

Woodbridge Deanery Synod

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

Minutes of the meeting of Woodbridge Deanery Synod held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 26th February 2025 at St Felix Rendlesham.

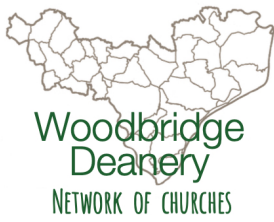
22 people attended: 3 Clergy, 19 Lay Representatives. There were 15 apologies.

1. Rev Mandy Reynolds, Rural Dean welcomed everyone and introduced Jane Sheat the Diocesan Director of Education.
2. The attendance book was circulated (including apologies for absence)
3. The role of, and becoming a Governor at a Church of England School – Jane Sheat began by thanking all members of the Deanery for their work supporting the schools in the area. The Diocese currently works with 87 schools in Suffolk and 4 in the Woodbridge Deanery – Bawdsey, St Mary's Woodbridge, Eyke and Orford.

Jane went on to outline the Diocese's role in education, the role of school governors and specifically Foundation governors in ensuring and developing links between church and school, setting standards and ensuring Finances are well spent. Jane introduced a film outlining the personal experiences of governors, how to become one, and the work and support involved. Questions from the floor were then taken. Rev Mandy Reynolds concluded by thanking Jane for her time in coming along to address the meeting. More information is available at [Foundation Governors - Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich](#) or by emailing <mailto:jane.sheat@cofesuffolk.org>

4. Minutes of the meeting held 10th October 2024 – These were agreed and signed. There were no matters arising
5. Standing Committee. Update – Mary Hare stated the current membership comprises, The Rural Dean, Lay Chair, Secretary, Clive Willetts (Deanery Organiser) and Rita James (Ecology and Webmaster) and two additional clergy elected by the chapter. Revd Charles Trefusis and Rev Kathy Wilson
6. Financial Update – As Clive Willetts was away, Barry Vincent spoke of his experiences of church funding and donation behaviour over the years and concluded by hoping more funding would be forthcoming from the centre out to the parishes.
7. General Synod Report – Tony Allwood had circulated copies of the report prior to the meeting (and attached to these minutes). He indicated that there was pressure from the meeting for Church Commissioners to increase their financial support to parishes which had been received positively, but there was concern that this would be limited to low income communities (none in Suffolk). This was compounded by the lack of historic monies/assets in many rural parishes. It was hoped a more holistic approach would be adopted to provide better outcomes for smaller rural parishes.

Options were discussed to reorganise the Safeguarding teams and outsource either the National Safeguarding Team or all Diocesan safeguarding teams. Synod voted for the latter but in the interim use the former as a stop gap measure. Also changes to the way Bishops are chosen was discussed – relevant for this Diocese as shortlisted candidates are expected to be interviewed at the end of April.
8. Diocesan Synod – At the start of the new triennium the House of Clergy and the House of Laity voted separately for new Chairs and Bishop Martin addressed the meeting for the last time. The Parish Share for 2025 was approved. Following reports in the Church Times that slavery reparation funding is ringfenced, resolutions to Diocesan Synod were considered not relevant.
9. Wilford Benefice vacancy – Despite no applications following previous adverts it was still hoped applications would be received from the latest advert. The meeting recognised the additional work placed on Rev Mandy and others in the interregnum and recorded their thanks. Mary Hare has produced a report for PCCs to use at their upcoming APCMs.
10. Eco Church. Rita James reported that a new Diocesan Environmental Officer had been appointed – Revd Canon Alison Alder. Three churches had now been awarded Gold status and a new church survey had been developed to support the awards scheme. More workshops are planned in 2025 - information is available at: [EcoChurch Information | Woodbridge Deanery](#)



11. Parish News – None

12. Future Deanery Synod Meeting dates - Tuesday 1st July 2025 St Felix Rendlesham 7.30pm
Thursday 16th October

13. AOB – Deanery inspections would take place in 2025. Please ensure all Safeguarding notices are displayed in churches including in toilets and that church policies and fees are up to date showing current information – dates are being arranged for inspections.

14. Closing Prayer – Rev Mandy Reynolds