

# **NORHAM DEANERY SYNOD**

## ***MINUTES OF THE 9 MARCH 2016 MEETING***

The meeting was held in St Cuthbert's Centre on Holy Island. There were 15 members present and 8 apologies for absence. The meeting remembered Margaret Thomson with prayer following her recent death.

Paul Collins opened in prayer and then summarised recent developments in Holy Island church. On Palm Sunday Kate Tristram's new dramatic presentation of the life of St Cuthbert ('The Witnesses') will be given in the church; Bishop David Stancliffe will lead the services over Easter weekend. A team from Lincoln School of Ministry will assist in the church during Holy Week; a part-time Education Officer has been appointed for 3 years; and summer interns will help welcome visitors to the church in the summer vacation: these are all part of the church's developing educational ministry. The Holy Island Festival will be held again this year 24-26 June, with the church much involved. There is a strong developing lay ministry: helping take the daily offices and as ministers of the cup.

Ian Hankinson was welcomed to his first meeting as an ex-officio member (as one of Norham Deanery's representatives on the new Diocesan Synod).

### **1. MINUTES OF THE 23 NOVEMBER 2016 MEETING**

The minutes of the 23 Nov meeting were accepted and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

### **2. NEWS FROM DEANERY CHURCHES**

- **Tweedmouth:** Redundancies from the Jus-Rol factory closure will commence in April.
- **Berwick:** A welcome ministry for visitors in the church ran from Aug to Oct last year and it is hoped that this will run again this year.

### **3. GENERAL SYNOD**

Catherine Pickford (Vicar of Stannington, and now 'rapporteur' to Norham Deanery for the General Synod) reported on the Gen Synod meeting in February. Like one third of the newly-elected synod members, she is a 'newbie' and found the debates and worship stimulating. There was feedback from the Archbishops' meeting in January with all Primates to discuss widely differing approaches to the thorny issue of homosexuality within the Anglican Communion; and on the Columba Declaration with the Church of Scotland (which has caused some upset with the Scottish Episcopal Church). Other major subjects were the ongoing Renewal and Reform programme (note subtle change from previous 'Reform and Renewal'!); and the serious impact of benefit sanctions across the country (all churches are to be encouraged offer practical support to those experiencing difficulties).

### **4. DIOCESAN SYNOD**

Ian Hankinson gave a summary of the Newcastle Diocesan Synod in November, which dealt particularly with Renewal and Reform and budget issues. The 'Spirit in Stone' project (run by Inspired North East, covering the dioceses of Newcastle and Durham) has produced a Visitor Welcome Toolkit 'Church Buildings for Everyone' which will be made available shortly to all churches. Thanks were given to Bishop Frank for his work running the Diocese pending the appointment and consecration of Bishop Christine; it is possible that a See of Berwick will be established so that Bishop Frank's successor will not be 'Assistant Bishop' but a Suffragan 'Bishop of Berwick' (the advantage of this is that a Suffragan can be appointed from a wider pool of candidates; it does not mean that the Bishop will be resident in Berwick!).

## 5. MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES

It had been hoped that a speaker would be found to address this meeting on this important subject, but that had not proved possible. Instead, it was agreed that this should be arranged for a future meeting, and meanwhile Ian Hankinson outlined some of the areas of concern, given that a quarter of the population is reckoned to experience some sort of mental health issue in their lifetime – and especially since head teachers are reporting that more students than ever before are experiencing mental health issues. The areas of concern include the linkage of mental health problems with: debt; prison; drugs/alcohol; poverty; etc. The stigma and shame of mental health problems need to be overcome; and we need to consider what our churches have to offer given that faith is a factor in reducing the impact of these difficulties.

## 6. RE-IMAGINING THE DEANERY

The Deanery Development Group met in February to consider the next steps forward with this process (and it will meet again in March). It was agreed that the focus should be less on a possible reduction in the number of Stipendiary Clergy in the Deanery and more on identifying areas where we can more effectively do things together. Anything we do must put energy into the individual parishes, rather than suck energy out of them.

As one of the areas of focus will be children/young people, Judith Sadler (Diocesan Advisor for Youth and Children) and James Harvey (Vicar of Felton with responsibility for encouraging young people's work in the north of the Diocese) are being sounded out for help and input. Paul Collins reported that the initiative to run a Scripture Union Lifepath event on Holy Island has not proved feasible; however, it remains a possibility that a Youth Pilgrimage to Holy Island in summer 2017 could be arranged.

A Deanery Newsletter will be published in April to tell folk more widely about these developments and to publicise the Deanery Open Synod on 14 June in the Parish Room of Berwick Parish Church.

## 7. PETER MIDDLEMISS MEMORIAL LECTURE

The initial lecture will be given by Lynda Woodhead in Newcastle Cathedral at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 19th October. Subsequent lectures will be held annually in Berwick. A decision will be taken nearer the time on whether to organise a coach or to encourage folk to travel together by train.

## 8. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Bishop Christine will visit the Deanery 17/18 May and will visit all parishes; Rob Kelsey will produce a detailed programme. There will be an opportunity for as many as possible to meet her in the Guildhall at the Open Synod meeting the evening of Tues 17 May.
- There will be a day of Safeguarding training in Spittal church on Weds 22 June: 10-12.30 for clergy; and 2-5 for laity.
- The Deanery Confirmation Service this year will be held at 7 pm on Mon 10 Oct in Spittal church.

## 9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (all 7 pm for 7.30)

<b>Tues 17 May</b>	Open Synod meeting in the Guildhall to meet Bishop Christine
<b>Tues 14 June</b>	Open Synod meeting in Berwick Parish Church as part of the 'Re-imagining Norham Deanery' process
<b>Mon 31 October</b>	Deanery Finance meeting in Spittal church
<b>Thurs 24 November</b>	Cornhill Village Hall