

# Notes of the Tower Hamlets Deanery Synod

## 26 June 2013



7.30pm at St Benet's Chaplaincy, Queen Mary, University of London

Attended by 10 clergy and 12 laity

Evening Prayer led by Rev Jenny Peterson. Jenny spoke about her work at the University serving the community of some 16,000 students and 3,000 members of staff.

### 1. Since we last met

Andy welcomed new members, in particular Tracy Miller (new LDBS representative from St Barnabas) and Andy Walton (St Peter's Bethnal Green). Tracy reported that she had attended one LDBS meeting already and was happy to receive comments/thoughts from Synod members so that she could take them forward to future LDBS meetings. Andy shared that he is currently working at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine's with the Contextual Theology centre involved in media and community organising.

Andy reminded members that most Deanery business is conducted on the website ([www.thcofe.org](http://www.thcofe.org)). News and resources can be found there, including meeting dates and minutes.

Andy also reported that the Deanery Clergy Residential had just taken place and that there had been discussion around 'where God is leading us as a deanery' He was sure this would permeate into our Synod conversations in due course.

#### Clergy Support

At the last Synod meeting we spoke about what support we wanted to see in place for clergy. Andy advised that this was discussed at the monthly Stepney staff meeting and fed back the following:

- The importance of clergy spending time together (eg theology days, Lenten walk, informal meetings) was recognised and would be encouraged.
- The Circle Works, an organisation offering encouragement, counselling and reflecting through educative processing, is a useful resource, which is being further explored.
- First Assist, an organisation providing telephone counselling services 24/7, is also being costed.

Bishop Adrian was keen to make sure that clergy know they are supported.

#### Common Fund

Andy thanked parishes for their pledges towards the Common Fund.

#### Deanery Finances

The Deanery bank account had now moved over to Reliance Bank (from Barclays). Parish donations will be collected soon. These will be used to help pay for speakers and refreshments at meetings.

Andy advised that the Deanery Standing Committee oversee Deanery finances and is made up of himself, together with three Sub-Deans representing the clusters (Rev Jane Hodges, Rev Rod Green and Rev Brian Ralph) and four lay members (David Longbottom, [Lay Chair] Hayley Clark, Elizabeth Marshall and Ruth McCurry).

## St Martin's Fund

Andy advised that the Deanery had received a grant from the St Martin's Fund. Parishes are welcome to apply for small grants in cases of hardship. Rev Jane Hodges has attended a training day at St Martin's on how to administer the grants. Andy invited all those present to bear this in mind as it is often not only clergy who encounter cases of hardship. Criteria and guidelines for applications will appear on the Deanery website soon.

## **2a. Capital Vision 2020**

Capital Vision 2020 is the Diocese of London's ongoing campaign, mission and strategic framework and all those present confirmed they were aware of it.

Andy asked those present to divide into groups to consider what this means to us as not only as a Deanery, but also in our clusters and parishes, and how we can respond to it. The following points emerged:

- Working together should be a priority – just as people do not stick to parish boundaries, nor should we.
- We should be working together to share resources and best practice.
- Compassion and caring will drive activity.
- Perhaps we should become more political and lobby ministers (as a group of churches or as part of bigger groups) to fight poverty and inequality.
- We need to understand the challenges of maintenance (which takes a lot of time) versus mission (which will help us realise Capital Vision 2020).
- We should embrace young people. Youth workers do good work outside normal Sunday services, likewise street pastors. Providing opportunities for social interaction, particularly across different parishes, would likely be well received by young people.
- We must not forget our responsibilities to our older congregations. A 'Kingdom' perspective on reality should be adopted.
- Older people's activities are not necessarily confined to a particular parish. Drop in centres, including transport, could meet a huge need. NB: Statistics show the church is growing in the over 80's.
- Mature ambassadors are very important and will have a positive impact on confidence building, mentoring and discipleship.
- We should encourage confidence building in lay ministries. Statistically the number of lay readers is close to the number of ordinands.
- Some of us are shaping Mission Action Plans around Capital Vision. It would be good to share them and perhaps a Deanery Mission Action Plan may emerge.
- We should encourage each other by sharing good news stories.

## **2b. What can we do better together, than apart?**

In response to Capital Vision 2020 and previous discussion around what the Deanery can do better by working together, the following ideas were forthcoming:

- Map and communicate events across the Deanery

- Explore digital platforms in order to share information better. The current website could be expanded. Facebook and Dropbox were also suggested and perhaps this might be something the Stepney interns could look at.
- Explore the idea of a central hub (a physical space) to allow people to interact. This would also be a useful resource for projects such as the food banks.
- Set up an annual 'Charity Day', not necessarily just for Anglicans.

### 3. Looking ahead

- a) Andy reported that 8 parishes have applied to the Stepney internship scheme and that it is likely that 3 or 4 interns will be appointed.
- b) Clergy vacancies have been announced at St Paul's Old Ford, and will be shortly at St Paul's Bow Common and St Anne's Limehouse due to the forthcoming retirement of present incumbents.
- c) Lots of new residential accommodation is being built at Wood Wharf at the eastern end of Canary Wharf and it is important to ensure that the church is present in these new communities. Rev Fiona Steward-Darling and the Docklands Cluster are already meeting with the diocesan strategy team in this regard. Andy offered the support of the Deanery.
- d) There is also a lot of development around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and this is already being addressed along-with the Chelmsford Diocese to ensure the new communities are served.
- e) Subsequent to the July General Synod and the failure to approve legislation to enable the ordination of women bishops, it was noted that the Deanery has not come together to discuss the outcome. Members were referred to the report from the House of Bishops - [GS 1886](#) - which also lays out the legislative timeline. It was agreed that the Deanery Synod should find a date to meet and reflect on this issue in October. **Andy to action.**
- f) Finally, with reference to the above point, members were asked to help parishes understand the complicated voting system in the three Houses, as many had found this confusing.

### The next Synod – Thursday 12 September, 8pm at St Peter's Bethnal Green (BBQ and special guest)

Please note: An additional meeting to be organised this autumn to discuss ordination of women bishops (see item 3e).