

# Bruton & Cary Deanery



**Minutes of the Meeting of Bruton and Cary Deanery Synod  
held at North Barrow Village Hall on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 7.30 pm**

**Present:**

Revd Tristram Rae Smith	Assistant Area Dean
Dr Rob Sage	Lay Dean
Mrs Jane Jeanes	Deputy Lay Dean
Other Members of House of Clergy	5
Other Members of House of Laity	20
Revd Jill Perrett	Deanery Accompanier
Matthew Pinnock	Diocesan Head of Finance and Operations
Debbie Smith	Diocesan Finance Manager
Other PTO Clergy	2
Other Readers	3
Other PCC Treasurers	2
Other Guests	2

**Apologies for absence** were received from: Revd Kevin Rogers (Area Dean), Jen Richards, Revd Stuart Thomas, Penny Ashton, Julie Ebsworth, Revd Hilary Jalland, Jean Sellick, George Renwick, Harold Clarke, Joanna Durham-Matthews, Tim Chater, Canon Brian McConnell, Lynda Payne, Marjorie Payne, Linda Mumford, Jacquie Hall, Wendy Hester, Revd Diane Barrett, Lee Tibbatts, Revd Rona Stuart-Bourne, Nerissa Northover, Maureen Ellis, Jonathan Baker, Chris Bunker and Lisa Prior

- Opening Worship** was led by Sandi Kiddle and Russell Hamblin-Boone from Templecombe, Henstridge and Horsington and included a reading from Ephesians 4 and the hymn "Here I am to worship."
- Previous Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were approved. The Lay Dean noted that, while he had hoped to be able to update the Synod on progress on the plan for pastoral reorganization in the Deanery that had been approved at the last meeting, there was nothing to report yet. The Wells Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Group would be meeting in November and it was hoped that an update would be available following this meeting.
- What does the Future hold?** What are our priorities going forward? Revd Tristram Rae Smith, Assistant Area Dean, drew on his personal experience as Rector of the Camelot Parishes to suggest that the Bishop's Four Directions of Travel would make a useful starting point. *Valuing the people we already have* – depends on whether we have a dynamic or static model of church. A dynamic church creates hope and energy, raises morale and begins to build an attractive model of loving community. *New worshipping communities* – doing services in a different way or place; can the Deanery offer opportunities to experiment with greater scale, creating a critical mass? *Shared local ministry* – there were questions of whether this meant local lay ministers or local lay ministry; the role of the incumbent; models of oversight and accountability; and the dynamics of power in a local congregation. *Developing our faith* – small groups were important, also midweek congregations; action and study need to go together to grow faith. Tristram suggested that developing our faith was the most important of the four directions as it connected all the others and was essential to them. He also explored the possibility of dropping one of the directions, but felt that this would be less than ideal. He ended by suggesting that we needed a plan to guide us on our journey into the future. Synod then divided into small groups to consider questions of which direction of travel was the most important; what was the most helpful church unit to focus on the four directions of travel - parish, benefice or deanery; and what was the current priority in people's parish or benefice.
- Refreshments.** Thank you to Jane Jeanes and to those from the Alham Vale benefice who served refreshments.

5. **Diocesan Financial Update.** Matthew Pinnock, Head of Operations and Finance for the Diocese, began by providing some statistics of interest. The cost of a member of the clergy was around £55,000 including stipend, pension contribution, housing, etc. There were around 800,000 people over 18 in Bath & Wells and around 16,000 regular worshippers in our churches, which had dropped by 25% in the last ten years. The amount of Parish Share collected in 2022 was £9.2 million, £1 million less than in 2019. There were 178 benefices in the Diocese which mean the cost of providing them all with clergy was £9.8 million. That requires £12 per week from each of our regular worshippers and doesn't pay for anything else apart from the clergy. Next year the Diocese would be looking at how the Parish Share is allocated. Matthew compared it to splitting the bill after a meal out – some cannot afford it, so others pay more. The problem is that 20% of parishes are paying more and 80% less than the cost of their clergy. Matthew noted that congregations were aging, lacking energy and struggling to pay Parish Share. On a more hopeful note, he pointed out that if the 50% of the population in the Diocese who indicated that they were Christian in the Census were all to contribute, they would only need to give 47p per week to cover the Parish Share. So we needed to appeal more widely to our communities.

Matthew then took questions. John Deverell (Upton Noble) asked if there were discussions about asking big business for money. Yes, but this was better done at a local level; the Diocese was trying to raise as much income as possible from other sources. John also asked to what extent Diocesan Secretaries got together to share ideas. They did, but all dioceses were in a similar position. Helen Corney (Milton Clevedon) stated that people had asked why they should give more money when the national church had vast funds. Matthew noted that the national church was releasing funds but to encourage growth rather than to maintain the status quo. Russell Hamblin-Boone (Templecombe) felt that churches need to show that they were a benefit to the community if the community was to support them. Revd Rosy Ashley felt that the Bishop should have led a call to pray in response to the deficit rather than cutting the number of clergy.

6. **Vacancies**

a) **House of Laity**

- i. Co-option of 3 members to Deanery Synod – not required.
- ii. 1 member of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group – Penny Ashton had volunteered to stand for DMPG and was proposed by Revd Rosy Ashley and seconded by Eric Deyes. There were no other nominations and so Penny Ashton was elected to the vacancy.

b) **Deanery Secretary** – No nominations received. The Lay Dean thanked Jeremy Pratt for sending out the Agendas and John Deverell for taking notes of the meeting, but stated that it was vital for the Deanery to have a Secretary to look after business. He asked members to see if there was anyone in their parishes willing to take on the role.

c) **Deanery Treasurer** – No nominations received. The Lay Dean noted that the role of the Deanery Treasurer was not onerous but was important and asked if a PCC Treasurers or anyone with bookkeeping experience would consider taking on this role.

d) **Deanery Ministry Fund Secretary & Treasurer** – No nominations received.

7. **Pastoral & Chaplaincy Update.** The Lay Dean noted that, as already stated, there was nothing to report on the plan for the pastoral reorganisation of the Deanery. The reorganisation would mean the end of the funding for the Schools' Chaplain in the Deanery and that the Chaplain was aware that the funding would come to an end at some point. The Lay Dean had also reported the Linx Project had provided funding to cover the current shortfall in the funding of the Chaplain.

8. **Lay Dean's Notices.** The Lay Dean noted that the Bishop would be visiting the Deanery on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> December at Batcombe Village Hall. Jane Jeanes stated that she had attended the Bishop's Visit in another deanery and he would say more about his four directions of travel. The Lay Dean asked if invitations to the event had been received and there was a mixed response. Responses for those wishing to attend should come to the Lay Dean. The Lay Dean also noted that there was some confusion over the date of the March Synod and this would be confirmed after the Area Dean returned.

9. **Closing Prayers** were led by Revd Tristram Rae Smith.

**Next Deanery Synod Meeting – Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024**