

RICHMOND AND BARNES DEANERY SYNOD
praying together, learning together, working together

Tuesday 3rd October 2023 – 7.30 pm
(Feast of St Francis of Assisi)

At ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, BARNES

MINUTES

- 1 Opening prayers led by Rev Stephen Stavrou in the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi.
- 2 Hymn – All creatures of our God and King.
- 3 Introduction and welcome by Rev Alex Barrow also extends a welcome to recently newly elected members of the Deanery Synod at the start of the new triennium.

- 4 Minutes of the last meeting were approved with the following point:
At the end of the Eco Update, Rev Alex Barrow raised a point about the heating of large church buildings carbon neutrally. Paula Brackenridge raised a question at the Diocesan Synod in July, asking *What plans exist for the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation department to advise parishes seeking to move to net-zero carbon dioxide heating for their churches?*

The Diocesan Secretary replied with resources already in place and how they hoped to implement the Net Zero Carbon Action Plan. Paula pressed the matter further by telling Ruth Martin that despite the many resources available, our churches felt overwhelmed by the task of achieving net zero and was assured that the Net Zero Carbon Action plan would include support for individual parishes. (The full answer is at the end of the minutes).

Q: What about the heating of vicarages and gas boilers? – Paula replied that this point had been raised at diocesan synod previously and had been assured that clergy housing was part of the plan. Alex also replied that the diocese had someone working one day a week on this matter.

Paula also said it's important to have a voice on the Diocesan Synod to be able ask questions and raise matters even though the responses may be less than satisfactory. There will be elections to the Diocesan Synod next year, do consider standing. Candidates for the Diocesan Synod do not need to be existing members of deanery synods but must be on an electoral roll and an actual communicant member of a parish.

5 Jason O'Shea from [Operation Forgiveness](#) talked about the work of this early intervention knife-crime initiative, delivered by local churches to local schools.

(Four years ago, we, the Deanery, raised funds from generous pledges from churches in the Deanery to place a knife bin in the Diocese where it would be needed the most. Despite working closely with the Diocese, we have been unable to find a suitable location. We are considering using the funds to support an alternative project tackling youth violence and feel that Operation Forgiveness may be a suitable recipient for our funds.)

Jason runs Operation Forgiveness with his wife, Tayo O'Shea and Tayo's mother, Sarah Olumegbon.

Jason introduced us to Tayo's brother, Zac – a small boy with a big personality. Zac was stabbed and killed in 2010 when he was just 15 outside his school by four teenagers from a rival gang. Just the day before, Zac had spoken at a Youth Against Violence conference and was commended for his speech. Zac's death had negative ripple effects on his family and the wider community (the house where Zac was killed in the garden was vacated, Zac's sister gave birth to a stillborn baby a few weeks later, Zac's seven-year-old nephew was scared to use the toilet at school in case he was stabbed too.) Trauma affects us and is passed down. Zac's story is not told to traumatise people but to give hope as God is moving amongst us.

Sarah and Tayo started going into prisons to talk about the ripple effect of crime, but the prisoners wished they'd been told this earlier. So, with Jason, they went into schools and spoke to Year 9s, but this was even too late. They decided to target primary schools and developed an interactive one-day session for Year 6s.

Children shouldn't be affected by murder, but they are. Most hands go up when the children are asked who has or knows someone who has been affected by violent crime. It is important to have informed conversations around this. Zac's nephew didn't quite understand what being stabbed meant and carried around a horrific image in his mind.

The one-day session starts with a video of Zac growing up, so the children get to know him and ends with his memorial service. Sarah tells the traumatic story of the 24 hours around Zac's death. The children are allowed to express how they feel and talk about this. They are told that they have the power to stop killings like this by never carrying a knife and living a forgiving life.

Forgiveness did not come easily to Sarah and Tayo. The court case was drawn out. Sarah was in court every day while Zac's killers were laughing and joking. Sarah managed to

forgive them during that time because of what Jesus had done. Tayo thought that God would not expect her to forgive until one day when her youngest child hugged her, and she felt no love. She knew then that she had to forgive. When we forgive, we let go of anger. The Lord's prayer tells us to forgive so that we may be forgiven.

By sharing the Gospel, the children are shown how Zac's story turns from trauma to hope. They are encouraged to explore what it means to forgive and how forgiveness can resolve anger towards others before it spirals out of control.

Jason, Tayo and Sarah have spent the last seven years developing this faith-based program. It is trauma informed and RE approved to use the right language in schools. They now have a package to train volunteers in churches to deliver Operation Forgiveness in schools and reach out to the whole of London. Funds are needed to support this work.

