

DEANERY OF ST ALBANS

<https://www.stalbansdeanerysynod.online>

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 14th October 2021 at Christ Church, Radlett

PRESENT

Ex officio

Rural Dean

The Revd Kenneth Padley (RD)

Treasurer

Pam Fox (PF)

Lay Chair

Meriel Dixon (MD)

Secretary

Julia Pyburn

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

1.	Opening Prayers
	<p>The Revd Kenneth Padley welcomed all members of Deanery Synod and visitors to the first “in person” meeting of Deanery in this new Triennium. St Albans Deanery includes 16 parishes and is primarily there to support the wider life of its churches. Chapter is formed of Incumbents and other clergy working within the Deanery; it meets twice per Term. Deanery Synod is made up of the House of Clergy (i.e. Chapter) and the House of Laity; it meets once per Term.</p> <p>Much of the evening’s time would be devoted to the presentation however, there were certain items of Deanery business to be dealt. There would be a short break after the presentation so visitors could leave then before the business part started.</p> <p>Meriel Dixon, Lay Co-Chair led the meeting in Opening Prayer.</p> <p>The Rural Dean gave a brief introduction to the presentation. The DSSC had discussed how best to respond to the problems we are faced with in light of the Climate Crisis. How can we make a difference as individuals, communities and within our parishes? DSSC invited Rachel Johnston, the Diocesan Environment Officer, to present to Deanery Synod and she asked to do this prior to COP26 taking place.</p>
2.	Living Hopefully
	<p>Presentation and discussion led by Rachel Johnston, St Albans Diocesan Environment Officer</p> <p>Rachel Johnston thanked St Albans Deanery for inviting her to speak. The role of Diocesan Environment Officer is a part-time, voluntary one which has expanded over the last 2 years. It falls within the Department of Mission headed by Canon Tim Lomax.</p> <p>The World is facing many challenges on several fronts:- Economic such as Brexit; Health as highlighted by the current pandemic; and Climate Change demonstrated by wildfires, rising sea levels and freak weather events. The following presentation looks at the scientific evidence of the climate crisis, our moral and spiritual obligations as Christians to respond and practical ways in which we can reduce our carbon footprint by changing behaviours as individuals, within our parishes and as part of the global community.</p> <p>Please refer to the attached Presentation Slides (Paper 1)</p> <p>When the presentation came to look at the Eco Church initiative, the audience broke into small discussion groups to consider 3 scenarios (Paper 2). The groups gave feedback as follows:-</p> <p>Scenario 1 – matched funding from the Diocesan Green Grant which covers Energy & resource use; Churchyard; Faith and outreach projects; and practical lifestyle actions.</p>

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Building insulation/Double glazing – several of the Church buildings are listed so such modifications are restricted or at best limited in scope. One church had received a grant to install 1 double-glazed window in the Church Hall, this was replacing a window that had been damaged. Changing this window unblocked the thinking of the PCC and encouraged it to do more.

LED light bulbs – where the current lighting system meets legal requirements and is working well, it was deemed inappropriate to change it. Only as it became obsolete would it be cost effective to upgrade to LED lighting. St Stephen's has recently installed a new LED system in the church at a cost of over £40k. St Michael's spent £20k a few years ago on a system which includes movement sensors. The subsequent cost savings have been considerable.

Interpretation boards for the wildlife area of the churchyard – some churches have received complaints that their churchyard was looking messy where they have left areas unmown to encourage biodiversity. Setting up interpretation boards to explain what is happening in that area and why could encourage people from the wider community to become involved and appreciate the uniqueness of the site.

St Julian's had seen the benefit of installing thermal blinds and curtains in the Church Hall but given the demographic of their congregation, a Cycle rack would not be appropriate.
Andy Sharp has clarified that the total cost of blinds and curtains in St Julian's in 2018 was £3,100. As far as can be ascertained, this resulted in a 15% reduction in heating costs - although different weather in 2017 and 2019 may have contributed to the saving

Rainwater butt and fittings – only useful if the churchyard includes a flower garden or where Planters/window boxes have been installed.

Scenario 2 – Disposables

What action would you recommend that the PCC should take regarding a) parish events and activities; b) activities of outside groups using church facilities?

One member said that they never used disposables but had then recalled that they had purchased lunch that day from a sandwich shop which included plastic cutlery. It was easy to fall into the trap.

Investment in a commercial dishwasher was recommended. This would allow for quick, hygienic cleaning of crockery and cutlery for activities/events run by both the parish and outside groups.

Where disposables were used, ideally these should be from renewable sources (e.g. bamboo cutlery) and be biodegradable. As a minimum, they must be recyclable.

