



## **LAUNDE DEANERY SYNOD**

### **Minutes of Launde Deanery Synod Meeting – Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024 Tur Langton Village Hall 19:30**

#### **1. PRESENT:**

Revd Canon J Dowman (Co-Chair) - JD  
Phil Leech (Diocese)  
Wendy Lewis (Deanery Secretary) - WL  
23 Deanery reps and officers from Parishes within the Deanery

Revd Jayne Lewis (Co-Area Dean) - JL  
Canon Shayne Ardron (Diocese)

#### **Apologies:**

Representatives received from 6 individuals

#### **2. OPENING WORSHIP: EVENING PRAYER**

The meeting opened with an act of worship led by Keith Evans.

#### **3.2 MINUTES OF DEANERY SYNOD 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

The minutes were taken as read. Wendy Lewis pointed out a couple of errors in the list of attendees which had been fed back to her.

Approved.

#### **3.3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

None.

#### **3.4 WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

None.

#### **4 MC AND DEANERY FINANCE**

WL (Treasurer) began by saying that she is currently in the process of opening a new account for the Deanery due to issues with the existing bank account including its cost. Signatories for this will be Wendy Lewis, Jayne Lewis and Hilary Painter.

JL began by giving thanks to Shayne Ardron for the time and support she has given alongside Stuart Burns to Launde Deanery Minster Community (LDMC) since its inception in 2021 and launch in April 2023. She has given support and challenge from Diocesan level as part of the facilitation team. JL thanked her for all that Shayne has given to Launde MC and gave a card and gifts to show appreciation. JL advised that support from Diocesan level through Stage 3 of MC process ('Living as an MC') will now be given by Phil Leech, the Archdeacons Co-ordinator for Parish Engagement and Phil was introduced to those present at the meeting. Phil outlined his role and advised that a key part of this process is ensuring that the right structures are in place for the MC to be able to work together. He has met with Jonathan Dowman, Jayne Lewis and Madeleine Wang to discuss how the MC is working and whether any structural changes are required. As a result, WL has been funded through a national pot of money



to provide 7 additional hours of administrative support to the MC during term time. This is for a period of 1 year and will begin from the end of August. Wendy's work will include supporting Parishes with occasional offices, and she will be working from Tilton on the Hill 1 day per week to enable her to work more closely with the MC ministry team.

Phil pointed out that the national funding to provide administrative support is only available for 1 year and it will be the decision of the MC as to how they continue after that. He pointed out that Diocesan finances remain in a perilous state. Phil explained that part of his work on the MC structure and encouraging Parishes to work more closely together will include getting together small groups of parishes with similar outlooks to consider where their church is at. This will not necessarily be in Benefice groupings.

One question from the meeting was what should be happening when a request for baptism is received. JL advised that requests should be passed to WL in the first instance and that processes for requests such as this are being worked on. The intention is that Wendy provide the administrative support to Parishes, freeing up time for the clergy so that they can be more missional and creative. JL also advised that whilst support is offered by WL volunteers are essential to the church and that there is no desire to disempower these, so help is only on offer where volunteers wish.

JD then gave a presentation on Deanery and Minster Community finance supported by PowerPoint slides. He began comparing the situation in Launde with that of the church in Out Skerries which he visited on his recent study visit to the Shetland Islands. The church is set within an island community of just 20 people. Decisions were being made in Edinburgh a long way from the Shetlands, who wanted to close the church because it served such a small community. Locally at Out Skerries it was not the right decision for the church to close. JD pointed out that the future of our Deanery and MC is in the hands of its Parishes but stressed the importance of Parish and church communities working together.

JD then looked at the many and various reasons for not contributing financially however he pointed out that churches do need to look at how much they are giving, especially to the Parish Share. He advised that of the disparity between Parishes in their giving to the Diocese. However a large proportion (5/6ths) of what is given to Diocese comes back to the MC so that Launde now has a ministry team comprising 2 stipendiary posts, 1 self-supporting post (shortly to become 2) and an administrative support post. However the amount given by Parishes within the MC does not currently cover the full cost of the team, and that is one of the requirements of a MC.

JD put forward 2 proposals to be taken back for discussions with PCCs:

- **As a MC, every parish commits to an *annual* increase of Parish Contributions of 10% or higher**
- **As a MC every parish commits to covering basic expenses, starting with our core ministry team (Jonathan, Jayne, David and Wendy). We ask every parish church giving at least £10 per month towards these costs (to be reviewed in February 2025).**

JD pointed out that if the proposals cannot be approved and funding not come forward from the Parishes within the MC then this will directly impact on the ministry that Launde MC is able to provide.

**ACTION: All PCCs to discuss these proposals around MC finance.**



A period of quiet was held after which JD invited discussion around the question of discernment as to what God is saying to us. A wide ranging discussion then took place with questions around:

- ✚ who should be paying the expenses, particularly for those directly employed by the Diocesan Board of Finance (JD and WL)?
- ✚ who will audit expense costs?
- ✚ concern that whilst the request for £10 per month per Parish was reasonable for this year the request from February 2025 felt onerous (a total cost of £990 for the MC had been put forward).
- ✚ the request for additional funding from Parishes would impact on the payment of the Parish share to the Diocese given the other costs that Parishes had to provide eg. running costs of churches, building costs resulting from Quinquennial inspections, insurance.
- ✚ can Parishes check which other Parishes are paying their full Parish Share?
- ✚ concern around the availability of services in small Parishes which may have only 1 service a month
- ✚ concern that whilst Parishes are being asked to pray and discern how much to give this is not very realistic and more guidance should be provided.

