

## READING DEANERY SYNOD

### Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the 2014 - 2017 Synod. Held at Shinfield St Mary Church, Churchurch Lane, Shinfield on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 at 20.00 hours

#### Present:

Clergy		Lay members	Apologies
The Revd Neil Warwick	Mr Peter Jeal (Chair)	Mr Sozzie Kasozimusoke	<u>NSM – PTO</u>
The Revd Nicholas Cheeseman	Mr Ayo Akintoye	Dr John Ledger	The Revd Richard Allen
The Revd Dr Peter Day	Mrs Anne Barnes	Mrs Margaret Lowe	The Revd Colin Bass
The Revd Dr Graeme Fancourt	Mrs Jane Borgeaud	Mrs Jane Masson	The Revd Norman Brown
The Revd Dan Heyward	Mrs Patricia Brazil	Dr Diana Matthews	The Revd Margaret Dimmick
The Revd Nick Jackson	Mr Graeme Buick	Dr Sally-Ann McDowell	The Revd Peter Grosse
The Revd Chris Leslie	Mr Mark Burton	Prof John Missenden	The Revd Eddie Orme
The Revd Jane Lewis	Mrs Anne Cheeseman	Mrs Pat Nash	
The Revd Vernon Orr	Mr Andrew Cobb	Mrs Pamela Patman	<u>Lay members</u>
The Revd David Pickersgill	Mrs Rosemary Cooper	Mr David Potter	Mrs Gill Adams
The Revd Sean Riordan	Mr David Cox	Mrs Janet Potter	Mrs Pat Almond
The Revd John Rogers	Mr John Cull	Mr Chris Rimmer	Mr Ian Bate
The Revd Mike Smith	Mr John Davies	Mr Kim Slater	Mr Tony Bartlett
	Mr Mike Eggleton	Mrs May Smith	Mr Allan Cross
13	Mrs Jane Fulford	Mr Ralph Taylor	Mr Robert Dimmick
<u>NSM – PTO</u>	Mr Trevor Greaves	Mr Bill Watts	Mrs Pauline Harris
The Revd Francis Jakeman	Mr Leslie Green	Dr Elaine Watts	Mr Mark Hinckley
1	Mr Lee Hill	Miss Joan Walker	Mr Steve Jenkins
	Mrs Audrey Hobbs	Mr Simon Walker	Dr Elizabeth Lowson
<u>Clergy Apologies</u>	Mrs Margaret Jeal	Mrs Alison Whitaker	Mrs Linda Lyle
The Revd Joy Atkins	Dr Alison Johnston	Mr Tony White	Mrs Katy Lyne
The Revd Derek Chandler		Mr Nicholas White	Dr Christopher Mott
The Revd Nigel Jones		Mrs Hilary Wynn	Mrs Sue Mott
The Revd Graham Lunn			Mr David Paine
The Revd Nigel Jones			Miss Alison Peyton
The Revd Eddie Marquez			Mr Les Pullen
The Revd Jonathan Salmon			Mrs Ann Taylor
The Revd Derek Spears			Mrs Pauline Willis
The Revd Jeremy Tear			

The following Treasurers were present as invited guests: Mr Dave Mbawa (Earley Trinity); Mrs Hayley Sheridan (Beech Hill); Mr Chris Nunn (Earley St Peter).

### **Welcome:**

The Neil Warwick chaired the meeting as Mr Peter Jeal was leading the presentation later in the meeting, He opened and welcomed everyone to the 2nd Meeting of the Deanery Synod and clarified the agenda.

### **Opening Prayers:**

Revd Chris Leslie led the opening prayers focusing on vocation, gifts and wise use of our calling within the church to the glory of God.

### **Minutes of the last Synod:**

Minutes of the Synod held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014, previously circulated were agreed after Joan Walker made an apology to Dr Christopher Mott for abbreviating his name in the draft minutes as circulated, but now amended.

**Matters Arising, not covered elsewhere in agenda:** none

### **Notices:**

- a) **Assistant Area Deans** – nil to report.
- b) **Lay Chair** – none

The Revd Nick Jackson asked if there was any progress re the appointment of a new Area Dean, to which the Revd Warwick responded in the affirmative but was not in the position of being able to disclose further details at the present time.

