

Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod Meeting
St Andrews Community Centre, Cullompton
September 30th at 7pm for 7.30pm start

Present: Clergy: 6, Laity: 33
Apologies: Clergy: 1 Laity: 7

The meeting was opened by the Revd Simon Talbot, with a prayer of Thanksgiving. This and future Deanery Synod meetings are vitally important as they will be discussing the Five-year Deanery Plan for the Diocese. The Diocese have asked the Deanery Synod to put together a Deanery Plan by October 2020. This is likely to be the principle focus of the Deanery Synod Meetings over the next 12 months. The Deanery Plan aims to allow the Synod to look at how they function as a Deanery, and whether there are any structural changes that could help them to function better, and also to inform decisions about the Deanery allocation of stipendiary clergy posts which are expected to be reduced from about 10 full time equivalent posts (currently), to 9 full time equivalent posts by 2022.

A smaller group as a Standing Committee will then refine the information gathered from each Parish Community and compile a five-year plan to present to the Diocese by autumn 2020. Anyone keen to join this committee could be co-opted onto the Standing Committee

Each table at the meeting represented the Lay and Clergy Deanery Representatives from each Mission Community. Simon had distributed a pack of information for each Parish in the Community, containing an in-depth questionnaire, the 2011 National Census data for each Mission Community, and a map of the Deanery. (The information contained in this pack has already been emailed to each Deanery Rep, but if you wish to have a paper copy sent to you, please contact Bindy Linden).

The Deanery Representatives from each Parish were asked to take the pack of information away with them and think through the questions with their parish, and return the completed questionnaire before the end of January 2020.

Simon also provided some key questions for the meeting to guide each group to explore existing issues about the make-up of our community using the census data from the Parishes, such as changes since the census in the Parish population, its density, ages, households, ethnicity, and religion which may influence the changing needs within each Parish Community over the next five years.

Some of the issues discussed included:

- the change in the use of farms which have been sold and converted into rental or other forms of accommodation, such as an agricultural educational training facility for people with learning difficulties, and as a children's home.
- Fewer farming communities in rural villages with farm workers less likely to live within the village community.
- People still want to be married in the rural village but don't always stay in the area.
- Dispersed rural communities demand the need for more time for communication and services from the Clergy in each of the Parishes.
- There are already stretched demands on the Clergy particularly in rural communities.

There was much discussion at each table and the main points discussed were written and collected by Simon Talbot at the end of the evening.

The meeting ended with a period of prayer at each table.

More details about the dates and venues of future meetings will follow.