**Deanery Synod Report for APCM 2025**

It is good to meet with other churches in our deanery and see each others' buildings.

We also share news of upcoming events.

The major change during 2024 was that Area Dean, Revd Jane Micklethwaite of Blaby, retired and the Revd Nigel Byard of Lutterworth became the new Area Dean in September.

**21 February 2024**

In February 2024 at Enderby there were two speakers.

Phil Leech from the diocesan Generous Giving Team spoke about the 'Cornerstone' programme. There was a dashboard for each parish and a database of grants available in particular postcodes.

The other speaker was the Revd Liz Rawlings, Discipleship and Vocations Enabler. Her talk was called 'Growing Vocations'. People were encouraged to contact the Diocese about their own callings.

**23 May 2024**

In May 2024, the Deanery Synod took place in The Bridge at Countesthorpe. The speaker was Sharon March. She is a pioneer minister in the Avon Swift benefice. Part of her work is with the primary schools in her area. Over the years she has gradually built up relationships by offering help with school assemblies. Eventually she was able to start an after school church which the families attending are developing into their own community.

Her husband also offered to simply make himself available one lunch time each week to help the teachers in any way. He was surprised at the number who sought his help, some just to off-load, some seeking mentorship, and some for prayer. There is an obvious need.

When we move into our minster communities we will be encouraged to reach out to our young families, which usually means via schools. So there were lessons to be learnt from Sharon's work. She was encouraging and enthusiastic. A good resource to use when we need to consider this.

**11 September 2024**

At the September Deanery Synod at Narborough Phil Leech from the diocesan Generous Giving Team stood in for Director of Finance, Simon Wilson, to talk about the finances of the Diocese, which he said were desperate. They could run out of money in four years' time. Staff who left were not being replaced and some office space was being let to provide income. Parishes were asked to look at their unrestricted reserves to see whether they could contribute more to the Diocese.

**12th February 2025**

The February 2025 Deanery Synod was held in Dunton Bassett Church on a cold evening and, despite a rather dark walk up to the church, there was a good welcome inside the recently well renovated church.

The business part of the meeting went smoothly. There are still a few thousand pounds to be applied for in grants for outreach projects so if you have any ideas please see Sally or Stephen Bailey or Helen Stokes.

The main speaker was Karen Rooms, Dean of the cathedral. Rather than prepare a talk she asked for questions from the floor. Here are a few:

*How many people attend on a standard Sunday?*

Approximately 30 staff [choir, priests, assistants, welcomers, etc] and about 40 worshippers and a few children.

*Why are there so many Canons serving the Cathedral?*

There are only 3 stipendiary Canons, who also form part of the trustees running the Cathedral. They do not have a PCC, as we do, but have trustee meetings. Other Canons have been given this title in respect of help and service they give to the cathedral and are usually in ministry elsewhere in addition.

*What children's work do you offer?*

They do have a salaried family worker and there are events put on to attract all ages, usually during festivals and school holidays. [After the meeting we spoke to Karen and we shared the frustrations we all have in turning these ‘events’ into the start of a faith journey and joining in with the community.]

*What do you offer to rural communities?*

While the actual building has been closed they have been out to lead worship or help in any way at rural churches and hope to keep offering this.

*The Renovation of the Cathedral*

It was felt that the last major change was over a century ago and that it needed to be fit for current modern needs, especially with the attraction of visitors to King Richard's tomb. This involved a new floor with under floor heating [economical to run and very pleasant] renovations to roof and repainting and a reorganisation of the interior of the church. This part has been completed and most of it is now in use again.

The ongoing major project was a new side extension to provide a large underground storage facility for chairs, etc, ground floor café and social space with meeting rooms above. They needed to demolish an existing extension and dig down. They were expecting to find human remains and had budgeted for about 300 bodies. Each skeleton must be removed by an archaeologist and then taken to the university for examination and classification at a cost to the cathedral. So, when 1,200 were discovered the costs started to soar. Other problems and cost of materials all added to the ever increasing budget.

The human remains which have been processed so far have been reburied at Gilroes Cemetery with due reverence.

The initial estimate for the entire project was £6 million which then grew to £11 million and still not completed is at £17 million plus. The Diocese was required to donate to enable other money to be released, so they sold a vicarage and donated £500,000. The rest of the money has been raised by fundraising and grants.

Sally and Steve Bailey and Helen Stokes

Deanery Synod Representatives