

## St Albans Deanery Synod Standing Committee

Minutes of meeting held on 20 July 2017 at St Luke's Church, St Albans

Present: Rev'd Mark Slater, Rural Dean (in the Chair), John Butler, Meriel Dixon, Mike Ford, Philip Habershon, Rev'd Canon Javaid Iqbal, Rev'd Becky Leach and Andy Sharp

Apologies for absence received from Rev'd Cllr Robert Donald, Rev'd Kenneth Padley, Rita ?? [Ritah Namakulah?]

Mark opened the meeting with prayer.

JI commented that Standing Committee had three members from Radlett parish: was this in order? The Rural Dean confirmed that it was: they had been nominated and elected.

### 1. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 were agreed and signed as correct, with no matters arising.

### 2. Synod Officers

The post of treasurer was vacant: it was thought that AH (Christ Church) might be willing to take it on. AS would prepare a brief describing the job.

### 3. Parish Share Factors

The inconsistency whereby Radlett had a higher share factor than anyone else had been resolved, but a better way of allocating share factors was needed. DF (Holy Trinity Frogmore) had sent a spreadsheet with parish populations and index of deprivation figures to RD and AS: further work needed to be done on these to establish the next steps. Population and income figures would be better than population and deprivation, but it was unclear what if any income data were available at ecclesiastical parish level.

Noted that, in parallel with this, the strong representations from parishes about the continuing above-inflation increases in parish share and apparent lack of long-term planning and real options for Synod to consider had been passed on to the Diocese, so far with no result. The Diocese had received a grant towards a Fresh Expressions initiative which it was hoped would boost congregations and therefore ability to pay: this grant had to be matched with Diocesan funds, making immediate economies difficult. Allocation of parish shares within Deaneries had to be done by Deanery Synods: allocations between Deaneries was done by the Mission & Pastoral Committee. Standing Committee recognised that this was a very difficult area, with the likely outcome being a reduction in the number of clergy, but nonetheless felt that more urgency was required than had so far been seen.

### 4. Developing the Deanery Plan

Three of the nine goals (Funerals Ministry, Nurturing Vocations and Growing Together through Deanery Prayer) were already being worked on.

25 responses to the request for expressions of interest in Synod goals had been received from members of Synod at the last meeting: 20 offered some kind of help.

Standing Committee broke into small groups to prioritise and consider the next steps in dealing with the remaining goals.

It was agreed that a first step was to try to get those who had expressed interest in each goal together, and for each group to develop its priorities and recommended way forward. Some might meet physically as a committee: others might meet mainly electronically. All would need to recommend coordinators.

One outcome of the group work was a suggestion that Synod should arrange a Deanery-level meeting to hear about Fresh Expressions – ideally before too much work had been done on Goal 4: Mission Matters.

Under Goal 5 (Reaching young people and resourcing assemblies), it was noted that KP had offered his resources for Deanery-wide use. There were also Diocesan level resources, and these needed to have a link on the Synod website. It was agreed that the goal needed to be widened to encompass RE. While some schools had a close relationship with their local church which should be preserved and built on, the value of a Deanery-level (and possibly ecumenical) team for other schools and to pick up the reins during a vacancy was recognised.

It was agreed that Goal 6: X:site needed careful planning and engagement: the programme was challenging and needs to be done well, with full commitment from churches. BL had experience of this in her previous parish, and would follow up contacts. This goal would have a medium to long term timescale.

Goal 7: communications had two possible workstreams – a Deanery newsletter and the Deanery website. AS explained what was on the Deanery website ([www.stalbansdeanery.online](http://www.stalbansdeanery.online)); it had useful information but needed more, so parishes needed to be moved to supply things like useful tradesmen, model contracts and risk assessments and the like. His aspiration was that it would be a tool for use by parishes, and recognised that its scope would probably broaden with use. MF was willing to do some work on the website. It was essential that it was kept up to date and relevant.

We probably needed a Facebook page – something which needed someone with the right level of expertise and enthusiasm. The use of Whatsapp was commended.

For a newsletter, we needed to know the audience and how to reach them. It should be available both electronically and in hard copy.

Having discussed the goals, Standing Committee members were asked which they would do if they only did one: no clear outcome emerged. 1 and 4 were high on most peoples' list, but we needed to communicate. It was also agreed that people who had offered help needed their offer accepted, and soon.

MD agreed to start to get some of the groups together to assess the level of enthusiasm: she would start with goal 1, Parish Ministry Support. JI agreed to convene the group for goal 4, and MF for goal 7. BL would work towards goal 6, recognising that it was a medium to long term project needing a leader with time and enthusiasm. RD would deal with goal 5.

Timescales were discussed. Groups needed to go at their own pace – especially recognising that holidays were ahead for most. RD would circulate contact details for each group.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Next meeting: 12 October