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The Deanery of Sutton

Area Dean: The Revd Darren Miller

Lay Chair: Mrs Alison Huneke

**17th October
2017**

Sutton Deanery Synod

**Minutes of the meeting of the Sutton Deanery Synod held on Tuesday,
17th October 2017 at Christ Church Sutton.**

Attendance: 42 members were present
13 members sent apologies
14 members were absent

Prior to the full meeting, the House of Laity was convened at 7:45pm to elect a new Lay Chair. Since no nominations had been received, the assembled members were asked if anyone there would like to volunteer. Fr Darren pointed out that the Deanery had to have a Lay Chair in order to function and that extraordinary meetings would have to be convened until one was elected. After some discussion about the commitment involved, Mrs Alison Huneke kindly agreed to take on the role. She briefly introduced herself to the assembled members and was duly elected, with many thanks.

1. The Area Dean opened the meeting at 8.00pm with prayer. He then announced that he will be leaving his current post at Christmas to take up a position in Canterbury Diocese. He spoke briefly about the things that had been done during his time as Area Dean, and his expectation that things would continue to move forward under his successor. He expressed his gratitude to Nigel Bennett for all his good work during the four years they had worked together, thanked everyone for their support, and the catering team for their provision of refreshments.

2. Synod was welcomed to Christ Church by the Revd. Phil Brooks, with hopes that it hadn't been too difficult to find, and thanks to the catering team for their help.

Christ Church is one of three churches in the Sutton Team Ministry, and recently a review of how the three parishes are run has been undertaken with the view of deciding how best things should be arranged so that the different churches can flourish, and can serve the people of Sutton most effectively. The review has been presented to the Bishop and the Archdeacon, and they will make a decision on the best way forward.

It is 500 years since the start of the Reformation, which is considered to be when Martin Luther wrote an article against some of the practices of the Roman Catholic Church, and Christ Church are commemorating this with a sermon series on the Five Solas of the Reformation. This will culminate in a lecture to be held on Friday 3rd November at Christ Church. John Marshall is at the back handing out leaflets. All are welcome.

There is always a warm welcome inside Christ Church, but the buildings are hidden away and not very approachable, so there is a programme afoot to clear out the north side of the church to make it more accessible, and more in keeping with the houses and flats around it. The church is in the process of raising the £18,500 which will be needed for the work.

3. The minutes of the meeting of June 8th 2017 were accepted.

4. Matters arising from the minutes:

Although there were no matters arising from the minutes, Fr Darren asked whether representatives had taken back to their churches the information on what types of ministries and training are available, and urged them to do so.

5. Reports from Diocesan Synods and Boards

None had been received, and will be circulated separately when available.

6. Presentation on Sutton Community Works by Mark Tomlinson

Fr Darren introduced Mark Tomlinson from Sutton Community Works (SCW), saying that historically the Church of England has been at the forefront in serving the community, but now it is more commonly left to other local groups such as SCW. Mark is to explain the work of SCW and tell us how we can get involved.

Mark invited people to ask questions during the presentation, and reassured synod that in fact there are already 18 partner churches in Sutton, both Anglican and Free Church, and many volunteers come from churches across the Deanery.

First a little history: in 2004, Soul in the City encouraged young people to reach out in their communities, and SCW started after that, with the Street Pastors being started in 2005, the Food Bank in 2009, and in 2010 a charity was set up to look at new projects, develop partnerships with local firms, and have a voice on the Council. Besides the current projects, SCW aims to facilitate training events, and encourage engagement in issues of social justice.

Current Projects

Street Pastors - Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings in the centre of Sutton, volunteers provide a listening ear and a helping hand to those in difficulties; homeless, drunk, or just wanting a chat, and are generally a welcomed presence.

School Pastors - started in 2012 and is now in four schools:

Greenshaw, Glenthorne, Stanley Park and Overton Grange.

Food Bank runs four sessions in three locations. People are often reluctant to come, but with the changes in welfare payments, the delays in receiving any money can be up to 6 weeks, and there has been a 23% increase in uptake over the last year.

Job Club attempts to help people back into work by providing practical help, such as CV writing, and giving 1:1 support and encouragement.

Most people referred to the Job Club are over 50, and feel their

chances of finding work again are low. The aim is to make them feel better, and equip them with skills that will help them get back into work.

Linking lives will be covered later by Leigh Stephens who is the co-ordinator of the programme.

Prayer for Sutton - a recent prayer day was held at the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Questions

How much has the agenda changed over the years?

