

# Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018**

at Christ Church, Ware  
Minutes from the 7.45pm Meeting

Chair . Canon Jo Loveridge

1. Welcome and Introduction of guests.
2. Prayer . The Revd John Hookway
3. 7.55 Main Topic: Worship in Town and Country, led by Canon Andrew Holford and an extremely capable but unidentified associate from the Diocesan Liturgical Committee.
4. Apologies for absence; Dorothy Toyn, The Revd David Sheppard, The Revd Jenny Gray, David Goodman, Dinah Findlay, The Revd Robert Thompson, Robin Bishop, Ian Bailey, Margaret Mellor, Margaret Rank, Peter Dane. Jane Cohen, St Andrews Hertford, was welcomed to her first Synod meeting.
5. The Minutes of the previous Synod (11 July 2018) were accepted
6. Matters Arising -
7. Diocesan Synod Representatives: The Reverend David Sheppard joined our representatives. Two places remain in the House of Laity and one in the House of Clergy; we remain significantly under-represented, which limits our voting power for decisions which may affect our Deanery and Parishes.
8. Elections to the Diocesan Board of Finance: Mr Colin Bird proposed  
The Diocesan Board of Education: Dot Marlow (Head of Ponsbourne St Mary's School) was proposed. Both were elected unopposed.
9. Reports, inc Diocesan Synod 13 October . Janet Bird  
This was the first of the new Triennium: The Eucharist was celebrated together, New Chairs of Clergy and Laity were elected. Questions re Finance and Voting for Committees, Clergy Stipend levels increased by £538 per annum by April 2019. Arun Kataria introduced Fellowship in the Digital World+which will be further looked at the next meeting.  
Board of Mission and Ministry . Janet Bird. Janet has been on this for one year, and elections are in progress for the next three years. The BMM arranged a

Conference for Inclusion of People with Mental Health issues, attended by 50 people.

Diocesan Board of Finance: Budget . Colin Bird. Summary Figures were given; total costs are £15 million, and stipends increase by 2% next year. Other costs remain at the same level, but it is very difficult to balance when inflation is at 4%. Colin emphasised that this is a very tough situation, which will lead to cutting two stipendiary posts per annum for the coming years. This is the first time that the Bishops and Archdeacons have needed to do this. The Parish Share increase for our Deanery 2.1% for 2019. The average increase per church member is higher as membership is still declining. A solution needs to be found. Also the Reaching New People/FX project will need funding in 2021 (c. £300,000 pa) and it is unclear where that will come from.

Deanery Accounts . Colin Bird. These are now finalised and available. No Grant is given now, but we do have sufficient funds to keep going. Costs are kept under control, so there is no current need to apply for grants.

10. Deanery MAP update . The Revd Mark Dunstan.

1. Parish Share payments are mostly on target, currently 40k below what we need to pay. Seven parishes are three months behind.

2. Collaborative working, the Treasurers met recently and hope to meet again early next year.

3. We have now looked at three FX items, as a Deanery which would we like to put more energy in to? What would help your parish if we all work together? A letter will be sent to the PCCs asking what can be done by the Deanery to support them. After Environmental Issues next year, what should we do to continue? Eg Churches which have examined and upgraded worship tend to be the churches that grow .

11. Announcements were made re. Deanery Clergy: The Revd Amanda Duncan will be Inducted at High Cross and Thundridge on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

The Revd Jenny Gray was congratulated on her forthcoming Marriage.

The Revd Nick Sharp was to be Inducted at St Cuthbert's, Rye House 23 October.

12. Any Other Business -

13. Closing Prayer

14. Next Meeting: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019, offers of a venue invited, please.  
The topic will be Environmental Responsibility.  
Future dates for 2019 . Tuesday 14 May, Wednesday 10 July, Thursday 17  
October. No specific problems were mentioned, so we confirm these dates for  
2019. Please put them in your new diary!

### The Worship Presentation

The Revd Andrew Holford asked %What is worship?+An encounter with the living God. Each context will be different . and there will be many human circumstances represented among the congregation. It can seem easy to play safe, doing much the same thing every week and dangerous to change in order to meet needs. But risks may be necessary to meet the breadth of interests and attitudes.

Anglicans regularly consult books for worship, yet many people find pictures, sounds most helpful. In this individualistic culture it can come down to what feels good to me rather than what is appropriate for God.

There are people who (can) come to church only every few months.

Q1. Your five top priorities for what creates good worshipõ ..Discussion 10mn.  
(Do we discuss the worship at our PCCs? We are more likely to talk about the colour of the church gate! Yet we need a vision of the future.)

What does the worship we share in say about the God we believe in?

Themes:

Ambience (Welcome, Music, Praise, Inspiring reflection, Quiet meditation)

Connection (Accessibility, Communal Prayer, Inclusion, Corporate)

Leadership of worship (Well prepared, well managed, music)

Service content (Variety, language we can understand, encourage a desire to return, singing)

Response (Hearing the Word of God, Challenge, Enthusiasm, encouraging a response)

Early centuries; small groups in homes.

Once legalised by State, worship became for the whole community. No longer a sect.

Last 30 years, regular weekly attenders often come once a month; this has a huge impact, not least if you do a sermon series. Varied frequency.

Q2. Someone comes to worship for the first time at your church - what would be their top five elements leading to good worship?

Welcome . again! (Comfort, Warmth . literal and human . the opportunity to sit quietly, No Grumpy Faces)

Inclusion; Understandable language, Where to sit?, Knowing what's going on, Feeling Valued.

The Service; Length! Is it child-friendly?, Can I locate something of Value?,

Atmosphere: Is it focused on God? What is the Central Message? Preaching that is Encouraging, Uplifting, Something that can be caught, Good Amplification . am I able to see and hear well?

Follow-up: Spotting Newcomers, Encouraging New Christians, Tea/Coffee, A friend before and after the service, Special Activities to join in.

Seek Feedback: Why people come infrequently or not at all.

Issue: Have you ever asked the question %How well do you feel the worship flows+?

Some elements of worship are very practical . accessible, welcoming and the feeling . Enthusiasm, Inspiration.

Conclusion. This evening should not be an end in itself, we can take it back to our parish so that it becomes something helpful for the local churches. Looking at it needs to be owned by the whole parish, not just a group of %experts+. It is better to monitor internally rather than %Ofsted scoring+which can be alienating . or helpful? Probably not for the Diocese but for the parish.

Ask yourself: How do I typically feel at leaving church at the end of worship?

You would gain important information from the congregation.

And further evaluation six months later to see if things/feelings have changed.

Last questions to us all: What does the worship we share in say about the God we believe in?

And to the Deanery Synod : How about looking again at this next year to find out what has been done in the parishes?