

AMERSHAM DEANERY SYNOD

Minutes of the Amersham Deanery Synod meeting held in St George's Church, Little Chalfont on 21st March 2023 commencing at 8pm.

Present: House of Clergy:

Tim Barnard, Dan Beesley, Brian Ludlow, Peggy Ludlow (AD), Jeremy Moodey, Jonny Rapson, Graham Summers, David Whale.

House of Laity:

Sarah Ainsworth-Coles, Andrew Bell, Mary Bentall, Richard Bolton, Margaret Carey, Michael Carmody, David Carter, Graeme Coles, Janine Dunnell, Julie Dziegiel (Hon Treasurer), Peter Flory, Ian Hamilton, Jackie Lambert, Grant Masom, Hazel Miller, Ian Mitton, John Nash, Hilary Povey, Jacqueline Rose, Stephanie Summerell, Lawrence Tebboth (Lay Chair), Cobus Van der Walt, Mary Webster, Eddie Weiss, Linda West.

Apologies: House of Clergy:

Matt Beeby, Jez Carr, Darren Dalton, Sue Gill, John Goodman, Daf Merion-Jones, Sharon Roberts, Debbie Oades, Margot Suter, Jenny Tebboth.

House of Laity:

Sarah Banks, Jean Batchelor, Chris Embleton-Smith, Cathy Franklin, Margaret Gingell, Jacquie Hardman, Michael Hardman, Ian Mitton, Brian O'Regan, Hilary Povey.

Secretary: Dorothy Potter

Visitor: Helen Savage, Andrea Norman, Ann Newcombe

Mr Lawrence Tebboth (Lay Chair) was Chairman.

- 1) At 8pm the meeting began with the Chairman welcoming the Synod, and thanked St Georges Church for the use of the building and their hospitality. Rev'd David Whale welcomed the Synod to St George's and opened the meeting with bible reading and prayers. Dr John Nash led the worship songs.
- 2) Apologies – these will be taken from the signing in sheet, in addition to those given to the Secretary ahead of the meeting.
- 3) Minutes of the Last Meeting:
The minutes were approved with the spelling correction of Mrs Dziegiel's name.

4) Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

5) Notices: There is Quiz evening at Beaconsfield on 22nd April – full details on the Deanery website.

Interviews for Team Vicar at St Mary's Church Beaconsfield to be held on Monday 3rd April. Rev'd Sharon Roberts will be appointed Rector of Beaconsfield benefice and licensing will take place on May 3rd.

Interviews for the Vicar at Penn and Tylers Green to be held on 24th March

Penn Street and Holmer Green are still in vacancy.

Rev'd Ian Jennings will be moving on from Denham parish.

At this point Synod was suspended and the Annual General Meeting for Amersham Deanery Trust was opened.

This is the AGM for Amersham Deanery Trust. Members of Synod are members of ADT which is limited by guarantee – all members liable for £1 should the Trust fail. All accounts are on the Deanery website.

Mrs Dziegiel asked if there were any questions.

The accounts show a loan of £11k which was there last year. Is this a loan?

Yes, this loan was made to Penn Street and Holmer Green and will be repaid in full when the land is redeveloped.

Mrs Dziegiel asked the Synod to accept the Accounts.

Proposed: Mrs Julie Dziegiel

Seconded: Mr Lawrence Tebboth

Agreed by a show of hands – no objections or abstentions.

Mrs Dziegiel asked approval for Mr Michael Hardman to carry on as Independent Examiner

Proposed: Mrs Julie Dziegiel

Seconded: Mr Lawrence Tebboth

Agreed by a show of hands – no objections or abstentions

Budget: Income for ADT is received from the rebate the Diocese provide if all parishes pay 100% of the parish share. This has been 3% but has now dropped to 2½%. As interest rates rose during the latter part of 2022, more interest is included in the budget for 2023. The budget includes amounts for two clergy ministers to take a sabbatical during the year. The reserves are much reduced.

Mrs Dziegiel asked if there were any question:

What is the reserves policy?

This is shown in the accounts – it is two years rebate.

