

Deanery Synod Report 2020-2021

The Rickmansworth Deanery covers nine parishes with eleven churches; Bovingdon; Chipperfield; Christ Church, Chorleywood; St Andrew's, Chorleywood; All Saints, Croxley Green; St Oswald's, Croxley Green; Mill End with Heronsgate and West Hyde; Rickmansworth; Sarratt.

Deanery Synod went into 'hibernation' for much of 2020. No meetings were held after January until November 2020. By this time St Oswald's had held its delayed Annual Meeting and two new members had been elected. Guy Parks and Richard Doughty were elected in place of Rupert Barnes and Jane Brading, who retired. Rev'd Simon Cutmore of Mill End with Heronsgate and West Hyde became Rural Dean in place of David Hall of Christchurch Chorleywood.

The routine business of Deanery Synod generally involves:

- Keeping up to date with general developments across the deanery including upcoming vacancies and appointments of new clergy. Duncan Kerr, who had been Deanery Synod Lay Chair for 7 years, retired. Rupert Barnes also retired as Treasurer. A new secretary was also needed as this role had been fulfilled by Sarah Wright, David Hall's secretary. Guy Parks has been elected secretary and Tony Barton as treasurer.
- Arranging deanery-wide events including the Deanery Ascension Day service and Deanery social events. None were held in 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Sharing information on developments in parishes across the Deanery and progress on the Deanery MAP. Unsurprisingly little happened in 2020 regarding either the Deanery or Parish MAPs. Deanery Synod has provided a forum for parishes to hear about the different ways in which we have continued to be church during the pandemic.
- Considering diocesan and national church events, including reports on General Synod.

On-line meetings on Zoom were arranged in November 2020 and March 2021. On each occasion we had a visiting speaker from the Diocese.

At our November meeting we were joined by Rachel Johnston, Diocesan Environmental Officer, who spoke on the subject of 'Becoming an Eco Church/Parish/Diocese'. General Synod has set a target for the Church of England to be net zero by 2030. Given the nature of the buildings the church occupies this is not just about measuring our carbon footprint. It will simply not be possible for many church buildings to achieve net zero. It is also about engaging with the community we serve to generate an impact that can be measured. We can engage with the community both through our worship and through other action in the wider community to encourage an overall reduction in our environmental impact. The A Rocha 'Eco-church scheme' was referred to as a good starting point and is something that St Oswald's has taken part in.

In March this year we were joined by Rev'd Canon Tim Bull, Director of Vocations who spoke to us about 'Promoting Vocations'. With all the challenges the church is currently facing there is a need to encourage vocations among people who reflect a broader and more diverse group. We need to encourage vocations, both stipendiary and self-supporting among people from different cultural and educational backgrounds and with a broader age-profile. Ministry is not just about ordination, preaching and teaching. There are lots of different ministries and God may be calling people to get involved in lots of different ways. The diocese provides opportunities for people to explore their own calling together with others who may be thinking along similar lines. Tim encouraged each of us to be open to talking about vocations and to be willing to ask if we feel God is calling us, or perhaps suggest it to someone who we think God is calling.

Tony Barton

Guy Parks

Richard Doughty

April 2021