

Witney Deanery Synod Notes – 16th October 2018

Worship led by Reverend Ross Meikle.

Introducing Prayer Spaces and Deanery equipment by Kirsty Morgan. This equipment has been purchased by Deanery mission funds and is for use in the entire Deanery schools. It has been designed with advice from Be-Space who advised how to run the sessions. If interested in running prayer spaces within your schools then contact Kirsty – kirsty@coggesparish.com. Reverend Harry MacInnes pointed out that used in Alvescot in the church as well as the school and found it was a great resource to engage people in church.

Bible Study – Ephesians 4.11-16

Small groups of maximum 5 contemplated the passage, each member said short phrase / single word that jumped out for them. These were then discussed in more detail.

Inspiration

Fiona Craig presentation - Supporting Churches, Serving Schools.

283 church schools in the diocese but many more community schools.

Talk will cover:

Reality that faces school today

Relationship between church and the schools

Tangible reward for this

60,000 in church schools in diocese – opportunity to touch life of 60,000 children in church schools.

The number of children in all schools is over 200,000. Not Faith schools, they are church schools so they are for everyone. Admission policies should not be top heavy for church goers otherwise miss mission opportunities.

Current changes for school

Budget – no school can hold more than 5 months budget and many are in deficit. Budgets changes effect curriculum as well as staff morale. Government made 280million pounds available, but such procedures to apply for it that only 4 million spent. Schools are publicly funded.

Academy agenda - 70 of 283 church schools are academies. The services have to buy services now so buying through academy trust is advantageous. Need to treat maintained and academy schools the same.

Ofsted that says any failing school needs to become an academy.

SIAMS seeing what difference being church school makes.

All the demands, pressure of Ofsted etc make schools struggle. Church needs to meet some of the needs. 38 headteachers been in resilience training for the role.

Relationship between school and church is crucial. School councillor commented - children need to know they are loved and what happens to them after they die. Schools can serve the church as well as church serve the school – a partnership.

Positive - talk up the schools. Talking down damages.

Need strategy so that always a priority for the church whoever is around.

Christian values are inherent in British values. Religious education is academic subject that is all.

Faith is a choice. Children may turn to faith if have foundation to understand it.

Gentle sustained conversation with headteachers, governors, clergy, children, young people, parishioners.

Prove the power of love. Church and Youth friendly church awards.

Open the book. Prayer. Messy church. JAM (Jesus And Me). Chaplaincy. Pastoral care.

Church school movement started in 1811. Now Academy schools in some diocese have lost church school status.

No political strategy for education at 5e moment. Not sure what is going to happen next. Everything is focussed on Brexit. Nothing is visionary at the moment.

Way forward... Dedication services at start of academic year. Schools help with clergy appointments and clergy help with headteacher appointments.

List of courses available. Noted were bereavement courses. Number of staff deaths was highest last year- 2 suicides and 3 other.

Feedback to allow the department to share good practice as well as acknowledge all hard work.

Floor opened up comments and discussions.

Local authorities can't open schools - all new schools must be multi academy trust. Have to negotiate church to be a part.

Charlie - chaplaincy for schools - to get in heart of schools. Only post like it in country. Only 12 secondary schools are church schools. How to reach teenagers - focus of chaplaincy.

Chris Price-Smith - link adviser. Establishing parish engagement and link churches to school.

Toby – thanked Fiona for being a source of inspiration not just tonight, but for time in the diocese.

Finance

Update from David Eaton. Diocesan briefing and notes.

Paris share – paid 71.2% - slightly behind last year. Thank you to all parishes for the hard work collecting the funds and let's hit 100% again.

For 2019 the Deanery's Parish Share increase has been capped at 4%. Synod has previously agreed that the Deanery Standing Committee has the discretion to vary the increases to individual parishes depending on circumstances up to a maximum of 8% and for 2019 for parishes, the minimum increase will be 2% and the maximum 6%. Figures to be sent out with the notes.

Champing.

Church Champing is glamping in a church and may be good way for churches to raise money.

Diocese thinks it is a good idea, but needs to be investigated more. 'Churches Conservation Trust use Church Champing as one of the ways of raising monies to maintain churches under their care.

Other

Area Dean's notices

Welcome back to Ron. Introduction by Rev'd Tess Kuin-Lawton as assistant area dean.

Common vision of diocese confusing being nurtured and developed.

Mission funds if not applied before please consider it.

Lay chair notices

Standing down as the Lay chair – so please contact team if any one interested to take in this role.

Administrative work of deanery has developed over his term, but to remember we are hands and feet of Jesus – keep a focus on this. The vacancies of churches and new housing is a great opportunity to change boundaries and respond to the growing Deanery. Kevin will continue in this role until the end of the year unless someone comes forward sooner,

Toby thanked Kevin for his work at Lay Chair

Attendees and apologies – see sign in sheet.

