

1. **Welcome:** The Lay Chair, Margaret Sheather, warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly new members Revd Pat Freeth who has now taken up the third PTO space, and Mrs Jane Williams from Eastington, and our speaker Canon Ben Preece-Smith, Diocesan Secretary. A big thank you to St Laurence for their warm welcome and for providing refreshments.
2. **Present/Apologies:** There were 45 Synod members present, as per the Register, with apologies received from: Revd Malcolm King, Revd Helen Bailey, Revd Mike Holloway, Revd Simon Howell, Revd John Hunnisett, Revd Stephen Jarvis, Revd Mathew Page, Revd Brian Woollaston, Mrs Theresa Yates-Round, Mrs Mary Tyler, Mr Jonathan Price, Mr Steve Harrison,
3. **Prayer** – The meeting began with prayer led by Revd Peter Quinnell
4. **Minutes of the last meeting** held on Wednesday 17th February 2016 at Lakefield School, Frampton were accepted as a true & accurate record.

Matters arising – not already covered elsewhere on the Agenda – there were none.

5. **Speaker: Canon Benjamin Preece-Smith – Diocesan Secretary - Knowing your Deanery**

An interactive presentation looking objectively in greater detail at the specific make-up of our individual communities, to help give us a clearer overview of those around us. Members were split in to individual Benefices groups, with detailed sheets to complete, broken down into specific categories within their communities. (18 difference categories in total to choose from)

Ben then handed around answer sheets to each group, detailing the actual figures for each particular category, with the aim to reflect on the differences between the two and focus on the possible mission and outreach opportunities that might re-shape your Benefice.

(Figures used were worked from the 2015 Census, Experian Data/maps/software, adjusted to Benefice boundaries). The Diocese have detailed statistical information for each parish, available on request. Electronic copies of the hand-outs worked on and links for the information will be sent to Sally asap to go out with the meeting Minutes).

Following the group discussions, the following observations were made:

Minchinhampton – The figures were slightly out as it appeared that Amberley had been missed off.

The general feeling is that we have a lot of ‘active elderly’ when in fact this is not the case and there are actually more ‘successful professionals’. The 30-40 age group need to be looked at – what are we going to offer them and how can we offer a different type of approach to ‘fresh expressions of church’?

The Beacon Benefice – Surprised that we are actually classed as more ‘rural’ than we expected to be and we thought we had more ‘active elderly’. Also, that we were given so few ‘young families’ with 3 schools in the area, with a lot more coming in. How you classify the different groups makes a difference and your mission approach to actively engage with a particular group. The importance of social media, particularly with professionals/young groups (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc). To what extent is the Diocese working to link with these areas? *Ben confirmed they are currently working to appoint a Media Officer.*

Bisley Benefice – Underestimated the number of ‘successful professionals’ and accept that we do not engage with them particularly well. Importance of relating to the population where they are at, including engaging with the lay, rather than just one person.

Stroud Team – Very diverse population demographic, with a high percentage of low income families/couples/singles living in modern housing/tenanted housing.

Brimcombe & Woodchester – Thought we had more people living in poverty, when in general we have more ‘successful professionals’, so rather unaware of the wealth within our communities. Mission – there is an area between our two parishes where people feel they have no particular identity to either church.

Nailsworth – Definitely classed as more rural than they imagined, with perhaps a particular range that do not fit in.

Severnside – The age profile shows us that there is a range that we are just not seeing 15-45’s. Wide social mix, with the backbone of the church congregation who like traditional worship. These tend not to be the wealthiest, but who work very hard to raise money for the church. Question over whether we have ‘two small town local routes’ within the Benefice, which really comes down to interpretation of the categories.

The Stanleys & Selsley – Feel that the age profile over-estimated the ‘golden oldies’ over 75. There is definitely a gap in the age range 30-44 that we do not see in church. It was felt trying to determine 15 categories in 20 minutes was almost impossible. Feel that they have more couples with young children than shown in the figures, also more families in rented accommodation. Have added a sticker for ‘old people in care homes’ not catered for.

Stonehouse – Were not surprised by the figures in general, although feel that there are more ‘active elderly’ and ‘elderly’ than shown. Of the 30-60’s in the parish, only a very small proportion come to church.

The Lay Chair thanked Ben for coming along to talk to us and also to everyone for engaging in this Deanery exercise. Resource tools are available through the Diocese to help find out more, to enable you to focus on particular areas. We will try to include Websites and links with the minutes from this meeting.

