**Minutes of Bishop's Waltham Deanery Synod**

**21st January 2021 held via Zoom**

Area Dean - Revd Canon David Isaac Lay Chair - Norman Chapman

**Present** were 23 Lay members and 10 Clergy. (details noted in attendance book).

**Apologies** were received from Paul Emmerson., Fr David Morgan, Elizabeth Quinn, Richard Garland, John Gwynn, Revd James Hunt.

The Lay Chair welcomed members and also greeted the Acting Archdeacon of the Meon, The Revd Canon William Hughes, visiting the synod for the first time in his new role.

The Archdeacon spoke encouragingly about the work currently proceeding within deaneries to contribute to the restructuring and renewal of church life in the diocese. Developing new relationships and ways of working will require visionary leadership, a commitment to deeper and informed discipleship, collaborative working and the re-shaping of structures to promote and enable growth. Deanery plans will contribute to the ongoing conversation as to how best to achieve these aims.

The Lay Chair thanked the Archdeacon and assured him of the synod’s support and prayer in his new role. The Archdeacon then left the meeting.

1. The **Minutes** of the Meeting held on 30th November 2020, having been previously circulated, were agreed.
2. **Appointments**

The Lay Chair reported that the Standing Committee had been pleased to make the following appointments:

Janet Clarke – co-opted as a member of the synod, in her role as deanery sub-warden of Readers

Petrina Hillier and the Revd Gregg Mensingh – co-opted as members of the Standing Committee.

Finance Committee – the Lay Chair reported that Brain Page (Durley ) and Andrew Wilkinson (Swanmore) had accepted the invitation to join the Deanery Finance Committee. Their appointments were confirmed.

1. **Financial Report**

Paul Emmerson, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the report, highlighting the achievement of parishes in paying parish share in the context of the exceptional demands of 2020. It was noted that this effort will have had a negative impact on the reserves funds of many parishes and that a similar result may be harder to achieve in subsequent years.

The seminar, promoted by the deanery, to support parish treasurers in understanding the implications of new HMRC regulations (IR35) had been well-attended and found helpful.

The Financial Statement for the year ending 31 December 2020, prepared by the Deanery Treasurer, Rob Scott, was received and agreed.

The area dean thanked Paul and Rob for their continuing attention to the deanery’s financial affairs.

1. **External Links**
   1. Wiawso Diocese. The area dean reported that during 2020 the deanery was able to provide emergency financial support to a number of parishes in the Awaso archdeaconry, together with assistance to the new archdeacon, Fr Dickson Denteh in purchasing some office equipment. The future nature of the relationship between parishes in Bishops Waltham deanery and partners in Awaso is still to be determined by the deanery synod, when opportunity permits. Pending this, the request to parishes for contributions to the deanery funds in support of the Ghana Link has been deferred.
   2. Hackney Deanery. The area dean reported that Canon Norman Chatfield and the deanery link group have been able to provide financial support for link parishes in Hackney, from the deanery fund collected from parishes for this purpose. A further generous individual donation is anticipated and will be forwarded to the Hackney Night Shelter project. Discussion are continuing with Hackney deanery about the possibility of scheduling a celebratory event in 2022 to mark appropriately the winding-up of the link.
2. **Personnel changes**

The area dean reminded synod members of significant changes happening in the near future.

The Revd Claire Towns has been appointed to a parish post in the cathedral city of Wells and will be leaving the deanery in May to begin her new ministry there.

Archdeacon Gavin Collins has been appointed as Bishop of Dorchester (in Oxford Diocese). His leaving service is scheduled for Sunday 24th January and the Zoom link will be circulated to enable synod members to attend that event .

Bishop Christopher will retire towards the end of April. It is hoped that the process of appointing a new bishop will begin immediately.

1. **Lent lecture series**

The Revd Ruth Howlett-Shipley provided synod members with details of the Lent Lectures to be promoted and hosted by St John the Baptist Church, Shedfield, as an online series.

* 22 Feb   Bishop Michael Beasley, Bishop of Hertford, who is also an epidemiologist, will

reflect on the role of the church in other pandemics,

* 1 Mar  Acting Archdeacon Canon Will Hughes, on the challenges faced by the local church
* 8 Mar  Professor Maggie Rae, President of the Faculty of Public Health, on the impact of

coronavirus on inequalities (and inequalities on coronavirus),

* 15 or 22 Mar (dependent on final speaker)  - Dawn Champion, Project Lead for the Old Way Project, British Pilgrimage Trust, will reflect about how pilgrimage can contribute to physical and spiritual wellbeing and also promote community.
* Final speaker tbc.

1. **Diocesan Strategic Development**

The interim report from the Deanery Mission & Pastoral Committee, previously circulated, was discussed in small groups. The following issues were identified for further consideration by the M&PC in shaping the deanery plan.

Direction

More clarity required abut what mission actually looks like

Need radical change to avoid decline

What do communities actually want from the church?

Focus needs to be local within the context of the wider area

Need a broader concept of purpose – ‘being Church’ not just running ‘Sunday-

Services church’

Bigger vision – transformation of life to reflect the values of God’s kingdom

Delivery

Will require sustained energy.

Where, how can volunteers be recruited and supported?

Develop shared posts for specific areas of work, schools , youth, online.

Succession planning needs to be an essential element in local

leadership

Leadership style of clergy may need to change

How can the need to change old traditions lie alongside pleasing current

congregations

Structures

Teams need to be formed of laity and clergy

Can Joint PCCs work?

Plan and work beyond deanery boundaries

Larger hub churches serving surrounding areas?

**Next Meeting:**  18th February 2021