

## **AMERSHAM DEANERY SYNOD**

Minutes of the Amersham Deanery Synod meeting held in St Giles Church, Chalfont St Giles on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022 commencing at 8pm.

### **Present: House of Clergy:**

Tim Barnard, Dan Beesley, Darren Dalton, James Forward, John Goodman, David Hyndham, Brian Ludlow, Peggy Ludlow (AD), Jonny Rapson, Jenny Tebboth.

### **House of Laity:**

Sarah Banks, Jean Batchelor, Andrew Bell, Mary Benthall, Richard Bolton, Margaret Carey, Michal Carmody, Hazel Chow, Janine Dunnell, Robert Edwards, Chris Embleton-Smith, Peter Flory, Cathy Franklin, Ann Geary, Francesca Hall-Drinkwater, Jacquie Hardman, Michael Hardman, Dave Kidner, Grant Masom, Hazel Miller, John Nash, Brian O'Regan, Andrew Patterson, Jacqueline Rose, Jonathan Rushworth, Trevor Sharkey, Stephanie Summerell, Lawrence Tebboth (Lay Chair), Cobus Van der Walt, Krystal Van Wauwe, Joan Wainman, Mary Webster, Linda West.

### **Apologies: House of Clergy:**

Ruth Atkinson, Jeremy Moodey, Phil Nightingale, Debbie Oades, Graham Summers, Margot Suter.

### **House of Laity:**

Sarah Ainsworth-Coles, Hazel Chow, David Carter, Graeme Coles, Zoe Clark, Julie Dziegiel (Hon Treasurer), Margaret Gingell, Jackie Lambert, Mary Lee, Ian Mitton, Derek Portwood, Hilary Povey.

**Secretary:** Dorothy Potter

**Visitor:** Rev'd Frog Orr-Ewing

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Mr Lawrence Tebboth (Lay Chair) was Chairman.

- 1) At 8pm the meeting began with the Chairman welcoming the Synod, and thanked St Giles for the use of the building and their hospitality. Rev'd Dan Beasley welcomed the Synod to St Giles, reflected on the recent death of HM Queen Elizabeth, followed by Thine Be the Glory and the National Anthem.
- 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.
- 4) Matters Arising.  
There were no matters arising.
- 5) Area Dean's Notes. These had been circulated in advance. A warm welcome to Rev'd Jonny Rapson, Rector at Amersham with Coleshill. The licensing of Rev'd Edward Millais (Great Chesham) has just taken place and licensing of Rev'd Jez Carr (Seer Green and Jordans) will occur shortly. Farewell to Rev'd Mike Bissett from Penn & Tylers Green, who has retired. Prayers are requested for the appointment of the right candidate to Beaconsfield and Penn & Tylers Green. A report from General Synod by Rev'd Jeremy Moodey will take place at the November Synod.
- 6) Hannah Mann – Programme Manager, Environmental Team, Oxford Diocese was introduced as the speaker this evening and she opened her talk with prayer. The talk is on Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency in the Oxford Diocese. All Hannah's informative slides are on the Amersham Deanery website. The Diocese is aiming to be carbon net zero by 2030; this is because of the energy crisis and rising temperatures. The warmest 7 years have been since 2015. There are a number of initiatives in the Diocese: community garden, repair café, ecohub – refill scheme, eco book swap, bike repair, tree planting. Heating in church – some churches are heating under the pews rather than radiators. The subject of ground heat pumps was raised – this technology is still too new to be embraced at this time. In the first instance, insulate! Eco Church combines worship and teaching, land, buildings, lifestyle and community and global initiatives. A subsidised energy audit is available for churches at a cost of £150. A number of deaneries have taken action already in different ways. What has the Diocese done so far? Diocesan Synod declared a Climate Emergency in March 2020 • We are committed to reaching net zero target carbon emission by 2035 • In 2021, the diocese completed its divestment from fossil fuels. • In April 2021 Bishop Steven was among 13 peers appointed to the Lords Select Committee for the environment and climate change. • The Bishop of Reading, the Rt Revd Olivia Graham, is a member of the Church of England Environmental Task Group. • Church House Oxford is powered by renewable electricity and all four Bishops drive electric cars. How can the Diocese help? By networking and resources: Eco Hub, Peer Support – Greenshoots and speaking up!

