

AMPTHILL AND SHEFFORD DEANERY SYNOD

Making Mission Matter

Tuesday 6th July 2021 at 7.30pm by Zoom

1. Opening Prayer

David Young chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone, particularly our guest speaker Billi Leach.

Lynda Klimas led an opening prayer for the Deanery.

2. Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Clergy:

Revd Andrew Johnson *Barton le Clay, Higham Gobian, Hexton*
Revd Linda Washington *Harlington, Westoning, Tingrith*
Revd Stephen Nuth *Woburn, Eversholt, Milton Bryan, Battlesden, Potsgrove*
Revd Richard Winslade *Gravenhurst, Shillington and Stondon*
Revd Dominic Holroyd-Thomas *Ampthill, Millbrook, Steppingley*

Laity:

Gillian Kern	<i>Diocesan Synod Rep</i>	Tony Howells	<i>Hexton</i>
Ruth Barton	<i>Battlesdon, Potsgrove</i>	Malcolm Curtis	<i>Woburn</i>
Wendy Adern	<i>Woburn Sands</i>	Linda Cudjoe	<i>Woburn</i>
Robert Adern	<i>Woburn Sands</i>	Christopher Valentine	<i>Meppershall</i>
Jane Steer	<i>Westoning</i>	Nick Crago	<i>Harlington</i>
Ruth Gray	<i>Clifton</i>	Anne Stiles	<i>Pulloxhill</i>
Beth Overfield	<i>Arlesey</i>	Carol Watts	<i>Haynes</i>
Sue Silver	<i>Campton</i>	Christine Cullinford	<i>Maulden</i>
Elizabeth Sullivan-Ash	<i>Campton</i>	Liz Allen	<i>Shillington, Gravenhurst</i>

PRESENT

Chair: Revd Canon Lynda Klimas, Rural Dean *Maulden*
Revd Caren Topley, Assistant Rural Dean *Clifton, Southill*

Lay Chair: Mr David Young *Ampthill*

Treasurer and Diocesan Synod Rep: Mr Martyn Gates *Silsoe*

Secretary: Revd Anne Barker

Clergy:

Revd Geoffrey Boulton *Arlsley, Astwick*
Revd Shaun Speller *Henlow, Langford*
Revd Carrie Steer *Clifton, Southill*
Revd Canon Nigel Washington *Harlington, Westoning, Tingrith*
Revd Roni Goodman *Meppershall & Shefford*
Revd David Payne *Silsoe, Pulloxhill, Flitton*
Revd Diana Young *Woburn Sands*

Laity:

Christopher Hodges	<i>Ampthill</i>		
Derek Ambler	<i>Arlesey</i>	Bob Vidler	<i>Langford</i>
Ann Clarke	<i>Aspley Guise</i>	Marjorie Horrell	<i>Maulden</i>
Brenda Eagles	<i>Aspley Guise</i>	Keith Callard	<i>Meppershall</i>
Gill Short	<i>Barton le Clay</i>	Kelvin White	<i>Milton Bryan</i>
Alison Millar	<i>Barton le Clay</i>	Julia Haigh	<i>Shefford</i>
Anne Gordon	<i>Campton</i>	Pat Goulding	<i>Shefford</i>
Peter Topley	<i>Clifton</i>	Tim Watson	<i>Shillington, Gravenhurst</i>
Rosemary Ilett	<i>Clophill</i>	Alan Aldridge	<i>Silsoe</i>
David Watson	<i>Flitwick</i>	Stella Brooks	<i>Steppingley</i>
Tony Brown	<i>Flitwick</i>	David Dallman	<i>Westoning</i>
Nick Crago	<i>Harlington</i>	Ruth Cullinan	<i>Woburn Sands</i>
Suzanne Spence	<i>Harlington</i>		
Joanna Daye	<i>Higham Gobian</i>		

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2021

The minutes of 17th March 2021 were unanimously approved as correct.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Guest Speaker

David Young welcomed Billi Leach, a recently authorised Lay Leader of Worship. She is married to Andrew and they have two teenage children. Billi is trained as medical herbalist. She moved into the area in 1988 and, after attending different churches in the Deanery, settled at Maulden when Richard Winslade was the Vicar. Billi became involved in various church activities, but never led a service. She realised that lay people can actually be involved in worship, and she reflected on her own theatrical background, surrounded by actors. When Maulden intended to join with Clophill, Billi saw the need to help and support the ministry, so she approached Lynda Klimas, who eagerly encouraged her, along with another member of the congregation.

