

1. **Welcome:** The Area Dean Mike Smith warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly those members attending Deanery Synod for the first time. Also, a particular welcome to Revd Steve Harrison the new Team Rector of The Stroudwater Team, and to our guest speakers Rob French and Nathan Youlton from PSALMS and Will Mansell from The Grace Network. It is also the last Synod meeting for Revd Mike Holloway, as he will be retiring from the Beacon Benefice just after Christmas – grateful thanks to Mike for the part he has played in the life of our Deanery.
2. **Present/Apologies:** There were 40 Synod members present, as per the Register, with apologies received from: Ann Greaves, Olga Gibbons, Revd Steve Jarvis, Suzie Taylor, Revd John Hunnisett, Linda Jarvis, Wendy Hanvey and Janet Ryan.
3. **Prayer** – The meeting began with prayer and songs led by Rob & Nathan from PSALMS.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting** held on Wednesday 31st May 2017 at St Laurence Church, Stroud were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising – not already covered elsewhere on the Agenda: Training and Resource Group still to be set up to look at what help and support parishes need. If you feel moved to volunteer do please contact Sally.

5. **Speaker: Rob French from PSALMS** (*Putting Sports Alongside Local Ministries*)

Rob began by telling us that PSALMS are refocusing on the original vision that was started up 12 years ago, using the universal language of sport, with a clear message from the outset always pointing towards Jesus. 80% of the population are involved in sports in some way and PSALMS use this opportunity to explain the faith and support young people with their life journey, through worship and witness not just with sports but also health, fitness and outdoors opportunities. Rob was very pleased to read in our Deanery Life vision our 'intentionality' to move from 'passive to active' to help shape the attitude and direction of Stroud Deanery into the future. A short film of photographs was then shown from

'Trac 2017', the PSALMS residential week highlight the activities, sports, faith, fun and games shared together during the week. As part of the Diocesan Life vision, the whole area and profile of Sports Ministry has been raised on the public agenda

A time for questions followed, including:

- **Are you linked with The Door?**
Yes, we share training and liaison with each other when required.
 - **If there a focus with local Schools?**
PSALMS works in partnership with local churches, (not in isolation) particularly Nailsworth, Stonehouse and Painswick. In Nailsworth it has been a huge help in communicating with the families of the children, forming a direct link from the community to the church.
 - **What is the financial commitment?**
Mike Smith confirmed that Nailsworth commit £18,000 p.a. spread between the their churches – effectively a half-time Sports Minister, enabling them to reach youngsters they would not normally have contact with. Recently 50 people from Forest Green went to Weston-Super-Mare for the day – this would not have happened without the help of PSALMS, establishing a new Christian community based around the work done with PSALMS. Funding also from local partnerships/grants/personal donations and the Diocese support the work by £39,000 p.a. (Not out of Parish Share)
 - **Who are you accountable to?**
There is a management Board of 10 members, and meetings are held every 3 months (Please see the Psalms website for full details: psalms.uk.net)
 - **Do you include general well-being, including Pilates/Yoga/music/meditation?**
Health and fitness are a massive area which we will continue to look at.
- If you would like to find out more about getting involved with the work of PSALMS, do please get in touch with Rob at: rob.french@psalms.uk.net

Will Mansell – The Grace Network – ‘Creating life-changing opportunities in the Five Valleys’

Will gave us a brief history of his journey from his involvement with the football coaching initiative ‘Kick-off Stroud, (A social enterprise that works with 100s of children each week in primary schools across the District which also provides work for young people through sport) to his involvement with the Stroud Food Bank (who now have 7 staff), and more recently The Furniture Bank (which provides quality, affordable furniture for families across the Stroud District and beyond) and Kids Stuff (provides free clothing and other items for families in crisis), all under the umbrella of The Grace Network (Not a charity but a business). The aim to see people reach their social, emotional, spiritual and economic potential by using the medium of business to develop, train and mentor people. 20 people have come through the network so far and all bar one now have jobs. Their main aims:

- To provide training for people in the form of mentoring and formal qualifications.
- To launch, manage and grow small social enterprises to create opportunities for people to develop.
- To invest time in people to help model and demonstrate positive lifestyles and create confidence that can build up self-esteem. (Heart, sole, mind, strength – taking someone with no skills and training them up and finding them worthwhile, paid employment) –
- Provide warehouse and office infrastructure to allow social enterprises and charities to grow and develop
- Provide consultancy and advice to third party organisations and our owned subsidiary companies (Kick Off Stroud CIC and Stroud District Furniture Project CIC)

90% of their income comes from the Furniture Bank and local schools, with additional support from a small number of local organisations. The long-term vision to build one community, all working together for the good of all. (A model to bring young people towards Jesus).

Will closed by saying ‘be encouraged, God is doing stuff in all sorts of places!’

(If you would like to sign up to the mailing list for The Grace Network to receive just a couple of updates a year, please click on the following link: <http://eepurl.com/c6jiK5>)

The Area Dean thanked our speakers for their very interesting and informative presentations.

6. Deanery Life Vision

Mike Smith confirmed that the **Mission Shaped Intro Course** had started with 15 people coming along, with apologies from 5 others unable to make the first session, so a good start – 5 sessions to go.

