

READING DEANERY SYNOD

**Minutes of the 6th meeting of the 2014 - 2017 Synod.
Held at St Mary Magdalen Church, Kentwood Hill, Tilehurst RG31 6JD
on Wednesday 10th June 2015 at 20.00 hours**

Present:			
Clergy	Lay members		Apologies
*The Revd Stephen Pullin (Chair)	*Mr Peter Jeal (Chair)	*Dr Alison Johnson	<u>Clergy Apologies</u>
*The Revd Neil Warwick	2 Mrs Gill Adams	*Mrs Margaret Jeal	The Revd Derek Chandler
*The Revd Nicholas Cheeseman	2 Mrs Pat Almond	*Mr Steve Jenkins	The Revd Leon Collyer
2 The Revd Adam Carlill	2 Mr Eric Anderson	*Dr John Ledger	The Revd Chris Leslie
2 The Revd Joy Atkins	2 Mrs Miriam Barlow	*Mrs Margaret Lowe	The Revd David Harris
*The Revd Richard Christopher	*Mrs Ann Barnes	2 Mrs Katy Lyne	The Revd Nick Jackson
2 The Revd Penny Cuthbert	2 nm Mr Ron Best	*Mrs Jane Masson	The Revd Jane Lewis
2 The Revd Peter Day	*Mrs Jane Borgeaud	2 Dr Christopher Mott	The Revd Vernon Orr
2 The Revd Pads Dolphin	*Mr Mark Burton	*Prof John Missenden	The Revd John Rogers
*The Revd Dr Graeme Fancourt	2 Mr Graeme Buick	2 Miss Ann Peyton	The Revd Jonathan Salmon
2 The Revd Dan Heyward	2 nm Miss Sandy Catchick	*Ms Marion Pitman	The Revd Jeremy Tear
2 The Revd Nigel Jones	2 Mr Andrew Cobb	2 Mr David Potter	
*The Revd Sam McNally-Cross	2 Prof Kevin Colyer	2 Mr Les Pullen	
2 The Revd David Pickersgill	2 Mrs Rosemary Cooper	2 Mr Ian Shorrocks	
2 The Revd Denis Smith	*Mr David Cox	2 Mrs May Smith	<u>NSM – PTO Apologies</u>
2 The Revd Mike Smith	*Mr John Cull	2 Mrs Ann Soley	0 The Revd Colin Bass
16	2 nm Mr Andrew Day	2 Mrs Ann Taylor	1 The Revd Margaret Dimmick
	2 Mr Brian Day	*Mr Ralph Taylor	
	*Mr Robert Dimmick	*Dr Elaine Watts	
<u>NSM – PTO</u>	*Mrs Jane Fulford	*Miss Joan Walker	
2 The Revd Francis Jakemen	2 nm Mr David Fulford	2 Mr Simon Walker	
1	*Mr Leslie Green	2 Mr Tony White	
	2 Mrs Pauline Harris	45	
	<u>Lay members apologies</u>		<u>Laity No Apologies received</u>
	1 Mr Ian Bate	1 Dr Sally-Ann McDowell	1 Dr Philip Giddings
Numbers before names indicate the number of 'Church of the Future' Synods attended	1 Mr John Davies	Mr Mark Hinckley	0 Mrs Audrey Hobbs
	1 Mrs Patricia Brazil	Mr Gordon Sumers	1 Mr Sozzie Kasozimusoke
	1 Mr Trevor Greaves	Mr Tony Barlett	1 Mr Ako Kolawole
	1 Mrs Carolyn Lobley	1 Mrs Sue Mott	1 Dr Diana Matthews
		0 Mr Kim Slater	0 Mrs Pat Nash
	0 nm Mr Lee Hackness-Smith	0 Mr Adam Wingrove	
		1 Mr Nicholas White	

In Attendance: Bishop Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading.

1. Welcome:

Mr Peter Jeal welcomed everyone to the 6th Meeting of the Deanery Synod, with a special welcome to Bishop Andrew.

2. Reflection on Scripture and Opening Prayers:

The Revd Denis Smith together with Mrs Anne Soley led the reflection on Scripture, St Luke 10¹⁻¹², with Synod members sharing a thought with those nearest to them and turning the thoughts into prayers.

