

1. **Welcome:** Canon Margaret Sheather, Lay Chair, warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Noel Sharp from Christian Aid, Revd Kate Stacey, the new Team Rector for Stroud, retired Clergy Pat Freeth, and Archdeacon Jackie who is going to commission Pat as Interim Area Dean.

A short Message of thanks was read out from Mike Smith – A card was available on the Registers for members to sign and leave their well-wishes, to be passed on to Mike.

2. **Present/Apologies:** There were 31 Synod members present, as per the Register, with apologies received from: Simon Barker, Elizabeth Haughton, Theresa Yates-Round, Debbie Bird, Hazel Stacey, Janet Ryan, Jenny Tann, Ann Greaves, Linda Jarvis, Susie Taylor, Karen Riding, Olga Gibbons, Mike Lambert, Revd Mike Clark, Revd Deborah Curram, Revd Sandy Emery, Revd Peter Francis, Revd Stephen Jarvis, Revd Sue Sobczak.

3. **Prayer** – The meeting began with prayer led by Revd John Hunnisett.

4. Archdeacon Jackie invited Revd Pat Freeth to tell members a little about herself prior to the Commissioning: Pat retired 5 years ago from the Oxford Diocese. Ordained in Oxford Cathedral – she spent time in Buxton, Derbyshire, before returning to Oxford to five rural parishes for 9 years, 5 of those years as Area Dean of Deddington. Since retiring to Stroud Deanery, Pat has helped out covering services, most recently as Interim Minister at Selsley, The Stanleys and Frocester whilst the Stroudwater Team was coming together. Pat is looking forward to getting to know everyone better and to supporting and encouraging engagement with the new Life initiative for our Deanery, whilst helping to hold that sense of continuity and mutual support for the clergy during this time of transition.

The formal Commissioning followed, with Synod members joining in with the responses, welcoming Pat in her new role as Interim Area Dean.

Contact details for Pat: Tel 01453 823890 Email: revpfreeth@gmail.com

Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 4th October 2017 at Cainscross Church Hall were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising – not already covered elsewhere on the Agenda

- **MSI Course feedback** – *Please see the attached sheet.*

5. **Speaker - Mr. Noel Sharp, Regional Co-ordinator from Christian Aid in Gloucestershire**

Christian Aid has been established for over 70 years and currently works in 40 different countries at any one time. They work for and with people of all faiths and none, as well as with churches and other organisations, to promote sustainable development, strive for social justice and pursue a vision of a world without poverty. Noel wanted to bring to our attention two new initiatives:

'Salt' – The Christian Aid Business Network – Provides a new opportunity for visionary business leaders to partner with a leading international development Charity. The Salt Network brings together business leaders to create a unique movement that unites the strengths of faith and business to tackle global poverty. This network will be motivated to learn about, support and engage in sustainable solutions for the world's poorest, reframing what it means to be in business.

The power of 3 – They will hold 3 meetings per year, with each meeting lasting 3 hours, and take 3 pledges of things to adopt:

- Lead change within their own business environment, by developing and implementing responsible business practices.
- Provoke a community of change by speaking with one voice to business, church and political spheres on issues that affect the world's poor.
- Resource change by using their skills and charitable giving, increasing the scale and impact of innovative enterprise projects in some of the world's poorest countries.

Could you help the Salt movement grow by becoming a Christian Aid Business Ambassador?

To find out more please contact: mwaterfield@christian-aid.org

Global Neighbours Schools Project - a new School Accreditation Scheme in partnership with the Church of England Education Office, to encourage a deeper understanding in the next generation of global injustice and poverty and the Christian response to it in primary school pupils across England. Resources are free and on the internet, specific to each school year/ages. Visit the website to find out more and register. They are also looking for volunteer teachers, particularly retired teachers, who may have time and be willing to share their skills.

