

Deanery Report

April 2024

Key Appointments

1. Rev Clair Harold has been appointed as Rural Dean to replace Rev Canon Lynda Klimas. She was licenced by the Archdeacon on 15 November 2023 and attended her first Deanery meeting on 19 March 2024.
2. It was announced recently that Rev Jenna Dearden has been appointed as Priest in Charge for Arlesey with Astwick, Gravenhurst, Shillington and Stondon. Jenna is currently serving her curacy in the Dunstable Team Ministry with specific responsibility within The Priory Church. Jenna will be licenced at Shillington Church on Thursday 25th July at 7.30pm. The church community has been asked to keep all the churches in their prayers as they prepare for and welcome their new incumbent and work together on the transition plan.
3. Since the last synod, Stella Brookes and Martyn Gates had been installed into the Order of St Alban, an award given by the Bishop of St Albans to recognise great and consistent work by members of the Diocese. Stella and Martyn together with a group of supporters attended a service at the Cathedral to receive their Certificate and medals.

Deanery Visit

4. Very Revd Jo Kelly-Moore – Dean of St Albans Cathedral attended a deanery meeting in November 2023. She had asked to visit the Synod as part of a series of visits around the diocese to find out more about how the Cathedral Mother Church was seen and how the diocese would like the Cathedral to interact with them.
5. The Cathedral is going through a Revisioning process, part of which is to update their MAP (Mission Action Plan) and during the period from Pentecost to Advent are listening to and praying with many organisations including local government officials, schools and Deanery Synods. The last MAP update was in 2018 and had resulted in a 5-year plan which, due to the pandemic, had been extended to 2024.
6. This consultation will be included in the new MAP which will form a base to the next 5-year plan for the Diocese. The three main headings being addressed are Welcome, Spirituality and Learning with those being split into 6 other topics. Congregational growth is to major on children and young people, learning on adult learning programmes and Social Justice and the Environment.

Dispute Advisory Service

7. At the Deanery meeting on 19 March attendees received a presentation from two representatives from the Dispute Advisory Service. They function independently to the Diocese, although operate under their umbrella, but do not report back to them thus being completely independent.
8. When there are disagreements or disputes in church, individuals can be hurt or disappointed, sometimes leaving unresolved conflicts and bad feelings even to the extent of leaving the church. These situations can affect any member of a church community on whom the continuance of services and membership depend, risking long-term impact if left unresolved.

9. If involved, the Disputes Resolution service provides support for individuals before a problem escalates.
- They provide advisers who are trained and are in effect the equivalent of the NHS 111 service for parishes and are available at any time.
 - They listen, explore and reflect providing a place to express difficulties in confidence.
 - Help to work towards a resolution.
 - The advisers are neutral and act as go-betweens, not involved, and communicate with both parties to facilitate a solution.
 - Work can be face to face with both parties in a non-threatening environment to encourage resolution.
 - If needed advisers will help to find the right counselling.
 - There is no charge for this service.

Diocesan Synod Elections.

10. Elections to the Diocesan Synod will be held shortly (1st May to 15th July) and Laity can be elected to that synod without being a member of the Deanery Synod first. Full details will be circulated soon.

Deanery Meetings

11. At a Deanery Standing Committee meeting it was agreed the three meetings this year are to be on the dates as follows:
- 19th March at Shefford
 - 19 June at Campton
 - 7th November - venue still to be confirmed.

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