

Report

April 2019

CIRENCESTER DEANERY SYNOD

Central Summary Report of Activities: year ended 31 December 2018

(for Annual Parish Council Meetings during April 2019)

The Deanery Synod met on three occasions during 2018. Clergy membership derives from parish or benefice incumbency whilst parishes nominate at least one lay representative; larger parishes such as Lechlade, Fairford or Tetbury recommend three such members of their choice and Cirencester four members. There are some 46 parishes in the deanery stretching from Lechlade to Shipton Moyne and from the Wiltshire boundary to a line with Birdlip. Deanery Synod is appointed for three years and the present triennium closes in April 2020. However, some parishes have been unable to identify a candidate; these vacancies can be filled on a short term basis. Some amalgamations of parochial church councils have occurred and this trend, which will lessen administrative burden although sometimes caused by an inability to appoint officers, is likely to continue.

Deanery Synod is jointly chaired. Revd Howard Gilbert (Associate Vicar Cirencester) was Area Dean until December 2018 before he has taken up the appointment as Rector of Minchinhampton. Lay Chair was Canon Karen Czapiewski. Membership includes a representative of retired Clergy, namely Revd Ian Aveyard. Other officers comprise a Parish Share Officer, Safeguarding Officer and a Secretary.

Revd Poppy Hughes, Rector of Tetbury Benefice, was appointed as Area Dean from 13 December 2018.

General Data Protection Regulations effective 25 May 2018

Deanery Synod, acting as the communications channel between the Diocese and local parishes, briefly explained the requirements of specific consent to hold personal data under new legislation and highlighted the benefit to every parish by establishing necessary lists of persons who wished to receive information on events. The need for confidentiality was expressed. Parishioners might expect communications and regular updates of local events as well as being expected to participate in periodically re-confirming consent to have their details held.

Gloucester Diocesan Synod

Deanery Synod co-ordinated the nomination of nine persons as members of the House of Laity whilst another nine Clergy were enrolled into the House of Clergy of the Gloucester Diocesan Synod for the triennium to 2021. At the time of writing, one vacancy remains in the House of Laity.

LIFE – the Diocesan Vision 2017-2022

Throughout the year, Deanery Synod continued its exploration of objectives included in LIFE (*Leadership, Imagination, Faith and Engagement) – the Diocesan Vision 2017-2022.*

Under E, Deanery Synod received a presentation from Revd Pauline Godfrey, Diocesan Discipleship and Vocations Officer, who challenged Synod to demonstrate members' commitment to becoming developed confident disciples in daily life. The talk, in March 2018, questioned if church would be mentioned when meeting other people during the week. A

further challenge was to consider the location of our 'frontlines': the interface between sacred and secular living. The speaker described how intercessions should be a place for offering real prayers about local people. Church should be nurturing confident disciples so that we can 'trail the wet footprints of our baptism'.

Christian Aid

A presentation on the work of Christian Aid was received in June 2018. Its major content was Global Injustice in Primary Schools through a project that showed how young participating pupils were equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to act against inequality and work towards a world free of poverty. In a second aspect, a presentation of the Christian Aid Business Network described how, with 50 members largely in London, the group met periodically to make three pledges of actions to be taken by their businesses towards building values-based businesses, ethical investments and banishment of modern slavery. Christian Aid, with lessening revenues from street collections, described the work of the charity in benefit of poverty-stricken aspects in life. New motivations included, with some questions on the pressures entailed, Christian Aid Direct (electronic payments etc) and other more direct activities such as breakfasts or sponsorships.

A film, containing the thanks of islanders, was shown on work of Christian Aid associated with consequences of hurricanes that impacted Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Setting God's People Free

Martin Kingston, member of General Synod and of Kemble PCC, suggested all baptised members of the body of Christ are called to ministry. People are set free to preach the good news while recognising that we are all called as disciples. Thus, clergy should equip and train laity so we all become ministers of the Gospel. An opportunity at <https://www.churchofengland.org/SGPF> - you will then need to click on the reports section, explains the Setting of God's People Free.

Thinking for the future: Multi-Parish Benefices

In October 2018, while exploring objectives within the Leadership element of the Vision, discussions identified some solutions to lessen the administrative burdens, implement efficiencies and liberate clergy energy towards Mission. Three of the local clergy outlined examples of promotion of individual churches within the community, the move of smaller parishes into combined but larger parishes and the effect of multi parish benefices. An example of streamlining how tasks were undertaken was an introduction of a common agenda for PCC meetings across multiple parishes where meetings were held within a few days of each other. Synod also acknowledged the necessity of creating future thoughts and strategy for 30 years hence.

Parish Share – contributions to Diocesan cost

Deanery Synod, regularly updated with information of parish share contributions to Diocesan costs (including clergy stipends), remains conscious of increasing annual costs especially as reliefs from central funds diminish. However, it is important for parishes to settle commitments promptly so that payroll costs can be met. Several parishes pay in excess of an allocated formula to meet needs elsewhere in the Diocese. Officers thank everyone for these prompt and full settlement of commitment.

Michael Spittle

March 2019

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