There followed a short time for questions and answers, including:

- How does the Global Neighbours Schools Project work in multi-faith schools.
All faiths are welcomed, with material overlapping with different faiths and is not generally a problem.
The Salt project's primary aim is to gather Christians from the business world but 'gives to any faith or none'
- Are resources available for the Appeals throughout the year?
Yes: Christmas, Harvest, Lent and Easter and Christian Aid Week.
- Collecting for Christian Aid this Year – concerns regarding the recent safeguarding issues in the national press.
Noel confirmed that an open letter 'Safeguarding the most vulnerable' has been issued by Martin Birch, Chief Operating Officer for Christian Aid – copy available this evening – to be absolutely transparent on this issue. The whole sector is going to take a hit because of the recent Oxfam revelations. Christian Aid works in a different way to Oxfam, always with partners on the ground – 'Reviews are being undertaken and we are certainly not being complacent about it, but please let us not forsake the poor'. Specific information will be issued to people who will be collecting for CA this year.
- Do you receive any direct funding from Government?
Towards the end of January we do receive some funding, that goes towards a specific project – we have to apply, up to £1.5m, with any funds granted going direct to our partners on the ground.
We engage and evaluate any potential new partners before any project is set up and funded.

The Area Dean thanked Noel for taking the time to come and highlight these exciting new initiatives being undertaken by Christian Aid.

Speaker - Canon Margaret Sheather, Lay Chair – The Work of General Synod (*Please see paper attached*) – Margaret talked us through her detailed paper explaining in greater detail the workings of General Synod and the particular areas of business usually undertaken. Members were then split onto small groups and asked the question – 'If you could put forward a motion, what would it be?' Results of the small group discussions:

- **Clergy Wellbeing** – *There is a Working Group currently looking at this particular issue.*
- **Re-organisation of Diocesan Administration** – *This is also currently being looked at, in particular the governance of Cathedrals (as they are currently not accountable to anyone). Paper out for consultation at the moment – the aim to create a set-up that supports good relations, but also sets out a mechanism that deals with discord if it arises.*
- **Vacancies** – The time it takes for posts to be filled. Managing clergy/deployment of resources. (*We have been short of 3 possibly 4 full time clergy for a number of years. The numbers coming forward for ordination in the Church of England are reducing*). Worries continue over the constant run of vacancies – and the speed of the process to follow before a post can actually be filled, potentially up to 9 months. We are losing parishioners during these extended periods of transition. At what moment can we actually accept the vacancy?
Hand-over of the freehold does not happen until the person physically moves out of the property.
The law needs to be changed – is this something we could take as a motion to Diocesan Synod, as there are very strong feelings across the Deanery about the current procedure?
The Lay Chair suggest that if anyone would like to put together a draft a motion, this could be considered at our next meeting on 23rd May (Agenda item). Once ratified by members it could then be taken as a formal motion to the next Diocesan Synod meeting scheduled for 20th June.

Special thanks and congratulations to Margaret for her very comprehensive paper, giving everyone a clearer understanding of the actual working of General Synod.

6. **Deanery Life Vision – ‘Green Shoots’** – Members were invited to bring forward the bad, as well as the good.
- Revd John Hunnisett – Stories of how people came to faith can be very interesting and inspiring – something to perhaps consider for the future.
7. **Parish & Benefice Update** by the Area Dean
- **The Stroudwater Team** – will be up to full strength after Easter when Revd Piz Palin will take up her post as Team Vicar in The Stroudwater Team, based at St Mary’s House, Frampton.
 - **The Stroud Team** – Revd Kate Stacey was licensed at Team Rector on 28th January 2018 at Cainscross
 - **The Bisley Benefice** – Revd Sue Murray will be Licensed as Vicar on 18th March 2018
 - **Brimscombe, Woodchester & Rodborough** – Revd Deborah Curram has recently become Assistant Curate – On 1st February 2018 the three parishes officially become a combined Benefice.
 - **Minchinhampton with Box & Amberley** – Revd Helen Bailey left on the 28th January. The re-appointing process is now underway.

8. Reports

8.1 Diocesan Synod on 21st June – Corinne Aldis reported that the meeting had covered 3 main areas:

- **A presentation by The Ugly Duckling Company**, a not for profit Charity - Fantastic resources available: Table Talk, Puzzling Questions, The Big Conversation, perfect to stimulate engagement with those of no faith. Visit their website to find out more
- **Safeguarding** – the latest guidelines
- **General Data Protection Regulations** – Visit the Diocesan Website: GDPR to find fact sheets, guides, templates. From March 1st a new Helpline will be available. A Safer Church - +Rachel and +Robert are very keen on this issue, particularly because of the recent articles in the national press. Do please visit the Diocesan Website, which is now packed with useful resources to guide you.

