

Meeting of Easington Deanery Synod held via Zoom
31st January 2022 at 7:00pm

MINUTES

Present

Revd Jane Grieve (Area Dean), Stephen Pickering (Chairman), Revd Elaine Jones, Fr Paul Kennedy, Fr Kyle McNeil, Revd Muriel Peters, Revd Ali Williams, Revd Paul Paterson (Treasurer), Revd Hannah Richardson, Revd Lucy Moss, Roger Muggleton, Jenny Winter, Jocelyn Bryan, Maureen Wilson, Ann-Marie Green, Carol Maddison, Francis Drake, Evelyn Izod, Carol Lines, Liz Massheder, Alan Roxborough, Karen Jones.

	Item	Action
1.	Opening Worship	
	Opening worship and prayers for wisdom, guidance and unity were led by Rev'd Jane Grieve.	
2.	Apologies	
	Kathy McAvoy, Tracey Fox, Wendy Tempest, Diane Metcalfe	
3.	Minutes of the previous meeting	
	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 nd November 2021 were checked for accuracy, were agreed unanimously and were accepted as a true and correct record.	
4.	Matters Arising	
	There were no matters arising from those minutes which are not covered elsewhere in the agenda.	
5.	Deanery Synod Secretary - Vacancy	
	Revd Jane Grieve again brought this matter to the attention of synod and stressed how important it was for someone to offer to take up this post, however, there were no volunteers. Stephen Pickering suggested that we each pray over the matter to discern a call to serve in this office. Revd Paul Paterson, who had taken the minutes on several previous occasions explained that the job was not onerous but that, as Treasurer, he was not able to take on another office. Meanwhile, it was agreed that Revd Paul Paterson would take the minutes for this meeting and that Stephen Pickering would take them at the next.	ALL

6.	House of Clergy – Casual Vacancy of Retired Priest	
	There is an ongoing casual vacancy for a retired priest to become a member of synod to represent the interests of all retired priests in the deanery. After discussion by clergy it was agreed that Revd Muriel Peters be elected to the office. This was carried unanimously by all clergy present.	
7.	Diocesan Strategy “Reviewing Pilgrimage”	
	Revd Jane Grieve spoke on this initiative and expressed a hope that the topic was being discussed by PCCs and that the booklets produced to go with it were being disseminated among the congregations. Francis Drake, Deanery Representative on Bishop’s Council, spoke about how well it was going down in Thornley. However, it was clear that some confusion has arisen in that Revd Elaine Jones said that she was unaware that it was to be discussed with PCCs, and some other parishes had not received any booklets at all. It is clear that greater guidance on such an important topic needs to be given. Jane reminded everyone that the Statistics for Mission had to have been submitted by 31st January (deadline now extended to end of February) and pointed out that some of them were in a slightly different format from previous years. However, concern was expressed by the rising age range among parishes revealed by these statistics. Carol Lines (South Hetton) remarked that since the start of the Covid pandemic the numbers of children attending church had fallen; however, Coffee Mornings remained popular among the older people.	
8.	Children’s and Youth Ministry – Surveying the ground	
	Having studied at length and prepared a report, Revd Ali Williamson spoke eloquently and persuasively about the need to nurture and develop faith in children – and the challenges we face in our parishes – and our place in resolving those challenges. Referring to the Church of England report “Growing Faith” (published February 2020) she reminded us that children and young people need to be valued and their opinions heard and that it is important to develop pathways so that children can become – and stay – children of Christ. Whilst her research was centred on the parishes of Wheatley Hill and Wingate, her findings were applicable to all parishes across the deanery and revealed a need to engage with children and young people. Ali recognised that exploring this topic raised more questions than answers but, if you would like to know more, you can contact her directly at Alison.Williams@durham.anglican.org	

9.	Ministry at East Durham College	
	Whilst Ali Williams had concentrated her research on children and teenage groups, Revd Hannah Richardson continued the theme centred on young adult students in the 18 – 25 age group and her experiences with them at East Durham College. Having initially become involved in the Equality and Diversity Committee at the college, Hannah endeavoured to engage with students but admits that progress was initially slow. However, the introduction of a 'Prayer Box' at her table in the lobby sparked interest and began conversations and ultimately gave purpose to her 'holy loitering'. The result of her endeavours is having identified a need to go to people where they are and to employ different approaches to reach different types of people. As with Ali, if you would like to know more about Hannah's work you can reach her directly at revdhannahrichardson@gmail.com	
10.	Good News Stories	
	Stephen Pickering said how pleased he was to note that this week would show a full complement of clergy in the deanery. Jane Grieve remarked that, so far, there had only been such a full complement for a total of eleven days since she had become Area Dean! Despite such an extended period without all clergy vacancies being filled, Stephen remarked on how parishes had thrived in the face of apparent adversity. Revd Elaine Jones told a "Good Samaritan" story of how, being faced with yet another roof repair at St Cuthbert's, Peterlee, a parishioner revealed that he was a trained roofer and would do the job at no charge! Francis Drake spoke enthusiastically of the impending appointment of staff to the Christians Against Poverty section of the Thornley Community of Hope - a big step forward. Revd Jane Grieve reminded us that Revd Mark Harrison is due to be Licensed as Vicar for Holy Trinity, Murton; Holy Trinity, South Hetton and St Andrew's, Dalton-le-dale at 7pm on Thursday 3rd February, and invited us to pray for him then.	
11.	Any Other Business	
	Revd Paul Paterson, in his capacity as Treasurer, thanked all parishes for maintaining their parish share for 2021, noting that all (except one parish with extenuating circumstances) had paid 100% of their pledge. He encouraged all parishes to do the same for 2022. He also said that HSBC, with whom the deanery bank account has been held for many years, had decided to start charging £5 per month as well as a charge for each transaction. In light of this, Paul had made enquiries to move the account to another bank on more favourable terms. Accordingly, it was Proposed (Francis Drake) and Seconded (Liz Massheder) and carried unanimously that synod support this move.	

12.	Closing Prayers	
	The meeting closed at 8:25pm with Revd Jane Grieve leading the closing prayers, finishing with The Grace. It was agreed that the next meeting would be in person and would be at St Mary's Church, Horden on Monday 23rd May at 7:00 for 7:15pm start	