

1. **Welcome & Introduction** – Canon Margaret Sheather, Lay Chair, warmly welcomed everyone to our Deanery Synod meeting, and particularly our Speaker, Revd Lee Barnes, Diocesan Warden of Readers and Lay Ministry Officer.
(28 members attended the meeting, with Apologies received from: Alex Jeakins, Cliff Smith, Julian Elloway, Sue Page, Peter Hankins, Revd John Spiers, Jackie Natt, Kathy Lee, Revd Coral Francis, Revd Caroline Bland, Revd Janet Turville & Peter Davies.)
2. **Opening Prayer** – led by Revd Liz Palin
3. **Minutes**
 - 3.1 Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 12th May 2021 by Zoom call were accepted as a true and accurate record.
 - 3.2 Matters arising – Living in Love and Faith Course planned for September was postponed and new dates in the New Year confirmed as: Mondays, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st January and 14th February, 7.30pm at Cainscross Church Hall. Further details in due course – The deadline for consultation and feedback has been extended nationally until the end of April 2022 so we have more time. (Any local arrangements in place will not be affected - Bisley are running a course in November)
4. **Speaker – Revd Lee Barnes – Diocesan Warden of Readers and Lay Ministry Officer**

Lee took up his new role only 3 weeks ago and began by sharing a story: For many years he has been involved with developing a group of around 70 Christians who all work together to provide 24 hour 'Church' at the Glastonbury Arts Festival – the volunteers are from all walks of life, from all settings and classes, ordained or lay, all equal and each offering something in their own way – the whole people of God serving others, with no right or wrong way, just different models that encompass all. 97% of church communities are not ordained - Lee highlighting the important part everyone has to play as the people of God in the reality of their local church context. Reader Ministry – A voluntary movement within the Church of England, licensed by the Bishop, theologically trained to preach and lead worship – 2/3 year training placement within a particular parish, to be teachers of the faith, encouraging and enabling mission in the everyday lives of people. There is no greater calling - All people of God have some calling of sorts and 'there is no hierarchy in the Kingdom of God'. There are many training opportunities offered by the Diocese to help and support and enable you in whatever God may be leading you to, including: Worship Leaders, Pastoral Assistants, Administration, Youth and Children's work. Checkout the website for more details.

A time for group discussions followed looking at the following question:

 - Based in your local Church, discuss the ways you might encourage, enable and empower more lay involvement.

Lee then took general questions from the floor, including:

 - Do we have a 'vision' of lay ministry in general?
As part of Lee's role as Warden of Readers and Lay Ministry Officer he is tasked with developing a Vision and training package for the Diocese, the first draft of which will be available next summer – aiming to involve 'the whole people of God'.

- How do we move away from the idea that lay ministry is just there to 'help out the Vicar'?
Sensitivity and language is important – speaking in the right terms, advocating for the lay in conversations to help guide cultural change. Keep asking that question to effect change.
There are many different types of 'Ministry' – all of which can have a part to play in starting conversations, in all different walks of life and in different contexts.
There is a Canal Chaplaincy starting at Saul Junction near Frampton.
- We have heard all this before – but nothing much has changed
The reality is that the Church of England cannot afford to pay for ministry.
Things have to change and the way it is put across is very important, to create an invitation and opportunity to lay people, to encourage and empower real change.

Thanks to Lee for taking the time to come and talk to us, it has certainly triggered some very meaningful conversations.

- 5. Deanery Strategic Plan** – Earlier this year the Review paper was submitted for our DSP. The Diocese have recognized that to take this forward and make it real more extra support is needed. A Facilitator Team has been recruited to pick up where we have got to and help us now develop our ideas to make something real. The Area Dean and Lay Chair are meeting with the new Team on Monday (made up of 4 people, led by Revd Robert Jenkins) to pick up where we are and help us to take forward the task.

They are very much working with us and the views of the people within the parishes will be a very important part of the process. They will be in touch with us soon to take the conversations forward.

15 Minutes in small group discussions to consider:

Things have changed in the last 6 months –

What has changed in your Benefice?

What is fresh/new that we might need to consider?

Please see sheet below for feedback comments following the discussions.

6. Parish & Benefice Update

- Confirmation by the AD that the vacancies in the Bisley Benefice, the Stroud Team and Brimscombe, Woodchester & Rodborough will now all be reviewed under our Deanery strategic Plan.
- Minchinhampton – Revd Coral Francis was welcomed into our community as Curate at Minchinhampton at the end of June.

7. Reports

7.1 General Synod – Report as circulated by the Lay Chair, any questions please ask. GS Elections - Please vote if you have not already done so, you have until midnight on Friday to register. There are 8 candidates in each House so lots of choices to consider. Margaret is standing again – 'this is an important Synod, with lots going on at the moment'.

