

NORHAM DEANERY SYNOD

MINUTES OF THE 6 JUNE 2012 MEETING

The meeting was held in Etal Village Hall. There were 19 present and 5 apologies for absence. David Howell was welcomed as the new Norham representative. Victor Dickinson opened the meeting with prayer and an update on life in Ford and Etal parish ('one parish, two churches') – notably the current Alpha course, next Easter's Flower Festival, the refurbishment of Etal church windows, and plans for involvement in Flodden 500 next year.

1. MINUTES OF THE 27 MARCH 2012 MEETING

Accepted and signed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- **Flodden 500.** Linda Gardham reported that the bid for the major part of the funding is now being made.
- **Mission Action Plans.** Since the last meeting £400 has been granted to Lowick (architect fees for Heritage Centre at back of church).

3. DEANERY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Heather Pentland provided more background to the concerns that led her to write to the Area Dean after the last Deanery Synod meeting about the way that the present meeting venue had been arranged. (Her letter, and the Area Dean's reply, had been circulated with the agenda.) These concerns centred around the questions 'What is the Deanery Synod for?' and 'What exactly is the remit of the Deanery Development Group?'

Rob Kelsey, as Area Dean and Chairman of the 27 March meeting, reiterated his written apologies about the way discussion was cut short at the end of that meeting, and for the misunderstandings that led to the upset over the present meeting venue.

A lively discussion ensued, during which it was pointed out that the Deanery Synod is: part of the CofE legislative process; part of the CofE communication system; and has a role to play in developing mission. And that, in order to carry out its functions satisfactorily, it needs a smaller group, such as the DDG, to do some hard thinking and to make proposals for the Synod's decision. Concern was expressed about the way the DDG had been set up in the first place and how its membership had emerged. Concern was also expressed that having issues 'pre-packaged' by the DDG might mean that Synod members played too passive a role. The point was made that the Deanery Synod had agreed the process for setting up the DDG and that the process of DDG membership was a transparent one. Synod members were invited to put names forward, and, given that there was no great rush to join, nobody was 'sifted out'. All the members of the DDG are appointed on an annual basis by the Deanery Synod.

The idea of reconstituting a Deanery Synod Standing Committee (separate from the DDG rather than the DDG acting in this capacity) was discussed. This committee would be responsible for Synod meeting agendas, venues, dates, etc; and for taking urgent decisions that do not require a formal Synod meeting. The DDG would then be a 'think tank' with no decision making powers.

It was proposed and agreed unanimously that the DDG would continue in its present form until the end of the term of office of the current DDG members in late November / early December. That natural break in the life-cycle of the DDG would be used as an opportunity to start with 'a clean slate.' The current DDG will re-visit the diocesan

guidelines on developing deaneries, and re-present them for review by the Synod at its 24 Sep meeting, with a view to Synod re-constituting the DDG at its 27 Nov meeting.

4. BRIDGE MAGAZINE

Terry Harris reviewed the current situation with the Bridge. The present arrangements for publication will continue till the end of the year, since subscriptions have been collected; but what after that? In discussion, it was pointed out that people do have a desire to know what is going on in other parishes; and that, if Deaneries are to play a bigger role in the future, some kind of news bulletin is important. On the other hand, the present format seems to major on service times rather than interesting reports on parish activity, which is not very appealing; and the take-up is, if anything, diminishing (and, on Holy Island, non-existent). Could there be more of a 'From our correspondent in x...' feel to the magazine; perhaps quarterly?

Since there will be a problem over cost if the distribution number goes below 300, Synod members were invited to seek comments from their parishes and report back to the 24 Sep meeting, so that decisions can be made about the future of the Bridge.

5. PARISH SHARE

The 'Proposal on Parish Share from the House of Clergy in Norham Deanery' (copy attached) had been circulated and its main features were outlined by Rob Kelsey. This is a revised version of the one discussed at the 27 Mar meeting, which was not taken to a decision because of some major concerns which had largely been resolved by the House of Clergy at their 30 May meeting.

The meeting of parish representatives on 2 Oct, to be chaired by Terry Harris, is the crucial element of the proposal. Mutual trust will be the key to the success of this scheme (in which the Archdeacon's encouragement has been an important factor). If that meeting cannot agree on the 'negotiated settlement' figures for each parish's share, then the Deanery will revert back to the present (very unsatisfactory) system of allocation. It was pointed out that this revised system will only work in the long term if the Diocese provides some kind of assurance that Norham Deanery will not be 'penalised' for increasing its overall level of income.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the proposal.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Diocesan Synod elections.** Nominations of the 3 House of Clergy Deanery representatives have been received from Paul Collins, Matthew Knox and Rob Kelsey; no election required. No nominations were received before the meeting for the 3 House of Laity Deanery representatives. John Ayerst said he was now willing to put his name forward; 2 more nominations are still needed.
- **Deanery Youth Rep.** Matthew Knox reported on the Diocese's 'Staying Alive 2012' event at Seahouses 9-12 Aug for young people from across the diocese. An application form can be downloaded from:
<http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/userfiles/file/Youth%20forms/SA%20Application%20form%202012doc.pdf>

7. DATES/VENUES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Mon 24 September in Branxton Village Hall

Tues 27 November in Green Room Berwick Parish Church