

LEDBURY DEANERY SYNOD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing & Business Committee held on
3 August 2011 at 7.00 pm
at Ankerdine House, Ledbury.

Present: Rev'd Prebendary M. Vockins (Rural Dean), Mr. I. Beer (Lay Co-Chairman, in the Chair), Mr I. Bailey, Rev'd P. Dunthorne, Mr N. Hills, Mr N. Hone, Mr. W. Hopkinson (Secretary), Rev'd M Horton, Mr G. Probyn (Treasurer), Rev'd R. Ward.

Opening Prayers: were said by the Rural Dean

Item 1 Parish Share:

1. SBC had before it a paper by Mr N Hone, for which he was thanked by the Lay Co-Chairman. The latter felt that it was not really supported by the facts. The Rector, Ledbury, pointed out that in a number of respects the paper did not convey the full situation. For example, whilst Parish Share was not a contractual and legal obligation it was intimately linked to eg Clergy deployment. (The Rural Dean noted that because of retirements significant gaps in Deanery Clergy were like to arise and need to be filled in the coming years.)
2. In the Hereford Diocese, the Deanery was the duly appointed authority for handling and allocating Parish Share to benefices, via decisions of the Deanery Synod. Whilst the Rector, Ledbury, personally felt that CSF was not an appropriate tool for calculating Parish Share he was bound to follow the proper and democratic decision of Synod. Beyond that it was important to apply the principle of subsidiarity and put decision making down as far as possible when it came to dividing up the sum sought from benefices.
3. SBC accepted that there was a real need for better communications between Synod and the benefices. Synod representatives needed to be better briefed and to understand the issues; the recently instituted meetings of the Deanery Treasurer with Parish Treasurers were an important step.
4. The Rector, C,M&S, believed that for his benefice, CSF was vital. The Rector, Colwall, believed that there was a great difference between parishes not being able to meet their Parish Share and not being willing to do so. Every effort must be made firstly at benefice level and then at Deanery level to help the former. The latter, however, were putting every other parish at risk as Deanery reserves were eroded. Mr I Bailey said that the figures in the recent SC Note to Synod did not differentiate between can't and won't.
5. Mr Hills said that his small parish (Aylton) had been confronted with a major problem of a 16% increase in parish share a few year ago. That had been related to the application of CSF and was quite beyond their capability. The increase had been

reduced to 4% but the strongly worded letter that they had received had incensed members of the PCC.

6. Responding to points made generally, Mr Hone said that what had finally snapped patience in the Cider and Hop parishes had been the remitting of some thousands of pounds to the Diocese. That had been agreed by Synod following a decision of SC but parishes had not felt involved. There was a need to galvanise engagement.
7. After some further exchanges, pointing out that the Parish share arrangements had been repeatedly approved by Synod, and that it was incumbent upon members of Synod and SBC not to subvert Synod by encouraging unilateral flouting of its decisions, the Lay Co-Chairman proposed a way forward. That would have three elements and would have to be approved and accepted by all parishes, in due form. It would be:
 - i. For 2010 the shortfall would be borne on Deanery Reserves;
 - ii. For 2011, Benefices would pay in total the sums allocated to them by the Deanery Treasurer. The division of those sums would be for the Benefices but in no case would a parish seek to apply to itself a calculation not formally agreed by its Benefice; Any parish that has genuine difficulty in raising its share would alert the Benefice holder and the Deanery Treasurer.
 - iii. For the future, no parish would take unilateral action in calculating or withholding Parish Share. However, SBC would be prepared to consider, and if it were acceptable, to recommend to Synod, a comprehensive review of Deanery financing proposed by a Benefice. Such proposal could include not only formulae for the calculation of Parish Share but also issues arising from Stewardship, and any other matters.
8. After further discussion with all the Committee involved, this was agreed, and the Secretary was invited to draft a letter to parishes seeking their agreement.

Item 2: Date of Next Meeting

9. SBC's next meeting would be brought forward to 1 September at 7 pm at Bosbury House.