7.2 Diocesan Synod on 14th July – The first meeting back in person, with Eucharist in the Cathedral – Link to +Rachel's address:

www.gloucester.anglican.org/2021/bishop-rachels-address-at-diocesan-synod

Not a lot of new business was conducted – next meeting Saturday 6th November.

7.3 Parish Share 2021 – Mike Lambert, Deanery Treasurer & Parish Share Officer Report as circulated – Most parishes are contributing what they have committed to, which will still leave us with a shortfall of around £129k. All the figures are available on the Diocesan Website if you are interested – the September figures are still to come through.

Parish Share 2022 – The figures for 2022 from the Finance Team were sent around yesterday to Parish Treasurers and Incumbents. Please discuss within your parish/Benefice how you will distribute around and let us have your commitments by the end of November please to pass on to the Diocese, to help with their budget planning for next year.

Question: Parish Share increase – has there been any comments from the senior staff team on the rationale for these increased figures?

The Lay Chair responded: We have requested more details from the senior team to put more context around the position, which has since been chased with the Archdeacon. As soon as anything is received it will be circulated – there needs to be some understanding/recognition that this is not an easy message.

7.4 Deanery Administration Funding – Thank you to the parishes who have now contributed towards the funding for Deanery administration. Sally continues to work from home and it is our intention to continue with this arrangement as it is working very well.

Thanks to Mike for taking on the role of Parish Share Officer as well as Deanery Treasurer and for all his hard working making it all work so neatly and well!

8. Meeting Dates and venues for 2022 confirmed as:

Standing/Pastoral Com.10am-12 noon all at The Porch Room Minchinhampton	Deanery Synod all at 7.30 pm	Speaker/Topic
Tuesday 25th January	Wednesday 16th February Lakefield School, Frampton-on-Severn	Deanery Strategic Plan
Tuesday 26th April	Wednesday 11th May St Laurence Church, Stroud	Tbc
Tuesday 20th September	Wednesday 5th October Cainscross Church Hall	Tbc

9. Chair's Announcements

- **Church Officer changes** following APCM's – A reminder to parishes to please send in their electronic Church Officer Changes return forms to Helen Crawford at the Diocese: Tel 01452 835589 Email: hcrawford@glosdioc.org.uk if they have not already done so. PCC Secretaries have also been asked to let Sally know so that our records can be kept up to date.
- **General Synod Elections** – *Please make sure you vote!*
- **Next meeting of Area Deans** – *Confirmed as 18th November 2021*
- **Bishop Rachel Deanery Visit 2022** – Tuesday 1st March (Shrove Tuesday)
Please put the date in your diary

- Pilgrimage to The Holy Land - 12th to 21st September 2022
Led by Revd Sue Murray – *If you are interested in finding out more, please email Sue and she can post you the information booklet: smurray123@btinternet.com*
Price around £2095 per person.

10. AOB

- **Living in Love and Faith Course** – *A Sign-up sheet is available this evening – more details will be coming through shortly.*

- **Our Deanery Strategic Plan**

'Be more deliberate in the deployment of Readers and Retired Clergy'

Clarification that this is to ensure that they are used wisely, (Readers particularly, may be under-used in their own parishes?) – How do we work more with our Retired Clergy both now and in the future to support ministry more widely? (Supplement, rather than a core assumption)

11. Closing Prayer - The meeting closed with prayer led by Revd Kate Stacey

5. Deanery Strategic Plan

Group discussion feedback from the question:

Since our Interim Report was submitted back in April things have changed –
What has changed in your Benefice? What fresh/new things might we now need to consider?

Ideas:

Taking every opportunity that presents itself

Finding ways to reach all areas of the population

PSALMS Youth Group

Enthusing the community – non believers who have a strong sense of continuity

Publicity, Open Churches, Toddler Groups

Zoom Services popular with older church members

Cross Deanery collaboration with Youth work/PSALMS – primarily sport based

How do we make God attractive?

How do we cultivate the seeds sown by things like Messy Church?

Stroud Team vision – (2 Clergy 2 Lay) - Where are we?

Questions to ask when deciding what we should nurture/what to prune. Priorities:

Life-giving small groups

Confident and creative LMT's

Hospitable Buildings

Cheerful Givers

Encouraging each congregation to be who they are called to be – different personalities – trying Café Church (with papers and praying about situations), Eco Church, All-age offerings.

Emphasis on discipleship – the need and power of prayer.

What is God doing and joining in?

We are 'counter-cultural' and should be because Jesus was

Story telling – looking at Jesus

Making services accessible

Fellowship

Church in School – don't wait for children to come to 'us' – we need to go to them where they are – opening up our buildings to our schools is vital.

Bisley Benefice – Recognising what can feasibly be done – 2 services a month

Things have to change – people struggle to travel – Still a sense of HC is what they want

Problem of change/travel – Important to talk about 'improvement' rather than 'change'.

The increasing cost and pressure of running all the buildings with fewer people in each.