Green Shoots – a time for encouragement and support – are you ‘the Ambassadors of Life’?

Some events happening around the Deanery:

- A 5th Sunday Service of Healing and Wholeness integrated into the normal Eucharist
- Bisley Benefice – Recently held ‘Forest Church’ led by Reader Brenda Cox – a walk with periods of silence and prayer, with people from all 6 parishes joining in – very well received.
- Stroud Collaborative Team – Simon Howell highlighted a monthly outreach service for children which is still going strong. Do not be afraid to review what is happening if things are not going well, to keep everything fresh and inspiring.

Deanery Website – We are considering adding some useful service resources to the Deanery website – is this something people would find helpful? General consensus was yes. More information at the next meeting.

7. Parish & Benefice Update – by the Area Dean

The Stroudwater Team – With Steve Harrison now in place, work on the job profile for a new Administrator has been agreed. Grants are being sought to fund the post initially. The process for selection of a new Team Vicar is underway, with interview date set at 19th January 2018.

Stroud Team Ministry – A new team ‘Rectoress’ has been pointed, Revd Kate Stacey, currently in the Oxford Diocese – Licensing service due to take place on 28th January at Cainscross Church.

The Question was asked ‘why does it take so long’ for the vacancy to be filled?

Margaret confirmed that there is usually a 6 month ‘fallow’ period to allow the ground to be ready to receive a new person. There is also a legal process that has to be followed, and it takes time to finalise Parish Profiles, advertise the post, arrange the interview and shortlisting day, as well as usually having to wait for any potential candidate to work a 3 month notice period. In the case of

retirement, the process can only begin once the Deed of Resignation has actually been received. Margaret Sheather confirmed that the question can certainly be asked again.

Bisley Benefice – The process has begun and adverts will be going out shortly. The Parish Profile has been drawn up incorporating the Life vision theme.

The Beacon Benefice – Mike Holloway has confirmed that he will be retiring just after Christmas.

8. Reports

8.1 Diocesan Synod Meeting 21st June 2017– Corinne Aldis reported very briefly on the two main topics on the Agenda: Renewal and Reform – a presentation by Mike Eastwood on ‘Setting God’s people free’ and an update from the The Children’s Society, who are celebrating their 50 year anniversary this year.

8.2 Parish Share - Margaret Sheather confirmed that a recent report from the Finance Team show that most Parishes are on target, although some have not paid anything at all. Some of the very small parishes do tend to pay a one-off payment at the end of the year. We are still going to be short of what we were asked to contribute as a Deanery. It is hoped that parishes will continue to look at what they can contribute so that we can deliver the mission that we have all been talking about.

The Open Parish Share meeting was very well attended, with the presentation by Julie Ridgeway very informative and well received. Julie explained in detail the position and how that has been worked through down to local level so that everyone is fully informed.

PS figures for 2018 have now been sent to parishes, with commitments requested by the end of November.

A comment/question from David Groom at Selsley:

In view of the disproportionately large number of vacancies experienced by the Deanery, a trend that could continue, is the Deanery’s allocation based on actuals or on the nominal roll of clergy? Diocesan advice showed “giving to churches” placed Gloucester 17th out of 42, but “church giving to the Diocese” placed us down at 36th. He urged all PCC’s to look closely at their giving. For the Stroudwater Benefice a suggested allocation for 2018, based on the historic pattern, showed requests to parishes ranging from £1230 per attendee down to only £260 per attendee. David questioned whether all parishes were striving equally hard with their giving to the Diocese? He said not only was it important that the “felt fair” principle was satisfied but that the targets set, although demanding, should carry a good chance of being successfully realised. He thanked members for their attention.

Margaret confirmed that she will try to establish the point and report back to the next Synod meeting in November.

Deanery Office Funding – Mike Lambert, Interim Deanery Treasurer, reported some good news, all parishes have paid towards the cost of running the Deanery Office for 2017. Do please go back to your PCC’s and thank them for their continued support – the office supports us all.

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 30 th Jan	Wednesday 21st February Horsley Church	Canon Margaret Sheather General Synod Noel Sharp Regional Coordinator for Christian Aid
Tuesday 8 th May	Wednesday 23rd May St Laurence Church, Stroud	<i>Jo Wetherall</i> <i>Diocesan Children’s & Families Officer</i>
Tuesday 18 th Sept	Wednesday 10th October Cainscross Church Hall	<i>Revd David Runcorn</i> <i>Warden of Readers & Assoc.</i> <i>Director of Ordinands</i>

10. Chair's Announcements

- **Digital Media Training** – 6th November 6.30-8pm at Holy Trinity, Stroud.
Full details on the Deanery website.
- GARAS – 10 families were to be received in the Stroud area. Unfortunately due to lack of premises, only 5 can be taken. If you know of any properties that might be suitable please contact GARAS direct, they are desperate.
- Elaine Venning spoke briefly to highlight the Film Dunkirk, and reported back on the recent National Day of Prayer on 8th September - Prayer is coming back on the agenda.
Printed resources were handed out.

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