

Cowley Deanery Synod
Minutes of the Synod Meeting Monday 11th June 2018
At St Andrews Church, Old Headington

Caring for the Environment and Eco Church.

Attendances signed

Hubert Allen	Wulf Forrester-Barker	Patricia Michael
Sheila Allcock	Andy Gosler	Stephen Michael
Margareet Armistead	Catherine Harvey	Margaret Norman
Heather Armitage	Natacha Hugget	Millius Palayiwa
Elaine Bardwell	Trevor Jones	Tony Phelan
Geoff Bayliss	David Knight	Blanche Stiff
Eric Bossward	Philip Lockley	Christine Tucker
Skye Denno	Tim Massingham	Bethan Willis
Nick Dewey	Darren Mcfarland	Margaret Woodcock
		Christine Woodman

Darren Mcfarland led the Worship.
 Geoff Bayliss chaired the meeting.

Agenda item	Time		Actions
Opening worship	7:30 7:46	Darren Mcfarland opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to St. Andrews church. The meeting coincided with the feast Day of St Barnabas and the worship led by Darren was a celebration of this. Geoff Bayliss added his welcome and introduced himself as the new Area Dean, having studied Ecology at University, the environment and Eco Church were both topics that he was passionate about. Geoff welcomed Andy Lester and handed over to him to introduce and explore the evenings topic.	
Caring for the Environment and Eco Church	7:49	Andy Lester introduced himself as a conservation director for A Rocha UK. Andy spoke of the variety and abundance in God's creation and highlighted a few of the threats facing the natural world; the rapid extinction of species, plastic waste in the ocean and climate change. Although the challenges faced are huge, there are solutions and A Rocha UK is working to strengthen the link between spirituality and nature, connecting people with God through the natural world and mobilizing people to care for the natural world. Even the smallest of actions have the potential to collectively bring change. As Christians it is important to know the Biblical perspective about the world, the Bible is very clear that God is passionate about creation, Psalm 24:1, John 3:16 and Rev 21:1 were highlighted as examples of this. Change is happening, churches are connecting with nature through the Eco Church award scheme, A Rocha UK is partnering with Christians landowners, Christians retreat centers as well as large secular organization including the RSPB. There is a great capacity to show the Christian faith to others through the everyday work we do to protect and look after the environment.	Two house martin boxes to be bought and suitable locations for them to be found.

		<p>There is a continued need to connect and understand the younger generation, thus creating opportunity for revival both in our churches and in our green open spaces.</p> <p>There was a time for questions at the end and several questions were asked, the chance to sign up and receive more information about the work of A Rocha UK was offered.</p> <p>Andy asked for two house martin boxes to be bought in lieu of payment. Geoff thanked Andy for coming to speak and introduced Claire and Felicity to speak about the Eco activities in their churches.</p>	
St Clement's and Holy Trinity Headington Quarry-Eco Activities	<p>8:31</p> <p>8:40</p>	<p>St. Clements- Claire Newgass Claire has personal interest in conservation as well as an interest in connecting faith with the natural world. St Clements has a history of reducing its eco-footprint through its management of church property and its facilities. With the church being located on a large plot there was scope to engage its congregation with nature, work parties have been established to work alongside the verges to create a wild natural space at the back of the church and a traditional churchyard at the front. Resources such as Caring for God's Acre have been used and a churchyard management plan has been created.</p> <p>The differences that have been made are clearly visible and very encouraging, the variety of plants in the churchyard has increased and they are looking forward to continuing this work.</p> <p>Holy Trinity, Headington Quarry -Felicity Wallendszus HTHQ were awarded their bronze Eco award last year and are currently working towards silver. HTHQ has been working through the 5 principles of Eco Church-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Worship and Teaching 2. Management and church buildings 3. Management of church land 4. Community and global engagement 5. Lifestyle <p>There work this year includes solar panels on the vicarage, work parties on the church land, engaging the community with butterfly and eco treasure hunts in the churchyard, an early morning bird event at Shotover and most recently an Eco- festival, engaging the community and also services such as Thames Water, Oxford City Council and other local businesses. It was well attended and there are plans to hold it again next year.</p> <p>7 out of the 11 Churches in the Deanery had signed up to the Eco Awards Scheme. All churches that hadn't, were asked to consider signing up. It was suggested that contact list for Eco activities in the Deanery be created and shared.</p> <p>Church events to be shared on the Deanery website.</p>	<p>Contact list for Eco activities in the Deanery be created and shared.</p> <p>Events to be shared on the Deanery website.</p>
Groups	8:54	<p>The following questions were discussed in small groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your church doing in these areas? 2. How can you develop this work? 	

