

Woodstock Deanery Synod Annual report for 2023

Area Dean: Revd Jeremy Auld (until December 2023)
Revd Dr Andrew Bunch (from January 2024)
Lay Chair: Stephanie Lacey
Secretary: Maria Coonick
Treasurer: Mike Sinfield

Deanery synod meetings

We had three meetings in 2023. All of these meetings were preceded by a short act of worship, which helped us to focus on God's love and the work of the church in the deanery. In March we met at St James the Great in Stonesfield and our Parish Development Adviser, Revd Charles Chadwick, ran a workshop on planning our Mission Action Plan. In June we met at St Leonard's in Eynsham, when Revd Canon Sally Welch spoke to us about pilgrim paths and the possibility of benefices creating their own paths for visitors and inhabitants. In November, we welcomed Karen Fairfax-Cholmeley to St Mary Magdalene, Woodstock. She spoke about Kairos Palestine and each deanery representative was asked to discuss their work with their PCC and decide whether to support the Carlisle proposal before the March deanery meeting. In March 2024 we are meeting at Steeple Aston and John Orridge, the diocesan director of finance, will talk about his strategy and answer questions. Treasurers will also be invited to this meeting.

Comings and goings

We are very pleased to report that our former Area Dean, David Tyler, has been appointed as our new Archdeacon. His collation was at Christ Church on Saturday 18 March at the 6.00pm Evensong service. David was formerly acting archdeacon, having been Assistant Archdeacon to Judy French before then. The deanery welcomed David at a special Evensong on Sunday 30 April. At the end of 2023 David was joined by Revd Preb Jane Haslam, who is our new Associate Archdeacon.

Our Area Dean, Revd Jeremy Auld, left the diocese at the end of 2023 to take up the chaplaincy of Nice and Vence in the South of France. We wish him and Christine many sun filled days! The deanery wished him farewell at our November meeting and presented him with a cheque to reflect our thanks for all his work. At an Epiphany carol service in Woodstock, Bishop Gavin licensed Canon Dr Andrew Bunch as our new Area Dean. Andrew retired to Long Hanborough a few years ago after serving at St Giles and St Margaret's churches in Oxford for many years.

In the summer of 2023 we made appointments to our two vacant benefices. Revd John Reader was appointed to Wootton, Glympton and Kiddington, but very sadly he died suddenly in October. So that benefice is once again in vacancy. Revd Harriet Orridge was appointed to Steeple Aston, North Aston and Tackley and has also kindly agreed to serve on the diocesan synod as one of our two deanery clergy representatives, replacing Revd Marcus Green. Now that Jeremy has left, we have another clergy vacancy on the diocesan synod. Our lay representative on the diocesan synod is Mike Holmes (Woodstock), there is currently a vacancy for another lay representative.

We also welcomed Melanie McGregor as our new Church Inspections Treasurer following the retirement of Ian Hale. We were pleased to present a small gift of thanks to Ian at our March meeting.

2023 was the year in which elections took place for lay deanery synod representatives. Some people were re-elected and some new representatives were voted on to the synod.

Other things to mention

Deanery synod reps, clergy and church officers had the opportunity to meet together in a social setting on two occasions during the year. In January at a Winter Bash in Duns Tew we had a late celebration of Burns Night. We had a successful Summer drinks party at the rectory garden in Woodstock, with its wonderful view over Blenheim Palace.

Stephanie Lacey February 2024
Woodstock Deanery Lay Chair