

## Ledbury Deanery Synod

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7.30 pm on 26 November, 2009,  
at Colwall Ale House.

### **Attendance:**

**House of Clergy** Rev'd Preb. M.D.Vockins (Rural Dean), Rev'd P Dunthorne (Ledbury), Rev'd M.Horton (Colwall), Rev'd H Mayell (Ledbury), Rev'd R Ward (C, M & S), Rev'd F Iliffe (Ledbury).

**House of Laity** Mr I Beer (Lat Co-Chairman), Mr M Allfrey (Storr ridge), Dr R Allsopp (Wellington Heath), Mr I. Bailey (Cradley), Dr C Bainton (Ledbury), Mr M Brothers (Ledbury), Mrs E Clutterbuck (Bosbury), Dr J Higgins (Pixley), Mr W Hopkinson (Secretary), Mr M Johnson (Coddington), Mr A Mence (Tarrington), Mrs H Morgan (Cradley), Mr C Myles (Ashperton), Mrs L Owen (Eastnor), Miss C Panter (Diocesan Synod), Mr B Pardoe (Putley), Mr G Probyn (Mathon), (Deanery Treasurer), Mr D McKerracher (Mathon), Mrs M Roberts (Colwall), Mrs A Russell (Ashperton), Mr F Seabright (Bosbury), Mr B Speakman (Wellington Heath), Mrs M Taylour (Colwall), Mrs E Toyer (Ledbury), Mr B Tremayne (Aylton), Mrs S Tyrrell (Putley).

Opening Worship was led by the Rev'd M Horton, Rector of Colwall..

1. **Address by Rev'd N Read.** The Rural Dean introduced Mr Read, now the Missioner for Agriculture, Rural Life and the Environment. He was also a member of the 2015 Follow up Group. Mr Read explained that the Environment part of his portfolio was a recent addition and he was working towards developing theological resources for it and a fuller understanding of the issues. Already, it was clear that there were two major elements: the Oil Peak and Climate change. The former will lead, inevitably to rising energy prices. The latter was still a matter of some controversy but most scientists accepted the role of human agency and the risk, if changes were not made of reaching several serious tipping points.

He felt that the two topics raised issues both spiritual and philosophical. The 2015 Follow up Group was seeking visions of the future; they wished to know what others in the Diocese thought. It was entirely possible that there would be a disjunction from the past (as in Jeremiah 27 and 28). He asked the Synod to consider what they thought God was saying through the situation that we face. Was the economic crisis circumstance, or was He speaking through it? Synod then broke into discussion groups to consider the issues. Those produced a variety of reactions.

Amongst matters raised in the reports back were the Leadership role of the Diocese, and the need for it to give a lead and set a context. Can diocesan structures help? On the other hand, there was a need for the involvement of the whole community. One interlocutor asked "What

does every parish need” and pointed to the significant impact of a single family coming into one parish. Another comment was on the need for radical reviews of the use Church buildings. There was also a need to trial new things and new ways.

Summing up, Mr Read said that the 2015 Group was there to listen. He would be very glad to return to the Deanery, or to a benefice to have further discussions. The Rural Dean thanked Mr Read for a most thought provoking and illuminating address. That was warmly endorsed by Synod. (An article on this meeting written by Mr J Barnes for the Ledbury Parish Magazine is at Annex A.)

2. **Welcome.** The Lay Co-Chairman opened the business part of the proceedings by thanking the Rural Dean and the Rector of Ledbury for the arrangements for the Deanery Service the preceding Sunday. That had gone very well and the Bishop of Ludlow had been thanked in writing. He also thanked the Rector of Colwall and those assisting her for the arrangements and hospitality for the meeting of the Synod.
3. **Apologies.** Mrs Avery, Mrs Blackaby, Mr Bouchier, Mrs Davies, Mr Greensmith, The Rev'd N Seabright, The Rev'd Preb Strutt, Mr Willder.
4. **Minutes of the Meeting of 24 September, 2009.** These were agreed, subject to the correction of certain proper names in the Mtwara report (Item 11).
5. **Matters arising:** Item 9, Appointment of Diocesan Synod Representatives. The Secretary reminded synod of their endorsement of the appointment of Dr J Higgins; he said that he had taken soundings and found another willing candidate. He, therefore, proposed the appointment of Mr R Hunter. That was approved.
6. **Finance:**
  - (i) **Current Year's progress.** The Treasurer reported the satisfactory progress with the current year's monies (Annex B). Synod took note with approval.
  - (ii) **Budgeting for 2010.** The Treasurer introduced a draft budget (Annex C) with apologies for its lateness. The timing had, however, been out of his hands as he had been waiting on the Diocese. After a brief discussion, the Rector of Ledbury proposed that:
    - a. The Treasurer be thanked for producing a budget in the short time available;
    - b. Synod accept the Treasurer's recommendation to split the Subsidy equally between parishes and the Diocese;

c. Synod accept the budget, subject to review at the next meeting if 3 or more parishes requested such a review.

