

East Wivelshire Deanery Synod

Tuesday 28th April 2026 7.30pm

Callington, St. Mary's

Rural Dean: Revd Michael Johnson (MJ) – eastwivelshire@gmail.com

Lay Chair: Richard Margetts (RM) – laychair@eastwivelshire.org

Minutes: Rebecca Giles

Guests: Archdeacon Clive Hodger and Ruth Marriott Director of Change and Renewal

In Attendance: Kirsty Mims, Mary Deacon, Eric Distin, Garry Morris, Margaret Morris, Robin West, Richard Margetts, Christine Mills, Beverly Troczynska, Annabel King, Roy Cooper, Kate Goodman, Debbie Crocker, Jenny Bushrod, Andrew Barrett, Di Burrow, Dona Cooper, Revd Laura Bushell Hawke, Lesley Batham, Lyn Crawley, Jane Coumbe, Miranda Lawrance-Owen, Mark Rawlings, John Darby, Jacqueline Darby.

Apologies: Clare Lee, Francesca Woodman, Barbara Bennett, Sioux Clover, Richard Laugharne, Mary Willis, Richard Hosking.

1. Welcome and Introductions (Revd Michael Johnson - MJ)

MJ welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended thanks to **Ruth Marriott** Director of Change and Renewal and **Archdeacon Clive Hogger**, and all present for attending and supporting the deanery.

2. Reading and Prayers

MJ led a short time of worship, beginning with a reading from Ephesians 4.

He offered a brief reflection, acknowledging that many present may feel they are in a position they would not have chosen, gathered to make decisions that carry weight for their parishes. He reminded Synod that this process is about what we do collectively as churches, acting responsibly, graciously, and for the good of all.

MJ then handed over to **RM** to continue the meeting.

3. Minutes (Richard Margetts RM)

Approval of Previous Minutes **RM** and Synod confirmed that there were no issues raised regarding the previous minutes. The minutes were approved.

Matters Arising - There were no matters arising.

New Triennium (2026–2029) Election Returns - **RM** reminded Synod that the new three-year triennium is about to begin. All PCC Secretaries are required to return their Deanery Synod Election Return forms to both Richard and April Bullard at the Diocese to ensure membership records remain accurate and up to date.

Secretaries are asked to:

- Use the official diocesan form to maintain consistency in communication lists

- Ensure GDPR requirements are met by completing the form correctly
- Submit returns **by 30 June** (earlier submissions are welcomed)

These forms were included in the **APCM packs** already sent to PCC Secretaries.

4. Review of Clergy Posts

RM introduced this item and acknowledged that many within the deanery have experienced bewilderment and a sense of overwhelm due to what has felt like two overlapping review processes — one led by the Diocese (Archdeacon) and one through Change & Renewal / DIT. These processes are interlinked for two reasons:

1. The present **Rural Dean & Strategic Lead** post is a fixed-term appointment, ending January 2027.
2. The **diocesan approach to appointing and supporting Rural Deans has changed**, prompting a wider review of how the role is structured and resourced.

RM noted that a significant volume of documentation has been circulated as part of these processes, and that the aim of this agenda item was to summarise the key elements clearly.

RM emphasised that Revd Michael's review, circulated on 27th April, represents his personal reflections and experience and was offered to assist Synod in understanding the context and particular challenges of the role.

Background (1) – Processes

Two overlapping review and consultation processes have been running:

Archdeacon-led process

- Mandatory review of the interim Rural Dean & Strategic Lead post

Change & Renewal / DIT process

- Review of Deanery Plan implementation (started late 2025)
- Options analysis for the interim post and alternative clergy arrangements

Both processes are driven by:

- The fixed-term nature of the Rural Dean & Strategic Lead appointment
- The Diocese's revised approach to appointing and supporting Rural Deans

The overarching challenge remains ensuring the deanery is both fruitful and sustainable.

