

Higham Deanery Synod – report for use at 2018 Annual Parochial Meetings

1. Higham Deanery Synod has met three times since the 2017 Annual Parochial meetings:

i) Tuesday 13th June at Little Addington

Charlie Nobbs, Diocesan Pioneer and New Initiatives Officer spoke about his role, **encouraging people to start things – such as fresh expressions of church and community projects**. He compared the Church to Bournville chocolate – long established, can be hard to break into, doesn't appeal to everyone and with a diminishing market. He suggested that those who don't like chocolate could try something different, such as Liquorice Allsorts. The church can be seen as made up of allsorts, but can't always predict what will happen, with there being no single right way. Examples of new initiatives within the Deanery include Rushden Whitefriars going into the community to help with tasks such as painting and decorating, Woodford having café church, Irthlingborough and Higham both holding Messy Church and Rushden St Mary's having "Who Let the Dads Out?"

ii) Wednesday 4th October at St Mary's, Church

Our guest speaker was Bishop Donald, who spoke on **lay ministry and leadership** – covering both lay leadership and lay ministry within the church and lay ministry outside the church. Underlying this is the fact that every Christian is called to be a witness to Jesus. Within the church, there are many roles for which lay people are needed in their own right – not because there aren't enough clergy to do the work. In addition, many lay members of churches are already active outside the church, often in senior positions in the workplace or their local community – and there continues to be a need for active Christians as school governors, hospital visitors etc.

iii) Thursday 15th February at Irthlingborough

Our guest speakers were Nadine Davis (Northamptonshire County Council) and Ray Jackson (former Deanery Lay Chair from Corby) who spoke about the growing need for **foster carers within Northamptonshire**, given that over 1,000 children are now in care. They spoke of the rigorous processes involved in selecting foster carers, and the many positive benefits that can result. Christians can be well-placed to foster children, with their local church often providing an invaluable support network for both children and foster carers. This was followed by a wide-ranging and positive discussion. Those present also agreed the **Deanery Mission Plan actions for 2018**, including encouraging continued involvement in discussions on the Rushden East and at Rushden Lakes, and the opportunities (and perhaps funding) provided by local tourism as a way of encouraging more people to visit church buildings and their surrounding communities.

2. **Other items:**

- A very big thank you to all parishes in the Deanery for their **contributions to the Diocesan share in 2017**. Higham Deanery paid 93.44% of the total requested: an improvement of 0.64% on the previous year and the fourth highest deanery contribution in percentage terms in the Diocese. Only four parishes within the Deanery were unable to meet the full share in the year, with a tremendous commitment made by all. Please thank your congregations and continue to support the mission of the Diocese by maintaining the support into 2018.
- The **Deanery Evensong** took place at Higham Ferrers on Sunday 26th November, with Richard Ormston (Archdeacon of Northampton) as preacher.
- Meetings for **PCC Treasurers** from across the Deanery were held on 26th

April and 18th October. The next one will be on Wednesday 25th April at Irthlingborough.

- Gatherings of **Church Wardens** in Higham Deanery took place in Rushden on 18th May (Miles Baker) and 12th October (general discussion). The next meeting will be on 31st May.
- **The next Deanery Synod meeting** will take place on Tuesday 12th June at Hargrave, with guest speaker Rachael Newman, talking about Spurgeons' work with families.
- Deanery Synod members will be voting in **elections to Peterborough Diocesan Synod** later in the Summer. The Deanery will have three clergy and three lay places: fewer than at present.

Andrew Presland (Lay Chair) and Steve Prior (Rural Dean)