

LEDBURY DEANERY SYNOD

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7.30 pm on Thursday 24th November, 2011,
at Storrige Village Hall

Attendance:

House of Clergy Rev'd Preb M Vockins (Rural Dean), Rev'd P Dunthorne (Ledbury), Rev'd M Horton (Colwall), Rev'd Prebendary S Strutt (Ledbury), Rev'd R Ward (C,M&S).

House of Laity Mr I Beer (Lay Co-Chairman), Mr M Allfrey (Storrige), Mr I Bailey (Cradley), Miss J Barber (Pixley), Mr A Bentley-Taylor (Much Marcle), Mrs E Clutterbuck (Bosbury), Mr N Hills (Aylton), Mr N Hone (Bosbury), Mr W Hopkinson (Secretary), Mr R Hunter (Deanery Synod), Mr D Kirkham (Ledbury), Mr D Longman (Colwall), Mr D McKerracher (Mathon), Miss C Panter (Diocesan Synod), Mrs P Powell (Stoke Edith), Mrs R Preedy (Stretton Grandison) Mr G Probyn (Mathon), (Deanery Treasurer), Lt Col H Ransome-Williams (Wellington Heath), Mrs F Robinson (Munsley), Mr J Sands (Cradley), Mr F Seabright (Bosbury), Mr B Speakman (Wellington Heath), Mrs M Taylour (Colwall), Mrs K Thompson (Wellington Heath), Mrs S Tyrrell (Putley), Mr N Walker (Deanery Synod).

Apologies for Absence Rev'd F Iliffe (Ledbury), Rev'd E Reed (Ledbury), Rev'd J Schofield (Ledbury), Rev'd N Seabright (Ledbury), Mrs V Avery (Tarrington), Mr R Beard (Colwall), Mr M Greensmith, Ms E Harvey (Ledbury), Mr M Johnson (Coddington), Mr J Lindeck (Ledbury), Mr Mr A Mence (Tarrington), Mr C Myles (Ashperton), Mrs H Morgan (Cradley), Mrs M Roberts (Colwall), Mr W Simmonds (Ledbury), Miss E Sophia-White (Eastnor).

Welcome and Opening Prayers Opening prayers were conducted by members of the Cradley, Mathon and Storrige LMDG. The Lay Co-Chairmen welcomed members of Synod; congratulated the Rev'd P Dunthorne on being made a Prebendary of Hereford Cathedral and noted the retirement of Mr B Pardoe from Synod. He thanked Storrige PCC for their kind hospitality.

1. **MAPs and Parish Plans.** The Lay Co-Chairman noted that contributions had been received from Pixley, Munsley, Wellington Heath, Stretton Grandison, and C,M&S. He invited representatives to give brief oral presentations.
 - i. Speaking for C,M&S, the Rev'd R Ward said that draft MAPs had been prepared in the light of a presentation by the Rev'd C Pascoe; fuller versions would be prepared by the end of January and then presented to the AGMs. The parishes had proceeded in the light of the Diocese's Five Marks of Mission. The current draft documents from the three P.C.C.s are at Annexes A, B and C
 - ii. The Rev'd Preb S Strutt spoke on Stretton Grandison's plans. They too were following the Five Marks of Mission in the continuation of their last 5 Year Plan. They were extending forms of worship and encouraging weddings.
 - iii. Mr B Speakman introduced Wellington Heath's MAP. They had evolved a 5 point action plan; that involved listening , to members, eg of the Bible study Group, and the village community; they sought more lay participation. There was a particular focus on children and how to encourage Church attendance by them. The PCC reviewed progress. The PCC contributed to safeguarding the environment, *inter alia*, by its wild flower meadow. Overall, it was concerned to address the threat to Christianity from secularising pressures.
 - iv. Miss J Barber spoke about Pixley, a small village with many foreign workers. The latter were always welcome to use the Church, which many did for quiet prayer. This Summer there had been a Romanian Orthodox Christening and a group

were to write, by hand, to every house in the parish encouraging them to come to Church for the Christmas service.

