

**STROUD DEANERY SYNOD  
AGENDA  
Wednesday 10th May 2023, 7.30pm**

**Agenda item 3.2 Matters arising - Our Motion to Diocesan Synod**

This motion related to the long-time taken to advertise and fill clergy vacancies (typically a minimum of 9 – 12 months) and sought that a much shorter process should be adopted.

This motion was presented to Diocesan Synod in May 2018 – 5 years ago!

A subsequent discussion meeting was held with Phil Andrews (then the Archdeacon) at Margaret Sheather's house on 4 October 2018. Revd. John Spiers and myself were present.

After no feedback from the Diocese, John and I discussed the matter at the February 2020 Deanery Synod meeting. John undertook to raise the subject at Archbishop's Council.

Result unknown.

A progress report was requested at Stroud Deanery Synod last year.

It appears on the Agenda for this meeting. The feedback is awaited.

**Views**

It appears that little or no notice is taken by the Gloucester Diocesan Synod to motions from the Stroud Deanery Synod.

We were not alone in drawing attention to this matter. In June 2018 a similar motion was put to the St. Albans Diocesan Synod It included a request that

*"the Archbishops' Council to review within 12 months the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 with a view to ensuring that:*

*The process for filling a vacancy is begun as soon as practicable after the bishop becomes aware that a vacancy will occur and*

*All concerned in the process of filling vacancies co-operate so that vacancies are filled as soon as reasonably practicable"*

The outcome of this motion is also unknown.

**Current Position in Deanery**

The Stroud Deanery has been operating for a long time now, measured in years, with a number of unfilled vacancies. The filling of these vacancies is "to be considered under the Deanery Strategic Plan" That too is a matter long in the process, still in progress and subject to further delays during consultation with PCCs.

The availability of leading clergy appears to be also subject to health issues.

**Stroudwater Team Vacancy**

The Rector, Revd. Steve Harrison, will take up a new post as vicar at St. James, Bream at the end of the month. Revd, Liz Palin has agreed to assume the role of Interim Rector, supported by Revd. Dave Bishop as Team Vicar.

The Stroudwater Team ministry comprises 15 parishes. It was imposed under the direction of Archdeacon Jackie Searle. The plan was to have three stipendiary clergy with the addition of a "pioneer minister" in recognition of the massive housing development at Great Oldbury without any church. The "pioneer" post has never been filled. The task of providing regular communion services across 15 churches has proved formidable. Most churches enjoy only two communion services per month. The demands that will be made on the two remaining clergy will be overwhelming. Health issues could be at stake.

**Assurance Sought**

**That the advertising, selection and appointment processes for filling the vacancy in the Stroudwater Team Rector's post be undertaken without delay and at a greater pace than has become the norm. This should not be subject to the timetable for the Deanery Strategic Review which has still some way to go. The decision that other vacancies also being held-up for this reason should be critically examined.**