

Minutes of Easingwold Deanery Synod Sept 25th 2018 Sutton Church Hall

Present – Revd Liz Hassall (Area Dean), Margaret Price (Lay Dean, in chair), Jane Johnson (treasurer & deanery Financial Adviser), Revd Margaret Young, Revd Steve Whiting, Revd Martin Harrison, Revd Stephen Pope, Paula Ritchie, Liz Crawshaw, Janet Irish, Alizon Leese, Andrew Evans, Malcolm French, Richard Mapletoft, Kathy Peacock, Olivia Taylor, Sian Merritt (secretary),

Apologies – Revd Charlotte Cranfield, Revd Catherine Toase, Revd Rob Suekarran, Revd Malcolm Wainwright, Revd Trevor Gant, Michael Wansborough, Carolyn Fletcher, Janet Mountain, David Mitchellines, Jane Pearce, Michael Turvey, Alan Hake, Carol Colbourne.

1. Opening Worship was led by Revd Steve Whiting
2. Approval of Minutes June 6th 2018 – following 3 amendments regarding attendees/apologies these were signed as a correct record
3. Matters Arising from minutes – Margaret Price has kindly offered to help us share synod news with our PCC's by circulating to synod reps & PCC secretaries the summary she makes from synod minutes for her own PCC.

4. Bishop John was unable to attend due to ill health but had sent Liz Hassall his notes to discuss with us. A summary of his deanery visits –
2105 – Faith as a social experience.
2016 – The calling of the Church of England
2017 – Sharing our faith stories, and why that can be difficult.

2018 – Sharing our story: doing good – the walk not just the talk

If our Christian life left a trail like a snail, would we be happy for others to see it?

What, from the Gospels, best summarises Jesus' teaching? – we agreed it was the first 2 commandments. Do we actually do that or are we better at telling others that is what they should be doing?

We were asked for evidence of faith in action – ideas included supporting charities, caring for & supporting others, foodbanks, bereavement counselling, support at funerals when people are often open to listening. Statistics – in UK there are 427 Foodbanks based in churches; 50,000 registered charities (27% of the total) are faith based; 1 million children are being educated in CofE schools; 15 million people have attended one in the past.

Why does it matter to show rather than just say? – we all agreed that it does matter & thoughts included; if you live it you show it & it's attractive to others; it's about building up personal relationships. Examples of "doing good" included; Foodbanks, Street Angels, providing a listening ear, being there, praying for people.

What is the difference when we "do good" as a Christian? – thoughts included; it is discipleship; it is what God wants us to do; by doing it we become more Christ-like (as a side-effect not as an incentive) and Jesus is revealed through us; it changes us as well & brings us closer to Jesus.

Much of this talk is based on the book: "For Good: The Church and the future of Welfare" by Sam Wells et al which talks about "faring well" not just welfare & proposes a model which focuses on 5 assets, that the church can help with, to empower people to take control of their lives ie:

being with, sharing with, working with, standing with & laughing with.

And to do so by:

contradiction, contrast, compliment, collaboration & co-option - with what is already happening.

The questions to take away & consider are:

How can we do good in our churches/deanery?

How can we live out our faith & have a real impact in our communities?

Liz advised that we do not be afraid of the enormity of the task but look at what is possible, however small, with the skills & resources we have (Jane J reminded us of the saying, "How do you eat an elephant?" – one mouthful at a time).

This will deepen our discipleship, show what we stand for and so attract others to our way of life. An example is our Deanery Interest groups, so do join one.

Liz also commended the Ken Loach film, "I, Daniel Blake" film – currently on Netflix.

5. Diocesan Synod report. The link to this had been circulated with the agenda and questions/comments were invited.

Margaret P noted the item entitled "Setting God's People Free" which invites and encourages deaneries to share good news stories, particularly involving lay people, with the diocese.

She reminded us, as our Freewill Offerings are now due, that the diocesan budget is in deficit and we are encouraged to offer, across our benefices/parishes, at least enough to cover the cost of our clergy which is about £65,000.

Regarding the "Reaching those in their 20's – 40's" strategy: the bid for funding from the Church Commissioners is ongoing. Andy Evans reported that Beverley Minster has recently taken on a young priest as part of this process. Martin Harrison informed us that Rob Suekarran, his curate, is having extra training as part of this, with a particular emphasis on "Fresh Expressions" eg. looking at those who do not come to church, doing church other than in the usual building and on a different day of the week. It is an exciting time but early days and perhaps less clear how this will work in rural as well as urban areas given the smaller numbers involved. Sian suggested it might be something to do across a deanery.

