

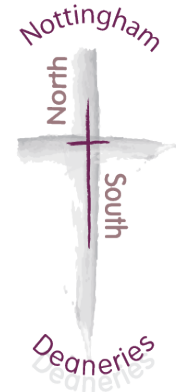
Minutes of the joint meeting of

Nottingham North and Nottingham South Deaneries

on Tuesday 1st February 2011 at 19.30

held at St Jude's, Mapperley, Nottingham.

Present: **South** 19 clerical and 29 lay members.
North 14 clerical and 25 lay members.



The meeting was chaired by Revd Jonathan MacGillivray, Area Dean, Nottingham South.

Apologies: **South** 7 clerical and 12 lay members.
North 6 clerical and 3 lay members.

Gathering

Jonathan opened and welcomed everyone. He explained the theme for the evening as Big Society. Graham and his team were thanked for the refreshments.

Opening Worship

Graham Hadfield led us in worship based on the Bible reading from Luke 7:36 to end.

Notices

- Deanery synod elections

These will be happening at this year's APCMs. A deanery handbook is included in an envelope for each church to be used at your PCC's when discerning who should stand. Further details will be sent out shortly.

- Prayer sheet

Check the website for a copy of the deanery prayer sheet if you haven't had one. Jonathan encouraged parishes to use this regularly in their prayer lives and asked to remember particularly Malcolm Crook, Alison Maddocks and Richard Coldicott who are all leaving to take up new posts.

- Newsletter

A newsletter is available for each member and church. Please take spare newsletters for putting in your churches. If you would like further hard copies, please get in touch with the deanery administrator.

Feedback from previous deanery synod

A copy of Peter's presentation is included in appendix 1.

Peter Munro gave feedback on the key points from the groups.

Women Bishops will be discussed in May.

We will organise another prayer day.

We hope you feel deanery leadership team have taken notice of what you said.

Finance

Robert Cleave reported on finance

2010 parish share - finance is about mission in our own parishes and is why we do parish share together. There is exciting and encouraging news. The 2010 figures came out this morning and South increased its share by .08% making a total of 97.4%; North increased 3.3% over what they achieved in 2009 making a total of 87.5%. The share apportionment for 2011 meeting has been held and this was a good meeting which showed the collaboration of the two deaneries.

Seven parishes had voluntarily offered to pay extra although it didn't match the shortfall but excellent nevertheless.

Apportioned share figures for each parish will shortly appear on the website.

Now that the finance group has been running for a couple of years and sorted out processes, they are now looking at patterns to see if there is any way they can offer help to struggling parishes.

14 parishes have used 'Giving for Life' campaigns and have achieved significant increases. Finance team members will happily come along to PCC meetings.

Big Society, Ven Peter Hill, Archdeacon of Nottingham

Jonathan introduced the Archdeacon, who is the faith representative on 'One Nottingham' so he comes with that input and to open up our thinking on how we might respond.

Peter offered congratulations on the progress we have made as two deaneries; we have been led in significant ways; also congratulations on the money side of things.

As the faith representative, Peter represents all faiths including Muslims not just the Church of England on One Nottingham

A copy of Peter's presentation is attached in Appendix 2.

The Church and Big Society

You are the church, at least the Anglican church, what about the big society? Peter opened telling a story about a puncture in his car and how someone came to take his battery, crudely illustrating that Big Society is about taking opportunity and a challenge to the church. The big question though is capacity.

Do we have the capacity, the energy or the resources to raise the bar even further - as per the deanery's first mission priority?

Or protest?

Peter has experienced a range of opinions on this. Will we as a church step up to the challenge?

Practical - meeting on Friday; see details on slide if you want to attend; need to book. Peter wanted to know what message to take to this meeting?

Slide 3 - quotes

Slide 4 - the church started these projects i.e. local big society which all started with us.

Peter reminded us of a couple of books: 'Faith in the City' which was the city churches' response to Margaret Thatcher and in turn resulted in the church urban fund. Still worth a read; and the book 'The Isaiah Vision.'

At clergy meetings shortly, the Bishop will be sharing what he has heard from us. It's important to know what we are already doing. The COE already has the most number of volunteers - see slide. We are big society - hold on to that truth.

There is a challenge of citizenship as Christians who are willing to serve and to seek justice in society so that people start to ask us why. This isn't the primary motive but it does often become evangelistic through the community service that we do. We don't do big society to proselytise but it is up to us to offer up our story and our faith.

Emmanuel House may well disappear; Framework is in trouble along with many other projects.

Will we step up with other partnerships (non faith groups) and other faiths and work in partnership with them, which is something we aren't used to doing. There is a possibility of getting more funding this way.

Liam O'Boyle, Partnerships officer in the Diocese, then joined Peter.

