

STROUD DEANERY SYNOD
Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 3rd June 2015, 7.30pm
at St Laurence Church, Stroud

1. **Welcome:** The Lay Chair, Margaret Sheather, warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly newly elected Deanery Synod representatives: Debbie Bird - Bussage, Sally Van Eeghan- from Moreton Valence, David Swinson – Sheepscombe, Valerie Heard – France Lynch, Val Flack – Randwick, Sarah Rogaly – Minchinhampton & James Tawse – Uplands with Slad.
2. **Present/Apologies:** There were 44 Synod members present, as per the Register, with apologies received from: Mrs Sandra Tucker, Mrs Hazel Stacey, Mr Jonathan Price, Mrs Linda Jarvis, Mr Harold Lay, Mr John Swann, Mrs Audrey Ricks, Miss Iris Trask, Mrs Carolyn Heighway, Mrs Wendy Hanvey, Revd John Hunnisett, Revd Stephen Jarvis, Revd Malcolm King, Revd Brian Ludlow. Revd Mick Wright.
3. **Prayer** – The meeting began with prayer led by Revd Mike Holloway, Assistant Area Dean.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting** held on Wednesday 11th February at Lakefield School were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising, not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

- **Hardwicke & Elmore with Longney** – The requested move to the Gloucester City Deanery has now been accepted and will come into effect from 1st June 2015. (*We have only been advised this week*)
5. **Journeying Together** – We are in the process of working on the Action Plan document and had intended to spend some time at the last Deanery Synod meeting discussing it in greater details but the finance discussions rather took over. It will be looked at again this evening to try to discern how we can act on it make best use of our resources.

6. Speaker: Revd Simon Howell, Pioneer Minister in the Stroud Team

Simon gave us a brief history of his path to becoming Vicar of Holy Trinity, Stroud, and half time Pioneer Minister within the new Stroud Team, and the exciting times ahead and his thoughts on how to effectively engage with the very spiritual and culturally diverse people of Stroud. Following on the work of Josh Maynard, Messy Church and Activate have now developed into Wide Open Space, offering lots of creative activities/art/music/faith workshops which are being very well received. Simon has a strong interest in sacred music and a first for Stroud will be a Sacred Music Festival to be held on 4th July, starting at the Sub Rooms with workshops and children's singing in the afternoon, culminating in a concert in St Laurence Church in the evening. There will be lots of visiting inter-faith bands, including the Bristol Renewal Gospel Choir and Stroud's own multi-faith world-fusion devotional dance band the Raga Babas, which Simon is a member of.

Our challenge is to open our ears and listen to what is going on around us, and try to re-imagine church in the wider community to reach out and connect to people where they are.

There followed a time for questions, which included the following comments:

- It is very refreshing to hear that we need to step out of our comfort zone and meet people in the street where they are, and re-think our ideas of 'church' in a more open-minded way.
- Stroud has a wide and very diverse community – a lot of the misunderstanding between the religious groups is because of the press, most people want to live in peace and see a better world.

Margaret thanked Simon for his very interesting insight and invited members to break into small groups to discuss items 5 & 6. The MAP and the briefing notes were circulated following the Standing Committee discussions to help prompt your thoughts and help us to make the plan a living document. Particular points that came out of the group discussions:

- We need to serve people where they are, and be radical in our thinking. What works here in Stroud might not fit in everywhere.
- Is the church the voice of the people today, and how can it be as effective as it once was? Are we 'scratching people's itch'? Lots of scope for engagement and learning.

- We are not very good at asking people to come to church. The onus is on us to ask people ‘would you like to come’, not just at Christmas and Easter – establish a habit of asking with a simple message.
- How spiritual is evangelism? Explain what it means to be an evangelist.
- Celebrate the gifts of the laity - create opportunities for training and to grow their gifts.
- Stewardship – Only 40% of churches are part of the Parish Giving Scheme.
- Work in partnership with other organisations, not necessarily church ones.
- We can get bogged down in ‘church speak’. Is the church the building or the people? We must not be afraid to close churches.
- A lot of people find it difficult to tell others that they are a Christian. ‘Bring a Friend Sunday’ – people were not keen, but it is a simple starting place for an invitation.
- Re-ordering churches/use the church as community/discover what attracts the community.
- Growth in Cathedral worship shows opportunity exists.
- Be clear ‘what is the point’ of why we are making changes, what do we want to achieve.

If you think of anything else you would like the Standing Committee to consider, do please drop an email to Sally at the Deanery Office.

7. 7.1 Reports – Parish Share Scheme 2016 update

Margaret confirmed that, following our last meeting, and in response to comments received from Deaneries, the original figures were updated, particularly regarding clergy numbers. Two further sets of amendments have been received from Ben Preece Smith and duly circulated. We are still uncertain of the shape of the whole package – A week on Saturday there will be further discussion on the proposal at the next Diocesan Synod meeting. The concern is that if it is not circulated again there will not be a further opportunity for PCC to discuss it. Are there any particular messages that our Diocesan Synod members should raise at the coming meeting? We need clarity, to enable understanding so that people will come on board with the proposal.

7.2. Deanery Office Funding 2015

Please make sure that your parish has paid its share of the Deanery Office expenses for 2015, at the rate of 1.2% of Pledged Parish Share for this year.

Deanery Treasurer and Parish Share Officer – No one has come forward. The role of the Parish Share Officer is particularly important and anyone who might come forward would be well supported and given help to understand what is involved.

8. Remaining Dates for 2015

Please put the dates in your diaries – if you have any suggestions for topics or speakers that you would like considered, do please let us know.

Standing/Pastoral Committee 10am-12 noon all at The Vicarage, Stroud	Deanery Synod all at 7.30 pm Venues TBC	Speaker/Topic
Tuesday 15 th September	Wednesday 14th October Cainscross Church Hall	Sharing Faith & Values Mr Duncan Munroe - The new Diocesan Development Fund

9. Chair's Announcements

Diocesan Synod Elections

Following the recent election process, Margaret was very pleased to announce that we have filled our full complement of nominations for lay representatives on Diocesan Synod, as follows:

Margaret Sheather, Graham Collins, Jenny Tann, Michael Campbell, Corinne Aldis, Elaine Venning, Ian Marsh, Toni Lambert & Mike Lambert. (9/9)

Clergy representatives: Malcolm King, Charles Minchin, Rosie Woodall, Mike Smith, Helen Bailey, Peter Francis & Mike Holloway (7/8)

The First meeting of the new Diocesan Synod will be on the 3rd October 2015.

10. AOB

- A Warm welcome to Peter Quinnell, the new Vicar of Cainscross.
- Thanks to Mike and Toni Lambert for their generous hospitality this evening.

There being no other business the meeting closed with a prayer chant led by Revd Simon Howell.