

DEANERY OF ST ALBANS

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Aldenham – St John the Baptist	<i>St Albans city parishes</i>	
Bricket Wood – St Luke	Abbey	St Paul
Colney Heath – St Mark	Christ Church	St Peter
Frogmore – Holy Trinity	St Luke	St Saviour
London Colney – St Peter	St Mary, Marshalswick	St Stephen with St Julian
Radlett – Christ Church and St John	St Michael with St Mary	
Shenley – St Martin		

ST ALBANS DEANERY SYNOD (minutes anonymised for data protection purposes)

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Deanery Synod held at 8.00 pm on Wednesday 25th April 2018 (postponed from 1st March 2018) at St Luke’s Church, St Albans.

PRESENT

ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Attendance – 26 Members recorded. No representatives from St Luke’s, Bricket Wood; St Peter’s, London Colney; nor St Saviour’s, St Albans recorded. All other parishes represented.

Advanced Apologies received – 16 Apologies on the night – 7

NB – Deanery Synod was postponed from 1st March due to heavy snowfall and re-arranged at relatively short notice. Many people had existing commitments. 5 Lay Members had resigned at their APCM 2 of which had not be replaced. St Luke’s, St Albans and St Paul’s, St Albans had elected additional Lay Members bringing them up to their full complement.

Abbreviations used: DSSC – Deanery Synod Standing Committee
 DMAP – Deanery Mission Action Plan DSIT – Deanery Synod Incumbents and Treasurers

1.	Welcome to St Albans Deanery Synod
	The Rural Dean welcomed everybody to the meeting which began at 8.00pm. In particular, he welcomed AP from St Martin’s, Shenley and new Lay Member, CS from St Luke’s, St Albans who were attending their first Deanery Synod.
2.	Welcome to St Luke’s Church, St Albans.
	The Rural Dean has been the vicar at St Luke’s, St Albans for nearly 19 years now and feels it is a great place to be. St Luke’s set up WOW! (like Messy Church) 9 years ago and will be running the 300 th WOW! next week. The interior of the church was re-ordered 5 years ago which has been a real blessing. There is lots of life within the church community however it is a challenge to grow numerically, the Electoral Roll numbers are steady but sadly, not increasing. It is a suburban parish encompassing 5 schools. There are irregular visits to 4 out of the 5 schools and looking to build a relationship with the 5 th . St Luke’s is holding a Parish Weekend in 2 weeks’ time with 100 people due to attend. The main speaker will be Revd Rob Merchant from St Mellitus, Chelmsford. Opening Prayer – the Rural Dean read from John, Chapter 21. This is the season of Resurrection: “Do you truly love me?” asks Jesus. In life we are severely challenged – the context in which we live with the treat of world war and Brexit as well as our own personal challenges. It is for us to live the life that God calls us to live, stay with Jesus, stay faithful. The Rural Dean then lead prayers with all joining in the Lord’s Prayer.
3.	Minutes of the last Deanery Synod Meeting – 17th November 2017
	The Minutes of the last meeting, held on 17 th November 2017, were accepted as a true representation by the members and signed by the Rural Dean. There were no Matters Arising which are not covered by this Agenda.
4.	Deanery Mission Action Plan (DMAP) – Project Plan Update
	The Rural Dean gave a summary of where we are at for the benefit of new members. There was no DMAP in place at all 2 years ago, so we have started from nothing. Deanery Synod and PCCs have liaised so that we now have Vision and Mission statements, Key Priorities and 9 SMART Goals. 2 Goals have been achieved, some are works in progress and others are yet to be tackled. The underlying aim of Deanery Synod is to support Parishes using current skills and resources; we are not going to feel guilty if we are not able to achieve some of the Goals. If there is the energy to work on a project, please go for it; equally if people have taken on a task and no longer feel able to continue, let us know.

