

Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod

www.hertfordandwaredeanery.org.uk

*Our vision is to see flourishing, Christ-centred communities
inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds to discover God,
grow in their relationship with Him
and respond to His transforming love through serving others.*

Annual Report of Activity in 2023

(for publication at APCMs in 2024)

Deanery Synod met three times during 2023.

March – to receive reports on Environmental Action from each parish

There were reports from 15 parishes detailing projects and activities being undertaken in their parishes to protect and maintain the environment. Much of the focus was related to heating, lighting and maintaining church buildings and encouraging wildlife in churchyards. There was a useful exchange of good ideas and helpful contacts, and much discussion on how to take ideas and best practices and turn them into positive action.

July – Racial Justice Action Group

There was a presentation from Revd Jonathan Gordon, who recounted his own personal journey and explained the aims and objectives of the group. The group has developed a three-year action plan including listening, education, reading, acknowledging privilege and speaking out to challenge racism. He took Synod through some of the changing language, helping people to be inclusive and non-offensive. Parishes were encouraged to take and use the handouts and to participate in the “Listening Experience” to discuss what individual congregations might do to encourage diversity.

November: Growing Younger and More Diverse

Revd Dan Drew’s presentation explored the problems of the diminishing number of young adults and children participating in church activities and shared the findings of the Diocesan report from 2020 which observed that if the current trajectory continued, we would have no younger people or children in parishes by 2030. The three ages where church attendance drops off are 11, 15 and 18 years old. How do we stop this? The Diocese is training 100 people to expand the involvement of children and young people with a pilot scheme started with funding from the Church Commissioners. The aim is to train leaders spiritually as well as practically so they have longevity. Synod members were challenged to consider what they could do. It was recommended that parishes start with small steps and set simple, achievable targets. The meeting was given an example of four church members (80+) who were amazingly supportive and were great with the children.

At this meeting, Synod split into Laity and Clergy to elect officers. A matter of real concern was that no one came forward to stand as Deanery Lay Chair. Everyone was asked to give this matter urgent and prayerful consideration to fill the important vacancy.

All the meetings also included other reports from General and Diocesan Synod.