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**The Deanery of Sutton**

Area Dean: The Revd Canon Angela Gbebikan

Lay Chair: Mrs Alison Huneke

13th February  
2019

**Sutton Deanery Synod**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Sutton Deanery Synod held on Wednesday,  
13th February 2019 at All Saints, Hackbridge.**

Attendance: 33 members were present  
11 members sent apologies  
19 members were absent

1. The Area Dean called the meeting to order at 8pm, and welcomed our speaker, the Revd Duncan Swan. The Lay Chair opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Synod was welcomed to St Mary's Beddington by the Revd Andrew Fenby, who was new to the post when Synod last met there in June 2015. The church is medieval by foundation, having first been built in the 12th century, but most of what is seen today is a Victorian redevelopment. It is the original church for Beddington and Wallington, and all the other Anglican churches in the area were daughter churches. The church is liberal catholic, with a strong musical tradition, and is frequently used for weddings. The parish includes affluent and less well-off areas, and much of it is taken up with the park, and a sewage works! There are six schools, none of which are church schools, and four of them are for children with special needs, so that is one area in which St Mary's concentrates its ministry. Other mission areas include LGBT and BME events.

3. The minutes of the meeting of 16th October 2018 were accepted with one alteration. In paragraph 2, the second sentence should read: An idea for a project to "Bridge the Language Gap" was suggested. Many newcomers to the area have inadequate command of English and need help to integrate properly.

4. Matters arising from the minutes:

There was a question about the status of the Secondary School Project. Revd. Kevin Lewis, who sits on the Diocesan Board of Education confirmed that there was no news yet about the bid.

5. Presentation by Duncan Swan

Following a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease, Duncan moved from his role in a parish to Deanery Development around 10 months ago, as it is easier for him to manage with his medical condition. His role is to help the deaneries implement the report on Mission and Evangelism.

He started his presentation by asking if we had come to the meeting with a sense of excitement. The wordsearch which had been handed out before the meeting started was to encourage people to reject associations such as 'necessary evil', 'turgid', 'talking shop' for more positive attributes such as growth, mission, energy and vision. Only 1.48% of residents of Southwark attend their parish church regularly, which rises to 7 - 8 % if other church denominations are included. He compared the situation to that of Woolworths, which people depended on being there, but didn't patronise sufficiently for it to keep going.

The church needs to become more mission focussed in order to survive. The DAG report encourages lay and ordained members to carry forward the work of the church in their own areas. As a deanery we need to ask ourselves where it would make sense for us to work together on a project. The diocese is there to give advice and support rather than to impose ideas.

The legal position is that the Deanery Synod has to meet together twice a year as a body, but it can then do what it likes. What each deanery decides to do will depend on its individual needs and capabilities. Sutton Deanery is the same area as the London Borough of Sutton, which in some ways makes things easier, but it is a long thin borough, and Beddington is a long way from Worcester Park, so maybe meeting more often in local-area sub-groups would make sense.

Start with one project and form a team of interested parties to move the project forward.

Of the 25 Deaneries in the diocese, 7 have started to pilot the scheme.

The first step is to replace the elected standing committee with an appointed Deanery Leadership Team (DLT). A good relationship between the Area Dean and the Lay Chair is crucial. The assistant Area Deans, Treasurer and Secretary are involved, and should look for team players with an interest in a particular field and encourage them to get involved. A team-building day for the DLT will be available in September, and the experience of the first seven deaneries to trial the scheme could be instructive.

Duncan concluded by emphasising that small groups make for greater flexibility, and suggested asking each parish for an area of special expertise. The aspiration of the Bishop is that each deanery should have a Fresh Expression or a church plant over the next five years, and that the deaneries should work more effectively.

The diocese is prepared to pay for administrative support for the Area Dean and Lay Chair of 5 hours per week, up to £2500 over the year.

Following the presentation there was a lively discussion, with many reservations being expressed with regard to the shift of power which the transfer from an elected Standing Committee to an appointed DLT would represent. What then would be the point of being elected to Synod? Why should we try to do together things that we could do better alone? Could we not redefine the purpose of Synod without changing the structure? Some ideas do not seem relevant to other local churches, so would it not be better to leave it to the individual parishes to find other partners in mission? Is this just a redundant level of governance?

The Area Dean confirmed that while debate continues, and at least in the first instance, the DLT would be the same as the elected standing committee with the

addition of the two Assistant Area Deans. All members are encouraged to canvas opinion within their churches, and to continue the discussion on-line.

The Area Dean thanked Duncan Swan for his presentation and offer of continuing support.

#### 6. Diocesan Synod Report.

The report of the meeting of 17th November, written by Revd Lynn Billin was accepted with thanks. There was a question over the wording of one paragraph, and some discussion of the 2015 objectives and to what extent they had been achieved.

#### 7. Elections of Treasurer

No nominations had been received, and none were forthcoming during the meeting. It was emphasised that this is a simple job, since there is not much money to be handled. It was pointed out that with the restructuring there could be financial activity and so it could become a more challenging role.

#### 8. Notices

- a) Mental Health Day on Saturday 23rd February at St Mildred's Church from 10am - 3pm,
- b) Meeting with Bishop Ignatius Makumbe of Zimbabwe at St Barts in Horley on 16th February.
- c) John Rutter singing day in Wandsworth on March 9th
- d) Southwark Vision Evening on Thursday 21st February at the Church of the Good Shepherd at 7pm for 7:30pm.

#### 9. Any Other Business

None had been raised.

Fr Andrew and his team were thanked for their kind hospitality, and the meeting was close at 9:05pm.

Dates for future meetings:

Thursday 13th June 2019      at the Church of the Good Shepherd