Background (2) – Documentation

A substantial amount of paperwork has been generated and circulated, including:

- Archdeacon's letter of 6 March to all Synod representatives
- Guidance from the Archbishops' Council (two documents referenced/linked)
- Profile for the Rural Dean and Strategic Lead post

- Change & Renewal's Deanery Plan Implementation Overview 2025 (circulated with February Synod papers)
- Options Analysis – Spring 2026, circulated for PCC consultation
- Focus Group notes from the two consultation meetings
- Revd Michael Johnson's review, received and circulated on 27 April

Background (3) – February Synod: Where We Started

RM reminded Synod of the position at the February meeting, when the review process was first outlined. Key elements at that stage included:

- The Clergy Posts Decision under consideration
- The work of the Deanery Implementation Team (DIT)
- The developing Options Analysis
- The proposal for a wider consultation group, with representatives from each benefice
- The expectation that the April Synod would receive further updates
- The need for engagement with the Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee and Bishop's Council

Background (4) – February Synod: Where We Left Off

At the February Synod, Richard Laugharne, on behalf of the DIT, presented a slide titled *Clergy Posts Decision*, outlining the overall review process then underway regarding future clergy arrangements.

Key points from that discussion were:

- Synod expressed unease about the depth and breadth of consultation originally planned.
- Following debate, Synod agreed that the Options Analysis should be finalised and circulated to all PCCs for discussion and feedback.
- It was agreed that responses would be reviewed by a Focus Group, comprising:
 - Two representatives from each benefice
 - Licensed clergy

This Focus Group subsequently met twice, and comprehensive notes formed part of the documentation circulated ahead of this Synod.

Background (5) – Options Analysis (Reminder)

RM summarised the three options that were presented in the Options Analysis circulated to all PCCs. These were:

Option 1: Continuation of the Strategic Lead Role

- A deanery-wide post with strategic oversight.
- The Strategic Lead role would continue beyond its current fixed term.

Option 2: Rural Dean Function with Priestly Responsibilities in a Specific Parish

- The interim Strategic Lead post would not be extended.
- The deanery would continue with three stipendiary parish posts.

- One of these priests may be appointed as Rural Dean, with Strategic Rural Dean responsibilities at the Bishop's discretion.

Option 3: Fourth Stipendiary Post as Deanery Missioner

- The Strategic Lead function would not continue in its current form.
- A new stipendiary post would focus on mission across the deanery, particularly supporting the Growing Younger strategy.

Detailed information about relative costs and funding sources for each option was provided within the circulated documentation.

5. Reflections on Acts 15 – Context from Archdeacon Clive

AD Clive thanked **MJ** for his introduction and acknowledged the confusion, disagreement, frustration, and sense of being overwhelmed that many have felt throughout this process. He expressed his appreciation to all present for their willingness to participate and engage constructively.

AD Clive offered a reflection on Acts 15 – the Council at Jerusalem - noting that this was the first recorded major disagreement faced by the early Church. In that example, the community gathered, listened, debated, and ultimately reached a decision. It was not necessarily the outcome each individual arrived wanting, but it was a decision they accepted together as a council — a synod — discerning a way forward.

He emphasised that today's task is not to make final decisions but to make **recommendations**, recognising that there are many moving parts influencing what the eventual decision may be. These include:

- Formal reviews already underway
- Wider diocesan reviews
- A current vacancy
- A half-completed pastoral reorganisation held in suspension
- A change in how Strategic Leads are appointed and supported

He noted that in the current role description, the post is titled *Rural Dean & Strategic Lead*, but the *Rural Dean* element is a bishop's appointment, not an automatic component of the Rural Dean role. If the deanery wishes to retain a Strategic Lead post, it cannot be assumed that the same person would necessarily be both **SL** and **RD**.

He reflected on the wider context: the Church of England nationally, and the Diocese of Truro locally, are navigating significant change. We are interwoven in faith and finances, and sustainability must be understood in both spiritual and financial terms. Financial sustainability is essential, but decisions cannot be made on financial grounds alone; equally, finances cannot be ignored. This balance is being asked of every part of the diocese.

Clive stressed that decisions are made at the most local level possible, and the intention has been to involve as many people as possible in consultation and discernment. This may have contributed to the feeling of information overload, but it reflects a commitment to transparency and shared responsibility.

Synod will be asked to make recommendations on:

- Whether the Strategic Lead role should continue
- Whether to proceed with an appointment to the Callington Cluster / Tamar Valley Benefice

These recommendations will then move through the diocesan processes to the Bishop.

