

# 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
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<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 Mary's Church, Rickmansworth at 8pm, Tuesday 26th February 2013

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

Present (6): Deborah Snowball (Rural Dean), David Hall, Rachel Jenkinson, Robert Riley-Brale, Simon Cutmore, Mary Kingsley.

Apologies (5): Charles Burch, Miriam Mугan, David White, Andy Reid, Charles Parry. Others absent: (2)

### Members of the House of Laity (34 current members)

Present (24): Duncan Kerr (Lay Chairman), Allan Brown, Pauline Brown, Caroline Wainman, Phil Waive, Linda Clough, John Guy, Audrey Timberlake, Rupert Barnes, Tony Barton, Ruth Barr, Gilda Conrich, Terence Russoff, Beryl Baker, Suzanne Powell, Jim Pummell, John Rhodes, Ann Badhams, John Marsh, Julie Shepherd, Alan Wills, Bill Seddon, John Parsons, Alex Twells (Secretary).

Apologies (4): Sally Morgan (Treasurer), David Nobbs, Brian Smith, Janet Anders. Others absent: (6)

### Observers

Present (7): David Clough (Sarratt), Kay Brown (Bovingdon), Paul Palmer (Mill End), Richard Ashton (St Oswald's), Des Sedgwick (St Oswald's), David Carruthers (Rickmansworth), Geoff Marshall-Taylor (Christ Church).

Apologies (1): Revd Linda Woollacott (Methodist link) Others absent (1): Chris Davey (Diocesan link)

## 1. Opening Worship, on the eve of the Principal Feast commemorating George Herbert, priest, poet, 1633

After Herbert's hymn *Let all the world in every corner sing*, Pauline Brown read a biographical note, Gilda Conrich read John 21:15-17, and Simon Cutmore read Herbert's poem *Aaron*. After a time of quiet reflection, Tony Barton led prayers before the final hymn, *King of glory, king of peace*, also by Herbert.

## 2. Welcome

Deborah welcomed everyone and introduced Bishop Paul.

## 3. Talk by the Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Hertford, followed by questions

Bishop Paul said he would give a kind of update on progress across the diocese on how parishes were implementing *Living God's Love*, which had five constituent parts, reflecting a structured Mission Action Plan.

A Way of Seeing, through transformation, growth, and holiness; all three are essential to the process. To grow, church communities need to be transformed, moving from one degree of glory to another, and unless what is done does not uplift God through his Holy Spirit, it is not worth doing.

A Way of Looking. This parallels the creation of a MAP, which is parish-based, then enhanced, then reviewed, and then shared. It is not wrong to share and to look at what other parishes are doing. This is why MAPs appear on the diocesan website. The diocese does not inspect MAPs. 85% of all the parish MAPs are on the diocesan website, forming a learning community.

A Way of Being. The cure of souls depends on the strong helping the poor. The parish system is based on communities of people. Some parishes are wealthy, others undoubtedly struggling, and the diocese is committed to helping the latter: that reflects God's will. 'Show us what we can take from you and cascade it to others which may grow' he said.

A Way of Resourcing. Many churches in the diocese are growing but the diocese itself is not. There should be a growing Christian presence in every community. Most dioceses are cutting the number of clergy, but St Albans is striving to sustain the number and even increase it, something made possible by parishes paying their Parish Share in full, as the vast majority do. He said a 'thank you' to them, especially in the current economic recession.

A Way of Listening? To what anyone might have to say.

Three questions were aired at the end of Bishop Paul's talk. One postulated the practicability of 'parachuting' a specialist with a particular skill, such as a treasurer or churchwarden. from a neighbouring parish when a parish found itself in great need. This was new to the bishop, who promised to think on it.

Another questioner observed that many people in parishes were ignorant of how the aggregation of Parish Shares was spent, which was mostly for the good of parishes. The bishop agreed that the link was not clear enough.

The final question expressed concern that a gulf was emerging whereby struggling parishes were being left behind in the slip-stream of 'rich' parishes. Bishop Paul recommended the strugglers to take a look at what the pace-setting churches were doing.

