

Woodbridge Deanery Synod

<https://www.woodbridgedeanery.org/>

Minutes of the meeting of Woodbridge Deanery Synod held at 7.30pm on Thursday 6th June 2024 at Ufford Parish Hall Church Lane Ufford.

24 people attended: 2 Clergy, 22 Lay Representatives. There were 11 apologies.

1. Mary Hare Lay Chair welcomed everyone and thanked Ufford Parish Hall for providing refreshments.
2. Rev Mark Cresswell led the opening prayers.
3. The attendance book was circulated
4. Minutes of the meeting held 8th Feb 2024 – These were agreed and signed. There were no matters arising.
5. Standing Committee. Consider current membership – Mary Hare stated that with the absence of an appointed Rural Dean it was imperative to keep a Standing Committee which comprises, The Lay Chair, Secretary, Clive Willetts, Rosie Evans and Rita James plus two nominated clergy.
6. Financial Update – Clive Willetts reported that there remained c.£300 in Deanery Synod Funds, used to cover hall hire and related expenses and that at some point in the future PCCs may have to contribute to ongoing running costs. The Parish Share target was £540K for 2024. 31% of this sum had been received to date which was less than the 42% hoped for at this time of year. Clive asked for parishes who had yet to send their Share to the Diocese to do so and to speak to him if they were experiencing problems with paying.
 - 6.1. When due, the renewal of the license for the Woodbridge Deanery Website will be covered from the Deanery Synod Funds.
 - 6.2. The issue of parish share was raised in the context of the treasurers' and incumbents' meeting held in 2023 where St John's parish sought a reduction in their share. Other parishes agreed to try and help with the consequent deanery shortfall. Surprise was expressed that St John's are now advertising for additional staff.
7. Diocesan Synod Elections – Mary Hare emphasised the need for Laity representation at the Diocesan Synod. Mary explained the commitment was 3 meetings per year which provided insight into the workings of the Diocese plus the chance to meet fellow Laity, Bishops and other clergy. Nomination forms needed to be returned to the Presiding Officer Rev Mandy Reynolds by 14th June 2024.
8. Vacancy in See – Mary Hare stated that following the move of the Bishop of Dunwich to Exeter, there was now a double vacancy in the Diocese and that it was unlikely that a Suffragan Bishop would be appointed until a new Bishop was in post. Interviews were expected to be held in April 2025 and appointment by October 2025. A public Consultation on Zoom will be held on the evening of 17th July. The Diocese will publish details of how to join in.

9. Resolution submitted by Burgh PCC

"The Burgh PCC while abhorring any form of slavery or coercion past or present is concerned by further calls for the CofE to pay reparations for activities that while the church did not undertake it has indirectly benefited from. It is of the view that further payments should not be undertaken. The PCC requests that the Woodbridge Deanery Synod considers this resolution and passes a similar one asking the Diocesan Synod to do the same."

Additionally a letter had been received from Sutton PCC (attached) voicing similar sentiments to the Burgh resolution. However Melton PCC had passed comments to the meeting opposing the resolution.

Before the discussions began, Mary Hare emphasised that Deanery Synod members should not necessarily feel the need to reflect the views of their PCC as they were representatives not delegates.

Mary Hare distributed a recent article from the Church Times to the meeting (which detailed the involvement of the Church of England in the trading and hiring of African slaves in the 18th century) in addition to the background

information by Rebecca Chapman supplied with the agenda.

Church Commissioners in Jan 2023 established a £100m fund earmarked to help address past wrongs through investments and grants over 9 years but a subsequent report from The Independent Oversight Group welcomed by the Church Commissioners recommended reducing this to 5 years - and setting a target of over £1bn for the total resource available to the fund.

Mary stressed that these targeted funds would not come out of any Parish Shares but could lead to reductions in Giving from the general public due to misunderstandings. It was also thought that the General Synod could have been more involved with the Church Commissioners to aid understanding.

However a majority of the members of the meeting and many in PCCs were unhappy with the further targets beyond the £100m as no information was available on how or where these resources would be used, the dangers of misappropriation or even fraud and recognition that no amount of money could right the wrongs of slavery. It was suggested the Burgh resolution be amended to form a new resolution for submission to the Diocesan Synod Autumn meeting, reflecting the concerns of funding beyond the £100m already identified. This was especially important in the light of the current financial uncertainties that many small rural parishes were facing.

Agreement was voiced from Culpho, Bawdsey and Clopton PCCs with Melton PCC not supporting.

The meeting was asked to have a show of hands in support of an amended resolution – 16 in favour, 4 against, 2 abstentions. The Lay Chair agreed to produce an amended resolution based on the overall wishes of the meeting to submit to Diocesan Synod.

10 Parish News - None.

12 Future Deanery Synod 2024 dates – Thursday 10th October. – Butley Village Hall. 7.30pm

The meeting voted unanimously for future Deanery Synod and Standing Committee meetings to fall on Tuesdays Wednesdays and Thursdays going forward.

13. Revd Mark Cresswell closed the meeting with a prayer 9.25pm