

Bruton & Cary Deanery



**Minutes of the Meeting of Bruton and Cary Deanery Synod
held at North Barrow Village Hall on Wednesday 8th June 2022 at 7.30 pm**

Present:

Revd Kevin Rogers	Area Dean
Dr Rob Sage	Lay Dean
Mr Jeremy Pratt	Deputy Lay Dean and Secretary
Other Members of House of Clergy	4
Other Members of House of Laity	25
Revd Jill Perrett	Deanery Accompanier
Caroline Bruce	Deanery and Parish Development Adviser
Wendy Hester	Schools Chaplain
Other PTO Clergy	4
Other Readers	4
Other Churchwardens	2
Other Guests	1

Apologies for absence were received from: Revd Tristram Rae Smith (Assistant Area Dean), Rosemary Rymer (Treasurer), John Deverell, Julie Ebsworth, Susan Hartnell-Beavis, Jonathan Dyer, Peter Leavold, Liz Henderson, Revd Alison Parris, Jane Jeanes, Ginnie Deverell, Revd Peter Sear, Helen Hamlet, Annabel Browne and Nigel Chambers.

- Welcome.** Revd Kevin Rogers welcomed everyone and opened the meeting in prayer. The theme of the evening was 'Resourcing the Future of Ministry in the Deanery'.
- Previous Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 29th March 2022 were approved.
- Opening Worship** was led by Anne Sear and Jen Richards, Readers from the Alham Vale benefice, and included the songs 'Hallelujah', 'Heaven and earth join to worship you Creator' and 'The peace of the earth be with you' and a reading from Ephesians 4:1-6,14-16.
- One good thing.** Jen Richards spoke about her placement shadowing the Schools Chaplain, Wendy Hester, which was part of Jen's reader training.
- Sharing/Reflecting on one local good thing.** Synod members wrote their one local good thing on post-it notes:
Green for good
Orange for challenging
- Refreshments.**
Thank you to Jane Jeanes for providing refreshments and to Russell Hamblin-Boone from Abbas & Templecombe for serving them.
- Deployment of Stipendiary Clergy & Implications.** Rob Sage outlined the situation.
Financial Background
The Covid pandemic had greatly impacted the parishes in the Diocese and the Parish Share collection rate for the Common Fund had gone down as follows:

2019	£10.35m	(98.3%)	
2020	£ 9.2m	(87%)	
2021	£ 8.9m	(86.9%)	
2022	£ 9.5m	(91%)	(Projected figures)

On average, the income was down £1.2m per year.

The budgeted income and expenditure for 2022 was as follows:

Total budgeted income £15m:
 Parish Share 63% (assuming 91% collection rate)
 Investment and rental income 18%
 Parochial fees & other 10%
 Use of reserves 9%

Total budgeted expenditure £15m:
 Clergy stipends, housing and training 75%
 National church 3%
 Parish support, governance & admin 16%
 Other 6%

Historically 75% of the Common Fund came from Parish Share. The remainder came from parochial fees, investments & glebe land rent.

That income used to pay all the clergy costs (including stipends, pensions, housing and training), as well as support for mission and ministry in the parishes, education and administration costs.

In 2020, Bath and Wells experienced the 8th largest drop in Parish Share receipts of all 42 dioceses and experienced the 5th largest operating deficit.

The Diocese were planning to address the situation as follows:

