

Notes of the Tower Hamlets Deanery Synod – 24 February 2015

7.30pm at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine.

Attended by 14 clergy and 15 laity. Apologies were received from 16.

Prayer led by Andy Rider. The meeting was chaired by Andy Rider.

1. Welcome

Andy opened the meeting and advised that the planned speaker, Dr Rachel Jordan, the Church of England Missions and Evangelism Advisor, was sadly unable to attend. The evening would therefore focus on the Standing Committee elections.

2. Standing Committee Elections

Those present split into the Houses of Clergy and Laity. The Clergy moved to a different room.

House of Laity

David Longbottom took the chair and advised that, as previously stated, he did not wish to continue in the role of Lay Chair. David noted that it had been a great opportunity to understand how churches work in a wider scale, having visited all but two of the churches in the Deanery. The Lay Chair sits on the Standing Committee which meets regularly on Sundays and also represents the Deanery at the Bishop's Area Council and the Archdeacon's Finance Committee. Other duties include getting involved in Section 12 meetings and welcoming new incumbents.

David continued that due to recent conversations around elections (see previous minutes) his retirement had been delayed and it was hoped that the laity would be in a position to elect a new Chair at the next meeting in June. In the meantime, the purpose today was to elect three lay members to the Standing Committee, for which nominations had been sought prior to the meeting. David explained that unfortunately two current Standing Committee representatives, Ruth McCurry and Elizabeth Marshall, were unable to be present. The third representative, Hayley Clark, was in attendance.

David advised that three nomination forms had been received – those for Hayley Clark, Ruth McCurry and Elizabeth Marshall.

The following points were discussed:

- Non-transparency of the rules surrounding the election process. It was noted that the Draft Rules state that elections should take place immediately after new Synod representatives are in place and some people felt the process was being delayed. However, it was agreed that this creates difficulties as people have had no time to get to know each other and are not well placed to make nominations.
- The lack of an open contact list of Deanery Synod representatives. Some people felt that this information was being withheld. However, this throws up Data Protection issues, given that individuals need to consent to the distribution of their personal details.
- The possibility of an event for lay representatives to get to know each other better and to ask questions about how the Standing Committee operates, in particular their decision making powers.

Those present voted on whether to carry out the Standing Committee election now or to postpone until after a 'get to know you' event. Ten people wanted to vote now, five wanted to postpone. It was therefore carried that the election would be take place now.

David asked if anyone else would like to stand themselves or nominate someone else. No-one came forward.

Dawn read out the three nominations forms received for Hayley, Ruth and Elizabeth. A show of hands was given with the following result:

Those in favour to elect Hayley, Ruth and Elizabeth – 11

Abstentions – 3

Hayley, Ruth and Elizabeth were duly elected Lay Standing Committee representatives for the remainder of the term.

It was agreed that the new Standing Committee representatives should organise a hustings type meeting before June for the Lay Chair election. Job description/person specification to be circulated beforehand with an invitation to self-nominate or express an interest.

David acknowledged that the process was not wholly satisfactory and thanked members for their input. It was generally felt that work needs to be done to develop the Deanery community. A suggestion was made to use name badges, to have a brief round at the beginning of meetings perhaps responding to a quirky question and to be conscientious in introducing ourselves before speaking. It was also noted that Synod used to meet more frequently at different locations. **Hayley agreed to bring these points to the next Standing Committee.**

The House of Clergy

The House of Clergy re-joined the meeting. Andy advised that discussion had taken place around whether the three Sub-Deans (Brian Ralph, Jane Hodges and Alexandra Lillie) should automatically sit on the Standing Committee. It was agreed they should. However, this would mean that the Bethnal Green cluster had no representation and so it was agreed that Kevin Scully should also join the Standing Committee in order to represent them.

3. School Governors

The following school governorships were ratified by Synod:

Governor	School	Proposed by
Elizabeth McKenzie	St Saviour's Primary School	Bob Gilbert (GB Chair) via Jane Hodges
Moira McCutcheon	Christ Church Primary School	Andy Rider

4. Any Other Business

Alan Green advised that the Tower Hamlets Interfaith Forum Calendars for this year are now available. Please contact him if any are required.

Mark Aitken advised that open reflective days are taking place at the Foundation on the second Monday of every month. There is also a programme of led reflective days with guest facilitators and speakers.

Andy advised that elections for the Diocesan and General Synods would soon be taking place. Judith Blackburn, who currently sits on the Diocesan Synod, spoke briefly about the nature of the London Synod's work.

The next Synod – Thursday 4 June 2015 at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine