



LAUNDE DEANERY SYNOD

Minutes of Launde Deanery Synod Meeting – Thursday 27th February 2025 Tur Langton Village Hall 19:30

1. PRESENT:

Revd Canon J Dowman (Co-Chair) - JD
Revd Jayne Lewis (Co-Area Dean) - JL
Revd David Palmer (Pioneer Priest)
Keith Evans (Billesdon)
Susan Johnson (Church Langton)
John Dyson (East Norton)
Hilary Painter (Gaulby Group)
Ali Kemp (Glooston)
Mary Twidell (Horninghold)
Liz Sanders (Knossington)
John Crisp (Loddington)
Richard Morris (Shangton)
Valerie Chouler (Skeffington)
Liz Auterson (Tilton on the Hill)
Janet Doughty (Tugby)
William Naylor (Tur Langton)
Wendy Rhodes (Welham)

Madeleine Wang (Tugby, Co-Chair) - MW
Phil Leech (Diocese)
Dr Mike Hammond (Ordinand)
Maxine Johnson (Church Langton)
Rudy Ike (Cold Overton)
Carol Johnson (East Norton)
Brian Kearvell-White (Glooston)
John Twidell (Horninghold)
Richard Windle (Keyham/ Hungarton)
Sue Sills (Knossington)
Rachel Crisp (Loddington)
Mary Weston (Shangton)
Sarah Holland (Skeffington)
Rachel Spence (Tilton on the Hill)
Gill Pawley (Tugby)
Clare Staveley (Tur Langton)
Wendy Lewis (Deanery Secretary) - WL

Apologies:

Revd Jeff Hopewell
Ann Aldridge (Cranoe)
Edward Davis (Lowesby)
Barbara Preston (Skeffington)
Sue Marlow (Thorpe Langton)

Alison Thurlby (Church Langton)
Dr Graham Prowse (Gaulby)
Simon Hammond (Owston)
Camilla Newton (Stonton Wyville)

2. OPENING WORSHIP: EVENING PRAYER

The meeting opened with a time of prayer and worship led by Hilary Painter.

3. BUSINESS

3.1 MINUTES OF DEANERY SYNOD 20TH JUNE 2024

The minutes were taken as read and approved.

3.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None were raised.

3.3 ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

Richard Windle (Keyham/ Hungarton) had raised a question which was read out by JD:



Does the Synod agree that it is both unacceptable and unsustainable to expect one minister to perform the combined roles of area Dean; have responsibility for the oversight of worship in an entire Minster Community; be leader of school worship in the 4 local junior schools; and be the only stipendiary “vicar” able to provide a visible presence to help promote growth of worship (and thereby generous giving) in 29 villages spread over a very wide geographical area; all in the absence of the peer support essential to ensure good governance, as well as providing protection from stress at work?

If so, what is the Synod’s recommendation to the Diocese?

JD responded by saying that this question would be answered in the presentation that he was about to give.

4. FEEDBACK ON QUESTIONS FOR PARISHES AND 2025 MODEL OF SERVICES

JD began by talking about the Benefice meetings which had been held since Christmas. He advised that 47 people had attended the 3 meetings held, and that feedback had been positive which was very helpful. There had also been 14 Treasurers who attended a meeting of Treasurers. JD talked through the feedback that had been received from the 3 Benefice meetings and in writing, and he also circulated a paper putting forward proposals about the future role of the “Oversight Minister”. These were ideas about what role a future Oversight Minister would want to apply for and how to make the role more sustainable.

JD noted 3 facts about the future of the Minster Community:

- ✚ JL will retire by the summer of 2025.
- ✚ The Diocese has confirmed that clergy leaving or retiring will *not* be replaced unless parishes can pay for their stipend in full (the Minster Community currently pays for 1 priest in full.)
- ✚ Our Minster community has been given a time of grace by the Diocese and by Jayne to help us prepare for how we support our mission, ministry and pastoral care beyond the summer 2025.

JD noted that it is not sustainable to have one individual responsible for the 3 areas of Oversight, Growing Faith Enabler and Area Dean as he is currently. JD advised that there are currently 3 types of parish in Launde DMC:

- ✚ Parishes with schools;
- ✚ Parishes that meet regularly (at least monthly) for worship;
- ✚ Parishes that only gather for worship occasionally and are therefore likely to be appropriate to become festival churches.

JD and MW have met with Bishop Martyn and other members of the Bishop’s leadership team to discuss the future of the “Oversight Minister” role in this Minster Community. Whilst it is being impressed upon the Diocese that more finance is required this is unlikely to happen.