Scotland decided to treat knife crime as a public health issue with a 60% reduction in knife crime, early intervention being just one of the facets. Operation Forgiveness is not the answer to knife crime but is effective early intervention. Jason cannot imagine that any child who listens to Sarah's story would carry a knife unless they experienced more trauma, which is sadly the case for many children.

Questions

What message does it give criminals if they are forgiven?

Forgiving does not mean no justice. Justice must be served, and criminals need to go to prison. If justice is not good enough, then we need to change it.

How might someone with an atheist or Muslim background feel if they are told that to avoid knife crime, you need to act like a Christian?

We are Christians and that's why we forgive but we don't tell children what to believe. We are sharing our story about why we forgive. We share our faith and the Gospel, but we don't impose a faith journey on the children. We are teaching what Jesus taught not teaching about Jesus. We are RE approved.

- 6 Adoption of "The Role of Deaneries and the Rules and Constitution of Deanery Synods". New rules were approved by the Southwark Diocesan Synod in November 2022 and are in the 20-page document that was previously circulated. The new Rules as set out in Part B VII and Appendix A of the document were adopted and the remainder of the document was received and noted.

7 Deanery Leadership Team

The Diocese would like each deanery to appoint Lay Vocations Champion. Such a person would be passionate and interested in raising the profile of lay vocations amongst clergy and laity alike. The role would encourage us all to think imaginatively about ministry and help people to consider the many roles now available in affirmed, commissioned, and licensed ministry. It is also hoped that the “Champion” would act as a network link between the Deaneries and the Department of Discipleship and Lay Ministry.

We are also in need of a treasurer to replace Veronica Willoughby who would like to step down after approximately 15 years in the role. This is a very small job as there are very few transactions throughout the year to keep on top of.

If you or anyone you know of are interested in either role, please let us know.

8 Eco Deanery Update

Suzie O’Brien sent apologies.

Since the last meeting we had our first Eco Webinar which went very well.

We had over 20 participants representing 12 churches which is a great testament to our commitment to caring for God's creation. In fact, Jack Edwards said that we are one of the most active deaneries in terms of the environment in the Diocese. He also encouraged us to keep sharing our experiences as he views what we are doing as best possible practice and he would like to feed it back to the whole diocese. So let's keep working together and shouting about our successes!

We would like to have more eco webinars. You need to tell us what you would like to focus on.

9 Area Dean’s Notices

Welcome to

- Rev’d Derrick Thompson, chaplain of Hickey’s Almshouses.
- Rev’d Dr Hannah Swithinbank curate at Kew United Benefice.
- Rev’d Joe Moore team vicar of St John the Divine in the Richmond Team Ministry.

The Rt Rev’d Dr Karowei Dorgu, Bishop of Woolwich died on Friday 8th September and was laid to rest on Thursday 28th September. Prayers for his family.

10 The meeting closed with prayers for everything we have heard tonight.

The next meetings of the Deanery Synod will be on

Tuesday 6th February 2024 – St Mary’s, Barnes

Wednesday 22nd May 2024 – St Anne’s, Kew

Monday 30th September 2024 – St Richard’s, Ham



The Diocese of
Southwark

DIOCESAN SYNOD SYNOD QUESTIONS NOTICE PAPER

Question 1

Q Paula Brackenridge [Richmond & Barnes Deanery]

General Synod has set the target for all parts of the Church to reach net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2030. This is a formidable challenge - not least in terms of heating churches, buildings that are often hard to heat well. What plans exist for the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation department to advise parishes seeking to move to net-zero carbon dioxide heating for their churches?

A The Diocesan Secretary

The challenge of reaching Net Zero Carbon is indeed formidable. Here in Southwark, Diocesan Synod agreed in July 2021 a revised Environment Policy which included a target for this Diocese of 2035 for Net Zero Carbon. This includes not only churches (which account for about 30% of Diocesan carbon emissions) but also schools (50%), clergy housing (18%), the Cathedral, offices and staff travel.

The Diocesan Environment Officer, who works two days a week within the JPIC team, has worked closely with the Church Buildings Team and the DAC Secretary to advise churches on carbon reduction. This has included a small energy audit scheme funded by the National Environment Team, webinars, support on completing the Energy Footprint Tool, and offering Carbon Literacy training to everyone in the Diocese. Going forward, we have accessed a starter capacity building grant from the National Team of £15,000 with which we have recruited a temporary Net Zero Carbon Project Manager, who is currently drawing up a capacity bid for a longer-term Net Zero Carbon Programme Manager, reporting to the Diocesan Secretary, who will take forward the Net Zero Carbon Action Plan endorsed by Diocesan Synod in March 2023. We will report on progress to Synod in March 2024 and annually thereafter.