		3. How can the Deanery help? Answers were written on post it notes and placed at the front.	
Feedback	9:08	Geoff thanked everyone for such active participation. A selection of the answers were read out, the main consensus was that there was a need as a deanery to share skills and ideas in order to grow this work. The idea of being an Eco elf was considered, elves always working in the background with the potential to make deep differences to people and the environment around them.	Answers to be collated and shared with Synod members.
Deanery business	9:12	Mission Fund- Trevor Jones It had been decided at a previous meeting create a mission fund, so far there was £8,000 in the fund and this is expected to rise to £20,000 by the end of the year. A letter with a procedure for requesting a grant would be sent out near October and the standing committee would meet to process requests and start allocating funds.	Letter with procedure for requesting a grant sent to all churches in the Deanery.
	9:17	Diocesan Synod Elections- There were two vacancies, only one candidate, Patricia Michael therefore was Patricia was automatically elected. Jayne Ozanne offered to fill the other vacancy. Geoff would follow the official procedure and would send out the relevant communications. As postage is expensive election via email was agreed. Individuals would be asked for consent to use this method. Those not consenting would be sent paper copy Clergy Elections- Clergy elections were to take place shortly as there were four nominees for the 3 vacancies a vote was to take place. Ballot forms were to be sent out, voting slips to be returned to Tony Phelan, the returning officer for these elections, the 9th July 2018 is the deadline for returning the voting slips. OWNS update- over the winter 33 people had been involved with the night shelter. This had led to 10 of those moving into permanent accommodation and that they were hoping to increase the numbers from 10 to 20 over the next winter. I Oxford City Outreach Service had given guidance that the Owns facilities needed to be located in the centre of Oxford. This meant that for this year ideas of setting up shelters towards the edge of the city in the East xford area had been shelved. All groups involved had worked well together. Vacancy at Headington Quarry- Meetings had taken place with the Archdeacon and the process was moving forward. Purchase of the United Reformed Church, The Littlegate Trust had purchased the United Reformed Church building and had offered it to St Ebbes to use for a church plant. Due processes had been followed with both the Archdeacon and Bishop involved and there was a desire to move this church plant forward quickly. A series of question and debate followed; key Questions point raised included.	Process to fill vacancy to be undertaken. Clergy Ballot forms to be sent out.