- c) **Treasurer** – Mr Mark Burton introduced himself as the newly appointed Treasurer and asked the meeting to approve Mr David Duvall as the Independent examiner for 2014 accounts. Members sought further clarification to which the response was that Mr Duvall is an accountant, church organist at Sonning Church. He had undertaken examination of the 2013 accounts very proficiently according to Joan Walker (then treasurer). Joan Walker then proposed, seconded my Mr Mike Eggleton that Mr David Duvall be appointed. Unanimously agreed.
- d) **Secretary** – Joan apologized for not yet having written a summary of the Diocesan Synod meeting held in June but summarized the changes in the Rules for Deanery Synod which had been passed and come into immediate effect. These included:

#### *rule 9*

The appointment of an Assistant Secretary is now optional, and if appointed it is no longer necessary for the Secretary and Assistant Secretary to be from different houses; there is also now the option of appointing an Assistant Lay Chair

#### *rule 10*

The Standing Committee may now co-opt any Assistant or Associate Area Dean

#### *rules 11, 17, 21 and 26*

These rules have been amended so that electronic communication is now explicitly permitted for various purposes

#### *rules 17, 21 and 27*

Now that electronic communication is explicitly permitted, the minimum notice periods specified in these rules have been reduced

### *rule 67*

The requirement for all deaneries to produce audited accounts has been removed; instead, deaneries are now required to have their annual financial statements independently examined

The revised Rules will in due course be made available on the diocesan website.

Secondly Joan reported that, recalling that at the 1<sup>st</sup> Synod meeting no clergy had been elected to serve on the Pastoral Committee in the North and West areas of the Deanery. Since then the Revd Derek Chandler had volunteered on behalf of the North Reading area (Caversham Thameside; Caversham St Andrew; Emmer Green St Barnabas; Caversham Park; Greyfriars; St Mary, Minster; St Laurence), supported by the clergy in that area

The Revd Pads Dolphin had volunteered on behalf of the West Reading area, (St Catherine of Sienna; Tilehurst St Michael; St Matthew; St Mark & All Saints; St George; St Mary Magdalen; Holy Trinity), not all clergy had yet responded but it suggested that a volunteer after a failure to elect should be accepted. The meeting was asked to support these two volunteers with no objections being raised.

### **Presentation of proposed New Parish Share Scheme**

Mr Peter Jeal explained that Plan A shown on his presentation could not be followed as the Diocese had forwarded necessary data to the National Church which had not yet made the data available. To be able to make any progress the Oxford Diocese had scanned its data base to obtain the calculated figure of attendance figures and electoral roll figures from 2008 - 2012 inclusive, which were used in their 2014 calculation. These figures only reached Peter a few days before his holiday hence the Parish Share Committee had not met to refine the outcome in any way. This being the case the meeting had a blank canvas and was invited to contribute and / or question. Peter suggested that the ideas of members would then be considered by the Parish Share Committee and email used to communicate inviting further response and possibly meeting with churches, concluding in an electronic vote. A point of order was raised that electronic voting is not permitted under the Rules of Synod. Voting being by a show of hands at a meeting. It was therefore agreed that any further consideration could be given at the September meeting of Synod (bearing in mind that the Archdeacon is already booked to address the meeting on that evening) but a final vote on the 2015 Parish Share figures must be taken at the November meeting of Synod to meet the Diocesan deadline. Some questions ahead of Peter's power point presentation are addressed later.

Peter then presented slides (as attached to these minutes) with explanation:

**Church of England** - the details here have been long standing policies applied to Parish Share.

**Oxford Diocese Share Scheme –**

**Diocese Share –**

**Deanery share (draft) initial thoughts of the Parish Share Committee** – churches in special measures are those with a specific problem the example being St Michael Tilehurst where having raised a large amount of money for repairs plus paying their share for that year they were then faced with a massive bill to repair dry rot in the roof of the church. In this case a one year reduction in share contribution was given.

The importance of sending in mission returns was emphasized, otherwise the previous figures submitted are raised by 10% for use in calculations which could well be to the detriment of that church.

The 1½ Deanery posts are: one a clergy member responsible for working with ethnic minorities and other faiths and the ½ is the Area Dean position.

**Deanery Share Calculation** – There does need to be an upper limit cap which would also reflect in a lower figure cap. Exceptions to the cap would be as in the situation for St Matthew's where an allowance was made for re-generation of the church community. As the church is growing they have undertaken to pay a 10% rise each year until they reach their correct share payment level.

**New Share V Old Share** – The draft spreadsheets circulated to members ahead of the meeting did not have the deprivation allowance applied. Once this is applied the smaller churches in deprivation areas will note significant decreases in their totals. In the unusual event of a church which does not have a clergy member, such as Holy Trinity where it is not envisaged to have a stipendiary clergy member appointed, (they are not in an interregnum) then there will not be the cost of a clergy member allocated to them. Our Deanery currently has 28 clergy to be paid for at £43,000 each.