Proposal to accept the Budget – Mrs Julie Dziegiel

Seconded: Mr Lawrence Tebboth

Agreed by a show of hands – no objections or abstentions

Amersham Deanery Trust meeting closed

Deanery Synod resumed

6. The Synod welcomed Mrs Sue Nash to speak about the Family Food Hub at St Georges.

Mrs Nash gave a brief account of how St George’s Church was set up in the 1930’s and how the area has developed since. The church is surrounded by social housing with some of the residents leading chaotic lives – often in abusive and difficult relationships. There is significant depravation in the area.

The church has provided a whole host of different clubs over the years – aimed primarily at children, but encompassing adults. 90% of the mothers that attend are single mothers, with different fathers to their children. This has expanded to the Oasis Community café and to lots of different offshoots. The church found it did more mission during the pandemic and worked with Restore Hope Latimer.

St George’s was a hub for the local foodbank. A client has to receive a voucher from Citizen’s Advice or other body. A gentleman turned up who had no voucher or food, and the Family Food Hub was started. This was launched in April 2022 and is open on a Monday and a Wednesday all day – it provides meals. Statistics shows that 1057 adults and 1593 children have been fed. It is about making a relationship with the family. All are welcome to a spiritual service with a hot meal.

The next initiative kingdom kids will launch on 4th April 2023

Questions:

Funding – where is this from?

Donations are made from other churches and Helping Hands have given a budget for food. We have supported 68 adults and 69 children.

How big is the team

Volunteers work on a rota basis

Rev'd Peggy Ludlow gave warm thanks which was followed by a round of applause.

Rev'd Michael Johnson from St Thomas' Church, Holtspur and the Dove Café

Rev'd Michael spoke about the use of St Thomas', where it fitted into the local area and the local facilities and amenities. In 2016 a commercial consultancy carried out a survey asking the community: families, you and senior citizens what they felt was needed. In 2018 Rev'd Michael joined the parish. Local meetings were held and the concept of a church café was adopted – there is no other café at this end of Beaconsfield.

Approval was sought and some building modifications were made and the name of Dove Café was chosen by the community. It offers faith, hospitality and community. It is open every day 8.30am – 4pm and run by two dozen or so volunteers. The main Sunday service is at 9.30am and there are some at 4pm. Lots of initiatives have taken place: regular children's concert, senior lunch – which is a community lunch, warm space, regular Ukrainian refugees, talking café for the bereaved, community mosaic and a children's choir years 4-6.

Financial issues are a problem: Helping Hands give a grant; VAT and rising prices.

Q & A

Has the Dove Café made a difference?

Undoubtedly yes, it is not about what happens on a Sunday

Will the presentation be shared on Deanery website – yes

How is pricing set?

Price of coffee: below average. All cakes made on the premises. There is a need to break even.

How supportive was the hierarchy:

Very, on board from the beginning.

What sort of congregation?:

Pre Covid 40, post 30 regular members. A small handful have joined, but there is a much bigger usage of the church.

There are those that would separate the church from the café. The café seems to be increasing and has good social working but the church seems to be closing.

A huge thank you was given to Rev'd Michael Johnson

7. Rev'd Jeremy Moody spoke about the last General Synod Meeting. His full report is on the Deanery website. The tone of the Synod was much better than expected, despite lots of differences of opinion.

The outcome of the prayers for love and faith – Bishops can proceed without General Synod approval, but wish to carry Synod. There are to be draft prayers and pastoral guidance issued.

What happens next/ At the July Synod revised prayers and guidance of how Pastoral Guidance is used. There is to be nothing that contradicts doctrine. There are significant issues and challenges.

Q & A: Julie Dziegiel said that she felt the debate was well handled.

Will voting happen? Bishops want to carry Synod with them. Will want the prayers endorsed, with a review after 5 years.

Has the Church of Scotland or the Church in Wales endorsed this? Yes, blessings have been adopted. However in the USA this has split churches.

Thanks were expressed to Rev'd Jeremy Moody.

8. APCM in near future – Deanery Synod reps to be voted in this year. Thank you to all who will finish – this being their last meeting.

Next Deanery Synod will be on 22nd June at St Marks Hall, Denham.

Synod closed by Rev'd Peggy Ludlow with the Grace at 9.35pm