

LEDBURY DEANERY SYNOD

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7.45 pm on Thursday 25th September in Cradley Village Hall

Attendance:

House of Clergy: The Reverend Prebendary S Strutt, and the Reverends, M Horton and A Lanyon-Hogg.

House of Laity: Mr I D S Beer (Lay Co-Chairman, in the chair), Mrs D Allen (Eastnor), Mr M Allfrey (StorrIDGE), Dr R Allsopp (Wellington Heath), Miss V Avery (Tarrington), Mr I Bailey (Cradley), Dr C Bainton (Ledbury), Mr M Brothers, (Ledbury), Mr G Burke (Stoke Edith), Mr M Greensmith (Stretton Grandison and DAC), Mr D McKerracher (Mathon), Mr A Mence (Tarrington), Mrs H Morgan (Cradley), Mr C Myles (Ashperton), Miss C Panter (Diocesan Synod), Mr G Probyn (Mathon), Mr F Seabright (Bosbury), Mr B Speakman (Wellington Heath), Mrs M Taylour (Colwall), Mrs E Toyer (Ledbury), Mrs S Tyrrell (Putley), and Mr J F Barnes (Deanery Secretary).

Apologies for Absence had been received from The Reverends M D Vockins (Rural Dean), P Dunthorne, H Mayell, E Reed, J. Scholefield, N Seabright, R Ward and J Watkins, Mr D Barnett-Roberts (Munsley), , Mr R Beard (Colwall), Mrs C Blackaby (Ledbury), Mr J Bouchier (Little Marcle), Mrs E Clutterbuck (Bosbury), Mrs D Davies (Canon Frome), Dr J Dinnen (General Synod), Mr M Hibbins (Yarkhill), Dr J Higgins (Pixley, Mr M Johnson (Coddington), Mrs D Merry (Eastnor, Mrs M Roberts (Colwall), Mrs A M Russell (Ashperton), Mr B Tremayne (Aylton), and Mr B Willder (Stretton Grandison)

Opening Worship was led Bill Crouch, Jen Dunford and Sue Bailey of the C M & S Local Ministry Development Group, with prayers, a reading from 1 Corinthians 12 and a hymn.

1. Welcome: The Chairman welcomed the Reverend Melanie Horton, Rector of Colwall and Coddington, and Mr Gareth Burke of Stoke Edith.

2. Directories for 2009: The Chairman expressed the thanks of the Synod to the Secretary for compiling and overseeing the printing and distribution of the new directory. Mr Seabright asked whether he could have a copy sent to him electronically and this was agreed. In reply to another suggestion, both the Chairman and the Secretary felt it would be inappropriate to post the Directory on the Deanery Website. Apart from anything else it would involve removing names etc of those who were willing to have them in a printed document with a limited circulation but did not want them published on the worldwide web.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st July (circulated previously): approved and to be posted on the deanery website.

4. Matters Arising: Aylton to be added to the list of parishes supporting the Deanery Link with Mtwara.

5. Finance: The Chairman stated that he had received one bid amounting to about £8,000 for the money available for Mission and reminded those present of the 30th September deadline.

(i) Acceptance of the Accounts for 2007 (circulated previously): agreed.

(ii) Treasurer's Report: Mr Probyn stated that finances were satisfactory. The third quarter's parish share had been paid and there was a small surplus of about £1,000 relative to the beginning of the year. Returns for Church Strength Factor (CSF) had been sent in: the numbers had fallen from 519 to 495. The Diocesan Board of Finance on 23rd September had approved a Budget for 2009 which involved an increase of less than five per cent. (This Budget had still to be approved by the Diocesan Synod).

6. Deanery Business: Parochial Expenses of Ministry. A paper had been circulated previously. Its recommendation was agreed.

7. Deanery Five Year Plan:

(i) Training Sessions: continuing.

(ii) Communications: Mr Greensmith, Chairman of the Deanery Advisory Group, had attended, with the Rural Dean, presentations from two firms bidding for the new Diocesan Website. The presentations were made on 16th September at Hereford. In both cases it would be possible for Ledbury Deanery to keep its existing website and to be linked with the diocesan website.. Nothing had been heard since about the outcome. Members of the Synod would be kept informed. The Chairman thanked Mr Greensmith.

