



Synod Feedback Comments

28/2/22

At an Open Synod meeting on Monday 28th February 2022, the team leaders presented outline findings of their consultations with parishes and the community. Synod members were asked to consider if there were any other messages that the 'On the Way' team should hear, whether they had 'heard' correctly and whether there were any reactions to the feedback that the team should take into account when drafting their initial plan in the coming weeks.

Various members of Synod and others present raised the following points:

Some parishes have the view that the vicar must do everything.

Key word for required leadership was 'inspirational'.

Problem of older population who may have the view of the priest is all-important – an entrenched view. Changing that is hard.

We can't go on as we are. What we are doing isn't attracting other people – it may suit us but it isn't reaching out. The church is more than people with dog collars.

Huge diversity of churches and within churches – micro-cultures; where there is good stuff it is driven by a vision e.g. work with the poor/environment. This led to hope.

Has the Diocese done a mission audit of the deanery? If you are going to undertake mission – you need to target it properly. Demography has changed over time.

There is a sense that everyone is 'so old' – but biblically, older people have achieved much.

Good research needed; also, empowering old people to work across age groups.

Would like to see development, training and enabling of lay ministry in the Deanery plan – essential to build it in to any plan. The system needs to be less bureaucratic (e.g. the requirement for 3 years training for Readers) if lay resources are to be properly utilized.

Could the pioneer group share with Probus and Roseland?

Transition effectively stopped two pioneering projects – perceived lack of support from Diocese during transitions.

How do we move swiftly through vacancies?

Training of lay people – diocese to consider not immersing them in deep theological studies, but use skills that they have already. Functionally irrelevant.

Jesus used skills that the disciples had, they did not undertake deep theological training – use his model.

How can the church respond better to emergencies like COVID and Ukraine? Build this capacity.

Make the Deanery more relevant to parishes. It would be good to share – use the Synod to assist growth.

Don't forget the community – the positive number of non-church goers who attended the consultations. Involvement is key – get them involved, partner with them.

Recently the quality of worship has improved year on year – some would like to be reassured there will always be a place for a core of 'sincere, devout' worship that is historic.

If we're talking about more lay leadership, we need to consider/review number of Holy Communion services. Waterside churches – services take place at the same time – principle is that HC available at one place every week. The vicar shouldn't be rushing from one to another – we have to learn to live with this practical model. It will be necessary to re-imagine the role of ordained people as well as lay.

Can the church include future demands? Future-proof.

Tendency for each church to try to do everything – out of this process, we can work together to cover between us rather than trying to do everything.

