

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 of the Meeting of the Deanery Synod
held at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 22nd October 2019 at St Luke’s Church, St Albans.

PRESENT

ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Attendance – 33 Members recorded plus 5 Guests and the Guest Speaker. Only 14 parishes were represented, there were no members from Christ Church & St John, Radlett nor St Saviour’s, St Albans.

Advanced Apologies received – 19 Apologies on the night – 5

Abbreviations used: DSSC – Deanery Synod Standing Committee DMAP – Deanery Mission Action Plan

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| 1. | Welcome to St Albans Deanery Synod & St Luke’s Church, St Albans |
| | The Lay Co-Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting which began at 7.30pm. As the agenda was very full, Revd Canon Mark Slater, the Rural Dean and vicar of St Luke’s Church, St Albans gave the briefest of introductions to St Luke’s before leading the opening prayer. |
| 2. | “Challenge to Make Connections” – presentation by Chris Birch-Evans of STEP |
| | <p>Chris opened his presentation with insight into his own background and upbringing. He was not from a Christian household. His first encounter with Christianity was as a boy sleeping over at a friend’s house. They read the Lord’s Prayer and, as they went to bed, the mother said a prayer for each of her children and also said a small prayer for Chris. His second encounter was with the Gideons, his third aged 11 when a friend shared his faith with him. The fourth encounter was at Secondary School, through the Christian Union. There were only 4 members but Chris embraced their work and felt connected. However, his parents were worried by his change of behaviour, doing good things. They thought he was being brain-washed and banned him from going to church. His mother worked as a Lab Technician and spoke with one of her colleagues who she knew was a Christian. This lady said that she would take Chris with her to attend church so that his parents would not worry.</p> <p>When it came to Careers Advice, the options suggested to Chris were very boring. His Art teacher asked him why he did not do something with his faith? School is very formative and is therefore the ideal place to introduce students to faith and to support them as they explore it.</p> <p>1 in 20 children today have Faith i.e. 95% of young people are not connected with Faith through any religion. Chris worked as a Faith Worker at St Luke’s Church, Bricket Wood for a while. Whilst he really enjoyed it, he wanted to connect with children/young people who were not already part of a church.</p> <p>STEP is a charity which was set up 25 years ago. Aimed at Secondary Schools, their work is to provide lively, relevant and consistent witness to Christian truth and standards. Chris joined STEP 22 years ago. In simple terms, students meet with Christians and have a lively encounter, success equals young people ending up in a discipleship relationship.</p> <p>STEP makes contact with schools to see if there would be interest in their work. They liaise with the School to establish the most appropriate delivery – sessions can be in the form of Lessons, Assemblies, Sixth Form Workshops and STEP Days. From these can develop “Hanging Out” time, drop-in Clubs, specific courses</p> |

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and/or signposting. For example, tomorrow STEP is at Loreto College running a “Retreat” day for pupils to explore their faith and what it means to them in their daily lives.

Leadership courses for students ask, “does leadership come from personality or from skills”? They look at teamworking, identity, perseverance and forgiveness.

Transition work for 10-11 year olds. What will it be like to move to secondary school? What should they expect? STEP ran this as a short course for a local primary school. 40 children turned up and STEP was asked to continue the course for a further 6 weeks.

Although STEP is a youth organisation in terms of who it supports, the 39 volunteers who help run it are of varying ages, some now very old. They each have life skills and experience to bring to the sessions and offer a broad range of knowledge and support.

10 years ago, STEP provided 400 sessions in schools
2019 – STEP provided 1900 sessions in schools and 700-800 of those were with classes of 30 students. 88% of work is with young people in St Albans and Harpenden. Currently working with 14 schools, there are 2 (STAGS and Samuel Ryder) that they are starting to connect with and 3 where there is no connection currently.

How can people help? Chris had brought packs with him which will provide more detailed information on STEP and how to be involved. Even if you just turn up to make tea for the volunteers, it will be a great help.

The Lay Co-Chair thanked Chris Birch-Evens for his presentation. Although there was no Q&A session, he would be around later if anyone wished to speak with him.

