

## Deanery Synod Annual Report 2020

It is perhaps a vast understatement to say that 2020 has been an unusual year. Nonetheless the work of the deanery has continued and God's work has been upheld in this corner of Oxfordshire.

At the beginning of the year we welcomed our new Area Dean, Jeremy Auld, who is chair of the synod and rector of Woodstock and Bladon. We have only had two deanery synod meetings this year. (The summer meeting was cancelled because of lockdown). Our March meeting was at St Leonard's in Eynsham and the November one took place via zoom. In our March meeting, the first deanery synod of Jeremy's time with us, the opening act of worship was based on Taize and Iona prayers and was compelling and engaging. Amanda Gafford spoke about "Meeting dementia with a positive attitude". She spoke about her work with people living with dementia and left us with some useful insights and information. We did not have a speaker at the November meeting and much of the meeting was taken up with discussion about the parish share. The parish share allocation between benefices was discussed at length with particular reference to the Community Profile Score element and changes were agreed in the method of allocation that will be used at deanery level from 2022 onwards.

As a consequence of lockdown the diocese gave extensions so that the APCMs could be delayed. Consequently the new parish reps were elected at different times, but most were in place by the November synod.

In 2020 two of our benefices were coping with vacancies, Stonesfield & Combe and Hanborough & Freeland. New priests are taking up their appointments in 2021. Our area bishop, [Colin Fletcher](#), retired in the Autumn after 20 years as Bishop of Dorchester. Our Deanery hosted two services to mark his retirement, an in-person service in St Mary Magdalene's Church in Woodstock for the Deanery Chapter and a Deanery Synod service of Evening Prayer on Zoom in which the neighbouring deaneries of Chipping Norton and Witney also participated. Our lay chair, Liz Whittle, who has worked so hard for the deanery synod, has also stood down this year after two terms. We owe her a great vote of thanks and are very appreciative of all that she has done for us over the years. Stephanie Lacey from the Barton Benefice will take over as lay chair in 2021.