- v. Mrs F Robinson said that Munsley PCC would like the Rev'd C Pascoe to address them. (The Rev'd S Strutt noted that it would be desirable to hold a joint Hop Group meeting.) The Church offered coffee after every service and lunch after the Harvest Festival. They auctioned off the produce after that for charity. The PCC planned a leaflet-drop asking the parish for ideas.

The Rural Dean highlighted Stretton Grandison's MAP as a model, not least as it set out realistic plans for the future and what could be undertaken immediately, and commended its format to parishes still working on their MAPs. Mr R Hunter suggested that it would be useful if MAPs could go on to the website. It was agreed that the Wellington Heath and Stretton Grandison plans would be put on at this stage, and also sent as hard copy to Synod members who did not use email. The meeting approved the Chairman's proposal that, with a number of parishes still to complete and present their MAPs, Synod should return to this subject at its March meeting when it was hoped all parishes would be in a position to present their MAPs.

2. **Stewardship.** The Lay Co-Chairman reminded Synod that parishes had been asked to let Mr J Sands know how matters stood on Stewardship. None had yet done so (although Cradley had sent a note to the Secretary for the Synod meeting.) Mr Sands was invited to pursue with PCC Secretaries. The Lay Co-Chairman also drew the attention of Synod to the Toolkit issued by the Diocese and encouraged parishes to obtain it. Mr Mckerracher noted that having just started on Stewardship Mathon had already had a most gratifying response: it had received a £300 donation and a £250 annual covenant.
3. **Anglican Covenant.** The Rural Dean introduced this by referring to the extensive documentation circulated before the meeting and took Synod through the most important aspects. He pointed especially to the piece by the Rev'd Dr Paul Avis. He stressed that the Covenant was very much about what unites us as a Communion rather than focusing on what separates. A number of members expressed concern over the proposal. Mr N Walker felt that it was divisive and un-Anglican; the early parts of the document were unproblematic but the later ones posed real difficulties. It was section 4 that created most difficulty for many. That view was echoed by Mr N Hone, the Rev'd R Ward and the Rev'd Sue Strutt. Mr R Hunter expressed great concern about unintended consequences. The Rev'd P Dunthorne agreed that there were grounds for concern but, on the whole supported the document. The Rev'd M Horton felt contradictory pulls and felt at this stage that she could neither agree nor reject the proposal. Responding to the concerns expressed, the Rural Dean pointed to section 3 of the Covenant with its wording on caution, diligence, etc. On a straw poll, a significant number of members of Synod expressed themselves as against the Covenant; another significant number felt that they remained undecided.
4. **Finance:**
 - i. Current Year's Progress; The Treasurer said that on current information, Deanery Reserves would be reduced by about £1,750 by the year end. Figures would be put on the website when the final position was known.
 - ii. Letter to PCCs; The Lay Co-Chairman said that definitive replies had not yet been received from all parishes. SBC would need to consider the matter again.
 - iii. Budget for 2012; The Treasurer presented his draft budget, which reflected the decisions of the Diocesan Synod. Mr N Hone said that he would have to abstain,

given the known concerns about the methodology of apportioning parish share to benefices. The Budget was agreed, *nem. con.* with 7 abstentions. The Treasurer will arrange for it to go on the website.

- iv. Faculty Fees. After discussion, Synod agreed the proposal from the Diocese, subject to two provisos. First that the new system should be introduced for a trial period of 5 years before being made permanent. Secondly, that the Diocese confirm that Restricted Funds that might have been used to meet Faculty fees could be used to pay the part of the Parish Share reflecting the compounded fees. The Secretary was invited to inform the Diocese accordingly.
- v. Parish Share Rebates. Synod noted the Note by Treasurer.

5. **Diocesan and Bishop's Council Business.** Synod took note of the Note by the Secretary who added that the last Bishop's Council had considered a report on the Diocesan Website and procedure for next year's budget work. It had also considered a report from the Board of Education on the radical changes in its focus and work being brought about, in part as a result of national government initiatives. The next Bishop's Council would return to the issue of communications.