3. Minutes of the last Deanery Synod Meeting – 12th June 2019

The Minutes of the last meeting, held on 12th June 2019, were accepted as a true representation by the members with one minor alteration (Page 2 Item 4 penultimate bullet point – The Big Sing – Feeling God’s presence, not felling). They were signed by the Lay Co-Chair.

There were no queries relating to the Minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held on 26th September 2019.

4. Climate Change – How is the Church Responding?

Kath Clough, Lay Member of St Albans Deanery Synod from St Luke’s Church, St Albans gave a presentation to Synod on Climate Change.

In April, Kath attended a talk on Climate Change and came away thinking the Climate is in a bad way. Since then, she has come to realise it is much worse. She asked for a show of hands

- Who is aware of the Climate emergency? Everybody
- Who is aware what the Church is doing about it? 2 people

This year Europe has experienced its hottest summer since records began, there have been devastating floods in Whaley Bridge and locally the River Ver has dried up.

Kath showed a slide demonstrating Greenhouse Gas emissions. Pre-1700 and the Industrial Revolution, emissions were steady. Since then, emissions have gone up exponentially and cumulatively. A comparative slide showing Climate Reports and International Agreements over the last 30 years demonstrated that this action on paper has had no impact on our carbon emissions at all, they continue to rise.

The UK is estimated to be responsible for 2.5% of global emissions. The Industrial Revolution started here so, as a Country, we need to show what we can do to reverse its negative impact.

William Wilberforce

“You can look the other way but you cannot say you did not know”

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XR – Extinction Rebellion – looked at models for change.

Mahatma Gandhi
Rosa Parks
Martin Luther King

They all invoked non-violent direct action (NVDA) to garner support for their cause and bring about momentous change. The disruptive/violent protests on the London Underground last week were not condoned by XR as an organisation, members were asked not to attend. The few who did carry out the protest angered the public and sympathy was for the commuters and innocent bystanders.

We have all seen evidence of the loss of habitats, erosion of topsoil and more and more species on the endangered list. We know these things in our head, we need to align the facts with what we feel. As a Church, we need to support people to act.

The Church of England has acknowledged a Climate Crisis. Acknowledging is not necessarily the same thing as “declaring” one.

Rachel Johnston of St Stephen’s Church, St Albans, has just been appointed as the Environment Officer for St Albans Diocese. Rachel was at the meeting along with other invited guests who have an interest in environmental matters within their parish. Deanery Synod welcomed Rachel’s appointment.

Eco Church – ⅓ of members were aware of this scheme, ⅔ had not heard of it. Eco Church is a programme run by the Christian charity, ARocha. It enables parishes to evaluate their current level of sustainability across the whole of their church life and to devise plans for future improvement.

Mike Berners-Lee was due to be hosting a talk “There is No Planet B” tomorrow at Marshalswick Baptist Church. He has now been asked to give the opening speech at an Environment meeting at The Hague. The meeting in Marshalswick is going ahead with an alternate speaker standing in for Mike. There will be a follow up meeting at St Luke’s, St Albans on 12th November.

Kath had brought a selection of leaflets with her for information. They were available for all at the back of the room.

**Action – Set up Environment Page on Deanery website to share information
Who – Deanery Secretary/Andy Sharp**

Q&A

Q – who is responsible? How do we get politicians to act? In 1972 The Economist was raising questions about CO₂

A – It has been easy for politicians to ignore, often they receive financial support from corporations involved in oil and gas exploration.

- St Michael’s Church held a talk about Plastic. Expected about 20 people, however 60 turned up. Recycling plastic will not work, we need to reduce our use/reliance on it e.g. do not buy plastic water bottles, do not buy milk from the supermarket. We have to change our habits to solve the problem. Decide what action to take and do it.
- Sustainable St Albans representative. The effects of problem are most acute in Third World Countries. It is very disturbing and very much a crisis. At the latest Climate meeting, the limits were again revised to enable us to meet set targets. Michael Mann, Climatologist, has been involved in researching Global Warming for a long time. At a recent talk he showed a Temperature Change Graph which showed the upward trend however, he said it is not a hopeless path. He stated it is very important to be practical and optimistic about what we can achieve. As Christians, we have a role to show what we can do.
- Eco Church – this initiative provokes you into change. It is flexible allowing churches to do what they can, when they can. It gives hope, presents churches with options/approaches that they can take.
- What if the Church is a listed building? With single-glazed windows which cannot be replaced, heating inefficiency is inevitable but the Diocese will not allow changes.

