

**Minutes of Bishop's Waltham Deanery Synod**  
**25<sup>th</sup> October 2022 held via Zoom**

Area Dean - Revd Canon David Isaac

Lay Chair - Norman Chapman

**Present:** Janet Clarke, David Hughes, Petrina Hillier, Katrine Brydges, Andrew Wilkinson, Max Cross, David Isaac.

**Apologies:** Sabrina Gwynn, James Hunt, Adrian Jordan, Jane Isaac, Norman Chapman.

This session of the Bishops Waltham Deanery Synod was arranged to focus specifically on our diocesan and deanery links with our partner diocese in Ghana, within the framework of the Inter-diocesan West Africa Link (IDWAL).

The area dean welcomed the Revd Max Cross, chair of the diocesan IDWAL group, and invited him to bring synod members up to speed with the current state of our relationship with our Ghana partners.

Max spoke of how, when he began in his present role, the energy level in the diocese about our Ghanaian links was quite low. However, after contact with his fellow bishops from Ghana at this year's Lambeth Conference, Bishop Jonathan has expressed a clear vision and strong commitment to trying share in partnership with our link diocese, in prayer, in personal support and, where possible, with direct financial assistance.

From his own experience of visiting Ghana, Max described the enormous differences there in the shape and supply of ministry, with some parishes being as large as deaneries or even dioceses in this country. The IDWAL group recently met, online, with The Revd Joseph Bain-Doodu, Acting Dean of Seminary, to hear of the current problems in enabling the work of their seminary for training priests. St Nicholas' Seminary serves much of the whole of West Africa and is the only source of training for Anglican priests. Currently the delivery of training is held back by an acute shortage of funds, meaning that students have to be sent home and that college staff are unable to be paid even their minimalist living wages.

Max and Joseph are clear that the longer-term issues impacting on the seminary will need more than merely emergency funding from UK partners. There is, however, an opportunity of engaging longer-term in promoting a greater sense of ownership of the seminary by the whole of the Province of West Africa. Joseph is clearly providing dynamic and visionary leadership for the seminary's development and exploring the possibility of some training being supplied online from the UK, in parallel to ordination training here, which is made easily feasible by Ghana being in the same time zone.

The area dean reminded members of the several conversations in deanery synod about trying to identify creative and necessary arena within which to provide support for our partners in Ghana, from the deanery fund to which parishes have contributed specifically for this purpose.

In discussion members commented that:

it is important to ensure that the funds contributed for Ghana are actually being used

the intended purpose and project are seen to be both significant and secure in terms of being delivered

the outcome should be more than merely applying a temporary sticking plaster

the route for the transfer of monies be securely arranged.

It was agreed, subject to general assent from the deanery synod, to earmark up to £4000 for the support of development at the seminary; with an initial contribution of £1000 for immediate needs, and to invite Joseph Bain-Doodu to join the synod, online, at a subsequent date, to discuss his plans for securing the future of the seminary, in leadership, training and financial stability.

Max Cross agreed to allow the IDWAL group's established route for transfer of funds to be available for use by the deanery for this purpose.

The area dean thanked Max for his inspirational contribution to this meeting and in his work for IDWAL.