



Minutes of the joint meeting of

## **Nottingham North and Nottingham South Deaneries**

on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at 19.30

at St Michael and All Angels, Bramcote, Nottingham.

**Present:** 75 Deanery Synod members & clergy

**Apologies:** 40 apologies were received.

### **Gathering**

Members assembled from 19.00 for refreshments.

The meeting was opened and chaired by Revd Canon Jerry Lepine who thanked the Revd Paul Reynolds and his team for their hospitality.

### **Opening act of worship**

This was led by the Revd Paul Reynolds who talked of bringing about the whole and the kingdom of God to all.

### **Notices**

#### **Jerry welcomed:**

✠ Revd Naomi Hill who was licensed to St Christopher's, Sneinton on 2nd September as Associate Priest with special responsibility for the school for disciples, together with Revd Steve Silvester as Priest-in-Charge of St Christopher's & St Nic's, Nottingham.

✠ Revd Andrea Russell, Curate at St Martin's, Sherwood.

Congratulations were offered to:

✠ Revd Martin Strang who had been ordained priest since the last synod and

✠ Revd Dan Corcoran who moved to Bilborough as Associate Priest & Pioneer Missioner with children & young people.

Jerry also formally acknowledged the leaving of Revd Ruth Worsley and thanked her for her huge contribution to the city, deaneries and the Diocese. There was no announcement of a replacement for Ruth at the moment.

The death of Stella Tyers in August, Missioner in Bestwood, was also noted with sadness. Stella was a force of nature whose life and faith was inspiring to those who knew her. Jerry commented that Stella had taught him how to live and die in Christ. We were asked to remember David and the parishes in Bestwood in our prayers.

There was a moment of quiet followed by prayer.

Prayers were also asked for Revd Jenny Corcoran who will be licensed at Lenton Abbey next Monday; and Revd Elizabeth Snowden to Bestwood, Emmanuel with St Mark next Tuesday.

### **Deanery Day of Prayer**

Members were asked to put prayer concerns on the sheet at the back of the meeting. This will then be collated and emailed out to all on Wednesday to be used on Thursday.

### **Big Society Conference;**

Revd Liam O'Boyle introduced himself as Partnerships Officer based in Dunham House. He wanted to plug a conference which would enable churches to engage with the 'Big Society'. Big Society will change how the welfare state works. This conference will equip you to do even more whilst recognising that churches already do a lot. Faith is at the centre of what they want to provide.

The deanery website has details – [www.nottinghadeaneries.org](http://www.nottinghadeaneries.org)

### **Fighting the Fear Course;**

Revd Karen Rooms reported on the day course that the working group on exploring spirituality to those outside the church had recently offered. The details of this course are now available for any church wanting to offer something similar. Details can be obtained from the deanery office.

Karen also mentioned two other resources – a book called the 8 Secrets of Happiness, (Martin Robinson & Paul Griffiths) which is useful for conversation starters into what makes people happy; and Table Talk, a set of cards with questions which open up conversations.

And finally Jerry thanked everyone who had enabled his study leave particularly the Nottingham North clergy.

## ■ Finance

### Old and new deanery accounts

Accounts were distributed to those who hadn't had them. After one question for clarification the accounts were agreed. Robert recorded his thanks to Hugh Allton and Mike Chamberlain who had produced the accounts.

Parish share apportionment – this will be taking place on Thursday evening. The team would welcome your prayers. The figures that we have received from the diocese are a 3.5% increase for Nottingham South and a 2.97% increase for Nottingham North. As we apportion the share, this averages out to a 3.2% increase across the two deaneries together.

Jerry Lepine thanked Robert and his team for the fantastic job they do.

## ■ Presentation by Nigel Spraggins,

Chief Executive, Southwell & Nottingham Diocese;  
'Deanery Synods - Past, Present and Future.'

In the last 2 years we have been looking to mission as a focused unit and synod as the place where we can facilitate God's mission in the parishes. Jerry explained that deanery synods were about attending to our local development but setting it in a national picture.

Jerry introduced Nigel Spraggins to the meeting.

