

Wallingford Deanery Synod Summary 2020

The deanery synod provides PCCs with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. The Revd David Rice, is the Area Dean for the Wallingford Deanery, which includes Didcot (St Peter's, All Saints', Great Western Park and Ladygrove), Harwell, Chilton, Cholsey, Moulsoford, Hagbourne, Blewbury, Upton, South & North Moreton, Aston Tirrold & Aston Upthorpe, Wallingford, Crowmarsh Gifford & Brightwell-cum-Sotwell.

Meetings of the deanery synod in 2020 were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, only two deanery synod meetings were held and 4 meetings of the deanery synod standing committee.

The main focus of the year was to progress the mission action plan (MAP). This was an important piece of work, designed to support the mission of individual parishes and guide the life of our synod. The map is designed to help the deanery to focus on the issues considered important at PCC level in order to reflect these up to the diocese, providing vital input into Bishop Steven's Common Vision. The MAP was presented to the Dorchester Mission and Pastoral Committee in October 2020 and was well received.

Our MAP has four key focus areas:

- 1. Development of ministry to children, young people & families**
- 2. Developing our outreach to new & settled communities**
- 3. Development of appropriate patterns of worship**
- 4. Development of the Ministry in the Greater Didcot Garden Town area, both financially & structurally,**

One initiative emerging from the MAP was the creation of a program of Pilgrim Path walks across the deanery, to link parishes and benefices. Four walks were planned as part of this program, these being Blewbury, Wallingford, the Astons and Didcot/Hagbourne. Each pilgrimage was planned to start and end with prayers and refreshments would be included. Unfortunately this program was brought to an abrupt halt by the pandemic and will be rescheduled at a later date.

Another initiative to emerge was the Youth Initiative, working to develop a standalone Youth Trust to better equip secondary age youths; this involves churches in the Greater Didcot area and ecumenical partners.

At the meeting on the 11th of March 2020, Rachel Brockie spoke about the work of The Children's Society and how some children today live through some awful experiences. The Children's Society help by campaigning for law changes to make life safer for these children at risk, helping children to access the mental health support they need, striving to stamp out the trafficking of young people and criminal exploitation etc

The meeting on the 24th of November 2020 focused on developing the church online, acknowledging that most churches had introduced an online service facility at some point since the start of the pandemic. The guest speaker was Revd Matt Hogg from St Albans, Fulham who spoke about online church, particularly social media, and how that can be used to connect with people, including those who attend church physically

Finally, the Parish Share for 2021 was negotiated; this highlighted that some parishes would not be able to meet their parish share in 2021 and that others would struggle. For some parishes this is an ongoing problem, for others it is a direct result of the pandemic.