

Deanery Synod report for 2018

Horsham Deanery Synod, covering fifteen parishes around and including Horsham, has met as usual three times during the first year of the new Triennium. There are twenty-four members in the House of Clergy and thirty-eight in the House of Laity, making a total of sixty five. The average attendance for clergy was 12 and for laity 21. Revd Canon Guy Bridgewater continued as Rural Dean. Only West Grinstead remained in interregnum (though the new vicar, Revd Alison Letschka, will be licenced on the evening of our 2018 APCM.)

On 28 June 2017 thirty-six members met at Holy Innocents, Southwater. There was the usual warm welcome from the vicar, the Rev Kesari Godfrey and his congregation, some of whom spoke about interesting initiatives to encourage people to come to church.

Mrs Eve Kenney of West Grinstead was elected as Lay Chair, Mrs Val Burgess as Treasurer, Mrs Brenda Large as Secretary and Revd Kate Bailey as Assistant Secretary. The new Standing Committee was elected: Geoff Peckham, Lower Beeding; Martin Hennock, Itchingfield; Alison Carrè, Horsham St Mary; Revds Mark Betson, Lower Beeding; Bernard Sinton, Horsham Holy Trinity; David Bouskill, Horsham Holy Trinity.

We were then treated to some fascinating talks entitled What's the use of a Sabbatical? from David Bouskill, David Beal and Guy Bridgewater.

Revd Jules Barnes was delighted to welcome 32 members of Synod to St Margaret's Warnham on 19 October 2017. She described her first impressions as a newcomer and outsider. She had felt really welcome. The death of the previous incumbent still impacts on the community and healing is still needed. But there are also developments, including a Thursday Club for primary children, and regular Taize services.

The guest speaker was David Sheldon, CEO of Horsham Matters. He outlined the origins of the charity as "seeking to demonstrate God's love in practical ways in Horsham". This is done in four main ways – community support (food bank, night shelter, Local Assistance Network), employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, youth work, in partnership with the Parish Councils, and retail sales, allowing people to dispose of items they no longer need to be sold to raise money to fund the other work. Unfortunately income has not kept up with expenditure recently. The new Charity Superstore in Redkilyn Close is not so easy to find but great efforts are being made to publicise it and improve the offering. He asked people to help by praying for Horsham Matters, by buying from Horsham Matters, by referring people in need for help and by volunteering.

The 19 February 2018 meeting was at St Mary's Billingshurst, where 28 members were greeted by another of our new vicars, Revd David Beal. He described how he had asked his church members what excites them – it was work with children and young people, so they are trialling a new service pattern, using a worship band, and reviving their plans to reorder the church. He also asked for challenges – not enough volunteers and reaching the unchurched, especially men.

Our team of speakers, Peter Schofield, Kate Bailey and Judi Cox, gave us a vivid picture of their recent visit to Kenya as part of a diocesan visit to explore how we might link with the Nakuru diocese.

There was discussion about how the deanery could best support our church schools.

Throughout the year the Deanery has been kept up to date on Diocesan plans for the Year of Prayer, Safeguarding training and other initiatives. Val Burgess manages the Parish share very efficiently but sympathetically and keeps the Standing Committee informed of problems.

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Brenda Large
Horsham Deanery Secretary.