

Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod Standing and Pastoral Committee

Minutes of the meeting on Monday 21st June 2021 on Zoom, 1.00pm

Members Present: Revd Mark Dunstan (Rural Dean Elect) (Chair), Mrs Diana Perkins (Lay Chair), Revd Doug Loveridge (Secretary), Mrs Janet Bird (Treasurer), Mrs Catriona Baker, Revd Canon Jo Loveridge, Mrs Lyn Paddon, Mr Mike West.

In Attendance: Revd Ysmena Pentelow (Assistant Rural Dean Elect)

1. **Welcome and Prayer**

MD, as new Rural Dean Elect, welcomed Revd Ysmena Pentelow for the first part of the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Colin Taylor was absent.¹

3. **Declarations of Interest.**

There were none.

4. **Minutes of the meeting of 3rd February 2020**

These were agreed.

5. **Matters Arising**

There were none.

6. **Review of the Synod Meetings of 2021**

MD noted we are required to have a minimum of two Deanery Synod meetings per annum. It was agreed that we would seek to follow the Diocesan Synod meetings, therefore holding three meetings per annum. These would be

- 23rd September (agreed already, incl. election of new Standing Committee), but in the future, early to mid-November.
- early February (perhaps Monday 7th incl. finance report) and
- July after Diocesan Synod

The Standing Committee would meet early to mid-December to arrange Synod agenda for the February meeting.

The previous Synod meetings were briefly reviewed.

a. **Forgiveness Project and Major Works (27/02/20):**

The project had not been ideal for people with breathing difficulties nor those who cannot stand for very long. There were no comments on John's address on major works.

b. **Flourishing Churches (12/11/20):**

Revd Harry Steele had been very enthusiastic. MW said there were fewer people on the Zoom call than he would have hoped.

¹ Post-meeting note: Colin conveyed his apologies late – the emails about the meeting had been delivered to his spam box so he didn't find out till too late.

c. **Clergy Well-being (08/02/21):**

Three perspectives had been presented by St Mary's Team. MW asked whether this was taken back to the parishes effectively? JL reported that the representative from Thundridge had reported it back to their priest and PCC and it had been very moving. MD asked a general question as to whether an Approved Report (i.e. not Synod Minutes) should be sent to each PCC following Synod meetings. JL said that parishes should have Deanery Synod matters on their PCC Agendas. It was recommended that any reports should be in short sentences. It was noted that the Deanery's Annual Report is insufficient for timely engagement. JB wondered if knowing that a report would come to PCCs might mean Synod members would not attend meetings. With respect to Clergy Well-being, MD suggested a "touch base", asking how the issue has been taken forward.

d. **How are we Going Forward? Church after Lockdown (16/03/21):**

The discussions and sharing were very helpful. The breakout rooms are valuable – whether on Zoom or not. MW shared how valuable Zoom meetings had been for many people, especially those who cannot come out for meetings.

e. **Faith in Young People (12/05/21):**

This detailed report was presented by Christian Cole, Diocesan Youth Missioner. JB felt concerned that it is a hard time to get anyone into church, and at the moment, this emphasis could be a guilt-making idea. YP noted that the Report had been initiated before the emergence of the virus, so we needed to hear the report and can work on it together as things improve.

7. **Parish Share.**

MD had circulated a brief report, plus Diocesan figures. We are ahead of the average Deanery, but some parishes are struggling. MW said that St Mary's is paying by Direct Debit, so it is unclear why their figures are not correctly reflected. Concern was shared that if the current shortfall were to continue, we would be short by the equivalent of a clergy person by the end of the year. Hoping parishes will pay, JB asked that they should be approached/encouraged. MD and JL agreed that often parishes do catch up after a while – however, it was noted that Ponsbourne has not paid in full for two years now. JL explained that there have been difficult changes there due to people leaving the PCC, incl. the Treasurer – the situation requires pastoral sensitivity. MD agreed, but noted we want to pay full share if we can. **Action MD:** to follow up with clergy.

8. **Website**

New people have joined the website community recently since our email. MD suggested that the blog be better used, perhaps once per month something from Deanery members/parishes (probably not clergy). CB suggested that we approach people to get it going, noting the fact that people don't volunteer but are often happy to be asked. The website would become more of a repository of Deanery ideas. **Action MD:** to follow up.

