



Bristol West Deanery Synod Annual Report 2022

Introduction

Following two years of continuing disruption and unforeseen changes within our local communities, across society and experienced on a global platform due to the Covid Pandemic it was with increasing relief that some aspects of life were returning.

All parishes reported significant impact over the last two years in terms of decreased income, attendance, volunteering; and also increased caution and anxiety.

Three Deanery Synods took place in 2022 and the key themes were:

- **The Environment and Net-Zero Carbon Proposal**
- **Up-Date in the Strategy -Transforming Church. Together**
- **Responses to the Cost of Living and Energy Crisis**

Deanery Synods in 2022

March Deanery Synod: Net-Zero Carbon Proposal

Deanery Synod on 10 March 2022 focused upon shaping a motion to bring to Diocesan Synod to give the previously agreed Climate Emergency recognition a greater sense of urgency.

The Meeting was held in person at St Mary's Almondsbury.

The Main Theme:

Agreement of the Net-Zero Motion to take to Diocesan Synod: Rev Dr Andy Murray to move:

that this Synod recognises the need to take urgent and immediate action at a parish, diocese and national church level, in order to achieve the Church of England's NetZero Carbon targets by 2030. We affirm the national church and diocesan work currently underway regarding these targets. In addition, we commend the proposals outlined in the 'Bristol West Deanery NetZero Carbon (March 2022)' paper and we therefore call upon the Diocese of Bristol to formally consider the proposals and recommendations contained within the above paper with a view to identifying a programme of support targeted at parish level.

This Net-Zero Motion was proposed, by the Rev Dr Andy Murray, and unanimously carried and accepted at Diocesan Synod on 11 June 2022.

The meeting was also attended by Clare Fussell, Diocesan Environmental Director, who provided a variety of practical actions and links to available resources for both parish and school.

The Uganda Link

The essential platform for this is '*building relationships of wholeness across culture with Christ at the center*'. In short this is about 'relationship'; between Christians, across cultures, over geography and with, sometimes, differing views of this world. It is about learning from each other and providing mutual support. The Uganda Link is a feature of every Synod and the working life of our parishes in the Deanery.

Two key thoughts at this time:

- ★ The impact of the pandemic has been serious and challenging within the UK; in Uganda and many other parts of the world it is disastrous.
- ★ Additional impacts of the virus have been loss of education opportunity for young women (due to an increase in pregnancies) and an increase in domestic violence.

May Deanery Synod: Transforming Church. Together

Deanery Synod on 19 May 2022 focused upon how we, as a Deanery, continue to shape the developing Diocesan Strategy to deliver across the Diocese.

The Meeting was held in person at St Andrew's Avonmouth.

The Main Theme: Transforming Church. Together

The Ven Neil Warwick, Archdeacon of Bristol, introduced this update on the development of the diocesan strategy. Archdeacon Neil began by asking members of Synod to share in small groups the best thing that had happened in church in the last week.

Archdeacon Neil said that, in developing the strategy, the Diocese has been keen to listen to less-heard groups, such as minorities and the disabled. A draft of the strategy was presented to Diocesan Synod in March; the strategy was developed further in response to feedback; and a bold bid for funds would shortly be submitted to the national church. Key parts of the strategy include the following:

Investing in people – sustaining the same level of stipendiary ministry as at present.

Investing in people's wellbeing – especially the wellbeing of stipendiary clergy.

Investing in volunteers – enabling all to serve as well as they can.

While the church is still present in every community, we are not representative: we need more under-18s and minorities, and people are critical of the church's treatment of women, the Windrush generation and LGBTQI+ people. A key objective of the strategy is to ensure that everything we do is sustainable.

Uganda Up-Date

Ali Rowe (St Mary's Almondsbury) reported that a group of about 13 people from the Deanery plan to visit Uganda from 14 to 31 October 2022. Others will be welcome to join the group. Ali was about to move to Kingswood and South Gloucestershire Deanery, and she thanked members of Synod for their support and hospitality: being the Deanery Uganda Representative has been a real joy, she said. The Revd Janet Lee (Christ Church Clifton) thanked Ali for her leadership of the Uganda link. Janet updated Synod on a Deanery project to support girl children who have become pregnant during the coronavirus pandemic.

October Deanery Synod: Cost of Living and Energy Crisis

Deanery Synod on 5 October 2022 focused upon the impacts of the current cost of living and the energy crisis.

The Meeting was held in person at St Peter's Henleaze.

The Main Theme: The Cost of Living and Energy Crisis

The Rev Chris Dobson was welcomed as the facilitator for the evening's discussion. Chris highlighted recent decisions by the Government led by Prime Minister Liz Truss and Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng that benefitted the rich and had a negative impact on the poorer and more vulnerable members of our society.

He invited the Synod to explore and discuss three questions:

1. How might our churches respond to the cost of living and energy crisis?
2. What are the challenges for us as we make our response?

The wide range of suggestions and Responses from Synod members were outlined and circulated throughout the Deanery and within the Diocese. They are attached to the minutes that were circulated following this Synod.

Uganda Report

Rev Janet Hill updated Synod on the Deanery trip to our link Dioceses in N Uganda which would take place at the end of October. Synod members participating in the trip joined Janet in outlining what the trip would include and prayer cards were distributed to Synod members for use before and during the trip.