

READING DEANERY SYNOD

Minutes of the 13th meeting of the 2011 - 2014 Synod.

Held at St Matthew's Church Hall, Southcote Tuesday 4th February 2014 at 20.00 hours

Present:

Clergy

The Revd Joy Atkins
The Revd Derek Chandler
The Revd Nicholas Cheeseman
The Revd Penny Cuthbert
The Revd Pads Dolphin
The Revd Dan Heyward
The Revd Chris Leslie
The Revd Jane Lewis
The Revd Graham Lunn
The Revd Chris Russell
The Revd Jon Salmon
The Revd Derek Spears
The Revd Neil Warwick

Lay members

Mr Peter Jeal (Chair)
Mr Eric Anderson
Mr Tony Bartlett
Mr Ian Bate
Mrs Anne Bingham
Mr Michael Charles
Mrs Rosemary Cooper
Dr David Fulford
Dr Philip Giddings
Mr Trevor Greaves
Mr Jim Johnson
Mr Alfred Kolawole
Dr John Ledger
Mrs Margaret Lowe
Dr Sally-Ann McDowell
Prof John Missenden
Mrs Carole Morgan
Mrs Marian Pitman
Mr Terry Pitt
Mr David Potter
Mrs Janet Potter
Dr Tony Pretlove
Mr Chris Rimmer
Mr Kim Slater
Mrs May Smith
Miss Joan Walker
Dr Elaine Watts
Mr Tony White
Mrs Gillian Wilson
Mr Brian Wynn

Apologies

The Revd Margaret Dimmick
The Revd Dr Graeme Fancourt
The Revd Nick Jackson
The Revd Vernon Orr
The Revd Sean Riordan
The Revd John Rogers
The Revd Jeremy Tear

Mr Derek Benham
Mrs Patricia Brazil
Mr Mark Burton
Mr Robert Dimmick
Mr Mike Eggleton
Mrs Mary Ellaby
Mrs Sonia Higgs
Mrs Margaret Jeal
Mrs Sheila Jordan
Dr Diana Matthews
Mrs Dru Maynard
Dr Christopher Mott
Mrs Sue Mott
Mrs Pat Nash
Mr David Paine
Mrs Jenny Searle
Mr Peter Shirley-Quirk
Mr Gordon Summers
Mr Andrew Taylor
Mr Bill Watts

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Welcome:

Mr Peter Jeal welcomed everyone to the meeting, welcoming our two newly licensed Assistant Area Deans, the Revd Neil Warwick and the Revd Nicholas Cheeseman and our three Guest Speakers: Mr Derek Chapman, a director of the Berkshire Community Savings and Loans (Credit Union); Alison Peyton, Co-ordinator of Readifood; and Julie Jones, Chief Executive of RE-inspire

Opening Prayers:

These were led by the Revd Pads Dolphin focussing on the work of our three speakers and the 200+ children across Reading who are in need of long term foster care.

Minutes of the last Synod:

Minutes of the Synod held on 23rd September 2013, previously circulated were agreed.

Matters Arising, not covered elsewhere in agenda: none

Notices:

- a) **Assistant Area Deans** – The Revd Nicholas Cheeseman, announced that work towards the appointment of a new Area Dean at the Minster was ongoing, aided by Catherine Morris. He also highlighted the work of our three vocational advisors, Ann Harwood, Jill Lovell and himself in being able to advise and guide in decision making as to the paths to various strands of ministry.

The Revd Neil Warwick explained the way work had been divided between them in that both would be responsible for clergy pastoral care; he would lead Chapter Meetings whilst Nicholas was taking on all things canonical and Legal. They had both been given a two year licence.

- b) **Lay Chair** – Mr Peter Jeal Informed the meeting that:
- (i) around £21,000 had been received from the Diocese as Share rebate and would be distributed to churches (hopefully) in the next couple of weeks.
 - (ii) That a motion was going to the next Diocesan Synod proposed by Bishop's Council, to give a rebate of 1% on Parish Share to those churches which paid by the Diocese direct debit scheme. This was additional to the existing rebate to those who met the agreed targets for February, June and November during the year. The new Draft Deanery Share Scheme would be out in March.
 - (iii) Concerns re the wording within the Document concerning the revising of Boundaries of St Mary's and St Laurence had been alleviated before the Document was submitted to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee by the removal of the wording which had caused concern.
 - (iv) The Revd Pads Dolphin was being given incumbency of St Matthew's, the suspension of this having been lifted.
 - (v) That officially this was the last meeting of this Synod but it may be necessary to call one more meeting before the end of May. Mr Jeal thanked Synod members for their support and participation over the three years.
- c) **Treasurer** – none
- d) **Secretary** – none

