

## MURSLEY DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2022

The Deanery Triennium of 2020-2023 ends on 30<sup>th</sup> June. So it is time to elect new Parish Representatives to serve on the Deanery Synod for the 2023-2026 Triennium, which begins in 1<sup>st</sup> July.

This year began at a low ebb with two of the four Benefices in Vacancy. Generally, morale was picking up after the Pandemic but clearly life was still difficult. In June Richard Locke retired as Deanery Secretary leaving a large gap, because there was and remains no successor. Sadly, he died suddenly in July which was a great shock to everyone. Richard's last Synod was on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

In July and October the two incumbency vacancies in this Benefices of Ivinghoe and the Mursley Benefice of 5 Parishes were respectively filled by The Rev James Grainger-Smith and The Rev Yvonne Mullins. So, the year, having begun on a low note, ends with the Deanery with a full complement of Incumbents. The morale in those benefices has soared and life is fast returning to normal. It only remains to fill the House for Duty post in Newton Longville.

The three Synod Meetings were on 15<sup>th</sup> March on Zoom, 28<sup>th</sup> June in person at Great Brickhill and 15<sup>th</sup> November on Zoom. The decision was taken to continue on Zoom due to the Rural Dean's health restriction, but at least one should be in person to maintain some personal contact.

In March Ollie Shaw, a Diocesan Youth Worker, who was about to begin his ordination training, gave a talk and presentation "Helping Parishes reconnect with young People".

In November The Rev Sue Hughes, a curate in training, came to talk about Greenhouses, which are part of a nationwide scheme to form teams to work in Deaneries to reach those outside the Sunday Church.

In May there was a Deanery Tea Party with Bishop Alan at the Home of Annie Cooper in Rowsham. It was attended by 66 people from across the Deanery. It was the first time that the Rural Dean, Val Plumb, was able to free herself temporarily from the shackles of COVID and meet people she had not been able to meet. It was a marvellous occasion. It is hoped that this kind of Deanery gathering will be repeated in 2023 and in future years.

In June the Bishop of Oxford visited the Deanery. He started by meeting the Deanery Clergy, then he visited the School in Wing. Afterwards he blessed the new bells in Little Howrood, this was followed by lunch with about 20, whom he called the "significant" lay leaders of the Deanery. Finally, in Ivinghoe he met as many people of the Deanery as could cram into the Town Hall. Unfortunately, there was more spare room than anticipated. He fielded one question (among other) to the effect "what, is the purpose of the Deanery, because some people think it has little use?". Bishop Steven replied with his usual tact and clarity that it is the vital link between the Parishes and the Diocese.

In October the Lay Chair attended one of several meetings arranged by the Diocese as a pilot scheme for the Deaneries of Mursley, Claydon and Wendover. Held in Wendover, it was about the Environment through caring for the Church and Churchyard. Among other subjects there was one about changing the policy, which prevents the installation of Solar Panels on Church Rooves.

**Parish Share.** In the Autumn the question arose in relation to the new calculation of the Deanery Parish share by the Diocese. The practice is for the Deanery to decide how to allocate the Share to the four Benefices. The Benefices are then left to decide how to allocate the Benefice share to their parishes. For some years the allocation at Deanery level has been left to a meeting between the Deanery Treasurer and the Parish Treasurers without bringing the matter for discussion in Synod. This meeting was not always well attended. So, for 2023, meetings to discuss this, included the Lay Members of the Synod, the Churchwardens and Treasurers of the Parishes. Two such meetings were held culminating in an Extraordinary Synod to which Churchwardens and Deanery Treasurers were invited. The result was a Decision, reached with openness, involvement and consensus of all in the Deanery. The Benefices will decide how fairly to allocate the Benefice Share to their Parishes.

**Conclusion.** The year ends with much hope for the future, but it urgently needs people to serve as Area Dean, Lay Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

Gavin Merrylees – Lay Chair