JD advised that there are 2 time periods to consider:

1. From May 2025 after JL has retired and for the remainder of this year. At this point the revised “Oversight Minister” role will not yet be in place.
2. From the time that the new “Oversight Minister” has been agreed by the Diocese and the Oversight Minister has been licensed to this new role (this is likely to be later this year).



JD gave feedback on the proposed model of services that he had put forward last autumn, and advised that whilst this included the gathering of MC churches on the 1st Sunday of each month it was recognised that this was unlikely to work. The feedback did however suggest that there was a strong desire for churches to come together.

JD put forward a new template for services from May:

- ✚ Oversight minister would prioritise working with the 4 church schools within the Minster Community and the communities around these – Church Langton, Billesdon, Tugby and Hallaton – to develop outward focussed services in each parish, once a month, the services will be tailored for those connected with our church schools.
- ✚ The oversight minister would be available to another Benefice every Sunday for a Benefice service, this would be either a morning or evening service.

Example:

	9am	4pm	6pm
1st Sunday		Billesdon	Whatborough Benefice
2nd Sunday	Welham Group	Church/Tur Langton	
3rd Sunday	Gaulby Group	Hallaton (Friday pm)	
4th Sunday		Tugby	Coplow Benefice
5th Sunday	Shared 5th Sunday Services		

This is besides the Zoom service which also takes place each Sunday.

Parishes would be able to have other services each Sunday but they would not involve the “Oversight Minister”. Other licensed ministers are available to take services, and some services could be lay led.

A number of questions were raised from the floor. There was a lot of support for the written question that had been tabled earlier and the need for JD to find an “Oversight Minister” role that is sustainable.

Questions:

Q. Are Area Dean & Oversight Minister the same thing?

A. In Launde these are largely the same thing although an Area Dean has more legal responsibilities.

Q. The need to support the schools is recognised but how will this work when families do not live within the parish eg. Tugby school accommodates 48 children from 7 different parishes?

A. JD advised services will take place in the parish where the school is and that he is working with schools & parishes to see what might work.

Concern was expressed from the floor that church buildings are being looked after by the parishes so that they remain places of worship, but if there is insufficient funding from the Church of England there will be fewer people wanting to do this. The national church needs to start putting up funds,



because otherwise churches will become derelict. Churches open and in use are the property of the parish but if closed they become the property of the Diocese.

A vote was taken to gauge support, with those present being encouraged to go back to discuss the proposals with their PCCs.

Proposal - Will the Launde Deanery Minster Community commit to exploring and developing a sustainable future based on the thoughts put forward by JD?

In favour - 12

Against – 0

Abstentions – 0

JD then spoke briefly about how the role of “Oversight Minister” could develop beyond this year. The “Oversight Minister” could be licensed to be Incumbent of Billesdon (Coplw Benefice) and Priest in Charge of the other 3 parishes^{1*} that have schools, Church/ Tur Langton, Hallaton and Tugby. The Minister would focus on these parishes whilst being “Oversight Minister” for the remainder of the Minster Community. The “Oversight Minister” would be supported by a Deanery Administrator who would organise Life events and Occasional Offices within the Minster Community area. The Deanery Administrator would be employed by a PCC. There would be an opportunity for parishes to become Festival churches forming a network of learning and mission practice with support and oversight from licensed ministers. A discussion took place about churches that do not have schools within their communities but did not want to become festival churches.

JD also proposed that the Minister Community fund a House for Duty role. This role involves a commitment to work 2 days a week as well as Sundays. This led into a discussion about finance across the Minster Community. No parishes will remain in vacancy once the revised “Oversight Minister” role has been created.

Concerns were raised from the floor about how this would operate in practice. JL pointed out that parishes have had to manage on their own increasingly, those present have been church to their community, this will not change. The proposed future model carries on needing parishes to work together more and with help from the centre e.g. Safeguarding. Parishes have already done an amazing job, and this will need to continue. JL explained that once a provisional rota from May is agreed it should be possible to put out a request across the Diocese to find out whether there are other clergy with Permission to Officiate who could help. JL continued to stress the importance of working together as Benefices as well as parishes.

JD advised that the Diocese has applied for funding to the Church of England for a Growing Faith lead based in the Minster Community (0.6 post) who will focus on the schools, their parishes and networks.

JD went on to explain that the outcome of the recent Treasurers’ meeting was that a formula be worked out by them for the Parish Contribution that each parish in the Minster Community pays. This will include consideration of the oversight being received by Parishes, the regularity of worship and

¹ Clarity is being sought about this matter.



population size. The parish contribution currently pays for the stipend of the “Oversight Minister” and the costs of the Deanery Administrator. Additional money (£21,000 annually) would need to be raised for the House for Duty post.

