

Deanery Synod report for 2020 APCM

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 14 parishes of (* in vacancy) Billingshurst, Broadbridge Heath* (from November 2019), Colgate and Roffey, Holbrook, Horsham*, Itchingfield with Slinfold, Lower Beeding*, Nuthurst and Mannings Heath*, Rudgwick, Rusper, Shipley*, Southwater, Warnham and West Grinstead. All the licensed clergy in the deanery are members of the House of Clergy – fifteen at the end of 2019 – and every three years the parishes elect a number of lay members (according to the size of their electoral roll); at the end of 2019 there were forty one members of the House of Laity, making a total of fifty-six. Horsham is entitled to elect eight and we have five vacancies, though Horsham St Mary’s has three members ex-officio as they are on Diocesan Synod.

Revd David Beal, Vicar of Billingshurst, is Rural Dean. Clergy also meet separately with the Rural Dean as a Deanery Chapter. This is a mutually supportive forum for licensed clergy in the deanery. As so many parishes were in vacancy for much of the year, the role of the Deanery as a mutual support system for the parishes is particularly important.

Mrs Eve Kenny of West Grinstead serves as Lay Chair, Mrs Val Burgess as Treasurer, Mrs Brenda Large as 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. Anyone is welcome to come to the meetings. 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.

However, for 2019 the first meeting on 20 May 2019, at Holy Innocents, Southwater, (attendance 14 clergy, 21 laity, 7 visitors) was part of the Episcopal Visitation to the Deanery and was largely taken up with an address by Bishop Mark, in which he looked at the mixed outcomes from the 2014 five year plan. Members were invited to tell the meeting of One New Thing that their parish had done. He then introduced the new Diocesan Strategy - More engaged, more representative, more generous, more converted.

As part of Horsham’s Year of Culture, Alison Hudson, with assistance from Carol Shepherd, had devised a Spiritual Treasures Trail visiting some of the interesting spiritual sites near Horsham. This had been well received.

The meeting planned for 10 October 2019 at Holbrook was cancelled as there were last minute problems over the availability of the speaker, and it was not possible to reschedule. However we did meet on 12 February 2020 at Lower Beeding (attendance 9 clergy, 21 laity). The Rural Dean led us in a structured exploration of “How can the Deanery help us?” Members were very engaged in these discussions, and the intention is to use the responses to

shape the content of future Deanery Synod meetings, when we can meet again.

The Deanery Treasurer updated members on the response to the current parish share requests. She urged parishes which had not recently looked at stewardship to do so. Members of the Deanery Standing Committee were willing to attend meetings to inform and support PCCs.

But with the Covid 19 lockdown on 23 March 2020 all Deanery Synod activity stopped, and there are no indications of how we will start up again.

Brenda Large

Horsham Deanery Secretary.

September 2020