

Locking Deanery Synod

Minutes of a Meeting of Locking Deanery Synod held on Wednesday 12 October 2005 at 7.30 pm at Locking Castle Church.

- PRESENT** There were fifty-three members present and twenty-five apologies for absence.
- WELCOME** The Rural Dean welcomed the Ven. Andy Piggott, Archdeacon of Bath on his first visit to Locking Deanery Synod. He also welcomed the Revd. Heather Williams, appointed by the retired clergy in the Deanery to be their representative on this Synod. Members of the congregation from Locking Castle Church were thanked for their hospitality.
- PRAYER** John Rewse, Lay Chairman opened the meeting with prayers, focusing on the Holy Spirit's guidance in our ministry and reflected in the Bible reading. Bishop Andrew and his family were remembered in our prayers.
- NOTICE** Members of the Locking Deanery Readers' Fellowship were reminded that their annual subscription is now due to Mrs Diane Rubery.
- MINUTES** Mike Slade apologised for the lateness of the last Minutes which was due to technical difficulties which had now been resolved. The Minutes were signed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

LOCKING DEANERY PLAN David Colborne, Reader from Banwell, reported that the Plan for Locking Deanery has now been submitted to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee for consideration. The only clarification since the plan outlined at the June Synod had been in the East Local Ministry Group. After three public meetings of clergy and lay people of all denominations a point of consensus has now emerged. This is as follows:

On the retirement of the Revd. John Abdy, Burrington will become associated with Wrington, Sandford is actively investigating a link with Winscombe, Congresbury and Banwell will remain unchanged until the retirement of the Revd. David Lockyer. Regarding Churchill and Langford, it is proposed that a priest will be appointed to the two parishes who will also have responsibility as a Youth Co-ordinator throughout the LMG, which includes the ecumenical links, as well as to investigate the possibility of setting up a Chaplaincy Team at Churchill Community School to address the challenges and needs of young people. The Parsonage at Langford will be sold and a house purchased in Churchill.

David also reported that the Diocesan School of Formation, lead by Graham Dodds has been invited to give a presentation at the next open meeting on 19 January to explain about the possibilities available for training of lay people within the Diocese; often Deanery based.

DISTRIBUTION OF DEANERY NOTICES AND MINUTES

David Colbourne has identified a previously unknown "spam" filter operated by BT, but not advised, which automatically blocks e mail attachments, thus causing the distribution problems. To overcome this blocking across the Deanery, David proposed that the web site already used by the East Local Ministry Group is offered Deanery-wide. This would enable the Rural Dean, Lay Chairman and Deanery Secretary to have their own secure domains, also Minutes would be available all on the ELMG website **elmg.org.uk**. This web site, which includes a Deanery map, could be used by other LMGs. Further information on request from David Colbourne@elmg.org.uk. Synod welcomed the offer.

Chris Wilkins from Hutton then presented an encouraging report about the co-operation between Locking and Hutton in South LMG in providing a Holiday Club and visit to the Children's Festival in Wells. On the strength of the success of these two events, a Children's Workshop is being held in December, together with plans for a Quiet Day and residential weekend away.

GENERAL SYNOD REPORT

Mrs. Ann Clarke gave a lively report of the General Synod held in July at York University. A vote of 293 against and 1 for the proposals on **Assisted Suicide and Voluntary Euthanasia** after the British Medical Council had recently voted to be neutral on the issue would be conveyed to the Government. A review of **Children and Holy Communion** was debated, and it was agreed that this would be a valuable topic for debate at Deanery level in the light of experience since it was discussed some years ago. Regarding **the ordination of women to the Episcopacy**, it was agreed that the House of Bishops be asked to prepare a report setting out various options. The final debate concerned the **Anglican Methodist Covenant** where there were three major concerns to be addressed. Although progress towards unity was deemed by some to be slow, careful consideration had to be given to these issues before agreement is achieved. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave the final thoughts : **When we work WE work. When we pray GOD works.** We cannot be sure that our decisions are right, but we must try to seek justice for all. Mrs. Clarke was thanked for her animated report.

It was also reported that one of the Deaneries within this Diocese had broken the rules of publicity, therefore the elections for Lay members to the General Synod had been set aside and the process will begin again later in the year. This will mean that there will be no Lay Members from this Diocese at the next General Synod meeting.

DIOCESAN SYNOD REPORT

David Elliott from Bleadon gave a brief precis of the Diocesan Synod held on 29 June in Wells. In his Presidential Address, Bishop Peter spoke of a meeting of Church leaders with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to discuss trade justice, unrepayable debt, corruption and other topics prior to the G8 Conference. Details of the Resourcing Mission Group set up to renew and reinvigorate the Church's vision for mission and the missionary role of a bishop, also the Make Poverty History campaign's progress were reported. An update on the formation of Local Ministry Groups throughout the Diocese was given with short presentations from two Deaneries. Ecumenical reflections were given by Dom Richard Yeo, Abbot of Downside and Prebendary of Wells Cathedral. He reported that the new Pope, Benedict XVI had made an explicit call to unity. In his experience, Dom Richard felt that the future of ecumenism lay not in summit conferences, but at a local level. He stressed the value of ARCIC where people using different language to express their theological backgrounds could sit down and talk to one another. David announced encouraging news of finances with ninety-five per cent of parishes paying their share of the Common Fund in full. He also informed Synod that the Revd. Norman Wallwark would be speaking at the next Diocesan Synod.

