

Deanery Synod Report

There were three Deanery Synod meetings in 2022. However, a major item during the year was the instigation of Lay Worship training, known as the, “Out of the Boat Group”, organised initially by reader Chris Evans from Whitbourne, later joined by Rev Elizabeth Wild, who was appointed Diocesan Local Ministry Team Leader and Warden of Readers (and, of course, along with her reader-husband Michael, a much-valued member of the Bromyard congregation). This resulted in four of our congregation – Robert Hollis, Mark Franklin, Pene Seabook and Roger Wilkins -being duly certificated. This has subsequently been extended to the Deanery Pastoral Visiting course, now, in 2023, under way.

The meeting in February was mainly given over to a very stimulating talk by Rear Admiral Richard Wilcocks, Lay Co-Chair of Dore Deanery and the Chair of Laity of Hereford Diocese. He talked of his background, and looked carefully at the future of the Diocese in the future, outlining financial and church building issues (more of this later). *Very sadly, Richard died earlier this year, and will undoubtedly be very much missed.*

The meeting in June, held in Whitbourne church, hosted a presentation by Stephen Challenger, Diocesan Property Secretary. He is secretary to the Diocesan Advisory Committee, secretary to the Parsonages board, and manages glebe land. He is the first contact for anything involving church building work, especially with a Grade 1 listed building such as St Peters.

The meeting in October devoted time to presentations on the Local Worship Leader training scheme.

All the meetings give opportunity for parish representatives and clergy to share information news from the various parishes and initiatives, which is really informative.

Following on from the inspiration shown by Richard Wilcocks, I agreed to become Lay Co-Chair of Bromyard Deanery at the October meeting. In that role I also attend the Herefordshire Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee (where, amongst other things, matters such as the suspension and closure of churches is discussed). Along with other Diocesan Deanery Leaders and Clergy, I have also been conscripted to a Hereford DBF Working Group, which is charged with “Looking at changes to make the diocese more sustainable, exploring ways to ensure the focus on mission and ministry is not overtaken by administration and compliance, and exploring themes such as insurance, buildings, structures, deployment and collaborations – making clear recommendations for change”. I am contributing to two sub-groups, covering Buildings and Structure.

Roger Wilkins. 14/5/23.