

Notes of the Tower Hamlets Deanery Synod – 7 October 2015

7.30pm at St George-in-the-East

Attended by 10 clergy and 14 laity

The meeting was chaired by Andy Rider

1. Welcome

Andy opened the meeting and congratulated the new London Diocesan Synod lay representatives – Lee Humby, Elizabeth Marshall and Philip Rice. Elizabeth stood and said a few words of thanks for the support received from Deanery Synod members. Clergy representatives are Rev. Richard Bray, Rev. Judith Blackburn and Rev. April Keech, however a fourth is needed. Nomination papers will be going out to clergy this week. Andy advised that a representative on the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) is also required again; nomination papers would go out shortly to all Deanery Synod members.

Andy advised that RFSK and the Meanwhile Project have come together to open up new community spaces at the Foundation. On 6 November a Yurt café will open and there is also a reflective meeting space as well as other opportunities to engage with the community. In response to a query, Andy confirmed that the RFSK has full disabled access. More information can be found [here](#).

Andy reminded the synod of its earlier plan to open Deanery Synod meetings more widely to becoming a Learning Community for the whole Anglican Church in Tower Hamlets. Flyers will be available for distribution ahead of future meetings. Andy will send Synod meeting dates to PCCs so that they can be included in church calendars.

Andy handed over to Angus Ritchie, Priest in Charge at St George-In-The-East. Angus welcomed everyone and spoke a little about the work at St George-in-the-East (SGITE). The Centre for Contextual Theology, of which Angus is a director, is based there. The Rectory is now host to a new community which is supporting and developing mission in the area. SGITE is now also host to the project celebrating women in the east end who were dislodged from the planned venue by the opening of the Jack the Ripper Museum. In response to a query, Angus acknowledged that SGITE was not accessible but that cost implications are hindering this at the moment.

2. School Governors

The following school governorships were ratified by Synod:

Governor	School	Proposed by
Ed Dix	St Luke's Isle of Dogs	Tom Pyke
Tracy McCormack	Christ Church	Andy Rider
James Olanipekun	Raines	Carole Day (Chair of Governors)
John Thurley	Sir John Cass & Redcoats	Trevor Critchlow
Tara Wilson	Stepney Greencoats	Marcus Nodder

3. Church Growth

Andy welcomed Bishop Ric Thorpe and Richard Gough and congratulated both on their new roles. [Ric](#) was appointed Bishop of Islington in July and [Richard](#) became Director General of the Diocese in May.

Richard spoke about the role of the Diocese in supporting the 460 parishes in terms of mission and the growth of the Church in London. As well as general support for day to day management, the Diocese also provides more specialised services, including safeguarding, finance, legal, HR, training and educational resources, etc. Richard spoke about the partnership with the Church Urban Fund which saw the launch of the [Capital Mass](#) project last year, an initiative of which is the Parish Giving Scheme whereby Gift Aid reclaims are administered centrally. The ongoing campaign, [Capital Vision 2020](#), was referenced - Collaboration, Confidence, Compassion. Its aim is to encourage lots more engagement across parishes including initiatives to develop ambassadors, double the number of young people and create new worshipping communities.

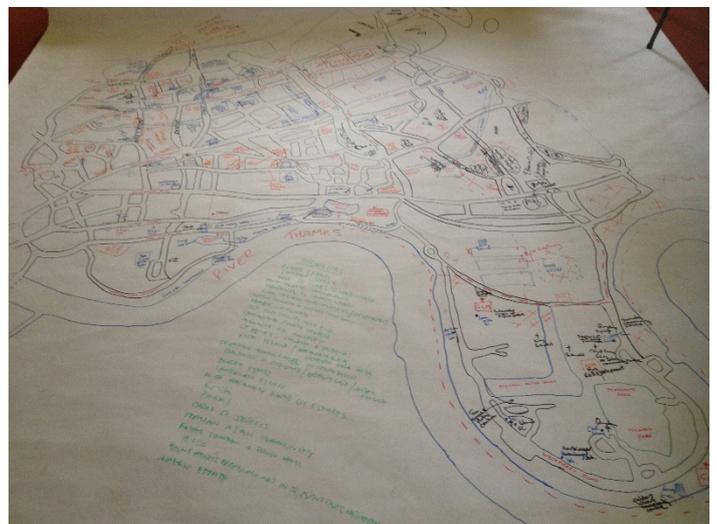
Richard distributed a map of the Diocese which showed ten areas of major new development, many on brownfield sites, and the number of new residents planned for each development totalling some 150,000 people. The lack of a Christian presence in earlier developments, eg Canary Wharf, was because the Church was not involved in the planning process at the beginning. With these new developments a much more pro-active approach is being taken and the Church is working with local authorities and developers to ensure a Christian presence. Section 106 planning obligations are being used to find spaces in new developments for churches, community halls and nurseries.

Hayley raised concerns that this initiative had not been subject to consultation within the Church and regular givers may not be in agreement, preferring instead to develop existing church buildings. Richard acknowledged this but responded that most of these developments are taking place on brownfield sites where there are no existing churches. Funding will not come out of Common Fund contributions, but rather from capital profits and wealthy philanthropists. Members discussed the amount of money needed for this work and there were comments about Vineyard Churches (a church planting movement) and the potential legacy for future generations if this work could be achieved.

Richard thanked Synod and handed over to Bishop Ric.

4. Deanery Map

Ric spoke further about the legacy of the church and reminded members of the Deanery map that was developed by Synod back in February that celebrates activity in Tower Hamlets. Ric referenced talkingjesus.org, an organisation leading research into how we think about Jesus and Christianity, and some of the interesting statistics arising from them. Only 9% of the population surveyed recognise themselves as a Christian, 33% of people claim not to know an ecumenical Christian and 1 in 5 would like a conversation about Jesus.



Ric gathered everyone around the map which was on display and spoke about how geography is important. There are some places with no church, and there are others, like St Peter's Barge, that operate without parish boundaries. He invited members to consider opportunities in the Deanery to register a presence. The following is a list of the ideas that emerged.

- Glamis Estate
- London Chest Hospital
- Move St Luke's to Wood Wharf
- Holy Mobile Narrowboat
- Companies in Canary Wharf
- Know Neighbouring Churches / Partnerships
- Creative Community in Wilton's Music Hall
- Prayer Community
- Old Holy Trinity, Mile End
- Chicksand Farm Project
- Columbia Road Market
- St Benet's Church and Students
- Fish Island / Hackney Wick / Olympic Park Area
- Creative Communities in Shoreditch
- Buildings in Aldgate / Bishopsgate / Norton Folgate
- Dorset Estate
- Lansbury Estate
- Hackney Road LCC Estates
- RFSK
- Parks
- Cable Street Studios
- Italian Asian Community
- Royal London Town Hall
- TELCO
- Young Adults of Broadway Market in St Augustine's Haggerston
- Minerva Estate

Ric asked that members nominate a 'top ten' from the list and use these as an action plan. Resources could be made available from the Diocese to develop these ideas and Ric was keen for people to contact him if they had any thoughts or needed any help.

5. In Conclusion

Tim Clapton led Compline.

The next Synod will take place on:

Thursday 11 February 2016 at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine

The Housing Crisis - theological, political, missional and actual responses - with Alastair Murray from Housing Justice and Cllr Rachel Blake, LBTH Housing Lead Cabinet Councillor