**Plan A** – not possible as explained earlier

**Plan B** – is the one to be followed now

**Variation to Deanery Share** – the three examples are ideas only. One idea was to give an allowance to benefices / parishes with less clergy than the number of churches. The example of £5000 is purely an example. A further idea was to absorb the cost of the 1½ Deanery posts into the attendance / electoral roll calculations. A third idea was to reduce the attendance / electoral figure average by a set figure, an example of 25 was given.

**The Future** – No figures are available as yet for the projected increases in either Share or deprivation allowances.

Members of Synod responded well to the invitation to raise questions or make contributions as summarized:

- a) Why cannot the 40% attendance 60% electoral roll be applied to the figures now response being that the figures are not yet available to do this.
- b) The timeframe is unrealistic as many churches will not have a Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting before being asked to respond, the response being that it does not require a PCC meeting for this but a meeting of those responsible for church finances which should be possible in around a month.
- c) The spreadsheet shows around a 5% Parish Share increase when salaries of parishioners are only rising around 1% or 2% making unrealistic demands upon parishioners. The response being that the spreadsheet was not a firm proposal neither had the deprivation allowances been applied.
- d) The overall totals in the old scheme appear to be skewed against poor parishes, the new scheme should look to make a more equitable approach.
- e) The use of Experian was questioned by several members, some wanting to go as low as individual post codes of parishioners in deciding wealth of each parish as applied to its electoral roll. It was explained that the Diocese had vetoed this therefore it was not possible for use within the Deanery. Others suggested that parishes could submit statistics as to which parishioners lived in which postcodes. This again was not always reliable as a small number of parishioners may live in an area which is generally considered wealthy by their overall post code or vice versa. Also there is the question of data protection which parishes must abide by.

One proposal from Mr Mark Burton was not to use Experian but to use the Department of Work and Pension statistics which were available annually. He volunteered to take the considerable time it would take to extract these.

- f) Generosity not costs as we can all come up with allowances which should be made. The income of older people was raised to demonstrate that monetary generosity is not always possible.
- g) One proposal was to take the income of each parish as an indication of its wealth and allocation of the deprivation allowance. One comment here was to be wary as parishioners may live in big houses but the cost of maintaining these against an income which may be a pension does not leave disposable monies. Several members supported the idea of using income with the proviso that the church expenses also be looked at together with the means of cutting costs. It was explained that the diocese had already and continues to look at ways of cost cutting. A further request was seeking help as to how a church can increase its income and increase mission.
- h) The Revd Graeme Buick proposed that the energy of the meeting be taken up by a full day's discussion as the timeframe for this meeting was too short to capture all that needs to be said to take the issue forward. The response was that parishes must discuss and send in their contribution to Peter for the Parish Share Committee to pull everything together.
- i) The Revd David Pickersgill requested that the overall increase be kept to 2½% thus avoiding any big jumps. He was assured that an upper cap would be applied.
- j) Mrs Jane Borgeaud appreciated the slides and the presentation of data, she recalled that God calls us to things which often appear beyond us and that we must apply principles across the board. She expressed that the Synod must put its trust in the Parish Share Committee, in clergy and PCC's to work on the right solution.
- k) Mr Andrew Cobb asked who was on the Parish Share Committee. The response that it had been formed during the previous Synod when members were invited to join and the membership is currently: officials of the Synod;- Mr Peter Jeal; the Revd Neil Warwick; the Revd Nicholas Cheeseman; Professor John Missenden; Miss Joan Walker; Mr Mark Burton and they are joined by Mr Mark Hinckley of Greyfriars church.

With time against further contributions the discussion was brought to a halt but all were reminded to send in to Peter their thoughts and ideas and the opportunity to invite Peter to their church if that was thought to be the way forward. .

It was noted that the Parish Share committee would take the comments made at Synod, and any further email contributions. If any member of Synod wanted to be considered to join the Parish share committee they should contact Peter Jeal although numbers will have to be limited for it to function efficiently. The Committee will work to draw up some proposals about the principles that should underlie our Parish Share allocation. Some options from these would be brought back to the September meeting for members to consider.

**Any Other Business: none**

**Dates of Next Meetings:**

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014 venue to be advised when the Archdeacon of Berkshire will be addressing the meeting.

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014 venue to be announced when a final vote on the Parish Scheme will be made.

The Revd Neil Warwick thanked the Revd Chris Leslie and his team for hosting the meeting.

**Closing Prayers** were led by the Revd Francis Jakeman. with the meeting closing at 21.40 hours.

Signed  
(chair)

Date