

Deanery Synod Annual Report 2017

This is a summary report; more detail on areas covered can be found in individual reports to PCC, and Deanery Minutes (see <http://www.witneydeanery.org/deanery-synod/>).

Since the last APCM Witney Deanery Synod has met twice, in June (at St John's Burford) and November (Holy Trinity Witney). Cogges now has five deanery representatives: Barbara Eaton (also a member of Diocesan Synod), Jane Harper, Elizabeth Knowles, Kirsty Morgan, and Ben Osman. David Eaton of St Mary's Cogges has taken over from Sue Campbell as Deanery Treasurer. Rev Toby Wright, Rector of Witney, remains Area Dean, and the Lay Chair is again Kevin Rillie.

Finances are as always a matter of concern (and again for some parishes a real difficulty), but there is a sustained emphasis on the importance of paying parish share in a timely manner (the increase for the coming year will be 4%).

Deanery Synod has continued to focus on the Deanery Mission Action Plan, with its core elements of Schools, Men's Ministry, and Support for the Vulnerable, and in the context of Bishop Steven's challenge to us to be a 'contemplative, compassionate, and courageous' Church. Each Synod meeting has heard a speaker highlighting key areas of concern. In June Roger Faulkner gave a powerful address on the work of Open Doors, and in November we had a presentation by Alison Webster and Jane Perry on the diocesan report *For Richer, For Poorer*, with its key findings from across the diocese including increasingly apparent inequality, hidden struggle, and the impact of self-perception. Focus on our own deanery flagged up evidence of deprivation in an apparently affluent area. (Since that meeting, the closure of Base 33 will have sharpened the pressure on troubled young people in Witney.)

Work done in the area of Schools Ministry has included participation by St Mary's Cogges and The Blake in a very successful Vision Evening on Prayer Spaces in schools put on at Burford by Catherine Clayton and Mary Phillips of Be Space. Subsequently Ali Laithwaite hosted a visit from several church schools to The Blake's Prayer Spaces set up in St Mary's Cogges, and Kirsty Morgan gave crucial help to Prayer Spaces at Leaffield CE Primary School.

As with last year, Deanery Synod is seen as a body with an active missional focus, and the Synod meetings are directed to fostering this work as well as developing fellowship between the individual churches.

Barbara Eaton, Jane Harper, Elizabeth Knowles, Kirsty Morgan, and Ben Osman, St Mary's Cogges Representatives to Witney Deanery Synod, 13 January 2018