

The Parish of St George Donnington

Deanery Synod Report

For the year 2025

Extract from the Synodical Government Measure

The function of a deanery synod shall be:

- *To consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to their deanery and to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest;*
- *To bring together the views of the parishes of the deanery on common problems, to discuss and formulate common policies on those problems, to foster a sense of community and interdependence among those parishes and generally promote in the deanery the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;*
- *To make known and so far as appropriate put into effect any provision made by the Diocesan synod*

In short, it is a statutory representative body that connects parishes to the diocesan synod and seeks to connect them to one another, linking clergy and lay representatives into a joint working community sharing needs and ideas.

Membership of deanery synod consists of all licensed clergy as well as lay representatives for each parish who are elected by their Annual Parish Meeting every three years. The number of parish representatives is determined by the number on the electoral roll. St. George's is entitled to 3 representatives. During 2025 we were unfortunately only able to find 2 willing to represent the parish. The synod is jointly chaired by the Rural Dean (who is our sequestrator during the Interregnum) and a Lay Chair to reflect the partnership between clergy and lay members.

Deanery Synod members endeavour to provide an important link with neighbouring parishes and the wider structures of the church. Members of the deanery synod play an important role in electing lay and clergy members to both Diocesan and General Synods. Deanery Synod members automatically sit on the PCC of their parish.

There were 3 deanery meetings during 2025 as follows:-

In February the Rural Dean reported on the November Diocesan Synod and the focus of the Diocesan Strategy for the next 4 years. Beginning in Advent 2025, the vision will look through the lens of the four gospels, focusing on the four Vision themes of Discipleship, Mission and Evangelism, Vocation and Prayer, and Worship. This will focus on the coastal deaneries, work with young people and equipping lay and ordained ministry. To help fund the vision the Diocese will apply for significant funding from the Church of England's Strategic

Mission and Ministry Investment Board. The meeting then discussed deanery governance before breaking into small groups to reflect on how local parishes could work together more effectively.

In June the synod received a presentation by Rev'd Jo King, one of the Diocesan Disability Advisers, on 'Becoming more welcoming'. This informative discussion helped synod to reflect on how we can make our churches more welcoming to those of our communities with many different disabilities. Jo made suggestions for simple ways of helping those in our congregations, from ensuring loop systems worked, to access issues for wheelchair users, to being explicit that posture in worship can be flexible for the disabled.

Finally, at the November Synod meeting the synod heard a presentation by Eloise Armstrong on behalf of the local charity 'Children on the Edge', founded 30 years ago by Anita Roddick. It works with refugee and marginalised children and young people worldwide, with the themes of justice, dignity and hope. The projects the charity supports provide education, child participation, community leadership and sustainability. While there are projects in many parts of the world, Eloise focused on the work in two countries, Uganda and Bangladesh and gave some wonderful examples of the children and communities that had been supported.

At the same meeting the Nick Grange-Bennett, a member of synod representing St Peter's Selsey was elected as the new Lay Chair.

In addition, whilst not formally a deanery meeting, the Chichester deanery hosted, at St Wilfrid's Parklands, the Diocesan annual autumn finance meeting for parish treasurers, churchwardens and deanery synod members, which is held jointly with Westbourne deanery. The meeting was addressed by John Preston, the Diocesan Secretary and Katherine Dawkins, the Diocesan Treasurer, who set out

- the current financial situation of the diocese,
- the staffing cuts and other actions that had been made to reduce costs and
- the implications of rising costs and falling income, which will inevitably include pastoral reorganisation and combining of parishes.

They thanked the parishes who contribute more than their parish share, in order to assist other parishes who are unable to fully meet theirs and urged those to pay as much as they are able, whilst emphasising that the payment of the parish share is discretionary.