

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

## SYNOD OFFICERS

<b>Rural Dean:</b>	The Revd Deborah Snowball, The Vicarage, Bury Lane, Rickmansworth WD3 1ED	01923 772627
<b>Lay Chairman:</b>	Duncan Kerr, Lavender Lodge, Nightingales Lane, Chalfont St Giles HP8 4SR	01494 763481
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Sally Morgan, Stockers House, Stockers Farm Rd, Rickmansworth WD3 1NZ	01923 773922
<b>Secretary:</b>	Alex Twells, 12 Greenbury Close, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth WD3 5QT	01923 448167

## Minutes of the Synod in St Oswald's Church, Croxley Green at 8pm, Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012

### Members of the House of Clergy (13 current members)

Present (6): Deborah Snowball (Rural Dean), Rachel Jenkinson, Charles Burch, Robert Riley-Brale, Simon Cutmore, Charles Parry.

Apologies (4): David Hall, David White, Andy Reid, Miriam Mugan. Others absent: (3)

### Members of the House of Laity (35 current members)

Present (19): Allan Brown, Pauline Brown, Caroline Wainman, David Nobbs, Audrey Timberlake, Jo Squire, Rupert Barnes, Tony Barton, Janet Anders, Gilda Conrich, Beryl Baker, Jim Pummell, John Rhodes, Ann Badhams, John Marsh, Julie Shepherd, Alan Wills, Bill Seddon, Alex Twells (Secretary).

Apologies (13): Duncan Kerr (Lay Chairman), Sally Morgan (Treasurer), Phil Waine, Linda Clough, John Guy, Stephen Lawrence, John Galloway, David Williams, Ruth Barr, Terence Russoff, Suzanne Powell, David Cansdale, John Parsons. Others absent: (3)

### Observers

Present (1): Peter Bailey (local farmer)

Apologies (1): Revd Linda Woollacott (Methodist link)

## 1. Act of Worship, led by Deborah

After the song *As we are gathered*, three members read Psalm 104:1-24. Then followed a time of quiet reflection and prayer, the song *Brother, sister, let me serve you*, and finally a blessing.

## 2. Welcome and apologies

Deborah welcomed everyone, thanked the team from St Oswald's for the light refreshments, and read out the names of those who had submitted apologies in advance. She welcomed the Revd Coralie McCluskey, Vicar of Eaton Bray with Edlesborough, near Dunstable, in her role as Agricultural Chaplain of Hertfordshire, which includes being co-ordinator of Farm Crisis Network for Hertfordshire.

## 3. Presentation by the Revd Coralie McCluskey

Coralie, a self-professed expert at leading/preaching Lammas Day, Harvest Thanksgiving, Beat the Bounds, etc, first described the unusual nature of her work – for a vicar, that is. A frequent traveller over miles of open countryside, often on uneven and muddy ground, she displayed some of her essential items such as wellingtons, raincoat, torch, literature, Bible and cross, that she carried around in her major role of FCN Co-ordinator.

Throughout the year she visits people who live in rural communities, especially numerous farms, festivals, markets, etc, in fact anywhere to meet farming people, who often live lonely lives, cut off from the urban areas that attract most attention in today's society.

Farm Crisis Network, which covers England and Wales, aims at helping farming people through difficult times. It grew out of a critical period for farming (foot and mouth disease, debt, financial problems due to EU policy). Christians got together to form FCN and found volunteer workers with the necessary specific knowledge and skills. Coralie believes that there is a great social division between town and country, even though almost every parish in Hertfordshire contains or abuts farming land.

In particular, she stressed the higher-than-average extent of mental health problems in rural communities, not least among farming people, including contractors, whose working lives tend to be very lonely. Alcoholism is quite high, while suicide is not unknown. Wives also suffer, feeling ashamed and unable to cope. Even form-filling is at times an intolerable burden. The most suffering is experienced by tenant farmers, she said.

Coralie ended by outlining actions that might be taken to help British farmers and farming: eg eat British, shop locally, press supermarkets to ease their stranglehold on fruit growers and other suppliers, change shopping habits, campaign, write to MPs, read *Country Way* magazine, and speak to congregations.

The interest in the subject that Alice generated was apparent from the dozen or so questions asked. Finally, Deborah thanked her for her presentation.

A retirement collection for FCN was taken.

## 4. Minutes of the Deanery Synod on 21<sup>st</sup> June

After replacing 'Allan Brown' with 'Charles Burch' in Item 7, these were accepted and signed as a true record.