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The DMAP Goals fall within the 5 Categories of the Diocesan Initiative: Living God's Love

1. Celebrating
2. Communicating
3. Sharing
4. Equipping
5. Growing

Goal 1 – Parish Ministry Support – The aim of the team is to help parishes learn from one another, share experiences and ideas, establish 2-way communication between Deanery and Parishes and strengthen relationships between parishes. MD reported that the team's initial meeting was constructive with several topics under discussion and others to explore. A further meeting is due to take place on 19th June from 3-4pm at Burston's garden centre.

Communication was identified as key, so the team is speaking with MF who heads up the Communications Goal.

Goal 2 – Funerals Ministry – A leaflet/directory has been printed and distributed. KP is leading this team, he is on a short Sabbatical from April to June inclusive. He is due to meet with more Funeral Directors upon his return to engage with them.

Goal 3 – Nurturing Vocations – JI reported that the team is still discussing ideas. To date, proposed projects were already being covered by the Diocese.

Goal 4 – Mission Matters – equipping and training. The aim is to help parishes obtain the training/support they need by pooling resources at Deanery level. To date it has not been possible to find a mutually convenient date for the Team to meet. JI will try again. BL is to run a Pastoral Training Course in the Autumn. We will need to advertise this across the Deanery to involve as many people as possible.

Action: Advertise "Pastoral Training Course"

Goal 5 – Reaching Young People. Slow progress. A local Team is working together to develop resources for primary school assemblies.

Goal 6 – Equipping – Reaching Young People

X:Site – **X:site is for all the churches of St Albans.** It is an exciting initiative aimed at 7-11 year olds connecting Messy Church with Sunday School. xxx of 2:67 has run this successfully in Harpenden for a number of years. The Team is working ecumenically with the Scripture Union, xxx, Roman Catholic and United Reformed churches as well as the Vineyard to garner support and broaden the appeal. Due to meet tomorrow. A promotional video and printed publicity will be produced and circulate during the coming weeks.

The plan is to run 3 dates this year to get things started and 6 dates thereafter as St Albans Deanery is large and egg-shaped. This will allow it to be held at varying venues to reach all parts of our area.

First date – 13th October at St Luke's, St Albans from 6-8pm.

10-12 people on core planning team, 50-60 people to volunteer and run the event on the day. Each church would be responsible for promoting the event in their parish.

Members were asked to discuss X:Site in small groups and feedback.

- Enthusiasm for X:Site amongst members
- Need to do something for teenagers; 2:67 Project can pick this up
- Mailchimp communication link with parents to send out information and organise
- Deanery subscriptions will cover set up cost, £1 or £2 cost per child to cover refreshments; Verulam House Funds could also cover some costs potentially
- List of roles required to help run the event
- X:Site website? Not yet, but there will be

Action: Will you become a Contact Point or undertake to find one in your parish?

Who: Volunteers to complete Sign-Up Sheet by door

Goal 7 – Communication – MF reported that in March he would have said that Facebook should be the way forward. Since the recent headlines/scandal he would not recommend it. He asked members for a show of hands on preferred communication medium

Social Media – 1 (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram etc)

- Email – All
- Newsletter – 1

Whatever communication the Deanery puts out, it needs to be something that people will want to read the 2nd edition.