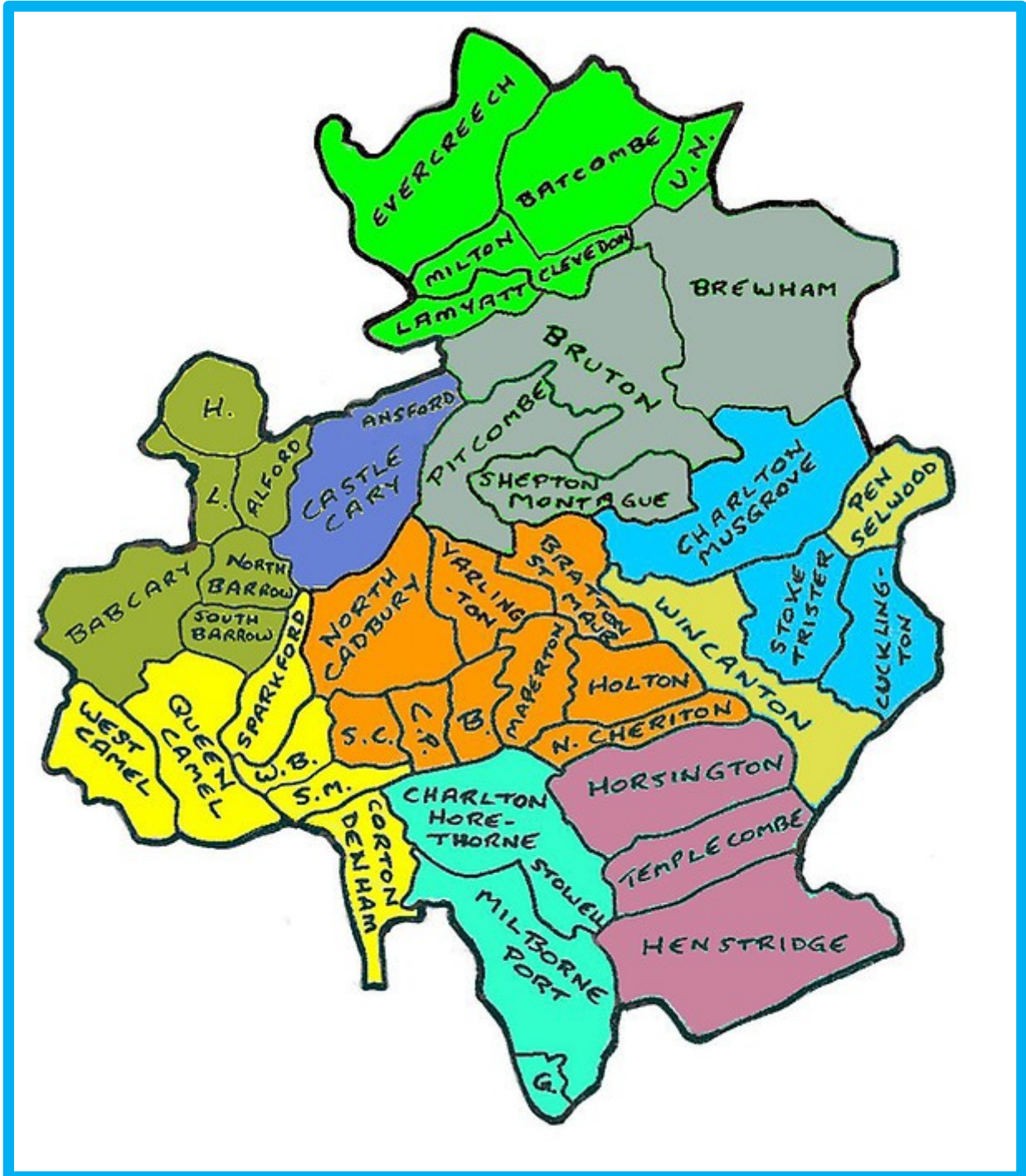
- i) Reduction in stipendiary clergy & curates
 Gradual reduction in stipendiary clergy over 5 years from 178 to 150.
 Reduction in stipendiary curates from 9 to 7.
 To date Bath and Wells is one of the dioceses who have made the least adjustment to the number of clergy and curates it funds.
- ii) Effective property/land management
 Reducing the number of clergy houses from 252 to 220.
 Making the assets work and exploring locally appropriate development opportunities.
- iii) Enabling ministries
 There is an increased focus on enabling the bubbling up of a range of ministries and releasing the gifts of all people.
- iv) Support Services staff cost
 The reshaping of the Support Services saw a 12% reduction in salary cost. The team now had a greater focus on deanery and parish support.

The 2004 Allocation Formula used by the Diocese had been:
 50% Church Membership + 35% Population + 15% Number of Churches
 As a result, Bruton & Cary Deanery had reduced from 10 to 8.5 stipendiary posts.

