

**c The Diocese of Southwark
The Deanery of Sutton**

Area Dean: The Revd Darren Miller

Lay Chair: Vacant

8th June 2017 Sutton Deanery Synod

**Minutes of the meeting of the Sutton Deanery Synod held on Thursday,
8th June 2017 at St Michael and all Angels, South Beddington**

Attendance: 29 members were present
26 members sent apologies
13 members were absent

Prior to the full meeting, the House of Laity was convened at 7:45pm to elect a new Lay Chair. Since no nominations had been received, the assembled members were asked if anyone there would like to volunteer. There was some discussion about what the job would entail, and it was remarked that Mr Nigel Bennett had gone beyond what would normally be expected, and would be a hard act to follow.

It was decided that the standing committee would put together a document detailing what would definitely be required, and what the post could involve, and this would then be circulated. Attendees were encouraged to consider if any members of their parish that were not currently on Synod might be suitable for the role.

1. The Area Dean opened the meeting at 8.10pm with the start of the Eucharist.

2. Synod was welcomed to St Michael and All Angels South Beddington with St Paul's Roundshaw by Mother Angela Gbebikan. She pointed out the two stained-glass windows in the south wall. The first was installed in the 1940s and the second as part of the centenary celebrations in 2007. That window has four panels representing St Michael, the Bandon Hill community of St Francis, St Paul, and Christ as King of the World. The propeller cross is the distinctive symbol of St Paul's which is built on the site of the old Croydon Airport. The local theme is continued by a representation of Wallington Town Hall in the background.

The staff at the church serving alongside Mtr Angela, are Mtr Maria, and Mtr Martha who has recently joined as a part-time curate.

3. During the Eucharist Fr Darren spoke briefly on the passage that was read from Tobit, where Tobias takes his cousin Sarah as his wife, and survives the wedding night that claimed the lives of his seven predecessors by prayer and following God's will. In the same way, this new Synod will not be 'just a talking shop' but will be an opportunity to explore together what God wants us to be as an engine of mission and growth in our parishes, and through

prayer and focussing on God, see what we can achieve in the wider community.

4. After the Eucharist, Fr Darren thanked Mtr Angela and her team for their hospitality. Mtr Angela mentioned that the excellent cake which we had been served had been to celebrate Fr Dennis Ede's 60 years of service as a priest. Fr Darren then introduced the Revd Canon Mandy Ford, who will speak on Models for Ministry, and how we can be God's people, making a difference in this place.

5. Mandy Ford reiterated how important the Deaneries are becoming in the future of the church, moving forward to serve our communities in partnership with each other.

She introduced herself by saying that she has been in the diocese for three years, previously having been a parish priest in Leicester, where she was involved in the re-burial of Richard III. Within the diocese she is responsible for discipleship and ministry, the training of curates and the ongoing professional development of the clergy.

Models for Ministry

So why are we looking at this now? There have been big changes in the world around us, and in this 'post-Christendom' world, the expectations that our local communities have of the church has changed as well. It is now unusual to be a churchgoer, and our neighbours may follow very different faith paths. With the decline in Sunday School attendance, and of RE teaching in schools, it can no longer be assumed that people will know the basic tenets of the Christian faith, which leads to huge challenges in engaging the local communities. Young people coming to church for a wedding or baptism may never have been inside a church before.

The response to this problem at a national level is a call from the Archbishops to 'Re-imagine Ministry'. This takes the form of two documents: "Serving Together" and "Setting God's People Free".

At the diocesan level, Bishop Christopher's priority is 'Empowering the Laity'. This is a call to the laity to exercise their faith and gifts in the service of their church ministry, and to the clergy to value the skills and experience of the members of their congregation. The aim is to equip more Lay Ministers, and develop more kinds of lay ministries. This Synod has the role of listening to what people are saying in the Deanery, and is their voice in the Diocese.

Since at least the 16th century there has been a clear role for the laity within the governance of the church at all levels. People who have been a member of Deanery Synod for a number of years may remember being asked to vote on issues such as the joining of the Anglican and Methodist churches, the ordination of women, and most recently, women bishops.

Vocation applies to all Christian people, and is shown in our choice of marital status, the sort of work that we do, the kind of services that we perform. Besides that there is the specific threefold ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, where people are commissioned for a specific role within the church, but which also bestows a character that cannot then be

laid aside. The primary role of these ordained ministries is to serve the whole people of God, equipping them to fulfil their individual vocations.

All members present were then asked to think about their own Christian life and discipleship and the roles to which we have been called and then to share briefly in pairs.

The talk then continued with Mandy explaining the four categories of ministry currently recognised in the Diocese. These are:

Ordained: these are nationally selected, trained and recognised, and also deployable and accountable. They are paid and unpaid clergy in parishes, and chaplains.

There are 500 clergy and 50 chaplains in Southwark.

Licensed Lay Ministers: these are subject to national guidance, but are locally selected, trained and accountable.

In Southwark there are 168 Readers, and 27 in training.

Authorised Ministers: these are selected, trained and commissioned by the diocese as Southwark Pastoral Auxiliaries - SPAs

There are 185 SPAs and 12 in training.