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	<p>Statistics show that only 50% of emails are opened and of those, only 20% of attachments are then opened. MF will look into various options, Mailchimp could be good as all the information is open on the page. He thanked members for their input.</p> <p>Goal 8 – Deanery Directory – This has been printed and distributed. More copies are available from the Rural Dean.</p> <p>Goal 9 – Deanery Prayer – the Deanery Prayer Diary is circulated every 2 months. A request goes out to all Incumbents and Parish Administrators for requests for prayers for inclusion.</p> <p>“Thy Kingdom Come” - 9 days of prayer leading up to Pentecost. Christ Church, St Albans is setting up Prayer Stations in the church based on the Lord’s Prayer. The Abbey is running an event aimed at the Youth, but all are welcome.</p>
5.	Motion for Diocesan Synod (Paper 2)
	<p>SB and AS have worked on the wording of a Motion for consideration by Deanery Synod, a proposal for shorter parish vacancies. The wording together with background information were circulated to all members in advance of this meeting.</p> <p>SB – In proposing the Motion before you this evening, I am going to tell you about some of the things I have discovered at national level which lead to vacancies being longer than necessary. Andy, in seconding the Motion, will talk about his experience at the parish level.</p> <p>The Church of England is currently in the middle of an initiative, set up by the Archbishops, called <i>Renewal and Reform</i>. <i>Renewal and Reform</i> is designed to turnaround the current decline in congregations. It is because of this decline that this evening’s motion is so important. Vacancies across England have been known to exacerbate the decline in congregations. Where there is a long vacancy there tends to be greater decline. One of the major obstacles to filling vacancies swiftly is the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. This measure is no longer fit for purpose, it belongs to an earlier generation. The Measure consists of 42 Clauses in 4 Parts with 5 Schedules, runs to 62 pages and includes archaic language. Apart from the unusual words, there are also unusual restrictions.</p> <p>For example, the “formal meeting” that is held to discuss the new appointment, cannot be held until the parish is vacant. The parish does not “become vacant” until the outgoing vicar has been installed in their next parish. The outgoing vicar may go on sabbatical or take personal time before taking up their next appointment. In any other organisation, the initial meeting to discuss the scope and option of a new appointment would be held very soon after management became aware of the resignation.</p> <p>Since the 1986 Measure was introduced we now have internet and emails to help speed things up. The 1986 Measure means that most activities related to finding a new vicar are currently done in series, one after the other. Surely it should be possible for some activities to be done in parallel, at the same time?</p> <p>We are asking for a review of the <u>Process</u>, not who picks the next vicar. It is the process which needs to change. We would suggest that the parish should have much more control over this, in particular, more control of the timetable.</p> <p>The Motion has the support of both Archbishop Jonathan and Bishop Alan. The text has been checked by the Church House lawyers at Westminster. John Wallace, Lay Chair of the Diocesan Synod is also supporting the Motion. What are the next steps?</p> <p>If we pass this Motion this evening, then the Motion passes to Diocesan Synod for a vote there. If the Diocesan Synod gives its approval, then the Motion will join the queue for debate at General Synod. The earliest possible date would be February 2019, but it could be year or more later.</p> <p>SB then formally proposed the Motion to Deanery Synod.</p> <p>Q – Some would argue that changing the status quo could have financial implications. During a vacancy there is no clergy stipend to pay and an empty vicarage can be rented out therefore a vacancy equates to a cost saving. A – I have found no deliberate extension to vacancies to balance books within St Albans Deanery. Some deaneries may do that. If the Motion is passed by General Synod, it will allow parishes to speed up the process if they wish.</p> <p>Q – Does it need to go to Parliament for approval? A – No, it is an internal measure. General Synod is the only body outside Parliament that can enact laws. Parliament would review the Measure but is unlikely to oppose it.</p> <p>NW – it is interesting to see that, when Bishops resign/retire, the Church starts to fill the vacancy before the outgoing Bishop has gone.</p>