Nigel explained that in days gone by, the Rural Dean had had greater standing than the Archdeacons. Deanery synods are very important to making the COE work but the form we know them in now has only existed since 1969. He wondered if the change had particularly helped us? It has encouraged the local without a clear picture of the national. Anglicanism is about presence in community - how do we serve community? Quasi democratisation.

In 1969 deanery synods had come into being. Pretty soon there was concern about the way they worked and 'The Bridge Report' was written which considered how the church worked with deaneries. Nigel quoted from the Bridge Report. In a review in 2001, it was advised that guidelines were needed if they were to be removed but that didn't happen and so they've stayed.

Coventry Diocese put forward a motion to General Synod this year proposing to make deaneries corporate entities - charities in their own right. This motion was defeated and will not return. The details can be read on the Church of England website.

Deaneries can't employ people and can't hold money, hence deanery administrators are paid by the Diocesan Board of Finance.

However, where best should they go? We don't know. There is some clarity from the Church representation rules which give an idea of what deanery synods can do – Nigel quoted:

"The deanery synod is a statutory body under the Synodical Government Measure 1969 and is the intermediate body between the Diocesan Synod and parochial church councils in the respective deaneries. Its functions are:

- to consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to their deanery, and to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest;
- to bring together the views of parishes of the deanery on common problems, to discuss and formulate common policies on those problems, to foster a sense of community and interdependence among those parishes, and generally to promote in the deanery the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
- to make known and so far as appropriate put into effect any provision made by the Diocesan Synod;
- to consider the business of the Diocesan Synod, and particularly any matters referred to that synod by the General Synod, and to sound parochial opinion whenever they are required or consider it appropriate to do so"

Nigel felt that this didn't help much.

There is for example the women in the episcopate item which has been referred down from General Synod to Diocesan Synod. Diocesan Synod are to take and count votes, but Deanery Synods have been barred from taking a vote on this matter. Bishops Council will have to decide how it will be dealt with. We can't even take a straw poll!

So what is it that a deanery synod is about?

There are rules which say that if you have 26 or less on your electoral roll, you can't have more than one person on Deanery Synod. A brave decision might say every parish can only have one person on deanery synod?

However Nigel felt that deanery synods are whatever we make them to be.

In this diocese there is enhanced deanery leadership and the Nottingham deaneries are a good example of what can be done but we shouldn't become complacent and should continue to consider where we go. Clergy chapters are also important within that make-up.

So the questions are - are we too big? How do we work?

We are units of mission and ministry. We are not about debating for no reason. We should be considering and reflecting on how we bring mission into the local community. We do need to bring in motions to diocesan synod. Nigel would be delighted to have too many motions to consider for diocesan synod, e.g. asylum seekers which went to a national level.

Deanery Synods should mainly be about how you better do mission.

Nigel's presentation ended here and questions from the floor were accepted.

*Qu - We appear to be getting mixed messages about the value of deanery synods i.e. women Bishops and saying we can't contribute to that discussion.*

*Nigel - We will want deanery synod to talk about this issue and we will come out and give presentations to deanery synod. We hope that the views will be shared. You are not delegates but are representatives, so we do want the discussion in deanery synod.*

*Qu - We've recently been asked to vote for general synod but the hustings were too far away and this was reflected in the numbers attending.*

This was worked out on last times turn out which was lower but these comments would be considered next time.

■ **Split into separate deaneries with following questions:**

1. What has been good about the Deanery Synods that you would like to take into the future?
2. What observations would you like to make about the Deaneries working together?
3. What developments would you like to see?
4. What issues would you like to see being brought to Synod?

The individual groups' responses can be found in the appendix at the end.

■ **9.15pm Feedback**

Instant feedback was offered on what appeared to be the main hits from the questions. These will be looked at in detail and some decisions made on where to go with them.

#### **Any Other Business**

Revd Paul Reynolds recommended a book as a valuable resource which he had referred to in the opening worship called 'The Dolls House' by Marie Swift.

Revd Karen Rooms also mentioned her Grove Booklet called 'Welcoming Asylum Seekers' that she had co-written with Revd Ruth Worsley.

#### **9.28pm Final Prayer**

Jerry Lepine ended the meeting in prayer.