6. Journeying Together – Linked to our discussions and the Journeying Together initiative is our Deanery Action Plan. In view of +R’s ongoing review and discussions around the Diocese our Plan will be put on hold for the time being. The results of the conversations around our churches and communities and hopes for the future will help launch a new vision of God’s plan in this Diocese. Please keep an eye on the Diocesan website as the process unfolds. The outcomes will give us an opportunity to re-shape and update our own DAP. (*Goodie bags were available from the Prayer Day in the Cathedral*).

7. Pastoral Re-Organisation – The Area Dean reported that the coming together of Brimscombe & Woodchester with Rodborough is moving apace. Formal approval has been given for a House for Duty post, the Parish Profile has been completed, with interviews for the post set to take place in August.

West of Stroud Deanery Review

The draft proposal has been out for consultation in the parishes and to Bishops Council, who gave it their broad support, and is now with the Church Commissioners. Some objections have been made. The Archdeacon is planning to meet with those parishes within the next few days and address their concerns, before final submission to the Church Commissioners for them to draw up a firm scheme. This is going to add slightly to the timescale, with the aim still to have a Team Rector in post by early autumn.

David Groom, Selsley – Disappointment expressed that, following the original meeting of Churchwardens with the Archdeacon, and submission of their comments three weeks before the closing date for comments, they have heard nothing. Only hearing this evening that the Archdeacon is planning to meet them again to address their concerns. Also that the words ‘met with broad approval’ are rather misleading, when at the original meeting of Churchwardens, Selsley & The Stanleys actually represented 40% of those being consulted. Mike Smith confirmed that the Archdeacon had only emailed a few days before and, not wanting to be dismissive in any way to the views expressed, we can only report on what we know.

8. Reports

8.1 Parish Share – The Lay Chair confirmed that, following an update from the Finance Department within the last few days, giving figures for our Deanery up until the end of May are on track and in line with expectations for the time of year. A number of parishes pay quarterly so at the end of June we will have a clearer picture of the half-way position. A big thank-you for all your efforts going into achieving this.

Randwick – Mrs Val Flack wanted to voice their concerns about the new Parish Share system and the transparency of the whole process. In the Stroud Team, St Laurence are paying significantly less than the other parishes in relation to their size, and have been treated as a ‘special case’ – who decided this and who is picking up the deficit. It was confirmed that the Diocese allocated the figures and left it up to individual Benefices as to how they shared the cost. Ben is not aware of any special arrangement for St Laurence in Stroud, and confirmed that any short-fall is spread across the whole Diocese as ‘shared responsibility’. The importance of clear, concise and transparent communication from the Diocese is essential if everyone is to get behind the new system.

8.2 Deanery Office Funding – Hand-out circulated with the Agenda by Mike Lambert, Interim Deanery Treasurer detailing the current financial position. The Lay Chair thanked all parishes for their continued support of funding the running costs of the Deanery Office for this year, all but 3 have now made their contributions. The office continues to play a vital part in the smooth running of the Deanery and provides essential admin support for the Standing Committee and Area Dean. There will be an opportunity for fuller

discussions at the October Synod meeting, when we will have a clear financial position for the year and projected budgets for 2017.

10. **Remaining Meeting Dates for 2016**

Standing/Pastoral Committee 10am-12 noon all at The Vicarage, Stroud	Deanery Synod all at 7.30 pm	Speaker/Topic
September 20th	October 5 th Cainscross Church Hall	Canon Andrew Braddock Journeying Together – the next steps

Meeting dates for 2017 will be confirmed at the October Synod meeting.

11. **Chair's Announcements**

- **Safeguarding Officers** noted
- **Deanery Website** – If there is anything else you would like to see on the site please let Sally know.
- **100th Anniversary Celebration** at St Albans, Stroud – 18th & 19th June
- **Street Pastors** – Update circulated on seats from Revd Mathew Page (*copy attached*)
- **The Goddard Enquiry** – *Enquiry into historical sex abuse of children*. An audit across the whole Diocese will be starting shortly so please ensure everything is up to date with your Safeguarding protocols.
- **European Referendum** – Information from a Christian prospective was available for those who wanted it.

12. **Closing Prayer**

There being no other business, the meeting closed with prayer led by the Area Dean, based around the words of the Lord's Prayer.