

## **Addendum to report of Witney Deanery Synod 2019-20**

Following the imposition of a national lockdown in March 2020 in response to the coronavirus epidemic, APCMs were cancelled, and therefore no elections could take place. The meeting planned for 3 June at St Mary's Bampton to open a new session could not be held.

A final meeting of the 2019-20 Synod was held by Zoom at 7 pm on 23 July.

### *Welcome and introductions*

*Bible study and addresses:* Revd Tom Putt (Burford) led a 'Dwelling in the Word' study on Habakkuk 3:17-19, and the Area Dean, Revd Tess Kuin Lawton, gave a talk on 'A Deanery in Lockdown: Inspiration and Challenge'. Revd Tess commented that she thought the church was in better health than the rest of the country with more people than ever before tuning in to online services and scattered churches being able to worship together. Revd Simon Kirby (Cogges) spoke on 'Re-Set', referencing the hardships experienced by many through lockdown. However, while he thought that there were more difficulties to come, he could still detect green shoots of renewal. Revd Toby Wright, from the experience of St Mary's Witney, spoke on 'Sacrificial Giving', reflecting on the difficulties for a church where significant sources of income had been closed off. The congregation of St Mary's, in response, had reflected on and practised sacrificial giving, so that the work of the church could continue. Like other churches, they had put in place a fund for those most in need, and had been greatly touched by letters and messages they had had from recipients.

*Finance:* The Treasurer, David Eaton, gave the financial report, including information on Deanery grants and Parish share. Our target at this point as a deanery had been to have paid 50% of our parish share; we have currently achieved 68%, which is very encouraging. We are likely to learn details of next year's parish share in the autumn; the probability is that individual parishes will not see a significant fluctuation.

*Conclusion:* Revd Tess Kuin-Lawton, in concluding the meeting, made two important introductions. Jo Paton, who worships at St Mary's Cogges and who is the Parish Administrator for Charlbury, was welcomed warmly as our new Deanery administrator. Revd Jo Hurst was licensed on 7 June 2020 as Rector of the Lower Windrush Benefice.

We are heading into a straitened period; economies are being planned and there will be a freeze on recruitment. Nevertheless there are many grounds for hope.

Parish APCMs will now take place in the autumn (and must be concluded by 31 October). Some members of Synod complete their 3-year term this session, and new members to replace them will be elected at the relevant APCM. The first meeting of Deanery Synod for the 2020-21 session is planned for 19 November 2020; it is likely to be a virtual 'Zoom' meeting, but this will be confirmed.

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*Barbara Eaton, Jane Harper, Elizabeth Knowles (for part of the meeting only), Kirsty Morgan;  
apologies received from Sid Rees*