

**Minutes of Reigate Deanery Synod Meeting**  
**Held at St John's Church, Church Road, Redhill, RH1 6QA.**  
**on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

Chair: Chris Elliott - Lay Chair

Members present: 45 Apologies: 21

1. Chris Elliott welcomed members to the meeting.
2. The meeting began with an act of worship led by Rev John Kronenberg.
3. Chris thanked St John's for the use of their premises and for the refreshments. He then welcomed Bishop Jonathan who he felt was well known to most Synod members and is a great supporter of refugees and asylum seekers.

When invited by Chris to speak at the meeting Bishop Jonathan was told he could choose what to speak on. He said he looked up Southwark Vision and Deaneries on the internet and one of the things that came up was a reference to Reigate Deanery Synod when Ruth Martin came and talked on this subject. He felt it was an opportunity for him to say that if he was to come and talk to us on the same subject of Southwark Vision and Deaneries it would be an inappropriate thing to do. He said he needed to learn from us. He said that it is frequently said at Diocesan meetings that Reigate Deanery is actually showing the Diocese the way to engage with the things we are doing in the Diocese as a whole and in particular this whole agenda that Bishop Christopher had about breathing new life into deaneries which in certain parts of the Diocese is met with some scepticism as to whether you can resuscitate this dead body. We have shown that resurrection is not only possible but something we can all expect. We should feel good about ourselves and all we have done and are doing as a deanery because it is a remarkable achievement. One of the things that struck him when he first came into the area was that the churches seemed to have retreated into an ecclesiastical preserve and that there was very little engagement in the Church of England's traditional role in terms of serving society as a whole. What we have done over the past few years in our Deanery has been impressive in generating that sense in the District Council and part of the County that they begin to recognise that they need churches as allies. A great way into that has been the help given to settle Syrian refugees, the Carers' Conference and the upcoming Forum. The challenge for us across the Diocese as a whole is not to invent new things but to work through into the life of Deaneries and Parishes what it means for this to be something that is who we are as a body together. The diocesan vision has to make sense in the parishes. Bishop Christopher's new strapline is Christ centred – outward focussed. The message is we should be one community together in our diversity and celebrating our variety as being a gift from God and saying how do we resource and support one another as we journey on together. He emphasised that we are part of a Diocese that is part of the Church of England and everyone is equally part of the Diocese. We should be looking outwards and the way to do this is to focus on the five marks of mission.

There are three specific issues of this; one is Brexit. We as the church cannot ignore this. We need to find a language in which we can speak to one another in a way that goes deeper than the politics of this country. We need to find a more profound unity together which we can offer to the world. (Fourth mark of Mission). There has been an increasing amount of verbal and physical violence generated out of the Brexit experience. There has been an increase in hate crime, anti-Semitic crime and an increase in the abuse suffered by those in visible ethnic minorities. As Christians we need to find a unity that is focussed on our commitment to Christ and our commitment to the Kingdom of God as our primary identity. Our primary identity as Christians is as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven not as a citizen of the UK or any other country. We should be able to talk about these things in our church communities and offer that gift to the world; to be peacemakers in the world.

He also said there was great difference in opinion about Extinction Rebellion but we have to recognise that change is happening and having dangerous and radical effects. We need to make practical decisions like choosing renewable energy even if it not the cheapest.

The Parish Support Fund has been one of the success stories of the Church of England. Most of the money comes back as something useful and most of it is in payment of a vicar. Next year we are working towards a much tougher budget mainly because more parishes are saying they can't increase their giving. There is a challenge for us as a Diocese that we use our resources as best as we can.

We are moving beyond the broadcast phase into a conversation phase and learning from each other what it means to live out this calling we share.

There was a time for reflection and then questions to the Bishop.

Rev Canon Les Wells: One of the important things that has been said is to not do more but embrace what we do. Sometimes we forget how much we do and we need to grow in what we are doing. The bishop replied that one of the marks of a healthy church is to do a few things and do them well.

Rev Anna Moore: There is a difficulty in finding someone to do the research to find the best way forward with renewable energy. Could the Diocese or Deanery do something to take the pressure of the individual parishes? The Bishop said there was a National Purchasing Scheme and someone mentioned Parish Buying and another the Church Energy Purchasing Group. There are also environment pages on the Church of England website with the appropriate links.

Christopher Taylor: The funds going into the Diocese reflect the funds coming into the parishes and the effects of Brexit and the subsequent uncertainty have had an effect on what is given to the church. The bishop said he recognised this and didn't want to cast any blame on anyone but to just recognise this issue which is biting at every level.

Julia Johns: Their conversation relayed that people were slightly troubled where Extinction Rebellion is going. The Bishop commented that the Diocese had not adopted a position about Extinction Rebellion and whilst he is supporting individuals who felt this was the right thing to do, they are not collectively saying we should be doing this. Chris Elliott commented that we are becoming an Eco-Diocese and this is making a statement.

Chris Elliott: Asked a question about the age of people who could go forward for ordination as people are living and working longer and the Bishop replied that the vocation pages on the Diocesan Website should show that the ages for entering training for the ministry had increased for stipendiary ministers to 57 and non-stipendiary to 62.

Chris then thanked the Bishop for attending.

4. Minutes of Reigate Deanery Synod Meeting held at St Luke's Church, Church Road, Reigate, RH2 8HY on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2019 were approved and signed.

