

Title: Deanery Synod Report
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Dunstable Deanery Synod met three times (in March, July, and December) during 2023. These meetings were well attended.

As always there were rich and varied discussions on all occasions, with Safeguarding being the main topic at every meeting. It was stated that members should remember that safeguarding is not only a biblical, theological, and pastoral imperative but is also a purely practical one. We were later informed of the percentage total of clergy and readers during the December meeting who have now completed the required training. Bishop Alan is monitoring this. At the same time, it was stressed that it is the responsibility of each person to ensure they have completed the required training and to inform their Safeguarding Officer.

At our March meeting the Very Rev Jo Kelly-Moore, Dean of St Albans gave a wonderful presentation, entitled “The Journey to St Albans and where we are headed?”

As the title suggests, the first part of her talk was about her journey to the UK, having been born and started her ministry in New Zealand; through to her subsequent appointment as Dean of St Albans in November 2021.

She then spoke about what is currently going on at the Cathedral and where it is headed. She was keen to stress that the Cathedral is looking to support all those in the Diocese, that they pray each day for each of the parishes—wanting everyone to feel they belong and are moving together in faith.

The primary aims in the Mission Strategy, she said, is to promote congregational growth and attract a younger and more diverse congregation in depth and number. The Cathedral also wants to promote social justice, including working with asylum seekers and care for the environment. Happily, visitor numbers are increasing. It takes no less than 600 volunteer workers who work hard to provide a warm welcome. She urged us all to visit the “Saints and Colour” display.

There was expected to be a review of how the Cathedral cares for its buildings and land later that spring.

Dean Jo advised us of a Diocesan-wide consultation on how to progress the mission strategy. During these consultations it was planned that they would be requesting ideas from across the Diocese.

She finished her presentation by stressing that the 55 staff and 600 volunteers at the Cathedral work to serve the Diocese.

There is currently a drive throughout the Diocese for contactless giving. At our July meeting we had a presentation by Kate Ford, the Giving Adviser to the Diocese. She gave us an inspiring presentation and demonstrated two types of contactless machines, which, we were told, are extremely cost-effective, usually giving a return within at least one year of installation. The main aim of course, now that we are in the digital age, is to make life easier for those who no longer carry cash.

The retirement of our own Tricia Humber has left a vacancy for a Lay member of the Standing Committee. Acting Lay Chair, Kerry Smith, outlined the role—three meetings each year to agree the agenda for the following Deanery Synod, meeting and occasionally the perusal of grant applications to present to the Synod to approve them being sent to the Parish Shares and Support Committee for their consideration. If you think this is something you would like to consider, then please contact Rev. Noel McGeeney or myself, Linda Morris.

Linda Morris

Deanery Synod Representative

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