He reminded Synod that the vote must be quorate and conducted by ballot, ensuring that the outcome legally and properly represents the view of Synod, even if individual members voted differently.

Clive noted that although initially there was no formal Option 4, the consultation process has surfaced areas that may require further exploration in the future. The decisions made today will shape the future life of the deanery.

6. Questions and Clarifications

Andrew Barratt (Landulph) expressed that he and his PCC still felt confused by the volume and complexity of the information. He noted that much of the discussion had focused on structures and processes, but he wanted to voice the deeper question: “*Where is God in this? What is God calling us to do?*” AD Clive responded with “**Amen**”, and several members voiced agreement.

Andrew also reflected on the human element of the process — particularly the impact on Revd Michael — and the responsibility the churches feel toward one another and toward their clergy. He asked why the pastoral reorganisation of the Tamar Valley Benefice (TVB) and Callington Cluster (CC) appeared to be tied into the clergy-post review.

AD Clive explained that this connection is due to clergy deployment. If the deanery chooses to retain a Strategic Lead, there would be three remaining stipendiary posts, which directly affects how clergy can be allocated across CC and TVB. He noted that placing a priest into a suspended benefice implies an intention to move forward with that benefice’s future shape. If a benefice is *functioning as one*, then the expectation is that it should eventually have one incumbent.

Andrew asked again why the pastoral reorganisation is affected by the clergy-post decision. Clive reiterated that the number of clergy available determines what is possible, and each option in the analysis carries different consequences for each benefice.

Andrew then asked: “If we vote *no* to the Strategic Lead, does the reorganisation go ahead? And if we vote *yes* to keeping the Strategic Lead, does it not?”

The response was that both processes continue, but the *shape* and *timing* of the pastoral reorganisation depend on the clergy deployment decision. In other words, the outcome of the vote influences the direction and feasibility of the reorganisation, but does not stop the wider diocesan process.

7. Presentation from Ruth Marriott, Director of Change & Renewal

Ruth Marriott thanked Synod for the depth of engagement shown throughout the consultation. She offered one point of clarification arising from earlier discussion: even if Synod were to vote for a model with only three stipendiary posts, the question before Synod is specifically whether or not to recommend the continuation of the present interim *Strategic*

Lead post. She emphasised that if the post were not to continue the deanery would not be left without strategic leadership, as this is provided in several ways across the diocese.

Ruth then presented a series of slides summarising the consultation process and the outcomes of the Focus Groups.

Consultation Process

Ruth outlined the steps taken since February Synod, including the circulation of the Options Analysis, PCC consultations, and the formation of a Focus Group with two representatives from each benefice and licensed clergy.

Focus Group Meetings

Two Focus Group meetings were held:

- **Meeting 1 (in person)**
- **Meeting 2 (via Zoom)** — convened for two reasons:
 - A number of PCCs had expressed a dissatisfaction with the three options offered and that an Option 4 should be developed, with some expressing the view that an Option 4 could include four parish-based stipendiary posts.
 - Several PCCs found the financial information in the Options Paper difficult to interpret, making decision-making challenging.

In response, further financial analysis was undertaken to show more clearly the implications of having **three** or **four** stipendiary posts. Some benefice representatives then returned to their PCCs for further discussion, which resulted in changes to voting at the second meeting.

Focus Group 1 – PCC Feedback

- **25 responses** received (16 from PCCs)
- Responses varied in length and format (statements, minutes, letters)
- All responses were collated and anonymised

Some PCCs were undecided; others requested clearer financial information.

First-pass option preferences:

- **Option 1:** 6
- **Option 2:** 1
- **Option 3:** 2
- **None of the given options:** 7

Financial Analysis

Ruth presented updated financial modelling:

- **MMF contributions in 2025** were significantly below the cost of ministry
 - **£69,490** had to be met from LICF and Mission Funds (MF)
 - Contributions were 4% lower than in 2024
- For 2026, the MMF call increases, meaning an anticipated draw-down of around **£96,000**

Of the LICF allocation:

- **£43,000** is committed to CAP work
- **£43,000** remains available to support MMF

Assuming MMF collection remains stable and applying 4% cost inflation:

- **4 posts (Options 1 & 3):**
 - Not sustainable beyond 2029
 - Residual MF: **£44,218**
 - No MF available for other posts or activities
- **3 posts (Option 2):**
 - Sustainable beyond 2030
 - Residual MF: **£215,829**

Notes:

1. Four *permanent* posts are not considered sustainable because Mission Funds are time-limited.
2. Under Options 1 & 3, all Mission Funds would be consumed by ministry costs.

