

## **RICHMOND AND BARNES DEANERY SYNOD**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 – 7.30 pm

at ST RICHARD'S HAM

### MINUTES

- 1 Welcome from Rev Peter Hart and thanks to St Richard's for hosting the meeting after such a long time.
- 2 Welcome to St Richard's from Rev Simon Coupland, who led extended prayer with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity as theme.
- 3 Rev Peter Hart welcomes Paula Brackenridge as Communicator and Secretary of the Deanery Synod. "We look forward to what she is going to do".

Mission statement for the Deanery is introduced with the encouragement to go and share with your congregations.

- 4 Wendy Robins, Director Communications & Press, Diocese of Southwark: talk and discussion – meeting the challenges of achieving good communication within and between parishes

Wendy arrived with comprehensive PowerPoint slides covering all aspects of communication (these slides are available for reference). She was keen to tailor the discussion to what we wanted. She had read the Communications Survey with great interest and agrees that we are "good communicators" but especially that there is always more to learn which she knows through years of experience. The Diocesan Communications team is always there to help with technical assistance, but it was strategy that she was keen to talk about.

It is important to choose a medium that works and that you think about your audience. Twitter, for example, promotes engagement which is a good thing as communication "is not a one-way street". It is important that the Church keeps up with what is happening in the world of social media. The younger generation tend not to use Facebook but rather Instagram or Snapchat.

There is still a place for the written word and hardcopies of news are still important (eg weekly pew sheets) even though news is dynamic. Use local newspapers. Churches can get stories into local press especially if it is relevant to the community. The local press is always looking for stories to fill their pages especially during "quiet" times of Christmas and Summer. Also consider local radio eg Radio Jackie. This feeds in to social media as the media often pick up stories from Blogs and Tweets.

When writing a newspaper story, keep it brief and make sure all the important information (eg times and dates of an event) is included in the first paragraph as newspaper editors edit from the bottom up. Be careful of GDPR, if you are going to use pictures taken in Church or at other events tell your subjects beforehand so they can decline to be in the photograph. Also be careful of using copyrighted pictures. One Church told us how a friend of a Church Warden had used a picture from the web in a charity newsletter and was subsequently billed for £400! The Diocese have a list of sources of free pictures that can be used.

Even though the importance of newspapers is dwindling do use them! And don't forget to send any article to The Bridge.

Make sure your websites are not overcomplicated even though sometimes they can grow despite the best intentions (the Diocese has redesigned its website many times....) [St Andrew's Wimbledon](#) is a good example. [A Church Near You](#) is a very good website and useful for Churches with or without their own website. Check your presence on there, especially check that your Church can be found from your local postcode. Do avoid using "click here" for hyperlink text as many people use audio reading apps. Also make sure that your mobile site looks as good as your desktop as most people access websites from their mobile devices.

"Twitter is big – use it"! Tweets don't have to be daily just what you can manage to sustain. Be careful about what you tweet to not cause offence (humour never works....). You can use Twitter to point to other areas of your communications (the Diocese use it to point to press releases etc). Make your settings public (take care) so that everyone can find you. Blogs are useful too but only one Church in the Deanery has a blog.

Everybody uses social media so please make use of it to spread the Word of God.

### Questions

1. *Are there any guidelines to staying safe online?*

The Diocese is producing social media guidelines. See also [A Safe Church](#). Be careful communicating with young people – send all communications to parents as well and do not get into individual conversations. You can use closed Facebook groups but don't get into closed messaging. Think about safeguarding rules regarding 1-1 conversations with vulnerable people (eg not behind closed doors).

2. *How do we build up visibility for Blogs and Tweets?*

Slowly and painfully! Talk about things that people want to be involved with. Use a # that everyone is using (the Diocese have used #zimbabwe recently). Also reference people who have lots of followers (eg

@JustinWelby)

3. *How do I stop anyone posting on my Church Facebook page?*

Look at the privacy settings to stop anyone posting. If you want to allow others to post then you can moderate posts.

4. *Who should communicate?*

Wendy was surprised to see so many vicars in charge of websites and doing a lot of communications. Vicars may Blog or Tweet but ideally, find a communications person to do the rest - vicars have enough to do! If there is a communication team make sure there are guidelines about what is being said.

Wendy talked about a Theology of Communication – communication to help spread God’s Love. Any communication can be an evangelistic tool. So let’s think about why we are communicating and share God’s Good News.

5 Glass Door Update – All Saints Sheen, St John the Divine and St Mary Mortlake all reported that the project is going really well. In particular:

- Numbers are up from last year - around 30 guests who are “lovely”.
- The project is blessed with a large number of volunteers who are from the local community not just the Churches.
- The Churches have been going in to local schools which promotes mission. Many of the schools are baking to support the project. This is also bringing the parents in.
- There has been a great deal of support from the other (non-host) Churches in the deanery.
- Volunteers are not just making the food but are sitting down with the guests and talking to them making a real difference to their lives.

Rev Peter Hart also told us that

- Glass Door caseworkers from last year stayed on at the Vineyard throughout the Summer through to this year increasing the contact with homeless people.
- There is probably no need for donations of goods but contact the Vineyard to find out what they need and don’t bring to the Churches. Glass Door could always do with more money donations.
- Glass Door are always very happy to come and talk to groups about their work.
- The Glass Door project was mentioned in a recent council meeting. This year the council have been very supportive of the project unlike last year.

Rev Peter Hart also told us that is very grateful for the all the work that has gone on in the parishes.

6 Diocesan Synod Election July 2018. Rev Dan Wells from Holy Trinity Richmond has stepped in to fill 1 of 3 clergy places, leaving 2 clergy places.

- 7 C1 Safeguarding Training at St Richard's Ham on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March for those PCC Members in the Deanery not trained.
- 8 Bishop Richard and the Archdeacons will be holding a Pentecost evening service on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June.
- 9 Building works at St Mary Magdalene, Richmond should be finished at the end of June in time for a dedication service on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July (the feast of St Mary Magdalene).
- 10 A Deanery Choral Evensong is planned for the festival of Christ the King (Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November)
- 11 Confirmations this year: Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June at St Michael Barnes and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July at Holy Trinity Richmond. Confirmations will otherwise be taking place at the Cathedral throughout the year.
- 12 Rev Peter Hart urged us to pray for St Mary Barnes in this time of interregnum.
- 13 Closing Prayer

The next meetings of the Deanery Synod will be on

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019, All Saints, East Sheen  
Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019, St Mary Magdalene, Richmond