

# NORHAM DEANERY SYNOD

## ***MINUTES OF THE 28 NOVEMBER 2013 MEETING***

The meeting was held in the Green Room at Berwick Parish Church. There were 13 members present and 5 apologies for absence. Ann Brown was welcomed as a new representative for Ford & Etal.

Peter Middlemiss opened in prayer and shared the news of the appointment of Dennis Handley as the new Vicar of **Berwick**; hopefully he will be inducted in March. The interregnum has proved a time of refreshing for the whole parish, with the congregation working well together and 'getting the house in order'. Thanks are due to the churchwardens and also to the retired clergy who have helped out. The organ restoration was completed during the year and there have been a number of recitals to put it through its paces.

Other news from around the parishes:

**Norham:** A special Advent event has been prepared this year for 30 Nov; hopefully there will be a good number of youngsters attending again this year.

**Branxton:** The events around the Flodden commemoration have given the parish an injection of new life. A carol service will be held this year with a choir that has come together with those normally outside the church's life who participated in the Flower Festival. A notice board and church leaflet are being prepared.

**Ancroft:** The organisers of this summer's Flower Festival really surprised themselves with what they achieved!

### **1. MINUTES OF THE 2 OCTOBER 13 MEETING**

Accepted and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

### **2. THE NEWCASTLE DIOCESAN LINK WITH THE DIOCESE OF BOTSWANA**

Jeff Lawson, Vicar of Tynemouth and closely involved over recent years with the Diocesan link with Botswana, gave an encouraging overview of the way the link works in practice and invited parishes to find ways of supporting the projects that have developed. These include:

- Children's Day Care Centres (which are much involved with the consequences of HIV/Aids – one third of the population is HIV positive, though this proportion is reducing);
- the Holy Cross Aids Hospice;
- and St Augustine's Theological School (providing distance learning to overcome the shortage of clergy and the shortage of funds to pay for them; women are being trained for the hoped-for authorisation of women priests).

The Diocese provides funding for exchange visits, and sends about £8,000 per year to Botswana. Leaflets and posters are available to promote this important mission link in our parishes.

### **3. YOUTH EVENTS**

Paul Collins reported on the plans emerging from his discussions with Ann Peters and Josephine Harris:

- A first 'alternative worship' event aimed primarily at young people will be held on Holy Island on 29 Nov (this has materialised at short notice but will be a useful experiment).
- Good Friday sleepover at Spittal church next Easter.
- 22 Aug 14 day event on Holy Island for the youth of the Deanery (and further afield).
- Possibly one other event during 2014.

#### 4. 2014 PARISH SHARE

Terry Harris reported on the recent decisions by the Diocesan Synod to increase the budget for 2014 by 2% over 2013, and to cap deanery share increases at 3% (the difference between these two percentages is explained by the fact that some struggling deaneries will increase lower than 2%). This is a departure from the previous formula basis, which would have resulted in our Deanery having a 5.8% increase for next year!

The meeting of Deanery Treasurers (the Deanery Finance meeting) on 22 Oct was an especially pleasing evening: there is now far greater openness between the churches over this key subject, and a greater sense of mutual support and encouragement. With much better 'ownership' of the targets, it looks as though the Deanery will manage to pay up to 97% of its target in 2013 (up from 92% last year). The Deanery's Parish Share division for 2014 as proposed at the Treasurers' meeting (basically a 3% rise across the board on 2013 figures) was unanimously approved.

#### 5. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 'Living Nativity' at **Norham** 3 pm Sat 21 Dec
- 'Instant Nativity' at **Spittal** 3 pm Tues 24 Dec
- There will be a Churchwardens training day on Sat 8 Feb (exact timing and venue not yet known)

#### 6. AOB

- Canon John Sinclair had provided a written summary of the General Synod meeting 18-20 Nov at which **the 'package of measures' to enable women to become bishops** was approved by a very big margin. This summary, with the 'Five Principles' underpinning the consecration of bishops, was read to the meeting; the full summary is attached to these minutes.
- Peter Middlemiss gave advance notice of an event he is organising for next September: the authors of the book ***Doing December Differently: an alternative Christmas handbook*** will give an evening lecture in Berwick. This event is an initiative of the Deanery Development Group following the decision of the Deanery Synod on 2nd October to have fewer formal Deanery Synod meetings, and to explore other ways of doing things together that promote our sense of belonging.

#### 7. NEXT MEETINGS

<b>Mon 24 Mar 14</b>	<b>Branxton</b> Village Hall
<b>Weds 2 Jul 14</b>	<b>Tweedmouth</b> Church Hall
<b>Tues 4 Nov 14</b>	(date for Deanery Finance meeting)
<b>Thurs 27 Nov 14</b>	<b>Berwick</b> Parish Church Green Room

It was agreed that the subject of credit unions should be addressed at a forthcoming meeting.