

- 1. Welcome & Introduction** – Canon Howard Gilbert, warmly welcomed everyone to our Deanery Synod meeting, and particularly our Speaker, Revd Cate Williams, Diocesan Environmental Engagement Officer. (28 members attended the meeting, with Apologies received from: Diane Keyse, Gerry Carter, Sharon Sameroo, Alec Jeakins, Julian Elloway, Alison Wood, Cliff Smith, Tony Singer, Valerie Flack, Revd Sarah Haslam, Revd Sue Murray, Revd Kate Stacey, & Revd John Thompson.
- 2. Opening Prayer** – led by Revd Liz Palin
- 3. Minutes** - Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 6th October at Cainscross Church Hall were accepted as a true and accurate record. There were no matters arising
- 4. Speaker – Revd Cate Williams**, Diocesan Environmental Engagement Officer.
The Diocese would like to have an Environmental Ambassadors for each Deanery in our Diocese - we have a vacancy for our Deanery if anyone would like to consider taking on this role, to help engage and update all the environmental work that is happening in the Diocese. In the wider context of the whole C of E, what steps can we take to save our planet, how might we 'tread gently' on our journey during this time of climate emergency? Whatever our interest, we need to do what we can towards the aim to become Carbon Net Zero by 2030 – how can we get from A to B?
The C of E have set out a route map to guide us and there are some excellent webinars available which will help us to understand the problems. Bishop Graham Usher is lead Bishop for the Environment – they are working with 3 priorities: Carbon target of Net Zero by 2030, Bio Diversity and Green Evangelist.
Where are we in Gloucester Diocese? Cate's job is now a full time role looking at how we encompass our aims within the whole vision of our life together, highlighting some of the ongoing priorities:
 - Carbon Net Zero is the number one priority
 - Eco Church Awards are a very useful tool
 - Worshipping outdoors – Forest Church, Muddy/Wild Church, 'Mud, Mess and Mystery'
 - Work-streaming for Carbon Net Zero for Schools, Churches, Vicarages, College Green
 - Energy Footprint Tool – new tool launched – carbon footprint for church buildings – we have to find some way of monitoring what we do – developed nationally, it will be opening in March – do please fill it in!
 - Eco Church Awards – The Diocese is aiming to become a Silver Aware Diocese by the end of next year. Do please consider giving it a go – please check out the Diocesan Website to find out more about how your church can become involved
 - Messy Church goes Wild – more details can be found on the Diocesan Website

Discussion time around tables followed, to consider the following 2 questions:

- Where are you finding energy for this bubbling up locally?
- What good things are happening in your area?

Also a number of shared stories including:

- Minchinhampton Church, before and after their major renovation – the heating system is working well with underfloor heating keeping the building at a constant temperature 18c 24/7 - £2k has been saved on the gas bill in a year, their carbon footprint is lower, the building is a lot happier (not damp), with the stone itself now insulating the building, and very happy, warm worshippers!
- 'Heating not just on Sundays' - Also a number of churches now keeping their heating on low all the time, 12c, warms the walls, reduced condensation and damp, less humidity, more affordable with bills overall reducing, creating a much more warm and welcoming environment.
- 'Heating the people rather than the space' on a Sunday – other options to consider – heating pipes under the seats, heating air flow which helps stop draughts. Headline advice – 'Make a plan before your boiler breaks' – Look at possible options before it becomes critical and make a plan to use the best creative solution for your building and the planet.
General discussion on oil and gas – if we can get ourselves off of gas we should, but it is not practical for all. Insulation can be the first step – time and expense of faculties/listed building consent, lack of grants at the moment for churches all mentioned. The Lay Chair mentioned conversations at General Synod proposing small adjustments to faculty rules, with a 'lighter touch' through conversation with the Archdeacons in that 'approval' process. (*On more rural churches, equipment on church buildings to get Wi-Fi – easier to effect lower carbon solutions*).
- Churchyard Biodiversity – Stroud are working with Green Spaces to develop more eco structures – an opportunity to engage and work with the wider community
- 'A plan that has the most impact, in the shortest time, for the least amount of money'!
- Outdoor Worship – Forest Church and some services were taken outside during Covid. People really loved the services, and on a good day can be fantastic!
- Eco Church in Ruscombe & Whiteshill – Green evangelism – 35 attended the last outside meeting at Haresfield Beacon – attracts a whole new group of people.

Eco Ambassador for Stroud Deanery – We are looking for someone keen and passionate about environmental issues, willing to engage with community partnerships and then sharing successes around the Deanery. If you or anyone you know might be interest, please speak to us!