3. Questions on the feedback from the previous (February) Synod:

4. Church of the Future – Part 1(Questions to Bishop Andrew):

No questions had been submitted relating to items 3 and 4 hence the time allocated was given over to Bishop Andrew to reflect back his interpretation of the feedback.

Speaking to each of the slides in the summary of the feedback, as attached to the minutes of the February Synod, Bishop Andrew reflected as follows:

What is the difference between the church of TODAY and the church of the future?:

Bishop Andrew felt that the Synod response was an accurate one, possibly because we are already in survival mode. In this he felt that we are not alone as the Baptist church and the Methodists are feeling the same way. The big challenge is in determining how we move from the current state of refuge to mission.

What is the difference between the church of today and the church of the FUTURE?:

The welcoming and inclusive; broad and diverse; fewer church buildings Bishop Andrew felt kept the door open for divergent views whilst maintaining a generous and loving feeling of speaking the same language and working together.

The aspects of new media; in the world and community focused he felt showed a Kingdom focus whilst discovering and enquiring of our faith and mission, in a worldly setting.

Spirit led innovation; growth and participation opened to us a renewed confidence in what we have and what we are as church members.

What is happening in the church of today that should not be happening in the church of the future?

The views of the Deanery reflect the church not addressing or facing up to problems. An examples being same sex marriage There is a listening process here. Additionally clergy, over many years, were trained to be all singing and dancing affecting the lay ministry. There is a strong movement now working to simplify the agenda and procedures within the church in line with the modern world.

What is the single most important outcome that characterizes the church of the future?

Professor Graham Ward of Christ Church, Oxford has stated that the secular age is over and there is now a shift towards mythological imagination. Religion is back on the agenda in the United Kingdom. To maintain the momentum we need to be more flexible, achieve greater networking and be more mobile.

Across the country there is a lot of work going on relating to discipling. Bill Godfrey, Roman Archbishop of Westminster 1956 – 1963 view was that the Church of England was good at sacramentalizing not evangelizing.

What things do we need to stop or free ourselves from?

The deanery views reflect that there is real fear of decline and marginalization and having too great an impact. We need to recover a compelling generous vision of God, safe that we can relax knowing that it is HIS church. Ric Thorpe, widely known for church planting, advises that we need to learn and release ourselves and establish a legal position for planting churches.

.What is unattractive about 'HERE' and compelling about 'there'?

Institutionalization has affected over many years, we cannot continue to assume that it is business as usual. This presents us with a big challenge. As we view the here and there we need to be cautious in making any judgments about liturgical styles.

What is unattractive about 'here' and compelling about 'THERE'?

The deanery responses show love at the heart of each one.

What kind of people do we need to be?

Bishop Andrew wholeheartedly agreed with the deanery responses.

Professor David Ford, Cambridge, resulting from his interfaith work, expresses that we need God at the centre for the church as whenever the church is renewed so is Spiritual discipline too. The seven most frequent excuses heard by Bernard Marr in preventing success in business are:

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| a). I do not have the money; | e) The conditions are not right |
| b) I do not have the time | f)says I cannot/should not/am not good enough |
| c) I have never done this before | g) I do not have anything new |
| d) I do not have the skills | |

Similarly the church hears excuses which can appear to be overwhelming, but the best way of engagement is to allow practices that allow us to be overwhelmed by God.

5. Church of the Future – Part 2 (Questions from Bishop Andrew):

- i) In the light of the ‘Church of the Future’ discussions what should the purpose of the Synod be?
- ii) How can clergy and laity be co-missioners together?
- iii) Our Living Faith vision is to have a vibrant Christian community: how should we be doing that in an increasingly networked social context? (social media, work and leisure networks etc.).

