

NORHAM DEANERY SYNOD

MINUTES OF THE 27 NOVEMBER 2014 MEETING

The meeting was held in Berwick Parish Church Green Room. There were 20 members present and 5 apologies for absence. Chris Hart was welcomed as a new representative for Tweedmouth.

Dennis Handley opened in prayer and welcomed everybody; he reported on developments in Berwick since his arrival earlier in the year, commending the good work done during the inter-regnum and summarising the findings of the Parish Review, which concentrates on the work needed in 6 areas: Prayer and Reflection; Welcome and Pastoral Care; Communication; Schools and Young People; Hospitality and Outreach; Education and Building up the Church. Now is the time to follow all this up with action!

Other news from around the parishes:

Tweedmouth: An after-schools club in Prior Park has started very successfully. Church Hall refurbishment is under way, with a 'grand opening' planned for February. Banner-making has been in progress. 'Operation Christmas Card' aims to deliver a card to every house in Tweedmouth, Spittal and Scremerston parishes.

Cornhill: It has been decided to keep the church open at all times.

Ford: 'Messy Church' has begun in order to reach out more to young people. A footpath through the church grounds has increased the number of visitors.

Branxton: A tenant has been found for the vicarage, which was otherwise standing empty.

1. MINUTES OF THE 24 MARCH 14 MEETING AND REPORT OF 2 JULY OPEN SYNOD MEETING

The minutes of the 24 Mar meeting were accepted and signed as a correct record. There were no formal minutes of the 2 Jul Open Synod meeting on 'Helping our Neighbours' but the Nov 14 Deanery Newsletter has provided a full report of the meeting and subsequent developments.

2. HELPING OUR NEIGHBOURS

The 2 Jul Open Synod meeting, and the report on it in the Nov 14 Deanery Newsletter were discussed. It was generally agreed that this had been a really worthwhile initiative with positive outcomes, particularly in raising awareness of the needs and of the resources already available locally to meet them. The following points were made:

- Berwick District Savings and Loans (the local paying-in-point for Northumberland **Credit Union** Ltd) now operates weekly from Tweedmouth Parish Church Hall, as well as from the Granary in Berwick.
- There are now additional local **Food Bank** collection points in Lowick and Cornhill; at Spittal there is an information point and leaflets are available.
- Chris Hart commented that there definitely is a **homelessness** problem in Berwick; Steve Turner of Salvation Army is taking a lead on considering provision for this and he should be supported. There is a women's refuge in Berwick.
- Berwick Parish Church's employee is paid the **living wage**.
- Ian Corsie will prepare a poster with current information about the various local resources which can be displayed in all churches.
- Each church to nominate a contact person so that a list of local church contacts can be given to CAB, Food Bank, etc .

3. DEANERY NEWSLETTER

These are now being prepared on an 'as required' basis when there is information to be promulgated; the document is sent to churches by email and it is up to each church to print and distribute copies locally. The

Secretary will send round a form, with the minutes of this meeting, for each church to nominate the person who will take on this responsibility.

4. ELECTION OF DEANERY SYNOD OFFICERS

- Since Terry Harris has stepped down as Lay Chair, John Ayerst has been nominated (by Chris Hart, seconded by Cecily Sobey) for the post. He described himself as 'passionate' about the synod and feels that he has real and relevant experience to bring to the task
- John Ayerst's appointment as Lay Chair was unanimously agreed. Ian Corsie and Terry Harris were re-appointed as Secretary and Treasurer respectively.
- The Chairman warmly thanked Terry Harris for his 20+ years of service as Lay Chair.

5. REPORT ON 17 NOV GENERAL SYNOD MEETING

John Sinclair was unable to attend to report personally on this meeting, which was momentous in finally giving approval to the Women Bishops legislation. Among the other issues covered were: progress on discussions concerning the Anglican-Methodist Covenant; and a debate about the Spare Room Subsidy (the 'Bedroom Tax').

6. 2015 PARISH SHARE

There is a 1.75% increase overall. Terry Harris reported that the Deanery Finance Meeting on 4 Nov had been gratifyingly positive and brief. The 2015 Deanery Parish Share figures were approved.

7. INSPIRING ANGLICANS

It was agreed that this series of talks was most successful. Average attendance was about 20. The idea of holding an annual 'Peter Middlemiss Memorial Lecture' was very favourably received and the DDG will be tasked to make proposals. (Peter Middlemiss was the inspiration for these talks, and his death in October leaves a large gap not only in Berwick Parish Church but in the Deanery as a whole.)

8. DEANERY VISIT TO NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL

The Cathedral has invited the Deanery to consider a visit – possibly in March. There was general approval for such a visit, though March was considered too early to plan and publicise it properly. The Clergy Chapter will discuss ideas which will then be developed by the DDG.

9. FUTURE SHAPE OF THE DEANERY AND DEPLOYMENT OF STIPENDIARY CLERGY

Rob Kelsey presented the proposal, put forward by the Deanery Pastoral Committee on this key subject, given the aim of the Diocese to reduce the number of stipendiary clergy in the whole diocese by 10 during the next 'quinquennium' (i.e. by the end of 2019). The next key step would be another Open Synod meeting – this time for a wide discussion on a paper to be prepared in advance by the Area Dean. This meeting would appoint a Deanery Restructuring Group, similar to the Deanery Finance Group which looked into the Parish Share issue, to report back to the Deanery Synod by the end of 2015. The proposal was agreed with 2 abstentions.

10. AOB

- Information was shared about various Advent/Christmas events.
- A lay member should be appointed to represent Berwick on the DDG/DPC.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Mon 16 March	Open Synod meeting on Deanery Restructuring (suitable venue to be found)
Mon 22 June	At Branxton Village Hall
Mon 2 November	Deanery Finance meeting in Spittal (to be confirmed)
Mon 23 November	At Ancroft Village Hall