Scenario 3 – No cost actions

Hippos in the toilet cistern – several people reported problems with these after installation in Church Hall facilities. Toilets did not flush correctly resulting in people flushing them 4 or 5 times to clear the bowl. This defeats the object of installing them.

Survey of cleaning products – Rachel was asked what was meant by this point. In a nutshell, are the cleaning products currently in use plant-based and biodegradable or do they contain chemicals which have a large carbon-footprint to manufacture and which are harmful to wildlife?

Most parishes seemed to have recycling facilities in place already.

St Peter's, London Colney gave a cautionary tale regarding composting facilities. These have to be managed and turned regularly to obtain compost. Otherwise you end up with mounds of rank grass clippings which will go mouldy rather than composting down. Removal of this is laborious and could be costly if transport needs to be hired.

Bug hotels/bird nest box/Bat box – suitable for some churches but not all. Similarly, bird feeding stations.

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Rewilding church grounds (e.g. at Christ Church, Radlett) and carrying out wildlife surveys were welcomed.

Encouraging members of the local community to use church land for recreation/contemplation. St Peter's, London Colney had taken worship outside – due to recent government restrictions on singing in enclosed places [due to the current pandemic], the congregation had gone outside to the car park to sing hymns. Another had used their outside space to set up and follow the Four Stations of the Pentecost and to create a Christmas Trail.

The charity "Caring for God's Acre" had provided training in Sept 2019 on carrying out churchyard surveys and had many resources available for churches to involve local schools and the community in wildlife surveys and how to increase biodiversity in the churchyard.

How do you find Volunteers? The Abbey said that 80% of work is done by Volunteers. They have a Committee to assess the aptitudes of people so that they can be fitted with tasks most suited to them. There has to be good planning to ensure that vulnerable and/or disabled people are protected and that facilities are used safely.

St Stephen's reported that a teenager was helping out with work in the Churchyard as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. By providing him with this volunteering opportunity, it supported his progression towards the award and created a link between the Church and his School.

A book of resources will be emailed out to everybody giving links to information, organisations and practical tools (Paper 3)

Following this discussion, Rachel Johnston returned to her presentation. Full details are in Paper 1, the following are some highlights:-

There are 440 Churches in the Diocese of St Albans and many have untouched churchyards (i.e. they have not been cultivated for crops or as gardens) so they are a vital resource for their local flora and fauna. Parishes may wish to conduct an annual survey, counting and recording the variety of species that are found in their grounds.

The Queen's Green Canopy – starting in October 2021 and continuing into 2022 to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's reign. Native species of trees are being planted across the Commonwealth. Either the Woodland Trust or our local Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust will be able to advise on what to plant and where.

"Climate anxiety" has been recognised as a medical condition. There is a great deal of media attention on Climate Change and people want to act but often feel helpless and do not know what to do for the best. In a recent survey, young people said that they wanted the Church to do more to protect the Environment.

"Climate Sunday" Service – encourage your parish to commit to take action. Take "The Time is Now" pledge.

"Remarkable Trees" – this exhibition runs until 23rd January 2022 at St Albans' Museum

The Rural Dean thanked Rachel for such an insightful and thought provoking presentation. Members and visitors were encouraged to sign up for more information.

A short break allowed visitors to leave prior to commencement of Deanery business.

3. Attendance & Apologies

Attendance – 34 Members recorded. Only one parish was not represented – St Albans, St Peter's.

Apologies received – 15.