Focus Group 2 – Updated PCC Positions

The second meeting was chaired by Ruth, with Archdeacon Clive also present. Benefice representatives reported back after further PCC discussions. Many expressed a strong commitment to growth, though with differing views on how best to achieve it.

Clive noted that the clergy-post options intersect with decisions about recruitment to the **Callington Cluster** and **Tamar Valley Benefice**, and with the progression of the **second Pastoral Scheme**.

Second-pass option preferences:

- **Option 1:** 4
- **Option 2:** 7
- **Option 3:** 1
- **“Option 4” – i.e. none of the above:** 4

Option	First Pass	Second Pass
Option 1	6	4
Option 2	1	7
Option 3	2	1
“Option 4”	7	4

8. Questions and Discussion

RM thanked Ruth and Archdeacon Clive for their presentations and opened the floor for questions.

Jenny Bushrod asked for clarification regarding the financial modelling. She noted that if either the three-post or four-post model uses all available funding, she was concerned about

the impact on the deanery's existing commitment to **CAP** (Christians against Poverty) and whether this work would have to be given up.

RM confirmed that the deanery would **not** have to give up its CAP commitment. The CAP allocation from LICF is already included within the financial planning. The issue is that the remaining surplus is currently being used to cover shortfalls in ministry costs.

Archdeacon Clive added that the distinction between **three** and **four** posts is not only financial but also relates to how deanery objectives might be delivered. He explained that:

- If the deanery were to choose a four-post model, all available Mission Funds would be consumed by stipendiary ministry.
- In that scenario, some of the wider deanery objectives might need to be incorporated into the responsibilities of one of the stipendiary posts.
- Employing someone directly (e.g., in a non-stipendiary or project role) is cheaper than a stipendiary post requiring housing and pension provision etc.
- Therefore, choosing a model where all funds are tied up in stipendiary ministry would require careful thought about how other deanery priorities could still be met.

Clive also noted that any decision about clergy deployment has implications for **Callington Cluster** and **Tamar Valley Benefice**, and that part of the discussion is how these benefices might benefit from shared or aligned ministry under different models.

Lyn Crawley (Stoke Climsland) asked whether, if Synod were to recommend a model with three benefice posts, this would lead to progression of the pastoral scheme and effectively signal a move toward a permanent change in the benefice structure.

AD Clive responded that the current Deanery Plan envisages three benefices. Therefore, if Synod were to recommend any option that still involves three stipendiary posts, this would be understood as an endorsement of the existing Deanery Plan, rather than a request to alter it. Under that interpretation, the pastoral reorganisation would continue under the present plan.

He noted that this would also have implications for Landulph, and that—while the direction of travel would be clearer—nothing is permanent, as pastoral arrangements can evolve over time.

Clive emphasised that the main concern expressed across the deanery has been the desire for more clergy, but that this section of the process does not change the total number of clergy available. Instead, the purpose of the vote is to open the way for the next stage of decisions, which will help determine how the deanery moves forward.

Jane Coumbe (Stoke Climsland) raised two questions. First, she reflected that the process of combining the **Callington Cluster (CC)** and **Tamar Valley Benefice (TVB)** had already been lengthy, and she was concerned that if the deanery moved to a model with three benefice posts, this would effectively progress the pastoral scheme and make the change difficult to reverse. She commented that the Deanery Plan appeared already to assume three benefices and three clergy, and she was unclear how the Strategic Lead and Rural Dean roles sat within that. She also asked whether **Option 4** was being taken seriously.

AD Clive responded that the Deanery Plan is owned by Synod, and if Synod wished to change it, there is a formal process involving the Board of Change & Renewal and ultimately the Bishop's Council. He confirmed that Option 4 had been considered seriously because

several PCCs had expressed that preference, which is why the Focus Group reconvened. He reiterated that recommending a model with three stipendiary posts would be interpreted as an endorsement of the current Deanery Plan, which envisages three benefices. However, he emphasised again that nothing is permanent, and pastoral arrangements can evolve.