## 5. Matters Arising

### a. (Item 5a) Diocesan Synod Elections and the Diocesan Board of Finance representative

Deborah, Presiding Officer for elections to the House of Laity, announced that, after an election to fill the remaining vacancy, John Parsons had been chosen. Synod endorsed his election. She also announced that, as John was the only candidate to stand to fill the Rickmansworth seat on the DBF he was, therefore, elected.

b. (Item 7) Mission Action Planning. Deborah announced that three parishes (All Saints, Rickmansworth, and Mill End) had placed full MAPs on the diocese website, and two (Chipperfield and Christ Church) had placed limited MAPs, leaving four (St Oswald's, Bovingdon and Sarratt, St Andrew's) still to submit. Short progress reports may be requested at a future synod.

c. (Item 8) Autumn Pilgrimage to St Albans Abbey. Deborah thanked all those who had supported this event. She also thanked Alex for organising it. He said that 48 people had booked – a very encouraging response - although four had been unable to get there. Janet gave a brief summary of the evening from the meal together to the closing service of Night Prayer, expressing how everyone to whom she spoke had enjoyed the evening. Something similar may be considered for next year.

d. (Item 9d) Deanery Quiz Evening. This will be on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 7.30pm in St Oswald's, Croxley Green. Deborah thanked St Oswald's for offering to be the host church. On behalf of the working group, Audrey Timberlake said that it was hoped that all nine parishes would each field a team (of eight), and announced that most of the quiz questions had been prepared. She asked synod whether fish and chips would be acceptable as the interval meal, and this was approved. People would be required to bring their own drinks and glasses. Full details of the Evening would be sent out within the next few weeks. Volunteers would be needed for setting up during the afternoon of 2<sup>nd</sup> February, please.

## 6. Report of the July General Synod by Bill Seddon (distributed 28 August)

There were no questions and Bill spoke about current issues leading to the General Synod on 19-21 November. This will discuss the final stages of women bishops' legislation, the Anglican Communion, the Living Wage and youth unemployment.

## 7. Any other business

a. Ministry of Welcome. All parishes are strongly encouraged to respond to this diocesan initiative, initially by arranging the one-day training course (DVD and booklets available from Church House Publishing). Mill End and Rickmansworth have already staged a training day. Alex reported on his attendance at St Mary's course, finding it very instructive, and said that it might be repeated at St Mary's in 2013. He added that time at the February Synod would be devoted to a 'taster summary' of the Ministry of Welcome.

b. Open Church Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013. 55% of church buildings in the diocese were open in 2012, including five of the eleven in the deanery (one not formally part of the scheme). The hope is that more will open in 2013.

c. Pastoral Matters. Deborah informed Synod that interviews would take place on 26<sup>th</sup> October for filling the vacancy in the Benefice of Sarratt and Chipperfield.

d. The Liberal Delusion. This book, written by John Marsh, a member of Synod, has been published. It explores how the drive for greater social justice and fairness must remain an essential objective in society, and John gave Synod a brief outline. He was to give a fuller presentation in St Peter's on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

e. Diocesan Synod, 13<sup>th</sup> October. John Rhodes gave a short summary. Being the first Synod of the new Triennium, it opened with a Eucharist, celebrated by Bishop Alan. Among other items were: a presentation by Bishop Martin Modeus of Linköping, our sister diocese in Sweden; approval of a 2% increase in clergy stipends from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013; approval of the diocesan financial requirements for 2013 (£13M); debating a motion on the inadequacy of the CofE's response to HMG's proposals on *Equal Civil Marriage* (defeated).

f. All Saints Bell. Charles Parry gave an update on the situation. Following a resident's complaint, Three Rivers District Council had issued a Noise Abatement Notice on 26th September requiring the hourly chime to be silent between 11pm and 7am. The bell, however, can only be set to 'on' or 'off' so to comply with the Notice they are now silent. Charles had conducted a private survey of residents in his road which revealed that none objected to the hourly chimes. The church had appealed.

## 8. Date of next synod, Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February (7.30pm for 8.00, St Mary's Rickmansworth)

The guest speaker will be the Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Hertford, and also there will be a presentation by Alex Twells, Deanery Co-ordinator for the Ministry of Welcome, on that subject.

## 9. Closing Prayer

After a time of quiet, Deborah led the synod in prayer and Synod closed with the Grace at 9.40pm.

*Distribution: All Synod members, others present, The Ven Jonathan Smith, Jim May, Revd Chris Davey (Diocese link), Rev'd Linda Woollacott (Methodist link), Churchwardens of parishes without clergy.*

(sgd) Rural Dean