8.2 Parish Share 2017 – The Lay Chair

Julie Ridgway, Diocesan Director of Finance, passed on her warm thanks for all the hard work and effort put in by our Deanery last year – 98.9% of our required share was reached – a huge achievement!

Parish Share 2018 – Not such a good picture – The request was for £730,500 and at the moment we are on £652,000, so well adrift of our target this year. There are one or two significant reductions this year, with most of the others very close to target – a very big thank you for your continued commitment. Do please keep this shortfall in mind as we go through the year if your situation changes and you find that you can offer more.

8.3 Deanery Office Funding – Thanks to Mike Lambert, who continues to act as Interim Deanery Treasurer, and for his work producing the circulated Accounts sheet for 2017 and the Budget for the office for 2018. Also for his support to Sally, helping to ensure the continued smooth running of the office in general.

(Please see the attached report from Mike, as he was unable to make the meeting).

Mike is proposing that we continue with contributions from each parish of 1.25% of the pledged Parish to fund the office for 2018. Contributions claimed back through Area Deans admin expenses will continue to be received to help support the work of the office.

John Hunnisett thanked Sally in the Deanery Office for all her efforts and hard work helping to manage service covers during the ongoing vacancies across the Deanery – you only realise the help and support that is there when you experience it first-hand. We are very lucky, not all Deaneries have an Administrator!

9. Meeting Dates for 2018

Standing/Pastoral Com.10am-12 noon all at The Church Office, Stroud	Deanery Synod all at 7.30 pm	Speaker/Topic
Tuesday 8 th May	Wednesday 23rd May St Laurence Church, Stroud	<i>Jo Wetherall Diocesan Children's & Families Officer</i>
Tuesday 18 th Sept	Wednesday 10th October Cainscross Church Hall	<i>Revd David Runcorn Warden of Readers & Assoc. Director of Ordinands</i>

10. Chair's Announcements

- **Visitation Services** - +Rachel will be leading the Visitation Services this year
Date for Stroud Deanery - **8th May, 7pm at St Laurence, Stroud**
- **Elections to Diocesan Synod** take place again this year
*Invitations for nominations circulated between 6th-14th May
Closing date will be 1st June - Depending upon whether a ballot is necessary, at the latest by 30th July results of those duly elected will be issued
New members take up their post from 1st August 2018 for a period of 3 years
Please consider if you would like to stand, or nominate anyone else who might be interested.
We have lots of clergy reps spaces to fill this time!
(Sally to circulate the current list of current members for both Clergy & Lay)*
- **Training & Resources Group** – Revd Pat Freeth updated us on progress with this new Group. The group, made up of Pat, Revd Peter Francis, Revd Steve Harrison, and Prof. Jenny Tann - you are more than welcome to join if you would like to - met for the first time 3 weeks ago. The aim, to look at how we can move forward in terms of providing funding and resources to run training at Deanery level. There are lots of resources available through the Diocese that we can potentially tap into, once areas of need are identified. Their next meeting is planned for tomorrow - update at the next Deanery Synod meeting.

Some courses happening in our area:

- **Growing Messy Church** - 3rd March -10am-4pm at Christchurch, Cheltenham –
- **Social Media Event** - 5th March -, 7.30pm at St Laurence Stroud.
Help setting up websites etc – and free!
- **Baptism Training** – 11th May 1-am to 12 noon at Dursley. Of particular interest perhaps to Baptism Friends etc.
More details for these events can be found on the Diocesan Website
- **Street Pastor Coordinator** required – If you know of anyone who might be interested please contact: Street.pastors.stroud@gmail.com
- **Share Faith & Discipleship** – Life Groups - being confident disciples
March 17th with LICC on Christians at Work at St Nicholas, Cheltenham.
- **'Planting Churches' & Pioneer Ministry**– March 21st, 7.30pm at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester with Tim Hughes, Christian worship leader and song writer

11. **Closing Prayer** - There being no other business, the meeting closed with The Grace.