

- 1. Welcome & Introduction** – Revd Sue Murray, Area Dean, warmly welcomed everyone to our Deanery Synod meeting, particularly new member attending for the first time, Revd Natalie Jennings, and our speakers, Lisa-Jayne Lewis, and Revd Helen Sammon. 23 members attended the meeting, as per the Register and apologies were received from: Henry Parker, Peter Gould, Margaret Sheather, Andrew Pemberton, Gerald O’Brien, Revd Coral Francis, Revd Peter Francis, Revd Sarah Haslam, Revd James Turk.
- 2. Opening Prayer** – led by Revd Liz
- 3. Minutes** - Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 15th October, apart from one small ‘typo’, were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising –

Parish Share 2026 – Benefice Consultations

Meeting scheduled for Monday 17th March – the Deanery will be split into 3 sessions, with benefices coming together for the discussions. We will keep you updated with further details as they become available to us. Thanks to those parishes who have returned their completed questionnaire.

- 4. Speaker – Lisa-Jayne Lewis, Stewardship & Giving Advisor.**

Email: llewis@glosdioc.org.uk 07445 066116

Lisa-Jayne gave us a brief outline of her background, involving Christian Charity work in many different organisations; CMS, Open Doors, The Salvation Army, with varied roles focusing on fundraising and church relationships. (*Also, a specialist in the Eurovision contest if you put her name into Google!*). Ordained into the CofE by the Salvation Army whilst living in the USA, she is also a Methodist Preacher, so has seen church in all its fullness and from all angles, coming from a place of understanding of our challenges.

In the last year, her role has focused on:

- **Workshops around the Diocese** – Following conversations with Area Deans to identify areas of communality, focusing on areas of need such as Preaching, Giving, Fundraising mechanisms, ‘Friends of’ schemes.
- **Digital Giving Project** – Last summer 50 churches across the Diocese started using the Digital Giving Scheme. Connectivity for very rural churches can be a problem, please contact Lisa-Jayne if you need help in this area.
- **Meeting with Clergy, PCC and Deaneries** to have conversations to address some of the struggles and to provide some expertise and advice. Lisa-Jayne is also now licensed to preach in our Diocese.

Grant Making Workshops – Lisa-Jayne is looking for a suitable venue in Stroud Deanery to host a workshop. Please contact her direct if you can offer a suitable space, that can also provide coffee!

10 Tips around Stewardship for us to consider:

- 1.** Recognising that everything belongs to God – *how much should I keep?*
- 2.** Give prayerfully and intentionally
- 3.** Be a generous and joyful giver (*from gratitude and joy – we are blessed by giving*)
- 4.** Manage your resources wisely – *Consider how we spend our money, does it reflect our values as a Christian?*
- 5.** Stewarding our time well - *Keep a time journal for a week*

6. Using our talents for God's kingdom – *Everything from finance, teaching, IT skills, cake making, flower arranging*
7. Teach and encourage generosity in others
8. Caring for creation – *Recycling/how we use our resources*
9. Trust God's provision
10. Giving in all seasons of life – There is always a way to give. Teach our children how to be generous/appreciate the wisdom of retirees. Stewardship is about faithfulness.

Which of these suggestions might be suitable to you to grow and develop, and what that might mean for your church?

Speaker – Revd Helen Sammon – Administrator for the Sylvanus Lysons Trust
Sylvanuslysons@gmail.com Tel: 07554 992892

Helen began by outlining her work as Administrator for the Trust. Sylvanus Lysons was a real person who left money in a Trust upon his death to be used to maintain a resident Rector in Hempstead Church and also to support clergy widows within the Diocese (currently around 100, who receive a Christmas grant of £250 from the Trust). The Trust is completely independent from the Diocese and is run by a board of Trustees who manage the interest from investments. They have around £300,000 per annum to administer around the Diocese and are keen to support initiatives that bring hope and healing where it is most needed. In the last 2 years they have supported:

- Working with families and children at St Laurence Stroud Toddler Group with a set-up grant over 3 years (*love and care of a church fellowship*)
- Planting of a Toddler Group at Coopers End in Gloucester
- Christ Church, Cheltenham – after-school Lego club with a start-up grant
- 'I Sing Pop' – Bringing Christian gospel music into schools
- Prayer Spaces in schools
- Youth Projects – following a community survey and the need for activities for young people, ran a Video Film Making Day in Frampton, coming again in May this year. (*Within the context of a church family*)
- The Fig Tree in Stonehouse - Shop, Café and drop-in centre – start-up grant over 2 years.
- Mara Trust support grants – Friday drop-ins to understand their work
- Working with elderly people – lunch club in church
- Digital Training Day at Frampton, including lunch. They now have 2 community lap-tops in their community café in church for everyone to use.
- Book Blest festival in Stroud
- A small grant to the Festival of Wonder in St Laurence, Stroud
- St John's Treadworth – weekly English teaching
- Hucclecote Community Garden – support for a community drop-in centre at the back of the garden
- Street Pastors in both Gloucester and Cheltenham

The Trust is an amazing 'gift' that we have in Gloucester Diocese and this is just a snapshot of the type of projects they support.

