



## DIOCESAN SYNOD

### Deaneries Advisory Group Update

#### Progress Report 2015-2018 Recommendations

1. The Southwark Vision, which summarises ‘Strategy for Ministry’ and ‘Hearts on Fire’ Reports, has a clear focus on Mission and Growth within the Southwark Diocese under the strapline of Walking Welcoming, Growing. There is a clear role for Deaneries within this Vision, as ‘partners in the Gospel’. To assess the needs of deaneries and plot a way forward, a Deaneries Advisory Group was established.

<https://southwark.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Deaneries-Advisory-Group-Report.pdf>

2. A number of areas of this report and its recommendations have been implemented through instruments and appointments. Within the recommendations of the report, there are other areas which we valued the insights of area deans and lay chairs.
3. Therefore, a simple questionnaire was devised to get up to date information for the July Status Report.
4. Of the 25 deaneries we have in Southwark, 23 responded completed the survey which we sent out.
5. Below is a summary of responses, along with some reflections regarding ‘next steps’ on the journey of deanery development. They fall into three broad categories:
  - Effective administration and governance within the deanery,
  - The formation of Deanery Leadership Teams (DLT)
  - Lay Leadership, Lay Ministry.

#### Effective Administration

##### Do you know that there is a Deanery Synod Elections Leaflet?

Most respondents (87%) have seen the Diocesan Synod elections leaflet, but of those who have seen it, 26% have not used it.

*Learning:* There could be better understanding regarding the provision of Diocesan Synod literature that exists to support work of deaneries. It is good to know that many deaneries are aware of what is available, but there is scope for improvement.

##### Have you seen the updated Diocesan Synod elections leaflet?

Most respondents (82.05%) have seen the updated Diocesan Synod elections leaflet.

*Learning:* There seems to be good channels of communication and engagement with deaneries on the matter of governance and elections.

## **Deanery Leadership Teams**

**Does your deanery have a commissioned Deanery Leadership Team (or similar structure that has a wider remit than a deanery standing committee)?**

Just over half (53%) of the respondent have a DLT.

*Learning:* A significant culture change has begun, fulfilling the task of breathing new life into deaneries and deanery leadership teams. Nevertheless, COVID-19 has had an impact on meetings and collaboration. Many meetings have been had on Zoom (with its strengths and weaknesses).

**Deaneries may receive the support of a designated mission accompanier. Do you have one?**

There is a high demand (60%) for a Mission Accompanier (MA) amongst those who do not already have one.

*Learning:* How do we resource the level of mission accompanier that is required?

## **Enabling Lay Leadership & Ministry<sup>1</sup>**

**Has the deanery been able to promote lay ministries through parishes collaborating?**

A majority 62% state the deanery has been unable to promote lay ministries through parish collaboration

Here are a sample of their comments:

- “At our last Deanery Synod in February, the Revd Doctor Raewynne Whitley spoke about the development of Lay ministry in the diocese.”
- “Lay leaders have taken the lead across the deanery in our response to LLF”.
- “Lay Young Peoples’ leaders have taken on the leadership of our deanery collaborative project Public Spirit and lay leaders have also been involved in our cross deanery collaborative project Black History in the Making and also in all our partnership work with Croydon Citizens.”
- “Organising a deanery eco day”
- “Supporting Robes project across deanery churches, sharing good practice on CYP”
- “through previous Deanery led workshop days we have facilitated lay ministry/work.”

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<sup>1</sup> Following the categories laid out in ‘Setting God’s People Free’, lay leadership and lay ministry can be categorised into gathered and sent church roles: that which takes place and is focused on the work inside the worshipping community and walls of the church (the ‘gathered’ church), and that which focuses on leadership and ministry beyond the worshipping community and walls of the church (the ‘sent’ church). For example, gathered church roles include Sunday School leaders, worship leaders, welcomers, bible study leaders, prayer group leaders, sidespeople, churchwardens, PCC members and officers. Sent roles include street pastors, school pastors, ministry in hospitals and care homes, food bank volunteers, winter night shelter workers, youth ministers, and community enablers. Our Readers and SPAs work across both gathered and sent church contexts. Again, following the definitions in ‘Setting God’s People Free’, we are using the word leadership in the broadest sense. By lay leaders we mean Christian disciples actively seeking to know Jesus more deeply, to learn to love and live in His ways in every area of life, willing either to lead others in their journey, or to influence others in informal ways in the workplace and in daily life as well as in the church as they live their lives as whole life disciples.