Voting separately on each aspect, Synod accepted the proposals, in the case of the second by a majority vote. They also accepted a motion regretting the suggestion that clergy pay might not be increased in the coming year and expressing their unequivocal support for their clergy. They directed the Lay Co-Chairman to draw their concerns to the Diocesan authorities; his letter to the Chairman of Finance is at Annex D.

(iii) **Deanery Finance Agreement:** The Lay Co-Chairman informed Synod that the proposers of the motion to change the DFA had sought his agreement to vary their motion from one seeking instant amendment to one remitting the issue to the DFAG. He said that, subject to the concurrence of Synod, he was minded to accept. Synod agreed. Mrs S Tyrrell then introduced the amended motion.

She said that she was speaking for the Cider and Hop Groups of parishes. In their view, the use of church attendance figures, otherwise known as Church Strength Factor, when calculating parish share, can cause significant distortions from year to year. This happens when the calculations include parishes of greatly different size within the same benefice. For example, an increase of two in attendance in the smallest parish in the Ledbury Benefice represents an increase of 33.33%, whilst an increase of two in the largest parish represents an increase of only 1.3%. The aim of the resolution was to ensure that parish share changes from year to year in a predictable manner which was aligned to the percentage change in Diocesan share. This could be achieved by removing CSF from all share calculations and replacing it with the standard intra benefice allocation of 60% - 20% - 20% for the Ledbury Team, the Colwall and the Cradley benefices respectively. She therefore asked Synod to support the revised motion - to ask DFAG to review means of achieving greater predictability in the annual changes in parish share and, in particular, to review the use of church attendance as a modifying factor.

The Lay Co-Chairman asked the Rector of Colwall to respond on behalf of the Standing Committee (SC). The Rev'd M Horton said that she believed passionately in the SC position; the CM&S benefice had based themselves on a mechanism agreed only 2 years ago. It should run for 5 years before there was any question of a major review. It followed the Diocesan system and was important as incorporating an element of ability to pay. The problems suggested by the motion had been greatly exaggerated; not only were CSF figure averaged over three years

but benefices were entirely at liberty to take measures to mitigate problems within individual parishes.

The Rural Dean noted that Ledbury had taken a prominent role in persuading the Diocese to revise their previous system; he feared that the Deanery could appear foolish if they now cast aspersions on the new principles.

The Rector of Ledbury said that he thought the CSF utterly wrong. It favoured static churches rather than those committed to growth. Mission oriented churches would suffer since an increase in numbers was not followed for some time by growth in contributions. Moreover, he took issue with the SC note: the figure per head of church attender was merely the inevitable result of a larger inequity: the unequal deployment of clergy within the Deanery. While the Ledbury Team had one stipendiary cleric per 4600 population, and 5.67 parishes, the figures for CMS were approx. 2000 and 3 (approx. 2600 and 2 for Colwall).

The Rector of Cradley said that he strongly supported the SC position; it was the most ethical. We needed to look for contributions according to ability, and to redistribute according to need. The present system approached that more nearly than would one that dropped CSF.

After a number of other interventions Synod voted against the proposal by 15 to 12, with 1 abstention. The motion was, therefore, lost. The Lay Co-Chairman assured Synod, however, that SC would keep matters under review and bring the DFA back to Synod if significant difficulties were perceived.

**7. Standing Committee Minutes 4 November, 2009.** No matters were raised.

#### **8. Deanery 5 year plan: Updating**

- (i) Pastoral visiting. Nothing to Report
- (ii) Communications. The Lay Co-Chairman noted that the Diocesan and Deanery Websites were in operation and there were links between them.
- (iii) Young people. The Rural dean reported on the very successful Open the Book session in Lebury. He was now establishing a Steering Committee which he hoped would be in being by January.
- (iv) Social event. The Rural Dean reported that he hope to finalise arrangements before Christmas for a Poetry, Prose, Pies, Pizza and Pints session to be held before Easter.