Street Pastors started out on Friday and Saturday evenings, but they are now out on Friday and Saturday afternoons as well.

School pastor have increased from just one to four.

The Food Bank shouldn't need to exist, but demand has increased lately. Getting to the root of the problems would be good.

Job Club started three years ago and has had 60 referrals so far.

Linking Lives only got funding in 2016.

There is generally more collaboration and consultation with the council.

What is a 'sofa surfer'?

These are homeless people who end up sleeping on the sofas of their friends. This is usually temporary and due to marital breakdown, or having just been released from prison.

How do you want us to help? Is it funding, or volunteering?

It is both, funding is provided by the police, the council and community grants, but there is always a need for more to help fund new or existing projects.

SCW is blessed in having a large number of dedicated volunteers, but circumstances change, and people move on. so there is always a need for more. In particular, anyone with relevant skills who could help with the Job Club programme would be especially useful.

Does SCW cover the whole of the Deanery, or the London Borough of Sutton?

The Deanery and the London Borough of Sutton cover the same area, but within that, the programmes are sited in particular areas. The Street Pastors only work in the centre of Sutton, the School Pastors are in three schools across the borough, the Food Bank has four team leaders working out of three locations.

Do the Street Pastors signpost to other services?

The main role of the Street Pastors is in caring, helping and listening, but they also carry cards with useful numbers for when people need to be put into contact with other agencies or groups.

Linking Lives - Leigh Stephens

Leigh introduced herself as a member of Bishop Andrews Church in St Helier. She works as a gardener, and has a number of elderly clients for whom she found that she was often the only visitor in the week.

Often the clients would want to chat and share their problems rather than let her get on with the gardening! Linking lives was set up 18 months ago to match isolated over 65s with volunteers who will befriend them, and go round regularly for tea and a chat. This really makes a difference to a lonely old person, and improves their health chances.

How does the linking process work?

Leigh visits all potential clients and interviews all volunteers, then makes suitable pairings. There are training and safeguarding sessions for all new volunteers.

Next Steps

SCW needs to keep the existing programmes going, and to develop new projects, always considering how best to meet the needs of the communities, how to reach the people who need help most, and how to address the underlying problems that cause that need. Two areas which are currently being considered are rough sleeping, which has greatly increased, and hunger amongst children. Do entitled children take up the free school meals on offer, and what happens to them during the holidays?

Please feed back any ideas you have of needs that could be addressed.

There are partner-church forums that meet to pray, discuss ideas and arrange training in areas where together is better than alone.

Please contact Mark through email with any ideas, or to invite him to come and talk to your church.

A particular urgent need is for an Overton school family which is moving into an unfurnished flat and would be grateful for the donation of: single bed frames, a table and 5 chairs, sofa bed, clothes rails.

More details of all the programmes can be found in the Impact report, which will be handed out at the back of the church after the meeting.

Fr Darren thanked Mark and Leigh for their informative talks, and pointed out that since there are 20 churches represented at Synod, there is the potential for more partnering. Take back what you have heard to your churches, and encourage people to get involved.

7. Notices

a) A training day for those working with children and young people will be held at St Oswalds on Saturday 11th November from 10am - 4pm. Please encourage those in your parishes who work with children and young people to apply at: [the-key-at-cheam.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/organizers/the-key-at-cheam)
There need to be more than 12 people for the course to run. It was said that many find it difficult to get up to training sessions in town, as this session has been arranged in response to that, please support it!

b) Mark Williams reported that the churchesinsutton.net website is up and running, but he needs information on what is going on in all the churches. Please send information to Mark and he will add it to the website.

c) John Lindsay-Scott is being inducted as Minister at Springfield at Wallington High School for Girls on Saturday 4th November at 8:15pm.

d) James Hills has just been appointed at Holy Trinity. News about his induction will be made available when known.

Banking Resolution

Under the current system it takes at least 3 weeks to pay out expenses, so an ordinary bank account is needed as well. The resolution proposed is that **a charities bank account is opened in addition to the present facility, and payments will require the signature of 2 out of 3 standing committee members.**

The resolution was passed unanimously.

The meeting was closed at 9:05pm.

After the meeting, Fr Darren was presented with a 'Thank-you' card which had been signed by those present.

Future Meetings

Wednesday 7th February 2018 at St Oswald's Cheam

Thursday 14th June 2018 at All Saints, Hackbridge

Tuesday 16th October 2018 at St Patricks, Wallington