

RICKMANSWORTH DEANERY SYNOD: *'We are the body of Christ'*

SYNOD OFFICERS

Rural Dean:	Revd Gavin Collins, Christ Church Vicarage, The Common, Chorleywood WD3 5SG	01923 282149
Lay Chair:	Duncan Kerr, Lavender Lodge, Nightingales Lane, Lt Chalfont, Amersham HP8 4SR	01494 763481
Treasurer:	Sally Morgan, Stockers House, Stockers Farm Rd, Rickmansworth WD3 1NZ	01923 773922
Secretary:	Alex Twells, 12 Greenbury Close, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth WD3 5QT	01923 448167

Minutes of the meeting in St Mary's Church Rickmansworth at 8pm on Monday 8th June 2009

Members of the House of Clergy (13 current members)

Present (5): Rachel Jenkinson, Miriam Muga, Robert Riley-Braley, Deborah Snowball, Jim Stevens.

Apologies (2): Gavin Collins (Rural Dean), Tim Marshall.

Members of the House of Laity (38 current members)

Present (26): Duncan Kerr (Lay Chair), Allan Brown, Pauline Brown, Rus Downham, John Guy, Jeannie Poulton, David Nobbs, John Stickland, John Galloway, Jo Squire, Margaret Roberts, Jean Scott, Audrey Timberlake, Anne Baron, David Halden, Terence Russoff, Bill Seddon, Nick Vale, Sue Hillier, Sally Morgan (Treasurer), John Rhodes, Ann Badhams, Bernard Bell, Julie Shepherd, David Cansdale, Alex Twells (Secretary).

Apologies (10): Nick Alexander, Norman Pearce, John Allen, Alan Noyes, Phil Waite, David Williams, Michael Hart, Simon Allard, Alan Wills, Linda Clough.

Others

Present (6): Rev David Smith (PtO), Jim Pummell, Michael Baker (both Rickmansworth), Julia Lawrence (Sarratt), Howard Borkett-Jones, Sheila Borkett-Jones (both St Andrew's).

Item 1 Welcome, apologies, and opening prayers

Duncan welcomed everyone for coming, thanked St Mary's for the refreshments, and opened synod with a prayer.

Item 2. Minutes of the synod held on 12th February 2009; These were approved and signed as a true record.

Item 3. Matters arising from the minutes (other than items on this agenda); None

Item 4. Deanery Strategy Group

In presenting his report, Jim described how the DSG had been set up in 2007 with the blessing of the Diocesan Pastoral Committee and a promise to note its progress; a DPC member sat in the DSG. Significant progress had been made in parishes learning more about each other and determining to work more closely together, not least through increased clerical contact, fellowship, and understanding. However, when the Deanery Restructuring suggestion emerged in January 2009 - without consultation - it was decided to suspend further work and produce a report. Jim expressed sadness at what had happened, as the work of the DSG was barely 50% complete.

Answering a question from Jim Pummell (Deanery Readers' Adviser) about the need for Readers, like clergy, to have a better-defined role and increased cross-parish contact, he said the work of Readers, although not specifically pointed up in the report, had been taken into account.

Duncan thanked Jim for the DSG's work and moved that synod should note the valuable progress made, recognising that its work was incomplete, and that it should be suspended pending the outcome of the Deanery Restructuring debate. This was passed unanimously. Meanwhile, the various contacts established by the DSG would be maintained informally, and the matter would be retained on the agenda of both the DSPC and synod.

Item 5. Deanery Restructuring

Duncan thanked parishes for their inputs, although Mill End PCC had not completed its discussions. The meeting enjoyed a full discussion on the merits of the archdeacon's suggestion to reduce the number of deaneries and realign boundaries. Some contextual points made were:

The archdeacon had said 'nothing final had been decided';

The PCCs must be kept in touch and consulted (the form of future liaison to be worked out);

There was a need to hear the views of other deaneries eg via DSPC on 7th July.

The key points raised were:

The deanery had begun to 'work' more cohesively, through events, services, mission series;

The whole matter should wait to learn of the new Bishop's vision;

The proposed Watford Deanery would be much larger than the others proposed;

Would this cause difficulties of representation?

How would it be 'managed'?

