

STROUD DEANERY SYNOD
Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 11th February 2015, 7.30pm
at Lakefield School, Frampton-on-Severn

1. **Welcome:** The Area Dean, Malcolm King, warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly our guest speakers, Mrs Julie Ridgway, Head of Finance at the DBT and Canon David Smith, a member of the Diocesan Finance Committee
2. **Present/Apologies:** There were 44 Synod members present, as per the Register, with apologies received from: Revd Rosie Woodall, Mr Duncan Webster, Mrs Mary Tyler, Mrs Janet Ryan, Mrs Penny Sumsion, Dr Simon Barker, Mrs Dorothy Stone, Mr John Cleever, Mr Mike Campbell, Mrs Clare Edwards, Mrs Isabel Stanley, Mr David Groom, Dr Gordon Horner, Mrs Audrey Ricks, Mrs Pat Aldridge, Mrs Heather Fletcher.
3. **Prayer** – The meeting began with prayer led by Revd Anne Spargo.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting** held on Thursday 16th October at Cainscross Church Hall were accepted as a true and accurate record.
Matters arising, not covered elsewhere on the Agenda – there were none.
5. **Speakers: Mrs Julie Ridgway, Head of Finance, Gloucester DBT and Canon David Smith, a member of the Diocesan Finance Committee** – The current Parish Share model is coming to the end of a 5 year cycle, coming up for review at the end of 2015. The DBF team is visiting all 9 Deaneries in the Diocese over the coming months so that there is full consultation over the proposed review, which will come into effect from 2016, and to receive any feedback as a result of this evening's presentation. The main focus is to outline why we have Parish Share, the principles behind it, how it is made up and its purpose. A Diocesan Parish Share group have been looking in greater detail at the current model, focusing on its strengths and weaknesses and at how we might improve the current mechanism. (*Nationally, our diocese is now seen at the poorest as Parish Share givers – with an increase of only 3% between 2005 and 2012. £300 per member in 2009, compared to £309 in 2012.*)

Julie then gave a detailed presentation, with accompanying OHP slides, (copies circulated following the meeting), highlighting the proposed changes, which include:

(All allocations to each Deanery will remain the same)

- Stipends Fund would be more mission focuses – where there is a general need/need for growth
- Parochial Fees would be off-set against Benefice Parish Share allocations
- Half the clergy cost is 'your vicar' and half is 'everyone's' vicar.
- Shares services to consider – churches/schools & parishes

Some questions to consider:

- Are the proposals appropriate?
- If not, what should change?
- How do we best use the Stipends Fund
- How do we still enable graciousness?
- How do we moderate change? (*No Benefice allocation will change by more than inflation +/- 5%*)

There followed a time for group discussions, with some initial responses as follows:

- 12.1m PCC income – how is this income actually broken down?
Information is available for the past 3 years.
- This appears to be just 'moving money' and smaller parishes will be affected the most. It shows our outreach is not working, and the Diocese should be asking where they can focus resources to make the most difference.
- What is the criteria for allocation of the Stipend Fund?
A separate working group is looking at this and will be reporting back to the Bishops Council later this year. Significant sums are involved.
- Transition – 5 years

- Are you taking into account the number of people in each parish?
Yes, figures are based on the Electoral Roll.
- Where do non-stipendiary's fit in?
Self-supporting Ministers and House for Duty priests are included in the spreadsheet information that will be circulated following the meeting.

Timeline for the process:

- Deanery responses by: 17 April
- Finance Committee: 13 May
- Bishop's Council: 27 May
- Diocesan Synod: 13 June

Julie closed by confirming that 'nothing is set' – we have to address the deficit and all feedback is welcomed.

Any further responses please to Sally at the Deanery Office, as we are being asked to make a Deanery response to the DBF on the proposals.

The Area Dean thanked Julie and David for taking the time to come and speak to us.

Detailed spreadsheet, a copy of the presentation slides and accompanying notes will be circulated by Sally within the next few days to Synod members & PCC Secretaries.

Slight re-arrangement of the Agenda items

7. Reports

7.1 Diocesan Synod on 7th February 2015– Please see the attached Report from
Canon Margaret Sheather

7.2 Parish Share 2015 - John Dickinson, Deanery Treasurer, circulated detailed notes on the Parish Pledges for 2015 and the Deanery Office Accounts 2014 & Funding request for 2015. (Please see the attached papers).