	<p>What were the due processes that had been followed? Had current clergy been contacted?</p> <p>Geoff Bayliss- There had been telephone conversations with both the Archdeacon and the Bishop, during which Geoff had been asked for his views on St Ebbes putting a church plant in Cowley, Geoff was of the opinion that a plant would be a good move for growing the Kingdom in Cowley.</p> <p>Question- Why had there been a different approach to a church plant in Barton?</p> <p>Eric Bossward- Barton was not a church plant, it was a partnership with St. Aldates, therefore the process had been different.</p> <p>Question- Why had this topic been left until this time in the meeting? It was scheduled for discussion at 8:45, had the meeting kept to time then a proper discussion with the Synod could have been had, rather than just one person’s opinion just been presented. When would there be a meeting scheduled to discuss this topic?</p> <p>Geoff Bayliss- He was unsure of when there would be such a meeting, but now was not the time to have a deanery debate about it. He was just providing a report back of where the process had got to.</p> <p>Why had Deanery Synod known nothing about it until the very late stages, due process seemed to exclude any expression of or consultation with the Deanery.</p> <p>There was a need for Geoff to work hard at rebuilding trust.</p> <p>There were clergy who had engaged with other groups who had placed a bid on the URC building and these clergy had not known that there was an Anglican interest in the building and they should have as it could have a damaging effect on the relationships with these other groups. There needed to be an honest conversation within the Deanery Synod to understand what had happened and why.</p> <p>There was concern about how St Ebbes had behaved in the Deanery with their 1st plant in Headington.</p> <p>How much money would the new plant would be contributing to the deanery share?</p> <p>Ebbe’s history of non-co-operation in the Cowley deanery was a concern. They had a track record of not cooperating and it was not foreseeable how anything had changed, there needed to be a very honest conversation as St Ebbes and Cowley Deanery are poles apart in their beliefs.</p> <p>There was also concern that the years of building trust between the different ethnic and social groups would be seriously damaged by what St. Ebbes would bring into the Deanery.</p>	
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	<p>Being aware and understanding were two very different things and that it would be necessary to communicate the deanery's concerns to the Bishop and the Archdeacon.</p> <p>Littlemore area and the Cowley deanery had felt like a safe group/place for many, with the influx of new people, there was the concern that there would be a new shift in what would be taught and they would perhaps bring in a different slant which in fact the deanery would not want and this was not what the Cowley Deanery was about. There was a concern that currently everyone is treated in the Deanery with equal rights and this would potential change when St Ebbes moved in.</p> <p>One member questioned if she would be welcomed if she attended the church plant and questioned whether she would be given communion there, she felt that given their views she would not be welcome to receive communion there.</p> <p>It was asked that the deanery chairs would work together and that they would work together to represent the full view of the Deanery Synod as concerns need to be addressed. The Deanery Synod had not voted or agreed on any of this and that they would challenge this and it would be raised at Bishops Council.</p> <p>A query was raised over the dates of the process and how clergy/the Synod had been informed.</p> <p>This had been a fast process as the last Area Dean had no knowledge of the Littlegate's bid on the URC or St Ebbes plans to plant a church there. It felt like there had been a lot going on behind closed doors.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Archdeacon should meet with all the clergy as at least 6 or 7 of the 11 incumbents in the deanery were very unsettled by this move and how it has been handled. There was also concern about the views held by St Ebbes on Women and Gay Clergy.</p> <p>A view was shared that the last Archdeacon had not known about it all and that an ill feeling had arisen amongst everyone, as it felt that there had been something planned and no-one in the deanery had known about it. It had come out in Chapter meeting, none of the clergy had known about what was happening in their own deanery, they were all shocked when they heard. There needed to be a clergy and Synod meeting with the Archdeacon. It was also noted that the Deanery had welcomed St Ebbes, Headington despite the differences but that St Ebbes had continued on their own path with no regard to the rest of the Deanery. It felt like this new plant had been snuck in through the back door.</p> <p>One member stated that she had no confidence in them all working together in the Deanery, that they had been managed and treated like children in the whole process and that the basis of trust had been ruptured. She claimed the Area Dean had not acted in a Christian way and the deanery needed to talk to the Bishop about it. It was stated that it all felt rather retrospective it was easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission.</p>	
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	9:46	<p>Geoff thanked everyone for their attendance and for being forthright with their views. He also thanked them for engaging with the evenings Eco topic.</p> <p>Geoff led a final prayer and the evening concluded with the collective recital of Monday's Blessing for East Oxford.</p>	

Actions from the Meeting.

Action 1	Two housemartin boxes to be bought and suitable locations for them to be found.	Felicity Wallendszus
Action 2	Contact list for Eco activities in the Deanery be created and shared.	
Action 3	Church events to be shared on the Deanery website.	
Action 4	Answers to be collated and shared with Synod members.	Geoff Bayliss Via Felicity Wallendszus
Action 5	Letter with the procedure for requesting a grant to be sent to all churches in the Deanery.	Trevor Jones
Action 6	Process to fill vacant Diocesan Synod position activated.	Geoff Bayliss
Action 7	Clergy Ballot forms to be sent out.	Geoff Bayliss
Action 8	Deanery kept updated regarding St Ebbe's church plant.	Geoff Bayliss