

Sutton Deanery Synod

Minutes of the meeting of Sutton Deanery Synod held on 16th October 2018 at St Patrick's Church, Wallington.

Attendance: 31 members were present
14 members sent Apologies
22 members were absent

The Lay Chair opened synod with prayer.

Colin Powell, Director, Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) was welcomed as were Steve Harris, Diocesan Communications Officer and Daniel Stone, Web Manager and Social Media Officer.

- 1) Rev'd David King welcomed members to St Patrick's Church. He spent his formative years (1-12) in the parish as his dad had been the vicar and he is personally proud to have returned as vicar. The church is planning a major project to rebuild the church hall and are working with the relevant authorities as regards planning following which they will have to overcome the fundraising challenge. Holy Trinity Wallington is their mother church and Springfield their sister church. They are a traditional Anglican evangelical church.

- 2) Minutes of the meeting of 7th June were approved with one matter arising; no: 8. Mtr, Angela reminded delegates that synod had asked members to refer back to their PCCs for support and suggestions. A project to "Bridge the Language Gap" was mentioned and synod was asked whether anyone could volunteer to assist. Trinity Methodist Church Sutton was mentioned as doing a lot of refugee support work including a food bank and the Change Foundation in Wallington is meeting them to see if there is scope for co-operation.

- 3) Item 6 was brought forward and Colin Powell explained that SDBE will be submitting a new bid for a Secondary School in Sutton by the deadline 5th November 2018. SDBE has 106 schools in the diocese including 14 secondaries. 91% are rated good or better and of these 37% are outstanding. The board has had approval for 2 new primary schools in Horley and Lewisham. The process calls for an approved bid before a site is allocated or finance put in place. Sadly, the previous SDBE bid in 2016 was not accepted although the bid was strong; the Local Education Authority found no weaknesses but chose Harris Federation. There is a demonstrated need for a further secondary school by 2024 onwards due to substantial residential developments and recent expansion in primary schools including 3; C of E primaries. If approved the school would open with 180 year 7 students and grow to 1,150 including a 6th form. It would specialise in Maths and Music delivering high quality education and would not just be an exam factory. Support can be logged at: www.suttoncofesecondaryschool.org.uk or on [Facebook.com/suttoncofesecondaryschool](https://www.facebook.com/suttoncofesecondaryschool) Telephone: 020 7234 9200. The previous bid had 1,300 expressions of support from across the borough and Colin asked synod members to again add support and encourage their PCCs and parishioners to do likewise.

- 4) Item 7; Presentation by Steve Harris and Daniel Stone on Digital Presence was brought forward. Steve gave an insight the diocesan approach to communications.

It seeks to maintain a partnership with parishes and to be a buffer between the diocese and the outside world. He is keen to improve and facilitate communications between the diocese and parishes and encouraged parishes to send in event and good news stories for publication on the diocesan website and in “The Bridge” as this should encourage other parishes to do likewise. Southwark was the first diocese to establish a website in 1996 and it has had a substantial makeover in 2015/2016. Departments can maintain and update their own pages and all parish web pages in Sutton Deanery are currently up to date, but reliant on parishes monitoring and updating their pages. Daniel Stone discussed the wide range of social media which is now available including; Twitter, Facebook, Blogging, with Podcasts to be introduced. The Diocesan twitter account has 5,672 followers and the 3 area bishops also have Twitter accounts as well as the Dean of Southwark. The blog is typically updated with a good news story from across the diocese every Saturday morning at 10:00am. Pages on the diocesan website carry the diocesan Vision at the bottom “Walking, Welcoming, Growing”. He discussed the website “A Church Near You” which has information on every church and which has 10M; views each year; 80% viewing for the first time. It is mobile friendly. Church pages should be user friendly and have details of events, locations, maps, and contact details. He strongly supported the “3 click rule” so that websites are user friendly and not over complicated; they should have a few key facts about a church and a relevant photograph to promote interest. Mobiles have overtaken desktops and a map and contact details are essential. Churches could for example choose to include recent sermons and possibly a link to Instagram. He recommended attached PDFs which can be easily downloaded as opposed to links to other websites and data which detract from the focus on the particular church. A key is for churches to keep their own websites up to date if they choose not to rely on “A Church Near You”. He said that there is a view that the average reading age is 9 and so data should be kept clear and relevant.

There was some discussion about building websites which can cost as little as £60. <https://www.church123.com/> was considered a good designer. They create professional looking websites which are easy to edit and update and there is always someone to go back to if necessary. There was discussion as to whether churches should have WI-Fi or should stream life services so that people who could not get to church could engage. There is a C of E; “Liturgy App” and also a “Proclaim” App. Daniel gave his e-mail address in case anyone wanted advice: Daniel.stone@southwark.anglican.org

He went on to quote significant statistics for the use of social media such as Twitter having 335M; active MAPS; (Mobile Active Users) of which 80% use mobile phones with 2BN; queries daily and 74% of users say that they use the network for news. This is a good platform for Bishop Jonathan’s news stories about refugees. The diocese has a daily prayer which is programmed 1 month in advance for release at 6am; daily. Facebook has 1.47bn; desktop and 1.57bn; mobile users and 80% of internet users have a facebook account. Instagram has 1bn MAUs and 500m Daily entries.

5) Discussion of reports from Diocesan Synod and General Synod. The reports were accepted without discussion.

6) Notices:

Alison Huneke had attended a National conference for Lay Chairs and reported back on the following: The website “A Church Near You” has been updated and

churches can update their data at no cost. They can download information relevant to their own parishes; EG: "Follow the Star" pre-Christmas updates. The Bishop of Hull had given a presentation on prayer and encouraged parishes to include deaneries and deanery officers in their prayers. Traidcraft is understood to be struggling somewhat and churches are encouraged to support where possible, including buying on line.

There will be 2 free residential 2 day conferences at Wychcroft for anyone having first thoughts or having remotely considered a calling to ministry. 2-4 November for ordained ministry and 16-18 November for Lay Ministry. The age limit for stipendiary ministry is 52 and 58 for non-stipendiary and no age limit for Lay readers. Synod members were encouraged to contact the Diocesan ECO Church Website; Sue Mallinson: <http://southwark.anglican.org/help/jpic/diocesan-environmental-group> to undertake an environmental audit (if not already done) bearing in mind that Preserving God's creation is one of the 5 marks of Mission.

The Standing Committee has considered the possibility of funding a Gazebo which churches could use to establish promotional stands at centres such as farmers' markets across the borough from time to time. This is already being done at Wallington. Trinity Church (Methodist), Sutton do a lot of refugee work including supporting a Food bank. One synod member reported that a meeting was being arranged with the Change Foundation at Wallington to explore possible co-operation.

This proposal will need further consideration as to how parishes could individually or in small groups could work together. The deanery account balances are £1,835.21 at present and some funding could be used to support the proposal.

Alison will be sending a questionnaire to parishes probably in the new year to seek feedback on best practises such as resources and activities for children / young people. The intent is not to be prescriptive but to share best practise and be mutually supportive, bearing in mind that parish environments can be quite different and some may have established best practises and more resources.

Synod Closed with The Grace at 21:30hrs.

John Ruske