

Church Administrator: Sally Banks

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Meeting Notes from Deanery Synod, 15th June 2017

Introduction

The meeting was hosted at Church of the Good Shepherd (COGS) in Farnborough. Russell Smart led us in prayer and worship, based around Psalm 103. Russell is the Associate Vicar at COGS, and is now holding the fort until a new vicar is appointed, hopefully early in 2018. Rachel has left to lead a monastic community in Leicester. Lots to celebrate at COGS: They have a new Community Worker, Abbey, which means they are able to run a foodbank, a kids clothing exchange, as well as messy church twice a month. Challenges: a very mixed community – 25% of the parish are from Nepal, many people are in social housing, receiving benefits. Over 50% of the congregation come in from outside the parish, from more affluent areas.

The meeting was chaired by James Lee, the lay Chair, and it was good to see George Newton (Rural Dean) back again as his sabbatical comes to an end.

Wellesley - Jackie Maw

Jackie gave an update on how things are going in Wellesley – the big news is that she's finished her cancer treatment and is well! Thanks for all your prayers!

The new church has a name: **The Wellspring Aldershot** – the picture being of spring water bringing new life. There is a small leadership team and regular Sunday worship with two patterns – 2 Sundays are communion and worship, 2 Sundays are hospitality and service out in the community. A regular coffee morning and toddler group has started. Jackie delivers welcome packs to new residents, and this has proved a really valuable way to meet people and minister to them. Lots of good conversations, and definitely the beginnings of a small discipleship group starting. 160 houses now occupied, 3,500 houses in total planned.

Please continue to pray for this work:

- For relationships to build
- For people to come and join in from other churches – fortnightly prayer meeting
- For people in the community to join in also
- Pray for dreams and visions, for spiritual dissatisfaction, questioning

Jackie is at mawdiva@gmail.com or 01252 329466

Vacancies and Appointments

There are many vacancies in the diocese at the moment. Please be praying for those churches, and for the right person to be appointed. Pray especially for

- COGS Farnborough
- St Michaels Aldershot – 16 months so far
- Christ Church Crookham – from August, as...

Roland Oliffe is appointed as Bishop's Chaplain to Bishop Andrew. His role will be to look after him spiritually, deal with pastoral issues, liturgical matters and administration.

Parish Share

David Willey gave an update on this issue, which poses a very real threat to smaller churches in the diocese. The Parish Share is designed to cover the costs of running the Diocese and the stipends of clergy. A review has taken place and a new formula was proposed, whereby all parishes need to pay for the clergy stipend and a proportion of the costs of running the diocese, depending on the wealth of the area and the size of the congregation.

The formula represents a change which will impact smaller churches the most. A mission fund will be set up (£500k) to support parishes who are not viable but have a valuable missional role, but this implication is that some parishes will not be supported. In the past, larger/wealthier churches have paid a higher proportion of the parish share, and poorer churches have effectively been subsidised – the new formula is intended to be fairer. Some larger churches have offered to keep their share at a higher level so that the balance can be saved into the fund.

There was a lot of comment from the floor. Claire stated that the impact is likely to be to reduce the number of clergy in poorer areas, which is exactly contrary to the Gospel.

The meeting supported a motion that David Willey should propose a delay to the plans to allow time for discussions with those parishes who would be most affected. (Post meeting note: the plans were approved at the Diocesan synod, so this proposal was not successful.)

What's Going On in the Deanery?

Dads and Kids @ St Peter's Farnborough: A group meets fortnightly on Saturday mornings for breakfast, which allows dads to get together while looking after the kids. Many men have few opportunities to spend time with friends outside of work, and this has proved a very popular group, and is attended by many with no other connection to the church, but have been invited along by friends. Resource: "Who let the dads out?"

Messy Church at COGS: Initially once a month on a Wednesday afternoon, but this tended to be only mums. Now an additional monthly service on a Saturday gets whole families involved. The timetable is reversed, starting with breakfast, then songs and finishing with craft. COGS don't call this fresh expressions – it's church.

Who Cares?: The Aldershot Deanery is mostly in Hampshire, and this is a Hampshire scheme which involves around 100 churches. Aiming to ask 2000 people, in schools and in towns; the questions are 'What hurts the most?' for adults, and "What makes me sad?" for the schools. The listening phase is in June and July, to understand what's happening in our parishes. The responding phase will be in the Autumn. The initiative was run in Norwich and the response was the biggest Alpha supper ever.

Fleet Angels: In Fleet and Aldershot, two independent outreach teams operate on Fri/Sat nights into the early hours, and on market days. They pray with people. Needs a town with a centre to be really effective. Pray for the people out there meeting and praying with people. Happy to welcome people from other parishes to get involved in this work. Termly meetings are held with Project Leaders to review events in the area, eg. The Reading Festival.

Dates of meetings in 2017

12 Oct – All Saint's Hawley

Sally Banks
23rd July 2017