

RICKMANSWORTH DEANERY SYNOD: *'We are the body of Christ'*

SYNOD OFFICERS

Rural Dean:	Revd Canon Gavin Collins, Christ Church Vicarage, The Common, Chorleywood WD3 5SG	01923 282149
Lay Chair:	Duncan Kerr, Lavender Lodge, Nightingales Lane, Chalfont St Giles HP8 4SR	01494 763481
Treasurer:	Sally Morgan, Stockers House, Stockers Farm Rd, Rickmansworth WD3 1NZ	01923 773922
Secretary:	Alex Twells, 12 Greenbury Close, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth WD3 5QT	01923 448167

Minutes of the synod in All Saints Church, Croxley Green at 8.00pm on Thursday 10th February 2011

Members of the House of Clergy (11 current members, plus 4 vacancies)

Present (9): Gavin Collins (Rural Dean), Rachel Jenkinson, David White, Jim Stevens, Deborah Snowball, Miriam Mugaan, Mary Kingsley, Robert Riley-Brale, Charles Parry.

Members of the House of Laity (35 current members, plus two vacancies)

Present (20): Duncan Kerr (Lay Chair), Allan Brown, Norman Pearce, John Stickland, Audrey Timberlake, John Galloway, Jo Squire, Jean Scott, Anne Baron, Terence Russoff, Bill Seddon, Nick Vale, Sue Hillier, John Rhodes, Ann Badhams, Julie Shepherd, Alan Wills, John Parsons, Alistair Harper, Alex Twells (Secretary).

Apologies (12): Pauline Brown, David Nobbs, Phil Waine, John Guy, Stephen Lawrence, David Williams, Michael Hart, Margaret Roberts, David Halden, Simon Allard, Sally Morgan (Treasurer), David Cansdale,

Others

Present (24): Mark Wilson (Bovingdon), John King, Judith Olney (both Chipperfield), Ann Dorrett (Sarratt), Ian Brocklesby, Geoff Marshall-Taylor, Sheila Marshall-Taylor, Ronel Odendaal (all Christ Church), Fran Bennett, Diane Galloway, Anne Oke, Sally Parry, Jean Walford (all All Saints), Tony Barton, Stephanie Lake, Jean Pope (all St Oswald's), Janet Anders, Nick Hughes, (both St Andrew's), Jim Pummell, John & Ann Shaw (all Rickmansworth) Paul Palmer (Mill End), Anne Lovegrove (Chenies & Lt Chalfont), Fr John Spinks (Harefield).

Apologies (1): Tim Fowkes (St Andrew's)

Item 1 Welcome, apologies, and opening prayers

Gavin greeted everyone, thanked All Saints for the warm welcome and light refreshments, and for setting up the church. He opened with a prayer from *Living God's Love*.

Item 2. Minutes of the Synod on 21st October (distributed on 28th October) - approved and signed as a true record.

Item 3. Matters arising from the minutes

a. Deanery Review (Item 5c).

Gavin would soon attend a Rural Deans' meeting with the Archdeacon, which he hoped would help reconcile the format and content of the Review with the requirements of Mission Action Planning.

b. Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Historic Churches Trust (Item 5d).

Louise Heasman of St Mary's Rickmansworth is the new Area member for the Rickmansworth Deanery area.

Item 4 [taken after Item 7]. **General Synod 7th-9th February – Report by Bill Seddon (St Andrew's)**

Bill's main points were that General Synod had impressed him as being a worshipping community; he had asked two questions in a debate on ethical investment policy; ecumenism was high on the agenda for the next five years; and there was a pressing need to encourage more young people to stand for election to PCCs.

Item 5. Any other urgent business - none.

Item 6. Date of next synod.

This would be on Monday 13th June, venue to be announced, the first of the Deanery's 15th triennium (2011-2014). Gavin hoped that a goodly number of current representatives would stand for re-election at churches' APCMs.

Item 7. The Consecration of Women to the Episcopate

a. Gavin introduced the item, stating that it was the diocesan synod that would take a formal vote to reflect the view in the diocese, at its meeting on 15th October. Deaneries were to 'consider' the motion to be put on that date ie

'That this Synod approves the proposals embodied in the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and in draft Amending Canon No 30'

b. The Revd Deborah Snowball then presented an overview, dividing her talk into four parts.

(1) How to look at the issue – it has been debated in three equally important ways, through:

- A. Scripture. (i) Status and behaviour in church (1Cor 14:34-35; 1Tim 2:11-15);
(ii) Under male authority and headship (Eph 5:22-33);
(iii) Equality in society and in Christ (Gen 1:27; Gal 3:27-28).
- B. Tradition. (i) Jesus chose twelve men, therefore only men can be priests (no longer relevant);
(ii) Women should 'know their place'.
- C. Reason. (i) Sexual equality (this is God's view, not one based on secular rights);
(ii) What about the Unity of the Church? (different denominations have different views);
(iii) What about Sacramental Assurance? (whether ministry of women invalidates sacraments).

(2) Where have we been?

A. The first women deacons were ordained in 1987 and the first women priests in 1994.

B. Arrangements explored but rejected by General Synod include:

- (i) a separate province for objectors;
- (ii) a separate diocese for objectors;
- (iii) a separate society for objectors;
- (iv) a two-tiered episcopacy with differing areas of authority;
- (v) a single-clause measure stating simply that bishops may be female.

(3) Where are we now?

A. Church of England has 3,000 women priests; 47% of ordinands are women.

B. Anglican Communion has 25 provinces (out of 38) with women priests, while 15 have approved having women bishops; no province has set up legal provision for objectors.

C. An ordinariate has been created in the Roman Catholic Church to accommodate Anglican objectors.

(4) Where are we going?

A. The Manchester Report (2008) asked how might we appoint women bishops in a way that:

- (i) maintains the traditional understanding and role of bishops;
- (ii) leaves space for those who cannot accept women as priests or bishops;
- (iii) avoids discrimination or half-heartedness by the Church towards women priests and bishops?

B. Draft legislation: General Synod has asked Diocesan bishops to draw up a scheme embracing a national statutory Code of Practice and seeking exemptions from the Equality Act 2010.

C. Process: The scheme is currently being examined by dioceses. The final scheme is then considered by General Synod and, if passed, by Parliament for implementation in 2014.

Deborah, who was thanked warmly for her presentation, referred to two websites which she had used:

<http://www.womenandthechurch.org/resources> <http://www.cpas.org.uk/download/1361>

c. Synod then considered, in small groups, the following:

- (1) How important is scripture in this debate?
- (2) What are its interpretations?
- (3) What should happen to parishes that refuse ministry by women?
- (4) What should happen to those that do yet their bishop does not?
- (5) How important is sacramental assurance?
- (6) Is all this just 'women's lib' gone mad?

Some questions from the floor, mainly of a factual nature, were taken, and Alex had received a written input fearing that a particular woman might be appointed bishop for political reasons ie solely because they are women and not necessarily the most able.

On a show of hands, 46 (87%) were in favour of the motion, one was against, and six abstained.

Gavin closed the synod at 9.40pm with another prayer from *Living God's Love*, followed by the Grace.

Distribution: All synod members, others present, The Ven Jonathan Smith, Jim May, Chris Davey (Diocese link), Margaret Millar (Methodist link), churchwardens of parishes without clergy.