

Deanery Synod Report covering 2023, for the APCM 2024

Rev'd Christopher Powell, Vicar of the parish of St Peter & St John the Baptist, Wivelsfield, continued as the Rural Dean for the Cuckfield Deanery.

At the first meeting of the new triennium in September 2023, Rev'd Christopher welcomed those who had just joined, including our Vicar, Rev'd Heather. Rev'd Heather also stood and was elected to the Deanery Standing Committee, so we as a Benefice are now very well represented. Do let Heather know of any burning issues you feel that Deanery Synod ought to be addressing so she can feed them into their planning. Rachel Field, ex Lay Chair, stepped down after 6 years of service. Michael Thomas, from St Richard's Haywards Heath, stood and was elected unopposed as the new Lay Chair.

Over the course of 2023 the Deanery Synod met 4 times. These meetings provided opportunities to bring together the views of the 18 parishes in the deanery so that we can work together to promote the Mission of the Church.

The meetings enabled us to:

- worship and pray together, and equally importantly – pray for each other,
- learn from each other and to share experiences,
- hear from Visiting Speakers. In July 2023 this was - *Stephen Argent (Reader, Scaynes Hill), Assistant Warden for Lay Ministry Horsham Archdeaconry*. Others have been planned for 2024.
- consider the business of the Diocesan Synod.

We have continued to spend time at the meetings sharing in cluster groups news - in particular share things our parishes are doing to serve and bless our local communities, in supporting local life. We also spent time praying for one another - especially asking for God's guidance with the challenges we face and thanking Him for the many blessings we have.

Clusters:

<i>Central</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>West</i>
HH St Richard	Ardingly	Balcombe
HH St Wilfrid	Horsted Keynes	Cuckfield
& The Presentation	Lindfield	& Bolney
HH The Ascension	Scaynes Hill	Slaugham
Wivelsfield	West Hoathly & Highbrook	& Staplefield Common

The Deanery Mission Action Plan was drafted over the course of 2022/2023 and ratified in September 2023. It is structured under the 4 headings, the '**4 Mores' Diocesan**, namely:

- More Open: a sign of being one.
- More Converted to Jesus Christ: a sign of being holy.
- More Generous: a sign of being catholic.
- More Engaged: a sign of being apostolic.

These reflect priorities within the Diocese as a whole. Our churches' Mission Action Plans reflect these 4 'more' areas too.

The Deanery meetings are lively, interesting, and open to anyone. Please do consider coming to the meetings as by attending you are likely to feel encouraged, strengthened and well informed. Another plus is that you often get to see inside other churches, and you can come away having been reminded how blessed we are here at St Margaret's and All Saints', and in so many ways!

Deanery Study days are good too – attending them is highly recommended. February 2023 saw us being led in worship by Bp Ruth and we were very much encouraged by her to be courageous in our discipleship. It was a wonderful morning of discussion, fellowship, and worship.

Report written by Karen Blackman, Deanery Synod Rep. for St Margaret's Church.