Jane then asked a second question: she sought clarity on whether Synod was being asked to recommend proceeding with an appointment, and whether that appointment would be one person or whether there remained an option for two posts.

Clive confirmed that the question relates to the appointment of one person, and that Synod's recommendation would help determine whether the deanery should "get on and do what was originally anticipated" or whether a different direction was needed.

Property and Resourcing Questions

Jane also raised concerns about financial sustainability, noting the Albaston clergy house remained empty. She asked why properties that could generate income were not being used more actively for local benefit.

Archdeacon Clive responded that he sits on the **Diocesan Property Committee**, and the intention is always to be good stewards of property assets. However, decisions can be complex. Properties are held to:

- house clergy,
- ensure accommodation is available during vacancies, and
- allow for necessary improvements before new appointments.

He noted that income from properties is reflected in reducing the overall cost of stipendiary ministry, but decisions must balance stewardship with the need to maintain suitable clergy housing.

RM added that the properties are not owned locally but are held collectively across the diocese. Income from them contributes to the overall diocesan budget, which underpins ministry costs across all benefices.

Debbie Crocker (Calstock) added that Archdeacon Kelly had previously indicated that the Albaston property had been identified for the future Kit Hill Rector, and suggested that a short-term arrangement might be possible for the Stoke Climsland house.

RM thanked contributors and brought the discussion back to the recommendations before Synod, noting that these wider issues, while important, sit alongside the specific decisions required at this meeting.

Margaret Morris (Callington) spoke about the particular challenges faced by Callington, noting that although it is the only town church within the Callington Cluster and Tamar Valley Benefice, it is not currently the largest congregation. She explained that Callington has been unable to meet its MMF contribution "by some considerable amount".

Margaret described how, historically, the church had 75–80 regular worshippers, but following the loss of clergy the congregation had reduced by around two-thirds, with many now worshipping elsewhere or no longer attending church at all. This had resulted in a significant loss of generous givers.

She emphasised that the congregation is working as hard as possible, but with Revd Andy's time shared across 11 churches, Callington had only seen him around six times a year. She highlighted the particular needs of the town, describing it as a community with high levels of vulnerability, issues of graffiti and theft, and constant pressure to raise funds. She stressed that Callington needs a priest on the ground.

Her comments were met with applause from Synod.

RM thanked Margaret for her contribution and acknowledged the seriousness of the issues she raised. He noted that this helps the deanery reflect on responsibilities and how they are distributed among clergy. He observed that town churches often receive less community support than some rural churches, despite facing significant pastoral and social demands.

Chris Beckett noted that there were many interrelated factors in the decision before Synod, and that some of the papers had only been received the previous day. He commented that change management is most effective when it has the support of stakeholders, and can be undermined when those responsible for delivering it feel uncertain or unconvinced. He felt that the various elements of the process were interconnected and that a review of the Deanery Plan was needed.

Chris expressed concern that some of the ways the options were being presented appeared conflicted, with two opposing messages being given at the same time. His PCC had reconsidered the matter and wished to see a pause in the pastoral reorganisation rather than proceeding immediately. He said they would not object to a post being appointed, but noted that Archdeacon Clive had indicated that choosing Option 2 would in practice mean that the pastoral reorganisation would go ahead. He felt the process needed to be reviewed properly and not rushed.

RM acknowledged these comments and said that one of the reasons both Clive and Ruth were present was to listen carefully to the concerns being raised. He noted that there was a clear feeling across the room that people did not want to be rushed into making a decision.

Garry Morris (Callington) said that, for him, the question was ultimately about understanding what God wants for the churches. He acknowledged that finances matter, but felt they should not always be the deciding factor. Garry believed that God calls the Church to invest in its people and its future, and that sometimes this means taking a step of faith rather than focusing only on budget lines or declining financial trends. He noted that one rector visiting six times a year cannot provide spiritual leadership to eleven churches, even though the administrative work is carried out well. He encouraged Synod to bring faith into its decision-making and to think about the long-term future. He added that although the Deanery Plan is owned by Synod "we own it, but we didn't create it." it has been shaped and adjusted over time, and he felt it should be reviewed in a measured way. He hoped that by keeping options open, the deanery could create space for future investment, renewed growth, and rising MMF contributions, rather than simply managing decline. His comments received some applause.