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	<p>AS – In seconding the Motion, I would like to speak about parish vacancies from a personal point of view.</p> <p>Before BL was installed, St Stephen’s with St Julian’s experienced an 11-month vacancy. In industry when someone resigns, the role is reviewed, advertised and filled as soon as possible. The cost of a vicar (£60k per annum - £25k salary, £10k expenses, £25k housing) is budgeted for so why leave the post vacant? For 11 months, St Stephen’s parish was run by 2 Self-Supporting Ministers, 2 Church Wardens, the Administrator, 3 retired Vicars and the Lay Chair all of whom are volunteers. They had no say in the matter but were simply expected to keep the parish running.</p> <p>AS continued that his own feeling was that the vacancy should be filled as soon as possible. One member of the congregation said that she needed a few months to effectively grieve for the outgoing vicar – he had married her and her husband, baptised her children and conducted the funerals of people she was close to, she regarded him as part of an extended family and wanted time to accept his loss before welcoming someone new. This was an aspect of the vacancy process which AS had not considered. However, the purpose of the Motion is not to enforce a timetable, simply to give parishes input into the timetable and a say in how quickly the vacancy is filled.</p> <p>JI – the quickest a vacancy could be filled would be 4 months – 3 months’ notice from the outgoing vicar (during which time they would still be working) then 1 month from the new vicar moving into the vicarage before their installation.</p> <p>SB – it is convention that the vicarage be redecorated before the new vicar moves in and that they have time to unpack and settle in.</p> <p>AS formally seconded the Motion</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>That this Synod request the Diocesan Synod to request the General Synod to debate the motion:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>That this Synod:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(i) recognise the disruption caused to a parish and its mission during a vacancy;</i> <i>(ii) request the Archbishops’ Council to review within 12 months the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 with a view to ensuring that:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>a. the process for filling a vacancy in a benefice is begun as soon as practicable after the bishop becomes aware that the benefice is to become vacant;</i> <i>b. all concerned in the process of filling vacancies, including patrons, bishops, and parochial church councils, co-operate so that vacancies are filled as soon as reasonably practicable.</i></p> <p>Motion carried unanimously.</p> <p>Action: The Deanery Secretary will write formally to the Diocesan Secretary asking for the Motion to be included on the Agenda at Diocesan Synod.</p>
6.	<p>Deanery Finances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS has not yet convened a DSIT meeting to discuss Parish Shares. This needs to be arranged so that share factors can be discussed and more equably distributed across the Deanery. <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Convene a DSIT meeting</p> • In the last set of Accounts, we had £2,500 income and outgoings of £1,000. Currently collecting subscriptions for 2018 so there are sufficient funds to pay for all DMAP projects. • Appointment of new Deanery Treasurer – members broke into discussion groups to come up with ideas on how to fill this vacancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Offer payment e.g. £100 per annum – Co-opt someone from outside the Deanery to broaden the audience – Change the job title? “Treasurer” sounds like high finance – Job share? AS thinks this would not work, the role is too simple and would not be enough to do – Advertise in Parish Magazines? – A’ Level Students or Book-Keeping/Accountancy Trainees may be interested, work experience, good for CV <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Draft advertisement to go into Parish Magazines Who: Deanery Secretary</p>
7.	<p>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</p> <p>The Rural Dean contacted all Clergy regarding preparedness for GDPR. Three quarters of them said that they would like some training. Online training from the Diocese will be available from 8th May however, the provisions come into force from 25th May so implementation of changes would be tight.</p>

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	<p>Key questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know where you are at in your own Parish? • What is the purpose of your organisation? i.e. why are you holding this data? <p>Insights from members:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) offers some useful Guidelines also the Church Commissioners Office - Parish Resources website, download Request Forms - “On-line” training courses available through the Diocese from 8th May - Big business is asking “do we really need to ask existing subscribers to re-subscribe?” so, this is a grey area
8.	Diocesan Synod for 2018 – 2021 Triennium
	The current Diocesan Synod meets for the last time on 16 th June. Thereafter nominations for and election of both Clergy and Lay members will take place. Nominations are due back by 12noon on 22 nd June. The Deanery Secretary will send out the necessary paperwork to all Deanery Synod members.
9.	Synod Reports
	<p><u>General Synod</u> The report which was distributed to members in advance of the meeting. There were no questions.</p> <p><u>Diocesan Synod</u> There was no report available.</p>
10.	Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group – pilgrimages within the Deanery
	<p>The paper was circulated to all member in advance of this evening’s Synod. Due to postponement from 1st March to 25th April, Synod was meeting after the first meeting of the GDW Group.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>
11.	Retirement of Assistant Rural Dean
	<p>LF is due to retire. Her final service at St Peter’s, London Colney will be on 13th May. A card was circulated round for members to sign.</p> <p>Quick discussion – the role of Assistant Rural Dean, what would you like to see?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the clergy suggested names of colleagues they thought would be good for the role • What part of the Rural Dean’s role would the Assistant take on? E.g. schools mission, supporting ASMs, SSMs, Retired Clergy?
12.	Any Other Business
	None
13.	Closing Prayer
	The meeting closed with all saying the Grace.
	<p>Dates for future meetings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2018 Wednesday 20th June Tuesday 23rd October</p>