The potential workload would be huge, perhaps requiring two Rural Deans?

How would the Rural Dean manage to lead a parish too?
Had local circumstances and population growth been fully considered?
There would be travel concerns over the greater distances imposed on synod members.
Rural parishes would prefer to retain contacts in Rickmansworth Deanery as these are more 'natural';
Are there any clear reasons as to why this is all being proposed?
If there are, let these be put forward so that they might be discussed;
It seems as though a solution is being proposed, but to what problem? What is the rationale?
What might deaneries look like if a new arrangement were designed now?;
It was important to retain 'colour and diversity' of theology and churchmanship within deaneries;
Parishes' responses had been thought through and were not 'knee-jerk';
Bovingdon, Sarratt and Chipperfield do not want to go into Hemel or Watford Deanery.
Wherever boundaries were set, there would be a need for inter-deanery co-operation;
Future consultation should be real: Rickmansworth Deanery will need time to consider further;
There are positive possibilities, but we need to understand the reasoning behind it all;
A larger deanery would be more persuasive: Rickmansworth Deanery hardly ever passes a motion to put a recommended action to the diocesan synod. [Further to this, Duncan read out the functions of a deanery synod, which Alex would send to all members]

The points made would be taken by Duncan and Jim Stevens to the archdeacon's meeting on 9th June (one of a quite lengthy series). ***Secretary's Note:*** *A summary of the archdeacon's meeting on 9th June was distributed to synod members on 11th June. At that meeting he announced that he had withdrawn the suggested restructuring*

Item 6. Marriage Course

Howard and Sheila Borkett-Jones of St Andrew's, who have run the Holy Trinity Brompton Marriage Course for five years, and in April had presented the course to about 80 local church leaders in Sarratt Village Hall to spread publicity, gave a short overview of it. Marriage was in decline in the UK and the course (one evening each week over eight weeks) was aimed at underlining the value of marriage based on Christian principles. It had been run on 800 occasions in this country and proved its worth. Resource Packs were distributed to those interested.

Item 7. St Albans Diocesan Synod 2009-2012

Alex announced that elections to the Houses of Clergy and Laity had taken place (closing date was 29th May). Four nominations were received (Jim Stevens, Miriam Mугan, Deborah Snowball, Rachel Jenkinson) for the four seats in the House of Clergy, and they were declared elected unopposed. Five nominations were received (Duncan Kerr, Alex Twells, John Galloway, David Cansdale, Anne Baron) for the six seats in the House of Laity. Duncan said that any late nominations could be sent to Alex by 20th June.

Item 8. Any other business

- a. Duncan reminded synod of *Who is my Neighbour?* - An Introduction to Islam, Christ Church 10am-1pm, 27th June.
- b. Alex reported that among those to be made deacons on 5th July would be Mary Kingsley, an NSM appointed to All Saints Croxley Green, and David Baverstock, who will fill the trainee curate post in Mill End.
- c. The Rt Revd Alan Smith, will be inaugurated into his ministry as Bishop of St Albans on 19th September.
- d. Rus Downham confirmed that Kings Langley would leave the deanery in September.
- e. Interviews for the St Andrew's vicar post would be on 24th and 25th June.
- f. Alex announced that there would be another *On Earth as in Heaven* conference in Restore Hope Latimer, from 12 - 20 September inclusive.
- g. Audrey Timberlake drew synod's attention to an exhibition and sale of paintings, jewellery, prints, etc by Pip Last, in Christ Church on 13th June, 10am - 2pm.

Item 9. Next synods (7.30pm for 8.00)

- Monday 8th October (St Mary's) - Presentation by members of the *Fresh Expressions* team.
Thursday 12th November (venue tba) - Dr Bridget Adams of the Kingdom Business School in Watford, will speak on aspects of workplace ministry; she has 25 years experience of the subject.
Tuesday 2nd February (venue tba) - Bishop Alan Smith will address synod at the end of a tour of the deanery.

Duncan closed the meeting with a prayer at 10.05pm.

Distribution: *All synod members, The Ven Jonathan Smith, Jim May, Canon Robin Brown, Nick Alexander (Diocesan PC link), Philip Lovegrove (General Synod link), Margaret Millar (Methodist link), others present.*