

Bruton & Cary Deanery



Minutes of the Meeting of Bruton and Cary Deanery Synod held at The Davis Hall, West Camel on Tuesday 16th June 2026 at 7.30pm

Present:

Revd Caroline Walker	Area Dean
Dr Rob Sage	Lay Dean
Mrs Jane Jeanes	Deputy Lay Dean
Other Members of House of Clergy	3
Other Members of House of Laity	17
Other PTO Clergy	4
Other Readers	2

Apologies for absence were received from: Nigel Chambers, Tim Chater, John Deverell, Revd Jonathan Evans, Camilla Graham, Susan Hartnell-Beavis, Alan Hoskins, Preb Rose Hoskins, Louise Jenkins, Sue Kellagher, Nicky King, Ted Marsh, Lisa Prior, Jen Richards, Martin Roberts, Olivia Scott, Jean Sellick, and Revd Rona Stuart-Bourne.

1. **Refreshments.** Refreshments were available from 7.00pm, served by members of the Vale of Camelot Churches.
2. **Welcome.** The Revd Caroline Walker, Area Dean, welcomed everyone to the meeting.
3. **Opening Worship.** The opening worship was led by members of the Milborne Benefice and included prayers for all those who had served on the Deanery Synod over the last three years, especially those who would not be returning for the next session.
4. **'In House' Discussion and Reflection following on from our last Synod meeting – Money Matters in Bruton and Cary Deanery**

Synod looked at the document that Natalie Wainwright, Lead Giving and Fundraising Adviser for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, had provided - that attempted to capture the hopes, fears and questions raised at the last Deanery Synod. This was discussed on tables, with different tables considering different sections and then fed back to the whole group:

 - i. **Growing Churches** - it was felt that this was 'spiralling up' and it needs to be more positive. We are all members and brothers and sisters - children and families need us and we need them.
 - ii. **Engaging with the Wider Community** - several benefices felt that they do do this - perhaps we are just not good at telling others what we do. This is an opportunity for us to go the wider communities in our benefices and tell them to what happening and our part in it.
 - iii. **Managing Church Buildings** - is a nightmare! And one we as such a rural Deanery share across our benefices. There are a lot of good resources out there. The contact details for the Church Buildings Adviser, Mark Lidster, should be sent to everyone as he is a useful person to contact and use.

- iv. **Financial Decision Making/Benefice Share** – it was recognised that deciding what to do and how much should be paid can be the ‘mindset’ of the particular PCC. Still the question is do we / don’t we have to pay it when we are also custodians of so many historic buildings and all the commitments that entails too. There was an appreciation that the figures are more transparent now and people were grateful for the fact that we are offered a lot from the Diocese and were grateful for the priests that they do have. We do need to pay the Benefice Share in full or to the best of our ability. Friends groups were useful. There was concern that the language coming from the Diocese can be condescending. Six Pilgrims to share a letter that they have recently sent to the entire village to encourage ‘Buying God a beer a month’. There was a need to make increases and amounts more understandable and achievable.
- v. **Clergy Appointments** - This was a concerning response. There is a great deal of anxiety about the ever increasing size of benefices and their growing complexity making it harder to appoint and attract clergy. Disappointment in the lack of urgency to appoint parish priests and yet a new Archdeacon is already appointed. Parish vacancies are now running at a length of at least two years and that is not good news...

4. **Good Things Happening in our Parishes/Benefices**

There was a time of sharing good things happening in our benefices:

Six Pilgrims: Grateful for their ‘new’ incumbent;

Bow Brook Benefice: Celebrating Muddy church;

Castle Cary: Grateful for people who fulfil duties on rotas;

Milborne Benefice: Celebrating a growing working together across the benefice;

Revd Elisabeth Isted shared a book that she highly recommended “Bruised Reeds & Mustard Seeds; the gift of the small church” by Jody Stowell, published in 2026 by Canterbury Press.

- 5. **Previous Minutes.** The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18th March 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Area Dean.
- 6. **Area Dean’s Notices.**
The next Deanery Synod meeting date had changed as the Bishops were hoping to visit all Deaneries and talk about new funding opportunities and the date was not yet agreed. Members were asked to **hold 3rd, 10th, and 17th November free** until this could be confirmed. [**Post meeting note – date of next Synod: November 3rd with Bishop Fiona.**]
- 7. Caroline Walker closed the meeting in prayer at 8.55pm