

# Notes of the Tower Hamlets Deanery Synod – 4 June 2015

7.30pm at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine.

Attended by 9 clergy and 15 laity. Apologies were received from 8.

The meeting was chaired by Andy Rider.

## 1. Welcome

Andy opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

He introduced: Tim Clapton who spoke about the new partnership at St George-in-the-East that has emerged from the vacancy review process carried out by the PCC. Angus Ritchie has become priest-in-charge and Tim Clapton is assistant priest with day-to-day pastoral responsibility for the parish. Tim and Angus both work for the Centre for Theology and Community (CTC) and a partnership has been formed by the congregation, the CTC and the Bishop of Stepney. It is hoped that by September the CTC will oversee a lay resident community of young adults who will be moving into the Rectory around September and will grow a programme of teaching and ministry, working with children and the local mosque. A review to take place at Easter 2016.

Tim led prayers. Andy prayed for the St George-in-the-East / CTC Partnership.

## 2. Lay Chair Election

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 spoke about how he had enjoyed his seven year tenure but was now ready to hand over. Only one nomination had been received, that of Hayley Clark, nominated by Elizabeth Marshall and seconded by Ruth McCurry. As no other nominations had been received, Hayley was duly elected Lay Chair. Hayley thanked David and spoke briefly about her life both within and outside the church.

Hayley took the chair and set about the business of electing members of the Standing Committee. Hayley, Ruth and Elizabeth had been elected to the Standing Committee at the prior meeting. However, now that the clergy representatives on the committee numbered five (Andy Rider, Brian Ralph, Jane Hodges and Alexandra Lillie and Kevin Scully), two more lay representatives were required. Dawn advised that only one nomination had been received, namely David Longbottom, nominated by Elizabeth Marshall and seconded by Ruth McCurry. David was duly elected to the Standing Committee. Election of final lay member to be deferred.

The following points were discussed:

- The issue surrounding an open contact list of Deanery Synod representatives. As previously discussed, there are Data Protection issues surrounding this. Dawn to provide a list of Synod members and details of how to contact them through their respective churches.
- Hayley is keen to modernise communications and intends to have regular contact by email. Those not on email will receive postal communications.
- A regular meeting of lay members to also be considered (similar to the Clergy's Chapter).
- Hayley to put together a proposal.

The House of Clergy re-joined the meeting.

### 3. Money and Credit

Andy spoke about the Archbishop of Canterbury's campaign against payday lending and the need for better community finance and reminded us of the Credit Champion talk given at the July 2014 Synod by David Barclay. The work was embryonic at that stage and Andy introduced Andrew Walton, Deanery representative from St Peters Bethnal Green and also an employee of the Centre for Theology and Communication (CTC), to take us through the latest developments.

Andrew spoke about a Church of England task force that had been set up to look at responsible credit and saving and out of that, among other things, had emerged the Church Credit Champions Network (CCCN). The CCCN is an initiative to build a network of churches to consider the financial challenges in parishes and find solutions. After a short video about how this initiative was working in Hackney, Andrew spoke about how this could be brought to Tower Hamlets and suggested the following to take things forward:

- Undertake the Seeing Change Course - a five week bible study course based on the book of Nehemiah
- Hold a Money Talk in church – a facilitated conversation with the congregation to identify the challenges in the parish and find solutions.

Each church can then think about what might work for them. This might be to develop a full blown credit union, or develop financial advisory skills to signpost people or, perhaps, something else. Andrew advised that a course has been developed by the Church of England and the Money Advice Trust to train up people to be the first point of contact for people in financial difficulty, and this may be an option for some churches. Andrew noted that there are lots of free resources on the CTC website <http://www.theology-centre.org.uk/projects/economic-justice/church-credit-champions-network/>.

Attendees split in to clusters to discuss what might be appropriate for each of them. The following responses were received:

- There are credit unions in Chrisp Street and Bethnal Green Road to which new members might be recruited.
- There is an initiative currently on the Aberfeldy Estate to develop a credit union.
- Opportunities exist at St Pauls Shadwell for those in need of assistance and these could be more widely publicised.
- The Isle of Dogs foodbank currently provides debt counselling, albeit not in church.
- Bow Group to take the discussion back to PCCs and then present at cluster.

It was suggested that a small group be formed at Deanery level to take this forward and Andy agreed to bring this idea to the Standing Committee. **ACTION S/C**

### 4. School Governors

Andy noted that foundation governors are currently being sought by both secondary and primary schools in the Deanery and asked if members could think about anyone appropriate they might encourage to come forward.

The following school governorships were ratified by Synod:

Governor	School	Proposed by
Alan West	Christ Church CoE Primary School	Andy Rider

## 5. Reform and Renewal

Andy spoke about the work undertaken by the General Synod to look at how the Church of England can respond to the challenges of the modern age and grow. A number of task forces addressed five streams of work:

- Release money
- Education – lay/clergy
- Develop senior leadership
- Simplify regulations and legislation
- Re-envision work of the National Church Institute (NCI)

The changes recommended from these investigations are:

- Funding for dioceses for mission and growth
- 50% increase in candidates for ordination
- Increase lay leadership
- Identify and nurture senior leadership
- Simplify

There are dedicated pages to Reform and Renewal with lots of information on the Church of England website here <https://www.churchofengland.org/reform-renewal.aspx>. There is an ongoing public debate at present on social media and Andy encouraged members to get involved.

## 6. Any Other Business

Andy advised that another 2 representatives are being sought for SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education). Rachael Husthwaite of Christ Church Spitalfields is already in place.

Andy spoke about the forthcoming elections for General and Diocesan Synods and a hardcopy sheet setting out who can stand, nominate and vote was distributed for information.

### Diocesan Synod

Tower Hamlets Deanery has four clergy and three lay representatives. Elizabeth Marshal is standing. All lay synod members should have received papers and, if not, should contact Monica Bolly. Andy encouraged everyone to vote.

### General Synod

London has 12 clergy and 11 lay representatives and TH Deanery were fortunate to have a member in Philip Rice. Philip spoke briefly about his involvement in the Reform and Renewal research programme (see item 5. Above), which looked at the characteristics of growth in churches and recommended reading the report. Ric also encouraged members to talk to Philip for insights into the programme.

Andy closed the meeting with prayer.

**The next Synod – Wednesday 7 October 2015 at Christ Church, Spitalfields**