This is the last year in the 5 year cycle, when we were hoping to be in a position to breakeven. If parishes had managed to pay what was asked, combined with the move of the Hardwick benefice to Gloucester, we would just about have been at breakeven; unfortunately this is not the case. Many parishes have increased their giving as requested, and thank you to all who did, it was most welcome, but we have about four cases where Benefices have had to make significant steps back from last year, so mutual support has reduced dramatically. Results: we were giving around £710k last year; we are looking at £670k this year, which will give us a deficit of over £100k, against our cost of missions as we currently calculate it; the equivalent of 2 full time stipendiary priests.

The Standing Committee will now look again at our future mission requirements across the Deanery, moving forward from the lessons learned, with faith, hope and charity to find a solution.

7.3 Deanery Office Funding 2015 – JD reported that Sally and the office are now settled in Stroud and continue to provide vital support to the work of the Area Dean, funded by contributions from the parishes, and thank you all again for your continued support. We asked you for more last year and you generously gave it. Following suggestions made this time last year, PCC's were consulted on a different way of funding the office, proportionately in line with what parishes give in Parish Share, as a fairer test of their ability to pay. A small number of responses were received, with the majority in favour of this proposal and none actively against. Accordingly, John proposed that for 2015, each parish should be asked to contribute for the upkeep of the Deanery Office a sum equal to 1.2% of the parish share it has pledged. This proposal was seconded by Revd Richard Amys. The proposal was carried by a majority vote, with none again, and one abstention.

A short time for questions followed

The Area Dean highlighted the fact that the Diocese sees Sally and our Deanery Office very much as a role model for others to follow. As the cost cuts at Church House continue to lead to

more and more work cascading down to deanery level, the role is becoming an increasingly vital resource to helping to balance the workload of the Area Dean.

6. **Journeying Together – Deanery Mission Action Plan**

Canon Margaret Sheather reported that, following a recent meeting of the Standing Committee, the circulated document is a plan of our vision for the Deanery, identifying things we might celebrate, and things that we need to work on to achieve our targets.

A brief discussion followed on the plan and accompanying briefing notes.

If you have any suggestions on how we might bring our plan to life, please send your thoughts to Sally at the Deanery Office as soon as possible.

8. **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 12 th May	Wednesday 3rd June St Laurence Church, Stroud	Pioneer Ministry in the Stroud Team Revd Simon Howell
Tuesday 15 th September	Wednesday 14th October Cainscross Church Hall	TBC

9. **Chair's Announcements**

- **Diocesan Synod Elections** are due this year – Information will be coming out from the Deanery Office in due course. Think about whether you would be interested in becoming a member of Diocesan Synod yourself, or is there someone you would like to nominate? Elections for General Synod will take place later this year – members on Diocesan Synod will be the electorate. Please try and make sure at your APCM's that your Deanery Synod places are filled to ensure that lay members have an opportunity to play a full part in the process. A leaflet is available on the Diocesan Website explaining the role in more details.
- Carbon Fasting for lent – leaflets were available at the meeting
- Welcome to Jonathan Clark, Curate with the Stroud Team, to his first DS Meeting. Also, to Mike Smith at his first DS meeting as the 'Vicar' of Nailsworth. Mike has also agreed to become Assistant Area Dean, and his previous experience in this role and also with pastoral re-organisation will be a great help as we move forward in these challenging times.
- Revd Richard Amys has announced his retirement as from the 31st May. Richard leaves with our very best wishes and every blessing, and with our sincere thanks for all his work for the Cotswold Edge Parishes over many years.
- John Dickinson is now standing down as the Parish Share Officer after 5 years, and has managed during that time to make one of the toughest jobs seem almost easy, with his lightness of touch, tact and understanding. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to John for all his work on behalf of the Deanery.
Accordingly, we are now looking for someone to take on the role of Parish Share Office for the Deanery – Please speak to us if you know of anyone who might be willing to take on this role. It is more about communication skills rather than the accounting process. Please give it some thought.

The Area Dean thanked Frampton on behalf of everyone for their kind hospitality.

10. **AOB** - There was none.

11. **Closing Prayer** There being no other business, the meeting closed with The Grace.