6. **Mtwara Report.** The Lay Co-Chairman noted that we still urgently needed a volunteer from Synod for the Mtwara Committee. Meanwhile, The Rev'd S Strutt gave an update. The committee await a reply to the letters to the MP and the High commissioner over the refusal of visas to the Mtwara visitors this year. Nevertheless, plans are still in hand for a visit next May. The Ledbury teachers who visited Mtwara in the summer attended the Committee and told them of the success of the trip; this had strengthened the link which is supported by both parents and children of Ledbury Primary School. The children are exchanging letters and email, and it is proposed to have an exchange of sports whereby the Tanzanian children are taught games played in England, and *vice versa*.

Money for food for distribution at Christmas (£500) has been sent; also reimbursement for the cost of visas. Plans are in hand to seek grants from the British Council for visits and further education purposes. Lent Lunches will be held again next year (Details for parishes wishing to hold one from Mrs A Davies, 01531 631873.) The Tanzanian Evening and Beetle Drive will, it is hoped, be held in May.

7. **Good News and Announcements of Functions from Parishes.** There will be a Service conducted by the Bishops of Hereford, Gloucester and Tewkesbury in St Michaels, Ledbury on 1 December to mark the merger of WEMTC with Ripon College, Cuddleston. Stoke Edith will hold its Carol Service on 11 December at 3.30 pm, followed by mulled wine and seasonal refreshments.

8. **Deanery 5 year plan:**

- i. Local training Needs; the Rural Dean noted that there were some hints in MAPs that additional help might be welcome. He would arrange any further input on that as requested.
- ii. Communications; the Deanery website was settling down and information going on to it.
- iii. Young people; Open the Book was now in place in 5 schools, and there were hopes that it might progress to include Much Marcle. The Lay Co-Chairman reported on the sterling work being done by Steve Taylor who was now working with the charity Young Life International. He was attracting young

people, and had had a successful Pudding Party. Synod had a link to this work via Liz Harvey who is Chairman of Ledbury YLI.

- iv. Social Activities. The Lay Co-Chairman reported that there was now a small group undertaking the planning. An additional younger volunteer to forge links with young families would be welcome.

9. **Agreed Minutes of Synod 29 September and SBC 2 November** were noted, including the engagement of Mr D Kirkham to assist the Secretary.

10. **Future Meetings.**

Synod: 22nd March, 26th July, 27th September and 22nd November. Venues to be determined

Standing and Business Committee: 7th March, 4th July, 5th September and 7th November.

11. **Any other business. None Notified**

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

Annex A

Notes towards an interim draft of Cradley Mission Action Plan, drawn from notes of a meeting of Cradley PCC held on Thursday 10th November 2011, following the Benefice Planning Morning on 8th October

CARING FOR THE WORLD

Displays to highlight global issues- e.g. the Mtwara link, mission projects, Fairtrade, persecuted Christians overseas...
possibility of a benefice wide group to hold these concerns in prayer and action

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

Importance of **youth outreach and integration...** Recent SIAS inspection recommended reviving the **after-school Christian club: a young people's Alpha Course** at the school has been mooted

John Masefield School- pursue possibility of link for teenagers. **Diocesan Board of Education: what secondary links have we and how can we encourage them?**

Galvanisation of existing Visitors Group... though LMDG?

Encouraging people to become more involved: a display of opportunities for further involvement at the back of church: **maybe slips in the pews for people to offer?** (*Stewardship issue*)

More use of church by Cradley School (*or more use by church of Cradley School? Unclear!*)

More inter-benefice communication (LMDG?)

Better communication with other village groups: e.g. synchronise with hall more effectively. Share dates, bookings, more effectively (Contact Ken Nason. Might this be a web-site issue?)

Explore possibility of presence at Wedding Fayres

Inter-choir events?

Write to companies inviting use of church and environs as a filming set

CARING FOR PEOPLE IN NEED

Review effectiveness of the Benefice Visiting Group

Share developing 'best practice' of **pastoral visiting co-ordination** (Mathon's scheme of local 'contacts')

GROWING IN FAITH AND HELPING OTHERS TO GROW

Continue developing work of **Stepping Stones (Young families lay-led outreach services), Sunday School**

Encouraging new bell-ringers

Variety of services: developing an inclusive welcome

A proper **network of contacts** across Cradley Parish (e.g. Pixiefields, Chapel Lane...)

CHALLENGING UNJUST STRUCTURES (or perhaps better, 'Challenging Injustice?') Following Cradley School's Mission Statement, 'Enriching Lives': How might we enrich the lives of others, globally and locally?