#### **Dates of future meetings**

1st February 2011

25th May 2011

6th October 2011 (Bishop Paul attending)

#### **Deanery Office contact details:**

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 **Feedback from groups:**

**South**

**1. What has been good about the Deanery Synods that you would like to take into the future?**

Presentations that challenge

Quiet days

Interviewing and feedback

Newsletter

Appointment information

Badges

Working groups – mission priority

Venues

Senior diocese input

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- The range of external speakers e.g. Nigel Spraggins this evening
- Deanery prayer days
- Conveying information and communication
- Number of meetings about right
- We appreciate that the minutiae of tedious details has been kept out.

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Meeting with other churches

Cross promotion of ideas

Dissemination of information. Newsheet & website

Promotion of mission initiatives

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- Bigger size widens our vision
- Good exchange of information – esp. from Rachel – we feel more informed.
- More energy
- Willingness to share resources & expertise
- Good meetings
- Benefit of having active members feeding back to PCC.

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Meeting with other churches – encouragement

Pro-active nature of the agenda – encouragement to .....

Mission focussed

Practical

Forward thinking

Outward looking

Training

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- Meetings purposeful and kept to time
- Focussed on mission
- Sharing innovation & good practice
- Meeting together means that we get a picture of the whole city
- Raises an awareness of resources available across the city
- Pooling parish share
- Website & admin

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N+S working together (e.g. finance)  
Opportunity to talk in small groups

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- Mingling and sharing
- Has more life and vigour than old deaneries
- Able to focus on mission priorities
- Better resourcing e.g. administrator

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## 2. What observations would you like to make about the Deaneries working together?

- Communication – more working groups
- Cluster groups for discussions

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Chapter too big for effective /ongoing fellowship. We miss meeting in smaller groups of clergy to chat/pray. Could we have some clusters within chapter?

Does deanery cooperation reduce ecumenical co-operation – only finite energy for joint projects – if encouraged to take part in deanery projects might this reduce involvement in ecumenical projects.

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- Present synod merely a talking shop
  - Deanery synod too large
  - Becomes .....

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Introduced us to many - resources; meeting; coordination

Have we lost sight of original priorities?

Momentum re appointments of strategic placing of clergy in churches.

Correlation between discussion in synod and appointments

100 key posts in the diocese as a whole?

Difficult because parishes are so different

Complementary?

Sense of identity with an area needed – do we identify with a much bigger area?

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- Big numbers means that we can't get to know each other – more impersonal
  - The cluster has become more important for local links and support
  - Person in pew probably has low awareness of deanery synod
  - Difficult for people unfamiliar with Anglicanism to come into deanery synod

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It's too big numerically - it can be difficult to get to know people (geographically e.g. travel)

Decide whether it's one or two i.e. if 2 why meet together?

But what is the vision (all we do is fill out bits of paper)

What do we need the money for (other than endless admin)

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- Separating 2 deaneries in order to “get stuff done” and also to enable fellowship – although point made – big joint meetings as place to discuss theological issues or to have external speeches rather than nuts and bolts business.
  - Separate deanery meeting but also joint ones as well during the year.

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Positive experience

Enables better focus on Nottm conurbation

Mingling and sharing experiences again!

### 3. What developments would you like to see?

Investigate relationships with the Nottingham city mega churches e.g. Trent Vineyard, Cornerstone, Talbot Street Christian centre.

Reduce differential of representation of churches of different size

Local clustering – perhaps along the lines of the old deaneries?

Would like to feel that deanery synod actually contributes something to diocesan synod.

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- Synod to behave as a synod. To have some say in decision making
- Synod should be a link between PCC's and diocese. Better flow of info from parish to Diocese. Communication upward.

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Deanery elects but doesn't have accountability from General synod

Why no role in general synod legislation?

More debates / discussion of diocesan issues to avoid deanery talking shop.

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- Meet in cluster at deanery synod so that we can get to know each other (with side effect of nurturing cluster collaboration)
- 'Job spec' available in time for church APCM's so that deanery synod reps are mission-focussed.
- Representation from a wider group of ethnic minorities.
- List of readers and mini bio registry so that they are a shared resource to deanery and can develop their skills.
- Clearer role of deanery synod as enabler.