JD reminded the meeting that it was important that the MC meet at least some of its ministry costs and that if Parishes are unable to do so this would directly change the distribution of ministry locally.

Shayne Ardron spoke from her experience living in an inner city Parish and pointed out that 55% of their income from donations and gift aided tax was given in 2023. This was raised to 61% of the 2023 donation income in 2024. She compared Parish share to a mortgage, that this is an amount that should be given as priority since without Diocesan support in the provision of clergy the church would not exist.

Phil Leech advised that in a business employees are a major cost, and that the ministry expenses for the MC are the equivalent of operating costs for the ministry team. He recognised that in some Parishes there are no PCCs and non regular congregations but that local communities do not want to lose their church buildings.

JL pointed out that the financial issues will need prayerfulness and creativity, a need to look at how we can create more funding. If the giving from churches does not cover stipends the MC need to ask how can it work with less stipendiary ministers?

Discussion ended with JD and JL concluding that this will be a key topic over the next year. There is a need to get the structure for the MC right but each Parish does want a focal minister who is involved in the local community. Hallaton expressed concern about the lack of Eucharistic services at the beginning of July.

**ACTION: All PCCs to discuss these proposals around MC finance.**

**JD and JL to discuss possibility of providing more guidance for Parishes in terms of funding.**

## 5. OTHER DEANERY REPORTS AND PUBLISHED REPORTS



**Growing Faith/ Interest Groups** – JD reflected on the Growing Faith held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May which had been a useful opportunity for representatives of churches to meet with the Headteachers of the Church of England schools within the Deanery. Three churches attended and there were apologies from several others. Such meetings will be continued and developed to encourage growth of relationships with our schools.

JD outlined that Interest Group meetings such as this give an opportunity to think about how the Parishes within the Deanery MC can work together. Details were given of a meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> July to discuss the opportunities open to churches to become Festival Churches and what this might look like.

JD spoke about the benefits of the recent meeting held for Parishes in the south of the DMC (the Langtons and Shangton and Welland Valley) which gave the opportunity to discuss challenges, ideas for working more together and for Parishes to get to know each other better. It was suggested that similar groupings of Parishes could meet elsewhere within the DMC.

**ACTION: DMC Parishes to consider possible groupings for such meetings for suggestion to JD and JL.**

**Safeguarding** – WL has provided a spreadsheet of all the Safeguarding Co-ordinators and Officers within the DMC to Madeleine Wang and Jayne Lewis who are looking to arrange a meeting of co-ordinators. A training event is being arranged within the DMC, possibly at Billesdon, in July with a trainer from the Diocesan Safeguarding team which will cover Basic Awareness.

**ACTION: JL and MW to finalise details of Safeguarding training event to DMC.**

**Diocesan Update** – JL gave an update on the emerging Diocesan Strategy after her recent attendance at a Diocesan meeting. The strategy is being developed at Diocesan level by Barry Hill (Diocesan Strategy Development Enabler) and focusses on how the Diocese works together and is based around the Shaped by God 3 questions: how to make more disciples, how to deepen the level of discipleship and loving service of the world, as well as the 5 strategic priorities for the Diocese - five Strategic Priorities – Intercultural Communities, Eco-Communities, Reconciling Communities, New Communities and Intergenerational Communities.

JL and JD reminded the meeting of the forthcoming elections for Diocesan Synod.

**ACTION: JD, JL and MW to provide further information on progress once available.**

**Launde Zoom Community Bishops' Mission Order** – JD advised that the Launde Zoom Community is applying for a BMO, seeking recognition as a worshipping community in its own right. Discussions are taking place with Archdeacon Richard about this. It is hoped that the Zoom service will receive the BMO later in 2024.

**ACTION: JD to provide further information once available.**

## **5. FORTHCOMING EVENTS WITHIN THE DEANERY MC**

JL reminded the meeting of the Deanery service on 30<sup>th</sup> June at Hallaton (11am) where Mike Hammond will be commissioned for the start of his Ordinand training, and the Mini-pilgrimage walks being held on 11<sup>th</sup> August (Welham to Hallaton - 4 miles with a stop in Slawston) and 15<sup>th</sup> September (Goadby to Gaulby - 5 miles with a stop in Illston), pointing out that these provide a good opportunity for people within the DMC to get together and to get to know each other better.



## **6. INTERNATIONAL REFLECTIONS**

JL and Mary Twidell reminded the meeting of the importance of our Diocesan links with America, India and our Sister Link Diocese in Tanzania. Further information will be brought to a future Launde Deanery Synod.

**ACTION:** *MT and HP to bring details to next Synod of how Launde Deanery MC can support the Link Diocese.*

## **7. CLOSING PRAYER**

JL closed the meeting with prayer.

## **13. NEXT MEETING**

- Launde Deanery Standing Committee with Launde MC Co-ordinating Group – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 at 8pm on Zoom
- Deanery Synod – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 7:15pm (Tilton-on-the-Hill)

**The meeting ended with prayer at 21:15.**