The 2022 Allocation Formula used by the Diocese had been:
 45% Regular Worshipers + 30% Population + 15% Number of Churches + 10% Deprivation
 As a result, the effect on stipendiary clergy numbers in Wells Archdeaconry was:

<u>Deanery</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Reduction</u>	<u>% Reduction</u>
Axbridge	9	7	-2	-22%
Bruton & Cary	8.5	7	-1.5	-18%
Frome	7	6	-1	-14%
Glastonbury	6.5	5	-1.5	-23%
Ivelchester	7.5	5	-2.5	-33%
Yeovil	8.5	8	-0.5	-6%
Shepton Mallet	5.5	5.5	0	0%
<i>Total</i>	<i>52.5</i>	<i>43.5</i>	<i>-9</i>	<i>-17%</i>

The current situation in Bruton & Cary Deanery was:



11 Benefices with Wincanton and Pen Selwood held in plurality making 10 posts.
Charlton Musgrove with Cucklington and Stoke Trister was a half-time post.
Six Pilgrims was a House for Duty post, making 8.5 stipendiary posts.
This needed to be reduced to 7 stipendiary posts.

There were Seven Principles to consider:

- 1) Mutuality of lay and ordained vocations.
- 2) Different needs & responses in different contexts.
- 3) Mutual care and support in leadership.
- 4) Each post should be possible to "serve with joy".
- 5) Learn from experimentation without fear of failure.
- 6) Deployment should be responsive and flexible.
- 7) Help and support with change.

8. Questions & Reflections. These included:

Question: Will this result in benefices changing?

Answer: Yes, benefices might need to change, either legally or practically on the ground.

Question: People expect it to be the vicar who does the visiting, particularly to the sick or bereaved. We are gaining, but how does ministry change?

Answer: We need to work out how we move from only clergy having authority. God has called all of us.

Reflection: There has always been support from the ordinary people.

Reflection: Zambia has a diocese the size of England with 8 stipendiary clergy + 2 retired clergy. This is an opportunity for us to re-think the parish system.

Question: Why don't we have a 5-year plan to recruit new ordained ministers?

Answer: We are trying to discern people who are called to ordained ministry. This is part of it. Our lay ministry has been undervalued and under supported.

Question: Is the problem people willing to serve, or is the problem paying them?

Reflection: The Diocese has been seen to have a poor regard for self-supporting ministers; but they can now be installed as incumbents.

Question: This has come as a big surprise to many people. Have we addressed bringing in more income?

Reflection: The community would hate the Church to close, but don't want to come.

Reflection: The Church of England is not hierarchical – it's upside down, with the parishes at the top and the Bishop at the bottom. It's what the parishes do which is important.

Answer: This is not about closing churches or parishes.

9. Looking Ahead & Working Together, where do we fit? Revd Kevin Rogers started by saying that we needed to have the courage of Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 13-14).

Where are we?

Recognising the loss.

Acknowledging vacancies.

Taking stock of where God is in this.

Celebrating who we are.

Thankful for what we have (trying not to grumble).

Re-imagining a different way of being the local church.

Shared Local Ministry – Next Steps

Deanery Plan by June 2024.

Reflective work at Parish, Chaplaincy, New Christian Community and Benefice Levels.

(Sets of cards were available as discussion starters. These could be used within the church, with people on the fringe of church and with people outside church. These were a resource available from the Diocese and were free.)

Developing a Strategic Overview of Ministry in the Deanery by the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group.

Decision making at Deanery Synod.

Values

Working urgently and slowly.

Prayerful listening and discernment.

Grace love, faith and forgiveness.

Encouragement and hope.

Kevin recommended the book from this year's Church of England – Big church read: 'how to hear God' by Pete Greig.

We need to discern God's plan – there is no plan B.

Practicalities

Vacancies.

Boundaries.

Defining roles and responsibilities.

Variety of configurations.

Shared Local Ministry

Caleb and Joshua: Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it

The others: We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we are

10. Questions & Reflections. These included:

Question: Does it mean those benefices in vacancy can't recruit?

Answer: No it doesn't.

Reflection: Where is the training? It needs to be started now, particularly for Lay Worship Assistants and Lay Pastoral Assistants.

11. Charge for September. Synod members were charged to bring answers to the following to the next meeting:

- i) Where are the places in your community that give life and hope?
(how are you involved in them?)
- ii) What are the challenges that people face? (not specific to church)
- iii) What gives you energy and hope? (as churches, as individuals)
- iv) Practical ideas for the way ahead (Balancing clergy and lay responsibilities)

12. One good thing to take away. Comments included:

I didn't sign up for this!

We have signed up for the Kingdom.

The wilderness experiences grow us.

God is working in us.

13. Closing Prayers. The meeting closed with the grace.

Next Deanery Synod Meeting – Saturday 3rd September 2022, 9.30 am at North Barrow Village Hall