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The Deanery of Sutton

Area Dean: The Revd Canon Angela Gbebikan

Lay Chair: Mrs Alison Huneke

7th June 2018 Sutton Deanery Synod

**Minutes of the meeting of the Sutton Deanery Synod held on Thursday,
7th June 2018 at All Saints, Hackbridge.**

Attendance: 34 members were present
16 members sent apologies
13 members were absent

1. The Area Dean called the meeting to order at 8pm, and welcomed our speakers. The Lay Chair, Mrs Alison Huneke then opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Synod was welcomed to All Saints Hackbridge by the Revd Lynn Billin, who has been the Priest-in-Charge since May 2016. She mentioned that this is the first time in living memory that Synod has been held at All Saints Hackbridge. The church is of middle Anglican tradition, and is open every day from 9am to 5pm in summer, and 4pm in winter. It is a place of prayer and peace, surrounded by lovely grounds and has recently joined the Small Pilgrim Places network. There is contact with the two primary schools in the area, and the parish is growing rapidly due to the provision of 700 new homes which are being built in New Mill Quarter, and down by the river in Wood Street. All Saints' Centre is always busy and is well used by the local community.

3. Presentation by the Archdeacon of Croydon, the Venerable Chris Skilton, and the Dean of Fresh Expressions, the Revd Will Cookson, on Mission and Fresh Expressions.

Chris started proceedings by asking four questions for members to discuss briefly in small groups, preferably from different churches:

- a) Who is missing from your church?
- b) Which single word would you use to describe your church?
- c) Which one word describes your parish?
- d) What is the most significant issue in your local community?

This was then followed by a summing-up question:

What do your four words tell you about the mission of your church?

Will then encouraged members by saying that there are some amazing things going on, and that we shouldn't be beating ourselves up so much. Although the worshipping community may seem to be small, it is twice the size of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party, and bigger than all the political parties put together.

The churches are involved in joint initiatives such as the food banks and Street Pastors, and individual churches have a range of their own community projects. So why are we so hesitant and so ready to put ourselves down?

We should have the confidence to invite people to come and join us at regular Sunday services. But for those who would never come to a church normally there are other ways to reach out to help, and share God's love with people of different backgrounds or cultures.

These come under the banner of "Fresh Expressions" and there are as many different ways as there are churches to arrange them: Messy Church, Monastic groups, Cafes and study groups are a few examples.

Members were asked to discuss in their small groups the best thing that their church is doing. These included a coffee bar in church after school for parents and children; a new food bank being set up; a Life Skills course to help people into work; visits to a residential home.

Chris then took the floor again to say that we should not seem ashamed of the gospel, but be convinced and convincing in all that we do. We should concentrate on what we do well and work out how to develop it and do it better, until it becomes time to do something else. People may come along to Messy Church when they wouldn't come along to a normal service because it suits their schedule and interests. So then the issue becomes how to develop an experience of church that they will still enjoy when they grow out of Messy Church. These Fresh Expressions need to have an integrity of their own, they should be an important expression of love and support to the community and not be seen as just a way to encourage new members.

So how can we build on these initiatives to help people to transform their lives and explore their faith?

In order to reach more people in our communities it will be necessary to come out of our churches and proclaim the Gospel afresh for every generation. But it is not necessary to abandon our heritage in order to achieve this. There is nothing new in looking back to the past: the Reformation sought to return to earlier church priorities; the Anglo-Catholic revival of the 19th century also looked towards social justice with the work of Wilberforce, and the Factory Acts amongst others.

The Church needs to return to its pioneering roots in order to reach the 98% who are not active members.

There are three forms of Pioneering:

- (i) Replication - a traditional church plant such as St Patricks. These are always a Fresh Expression. However, these cannot be afforded at present.
- (ii) Pioneer Adapters - Cafe church and Messy Church
- (iii) Pioneer Innovation - new forms of church adapted from our traditions.

Within our regular church services there are things that need to be paid attention to that can make a big difference to the experience of those attending. How do you interact with children? and How do you engage with newcomers over coffee?