9. **Diocesan Synod.** The Secretary reported on the first session of the newly elected Diocesan synod. The Bishop had held an interesting meditation on the Chalice; Synod had dealt competently with a draft budget, including provision for a staged settlement for Clergy pay. However, it had had very great difficulties over Clergy Pensions. Voting on draft advice to the General Synod had been 28 for; 10 against and 46 abstentions. In part that reflected the difficult nature of the subject; it also reflected, however, the presentation and handling of the business. Bishop's Council had reviewed the matter and steps were in hand to prevent a repetition of the occurrence. A supplementary note had been provided to the General Synod but in the Secretary's view that was still inadequate as it reflected certain rather grudging opinions which viewed the Clergy as significantly privileged, and it still did not demonstrate a balanced analysis of the issues.
10. **Bishop's Council.** The Secretary reported on the two meetings of the reconstructed Bishop's Council. He felt that that was an effective body that had done very useful work already, including on management and other structures.
11. **Mtwara report.** Mrs E Toyer said that the £4,500 sent in June had been acknowledged. The Rev Preb Gould had been assured whilst in Mtwara that the roof would be on the new church at Likondi by Easter. Over £900 had been received from Lent lunches in CM&S parishes; of this, £600 will be sent for distribution of food to the poor at Christmas, and £300 for meals for the kindergarten. £225 from Much Marcle will be used for refurbishment of the kindergarten; £260 from Ledbury and Yarkhill is held in reserve.
- The Headteacher of Ledbury Primary School is keen to proceed with a link with Lilunga School. A meeting will be held shortly with Rev Preb Gould and the Diocesan Education Officer.
- The next fundraising project will be a Beetle Drive and African Supper to be held at Wellington Heath Village Hall on 22 January 2010, to bring visitors from Mtwara next year.

## 12. Dates of forthcoming Synod Meetings

- (i) 25<sup>th</sup> March, at Much Marcle
- (ii) 29<sup>th</sup> July, at Ashperton
- (iii) 23<sup>rd</sup> September, at Ledbury Chapter House
- (iv) 25<sup>th</sup> November, at Colwall Ale House.

13. **Any other business.** Miss Panter drew the attention of Synod to the Book Aid Bookshop now open in Ledbury and flyers were distributed.

The Meeting ended at 10 pm.

2015

Ledbury Deanery Synod met on 26<sup>th</sup> November and, among other things, received a short talk from The Reverend Nick Read, formerly known as the Agricultural Chaplain and now designated Diocesan Missioner for the Environment, Agriculture and Rural Life.

One of Nick's objectives was to learn what Synod members and others thought about the changes set out in 2015 Onward, a document produced in the Diocese of Hereford and setting out a possible strategy for the Church in this area. This was written against the background of likely falling numbers of full-time stipendiary clergy and the probable need in future to rely more on non-stipendiary clergy (who would have "oversight" of a group of parishes) and upon a greater degree of involvement by members of the laity.

The Synod had met in September 2008 to hear what the authors of the Report had to say.. Nick and a few others ("The Follow Up Group") had been charged with following up this work and were expected to report their own findings and recommendations in the spring of 2010.

Nick started by linking the worldwide changes in the Environment with the work of the Follow Up Group. The days of cheap oil were over. Remaining reserves would be more difficult to extract. Energy prices would rise. Climate Change could result in the loss of the Arctic Ice cap and in the process upset the course of the Gulf Stream. The climate of the United Kingdom could resemble the present climate of Newfoundland. The key question is "How do we respond? How do we manage agriculture without access to pesticides? People will have to decide for themselves.

The example chosen by Nick was from the Old Testament: Jeremiah, Chapters 27 and 28, where the people of Jerusalem had been told that, because God had helped them in the past, they could not automatically rely on the same thing happening again: they had to think and act for themselves. Against that background, what do we have to do within ten years to attract 60,000 people back into agriculture – and in the process regain a sense of community?

Along with Herefordshire Council, the Diocese of Hereford had a key role. It was vital to plan for the future rather than simply reacting to events. Where would we like to be as a Church in 2015? What do we think God is saying to use?

Those present then broke up into small discussion groups. The general tenor of their findings can be summed up as "Lay people will have to get on with it." To this should be added the observation that the structure of the diocese will need to be altered -with care- in order to provide for effective leadership. The point was made that, in a small parish, the arrival of one family can transform things. It was also recognised that any changes would have to be promoted with care to minimise the possibility of misunderstanding.

Nick concluded by emphasising that he would welcome ideas that might be the subject of trials and also suggestions as to how best the diocese might help individuals and parishes to bring about change.

You can write to The Reverend Nick Read, OBE, The Rectory, Pembridge, HR6 9EB or to [agchap@btinternet.com](mailto:agchap@btinternet.com).

J F Barnes.

**2009 Financial Position**

The table below the position by parish for 2009 up to date, and after having made all the scheduled payments up to the third quarter.

A minus figure in the final column indicates that a parish or group has paid a surplus; at this stage only a few have paid for the fourth quarter.

