

SEVERN VALE DEANERY

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26th June 2019 at St Michael and All Angels, Tirley

Present:

Clergy: Revds: S Mason (Area Dean), J Hyde, J Longuet-Higgins, P Donald, S Taylor, P Phillips
Laity: S Padfield (Chair), K Carpenter, H Cotton, N Hogg, L Vogwell, E Ashenden, M Richardson,
P Ingram, G Davies, A Herbert, C Hill, J Bates, Canon R Parker, A Nicol, C May, R Ensor, M McGhee,
C Steadman, B Fellowes, S Fellowes, M Mitchell, A Cowdrey, E Lovell, J Smith, C Thomson, R Blandford,
C Jakeman, D Wright, C Langham, S Bell, P Cotton, A Clive, S Riddick, H Murphy, S Hargreave

In Attendance: K Creese, J Clutterbuck, R Clowes

Apologies:

Clergy: Revds: H Sammon, D Gill, S Monk, L Bloom, D Browne, S Skepper, S Godsell, S Cooke
Laity: H Dunsford, R Cottell, C Hickson, F Down, D Starr, C Hitchins

Sue Padfield began by welcoming everyone and thanking Tirley for hosting the meeting. It was noted that no-one present was attending Synod for the first time; after which the Reverend John Longuet-Higgins led our opening worship based around Psalm 103.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2019 were approved without amendment (bar one correction on Apologies). There were no matters arising not already being covered under subsequent agenda headings.

Stewardship: Mike Smith then made a presentation on Stewardship, mainly focussed on the financial aspects of our roles as stewards of what God has given us to look after. He pointed out that about one-third of parables in the Bible refer to money in one way or another, and it has more specific mentions than prayer – but nonetheless people often find it difficult to discuss church finances (or perhaps even to think about them). He ran through various steps in the giving process, including survival, supermarket, subscription, submission and sacrifice; and talked about The Giving Toolbox, an aid to help increase giving which can be found via the Diocese website (www.gloucester.anglican.org/giving), which some churches have used to great effect. He also reminded everyone about the benefits of the Parish Giving Scheme. Various questions and points were raised by those present, including on practical difficulties and heritage opportunities; while it was agreed that Mike's slides would be circulated to all present to help us go forward (*subsequently done*).

Mike has now stood down from his Christian Giving role, but is still happy to help anyone with queries (on 07840 260182).

Rural Ministry: John Longuet-Higgins then spoke about his paper on leadership in multi-parish benefices, as previously circulated. He pointed out that heading up a multi-parish benefice can be daunting, particularly for those without relevant experience, and has often led to stress and related health issues. It can also be unattractive from a recruitment perspective. He believes that more formal links between (perhaps three to four) multi-parish benefices may be very useful – for mentoring, support, mission, sharing resources, even efficiency/making best use of people's various talents. He thinks lay leadership may be useful in certain circumstances. And he considers that the Diocese should formally consider and debate his proposals.

Feedback from the floor was broadly positive. It was agreed that leading a multi-parish benefice had led to health issues and long vacancies, and better support is most definitely needed. Sometimes this is already being done informally, but more structure would certainly be useful. Different types of training for curates might also help.

There was some debate on the exact phrasing of the motion to be put forward, before it was accepted that John's original wording was perhaps the best.

Therefore John proposed that the motion "We encourage reflection on and discussion of this paper (*on leadership in rural multi-parish benefices*) at PCC, Deanery and Diocesan levels as a means of Anglicans exploring the Diocesan LIFE vision in rural multi-parish benefices; with the aim of enabling neighbouring benefices to work together as effective missional communities" be formally submitted to the Diocese, and this was seconded by Chris Hill. 38 votes were cast in favour, none against, with 3 abstentions; the motion was therefore carried.

News Items:

- a. The Area Dean noted that the lay chaplaincy project for Newent Community School is slowly moving forward. The need for this initiative is still very much recognised. Teams are being put in place to organise, help and support, while the school remains very much in favour. Financing will hopefully soon be in place, but longer-term there will need to be greater local contributions.
- b. Grant funding has now come through for the Children and Family Worker post (Highnam/Leadon Vale). Hopefully someone will be in place by September.
- c. Jacqui Hyde noted that the recent training on "Welcoming Churches" was very well received. There is some Safeguarding training being run in Newent next week, but it seems that the Diocese may not have publicised this very well (*subsequent update – now postponed till October, to allow more people to attend – details now being circulated*). We have no Deanery-specific training organised in the immediate future, but hope to do some on subjects such as ministering in care homes and similar environments before too long.
- d. It is felt that there are numerous rural issues which might be looked at on a Deanery-wide basis, and this will hopefully be looked at before the winter.

Reports:

- a. Parish Share – Roger Parker circulated his latest Parish Share report. There are some issues with Badgeworth and Leadon Vale, but now was not the right time to go into detail. As regards 2020 allocations, the Deanery has been granted £32k from the Diocesan Stipend Fund, out of a £35k request, and more detail should be available soon.
- b. Diocesan Synod - The report of the March meeting had already been circulated; no matters of note were raised other than to record that the issue of phone masts can be more slow-moving than we might like. We have not yet been notified of the date of the next meeting, but it should be relatively soon.
- c. Helen Sammon was not available to discuss any House of Clergy matters, but no-one is aware of anything of immediate importance.
- d. Treasurer – a small number of parishes have yet to make their 2019 contributions, but nevertheless the finances are in good shape. A small contribution (approx. £130) was made towards the "Welcoming Churches" training course. Anybody willing to consider taking on the (very undemanding) position of Treasurer would be welcomed.

Under **Other Business**, it was noted that today was Ruth Clowes' last meeting as Lay Healing Adviser. Reverend Philippa Donald is now our main Deanery lead for prayer and healing. Thanks were recorded to Ruth for her past efforts. Meanwhile an Eco Breakfast is being held at The Swan in Staunton at 10am on Saturday 20 July, for anyone interested in contributing towards environmental awareness in their parishes. Anyone interested should please contact John Longuet-Higgins on vicar.westof7@gmail.com or on 01452 700965.

The **Next Meeting** is scheduled for Tuesday 22nd October 2019, at a venue yet to be decided.