## 2. (continued)

Deborah announced the death on 29th January of Jo Squire, 78, of All Saints Croxley Green, who had been a committed member of synod since 2003. Also, she was a member of the Deanery Standing and Pastoral Committee from 2005 to 2011. The synod expressed its condolences to Jo's family.

Deborah then introduced David Hall, Vicar of Christ Church, attending his first Rickmansworth Deanery Synod.

[Agenda Item 6 was taken next]

## 6. Presentation: Ministry of Welcome

This was led by Alex Twells, the Deanery Co-ordinator for the Ministry of Welcome. In an introduction, he stressed how central was Welcome to our Christian calling. It is gospel-based: 'I was a stranger and you invited me in' (Mt 25:35) and is vital to church growth. He quoted the statistic from a Church of England survey that of people who attend a church for the first time, more than 90% do not return. A thorough and well-organised Ministry of Welcome possibly would at least halve that proportion. There are five key aspects to Welcome, he said, and a speaker from each of five parishes dealt with them in turn.

Phil Waine (Chipperfield) spoke on 'Helping people discover the church's existence and character', David Carruthers (Rickmansworth) on 'Giving people a good experience of the church premises', Rachel Jenkinson (St Andrew's) on 'Giving newcomers and strangers a good experience of the church people', Caroline Wainman (Bovingdon) on 'Helping newcomers belong to the church community and start contributing to it', and Geoff Marshall-Taylor (Christ Church) on 'Integrating newcomers through the work of the Welcome Team'.

Alex summed up. Jesus said 'Go and make disciples of all nations' (Mt 28:19), but contacting people, befriending them, welcoming them into membership of the community of Christ, and nurturing them into Christian discipleship, can only be achieved when the quality of the life of the whole church measures up to the task in hand.

So, what comes next? In 2009, the Church of England launched *Everybody Welcome*, a course that teaches how all members can help grow their church. It is designed to run over four weeks, one 90-minute session per week, plus a 5th session to provide focused training for those invited to join a church's Welcome Team. Alternatively, the four sessions could be held on a single Saturday. St Mary's and St Peter's have already run courses and Alex encouraged other churches to do the same, so that each establishes a full-scale Ministry of Welcome. Welcome is not a small specialist ministry; it aims to bring new health and vitality to the whole of church life.

## 4. Minutes of the Deanery Synod on 25th October (distributed on 2nd November)

These were accepted and signed as a true record.

## 5. Matters arising

### a. (Item 5d) Quiz evening held on 2nd February.

This was well supported, with 49 people enjoying a fun evening. Five of our parishes each fielded a team and the winner was Bovingdon.

b. (Item 7c) Vacancy in Sarratt and Chipperfield. Deborah announced that, after a second round of interviews, the Revd Michele Marie du Saire, Assistant Curate at All Saints Leavesden since 2009, had been appointed as Rector. Her Installation and Induction would be on Monday 3rd June.

### c. (Item 7f) All Saints' Bell.

After legal consultation, All Saints is working actively with Three Rivers District Council to find a way of reducing the bell's sound to ensure that it is within the World Health Organisation's recommended limit

## 7. Any other business

### a. Ascension Day Service, Thursday 9th May (St Lawrence, Bovingdon).

This would begin at 8.00pm. Parishes are asked to publicise it and encourage church members to attend.

### b. Deanery Treasurer.

Sally Morgan had indicated that she wished to step down due to commitments elsewhere, and Rupert Barnes was elected unanimously to succeed her. On behalf of synod, Deborah thanked Sally for her work over the past five years.

## 8. Next synod (Tuesday 25th June at 7.30pm for 8.00, venue tbc)

The Revd Charles Burch, Vicar of Bovingdon and Diocesan Vocations Officer, will speak on 'Vocations'.

## 9. Closing prayer

Deborah thanked St Mary's for the light refreshments, and the meeting ended at 10.15pm with the Grace.

*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