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- Reuse things. Look at all the paperwork involved in tonight’s meeting. Paper is very expensive, both economically and environmentally, to produce. Reusing a plastic bag is better than using a cotton bag as cotton has a very high carbon footprint.
- Do not use bags at the supermarket. Just fill your basket/trolley and sort items later. Reduce water usage/consumption.
- Sustainable St Albans – Thermal Imaging project. Two thermal imaging cameras are available so that parishes can ascertain where heat loss is occurring and make changes to reduce this. Full training is provided, free of charge. Details available at the back of the room.

The Rural Dean said this discussion shows that there is clear concern. Rachel Johnston has put together a proposal that Deanery Synod push the Diocese to encourage all churches to be Eco Churches and that the Diocese signs up to be an Eco Diocese.

Resolution:

The Synod of St Albans Deanery, mindful of the Church of England’s fifth mark of mission (To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth), requests the Diocese of St Albans to register with A Rocha UK for the Eco-Diocese Programme;

Q – What is ARocha?

A – Christian charity, international, set up to care for the environment

xx proposed the motion. zz seconded it.

For 32 Against 0 Abstain 1

zx asked if Deanery Synod would want Diocesan Synod to pass the motion to General Synod? There was general agreement to this so a Second Resolution was drawn up

Resolution 2:

The Synod of St Albans Deanery further requests that the General Synod debate a motion ‘in identical terms’ requesting that every diocese of the Church of England registers with A Rocha UK for the Eco-Diocese Programme.

zx proposed the motion. xz seconded it.

For 32 Against 0 Abstain 1

Deanery Synod thanked Kath Clough for her insightful presentation.

5. **Deanery Communications**

cc, St Saviour’s Church, had put together a paper on how we can promote the Deanery more amongst our parishes. He came to the meeting of Standing Committee on 26th September to present his idea which was well received.

Members were given a handout which detailed the proposal for Electronic Noticeboards in churches/church halls. This covered content, hardware and software requirements, installation, management and ongoing maintenance.

Content would be managed centrally and updated overnight. Notices would then be scrolled through on the TV monitor and could include parish, deanery and diocesan news and events. Once installed, the system would need minimal maintenance and would provide clear, ecological communication across the Deanery.

Members were asked to present the idea to their PCC for consideration.

6. **Deanery Mission Action Plan (DMAP) – key actions taken**

Beautiful Burial Ground Project

Paper 3 sent out with the Agenda, was a full report on the two sessions which ran on 21st September. The Deanery Secretary gave a brief update on actions since.

- We have been asked to keep the BBG Project Coordinator updated with progress, especially changes

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to the way we manage our churchyards

- Colney Heath, St Mark – found a letter and report from the Diocese that the churchyard is recognised as a Wildlife Site. Pulling team together to work through that report. Ancient Tree Group – looking to see if Oaks and Yews can be registered on this.
- London Colney, St Peter – Common Spotted Orchid in the churchyard has been officially recorded. Planning for Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) to carry out a site survey in Spring/Summer 2020
- Aldenham, St John the Baptist – plans to establish a wildflower meadow in part of the churchyard. Making contact with HMWT
- St Albans, St Stephen – looking to update mowing regime in the churchyard to support and encourage more species. Also looking to see if HMWT will conduct a site survey next year

Next Steps

- Community Engagement – form links with local schools and groups to celebrate the biodiversity in our churchyards. Example – Highfield Park Society has organised a “Bug Hunt” in the local park during Half Term

X:Site

The Rural Dean reported on this. Effectively a 2-hour holiday club for Years 3-6 (7-11 year olds). We have run 4 now, the last one was on 19th October at St Luke’s, St Albans and was attended by 42 children. The project is struggling for Helpers.

