

NORHAM DEANERY SYNOD

MINUTES OF THE 24 MARCH 2014 MEETING

The meeting was held in the Branxton Village Hall. There were 18 members present and 4 apologies for absence. Dennis Handley, the new Vicar of Berwick was formally welcomed.

Margaret Thomson opened in prayer and Eileen Turnbull shared her enthusiasm for the current state of the church in Branxton after an eventful year revolving around the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Flodden, which brought new life, despite an interregnum that began in June. There are now new memorial doors, new carpets and new notice boards; the Flower Festival involved many new folk in the life of the church; and there are some younger folk involved, with energy and ideas. The church tower has been repaired; but the next big job is repairs to the roof.

Other news from around the parishes:

Berwick: A £70K window replacement project is now under way.

Lowick group of parishes: Jeannie Cooper is being licensed this week as a Reader. A concert is planned to mark the centenary of Lowick's organ. Ford Church (together with the Castle) is now part of the Flodden Ecomuseum (a web-based link-up of many different heritage sites and communities relating to the battle).

Holy Island: A long and expensive programme of replacement of cement mortar by lime mortar lies ahead. An application for a grant for an 'evangelist' to work from the church to help explain the church, its history and the Christian faith to the church's many visitors has not been successful but other ways of achieving this are being explored.

1. MINUTES OF THE 28 NOVEMBER 13 MEETING

Accepted and signed as a correct record. The actual payment of Parish Share in 2013 for our Deanery was even higher than anticipated at 98.6%.

2. GENERAL SYNOD REPORT

Canon John Sinclair, one of Newcastle Diocese's 6 representatives on the General Synod (and charged with keeping our Deanery abreast of its discussions and decisions) reported on the Feb Synod meeting, which, most significantly, passed (with an overwhelming majority) a resolution that looks to break the logjam on the thorny issue of women bishops. The '5 guiding principles' have been established and the proposals have been passed to Diocesan Synods (the Newcastle discussion will be on 7 May); if the majority of dioceses approve, the legislation will be considered for final approval at the July General Synod meeting.

John Sinclair reported that there had been a noticeable change of mood within Synod meetings over the past year, with different ways of getting things done. The accent is now on 'mutual flourishing' rather than adversarial church politics. He believes the appointment of the new Archbishop of Canterbury has been significant here. In his address, he stressed that love must be demonstrated and trust must be earned.

Other matters discussed included a report on gender-based violence; safeguarding; analysis of the factors influencing church growth. A major issue coming up is the Pilling report on human sexuality. John Sinclair also mentioned the 'Pilgrim' course which is an excellent resource for e.g. Lent (Matthew Knox has been using it and also commends it).

3. **INSPIRING ANGLICANS**

This is the title of the current Lent series of talks in Newcastle Cathedral (about 5 individuals whose lives have been in some way an inspiration). Peter Middlemiss has ascertained that the speakers (John Sinclair is one of them) would be willing to come to Norham Deanery in Oct/Nov to repeat these talks. There was some discussion about this but it was decided to go ahead with it, with the DDG working out suitable details of timing and places, etc.

4. **CREDIT UNIONS**

The attached discussion paper prepared by Ian Corsie was discussed and its recommendations were agreed with the following alterations:

- The 2 Jul meeting should not be advertised in the press, nor be open to the general public.
- Invitations for other churches to attend must be carefully worded to make it clear that they are being invited to join with a Deanery Synod meeting considering practical issues (not the wider political implications).
- Consider also inviting Father Nick Buxton (Church and Society Advisor) from Newcastle.

5. **YOUTH EVENTS**

- Good Friday sleepover at Spittal church Good Friday 18 Apr.
- Possibly another 'Crossing Place' evening in St Mary's Holy Island on 20 Jun (though the 28 Feb one turned out more 'all ages' than 'youth').
- 22 Aug 14 day event on Holy Island for the youth of the Deanery (and further afield).
- The Diocesan 'Staying Alive' event (in Seahouses 7-10 Aug this year) was noted as an good template for a Deanery Youth Event.
- Youngsters from other parishes are warmly join with the age 8-13 and 13-18 groups in Tweedmouth/Spittal; contact Matthew Knox/Ann Peters for more details.

6. **DEANERY SYNOD ELECTIONS**

All churches have been notified by the Diocese of the need to appoint/elect new Deanery Synod representatives for a 3 year period from 1 Jun 14. Given that it would be inappropriate to deal with the appointment of officers for the new Synod at the 2 Jul open meeting, this will happen at the 27 Nov meeting. Terry Harris gave advance notice that he intends to step down as Lay Chair at that time.

7. **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

- Bible Basics session **Tweedmouth** Church Hall 1 Apr 6-8 pm (bring own tea!)
- Organ concerts in **Berwick** 14 May, 18 Jun, 23 Jul, 20 Aug and 24 Sep on the restored organ
- RSCM series of workshops on church music **Norham** 4-6 Jul
- 'Doing December Differently' in **Berwick** Parish Centre 22 Sep 7 pm (tbc)

8. **AOB**

- Church architect Christopher Downs has had to stand down and some deanery churches now have to find alternative to appoint. Matthew Knox has two good contact details.
- Dennis Handley joins DDG as Berwick clergy member, and Peter Middlemiss was reappointed as Berwick lay member.

9. **NEXT MEETINGS**

Weds 2 Jul 14

Tweedmouth Church Hall

Tues 4 Nov 14

Deanery Finance meeting in **Tweedmouth** Church Hall

Thurs 27 Nov 14

Berwick Parish Church Green Room