(iii) Children & Young People: The November meeting would be devoted to this topic. **It was emphasized that all those working with young people in the parishes were urged to attend whether members of the Synod or not.**

(iv) Social Function: The Rural Dean, Esther Kay of Bosbury, Mr Myles and the Chairman had met. Mr Myles explained that they had in mind a Musical Event in the Concert Hall of John Masefield School during February. Suggested names of performers, of all ages, would be welcomed. Groups could be set up. The organisers would invite them. Names to Mr Myles or to the Secretary.

8. Further Reports

(i) Standing Committee: Minutes of the meeting on 3rd September had been circulated.

(ii) Diocesan Synod: no recent meeting.

8 Further Reports (continued)

(iii) Bishop's Council: The Reverend Prebendary Sue Strutt described the residential meeting on 18th, 19th and 20th September at Ludlow, when the Council had considered and discussed the same material as that presented to the Ledbury Deanery Study Day on the 13th. Whereas Ledbury Deanery had already begun to move in the direction outlined during the Study Day, it had become apparent that others had not yet begun to think along these lines.

(iv) Mtwara Committee: Mrs Toyer reported that a teacher from Ledbury Primary School had visited the school in Mtwara and the link between the two had been set up. Further exchanges were planned and both schools were embarking on projects about climate. The Reverend Judy Scholefield and Dr Robert Scholefield were at present in Mtwara for a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Church of St Michael and All Angels, when four bishops would attend. They had taken with them a small altar cross as a gift and the forthcoming Patronal Festival at St Michael and All Angels Ledbury would incorporate material about Mtwara in the Order of Service.

9. Good News and Forthcoming Events:

(i) Deanery Service on 23rd November with the Bishop of Ludlow as preacher.

(ii) Putley: films on the forthcoming Saturday and Sunday, which would be "Back to Church" Sunday;

(iii) Bosbury: Concerts on 26th September and 8th November.

(iv) Ledbury: Harvest Festival and "Back to Church Sunday" on 12th October.

(v) Hereford Cathedral: The Reverend John Watkins would be ordained priest on 27th September at 2.030 pm.

9 Date and Venue of Next meeting: 27th November at Wellington Heath at 7.30pm.

10. Other Business; Mr Allfrey asked about substitution. The Chairman had consulted the relevant authority and had been told that substitution with the right to speak and vote was not permitted. It was, however, entirely possible for a substitute to come in place of an elected member who was unable to attend, although they would not have voting rights.

11. Deanery Study Day and the Diocesan Conference at Swanwick. Because of pressure on time discussion about Swanwick would be deferred. A paper, prepared jointly by the Lay Co-Chairman and the Secretary after the Study Day on 13th September, had been circulated. It included the questions that had been asked during the final session. The Chairman explained that those present would be divided up into four groups

to consider and report back on these questions.

11. Deanery Study Day (continued).

Shortly after receiving the joint paper, the Reverend Anne Lanyon-Hogg had set down on paper her own reservations about the concept of oversight as described by the organisers of the Study Day. She was invited to speak and started by asking “Why is God calling more and more people to offer themselves for ordination as non-stipendiary ministers?” She felt that those responsible for fostering vocations and for training were not considering properly the hopes and aspirations of those to be ordained. In short, the proposed system for oversight of parishes would not work: non-stipendiary ministers had of necessity to be connected to workplaces.

At the conclusion of the group meetings, the following findings, among others, were presented:-

2015 is not far away but the Deanery could be larger, with fewer clergy. Congregations and income could well be smaller, with the prospect of closures. The Deanery would have to rely more on its lay resources but it was by no means certain that more volunteers would come forward. An increase in Lay Readers should be encouraged and the Deanery should be expected to provide more training. An ageing population and a bigger workload might constitute a threat to the existence of many churches. Financial aid for maintaining, repairing and re-ordering buildings would help.

There would be a requirement to re-educate people about Extended Communion and it was essential to develop links with children and their parents. “Each Parish should grow its own priest.”

One group felt that it was vital that the Deanery should not plan for decline and emphasised the need to “spread the word”.

An “approachable Head Office” would be an advantage.

The Chairman concluded the discussion by thanking everyone and stating that the views expressed would be added to those already forwarded to the organiser after the Study Day.

The Synod closed with prayer at 9.30 pm.

James F Barnes,
Deanery Secretary,
26th September, 2008.