JD also advised that parishes are being asked to cover any costs that concern the whole minister community: to cover the expenses of the Oversight Minister and the expenses of others who perform Minister Community duties. In addition, every PCC should begin to offer expenses to licensed ministers when they lead worship or visit parishioners within their parish and offer a gift (currently £63.50) to clergy when leading Sunday worship. This would either be accepted by the minister or given back to the parish, but where the gift is not accepted PCCs should record that the minister has provided as a “gift in kind”.

Greater awareness is needed that all ministry costs money and that parishes should begin to recognise the true cost of ministry within the DMC. Concerns were expressed by those present that parishes are already finding availability of finance difficult and that requesting payment for ministry will add pressure to parishes. It was considered that the final decision should be left with PCCs but at this point the proposal was put forward as to whether parishes should be moving towards the “Pay for what you get” principle.

A proposal was put forward:

The parishes of Launde Minster Community commit to contributing £10 a month to cover central MC costs and expenses. The PCCs also commit to offering expenses and gifts for leading services in a timely manner and where these gifts are returned, they will be recorded as ‘gifts in kind’.

A vote was taken along the same grounds as before:

In favour - 9

Against – 1

Abstentions – 5

Concern was raised that licensed lay readers were not mentioned in the discussion, JD responded by confirming that they were mentioned and showed his appreciation of them. He advised that a strategy was needed to encourage more focal ministers/ local lay readers to come forward within the DMC.

ACTION: PCCs to consider the proposals put forward by JD to explore and develop a sustainable future for the role of “Oversight Minister” and the future of the Minster Community. PCCs to ratify these proposals before the next Deanery Synod of 19th June. Parishes to work with others within their Benefices to decide on service rotas from May onwards. Treasurers to work together to discuss possible formula for parish finance.

5. MINSTER COMMUNITY NEWS

JD expressed thanks for the feedback that had been received from parishes about their Christmas services. He advised that he has been meeting with the Bishop of Leicester, Revd Martyn Snow and Senior Staff from the Diocese to express concerns about the unsustainability of JD’s role following JL’s retirement and he advised that he has been heard, that the Bishop is understanding of JD’s position



and wishes to support him although as yet there have been few practical outcomes. Bishop Martyn is visiting Launde DMC to have a conversation will all within the Minster Community.

NB. This has now been postponed from 24th March.

JL's retirement farewell service will be on **18th May**, her last Sunday.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

7. SAFEGUARDING

JL took these 2 items together. JL organised 2 safeguarding training sessions when Louise Warner from Leicester Diocese visited to provide 2 training sessions on Basic Awareness. An email was sent out in November 2025 requesting that PCCs check that all members are up to date with their safeguarding training, and an Excel spreadsheet had been attached for this purpose. Training could be completed either online or in person. Louise Warner from Leicester Diocese provided the 2 in person training sessions to Launde DMC in January 2025. JL thanked everyone who has responded and completed their training. She reminded those present that Foundation training is also required to be completed by all PCC members, and this can be done online or in small groups, however if requested JL will arrange for in person training again.

Concern was expressed from the floor that Safeguarding training requirements are too onerous for PCC members who are all volunteers. JL advised that the Charity Commission have this requirement of all PCC members as Charity Trustees and that safeguarding is a PCC responsibility. MW mentioned that Safeguarding will be brought for discussion to a future Synod meeting.

JL raised concern that the circulation of the email had been a steep learning curve and that there had been difficulty in getting responses. The safeguarding email had requested the email to be circulated to all PCC members which did not always happen. She spoke of the difficulties of communication within the DMC where there are at least 24 parishes, and advised that all PCCs need to have someone who can cascade information and emails.

ACTION: MW to bring Safeguarding for discussion to a future Deanery Synod meeting. PCCs to advise whether the in-person Foundation Safeguarding training is required.

8. DEANERY ACCOUNTS

The 2024 accounts were accepted as a note to the meeting.

9. NOTES FROM LEICESTER DIOCESE

MW advised that she would circulate these.

She also reminded those present that this year is a complete refresh of the Electoral Roll.

10. INTERNATIONAL REFLECTIONS

This was left to a future meeting.

11. CLOSING PRAYER

MW closed with meeting with prayer.

The meeting ended at 21:30pm.



12. NEXT MEETING

- Launde Deanery Standing Committee with Launde MC Co-ordinating Group – Monday 9th June at 7:30pm on Zoom.
- Deanery Synod – Monday 16th June 2025 7:15 for 7:30pm (Tugby Village Hall)