

Minutes of Easingwold Deanery Synod Oct 18th 2017 in Strensall Church Hall

Present – John, Bishop of Selby. Revd Liz Hassall (Area Dean, in chair), Margaret Price (Lay Dean), Jane Johnson (treasurer & deanery Financial Adviser), Revd Margaret Young, Revd Charlotte Cranfield, Revd Catherine Toase, Revd Steve Whiting, Revd Martin Harrison, Revd Malcolm Wainwright, Revd Trevor Gant, Revd Stephen Pope, Arthur Harland, Paula Ritchie, Liz Crawshaw, Hilary Clough Smith, Janet Irish, Alison Leese, Michael Wansborough, Jenny Hexton, Rita Bresnen, Andrew Evans, Janet Mountain, Sian Merritt (secretary),

Apologies – Revd Rob Suekarran, Carolyn McQuinn, David Mitchellnes, Jane Pearce, Stephanie Dow, Carole Todd, Kathy Peacock, Carol Colbourne.

1. Opening Worship was led by Revd Martin Harrison
2. Approval of Minutes May 22nd 2017 - these were signed as a correct record
3. Matters Arising from minutes – Margaret Price explained that the weekly email from Carol Colbourne – previously “Date for your Diary” – is now to be called the “Deanery News”, to reflect that we are encouraged to use it, not just for dates, but also to communicate all kinds of “Good News” which might be happening in our churches.
4. Bishop John started by thanking and congratulating us for being, in many ways, the vanguard deanery in the diocese, taking forward and taking seriously the diocesan plan to renew the role of deaneries.

He then summarised his deanery visits of last year where he posed the question “What is the Church of England here for?” by reminding us that:

- a) it is here for others – it is not a club of “members only”; it is not seeking to infiltrate but is the basis of much of our country’s history.
- b) it is a community serving a community - we need to be attentive to what the community around us needs. The church buildings, especially in rural areas, serve as an important reminder of our history within the community.
- c) it is inclusive – everyone is invited to “walk with us” - not just those we like. God calls us to love people we do not like; the word “synod” literally means “walking together on the way” - clergy and lay people are in it together.
- d) it is the national wisdom of God in Jesus – we must be good examples; be self-giving and serving.

He then asked us, in small groups, to produce the following:

3 reasons that we find faith in Christ persuasive and 1 struggle that we have in this faith.

Among the persuasive reasons were: hope eternal; it levels people; loving Christ is a unique experience; Christ is inclusive; forgiveness and peace; a personal calling from Christ; freedom; guidance; love; a God who understands; security; support; Jesus hears our prayers.

Among the struggles were: difficulty explaining our faith to others; witnessing; feedback from God may be confusing; the weight of the institution; intolerance and attitude of others.

Bishop John then helped us with some of the struggles:

He pointed out that we had successfully shared our faith with others during this meeting, that doing so is good, that practise helps and increases our confidence so we can deal with questions raised by others. We also need to be honest that faith isn’t easy, it isn’t just a comfort blanket, but that God will always rescue us because he has experienced the darkest places too – only Jesus has done this and so only he can fully understand us;

We must remember that our lives matter because we are part of something much bigger and we should be “who we are” in public, as witnesses;

However we can’t do it alone, we need help to understand what God wants from us by sharing with others who have experience – no-one can play football alone, we need to play as a team - but also we don’t need to understand everything;

The institution and the history is how we know about Jesus, it keeps us stable with the past but we also need to keep reforming it;

We must keep trying to love the unlove-able - it is what we are asked to do.

5. How can we communicate what is happening in our churches more effectively?

Margaret Price asked us to split into small groups to compare across parishes & get ideas. Feedback from the groups included:

Face to face/word of mouth – this remains vital and probably most effective;

Newsletters, magazines and weekly news-sheets are used by many but getting people to read them is the challenge;

Websites & social media have the potential to reach a wide range of folk but need a good deal of careful & regular input;

Emails eg the Deanery News from Carol Colbourne;

Using regular events eg monthly coffee mornings, kids clubs;

Personalised invitations; posters; banners; local papers eg Easingwold Advertiser;

Holding specific events eg Mission weekends, as recently undertaken by Strensall and Easingwold;

A novel idea from Strensall - "Jesus to Go" coffee cups (contained a red ribbon, a candle, some love hearts and an explanation) as a starting point for conversation.

