

Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod

Annual Report of Activity in 2021

(for publication at APCMs in 2022)

Deanery Synod met four times during 2021: on 8th February, 16th March and 12th May via Zoom, and on 23rd September in person in Holy Trinity, Bengoe.

February: Clergy Well-Being

In February the main discussion was a reflection on the General Synod Measure on Clergy Well-being and was led by The Revd Ysmena Pentelow, The Revd David Sheppard and Katy Little, an Ordinand.

March: Where are we now? Seeking the way ahead (post Covid)

The Synod considered the bishop's document on recovering from Covid disruptions to worship – "Where are we now? Seeking the Way ahead." The discussion was led by the Rural Dean and considered the following questions: How do we regain our confidence and hope after the virus has pulled us apart and caused wide disruption to church and society? What have we learnt from our experience of isolation, including our online presence, pastoral care and need for togetherness? What opportunities (other than restoring vital shared worship) look most important in your parish context?

May: Faith in Young People

Christian Cole, the Diocesan Youth Missioner, addressed Synod with the findings of a major piece of research conducted in the Diocese by *Youthscape Centre for Research*. The research was carried out in early 2020, before Covid. The report identified trends in young people's engagement with our churches, presenting us with positive stories and a serious challenge. It was evident that the pandemic had had a significant effect on the extent to which young people were involved in the life of our churches, and therefore the report's recommendations are all the more urgent. Many Christians report coming to faith as young people and part of our calling is to ensure that today's young people get to hear about Jesus. To make that happen, we need to understand our context and look hard at what we can offer. Everyone is encouraged to read the report, "Faith in Young People", available on the Deanery website under "General Papers" in the "Documents" section.

September: Deanery Vision - Facilitating Mission across 23 Parishes.

After celebrating our first in-building gathering for two years with an extended time of worship, the two main items of business of the September Synod meeting were the elections of the new Standing Committee and the new Rural Dean's presentation of the Deanery Vision which included some of the steps that would need taking in the short term to see this vision realised. The newly elected Standing Committee was given the task of identifying and building the administrative structure in the Deanery which would enable these steps to be taken.

www.hertfordandwaredeanery.org.uk

*Our vision is to see flourishing, Christ-centred communities
inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds to discover God,
grow in their relationship with Him
and respond to His transforming love through serving others.*

Mrs Marion Little, Deanery Secretary, secretary@hertfordandwaredeanery.org.uk

Other News

During the year – The Revd Canon Jo Loveridge stood down as Rural Dean and The Revd Mark Dunstan took over as Rural Dean with Revd Ysmena Pentelow becoming Assistant Rural Dean. Revd Doug Loveridge stood down as Secretary, and with the permission of Synod, the post of secretary was filled by Marion Little from St Mary's Ware (but not a member of Synod). Diana Perkins continues as Lay Chair until 2024 and Janet Bird continues as Treasurer.

Elections to Diocesan Synod and General Synod were also conducted this year. Our Diocesan Synod currently has two vacancies in the house of laity and two vacancies in the house of clergy.

Grant applications from St John the Baptist, Gt Amwell, and Christ Church, Ware, were supported by the Deanery and approved by the relevant Diocesan committee. This will help continue and enhance mission and ministry in these parishes over the coming year. Parishes are encouraged to apply for small "kickstart" grants from special Diocesan funds, either to restart initiatives which have closed because of Covid or to start new ones. There is a link for more information (including an application form) on the Deanery website under "General Papers" in the "Documents" section.

Our Deanery comprises 23 parishes – the two towns of Hertford and Ware and all the surrounding villages stretching from Hunsdon and Widford in the east to Essendon in the west; from Newgate Street in the south to Aston and High Cross in the north. The Synod and its various officers, committees and teams work to provide practical, financial and spiritual support to the parishes of the Deanery as they seek to conduct their mission and ministry for the glory of God. We are also the link with the Diocesan Synod which makes wider decisions about mission and ministry in our area, and, through Diocesan Synod, we are linked with the national General Synod.

The Deanery Synod provides a website for information about parishes and churches and our joint mission to Live God's Love. It is hoped this will be developed over time. Your suggestions would be most welcome.

We are currently looking for volunteers for a series of project teams to help the parishes face the challenges of the next few years. The teams will be looking at:

- Social Action,
- Environmental Concerns,
- New Housing Developments,
- Pioneer Ministry and Reaching New People "where they are",
- Ecumenical Partnerships, and
- Communications.

If you have interest and/or expertise in any of these areas, please do get in touch.

Marion Little
Deanery Secretary
1st March 2022