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- 1. Welcome & Introduction** – The Area Dean, Revd Sue Murray, warmly welcomed everyone to our Deanery Synod meeting, particularly our speakers, Lisa Gardner, Diocesan Director of Finance, Property & Giving and also Archdeacon Hilary and any Treasurers or Churchwardens who have joined us for the evening. Also our thanks to Ann and Penny for providing refreshments. 32 members attended the meeting, as per the Register and apologies were received from: Canon Howard Gilbert, Revd Simon Howell, Revd John Hunnisett, Revd Gill Martin, Revd Kate Stacey, Revd Kim Trinder, Revd James Turk, Peter Hankins, Simon Barker, Jayne Southwell, Clifford Smith & Clare Jayes.

It is with sadness that we report of death two weeks ago of Revd John

- 2.** Spiers, formerly House for Duty priest at Amberley. John's funeral will be on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 11am at Amberley Church, all are very welcome to attend. Our prayers are with Doreen and the family at this time.

- 3. Opening Prayer** – led by Revd Liz Palin

- 4. Minutes** - Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 at Minchinhampton Church were accepted as a true and accurate record.

#### **Matters Arising**

- **Question from France Lynch PCC to Synods**

It was confirmed that the question will now be going to General Synod at their next meeting at the end of February (23<sup>rd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> February in London).

- 5. 'Green Shoots'**

- **Jennie South – Deanery Eco Ambassador** – *Please see the attached Report*

- **Penny Lidstone – Framilode**

Framilode has only 2 children living in the village. At an initial Easter family event where 33 children and 30 parents attended, they have now run a further 3 similar services which have all been very well attended. A real success story and many of those now drop in to other things held in the church.

- **Sharon Samaroo – Chalford**

The Benefice have now set up a 'Musketeers' WhatsApp group sharing tasks across the church – well supported and lots of fun – really made a difference working collaboratively together. Their 300 year anniversary is coming up, with a big Celebration event planned for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

- **Revd Caroline Bland – Nailsworth**

Nailsworth is in the process of re-ordering to make a community space within the church and the faculty has been agreed. The local newspaper recently printed a double-page spread on the consultation process, with the Editor offering to publish a follow-up piece in due course. Real sense of excitement at this positive move forward.

- **Revd Peter Frances – Woodchester, Brimscombe & Rodborough**

Resource 'Vision for the Kingdom of God' Bible project – a 10 minute video on books in the Bible – A crowd-funded project, all free on-line. Do take a look.

- **Margaret Sheather – Lay Chair – Electoral Roll Officer**

Jackie Natt, Electoral Roll Officer at Minchinhampton is very happy to be contacted for advice and guidance if anyone needs help.

## 6. The Deanery Strategic Plan

Presentations are ongoing around the Benefices, with feedback requested by the end of February. The next meeting of the Deanery Leadership Team is scheduled for Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

## 7. Presentation – Finance overview

**Lisa Gardner, Diocesan Director of Finance, Property & Giving, accompanied by Archdeacon Hilary Dawson.**

*(Lisa confirmed that her new title is now Chief Financial Officer)*

Please see the attached presentation slides – Lisa talked us through in detail the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance structures and the intricacies of her responsibilities, including a breakdown of income and expenditure linked to Parish Share: Staffing; Summary Budget for 2024; Costs and number of Clergy; Income; History of Parish Share and a Summary of all Deaneries Parish Share figures. Lisa also confirmed that they are employing an IT Transformation Manager to work on streamlining some of the projects, with a view to be less paper intensive. “It is a really tough environment for everyone and we are hugely grateful for all your efforts, but we need to work on a way to reduce the deficit by working together to solve the current situation and come back to a balanced budget”. There are some reserves but they will eventually run out.

There followed a time for discussion and questions, including:

- **Are any of the Parish Share monies used to support Gloucester Cathedral.** *No, it is a completely separate legal entity, which is also running at a loss. Cost of running the Bishops is also covered by a separate source*
- **What is the total of ‘Reserves’?**  
*A lot are ‘restricted’ and can only be used for certain things. There are two types of reserves: General, 6.8m and Stipendiary Reserve, (endowment – mainly clergy housing) 18m. 2.4m is being taken out each year by selling glebe land to help top up the deficit to continue to provide mission and ministry, but once it is gone it is gone. The deficit figure of 2.2m is net.*
- **Role of the Church Commissioners** - *Margaret, Lay Chair - They fund the Bishops, but otherwise do not fund us other than for particular projects. They have put some funds into church buildings, particularly since the pandemic, but it has to be bid for (Strategic Development Fund), with a focus on church community development and church planting, particularly in larger towns and cities. (Comment from the floor that the Church Commissioners have investments of 10 billion, with income of around 800m per year and their lack of support for smaller church in more rural areas).*
- **Clergy Pensions** – *These are paid for by the Pensions Fund, not the Church Commissioners. As a Diocese we pay contributions into the Pensions Fund every month – the C of E Commissioners actually administer the payroll and pay the pensions.*

The Finance Team are currently working on a pie-chart that will show clearly where all the money goes - Parish Share does not currently cover

our parish Ministry – we have to all work together to find an answer to the present situation.