Arthur Harland asked if someone from Easingwold and Strensall could share more about their recent Mission weekends for everyone's benefit – Martin Harrison from Strensall and Charlotte Cranfield from Easingwold offered to do this via the Deanery News.

6. Interest/Mission Groups. Outline guidance notes of how these groups should function was circulated prior to the meeting.

Each DS rep will choose one of the 6 groups which interests them, which will then meet before the next synod meeting, and use the guidance notes to start the process.

At each synod meeting the groups will report back.

Liz Hassall encouraged us to share what we are doing in the groups with our PCC's and congregations. Anyone with a passion for the topics is welcome to join a group – this is not just for DS reps but for the Deanery as a whole community. Equally every church is not expected to join in with everything and the different groups will inevitably go at different speeds. Liz suggested we think of them as support groups for encouraging those with a passion for these areas of mission.

The current list of who is in which group is listed below. The coordinator for each group is in bold type and they have each agreed to contact the others in their group to organise an initial meeting: (if your name is not listed, you will be contacted for your choice):

Telling the Good News of Jesus Christ: **Revd Rob Suekarran**, Revd Catherine Toase, Arthur Harland

Helping people grow in their faith: **Revd Liz Hassall**, Nick Warren, Liz Crawshaw, Paula Ritchie

Sharing God's love with all people: **Revd Trevor Gant**, Jenny Hexter, Rita Bresnen

Challenging unjust structures in society: **Janet Mountain**, Michael Turvey

Caring for the Environment: **Margaret Price**, Revd Martin Harrison, Michael Wansborough, Janet Irish, Jane Johnson, Andrew Evans

Helping our worship to be the best it can be: **Revd Margaret Young**, Revd Malcolm Wainwright, Revd Stephen Pope, Alizon Leese, Hilary Clough Smith, Sian Merritt

7. Diocesan Report – this report, from the Diocesan website, had been previously circulated. Margaret Price, who is our Diocesan Synod rep, along with Malcolm French, particularly drew our attention to the section on vocation and encouraging ordination.

8. Resource Directories – these will be distributed as soon as possible as unfortunately they were not brought to the meeting, for which Liz Hassall apologised. Please note that they are a partial reprint so care is needed to replace the necessary pages.

9. Expanding the Leadership Team - at the May meeting, the members of the Deanery Leadership Team (DLT) were provisionally elected but as the new synod only legally started on June 1st 2017, we need to ratify those decisions.

Margaret Young proposed, Janet Irish seconded & all agreed; that we ratify the decisions of May 22nd 2017, and also the election of Revd Martin Harrison to the team.

Ideally a rep from the Alne/Brafferton group would be good to spread deanery representation more widely if anyone is interested.

The DLT currently comprises:

Revd Liz Hassall (Area Dean) revliz@trundlebug.co.uk
Margaret Price, Stillington (Lay Dean) margaretp1@aol.com
Revd Margaret Young, Easingwold (assistant secretary) margareteyoung@btopenworld.com
Revd Martin Harrison, Strensall revmartinharrison@gmail.com
Janet Mountain, Strensall jancenturion@btinternet.com
Jane Johnson, Easingwold (financial adviser) janejohnson01@outlook.com
Sian Merritt, Crayke (secretary) sian.merritt@btinternet.com

Strensall were thanked for their hospitality.

The meeting closed with a blessing from the Bishop and with the Grace.

Future meetings (6.45 for 7pm) Monday January 15th 2018 Easingwold Church
Wednesday June 6th 2018 Tollerton Church
Tuesday September 25th 2018 Strensall Church Hall