Lynda was able to liaise with the Lay Leader of Worship (LLW) trainer in order to arrange for the training to occur at a convenient time.

In the current conditions, the training was conducted via zoom. The first challenging questions was, “What is worship?” The many and varied responses from the other participants proved enlightening.

Another question, “Do you know what time of the year it is?” was equally as challenging, and introduction to the liturgical seasons followed. An understanding of the theme for each week was gleaned, and how worship can be focused on that.

They were introduced to what LLWs can and cannot do. It was clearly emphasised that LLWs must **not** preach.

Billi spoke about being a LLW in the first service she led, and saw how the readings fitted in nicely with the content of her talk. Billi is very aware of the need to make congregations feel comfortable, being careful not to impose upon them. She appreciated feedback from the attendees at worship.

Embarking upon the course was enlightening and enriching, and inspires personal spiritual growth as well as training for a specific role.

Billi sees the need for lay people to ‘step up’ because rural churches are dwindling in membership.

David Young thanked Billi, and invited questions.

Caren Topley commented that she has 4 LLWs across her Benefice. What is the take on robing now? Billi felt comfortable not robing.

Rosemary Ilett has been a LLW for a few years. She said it is challenging to deliver the talk, but God gives her the words, sometimes at the last minute.

Ruth Cullinam has been a LLW for about 4 years

Marjorie Horrell was on the same leadership course as Rosemary Ilett. She has no desire to put on robes. She is very much a member of the congregation. Ideas and thoughts come to mind to speak on. The Reader at Aspley Guise trained 22 years ago, and as a Reader, is always robed.

Lynda Klimas: the main issue is the distinction between a Reader, who is permitted to give a sermon, and a LLW who can give a talk. Readers train for 3 years, LLWs for a much shorter time.

Stella Brooks: it doesn’t matter who wears what, or what training they’ve had. Robing helps new members of the congregation find you.

Peter Topley has been a Reader. LLWs offer a great benefit. They have a gift, which is not necessarily academic. The Reader training involves a challenging 3 year academic training.

Rosemary Ilett: Ordained Priests can preside at Communion; LLWs feel one of the team, and give a different perspective.

Pat Goulding trained as a LLW about 4 years ago, during which the trainers were adamant that they mustn't preach because they hadn't got the theological background. They do not give a sermon, someone else does that.

Ruth Cullinan shared in a service in Somerset, where the sermon was delivered on a screen by the Rector of the Benefice.

Billi stands at the back of church at the end so that people can see her, which helps to make the congregation feel comfortable with her. At present she hasn't the time to train as a Reader, but the LLW course was more accommodating for the time being.

6. Treasurer's report

Martyn Gates said the accounts for 2020 had been examined and signed off.

£6,321.96 is in the current account.

Income was £0. £25 cheque was issued for Jeffrey John's leaving gift.

£146 uncashed cheques from previous years.

7. Archdeacon's inspections

These didn't occur last year, due to the pandemic. This year there will be a 'light touch' only with the aim of thanking the wardens and officers for carrying on so well during difficult times.

The Archdeacon will be focusing on Biggleswade Deanery.

Lynda, Caren and David will be carrying out the inspections this year, and are keen to offer moral support.

8. a) Deanery Pastoral Reorganisation update

In the Westoning, Harlington, and Tingrith Benefice Revd Linda Washington will be licensed on Sunday as the Vicar of Harlington. Linda has carried Harlington for many years.

Revd Canon Nigel Washington is the Incumbent of the Benefice.

All the parishes in the benefice are very positive about it.

Toddington and Chalgrave have been informally gathered into the benefice, but the distinction is now becoming much clearer. All is being handled well and co-operatively.

David thanked Linda and Nigel for their work.

The public notice for the reorganisation of Haynes, Campton, and Clophill with the benefices of Clifton & Southill, Shefford & Meppershall, and Maulden has been issued, and as no-one came forward to challenge it, the assumption is that all is well. No further progress has been made.

Rosemary Ilett commented that everyone is very appreciative of the help and support given by Lynda Klimas and Roger Wood, among others. They are all eager for the reorganisation to be finalised.

b) Ordinations and vacancies

Congratulations were given to Carrie Steer for her ordination as Priest.