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Moving away from facilitate growth model, would rather see sharing of resources, people, finance, e.g. for mission events in the market square, theatre.

Want to hear from practitioners about things

Is this an extra layer of bureaucracy?

Understanding of parish as network

More focussed on doing mission

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- Forum for groups of parishes to recognise common issues not always geographically connected parishes – to share, work together – this works when time is given to meet each other BUT when we get into different groups each time it feels like a starting all over again each time.
- We don't quite know which parishes are in our own deaneries – separate meetings would help this and help form identity of each deanery – a way to get to know other parishes, rather than just their name.
- Contact list of members – does it exist? It would aid lay members communicating outside of synods.
- Map of deaneries with a "who's who" of each one.

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More information about projects (i.e. Dunham House)

General Synods information / diocesan synod

Annual report – more available – communication improvement

Weekly bulletin – deanery communication to be clarified and condensed with links to flyers.

Focus on mission priorities

Extra meeting?

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- Become more inclusive and accessible
- More examples
- Of active support e.g. Broxtowe situation
- More opportunities to share mission success/developments/ideas etc.

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#### 4. What issues would you like to see being brought to Synod?

- How could the deanery best work as support to parish officers (e.g. responding to requests from the ground)
- Anything that's productive (realistic change)
- City-wide issues presented by relevant officials e.g. police, council, universities, health service etc
- Structured social/networking time to build relationships of trust and mutual support replacing formal meetings
- Parish issues – PCC
- Process to bring issues to synod
- Clear understanding of relationship between deanery & synod
- Better visibility of diocesan synod members and clearer communication in relation to city centre.

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Exploring implications of Big Society for parishes  
 And lay presidency at Eucharist  
 Homosexuality  
 Women and episcopacy  
 Impact of budget cuts  
 E.g. chaplaincies

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- Exploring Big Society
- Lay presidency
- Homosexuality
- Women bishops
- Budget cuts and chaplaincy
- Communication issues
- Review of stipends
- Education/youth focus

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Deanery does not seem to interface with community/network in the context of mission  
 The language itself is exclusive "Welcome to planet Zog"  
 Is it always only going to be about money

**North****1. What has been good about the Deanery Synods that you would like to take into the future?**

- Helps you look outside your parish
- Focus on mission instead of agendas
- Church members engaging in the wider church
- Building links between churches
- Take forward – gathering opinion
- Broadening vision

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Support : area deans and administrator

Structure of meetings – small groups

Meeting people from other churches

Working together – 2 deaneries

Breadth of topics – outside speakers

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- Discussion in small groups
- Mixing within small groups
- People coming to talk about issues (wider than local church)
- Hearing about other churches- mission focus
- Sharing ideas
  - hearing their problems
- Administrator – communication
- Supporting other parishes
- Meetings – keeping to time
- Structure given in advance

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Prayer

Identifying mission priorities

Pooling resources – joint events

Sharing resources – list of advisers

Website & emails

Chance to meet and chat

Learning – feedback diocesan & CoE

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- Positive attitude
- Deanery office and administrator
- Excellent communication – the newsletter
- Sharing good experiences
- Sharing resources
- Positive new initiatives – good leadership

- Shared input clergy & (empowered) lay
- Links between parish and synod
- But are we too big
- 2 deaneries work better than 4
- Good team leaders – Ruth, Jerry & Rachel

## 2. What observations would you like to make about the Deaneries working together?

Feel it's too big – for meaningful discussion

- to convey the content to others
- to socialise and build relationships

See friends I don't see otherwise

Rachel (Deanery Administrator) fantastic resource but if you aren't online your access to information is limited

Communications update is good

Size of deanery (i.e. large) does allow broad perspective

Good to see partnership working modelled on this kind of scale.

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- At first thought it would be too big. Better as numbers have dropped off.
- Would be nice to know feedback from the other deanery after meeting together.
- From lay perspective why have 2 deaneries
- Clergy chapter – not as intimate as previously
- Breaking into smaller groups – people willing to share when wouldn't in larger.
- Having one administrator brings the 2 together.
- Tap into wider experience
- Variety of churches – inner city, wealthy village contribute to each other.

