

# SEVERN VALE DEANERY

## Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 at Ashleworth Village Hall

### Present:

Clergy: Canon R Mitchell, Revds: J Walden, A Lomas, J Bond, J Longuet-Higgins, S Hobbs, S Dangerfield, S Skepper, K Morgan, D Gill

Lay: Mrs H Cotton, Mr N Hogg, Mrs E Ashenden, Mr R Ashenden, Mr T Wiltshire, Mr G Davies, Mr R Cook, Mr C Hill, Dr A Nicol, Mrs C May, Mrs E Magee (deputising for Mrs M McGee), Mrs M Richardson, Mrs J Corless, Mrs J Smith, Miss E James, Mrs H Witcomb, Mr C Jakeman, Mrs S Hargreave, Mrs C Hutchins, Mr P Cotton, Miss K Creese, Mrs S Padfield

In attendance: Mrs A Perham.

### Apologies:

Clergy: Revds: P Donald, A Jones, S Taylor, J Perkin, C Sterry, C Ingram, S Mason

Lay: Mrs K Carpenter, Mr R Wall, Mrs R Cottell, Mrs V Bolch, Mr P Stephenson, Canon R Parker, Mrs M McGhee, Mrs B Fellowes, Mrs W Meadows, Mrs R Blandford, Mrs A Godwin, Mrs K Thompson, Mrs M Barclay, Mr A Clive

**Opening Prayers:** were led by Rev. John Longuet-Higgins using prayers chosen from a selection used in their home groups

**Welcomes:** Richard welcomed Revd Suzanne Skepper who had recently been appointed as Rector of Seven Towers Benefice and Alison Perham as speaker plus all those visiting to hear what she would be saying.

**Minutes:** of the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June were approved and there were no matters arising.

**Treasurer:** Hazel Cotton reported that the balance in hand was now £1063.06 and she was in contact with the few parishes that had not paid their subscriptions.

**Deanery Secretary:** Richard was pleased to report that Robert Cook had agreed to act as secretary for the ensuing three years.

**Parish Share:** Richard urged all parishes to ensure they keep up with the payments and to let Roger Parker know before the end of the year what they will commit to paying next year as it is important for the diocese to be able to budget. Treasurers should already have had the requested amount as this has been circulated previously with the five year plan.

**Journeying Together:** Each benefice in turn was asked to give a brief report on how their involvement with the implementation of the project was progressing. Almost all were able to report either significant steps forward or at least that it was under serious consideration. For those who did not receive a copy of Roger's implementation booklet it can be downloaded from the deanery website - <http://www.severnvaldeanery.co.uk/palette/jtprint.pdf>

**End of Life Care:** Alison Perham led an excellent presentation of her work with those who were in the final stages of life. She felt that death and dying should be an area that the church as a whole should be much more involved with as it affects everyone. Most of the resources available make no mention of God.

She had intended to show some video clips but, unfortunately, was unable to for technical reasons. However, she strongly recommended that members looked up the web site 'Dying Matters' (<http://www.dyingmatters.org>) which has a wealth of resources. Others were Compassionate Communities (<http://www.compassionatecommunities.org.uk>) and Bill United (<https://www.facebook.com/BillUnited>).

Some salient points from her talk:

- End of life care should be available to all. We are the first country in the world to have an end of life care strategy but it has been too concentrated on hospices and needs to move out into the community.
- We need to start thinking about our end of life care whilst we are still healthy.
- Two thirds of doctors find discussing a terminal prognosis stressful and patients don't usually like to initiate a conversation about it.
- People with religious beliefs either find their belief supports them in dying or they rage against it and see it as a punishment from God.
- Spiritual distress in dying is very common and can present in a lot of physical ways.
- The hospital chaplain and lay visitors are very important and the chaplain should be seen as part of the care team.
- End of life experiences are quite common and give people hope and calm them down. People often see dead relatives or a religious figure appropriate to their faith.
- Impending death may prompt people to settle unfinished business such as re-establishing contact with someone they have fallen out with.
- There is a need for expressions and rituals to ease the passage and the church can help a lot with this.

The members were then split into two groups to discuss the merits of assisted suicide or to come up with five things to ensure you have done before you die. On the first members were roughly evenly divided. The five things included making a will and ensuring others knew what your wishes were and for whom to contact. The concept of a message in a bottle was explained where a bottle containing a note detailing important information was kept in the fridge where all the emergency services know to look.

**General Synod report:** Richard gave an overview of the July meeting which he felt had a positive mood and encouraged members to look up the on-line account (<http://www.churchofengland.org>)

**Next Meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at St John's, Churchdown. The Dean of Gloucester will be speaking on the development plans for the cathedral.