Sidesmen can be considered the most important people in the church as they are the first person that a visitor will meet. It is necessary to keep revising the process: your MAP may just be about welcoming and receiving people into the church, changes don't need to be dramatic to make a difference.

From January 2019, a Mission Training Course will take place at Christchurch in Purley on how to reach out to communities in new ways.

Questions:

Lotwina Faradoye asked for more details regarding the schedule and cost of the Mission Training course.

Chris replied that the current plan is for the course to last for a year with monthly meetings on a Tuesday, with three Saturdays and one weekend during the year. The cost for one person will be £300, but the idea is to encourage groups from each church to attend, so the cost will be £150 for a second, £100 for a third, £75 for a fourth, and £50 for a fifth and thereafter.

Alex Helliwell asked how it would be possible to bring those attending Fresh Expressions such as Messy Church and Cafe Church into the full sacramental elements of the faith.

Will replied that at Springfield they have performed baptisms at Messy Church. It is expected that learning about and participating in all the sacraments will emerge over time, as they develop.

Chris and Will were thanked for their stimulating presentation.

4. The minutes of the meeting of 7th February 2018 were accepted.

5. Matters arising from the minutes:

Gloria Dean raised the matter of the change of date of the meeting, which many had been unaware of until receiving the agenda at the end of May. The Area Dean replied that the change of date had occurred because the date had been set before she had been appointed and she was already booked to attend a retreat the following week. It is unlikely that it would be necessary to change dates in future unless there was some unavoidable problem for the speaker.

The problem was rather that the promulgation of the information of the change of date had not been adequate. The secretary should have highlighted the alteration. In future any change will be more actively advertised.

6. Diocesan Synod Report.

The report written by Lotwina Faradoye was accepted with thanks.

7. Elections to the Diocesan Synod

For the House of Clergy there are two places and two nominations. The Revd Lynn Billin and the Revd David King. Both introduced themselves and spoke of their interests and experiences on the Synod.

For the House of Laity there are 4 places and 6 nominations. Each candidate was invited to come forward and introduce themselves and speak briefly to supplement the written statements which had already been circulated. Lay members of Deanery Synod were encouraged to fill in their voting papers and place them in the ballot box

at the back of church when leaving the meeting. For any unable to attend, voting will remain open until 21st June. All papers to be returned to the Deanery Secretary.

8. Deanery Project

It is proposed that we work together as a deanery on a project that would be too large for a church to undertake individually. The suggestion is that it should involve work with refugees as Sutton is designated as a Borough of Sanctuary. There was a lot of discussion about what could actually be done. It was felt that it is important that somebody should be appointed to take the lead and that a more concrete plan should be established. All members are encouraged to report back to their PCCs for support and suggestions.

Lotwina Faradoye mentioned Rosie Edser who works at the Croydon Refugee Centre and has set up a school for children who have not yet been processed and so cannot yet attend state schools. It was thought that she might come and share her experiences with Synod.

9. Website

The domain has been paid for, but there is nothing on the site. The website needs someone, or a group of people to set up and maintain it. There was a lot of discussion about what the website would be used for that wasn't already done elsewhere. After a while, a vote was taken on whether the idea of a website was worth pursuing, and the majority were against. It was suggested that a site such as one drive could be use to share documents and other information important to Synod members.

10. Notices

- a) A flyer has been circulated regarding a new food bank which is being set up in South Beddington. The preliminary meeting for potential volunteers is to be held at Wallington Methodist Church on Wednesday 27th June 7:30 - 8:30 pm. It is hope to have at least 12 volunteers, as three people will be required in the building at any one time. Please advertise this to any in your congregations who might be prepared to help out occasionally.
- b) Members of Synod attending for the first tie were introduced. These were Father David Chislet, Rector of All Saints' Benhilton, and Matthew Tomson from Springfield Church.

11. Any Other Business

None had been raised.

The meeting was close at 9:35pm.

Dates for future meetings:

Tuesday 16th October 2018 at St Patricks, Wallington

Wednesday 13th February 2019

Thursday 13th June 2019