Does this project work for us as a Deanery? Is your church wanting to support X:Site? 2,500 leaflets printed and distributed to promote each event. Aiming to attract c100 children and run a range of activities to help our churches connect with young people. Appreciate that for parishes in South St Albans, it is too far to travel. The hope and aim is to set up a second venue, possibly Holy Trinity, Frogmore or Christ Church, Radlett.

Typically 10 churches are represented, 6 Anglican, 4 non-Anglican. What is happening in your church? At this point, we need your feedback.

- How did the 42 children get there? Saturday is often too busy with sport, music etc to fit another activity in.
- St Stephen’s – we really support it. We do not have many children to send but those who go absolutely love it and are telling their friends about it. Coming from such a low base it will be hard to get it going but the momentum is there. Keep going with it!

The Rural Dean thanked members for their input, it is really helpful as it is difficult to know how we are doing.

Invitation cards to the next X:Site on 1st February 2020 are on the table at the back of the room.

7. Parish Matters

How Could Deanery Support Your Parish

If you have ideas or requests, please send them to the Lay Chair for inclusion on a future Agenda.

Appointments

Revd Caroline Keightley has been installed at St Mark’s, Colney Heath
Revd Kirsty Wainwright has joined St Stephen’s with St Julian’s as Curate
Revd Alex Huzzey has joined St Peter’s, St Albans as Curate
Revd Canon Jonathan Lloyd is the new Precentor at St Albans Abbey

Deanery Synod Standing Committee

Two elected members have stood down so we are looking for 2 people to join. There are elections for Deanery Synod next Spring so the appointment would only be short term.

**Action – Send out information on what is involved in being on Standing Committee
Who – Deanery Secretary**

8. Finances – Deanery Treasurer

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| | <p>Members were handed the Finance Report showing projected costs for 2019 and proposed budget for 2020.</p> <p>2018 – parishes paid £50 contribution per lay member to cover the costs of X:Site, the Newsletter and setting up the Deanery Website. Not all this money was spent as the projects were just getting going.</p> <p>2019 – it was agreed that no contributions would be collected for one year and that this would be reviewed by Deanery Synod.</p> <p>2020 – going through the proposed budget for 2020, the costings amounted to a contribution of £30 per lay member.</p> <p>Resolution</p> <p><i>Deanery Synod request a contribution of £30 per lay member (whether the vacancy is filled or not) from each parish for the Financial Year 2020</i></p> <p>Proposed by aa, Seconded bb</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For 33 Against 0 Abstain 0</p> <p>Motion carried.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. | Synod Reports | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p><u>General Synod</u></p> <p>dd read from a report provided by Tim Fleming. Report attached.</p> <p><u>Diocesan Synod</u></p> <p>Presidential Speech – included “The Big Conversation” to imagine a Church that is growing younger. 2020 plan to speak with all Deaneries and through them all PCCs.</p> <p>There was the Annual Presentation on Stipends and Budgets. It was agreed that Stipends increase by 2%.</p> <p>Presentation with a Q&A session on AI (Artificial Intelligence) and theological questions surrounding this.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. | Any Other Business | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Item for which there was not time on this Agenda therefore taken forward to March 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia Friends – how to provide support and services within your church that are relevant for people suffering with Dementia | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. | Notices | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>SustFest20 – St Albans Sustainability Festival runs from 23rd May to 7th June 2020. Go to https://sustainablestalbans.org/ to register your Church for events and activities at next year’s festival.</p> <p>Safeguarding – The Rural Dean has written a paper to the Diocese on the issue of Safeguarding. Currently there are over 50 documents relating to Safeguarding that the Diocese has produced and Incumbents/Safeguarding Officers are supposed to be familiar with all of them. There are too many and there is the risk of missing an important point in amongst them. The Rural Dean has since been invited to attend the next meeting of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee in November.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. | Closing Prayer | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>The meeting closed with all saying the Grace.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Dates for future meetings (NB - with 7.30pm start time)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2020</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">12th March</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">St Peter’s, St Albans</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">17th June</td> <td style="text-align: center;">St Luke’s, Bricket Wood</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10th November</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Holy Trinity, Frogmore</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | 12 th March | St Peter’s, St Albans | | 17 th June | St Luke’s, Bricket Wood | | 10 th November | Holy Trinity, Frogmore | |
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