

Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod

www.hertfordandwaredeanery.org.uk

*Our vision is to see flourishing, Christ-centred communities
inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds to discover God,
grow in their relationship with Him
and respond to His transforming love through serving others.*

Annual Report of Activity in 2025

(for publication at APCMs in 2026)

Deanery Synod met three times during 2025.

There are several key areas of work that the Synod must consider. We have established task groups to ensure that these are addressed in a timely fashion and in sufficient detail (see overleaf). This year, our focus has been on “Reaching New People” (RNP) and to some extent “Growing Younger and More Diverse” (GYMD).

March: Multifaceted Mission

This meeting was held at Christ Church, Ware. The main topic was under the RNP strand of our work, seeking to identify how our churches are already engaged in offering opportunities for worship in ways other than “Sunday Services in the Church Building.” In the past, such opportunities have been called “Fresh Expressions” or “New Worshipping Communities” but the intent behind them is always to reach new people who might not otherwise engage with the Christian faith. The meeting was planned to explore what we are currently doing, to create opportunity for encouragement and sharing of good practice, and to inspire members with new possibilities.

After a guided discussion on “Multifaceted Mission” facilitated by Revd Ysmena Pentelow, Synod members considered all the kinds of worship made available within their parish and recorded them on a map of their parish under different headings. They were then invited to discuss their responses with others from other parishes and shared good ideas and approaches. Sadly, technical difficulties meant that the final visual report was not as helpful as anticipated and some data was lost. A brief report of the general findings is available on the Deanery Website on the RNP group page.

July: Triennial Deanery Share Review

This Synod was held at St Andrew’s, Stanstead Abbots and was concerned with matters of finance (and therefore Parish Share). Parish Treasurers were all invited to join Synod members for discussions with the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Director of Finance. The Chair of the DBF gave a thorough presentation of the responsibilities of the DBF and how its work is structured, then spent time sharing a detailed explanation of the Parish Share system. The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer session. This concluded with a challenge to the DBF to provide more assistance to deaneries to conduct meaningful share reviews in the future. It was acknowledged by all that the reviews are always difficult conversations and that the DBF did need to assist.

Synod agreed that the current Parish Share arrangements should remain in place for the next triennium, in hope that better collaboration within the deanery and improved information from the DBF would allow those difficult conversations to take place at the next review in 2028.

November: New Things in our Midst

This Synod was held at St Mary's, Ware. Another session under the RNP banner, this meeting was an opportunity to hear from the leadership of two "Fresh Expressions" in the deanery – "Take-Away Church" in Watton at Stone and "Make Church" in Stanstead Abbots. Both were aimed primarily at children and their families, and therefore this could also be considered relevant to the GYMD strand of our work.

As usual, our Synod members were not slow in coming forward with questions about the presentations. All went away from the meeting with some encouragement about what may be possible – if these two churches could be started from nothing and attract regular attendance of around 20 children and their parents, could not all churches do similarly?

All the meetings also included other reports from Diocesan Synod.

Your Involvement is Requested

As mentioned earlier, the Deanery Synod is engaged in six important streams of work:

- Environment
- Growing Younger and More Diverse
- New Development
- Parish Share and Finances
- Reaching New People / Fresh Expressions
- Social Action

By sharing wisdom, experience and best practice, the teams responsible for each of these streams aim to encourage and support parishes across the deanery as they face challenges in these areas. The core teams are all looking for more members. You do not need to be a member of Synod to be on the teams. All that is needed is an interest in the relevant field and a heart to see the good news of Jesus transforming communities through the work carried out by the parishes of the deanery in that field. **Could you help?**

The deanery website now includes a functional "social network" which means that members can contribute to discussions about these matters online as and when they think of things (rather than needing to commit to meetings). Anyone interested can register with the website at www.hertfordandwaredeanery.org.uk/register and join one of the groups. N.B. usernames can be seen by everyone, so we recommend applicants do not use their email address as their username.

The social network also has a dedicated group for Church Wardens to communicate with one another (i.e. for asking for advice about aspects of the role and specific circumstances they encounter, e.g. recommendations about contractors or "what to do if..." scenarios). There is also a general "Deanery Chat" group which is for people to keep up to date with deanery news, advise others about events in their parishes or ask questions. Please join!

Marion Little, Deanery Secretary
March 2026