feel that it should relinquish its State relations where recent matters of debate have included ‘gay marriage’ and ‘women in the Episcopate’. There are those who feel that the church is marginal to society and over-represented. Gallop polls in 2008 revealed that 6.3% of the population are regular weekly churchgoers and 1.5 million people claim to be either C/E or Roman Catholic, followed by Pentecostals, Independents and Orthodox. Numbers within the non-C/E, such as Methodist and United Reform are falling rapidly.

In public life there are many references made to the Bible and Prayer book, one classic example being Neville Chamberlain – ‘Peace in our time’. Due to changes in the Education act in the 1990’s the over 40’s know about the Bible but not the under 40’s age groups. There is now no knowledge of hymns when couples come to choose wedding music. Different hymn books offer a great diversity but some people think that any hymn book over two years old is not of the Spirit.

In 1992 when the vote on the Ordination of Women went contrary to expectation and ‘Flying Bishops came into being the move was expected to be a temporary one. Greater equality is important and the church sometimes needs to be outside of its own boundaries. The church needs to be listening, it faces a double edge whilst remaining loyal to faith and tradition yet being cross cultural.

Gay relationships proved challenging to Archbishop Justin Welby but he is perhaps more comfortable with such matters than others have been.

Church schools are welcomed, although only around 3% of the children are of faith parents recognize the schools as having academic excellence. There is however a question-mark as to whether this is perpetuating division.

There is church of non-believers in London and this is beginning to spread.

Inside of these observations Linda Woodhead states that Anglican people are more liberal than leaders. And backs this with statistics.

Regarding approaches to Assisted Suicide ¾ of C/E people believe there is a right to it, which is higher than the population as whole. The leadership need to see this gap and address the different value systems which are in place as they affect individual liberty and equality.

The amount of goodwill within a church is not recognized. The emphasis on intensity is on discipleship, the signs of worship which appeal to folk come with the Gospel of intensity not the conventional helping. This raises the question as to leadership being missional, pastoral or both. In the public domain what does it mean to be church, is it a website, a notice board, overenthusiastic welcome at the door which puts people off or a living of the Christian life following the traits within the Sermon on the Mount.

After her presentation Angela responded to a few questions, relating to political allegiance and saving lives, ending with the fact that the church can only lead if it has followers.

Mr Peter Jeal gave a vote of thanks to Angela.

Dates of Next Meetings:

Thursday 28th November 2013 at St Nicolas, Earley, when Mr David Duvall will lead a musical evening, when members are invited to bring guests with them.

Closing Prayers were led by the Revd Derek Spears.

Signed
(chair)

Date

DRAFT