Any shortfalls are adequately covered by the 2009 phasing allocation from the diocese of £5,007.

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Balances from 1/1/2009 to 31/12/2009.

Parish	Target for 12 months	Amount Paid To date	Balance Outstanding
Coddington_	6240.00	-6209.00	31.00
Colwall_	50408.00	-38158.00	12250.00
Group_1_Total	56648.00	-44367.00	12281.00
Cradley	30024.00	-22517.94	7506.06
Mathon	13840.00	-13840.40	-0.40
Storrige	8616.00	-8573.41	42.59
Group_2_Total	52480.00	-44931.75	7548.25
Eastnor	7400.00	-5900.00	1500.00
Ledbury	81004.00	-60753.98	20250.02
Little_Marcle	5176.00	-3893.25	1282.75
Group_3_Total	93580.00	-70547.23	23032.77
Ashperton	6572.00	-4961.25	1610.75
Bosbury	13888.00	-10077.50	3810.50
Canon_Frome	1496.00	-1453.50	42.50
Munsley	5556.00	-4033.00	1523.00
Stoke_Edith	800.00	-808.60	-8.60
Stret_Grandison	5068.00	-3688.50	1379.50
Tarrington	13488.00	-13075.00	413.00
Yarkhill	6784.00	-5033.00	1751.00
Group_4_Total	53652.00	-43130.35	10521.65
Aylton	5724.00	-3938.73	1785.27
Much_Marcle	10244.00	-7704.72	2539.28
Pixley	3556.00	-1500.00	2056.00
Putley	6432.00	-6532.00	-100.00
Wellington_Heath	10836.00	-7976.50	2859.50
Yatton	3132.00	-3248.00	-116.00
Group_5_Total	39924.00	-30899.95	9024.05
Total_outstanding	296284.00	-233876.28	62407.72

**From:** The Lay Co-Chair of the Ledbury Deanery, Ian D.S.Beer, CBE  
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30<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

*Topped personally to Charles Hunter, Chairman of Finance*

### **Church Finance and Clergy Pay**

At its meeting on 26 November the Ledbury Deanery Synod adopted a budget following, generally, the guidance from the Diocese. They noted the financial pressures upon the Diocese and that it was facing a deficit and therefore agreed to pay a share of £267,753 thus reducing our need for subsidy to £3,030, i.e. 50% of the most recent calculated figure, and less than the amount we received in 2008.

However, they also directed me to write to you expressing their extreme disquiet, indeed anger might not be too strong a word, over the Diocese's handling of the issue of Clergy pay. This was very much a reaction from the grassroots or the pews; it was not at the initiative of the Deanery officers, though they all share the general concern.

Contrary to what appears to be the case in some parts of the Diocese, Ledbury does not feel that the Clergy are protected or privileged. They do not see them as well off as against their parishioners. They see a dedicated body of men and women who could pursue, and in some cases have previously pursued, much more lucrative professions. Many are very well qualified to earn much greater emoluments than they receive as Clergy. As a body, the Clergy may expect to work a long career, most foregoing the opportunity to build up capital through house purchase. The Synod formally expressed its confidence in, and deep appreciation of its Clergy, giving thanks for their dedication.

Against that background they wish me to express their deep regret that the Diocese thought fit to send out a questionnaire to Clergy asking whether they would be prepared to forego a pay increase next year. The Synod felt that that is not the way to demonstrate to the Clergy the appropriate feelings about them, their vocation and their dedication. Some clergy pointed out the moral pressure that colleagues might feel to answer such an enquiry in the affirmative. Obviously, personal circumstances vary greatly; some clergy may be very willing to forego their increase (or even to gift aid it back) but that should be for the private decision of the individual, not driven by a feeling that for the sake of diocesan finances he must not stand out.

The change of tack in moving to a staged settlement is obviously an improvement on the idea of a nil increase. It still aroused (lay) anger, however, and there was considerable pressure to make good the full, unabated increase as a Deanery measure. That was not pursued, not least because of arguments from Clergy. However, Deanery Synod asked that you be left in no doubt about the concern felt here over the need to handle Clergy conditions of service with appropriate sensitivity. They express firm encouragement to the Diocese to revert to doing everything possible towards paying full stipend increases at the earliest opportunity, and certainly at the next round of increases. If Diocesan finances are under strain there should be no seeking of simple solutions in squeezing down further the already low emoluments of the clergy.

*Tailed personally by Ian Beer*

Charles Hunter, Esquire,  
Chairman of Finance,  
The Diocesan Office,  
The Palace, Hereford

*but delivered by hand by Ian Beer*