RM responded that the desire for growth and commitment to the future was shared by most churches and representatives, even if there were differing views on how best to achieve it.

Miranda Lawrance-Owen (South Hill) Contributed that there were people in her PCC who would begin giving again if they felt there was clear spiritual guidance and leadership.

Debbie Crocker said she was increasingly uncomfortable with some of the proposals. She reminded Synod that members are called to think about what is best for the whole deanery, not only their own benefice. She noted that if the 'Kit Hill Cluster' is asking for two priests, then the same question must be asked for Rame and Rivers, who have thirteen churches compared with eleven, a similar population, and an equally large geographical area. She said this was a personal discomfort, as it is difficult to think beyond one's own needs, but if the deanery is trying to consider what God wants, then it must be about what God wants for all of the deanery, not just some parts of it.

Debbie then asked a further question. If the deanery were to proceed with a model of three benefices with three incumbents, would that prevent the deanery, in six months or a year, from appointing additional clergy if circumstances changed? She asked whether anything in the decision would stop the deanery from appointing another priest after establishing the three posts.

AD Clive responded that finances would play a significant part in any future appointments. He explained that a benefice having an incumbent does not mean there can only ever be one priest. The existing plan for Rame and Rivers already includes a House-for-Duty post, although he noted that House-for-Duty roles are a very niche appointment and can be difficult to fill. He confirmed that the deanery could, in future, consider other forms of ministry such as team ministries, associate priests, missionaries, or other licensed roles, depending on resources and finances and need.

Robin West explained that he was attending as a diocesan representative rather than a parish representative and therefore would not be voting. He asked whether, under the current Deanery Plan, the presence of three school chaplains would be affected by any of the options being recommended.

AD Clive replied that yes, the choice of option could affect the provision of school chaplains. If the deanery chose a model with four stipendiary posts, there would not be sufficient funding to support school chaplaincy. He added that with MMF contributions decreasing, even the specific chaplaincy provision proposed in the plan was becoming difficult to afford. One possibility, though not ideal, would be to incorporate some chaplaincy responsibilities into a stipendiary post. For example, a priest could be employed to serve proportionally in a vacant benefice while also covering chaplaincy work elsewhere in the deanery. However, Clive noted that the preferred approach is to employ a lay person for chaplaincy rather than expecting an incumbent to take on that role.

RM noted that Synod needed to move on, and confirmed that this concluded the comments and input from members.

Closing Remarks from Archdeacon Clive

Clive said that he would be writing a report following this meeting. He noted that Michael had asked whether he could see the report beforehand, and Clive confirmed he was happy for others to see it as well. He explained that it would be a consultation document containing the recommendations and the outcomes of the meeting, and that it would not be hidden. The report would be accessible to anyone who wished to see it.

9. Voting Instructions

RM explained that there were two voting slips and that only current Synod members were eligible to vote. Members were asked to take one green slip and one white slip. Each slip offered the options of voting for, against, or abstaining. One slip was to be used for each of the items being decided.

Results

1. This synod recommends that the interim Strategic Lead post be extended for a further term.

For	Against	Abstain
9	18	1

With a majority ‘Against’, the recommendation taken forward will be not to extend the interim SL post for a further term.

2. This synod recommends that the appointment process to Callington Cluster and Tamar Valley commence without further delay.

For	Against	Abstain
13	9	6

AD Clive and **Ruth** explained that this was not a simple-majority vote, because the item being considered was not a recommendation that would trigger an immediate process or formal next step. Instead, the purpose of the vote was to test whether Synod felt able to support the direction being proposed.

As the combined total of against and abstentions (15) was greater than the number of votes for (13), this indicated that Synod was not sufficiently supportive for the proposal to proceed, in this context, the motion could not be carried, and that the outcome signalled a need for further discussion rather than approval to move forward.

Kirsty Mims asked when the deanery would be looking again at the issues raised, and what she could take back to her PCC. She said Synod needed clarity on the next steps.