Social inclusion locally... e.g. The Leys coffee mornings

Amnesty International Anyone to be the link?

Link with inner-city Parish? Write to bishops elsewhere asking advice? Ask Melanie how the Colwall-Aston Link developed

Specific Project(s) would help: e.g. for Christian Aid Week, or from USPG

Annex B

An Interim draft towards Mathon's Mission Action Plan 2011/2: Notes from special planning meeting held by Mathon PCC on 3rd November 2011, following the Benefice Planning Morning on 8th October

Caring for the world

The issue of *more focused prayer* was picked up from the Benefice notes. It was felt that more frequent use of lay intercessors might help with this. Perhaps a further column could be added to the list of Readers prepared each month by Mrs Seymour. Mrs Cutler could organise documentary support and there was a list of people who could be approached.

Sharing God's love

Community *tea parties* were mooted.

Helpers to follow up on the Rector's visits.

The *Evensong* experiment had been successful in increasing the numbers attending. Have one every time the month had a 5th Sunday? [ie four (without Dec) or five times a year] Or every month?

Find a popular way to host a big event for next year's *Diamond Jubilee*

Use *themed services* to bring in new audiences, particularly the young

Challenging unjust structures in society

Nothing discussed.

Caring for people in need

Contrary to the note about the *Rural Dean* being too busy, the meeting wished to thank him most sincerely for all his efforts in support of the Rector in Mathon.

Growing in faith and helping others to grow

Churchwardens from the three parishes met regularly and the liaison was useful. While joint PCC meetings were not much favoured, a (yearly?) *meeting of the Benefice* to share successes and new ideas would be welcome.

The concept of the *Friends* had been well received. Build on this with occasional *welcome parties* for new parishioners? Put the literature out at the *Advent Fair*.

Benefice extracts

A quick run through produced these thoughts:

Use the *extra space planned for the back of the church* to install free standing *display boards*. Use for showing our current charity forthcoming special events so forth, and maybe photos of the Rector and Wardens? Maybe also a box for *prayer requests*, and *candles* to light?

A *link to an urban church* in an area of need was favoured.

Visiting ex parishioners now beyond the parish (e.g. in Perrins)

Build on the popularity of the *Lent Courses* which attracted many non-churchgoers.

Storridge P.C.C.

Interim draft for Mission Action Plan 2011-1012 drawn from notes of a special meeting of the PCC held on Monday 31st October 2011, following the Benefice MAPPING morning on 8th October

Significant points raised were:

- a] A desire **to add to the notes from the benefice meeting**
 - i. a record of our appreciation of the highly valued and long-standing service of our Honorary Curate.
 - ii. a record of the importance of the meetings **between the officers of our three parishes** (churchwardens, occasionally treasurers) which have **long been a valuable feature of this benefice.**

- b] The importance of the different forms of service preferred by our three parishes, offering a **good variety of worship** – something for everyone. **Storridge maintains a strong loyalty to BCP and AV and wishes to be inclusive and to make all Christians feel welcome and accepted.** The PCC recognised the need to offer services of a **more flexible variety** for occasions which draw larger numbers from the wider community, such as Christmas and Harvest. **A banner outside for special occasions, maybe three times a year?**

- c] For **outreach** the PCC would like to explore the possibility of **welcoming newcomers to the parish with an occasional short service followed by refreshments in church.** Events such as refreshments in the former vicarage after the Carol Service were noted as having given people the sort of friendly atmosphere that the PCC would like to build upon..

- d] Attempt to **visit newcomers moving in to the parish:** spearheaded by Rector and churchwardens, involving others as appropriate. **Availability of a leaflet giving information about local** organisations and contact details for church personnel?

- e] Perhaps we might **improve our website** by **seeking the assistance of a parishioner with IT expertise.** Maybe enhance the data with pictures, etc?

- f] Need also to **plan for financial viability**

- g) Concern was expressed that **joint PCC meetings** would merely **add to the time spent in meetings.** Should it prove impossible to find suitable persons to serve as **treasurers, churchwardens etc** it **might be useful to have one individual serving more than one parish within the benefice, but we have not yet reached this position.**