

Report on Deanery Synod Meetings during 2021.

There were two held during 2021 the first was on Thursday 29th April 2021 and conducted on Zoom and the second was held in person on Wednesday, 20th October 2021 at St. John's Church, Hook.

Sue Rumsey attended the first as the Deanery Representative before her move to Somerset and Richard James attended the second having taken over from Sue.

April 2021

Myanmar

Marion de Quidt the Area Dean sadly reported the shock of the news from Myanmar concerning the violence against the people struggling for freedom of speech, ability to travel and financial support for the priests. (The Diocese of Winchester and the Odiham Deanery has long-standing links with churches in this area and has hosted visits from Archbishop Stephen and Rev. Dr. Paul who is now a Canon).

- A prayer was distributed to the reps and added to our own website with the hope we can pray for Myanmar and its people in church.
- Thought and discussion has been given as to what to do to support them.
- On Wednesday 21st and Thursday 22nd April there was a prayer vigil in support of the people of Myanmar.
- Marion gave a power-point update showing demonstrators being showered with water, floods and landslides, and a moving image of a lone nun praying in front of the police holding guns. She illustrated the position of Myanmar surrounded by powerful countries such as India, China and Thailand.
- Angie Smith opened and closed this vigil by zoom.
- Marion led us in a prayer for peace, reconciliation and justice for the Myanmar people and highlighted **an appeal lead by the Bishop of Winchester.**

IT and Streaming

Andy Pinnock from Bramley gave a detailed, technical talk on the use of streaming services and Audio-Visual systems for worship. The advantages of these systems include:

- Serving those who cannot get to church for the normal service
- For weddings and funerals where the worshipers are limited due to COVID.
- It opens the possibilities of communication with missionaries and new believers.
- He explored the possibility of video and DVD for those who may not be up to speed with IT.
- Participation from home viewers using the chat feature (prayer requests etc.)
- St. John's in our benefice are very up to speed with streaming.

Permission should be sought from the worshipers for their image to be broadcast.

Retiring Priests in the Deanery

Stephen Ball from Sherfield led us in a prayer for faith, truth and to bless this meeting.

John Lenton from Bramley led the Grace.

October 2021

Up-date from parishes.

All the parishes reported similar findings, as below. Also most reported successful events such as Harvest, church fetes, special services, the restarting of children's groups etc.

- On-line services proved very successful, and services in church have been restarted though not so many people have returned.
- People have returned to church, and there has been a growth in Lay leadership.

- The services during lockdown were mainly on-line. Now all the churches have returned to in-person services, and with some Zoom input. Not everyone has come back.
- Everything was on-line during lockdown. All the regular services are now being held in person, but there are still lower numbers attending.
- General observations: The Deanery seems to be experiencing some very positive things including:

Report from Colin Cohen, Deanery Synod Treasurer

Colin explained the financial position of the Deanery and the impact of the pandemic. He explained the CMF saying it differs from the Parish Share in thought rather than practice.

- The CMF goes into one pot and goes to help where it is most needed. 80% goes back to the parishes, some to the Links and some to the Diocese. The same parameters are used across the parishes; some challenge it and some ask for a CMF "holiday".
- If the money does not come in, none can go out to be used where needed. 92% was achieved last year, it will be slightly less this year, and it is recognised that in the past 18 months incomes have been down.
- In the short-term parishes are needing to use their reserves; if reserves are used longer than short term there will be difficulties as they will have no cash.
- If the CMF is not paid there will be fewer clergy.
- The biggest competitor for the CMF is church fabric, and in the future parishes may need to rethink where services are held. If money is poured into the fabric, it could equal a beautiful building with nothing going on in it.

Where to go from here?

- The bigger churches have more going for them than the smaller rural parishes.
- Colin said we all need to decide where we go from here – what is it financially that we want?
- The Diocese has not enough income this year; there are some short-term plans for raising more income.
- Should ask "Does the community want the church"? Worship could take place outside the building, and pastoral care carried out by other means. If there is no visible presence in the village the church cannot grow.
- In general, it is retirees who are giving, and these are dying off. Young people will either not give or are not in a financial position to do so.
- In an average congregation 10-20% of people don't intend to come back, though there is some growth of young families. Need to encourage people to commit to the church and grow the church.

Up-date on Diocesan Synod and the news re Bishop Tim – Marion

There has been some turbulence within the Diocese. Many Diocesan Synod reps have stayed on to give continuity; the goal is to stabilise everything. Odiham is represented by Marion deQuidt, Richard Elphick, David Collier and Justin Hooper from St Johns.

- There was open conversation, and many questions asked from the floor, looking very carefully at governance and financial matters.
- Please pray for Bishop Debbie; she was a Suffragan Bishop but is now holding the fort.
- Odiham Deanery is the least affected.
- The Diocesan accounts have not yet been published but will be made available.
- Bishop Debbie said a complete review of governance and finance will take place but has not given a time-scale.

Myanmar.

The WhatsApp prayer group is a real inspiration and has kept going since the visit of Archbishop Stephen in February.