Malcolm French, our Diocesan Synod rep, commented that he is much encouraged by what is happening at Diocesan Synod at the moment.

6. General Synod Report from Revd Paul Hutchinson, who is our link with GS, had been circulated with the agenda. There were no questions on this.

7. Coordinator Report. This report from Carol Colbourne had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Margaret P noted that there are still some consent forms relating to the new GDPR rules outstanding which Carol will be chasing up.

She thanked people for contributing "Good news" stories to the weekly Deanery News email and encourages us to circulate the news to church members as appropriate. She reminded us that the photo competition is open until October 1st.

The Deanery Website is being improved & also updated for phones/tablets.

It was also noted that the first Deanery Newsletter from the diocese was recently circulated and includes an article by Liz H.

Sian thanked Carol, in her absence, for all the work she does for the deanery.

8. Deanery Plan. Ideas for updates/amendments to our rolling 3 year plan were requested.

Liz H said that the Deanery Leadership Team propose that we streamline the Interest groups by combining "Telling the Good News of Jesus Christ" with "Helping people grow in their faith" to become a discipleship group. Also the work of "Sharing God's love with all people" is better done at parish level. The other 3 groups – "Worship", "Environment" & "Unjust structures" will remain. We are encouraged to join a group and to invite others from our churches who might be interested.

Other suggestions were to include sharing of ideas & encouragement about LyCiG and to mention children's & youth work.

The DLT will discuss this further and make adjustments in order to keep the plan accurate & relevant.

9. The LyCiG Journey.

Revd Steve Whiting of Forest of Galtres benefice (went to LyCiG conference in February 2018) told us they had had a launch day at Pentecost including distributing a bookmark to all churchgoers – this has a picture of all the churches on one side and an amended form of the LyCiG Prayer for Growth on the other with an acorn at the top and an oak tree at the bottom. They started a series of 7 weekly sermons, managing to fit them around worship in 5 different churches.

On Thursday evening Oct 4th they have an event planned in Stillington Village Hall of a bring & share supper, preceded by a Power Point presentation by the LyCiG group. There will then be discussion in church groups about how to move forward - specifically what could be achieved by Easter 2019 and what within 2 years.

There will be meetings into the future for sharing ideas & encouraging each other. Steve is encouraged by the energy around these plans and thrilled by the lay involvement and stressed that it is they who are driving this forward.

Martin H said that Strensall are now reviewing their Mission Action Plan to ensure it remains an active document.

Margaret Young said that Easingwold's MAP has been approved by PCC and plans include removing pews and curry nights. She referred us to an article on modernising church buildings, the link is here: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/18/modernise-close-parish-churches-told-judge-warns-buildings-risk/>

Liz Crawshaw reported from the Byland Churches that they are encouraging each church by working more closely together; particularly focussing on the joint 5th Sunday services to make that worship as good as it can be and following it with lunch. Also producing a joint service booklet for all 7 churches.

10. "Christians Against Poverty" courses.

In the absence of Janet Mountain from the "Unjust structures" interest group who has done a lot of work on this, Margaret P told us of the availability of courses run by CAP to train a couple of people in money/debt management who then run courses themselves in their communities using CAP materials.

Would this be useful in our deanery? There is an annual fee to CAP of about £700 per year.

Discussion included concern about confidentiality especially in our small areas, about transport to evening courses and about whether folk will admit that they would benefit from the course.

Steve W has experience in Scarborough of "Community Money Advice", whom he has found better than CAP. Information he brought to the meeting has been passed to Janet.

If anyone has particular interest in joining the "Unjust structures" group do contact Janet as they need a few more members.

11. Training Date.

Saturday Oct 20th Strensall Church Hall - Bob from Thirsk will speak on his experiences as a biker in a gang the 70's, drug misuse & mental health issues and how he found faith and now helps others in similar difficulties. He will then be open to any questions we may have. A fascinating morning with breakfast from 9am, finishing no later than 11.30.

Fairtrade Events - we are encouraged to keep Fairtrade in mind when organising our church events, giving consideration to having a stall and using FT products. There will be more on this from the "Unjust structures" interest group into the future, meanwhile Margaret P is able to help with any queries.

Sutton were thanked for their hospitality.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

Future meetings (6.45 for 7pm)

Wednesday 16 January 2019 – Tollerton Church.

Tuesday 11 June 2019.

Monday 7 October 2019.

Monday 13 January 2020