CASUAL VACANCY TO DIOCESAN SYNOD

David Colbourne proposed and Cliff Dumbell seconded that Mrs. Jenny Humphries be elected to lay membership of the Diocesan Synod for the remainder of the term. This was unanimously agreed by the lay members present. (NB It is noted that Mrs. Humphries is not eligible to serve on the Diocesan Board of Finance.)

CHAT

The Revd. Gill Putnam reminded Synod that it was five and a half years ago when the vision for a Chaplain for Weston Town Centre was born. There is a temporary office

above Wesley Owen Book Shop, furnished by donations and a Lead Chaplain, the Revd. Andy Sewell, began work in September on a part-time basis. An information pack was distributed to all the parishes in the Deanery advertising CHAT Week starting on 6 November 2005. There is a web site available westonchat.org.uk telephone 01934 643533. Gill stressed that the Chaplain should not become involved in fund-raising. She introduced Synod to the Revd. Andy Sewell who confirmed his willingness to come to talk to PCCs or attend services to high-light the work and the need for volunteers and financial support from local churches. This is an ecumenical outreach to everyone working or shopping in Weston Town Centre.

YOUTH TOUR The Revd. Mike Slade reported that Tony Cook, the Diocesan Youth Adviser will be heading up the Tour of the Deanery scheduled for 16 November to 6 December 2005. Andy Williams at Christ Church is now unable to head this up from the Deanery end and someone is needed to spear-head this work in the Deanery. All the events and venues have been booked, but someone is urgently needed to ensure that each venue is ready and prepared for each event. Mike asked for a volunteer as a matter of urgency. It was stressed that these events are open to all ecumenical partners. A detailed list of events is available on Tony Cook's e mail at tony.cook@bathwells.anglican.org.

GRAVESTONE TESTING BY NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

Mike Slade explained that this had become a contentious issue throughout the Deanery. North Somerset Council has a duty to ensure that graveyards under their control are safe. They have produced a leaflet for each church to explain why they are having the work carried out. They had employed a professional firm to carry out work on their behalf. From his experience at St James's in Winscombe, Mike reported that the team carrying out the work had been sensitive to the people they met and took great care to record everything that they did, which included laying flat any stones that were considered to be unsafe. He stressed that priests must be sensitive to the pastoral concerns that may arise, and to discourage intrusion by the media. He would be pleased to address any specific problems that may arise throughout the Deanery.

Denys Cutmore questioned whether all churches in the Deanery should be applying the standards adopted by North Somerset Council for churches under its control. It was agreed that PCCs are liable for health and safety issues, and as such should be encouraged to examine their policy regarding the safety of open graveyards. It was also pointed out that it is an offence to move gravestones without the necessary authority.

THE ARCHDEACON OF BATH, THE VEN. ANDY PIGGOTT

John Rewse welcomed the Archdeacon of Bath to Deanery Synod who had previously been Secretary of the Church Pastoral Aid Society and had been in the Diocese for five months. He is involved in the Diocesan Strategy "Changing Lives – Changing Churches for Changing Communities" which extends throughout the Diocese, together with his role as Archdeacon of Bath which embraces five Deaneries with many varied parishes.

The Ven. Piggott reported that he had received a warm welcome and his first impressions of the Diocese had been good. He then asked people to move around so that they were sitting away from anyone else in their own parish. He then asked people to discuss with their immediate neighbours the question: "What is the best thing that has happened in your church in the past year or two?" Then "Why was it the best thing?" and "What caused it to be a good thing?". After very encouraging feedback, it was agreed that our spirits are lifted when we hear good news about how God is stimulating new directions both within the Church and outreach into the community. There is often mystery about the original vision, but with good communication, hard work and collaboration new initiatives are proving successful. We have three responsibilities as

Christians, firstly to worship God, secondly to join in the fellowship of the church and thirdly to serve God in his world. We are all called to love God and love our neighbour. The Archdeacon then referred to scripture by reading Phillipians 4 v 4-9 as a blue-print to living Christianly in the world. He urged members to reject the morass of gossip and standards of the world, and use Jesus as the template and source of guidance for the future direction of the life of his church in the parishes.

The Rural Dean thanked the Archdeacon for his message of encouragement, and asked members to remember in prayer those people involved in their group, and also for the Archdeacon and his ministry in the Diocese.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with prayer.

DATE OF SYNODS FOR 2006

Tuesday 21 February 2006 – St John the Baptist, Weston-super-Mare

Wednesday 21 June 2006 – St Nicholas Church, Uphill

Thursday 12 October 2006 – St Augustine's Church, Locking

All meetings commence at 7.30pm with refreshments served from 7.00pm

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