9. **Deanery MAP**

No change in the last year, but the website shows the current position. MD has been speaking with the Archdeacon and Emma Critchley about how things are changing with Deanery MAPs. Next year we would have been due to revise, but now it is working in different ways among the deaneries, so he is in discussion, hopefully with DP and YP also. There are new housing developments etc. to add. **Action MD:** to report back. *[YP left the meeting]*

10. Deanery or Parish-related News

- Wareside and Great Amwell with St Margaret's have received Pastoral Support Grants.
- In light of the unforeseen pandemic, the patron's right of presentation in the parishes of Great Amwell with St Margaret's and Stanstead Abbots has been suspended for a further three years from next January, so Revd Dr Sarah Forrest will continue in post.²
- LP reported that St Margaret's is really running out of money; there is considerable concern.
- JL said she had attended a meeting about Fresh Expressions relating to new housing. It was recommended we find feedback from the ongoing meetings, which stem from a nationwide body. **Action JL:** to follow up resources.
- The two Deanery curates, David Sheppard (St Mary the Virgin, Ware) and Wendy Sellers (St Andrew, Hertford) are to move shortly to their first posts as Priests in Charge.

11. Review of requirements for Election of Standing Committee

The Rural Dean, Lay Chair, Secretaries and Treasurer are Ex Officio members. Additionally, there is to be a minimum of 2 clergy and 2 laity.³ Others can be added, but the houses of clergy and laity must be equally represented other than the ex officio base. It was considered odd that the Assistant Rural Dean is not ex officio despite being a Bishop's appointment. It was agreed that YP should be on the Committee.⁴ JB said we have some new clergy who may wish to join. CB suggested we might do better inviting specific people than waiting for volunteers.

MD noted this is the Standing Committee only. He suggested the first task of the newly elected committee will be to consider how best to approach the pastoral areas (such as outreach to new developments). Some deaneries have Pastoral Committees. There may be other ways. We need to think hard about how to achieve this.

JB said that the clergy meet for Chapter but laity have no equivalent, how do we focus on shared pastoral strategy?

MD said we should encourage people to join in September. At the September meeting, the Lay Chair needs to be elected first. DP has served for the usual maximum 6 years, but indicated she would be willing to stay on if needed. The Treasurer is also to be elected and a new Deanery Secretary is also needed. MD is already seeking. **Action MD:** organise the election programme.

12. Synod meeting 23rd September

Agenda to go out mid-August. Should be a face-to-face meeting so a venue will be needed, though it was observed that some people really like Zoom! CB sympathised but felt that we need to really develop relationships and this is better done in person. JB said that February could be a good Zoom month for obvious reasons.

MD suggested the meeting should begin with a substantial act of worship.

² Post-meeting correction. The further suspension had been proposed but not formally determined by the date of this meeting.

³ Post-meeting correction. There is a requirement for 3 further clergy and 3 further lay members (not 2).

⁴ Post meeting note. The Committee does not have the power to determine this – the Church Representation Rules are clear about the constitution, and Synod members must be free to elect.

The following ideas were also raised:

- All people's Well-Being (i.e. not just clergy). Important areas around how we feel, evening services have restarted, relationships have frayed, questions of wholeness.
- Money. This is important in all our parishes. We all need help and advice.
- Flourishing Churches team to present on the way forward.
- Environmental issues. The Diocese has just voted to become an eco-Diocese. One concern is the end of gas boilers in a few years – how will we make this happen when churches are struggling financially?
- Short presentations on more than one of the above.

The meeting agreed to allow MD to decide. **Action MD:** finalise the agenda.

13. **Any Other Business**

There was none.

14. **Dates for Synod Meetings**

MD agreed to confirm dates in time for the publication of the Agenda for the September meeting. **Action MD:** confirm meeting dates.

15. **Date for Standing Committee**

It was agreed the next meeting date should be arranged by the newly elected committee members following the Synod meeting in September. If a meeting in early September is needed, it was agreed to arrange this at short notice.

16. **Prayer**

MD closed the meeting in prayer.