

Report on Salisbury Diocesan Synod - Saturday 5 February 2011

Synod met at St Nicholas Church Corfe Mullen from 10.00am, and was attended by the Archbishop's Delegate, the Rt Revd Christopher Herbert; the Bishop of Sherborne, Dr Graham Kings; and the Dean of Salisbury, the Very Revd June Osborne. Diocesan Secretary Lucinda Herklots welcomed the new chair of the House of Laity, Robert Key.

Bishop Christopher, presiding, used the metaphor of building a "mental map" to explain his experiences in the Diocese, thanking senior clergy and others for their warm welcome; noting that maps included geography, culture and ethos; and, drawing parallels between trade in goods and trade in information, noted that there were huge implications for mission in information networks.

He concluded by saying, "The challenges that face us as we try to map the future are considerable, but because God is God, the future is filled with promise. Where two or three are gathered together... it is true, it is true, it is true. We are accompanied on all our journeying by the risen Christ and so the future beckons as a place where new life is also to be found."

Download the address at <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/news/bishops-mapreading-challenge>

The Revd John Cowburn gave a presentation on chaplaincy to the deaf and hard of hearing, noting the existence of a 'deaf culture' with its own language, online presence and challenges in representing spiritual concepts. He explained that his role included links with Bristol and Exeter dioceses, Sight and Sense groups in Wilts and Dorset, other denominations, and local churches, schools, councils and social services. He offered to give talks and advice on accessibility, signing and hearing loops.

The Archdeacon of Sherborne, Paul Taylor, then introduced a discussion on collaborative ministry, with an emphasis on greater engagement of laity. He cited lessons learned from practice in the rural Catholic Diocese of Évreux, where lessening numbers of priests had resulted in a mobilised laity. Canon Harold Stephens presented the strategic and needs-led approach taken in Évreux, and Archdeacon John Wraw spoke on possible implementation.

Lay Chair for Alderbury, Deborah McIsaac, proposed an amendment to the wording of the motion to explicitly add consultation with deaneries and stakeholders. Since consultation with these was implicit, however, the amendment was defeated by a large majority. The presentations were followed by discussion in small groups and a vote unanimously in favour of introducing the proposed pilot scheme.

The Dean then presented the Cathedral's annual report, which included further development of the new Arts policy and Education ministry, with a new phase of refurbishment including development of the Magna Carta exhibition.

After lunch, the DAC awards were presented by DAC Chairman Mark Bonney, for Chickerell St Mary's extension, St Katharine Savernake Forest's organ, and Erlestoke Holy Saviour's refit as a community centre. All three parishes were commended for their thorough approach and effective consultation.

There was a brief presentation on the new diocesan website by Communications Co-ordinator Michael Ford, and then the Bishop of Sherborne introduced the Anglican Communion Covenant, referred to dioceses by General Synod for consultation, explaining that the Covenant would encourage autonomy, addressing differences in viewpoints via accountability and consensus.

General Synod member Christopher Fielden proposed an amendment to the motion, that it be referred in detail to Deanery Synod level. The amendment was carried by 41 votes to 39, and the amended proposal was approved by an overwhelming majority.

The next meeting of Synod will be an all day session from 10am on Saturday 25 June 2011, at St Paul's Church, Salisbury.