

## **Deanery Synod Report to PCC St Mary's Shaw 2024/25**

### **Overview**

The Deanery Synod is a core link in the governance structure of the Church of England. It plays an instrumental role in bridging the local parishes and the diocesan leadership and serves as both a consultative and decision-making body to provide two-way communication. In Newbury Deanery the financial and pastoral roles are combined under the aegis of a Deanery Standing Committee appointed (usually) from the Deanery representatives. Libby Goldsack and David Willetts are the elected representatives from St Mary's, and David also serves on the Deanery Standing Committee. This report covers the 12 months since the last AGM.

### **Pastoral: The Cure of Souls**

There are currently 38 Parish Churches and 2 chapels of ease in Newbury Deanery, gathered into 11 Benefices: East Downland (7), West Downland (6 +2), Greenham, Hermitage (7), Hungerford (1), Lambourn Valley (3), Newbury North (2), Newbury South (2), Shaw(1), Thatcham (1) and Walbury Beacon (5), with a full-time allocation of 14 clergy. (See also Appendix A: Deanery Map). Currently St Mary's 1 full time post is filled by the generous voluntary service of a part-time incumbent, Rev Raymond Obin.

During 2024 Revd David Macleod moved from Greenham to an area role in France, Revd Wayne Lautenbach retired for reasons of ill-health. This vacancy has been filled by the imminent appointment of Rev Nicola Hulks, currently Team Vicar at St Barnabas, Thatcham. The vacancy left by Revd Miri Keane in West Downland has been filled by the arrival of Revd Mike Griffiths. Recently we have learned that Revd. Mike Saunders, Hungerford is receiving treatment for cancer,

Sustaining one service a week in each parish and parish ministry is only possible with the support of curates in training, St Mary's Shaw, Hungerford, St Nicholas, St George's and St Johns, plus lay and retired ministers.

Average Church Attendance in the Deanery was 919, a reduction of approximately 4 % compared with 2023.

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### Finance – Parish Share

Parish Share is the mechanism whereby the Diocese of Oxford raised around £18 million each year to provide ministry provision across 284 benefices. Appendix B provides a detailed note of the Core and Operating Principles which are applied in allocated the total agreed budget between the Deaneries. The Deanery Standing Committee in consultation with the Deanery Chapter, is responsible for the allocation of Deanery Share between individual benefices, subject to the approval of Deanery Synod, and the Benefices then agree an apportionment between the individual parishes. The total Parish Share for Newbury Deanery for calendar year 2025 is 919,000, compared with £860,000 for the previous year.

### General Synod

in February 2025 the General Synod of the Church of England, the church's governing body, rejected the proposal for a fully independent safeguarding model, retaining for the time being diocesan control of safeguarding in favour of a hybrid model. This decision comes in the wake of a series of widely reported major safeguarding scandals, that have culminated in the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the departure of other senior members of the episcopacy.

### Children, Young People and Families

In March 2024 + Steven commissioned a major task initiative for all the Deaneries in Oxford Diocese to engage in a renewed vision for *“a growing number of children and young people deeply rooted in Christ and living out their faith in the whole of their lives”* and, *“to see every benefice growing and deepening its ministry to young people and families by 2030.* Appendix C provide an update on progress to date. We have just learned that the funding proposal from Oxford Diocese to the National Strategic Ministry Investment Board has not been successful

### ECO Church

There is now a regular lot at each Deanery Synod for Eco Church with St Mary's Chieveley joining St James Eastbury and St Mary's Shaw.

David Willetts

15 March 2024

Appendix A Deanery Map



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### Appendix B Parish Share Diocese of Oxford

The parish share for the Diocese of Oxford raises around £18m each year to provide ministry provision across 284 benefices. The Core principles of the Diocese of Oxford's parish share scheme underpin our system of parish share allocation to deaneries. The Operating principles are there to assist deaneries and ODBF staff in applying the core principles - should:

- reflect the ability to pay
- not immediately penalise growth
- be administered as a partnership between Diocese and Deanery
- be based on generous and gracious giving and mutual support
- be easily communicated

be a formula-based system

Must be fair and seen to be fair

The Operating Principles are:

- Diocese allocates parish share to Deaneries. Allocation of parish share within a deanery is the responsibility of the Deanery Synod.
- Diocese allocates to deaneries full costs within the parish share. The cost categories within the parish share allocations are the same as those used in the Diocesan budget, to ensure clarity about the use of the funds requested in the parish share allocations.
- Allocations from diocese to deaneries shall include the cost of ministry in each Deanery and also take account of the ability of each deanery to pay and to offer mutual support.
- Allocations take account of previous years' allocations to moderate significant movement in allocation year on year (apart from agreed alterations to ministry posts).

Deaneries fully allocate their allocation of share to identifiable revenue sources. This shall include the parishes/benefices within the Deanery as well as the Deanery itself, if the Deanery has sufficient of its own funds to pay a proportion of the parish share.

The default minimum position shall be that the parish share allocation to any parish/benefice should cover the costs of ministry provided. However, a deanery may also choose to adopt an allocation methodology to recognise the necessity of mutual support between parishes, where one or more parish/benefice is significantly less able to cover the cost of ministry.

Shortfalls in contributions shall be initially addressed by the Deanery and, if necessary, resolved in a joint process between Diocese and Deanery.