

Deanery Synod report for 2019

The main functions of a Deanery Synod are to discuss and reflect on matters of the Church of England as they affect the deanery, and generally ‘to promote in the deanery the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical’. Deanery Synod acts as a forum for the airing of parish views on any common problems, the communication of diocesan synod decisions, the consideration of relevant business and the referral to diocesan synod of matters of concern.

Horsham Deanery Synod includes the parishes of Billingshurst, Holbrook, Horsham**, Itchingfield with Slinfold, Lower Beeding*, Nuthurst and Mannings Heath*, Roffey and Colgate, Rudgwick, Rusper, Shipley, Southwater, Warnham and West Grinstead. All the clergy in the deanery are members of the House of Clergy - twenty-two – and every three years the parishes elect a number of lay members (according to the size of their electoral roll); there are currently thirty-seven members of the House of Laity, making a total of fifty-nine. Horsham is entitled to elect eight and we have four vacancies.

The average attendance at meetings of Synod for clergy was 13 and for laity 18. Revd Canon Guy Bridgewater served as Rural Dean till he left for Bath. Revd David Beal, Vicar of Billingshurst, was appointed Rural Dean in November 2019. Clergy also meet separately with the Rural Dean as a Deanery Chapter. This is a mutually supportive forum for licensed clergy in the deanery. The asterisked parishes are currently in vacancy, so the role of the Deanery as a mutual support system for the parishes is particularly important.

Mrs Eve Kenney of West Grinstead serves as Lay Chair, Mrs Val Burgess as Treasurer, Mrs Brenda Large as Secretary and Revd Kate Bailey as Assistant Secretary. On the Standing Committee also are Geoff Peckham, Lower Beeding; Martin Hennock, Itchingfield; Alison Carrè, Horsham St Mary; Bernard Sinton, Horsham Holy Trinity; David Bouskill, Horsham Holy Trinity.

It is the practice for Horsham Deanery Synod to meet three times each year – in February, June and November. We try to visit every parish over a five year span, and we always begin our meetings with worship, followed by an introduction to, or update on, the parish we are visiting. We then have as our main item a speaker or a discussion on an important current issue.

In June, at Rudgwick, we were interested to hear from the Vicar, Revd Martin King, of the new approach they had taken to their Trustees Annual Report, making it a more attractive, informative and mission orientated document. Horsham has taken such an approach this year. We discussed how best to fund the Diocesan Mission Fund, which supports specific projects in the diocese, including the Parish nurse in Broadfield. Archdeacon Fiona also came to introduce the diocesan project *Setting God's people free*, which aims to equip the laity to serve God better, whatever their calling.

In October Natalie welcomed us to St Leonard's, Horsham. Our theme for this meeting was Family Support Work. Its Director Martin Auton Lloyd told us how the Charity is changing and seeking to engage more closely with the Deaneries. He hopes to revive the Horsham Deanery Committee, which can guide FSW on the needs of the area.

In tune with the Diocese's Year of vocation, in February we went to Roffey, where we had a stimulating presentation from Revd Martin King on *What is God calling you to do?* This led to small group discussions on how to use **SHAPE** to examine our own path:

Spiritual gifts - perhaps you need to ask a friend or use a tick box or think about experiences you have had that help you recognise spiritual gifts

Hearts desire - what are you passionate about?

Ability - what are you good at?

Personality - are you an introvert or an extrovert, sociable or shy?

Experience - what has shaped you for good or ill? Think about your family, your school, your work, your spiritual surroundings.

Members agreed that this had been a most worthwhile exercise.

Alison Hudson, of Southwater, assisted by Carol Shepherd of Slinfold, has devised a Spiritual Treasures Trail to operate in August as part of the Horsham Year of Culture.

Val Burgess continues to manage the Parish share very efficiently but sympathetically and keeps the Standing Committee informed of problems.

The next meeting of the Deanery Synod is on Monday 20 May 2019 at Southwater Parish Church. This meeting will be part of the Episcopal Visitation to the Deanery by Bishop Mark from 20-22 May 2019. The meeting will focus on the Diocesan Vision for the future.

Deanery Synod meetings are open to all church members, not just Deanery Synod members.

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Brenda Large

Horsham Deanery Secretary.