- “through synod we have featured a variety of lay ministries - including CYP work, chaplaincy and prison ministry, and the role of SPAs and our licensed lay minister (SPA).”
- “Various lay people are working on becoming an eco-deanery”

### **Parish/ Deanery Promotion of Lay Ministries**

A sample of comments on Parish/Deanery promotion of Lay Ministries:

- “Churches in the deanery support a local foodbank and one of the churches has a FoodStop shop which is very successful in meeting the needs of families in the area. There is the potential for collaboration on holiday hunger.”
- “Deanery Schools Project delivering presentations and material for Christmas and Easter; Greenwich Winter Night Shelter currently on hold due to Covid-19 and considering relaunch in revised format; proposals in 2020 for holiday meals project unable to progress due to Covid-19; recent deanery forum looked at poverty / debt relief and hopes to develop tentative thinking.”
- “We have had Deanery Wide Zoom Novena Night Prayer. In 2019 we had a Deanery Youth Weekend Away, which was attended by around 30 young people.”
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- “TKC deanery walk, Robes project, Black Lives Matter gathering, Lambeth Country Show”
- “mental health; foodbanks; refugee groups; interfaith work; some CYP work”
- “The DLT led a pilot of a summer childcare and lunch club, though with mixed success; and the deanery collaborated on a Lambeth Passion trail this year.”
- “Street Ashing. Xmas Mission Events.”
- “We are promoting ECO & UKME and encouraging engagement in these areas. The Deanery Synod meetings 2018 - 2020 worked through the five marks of mission and encouraged engagement of the back of them”
- “Glassdoor nightshelters, foodbanks, knife bin sponsorship”
- “We have been involved with the Reigate Area Social Justice forum; Individual churches have been involved in community support ie with food bank/parcel and social contacts to local areas through the pandemic; community choirs; listening posts”
- “Battersea Welcomes Refugees; support for our two church primary schools; half the parishes cooperate with the Glassdoor Night Shelter circuit in Wandsworth”
- “We have been involved with Lambeth North and Dulwich deaneries in the Lambeth Country Show which has drawn people from churches in public witness and service at the Country Show. We also organised a BLM act of witness in Brockwell Park last Summer that drew people from every church in the deanery. Norwood and Brixton Foodbank is located in the centre of the deanery and is promoted throughout the deanery.”
- “Housing Syrian refugees, Launching a debt centre in the deanery, eco-projects”
- “Deanery schools project with Christmas Journey and Easter Play, commitment to becoming an eco-deanery, seeking a shared social justice project.”
- “Supporting the New Malden Debt Centre, based at St John the Divine, New Malden. Supporting Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness. Supporting the 'Growing Faith' initiative through engagement with Church schools in the Deanery; Operating the Deanery Funerals Scheme . Supporting the proposed C of E Secondary school for Kingston.”

## **Do you have a deanery mission action plan or vision statement?**

A majority (54%) have neither a vision statement nor a mission action plan.

*Learning:* Does a clear mission or vision statement focus the mission of deaneries in a selective way?

## **Do you have deanery champions?**

The evidence indicates that the role of deanery champions in deanery leadership teams has not yet landed well. Apart from LLF leaders and trainers (80%), there are low numbers of deanery champions (10% - 18%).

*Learning:* It may be that as DLTs mature, the role of a specific ministry champion will find their place, however, I am open to the possibility that this may not be the best approach going forward.

Going forward, the roles of the deanery ministry champions should be orientated around the shared ministry endeavour and the sharing of best practice, this is highlighted in the very high level of interest in becoming eco-deaneries (93%).

## **Next Steps: Continuing the Journey**

We are grateful both to the Lay Chairs and (Assistant) Area Deans for giving us an insight into deanery activity through their survey responses. COVID-19 has been a significant disruption to the status quo for churches and deaneries in many respects. One positive outcome is that Archdeacons are meeting with Area Deans to receive updates regarding parishes and offer support. However, this is by its nature a clerical conversation to which Lay Chairs are currently not included. Where partnership amongst the whole people of God (lay and ordained) occurs in deaneries, we are seeing the greatest level of dynamism for mission. Finding way to foster this further is an important next step.

The development of Deanery Leadership Teams (where they have occurred) is encouraging. The survey demonstrates that there is a significant desire for accompaniment and encouragement in the work of mission. Determining how to resource this with lay and ordained mission accompaniers is an important consideration.

Part of the Mission Accompaniers role may be to enable deaneries to identify the one or two things that they ought to focus upon during the next season of their life. This can reduce spiritual anxiety that deaneries are not doing enough (or as much as a neighbour) and increase the sense of hope that they can extend God's Kingdom through their endeavours.

Utilising technology for meetings and decision-making (particularly during the winter months) could aid in the accessibility of meetings to a greater constituency.

Opening up deanery meetings so that they become 'forums' for Anglican parishes to discuss important matters of mission and ministry that pertain to their geographical area (and transcend ecclesial traditions) has worked well in some deaneries. We commend this approach and encourage deaneries to focus upon mission and ministry 'themes' for their meeting whilst dealing with synodical business towards the end of the meetings.

The Revd Canon Jay Colwill & The Revd Canon Duncan Swan

21<sup>st</sup> June 2021