

NORHAM DEANERY SYNOD

MINUTES OF THE 2 OCTOBER 2013 MEETING

The meeting was held in St Cuthbert's Centre on Holy Island. There were 13 members present and 12 apologies for absence. Carole Smart has had to resign as a representative of Ford & Etal due to ill health.

Ruth Booth (Holy Island Churchwarden) reported on the current situation in St Mary's Church. Although Paul Collins is currently recovering from an operation, the three-services-a-day pattern of worship continues with Canon Kate Tristram and help from some visiting clergy. It has been a very busy summer for the church (see item 2 below) and there are very few on the island to cater for the needs of so many visitors; local folk can feel swamped. 80-90% of the congregation on a Sunday are visitors. This year has seen a new stained glass window installed in memory of members of the Crossman family. And pew cushions have been purchased for all the seats in the church greater comfort.

1. MINUTES OF THE 4 JUNE 13 MEETING

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

2. LINDISFARNE GOSPELS EXHIBITION EVENTS ON HOLY ISLAND

Ian Corsie reported on the very busy summer of events on Holy Island linked to the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition in Durham:

- 4 concerts in the church (Alastair Anderson band; Christian Forshaw's Sanctuary Ensemble; Marygate Singers; Royal Northern Sinfonia string quartet) underwritten by an Arts Council grant. Audiences were a bit disappointing given how much effort and cost was expended on publicity, but the concerts were very high quality and useful lessons have been learned about putting on such events in the future.
- Flower Festival during Aidanstide at end August (the church door became the front cover of the Lindisfarne Gospels!), proceeds from which will be shared between the church and the island's new village hall fund.
- Ecumenical Pilgrimage in July. This was blessed by perfect weather and the open-air service in the Priory was greatly appreciated by all the pilgrims (over 2,000). The Newcastle Diocese contributed £5,000 and the URC £1,000 towards the costs.
- Lecture by Michelle Brown (ex curator of the Gospels at British Library).
- Coach trip to the Durham exhibition for island and other folk.

Other recent events in the church have included a short-notice worship concert by the Iona band (which had the building 'rocking'); and the 15 Sep Deanery Confirmation service.

3. FLODDEN 500 EVENTS

Rob Kelsey reported on the 'Churches Together' group from both sides of the border which had come together very successfully to plan events commemorating this very significant anniversary:

- A rolling programme of Flodden-themed Flower Festivals in churches proved very successful (one more to go 26/27 Oct at Coldstream).
- The Choir of Local Voices staged a fine concert in Coldstream in June.
- Catholic Requiem Mass in Norham Church on 10 Sep.

- Solemn Commemoration service in a marquee at Branxton 10 Sep which proved a very profound occasion for the 400 or so who attended. The service brought together civic, military, community and church groups of all denominations from both sides of the border.

4. NEWS FROM AROUND THE PARISHES

- **Lowick** has held two special choral evensongs. There will be an Andante concert in the church 13 Oct.
- **Tweedmouth** now has up to 20 children attending on Sunday mornings which is a great encouragement. Summer holiday clubs were held at **Scremerston** and Tweedmouth. There will be a sleepover in **Spittal** church 1 Nov to which over 9-year olds from other parishes would be warmly welcomed. A bereavement service is planned for All Saints Day 3 Nov. There is still an open invitation to other churches to join in on training for children's work in Tweedmouth Church Hall 7 and 8 Oct. Advice is being sought on a funding campaign for work on all parish buildings.
- **Berwick** has held 4 recitals and a master-class this year to celebrate the restoration of the organ. 2 more retired clergy have offered help.
- **Branxton** church has had two fine new doors installed in time for the Flodden commemoration.

5. YOUTH EVENT/ROLE OF DEANERY

It had been intended to discuss a possible combined Deanery youth event in 2014; but in Paul Collins' absence, the preparatory meeting has yet to take place. Instead, there was a discussion on the points raised in the Deanery Development Group's 28 Aug meeting (for which minutes have been circulated) concerning the role of the Deanery Synod and thoughts on how to make the best use of future meetings and events. There is very little that the Synod has to do (though these few matters are of course important: division of the Deanery Parish Share, appointment of Diocesan Synod representatives, election of General Synod members, etc). And there is an element of top-down communication from the Bishop. But it is local communication that is at the heart of the Synod's purpose and work, setting our own agenda, sharing information, experiences, expertise, etc, and working together on how we communicate beyond our churches. It was agreed that:

- In 2014 there would be 3 Synod meetings (instead of 4 as heretofore).
- The idea should be explored of holding special meetings on particular subjects of interest that would be open to all-comers, not just Synod members.

6. DEANERY FINANCE MEETING

It was confirmed that this will be held at 7.30 pm on Tues 22 Oct in Tweedmouth Church Hall. One or two reps from each parish should attend to:

- Provide as good an estimate as possible on the achievement of payment of this year's Parish Share.
- Assess whether any churches face special circumstances.
- Agree 'stabilised targets' for 2014.

7. NEXT MEETINGS

Thurs 28 Nov 13 **Berwick** Parish Church Green Room (to confirm the division of Deanery Parish Share for 2014)

The Standing Committee is to fix 3 meeting dates and venues for 2014 (to include Spittal and Cornhill).