AD Clive said that, given the general feeling expressed during the meeting about not rushing, it was clear that Synod did not feel this was the right time to proceed with an appointment. He said this was a deanery decision, and the vote indicated that Synod was not confident about moving to a model of three benefices at this stage. He suggested that the deanery might want to bring forward a different recommendation for discussion at the next meeting.

Kirsty asked whether any guidance could be given now, or whether the deanery would need to wait for the arrival of the new Archdeacon.

AD Clive replied that he would ensure all information and context were handed over to the new Archdeacon, but in the meantime he would continue to act on the basis of this meeting’s outcome. Until the handover, the deanery remained under his guidance.

Ruth added that the outcome of the vote meant beginning a wider process of conversation across the deanery. She said there would need to be a fresh options analysis, looking at what different models might mean in light of the views expressed at the meeting. She also noted that the deanery had Mission Fund money available, but there was currently no clear plan for

how to use it effectively. She said the deanery needed to develop a sustainable and purposeful plan for how that funding could support future ministry.

POST MEETING NOTE:

On further reflection after the meeting, Archdeacon Clive came to the conclusion that while the decision may have seemed unclear on the night the criteria for the motion to pass was for a “simple majority”. That meant that abstentions should not in fact have been counted, in effect, as “votes against” or as grounds to delay the process.

This revised opinion was shared with the DIT when it met on the 14th May. After discussion of various factors, including the deanery’s financial position and the strength of local feeling, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to proceed promptly with the planned recruitment to a proposed joint benefice for the Callington Cluster and Tamar Valley parishes, in line with the principles of the Deanery Plan, the Synod vote and diocesan guidance.

Archdeacon Clive was informed of this conclusion, but decided that in light of possible confusion at the meeting and in the interests of openness and transparency, he would prefer the view of Synod to be confirmed in some way before proceeding with recruitment.

10. Good News from around the Deanery

MJ shared an update on Cawsand, noting that although the church had come close to closing, after some community engagement activities were now beginning to restart and progress was being made again.

Jane Coumbe reported that the Pulse Bus project had benefited many local children. Supported by the Callington Cluster, the team from Launceston had been visiting Stoke Climsland and Callington, providing valuable engagement and sharing the Christian message. Jane said she was passionate about taking church activities outside the building and into the community. She is currently helping to organise an outdoor Rogation service, which this year will take place on her farm. As part of this, an orchard is being reinstated and dedicated to her late husband, Richard. She encouraged others to think creatively and said she was happy to share her experiences.

Michael added that St Germans had been involved in a feasibility project and was currently using grant funding from outside the deanery and diocese to explore how the church could be developed for the next few hundred years as a place of engagement for the wider area. They were working towards a small festival featuring speakers, artists, and other contributors.

He also reported on the recent Passion Play at St Germans, delivered by the Riding Lights Theatre Company. The event was attended by 103 people of mixed ages and had been very well received.

Richard shared that the Foundation in Christian Ministry course had recently begun. He was three weeks into the programme and finding it both interesting and encouraging. He noted that the diocese had agreed to make the course available locally, for the first time, which had allowed more people to take part.

Closing Remarks

Richard thanked everyone for their contributions and said that there was clearly more work to be done following the outcome of the meeting. He noted that additional Synod meetings might be required.

The next scheduled meeting will be on 15th July. Location to be advised.

He had been asked whether Synod could meet in a new venue and invited churches to offer to host, provided they had the usual amenities needed for a Synod gathering.

Annabel suggested that the winter Synod should be held in Saltash, as it would provide a central location and be more convenient for travel during the colder months.

Closing Reflection

AD Clive referred back to the Council of Jerusalem, noting that in that situation no one received exactly what they wanted, but the community received what it needed. He asked Synod to be sensitive to any feelings of disappointment and reminded members that there was no sense of victory or defeat in the outcome. He encouraged everyone to continue seeking God's will together. Clive asked members to be gentle and kind with one another, and to pray for each other in the days ahead.

11. Close in Prayer

MJ closed the meeting in prayer.

The meeting ended.

Note: Appendix to Minutes

Please see attached Finance Slides from Deanery Treasurer Paul Gribble, unfortunately there was not time at the meeting to include this information in the evening's discussions.

With thanks to Rebecca Giles for preparing full and detailed minutes of this important meeting.