Presentations:

Mr Derek Chapman gave the first presentation outlining the ideas of an earlier Director, Mr David Bertram who at every meeting stated that St Laurence Church Lands funds should be sought, That Brian Shenton should be approached, that the Area Dean could assist with funds and that the Chair of the Norwich Credit Union was one Sally Chicken. On a more serious note he went on to explain the work within the London Street Office, where there are just two paid staff, the others being volunteers. Credit Unions are a membership Co-operative, not a charity and as such are financially vulnerable. Loan shops and Wonga were not on the scene when the Reading Credit Union was set up and the general social climate has been a worsening one. Archbishop Justin Welby speaking out on the subject and promoting Credit Unions had been welcome.

The idea is for people to become members, save regularly and take out loans. Savings are currently attracting a 1¼% dividend, set each year at an Annual general Meeting. The current on loans APR is 26% which compares very favourably with other sources of loans which may be as high as 400% depending on the amount and length of time for repayment. Many of those helped are classified as tier three which means they are poor, possibly on a low wage or receiving benefits.

Because of the demise of the Financial Services Authority, being replaced by the Financial Conduct Authority all stationery is having to be changed to meet the standards of the new controlling body – an expensive business. Currently there are around 2000 members but more are to be welcomed especially those who take out loans as this is the source of income for distribution to others.

In response to questions people hear about the Credit Union through word of mouth and media coverage; maximum savings are £15,000, which, in case of failure, is well within the £85,000 covered by the FSCS; Parish Church Councils and other corporate members are able to become members; Yes there are people who can not be helped but they are referred on to the debt advice agencies which work closely with the Credit Union.

The second presentation was made by Alison Peyton who explained that Readifood is a registered Charity under the auspices of FAITH. They man a Sunday Tea bar on the market site providing food and warm drinks for those on the streets and, in their warehouse they make up food parcels which they deliver to homes. From providing 20 parcels a week in their early days three years ago they now make up around 100. Each parcel is designed to last the family around 3 days and is expected to be of around a four to six week duration. The recipients are those who have been referred by the Reading Borough Council (RBC), agencies, prisons (for those just released). Supplies come from a large interdenominational Church base together with Waitrose Stores who enable a monthly collection. Distribution undertaken by volunteers plus RBC and other agencies. The area covered is extensive from the greater Reading area, Mortimer, Burghfield, Woodley, Sonning Common, Purley, Pangbourne, Emmer Green, Maiden Earley and CIRDIC. Requests have also come in from Henley and Winnersh in the past.

The third presentation was made by Julia Jones who led a lively interactive session of the Storm on the Lake. Just as it presented in schools each 'disciple' in the boat was asked what their feelings were with Jesus asleep while the storm battered them, also some Synod members who were 'observers on the beach' were asked too. Feelings of drowning, sea-sickness, fear were expressed. By using this method each child participating gets a chance to speak and therefore feel their opinions are valued. After the drama when Jesus had stilled the storm again view were sought, with the main response being that it was a miracle. In schools, and at groups where such methods are used those leading the sessions have really noticed a big change in attitudes and approaches. Teachers who vehemently opposed the teaching have gradually come around and now ask questions and actively participate. Parents who felt they had no-one to talk to have been greatly helped by talking to the leaders or clergy despite these people being of a totally different faith. It is hoped that more schools will come on board and invite the RE-inspired members to work with children. The latest school to invite them is St John and St Stephen, Orts Road.

Overall these three presentations gave Synod members an insight to ongoing work addressing social issues around our Town, the problems each of them faces but also the hope and inspiration for a brighter future.

Mr Peter Jeal gave a vote of thanks to all three speakers who were warmly applauded.

Dates of Next Meetings:

Thursday 12th June 2014, 19.30 hours for 20.00 hours, venue to be confirmed

Closing Prayers were led by the Revd Nicholas Cheeseman..

Signed
(chair)

Date