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	<p>NB – there are 2 parishes in vacancy – Shenley, St Martin; St Albans, St Luke.</p> <p>No Lay Representatives have been elected to Deanery Synod from London Colney, St Peter's.</p>
4.	Minutes of previous Synod and Standing Committee
	<p>Minutes of the meeting of Deanery Synod on 8th June 2021 were circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Rural Dean asked if they were an accurate recording.</p> <p>Proposed by : Andy Sharp Seconded by: Michael Jameson Approved: unanimous</p> <p>Minutes of the recent Standing Committee meeting were received.</p>
5.	Elections
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diocesan Synod – casual vacancies – laity (4)<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Only 1 completed Nomination Form received from Elizabeth Cummins – Approved by Synod• Diocesan Synod – casual vacancies – clergy (11)<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 2 completed Nomination Forms received from Revd Corniel Quak and Fr Richard Watson – Approved by Synod• Diocesan Board of Finance – Lay Representative. Lay members of Diocesan Synod are eligible to stand for this role. Of the newly elected Lay members, only David Roberts wished to stand. His appointment was approved by Deanery Synod.• Diocesan Board of Education – Lay Representative. Vicky Barriere of the Diocesan Board of Education had written to the Rural Dean saying that the Diocesan Board of Education would like to renew the appointment of Andrew Wellbeloved, Head of Townsend School. <p>Proposed: Kenneth Padley Seconded: Meriel Dixon Approved by Deanery Synod</p>
6.	Forthcoming Issues and Dates
	<p>Standing Committee had discussed possible topics and speakers for future meetings.</p> <p>8th February 2022 – St Saviour's Church. Youth Welfare and Mental Health. Speakers – Christian Cole, Diocesan Youth Missioner and David Barker, Managing Director of Youth Talk, a charity providing support for teenagers. The disruption to education and careers caused by the Covid 19 pandemic and resultant Lockdowns had seriously impacted on the mental health of young people. Finding ways to support younger members of our congregations and in the wider community was seen as first priority.</p> <p>8th June 2022 – London Colney, St Peter's. "Dementia Friendly" presentation by Louise Bates of the Alzheimer's Society. Exploring how we can make our churches and services accessible and meaningful for people suffering with dementia. It is hoped this will encourage PCCs to consider changes that can be made not only for those with dementia but other mental health issues too (e.g. Autism).</p> <p>18th October 2022 – Venue tbc. Clergy Welfare. Speaker Richard Farmbrough from the Clergy Support Trust. Looking at the support available for Clergy and their families to ensure their health and wellbeing. Although the support will often be a financial grant, there are other resources on offer too.</p> <p>Members were asked to contact anyone on Standing Committee with ideas for future topics or speakers.</p> <p>Q – would there be time for questions in future presentations? A – a very good question. Yes, usually time would be allowed for a Q&A session. If anyone has any questions arising for tonight's presentation, please take them up directly with Rachel Johnston via email environment@stalbens.anglican.org</p>

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	<p><u>Other Events in the Deanery</u></p> <p>17th November 2021 – Church Halls Management. 7.30pm at St Julian’s Church Hall. Following a presentation to Chapter by Revd Cllr Robert Donald and colleagues from St Albans District Council on how churches can assist local businesses in our communities, an invitation has gone out to all Hall Managers to attend. This will be an opportunity to share best practice on advertising facilities, managing bookings and maximising hall usage. Hall Hire is a large proportion of income for many parishes so looking at ways to increase bookings makes financial sense as well as engaging with the wider community and local companies.</p> <p>28th November – Confirmation Service. 10.30am at Radlett, Christ Church. Please speak with Revd Oliver Blease if you have anyone who would be interested in attending this.</p> <p>2nd February 2022 – Roundtable of Clergy and local Funeral Directors. Frogmore, Holy Trinity. To date there have been 4 such meetings to develop closer working relationships between parishes and local Funeral parlours. Please encourage all Clergy and Readers who take funerals to attend.</p>
7.	Parish Share historic debt write-off request
	<p>The Parish Share is paid by parishes to defray costs across the Diocese. Parishes may not always pay their share for various reasons and debt can build up. Where there are 3 or more years’ historic debt, the Diocese will write to ask if the Parish wishes to have the debt written-off.</p> <p>Revd Kylie Hodgins, Vicar at St Luke’s, Bricket Wood has written to the Rural Dean on behalf of St Luke’s PCC asking for the support of the deanery for St Luke’s plea to the Diocesan Board of Finance that St Luke’s historic debt from 2005 – 2014 be written off. The Rural Dean read out the letter in full (Paper 4) and then asked if there were any questions. There were none so he proposed that Deanery Synod approve the write-off.</p> <p>Proposed: Revd Kenneth Padley Seconded: Revd Jono Tregale For: 30 Against: 0 Abstained: 2</p> <p>(NB David Roberts abstained on the grounds that this issue may come before the Diocesan Board of Finance)</p>
8.	Matters Arising from Minutes of the Last Meeting
	None
9.	Any Other Business
	<p>The Rural Dean had received a question regarding communication between members of Deanery Synod.</p> <p>The provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations mean that we cannot share members’ details (email addresses, telephone numbers etc). If you wish to swap contact details informally with another member or members, please do and keep sharing ideas.</p> <p>Any queries should be directed to the Deanery Secretary or Rural Dean.</p>
10.	Closing Prayers
	<p>The Rural Dean thanked everyone for their input during the evening.</p> <p>There was a moment for quiet reflection before Members joined in saying The Grace.</p>
11.	Date of Next Meeting
	8 th February 2022 – 7.30pm at St Saviour’s Church, St Albans. AL1 4DF