In groups the following were submitted as responses following a time of discussion:

- i) Has been about buildings and money;
Clearer direction / guidance required on purity (holiness);
Purpose should be a two way conversation between churches and Synod; sharing our individual experiences to bring together a plan, not necessarily the one imposed on us from the hierarchy. i.e. a 10 – 15 minute slot for an individual church to share their experience.
Relationship between church and world outside – planning
Sharing stories / encouraging / info sharing relationship
Funding source
To build up and encourage the church
Encourage one another + encouraging
Need to be organized and get things done
Forum to exchange ideas
Interchange of different churchmanships
Sharing all resources – need to get better at
Synod needs to be better attended
Scaffolding – a structure that allows something else to be built
Reinforcing – core structure for experimental pieces of architecture
Making resourcing interventions / choices
Transparency of discussion and decision
Creation of relationships and trust + care
Formal duties for parishes
- ii) Learning together, listening to each other
Clergy better at accepting whatever
Laity more active in providing support to the clergy
More listening – conference context
Clergy and laity need to give each other permission to get on with what is needed rather than waiting to be asked.
Excess expectation on clergy,
Laity must educate laity that clergy can no longer be there to do everything or control everything. Clergy cannot do that as seen by those living in the past as simply lazy.

If projects fail there is no fault, no blame, just an opportunity to start over

This empowerment extends to this Synod. Synod should share the stories of member churches, giving 'permission' to other churches to try the same or something similar in their own way

Knowing what our mission is

Self discovery – what gifts are present

Minister to each other

Look in as well as out

Clergy to identify specific people within the church to be granted permission to undertake specific pastoral duties in order to assist priest to concentrate on more important needs. This will help reduce the do-it-all priest and make things more inclusive.

People need to be valued and empowered to have a stronger sense of being the body of Christ

People need personal time not an email / telephone contact

iii) Wise use of websites

Use of community buildings (neutral territory)

Be where the people are

Use of virtual world

Remembering the elderly, disabled, housebound, any who cannot get to centres

6. The Revd Denis Smith led a time of prayer with Mrs Anne Soley reading from Romans 12 and 1 Thessalonians

7. Engaging our Parishes:

The Revd Stephen Pullin explained the format for the parish feedback, based on the Living Faith framework. Synod was asked when it was realistic to complete the task by – there was a consensus around the date of 30th September. The feedback will provide essential input to the deanery planning process.

Furthermore it form a basis for enabling the sharing of ideas of good practice and identify areas where help is needed. A question was asked concerning the non-parish setting, an area Stephen agreed needed to be addressed. Agreed that the format would be circulated within the next two days, also attached as appendix 1.

8. Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee.

A draft 'Terms of Reference' for this Committee had been previously circulated. Questions concerning the position for retired against non-retired clergy within the membership; the authority to deploy curates; Synod priorities; and a request for the minutes of meetings to be circulated to Synod members which was agreed, resulted in slight amendments to the Terms of Reference which were then proposed by Nicholas Cheeseman, seconded by Sam McNally-Cross with unanimous acceptance.(appendix 2).

9. Parish Inspections

Further to the information given in Note 5 attached to the agenda Peter Jeal explained that it would be clergy undertaking the Mission aspects of the inspections, whilst Peter and John Missenden would be undertaking the administration part. The two visits could well be at different times, but would begin in September 2015.

10 Finance

10.1 2014 Accounts

Mark Burton presented the accounts, previously circulated, with no questions being asked, Mark proposed the adoption of the Accounts, seconded by Alison Johnson with Unanimous agreement.

10.2 Parish Share Position

Peter Jeal reminded Synod of the need for 50% of the parish share across the Deanery to be fully paid by the end of June in order to secure a 1% rebate, with the full amount being paid by the end of November for a 2% rebate. He further explained how the Deanery would make up any shortfall at these times if it was known that defaulting parishes would be able to pay given time and that the amount to be paid was less than the rebate which would be secured.

10.3 Year end Decision Making

A proposal within note 6 attached to the agenda that the Lay Chair, Area Dean and Treasurer make a joint decision in these circumstances, due to the short time frame given for this decision was seconded by Pads Dolphin and agreed with one abstention.

11. Administration

11.1 Minutes of deanery synod meeting held on 10th February 2015

Joan Walker asked if the previously circulated minutes of this meeting were an accurate record. A show of hands revealed that one or two members had not received these but that nearly 50% of members present had not attended the February meeting. The minutes were agreed

11.2 Matters arising

None

11.3 Deanery notices

As note 7 attached to the agenda

11.4 Any other business

None notified.

11.5 Dates of Future Meetings

As notified on the agenda.

12 Worship

Closing worship with the singing of a hymn was led by the Revd Nicholas Cheeseman

13 Close and depart

Bishop Andrew gave a final Blessing with the meeting concluding at 21.43 hours.

Signed

(chair)

Date