Please check out the Diocesan website for more information – the process to apply is simple and accessible. Please speak to Helen if you would like to discuss a future project that you would like support for.

This was followed by brief table-top discussion time, and questions, including:

-

Lisa-Jayne Lewis

- Legacy Funds – are they understood and is it a good thing?
A resource hub is underway in the Diocese, so please keep an eye out around Easter when new resources and information will be launched on the website.
- Will there be technical information available on setting up an investment fund portfolio?
Yes, where to go to the correct people to set everything up legally – it will be 'signposting', rather than actual advice.
- Connectivity issues – less and less people carry cash
Mobile wi-fi is available through a 'Mi-fi' device through O2, which runs on a phone sim card, with a built-in booster. (Cost: £6 per month for the first 6 months and then £11 pm). Proven to work well in black-out areas. It can connect to your 'Sum-up' device or alternative. Lisa-Jayne will come and test it in your church to see if it works in your area.
- Spontaneous giving – Sum-up machines can take a long time, so can be off-putting. Consider the use of QR codes on posters and websites? Be aware of potential fraud with stickers over genuine codes.
*More information is on its way regarding this type of technology
Some information is available on the Church of England website, but more will be posted on the Diocesan website around Easter time.*

Revd Helen Sammon

Trustee meeting dates confirmed as:

4th April 2025 (closing date 17th March)

18th July 2025 (closing date 30th June)

14th November (closing date 27th October)

Please email Helen at an early stage if you have a project in mind so that they can work with you and give any fundraising advice. They will also help you complete and submit your application.

- 'Thank-you' for supporting arts projects
We are a Christian Charity, happy to take 'godly risks' and support 'ambition'
- Do you make multiple grants to the same people?
Each project is considered on its own merits

Grateful thanks to both our speakers for very interesting and engaging presentations.

5. The Deanery Strategic Plan – We are now focusing on what will happen next to start putting things into action. Two of our identified priorities are Administration and Children and Youth Work. Barrie Voyce, Diocesan Senior Youth Connector, will be coming to our May Deanery Synod meeting to look at our Deanery vision for Children & Youth Ministry.

6. Parish & Benefice Update

- **Stroud Team** – The advertisement has gone out to fill the full time stipendiary post, with interviews set for 26th March.

7. Reports

7.1 Diocesan Synod on 1st February, as per the draft Minutes circulated.

The main topic for discussion was safeguarding. The following link will take you to a letter from Bishop Rachel following the meeting:

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/2025/message-from-bishop-rachel-18-february-2025/>

7.2 Report from General Synod 10th-14th February – To follow

7.3 Stroud Deanery Financial Update – As circulated

Clarification sought on the Area Dean contribution to the Deanery Office. The Area Dean is allocated funds towards administrative support, and a part of this is used towards supporting the Deanery Administrator, reclaimed quarterly from the Diocese.

Looking at the budget, and taking all of the PS commitments into account, Mike Lambert proposed a figure of 1.65% of pledged PS be asked from parishes towards funding the office for 2025.

This proposal was seconded by Col Tony Singer and all were in agreement.

The usual Deanery Office Funding request letter will therefore go out to all Parish Treasurers in the next week or so.

7.4 Deanery Eco Ambassador Report as circulated

Jenny spoke briefly around her report – do please consider completing the CofE Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) if you have not already done so.

Managing our Churchyards for Biodiversity and Nature Recovery – 25th March at St Mary's, Woodchester. Please follow the link for more details: [Managing Churchyards Event](#)

8. Meeting Dates and venues for 2025 confirmed as:

Standing/Pastoral Com. 9.30am-12 noon all at The Porch Room Minchinhampton	Deanery Synod all at 7.30 pm Coffee served from 7pm	Suggested Speaker/Topic
April Tuesday 29th	May – Wednesday 21st May St Laurence Church, Stroud	Barrie Voyce Senior Youth Connector Deanery Vision for Children & Youth Ministry
September Tuesday 16th	October – Wednesday 15th Holy Trinity, Minchinhampton	Tbc

If there are speakers you would like to see, or topics you would like covered, do please let us know

9. Chair's Announcements

- **Deanery Lay Chair Vacancy** – The job description attached is just a guide, you would just need to 'be you' representing the lay members of Deanery Synod. Please speak to Sue or Margaret if you would like an informal chat to find out more.
The May meeting will be Margaret's last after 10 years in post.
- **Lay vacancy on the Deanery Standing & Pastoral Committee**
We continue with 1 lay vacancy - 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. We are very keen to fill to these vacancies so do please think about anyone who might be a good fit in your community, perhaps with strategic planning skills.
- **Bishop Rachel's Deanery Visit – Monday 9th June 2025**
Please let us know if you have something you would like her to see in your parish.
- **Severn Forum Lectures** – Very worthwhile meetings - £15 per annum. Please follow the link for the full programme of dates for this year: [2025 - Severn Forum Programme.pdf](#)

10. **AOB** – There was none

11. **Closing Prayer** led by Revd Dave Bishop