What are the practical ways that we can act? The cuts will be huge and the church will not be able to respond to every project. However, we have begun to prioritise some areas that the church could help e.g. welfare rights advice. There is a new Act coming in which will affect all benefits. Is there a possibility that churches could offer venues to welfare rights and debt advice centres who are beginning to find their funding cut?

Food banks - a way of distributing food to people in crisis. For those whose benefits are not sorted immediately, there is a gap.

Homeless and asylum seekers - the cuts will greatly affect all homeless agencies.

Kevin Hancox from Emmanuel House

addressed the meeting saying that on 31st March, Emanuel House's major funding will go and there is no way that Emmanuel House can continue. It's crucial we keep going. Please read handout and pray and think what you can do as a church in volunteering, in covenanting or in donating food.

Peter Hill continued:

The Government realise that our buildings are a community hub and churches could offer more and varied facilities such as luncheon clubs. Help the Aged, now called Age UK, are looking for churches running luncheon clubs that they could partnership with?

Talk to those people who are active in our communities; those charities that survive are going to be looking for partnerships.

Pray for vulnerable people.

March 31st is the crucial date when all money disappears 60 million, 30 million and 20 million in the next 3 years.

Peter then asked us to share what we were already doing?

 **Feedback**

Some of the 'big society' efforts that are already happening:

- Lunch clubs
- Healing on the street
- Armed forces support group
- Youth club
- Women's refuges
- Outreach to sex workers
- Community centres
- Supporting local tenants and residents association.
- Carers support group
- Bereavement support
- Transporting to hospital
- Posting to cab
- Local action groups
- Standing together to influence the political situation
- Food bank
- Local partnership action

So be encouraged; you are already doing it but can we raise the bar?

The synod then split into groups – see slide 12 for questions asked.

Jonathan MacGillivray handled feedback:

How as a church are we going to respond?

- Protest - perhaps the COE should be angry. The prophets were angry.
- If I carry on volunteering will I be doing myself in? I feel like I should stop volunteering.
- Monitoring process at local level is important - councils do not need to be accountable and won't lose seats.
- Local councils are prioritising cuts and they always cut the vulnerable – there needs to be fewer councillors, less food and fewer trips abroad.
- In defence of local councillors - we should be more prayerful in our support of local councillors
- Try and keep the focus on the ethics of the whole thing - the bankers were bailed out; the homeless aren't being bailed out.
- Relying on a lot of people who aren't working, will they be able to keep volunteering
- What would Jesus have done?
- Do we understand what we mean by big society – the government is going to put more responsibility on society. This is being done within the light of huge cuts.
- If we are going to protest, we need to say what we are going to protest about - what would we cut in the same position?

2. How much are we willing and able to serve our communities by filling some of the service gaps that the savage cuts will reveal?

- What do we have to give up as a church to achieve other things?
- Will we be able to plug the correct gaps?
- Are we able to reverse some of the social trends i.e. working so hard that we have no energy to do anything else, i.e. Sunday working?
- We have buildings and we have a voice and we should be using those.
- There are statutory limitations as to what people can do as volunteers. Very concerned that these obligations may not be met.
- Maybe the way we do church is too fancy; simplify or lower the bar on church and raise the bar on discipleship. This would increase the number of hours we would have available.
- Although some will be losing their jobs, there are others who could bring their expertise.
- Worth remembering when the church has got involved, it has been on the back of outside funding. We can still be go between, putting people and skills together. This does involve a huge time commitment so be careful about taking on too much.

Peter Hill concluded the session:

The City Council is not the enemy; they are struggling to know what to do. There are lots of groups who depend on the City Council for funding. The COE is unique in that it

doesn't depend on these grants and so won't collapse. We could take a lead on funding where it might be beneficial.

Compare it to past things -

Poll tax and miners - protested at all of these things. But what good did it do - nothing. Protest appropriately but we have to discern what is worth it. However, what the protest did do was to raise the profile of the church.

Following The Isaiah Vision, we want children and old people living in dignity.

We want people getting involved in local communities and having a voice. Is a prophetic voice about being angry or holding people to account? What about if people came together and held the Council to account saying that these issues really matter to us, i.e. the city centre and drinking.

It is about talking to the biggest employers in Nottingham asking them to commit their staff to giving up 3 hours a week to volunteer. If one church asked they would probably say no but if a coalition of churches and mosques got together, they might say yes.

Karen Rooms addressed the synod: see slide 13.

An example of citizens assembling from groups of reps from schools, churches mosques and synagogues, who held the government to account and brought before them the child detention issue asking if they would commit to working together and the answer was yes.

This was one example of people locally working together under the umbrella of Citizens UK.

On 19th May, Nigel Rooms will chair a study day looking at big society plus theology.

Closing

Jonathan thanked Peter Hill and the other contributors and ended the meeting in prayer at 9.30pm

Appendices:

- Peter Munro's presentation
- Peter Hill's presentation

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