Flitwick is now in vacancy.

Lucy Davis has gone to St Andrews Bedford

Andrea Malfei has gone to the Transfiguration Kempston

Anne and Brenda stated that Aspley Guise is now in vacancy. There is some interest in having services in Ridgemont and Husborne Crawley. They are struggling for cover.

Nigel Washington mentioned that Janine Dearden was recently ordained, having been an ordinand at Westoning, and will be at The Priory, Dunstable, for her curacy. Stella stated that LLWs are attached to their own parishes, whereas Readers are permitted to minister across the Deanery. Lynda clarified that LLWs can work in a Benefice, but not the Deanery.

Diana Young has 2 LLWs in a single church, but are unable to go elsewhere.

9. Reports from Diocesan Synod and elections

Martyn Gates attended the DBF meeting on Monday, during which it was noted that half a million pounds had been scraped from the reserves to support the Diocese, during this Covid time. They were not sure how parishes will be able to pay the Parish Share - the prediction is for less this year. The situation is dire, but had been thought would be much worse. St. Albans is in fact better than other Dioceses, but it's obviously very difficult as the finances are tied up in investments which can't be cashed. Clergy housing expenditure has had to be postponed. It was acknowledged that individual parishes have struggled.

Caren reported that schools are coming out of Covid time, and teachers were thanked for keeping children safe as they could be and educated.

The schools are being reorganised from 3 tiers to two tiers in county and church schools. School buildings, staff and pupils will be faced with more upheaval.

Bishop Alan's presidential address is on the website.

Revd. Will Gibbs will be responsible for rolling out Living in Faith and Love from November. The next step involves the Bishop of London leading us into a deeper understanding of God, and what it means to be human.

Further details can be found on the Diocesan website, and discussions can occur in PCCs and small groups.

Quinquennials do not need to be conducted by professional architects. There is a wider pool from which to select; the list has been prepared by the DAC. The architect employed for church alterations does not need to be the same as the one carrying out the Quinquennial. The PCC must still formally approved the chosen professionals.

Elections to Diocesan Synod

Clergy: Revd. Canon Lynda Klimas, Revd. Caren Topley, Revd. Diana Young, Revd Dominic Holroyd-Thomas

Laity: Martyn Gates, David Young leaving three places unfilled. Anyone interested in being elected to the Laity, please contact Lynda.

Nominations for the General Synod need not have been to Deanery Synod. It was stressed that an inclusive and diverse membership is welcomed.

Martyn Gates was unanimously elected as Finance representative for the Deanery.

10. News from the parishes Arlesey and Aspley Guise

Arlesey

Geoffrey Boulton spoke about the new from Arlesey. Sadly the fundraising has decreased, and all social activities have been paused this last year. Previously the fundraising has been successful.

The Good News: there's been Open Church throughout the week. The congregation has dropped, but the recorded services are still being watched. The children's prayer club has been meeting by zoom. The quarterly magazine has included contributions on topics such as reflections on determination, and inspiring articles which have been giving hope.

Recently there's been a flurry of baptisms being booked. A garden party was held in the vicarage gardens, and it seems that everything is gradually beginning to come to life.

The congregation are looking forward to singing at the end of the month.

Aspley Guise

Ann Clark and Brenda Eagles (churchwardens) updated us, and realised that a time of vacancy is really awful. They are inundated with things to do. Brenda is also a Lay Reader. Diana Young and Lynda Klimas have stepped in, and they are extremely grateful for their support. There is uncertainty about the future . reorganisation. If the benefice if joined with Woburn Sands, that would warrant 1.5 clergy. The rota is beginning to be filled, with help from Diana Young, Paul Lanham and Roger Woods. They need help with October and November services.

Bishop Alan visited the church, and offered much encouragement.

The Sacristan, Bob Brown has formally retired after 85years. A collection was raised for a gift for him.

Stewardship is being re-energised and people are re-engaging, as the income dipped during lockdown. A congregation of 20-25 was maintained. Only £5 was collected from a congregation of 27. They are keen to pay the Parish Share and are doing their best in these strident times.

They are enjoying the different styles of leadership.

11. Any other business

Revd. Canon Tim Bull has additional role with MOSAIC

12. Date of the next meeting

Wednesday 10th November 2021 at Silsoe church. 7.15pm for 7.30pm start.

13. Closing prayers

The meeting ended at 8.55pm with the Grace.