Recognised Ministries: such as Youth Worker, Worship leader, Messy Church leader, Healing teams, are just a few examples of the many kinds of ministry that happen in individual churches and where people are trained and supported locally.

There are hundreds of people in these roles in our churches.

We were then asked to think about what ministries already exist in our churches and to share that with our neighbour. Members shared more unusual activities that they were organising: labyrinth coordinator, a dementia sufferers group, a bereavement group, tea dances, street pastors (which are nationally trained) and Church army were mentioned.

In the early church, ministries were defined by task, such as preachers, prophets, teachers, etc and as our situation changes to more nearly resemble that of the early church it is important to encourage people to discover their gifts and then get out there and use them, living lives that may include service and leadership, and providing them with the training and support to go with the task they have found to be done.

There are already some possibilities for training in place in the diocese, and Mandy mentioned four more specifically:

Bishops Certificate: this is a one year course in disciple which aims to equip and empower people for service. It is used as a foundation course for people training as SPAs and other forms of ministry. The content has been revised recently to make it less academic and more practically based. Copies of the leaflet: "Growing in Life and Faith" have been sent out to every church.

Vocations Fair: these are held three times a year in locations across the diocese. They present the different ways in which you can serve the church, including religious communities and the Church Army.

‘Deepening Discipleship’: is a leaflet that lists all events across the diocese. A new one is now being printed and will be sent to the parishes next week.

Department of Discipleship and Ministry: Nick Shepherd is the diocesan representative ready to resource you as an individual, as a parish, or as a Deanery.

A Lay Ministry Advisory Group has recently been formed and will be reporting back in Autumn 2018. The aim is to provide more training for more kinds of ministry. more short courses, and shorter training; already the Reader training has been reduced to two years, with the aim of getting people equipped and out there and then giving more training on the job. More encouragement and building-up of the local church to serve the local community, having a conversation to find out what their desires and expectations are.

Signs of Hope: There has been an increase in those coming forward for ordination of over 50% in the last three years, many of these are under 40, and over a third are black or minority ethnic, more representative of the diversity in the diocese.

There are over 8000 lay readers in the country fulfilling a wide range of roles. In some rural areas they are the pastoral focus of the church, leading services, visiting and taking funerals.

Fresh Expressions, which include activities such as messy church, cafe church, pub church, kids clubs, etc are often led by lay people who may have no special training or authorisation.

The attendees were encouraged to take the message back to the PCCs and thence to the wider church.

Questions and comments were invited.

David Billin confirmed that a 2-year Readers training course was starting in September at St Augustine’s. This led to a question about the age limit for training for the different ministries: there is no limit for SPAs; for Readers it is 62; for non-stipendiary ministers, 56; and for stipendiary ministers, 52. It was suggested that with the ageing population these ages seemed a bit low. Just in Time learning was suggested as being a better experience for adults, where you try something, find out what you need to know, get some training, and then try again.

Fr Darren thanked the Revd Mandy Ford for an interesting and stimulating presentation, and encouraged all members to go back to their churches and report on all the exciting things that are happening across the diocese.

6. Election of Officers

The lack of nominations for the post of Lay Chair is to be regretted, and a new document will be prepared for circulation. Members were again urged to consider if they have the gifts to take on this role, or knew of someone else who might be suitable.

Gerald Young and Penny Meakin were re-elected as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

7. Minutes of the meeting of February 8th 2017.

These were taken as read, and there were no matters arising.

A question was raised about what was quorum for the meeting. A third of the membership of 69 is 23 and there were 29 members present. A number of members were absent due to electoral duties, but Fr Darren expressed regrets that so few of the clergy were present. The rules have recently been changed so that if a member misses two meetings without sending apologies then they are deemed to have resigned from Synod.

8. Notices

a) Winifred Greenfield was invited to give a notice regarding the Sutton District Osteoporosis Group. She is trying to raise awareness of the dangers of osteoporosis, which only tends to be diagnosed when it is already advanced and not so easily treatable. Apparently 50% of women over the age of 50 will have the early stages of osteoporosis, and most do not know it until they have a fracture. Although it tends to be thought of as a women's problem, in fact 20% of men over the age of 50 will also have undiagnosed osteoporosis.

Winifred asked that one member from each church take a copy of the posters she has prepared and display it in a suitable place in the church so that people are encouraged to be tested while it is still easily treated. The posters give details of the local group and the national charity.

b) The Revd Lynn Billin mentioned a Safeguarding Training Day which is to be held at All Saints Hackbridge, 10am - 1pm on Saturday July 8th. It will be a very informative session and is suitable for all PCC members, those running church groups or in any pastoral role in the church. Please contact Jane at the church if you would be interested in attending.

c) Future meetings: Fr Darren reiterated the importance of attendance at the upcoming meetings of the Deanery Synod, which are:

Tuesday 17th October 2017 at Christ Church Sutton
Community Works

Wednesday 7th February 2018
Thursday 14th June 2018
Tuesday 16th October 2018

The meeting was close at 9:25pm.