Archdeacon Hilary – We will be coming back to Deanery Synods very soon to consult on a proposed new Parish Share model which will take effect from next year. An opportunity to sit down together to try to find out what we are going to do, to start a fresh – ‘we are the Diocese together, in Church House or in the parishes’ – ‘we all live in the same house, all as available to each other’. Our deficit of £81k is roughly the cost of ministry for a full time stipendiary clergy. Some places will never be able to fund that. (*Looking as possibly 3 bands and working out where we are in that structure*). We will be looking at how we can increase income and work together on how we can share our resources. Material will be coming out shortly around that.

(*There will need to be a ceiling on the top band*).

Updated Experian Data is now available – for interest, the largest concentration of young families is in Quedgeley.

We are to contact Archdeacon Hilary as soon as possible to set a date for our Deanery PS model consultation. Perhaps it could be part of our next May meeting?

## 8. Parish & Benefice update

- **Brimscombe, Woodchester & Rodborough** – Assoc. Priest vacancy to be reviewed under the Deanery Strategic Plan.
- **Bisley Benefice** – House for Duty vacancy – No change, to be considered under the Deanery Strategic Plan.
- **The Stroud Team** – Revd Kate Stacey is moving to take up a new Diocesan role as Collaborative Ministry Lead for lifelong learning, starting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (last service 18<sup>th</sup> February). The Deanery wish her well in her new post. Discussions on what will happen next for the team will take place once Kate has moved.
- **Minchinhampton – House for Duty vacancy** - Advertisements are going out on Friday, with interviews set to take place on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

## 9. Reports

**8.1 Report from General Synod** – *Brief report on tables, copy attached. All papers from this evening are posted on the Deanery website for information.*

**8.2 Report from Diocesan Synod** – Next General Synod meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> February

**8.3 Stroud Deanery Financial Update** – Mike Lambert’s report circulated prior to the meeting. The latest report from the Diocese was received yesterday showing PS for 2023 at just under £600k, around £16k short of our target. Full details of PS reports for 2023 can be found on the Diocese website.

**Parish Share 2024** – At the time of writing, the total of Parish Share committed for 2024 is £307,000 with half of the parishes still to notify us of their pledges. Do please check with your Treasurers that they have submitted their commitments, or tell us as soon as possible.

**Deanery Administration Function** – Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 circulated – Thank you to all the parishes have contributed towards the Deanery Administration Function for 2023 - not all monies expected were received, hence we are showing a loss of around £1k. As there are still a number of pledges to

come in for this year, income is still uncertain and budgeting is more difficult. In the circumstances, we would like to suggest that we continue with 1.6%, to be review at our next meeting. We would encourage you to make sure that your Parish Share pledges have been submitted to Sally please.

**Meeting Dates and venues for 2023 confirmed as:**

<b>Standing/Pastoral Com. 9.30am-12 noon all at The Porch Room Minchinhampton</b>	<b>Deanery Synod all at 7.30 pm <i>Coffee served from 7pm</i></b>	<b>Suggested Speaker/Topic</b>
<b>April</b> Tuesday 16th	<b>May</b> <b>Wednesday 8th</b> <b>St Laurence Church, Stroud</b>	<b>Revd Canon Dr Sandra Millar</b> <b>Community Engagement</b>
<b>September</b> Tuesday 10th	<b>October</b> <b>Tuesday 15th</b> <b>Holy Trinity Church, Minchinhampton</b>	<b>The Very Revd</b> <b>Andrew Zihni</b> <b>Dean of Gloucester</b> <b>Cathedral</b>

**10. Chair's Announcements**

- **Lay vacancies on the Deanery Standing & Pastoral Committee**  
We have 2 lay vacancies - 3 meetings per year, plus a role on the Deanery Leadership Team. We would be very pleased to hear from you if you are interested.
- **Next meeting of Area Deans** – 17/18<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- **Archbishop of Canterbury to visit Gloucester Diocese**  
This May, we will be welcoming the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, to our Diocese as part of the Big Mission Weekend in May. From Friday 24 to Sunday 26 May, the Archbishop will be visiting various locations across the Diocese followed by a **special service in the Cathedral on the Sunday afternoon, open to all.**  
*Read more: [gloucester.anglican.org/the-big-mission-weekend-with-the-archbishop-of-canterbury-24-to-26-may-2024](http://gloucester.anglican.org/the-big-mission-weekend-with-the-archbishop-of-canterbury-24-to-26-may-2024)*  
**10 Tips for a 'Mission Minded Deanery'**  
*Leaflet attached with the Agenda*

- 11. AOB** – Please see the attached sheet with questions raised prior to the meeting and the corresponding answers.

Safeguarding – It was confirmed that, in line with policy and procedure, you have to have a designated person in that role for each church. Raised as a recent Diocesan Synod meeting, Wotton Deanery are hoping to set up a Safeguarding Officers support group to share experience and expertise.

- 12. Closing Prayer** – Thanks to everyone for their attendance and participation this evening. There being no other business, the meeting closed with prayer led by the Area Dean.