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Meetings can be overwhelming

Language, jargon can be confusing. It makes less sense for laity than clergy

Deanery office has been great

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- Good overview – worked better than expected Sometimes needed too much structure because of size
- Where re the edges? How are they included?
- Difficulty in finding place and role in the meetings.

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Much too big. View is that even each deanery is too big and people have stopped coming as a result. Overwhelming. Can't get to know people.

Travel distances greater

Fewer meetings

Too quick initially to make decisions – puts people off.

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- Loss of identity and family feel going from smaller units to larger ones (esp from former Beeston deanery)
- Greater variety of contexts to learn from

- 2 works better than 4
- Greater co-operation
- Greater concentration on mission
- Best of both worlds – working together and apart – feed off each other
- Saving of resources – 1 meeting saving time and money

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### 3. What developments would you like to see?

- Change the name 'deanery' so it has some meaning to outsiders – PCC switches off when they hear the word.
- Define what a deanery is, what it does, what it connects to. Huge assumption people know the structure of the Church of England and they don't.
- About access to information for all. Is the message we send that some people aren't worthy or capable of an opinion/voice?
- We want more feedback from diocesan and General Synod. Again: this is about access to information.
- Also we want a vote!
- We seem to spend a great deal of time discussing how deanery synod works – I know Jerry is keen on process but I think it's time to run with it and trust it's good enough.

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A way in which motions can be encouraged to pass up to Synods (Diocesan and general)

Encourage clusters

Mission priorities should include how deanery fits within synodical government.

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- Introduction to deanery for new reps – how it works, what happens at meetings
- Better relationships with neighbouring churches v churches across the deaneries

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Continuation of groups looking at different mission priorities

Work on mission priorities we haven't focussed on – these have helped focus parishes individually

Ideas of bringing people in, and reaching out

Sharing of resources and how they've worked in our contexts – could be through website.

Deanery newsletter – good communication, sharing good news stories.

("Some of these should have been on previous sheet.")

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- Perhaps Diocesan synod could think about developing better links with us beyond just parish share.
- Social side – can we do more together socially
- Better 2 way communication – diocese to deanery
- What can we add to diocese, what do we think they ought to be asking us?
- How should we be contributing to diocese and general synod e.g. asylum seekers?

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Small friendship groups

Developing practical things together

- Deanery
- Local within the deanery (Bigger than parish)
- Informally done

Joint services and events

Deanery pilgrimage

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- Meeting people
- Mission stories - sharing good practice)
- We'd like to take Rachel into the future she (or similar figure) = pure gold
- Reports on national developments
- Splitting up into small groups: voice is heard
- Voting people ->diocesan synod
- Visiting different venues for meetings widens our perspective
- Nice for clergy not to have to lead worship occasionally

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#### 4. What issues would you like to see being brought to Synod?

How can we develop a simpler church life?

Discussion of co-ordination of funerals

What else can be co-ordinated?

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- Diocesan synod asking our views – deanery choosing which issues to discuss.
- Parish issues brought up to deanery synod
- Women Bishops
- Big Society
- Lay presidency
- Mission into poorer areas of our country

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Women bishops – hear both sides of the debate

Hospital chaplaincies and reductions in staffing

How to dispel the idea the church is wealthy

Leadership in parishes – clergy numbers, reader training, lay involvement

Reaching people in large parishes

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- Expectations on church to step into gap.
- Local community issues – cuts in funding; cuts in services; unemployment; chaplaincy issues; e.g. PCT cuts; resulting from Big Society
- Effects on parishes
- Theology – holistic – spiritual – practical.
- Ecumenical links
- Making a Christian voice heard in the changes that are coming in society e.g. Faith in the City
- So – what do we think we are here for as a church – theological debate

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Life stage issues e.g. caring for elderly parents – offered to wider community caring for grandchildren

Social action items – Fair Trade, debt etc

Overcome the pre-conceptions that we have

Theological teaching and discussion especially around hot topics e.g. women bishops

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