Chalfont St Giles is an Eco Church and Keith Wood-Smith from Chalfont St Giles took the floor. Keith's slides are also on the Deanery website.

Eco Church was developed by A Rocha, a global Christian charity responding to: "the biblical mandate to care for the earth and demonstrate the Christian hope for God's world". But what is Eco Church? Eco Church is a framework churches can follow in order to make an environmental difference. It contains 5 areas: • Our Worship and Teaching; • Our Buildings; • Our Land; • Our Community and Global Engagement; • Our Lifestyle. There are many activities a church

can undertake against each area, for which points are awarded, the more important the action, the more points are awarded.

What about the Awards? Once a certain number of points are achieved against an area it scores as Bronze, then Silver, then Gold. The lowest area gives the overall rating. Chalfont St Giles created an Eco Committee in very early 2021 and quickly reached bronze. It took another year to achieve Silver this June

Going for Gold! We do not do this for the badges, but obtaining them is a mark of progress and commitment to God's creation. Bronze is relatively easy. Many churches will be at this level without knowing it. Why not show it off? Silver requires maintaining and stretching what is already being done, and also doing new things. Gold involves consolidating on everything already being done and then also doing many of the most challenging actions... and being audited! Gold requires we move from being a church with an Eco Committee to being a full Eco Church. How will we do this? We have a Vision: "By March 2024 St Giles will be a church which demonstrably lives out our faith in God and our love for our global neighbours through a comprehensive approach to caring for the Earth in all our activities, thereby not just reflecting the Church of England's concern for the environment, but also leading amongst its churches, inspiring our community and growing - spiritually and in numbers - as we help restore creation for God, humanity and all life for whom the world is a shared home." We have a plan: We invite committees and officials to: - Keep doing what they are doing; - Take on specific Eco Church actions; - Volunteer for other Eco Church actions; - Think of other things in their remits which deliver our vision, even if not necessarily earning us points; - Consider the environment in all their decision making. We have five high level aims To have care for God's creation embedded in our culture as an integral and inspirational pillar of our communal and individual faith and worship. To ensure our church is as environmentally responsible as possible, minimising those things it does that harm the environment and in maximising those things it does to restore it. To encourage church members, as far as they feel able, to minimise those things they do that harm the environment and maximise those things they do which restore it in their lives. To be visible in our Parish as a church which cares for the natural world, thereby both encouraging the wider public also to act and drawing those who share our values - especially the young - to try our services. To campaign appropriately on local, national and global environmental issues.

Eco Church represents opportunities: • To worship God through taking care of his creation; • To integrate with wider church life, supporting (and supported by) other priorities: - Spirituality: to find God in his creation and in new ways to worship; - Outreach: relevance to younger people, drawing them to God and church; - Mission: helping the global poor, most impacted by a crisis least of their making; - Collaboration: joining with churches locally, nationally and internationally. • To help slow or stop deforestation and the decline in wildlife; • However small, to contribute to the climate solution rather than the climate crisis. ... and challenges: • Not all our church family will view Eco Church as a priority, or perhaps even agree with it; • Eco Church requires our time, some financial commitment, resilience, stamina and lots of organisation – cultural change throughout a church may be hard; • It can feel hopeless – it takes courage, and faith! "Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to the life of faith. It is a way to love our neighbour and to steward the gift of creation."

A Question and Answer Session took place:

Solar Panels on Churches: They can be placed, providing they are not visible – this is a government requirement, not the churches. Planning permission also has to be obtained.

Working with other religious bodies: Faith for the Climate action group is working on this but sensitivities are involved, but some things are happening.

International Aspects: Many countries are suffering because of what the West have done. Are we supporting churches? Shared knowledge has been established with Link Diocese in Africa and India.

Can we encourage local churches to link with churches abroad? This is happening through Tearfund.

How key is it to have church leadership involved? It is critical to have church leaders involved. Churches that don't have leadership commitment don't excel. If worship and teaching are not involved it becomes a non-starter. Actions drive beliefs.

The Synod broke into groups to discuss church problems and good practice.

Rev'd Peggy Ludlow thanked both speakers for their energy and to Hannah for coming.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 9.25pm.