#### 5. **Elections to Diocesan Synod**

There are three vacancies for House of Clergy and one vacancy for the House of Laity on the Diocesan Synod. Two nominations for the House of Clergy have been received. One was from Rev Anita Colpus and the other was from Rev Dr Nigel Griffiths; both of whom were declared elected to the Diocesan Synod. Anita gave encouragement to members to join Diocesan Synod and invited members to ask questions of the current membership saying it would be good to have

Reigate Deanery's full quota represented at Diocesan Synod. As a result of this, three other clergy members showed an interest in becoming Diocesan Synod members. The papers will go out again and if they all fill them in we will have an election. There were no volunteers for the House of Laity. Chris encouraged members to think about it prayerfully.

## 6. Financial Report from the Treasurer.

The Treasurer was unable to attend the meeting but Chris said there wasn't anything to report as we were in the middle of the year and invited members to pose to him any questions they might have but none were forthcoming.

## 7. Notices from the Chairs/Spoken reports

- Kim Honey was not at the meeting but Chris gave a synopsis of what was happening with Thy Kingdom Come for next year. There has been a meeting and some events have been planned for 2020. We will have another Ascension Day service on Reigate Hill and we will have the prayer space in Redhill. We will be looking for people to help in the prayer spaces and hopefully we can have one in Reigate next year if we can find the support to run it. More will be said at the February Synod.
- Rachel Gardiner gave an update on Youth Events. She began by reiterating the fact that there is money available from the Diocese and Deanery for youth work and training. Southwark Diocese CYPMM will give more information or anyone can talk to Rachel. She highlighted an event led by David Csinos at Trinity House on 7<sup>th</sup> November entitled, How Children and Young People Create Theological Meaning. Also a new resource has been developed by a children's pastor from Christ Church, Purley called CSI Easter. It can be hosted in church and local schools can be invited. It uses science to go through the story of Easter and involves crime solving. There is a training course for that on 24<sup>th</sup> February at Christ Church, Purley. Keli Bolton from the Diocese can now be followed on Facebook and Twitter with news of what is going on with young people. Once again Rachel made a plea for updates of Parish Reps. Chris then proceeded to thank her for all she does for your people in our deanery.
- Chris Elliott gave an update on Social Justice. There is a Forum on 20<sup>th</sup> November at St Mary's Church Centre. A poster has been distributed. It is free and the Chief Constable for Surrey, Supt Karen Mizzi and the Clewer Initiative, whose focus is on Modern Slavery, will be taking part. The signs of modern slavery, signs of county lines drug dealing and signs of serious organized violent crime are all around us and we are just not seeing it and if we do see it we don't know what to do with it. There will also be someone there from Crimestoppers. Places are going very quickly. Other things will be done following on from that depending on the level of interest and in what areas. Chris has written to every church asking if they are willing to give details of their church halls and premises that they might be willing to let out and share with other charities. Some have come back and he has now put something on the Deanery Website. He will be at a meeting called, "Get Connected" which Reigate and Banstead Borough Council have put together. It is a group of local agencies focusing on children and young people and how to support them in times of need. They do need premises for meetings sometimes one on one or perhaps for a major function. Ven Moira said in her talk at the Carer's Conference was that one of the things churches have lots of are premises. If churches want their premises put on the list, they are to send them to Chris.
- Rev Anita Colpus then gave us an update on Make Lunch (formerly known as Lunchbox). She started by reminding us of the February Synod where we had a talk from JPIC and then broke into small groups. The post its from these group meetings were collated and most of them seemed to implicate that we wanted to support those families who in the holidays did not have enough money to feed their children. Anita then asked members if they had seen a flyer she was holding up in their church. She said they wanted to get a group of people who felt strongly in getting together to form Make Lunch. She felt it was something the Deanery could do together. She is suggesting that if we had 50 people across the Deanery and divided them into three groups and also across the Deanery found three areas in particular need which we would do through our relationship with schools. We would provide one meal a week in the school holidays after the school had invited these families to come along. A team of about 15 people would cook

a meal, do some craft and build relationships with these families. Funding has already been secured of £500 each for three groups and we should be able to feed 30-40 people with this amount of money for about two to three years. The response to this for helpers has been poor and so she appealed for more people to come forward. A question was asked as to whether we would provide hot or cold food and Anita felt it was generally hot food that would be provided. There would be three teams and then after some training it would be up to the team working together to decide what was best for them. She said she would send out the leaflet to the Deanery Secretary for it to go out in the monthly events mailing. Chris said he would put it on the website and twitter.

- Anita then reiterated that Chris would be standing down in his role of Lay Chair in 2020. She asked members to prayerfully think about taking on this role or perhaps to consider a member of their congregation who would be suitable. She invited anyone who might be interested to come and see her or Chris or Andrew Cunningham. Chris then mentioned something that happens in the Croydon Area is that the Lay Chairs meet once or twice a year and you can through this group feel you are not alone.
- Hilary Richardson then came forward to talk to us about the Mothers' Union who she said Archbishop Justin referred to as the best kept secret in the Church of England. She wanted to highlight events two of which were happening at St Francis in Horley. She spoke of the Lily Trust who work with people subject to modern day slavery and those taken into custody. St Francis is acting as a drop off centre for toiletries and supplies. She will email the Deanery Secretary with details for this to be sent out with the next mailing. Also at St Francis from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December is 16 days of activism against gender based violence. On Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm they are showing a film addressing the subject of female genital mutilation. A new initiative regarding refugees and asylum seekers is to train people to set up and run groups communicating English. This has been enabled by a legacy left to the Mothers' Union.
- Chris then just mentioned that in all ten televisions had been delivered to the Council and now the Council's commitment to refugees was complete. We are also paying for a year's Wi-Fi for these families.
- He also mentioned the next Healing Service at St Francis on 27<sup>th</sup> October.

Rev John Kronenberg finished the evening with prayer.