Our thanks to Cate for an inspirational talk

5. Deanery Strategic Plan – *Introduction by the Lay Chair circulated with the Agenda*

Members were invited to share their thoughts and ideas using stick-it's on the flipcharts around the room covering all areas of church life. The DSP Group have had two day-long meetings with the Diocesan Facilitator looking at all these issues, developing the strands that emerge from the discussions, as we start to develop our Plan - looking at the wider picture, what might the Deanery look like in 5 years' time?

How can we work together to achieve our goals as a church, face difficult decisions and support new growth together?

The next time we met in May we will have something more concrete to share with you.

Please keep talking, reflecting and praying as we continue working together on our Deanery Plan.

6. Parish & Benefice Update

- Bisley Benefice – House for Duty vacancy to be considered under our DSP
- The Stroud Team – Team Vicar vacancy – appointment process now underway
- Brimscombe, Woodchester & Rodborough – Associate Priest vacancy not being pursued at the moment.

7. Reports

7.1 Diocesan Synod November 2021 & February 2022 – *Report circulated by the Lay Chair* – Resources were placed around the tables for the Life Together re-launch 2022, Please take them away and share with your churches – ‘Renewal’ of the Life Vision.

7.2 Parish Share 2021 – Mike Lambert, Deanery Treasurer & Parish Share Officer - Report as circulated – Brief run through of Mike’s report – the majority of parishes met the figures they had committed to, although still short of the Deanery request by some £130k. The deficit has gone from just £16,105 5 years ago to £130k last year. The Diocese as a whole are carrying a shortfall of £570k – not sure how long this can be sustained.

Parish Share 2022 – Thanks to the parishes who have committed their PS pledges for this year (38 out of 40) – Overall parishes have committed to contribute £612,283, slightly less than 2021, leaving a predicted Deanery shortfall of £174,083. The Diocese are currently covering this by using up reserves; we are not approaching a cliff edge yet but this situation cannot continue indefinitely.

7.3 Deanery Administration Funding – Statement of the Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2021 were circulated, along with a budget for 2022. Thank you to Sally for all her hard work and commitment and to all your PCC’s for your continued support of the office. We are actually better off than anticipated - Funds actually increased slightly last year, mainly due to our budget being worked out on an estimated PS total for the Deanery. At that time a number of parishes had not committed to a PS amount when the Synod met last February when we agreed the budget. We have also saved money by Sally working from home. We make a monthly £15 contribution to Sally for ‘working from home’ towards heating, lighting and internet, less than the rent we used to pay at the Stroud office, creating a surplus. Area Dean support claimed through Area Dean admin expenses was down slightly, mainly due to the Covid pandemic and generally reduced activity because of lock-down. Overall, in 2021 Deanery funds increased instead of the expected fall.

Following discussions at Standing Committee, and with this in mind, it was suggested a 1.2% contribution of the parishes’ committed PS amount is required to maintain the administration function for 2022 - slightly less than last year.

Questions were invited

A number of questions were received from Tony Singer, DS rep for Pitchcombe (*Apologies, absent with Covid*), including:

- A more detailed breakdown on how the £67,000 stipendiary clergy cost is made up. (*SW to speak to Julie Ridgway for clarification on £67k breakdown*)
- Deanery Office accounts - Why we have moved from a surplus of £264 to a budgeted deficit of £1733 for 2022 (*Please see attached detailed response from ML*)

ML therefore proposed that we ask parishes for 1.2% for 2022 – this was seconded by the Lay Chair. On a show of hands, generally all in favour with one against.

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 26th April	Wednesday 11th May St Laurence Church, Stroud	Deanery Strategic Plan
Tuesday 20th September	Wednesday 5th October Cainscross Church Hall	Living in Love & Faith Report on feedback due to be published in September

9. Chair's Announcements

- **Bishop Rachel Deanery Visit 2022 – Tuesday 1st March** (*Shrove Tuesday*)
A day visiting Clergy and projects around the Deanery, including Pancake Races on Lakefield School, Frampton-on-Severn and culminating in a Deanery Celebration in St Laurence Church, Stroud in the evening, including coffee and cake.
- **Stroud Women's Refuge** – If you are looking for a new Charity to support, please consider the Stroud Women's Refuge, who are particularly struggling at the moment. HG highlighted the work of the project and the many invaluable services it provides. They need to raise around £300k per year to run, and do not receive any government funding. Please support them if you can (*More details attached*)
- **Next meeting of Area Deans** – 30th/31st March 2022
- **Diocesan 'Vision'** re-launch - Leaflets circulated on tables
- **Cycling Pilgrimage** – Howard Gilbert & Steve Harrison are undertaking a Cycling 'Retreat and Pilgrimage for their own refreshment' of around 260 miles from Worcester Cathedral to Manchester Cathedral, visiting around 8 cathedrals in total, hoping to achieve 50 miles per day.
- **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 None

11. **Closing Prayer** - The meeting closed with prayer led by Revd Dave Bishop