

THE PARISH OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST, BROUGHTON

Charity Number: 1134595

Jesus said, "I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15.16

We seek to make Jesus known in our community, through our joyful, loving service and worship

Report to Broughton St. John Baptist Annual Parochial Church Meeting On Preston Deanery Synod 2020 Canon Andrea Titterington

Preston Deanery Synod was affected by COVID 19 lockdowns in 2020 as every other area of church life. Therefore the original meeting schedule for both the Deanery Synod Standing Committee (of which Susan Cherry, as Treasurer, and myself are members) and Deanery Synods was replaced by Zoom meetings. The Standing Committee met on the 1st of April and the 22nd of July to re-arrange plans for Zoom meetings of the Synod on 3rd September and 22nd October.

Deanery Synod – 3rd September 2020

The vicars of four parishes spoke of the ways in which their Parishes were coping under the COVID 19 lockdown and restrictions.

Revd Mike Barton (Longridge St. Lawrence with St. Paul) took a Spiritual, Philosophical and Emotional approach to describing the parish's approach. They built on their parish vision: *Following Jesus in a loving community*. Sources of information were mainly CPAS leaders Webinar and the Diocesan Coronavirus updates. Parishioners were very forgiving and encouraging. The 2020 emphasis was on *building a loving community through prayer and invitation*. Recently we've been studying the book of Acts in an on-line service on Sundays (also delivered to a local nursing home). Since the beginning of lockdown about 18 people have consistently joined in with Morning Prayer 6 days a week and continued all year and into 2021. (I am part of this group.). A Bible course was also held on Zoom. They checked progress with PCC and as a result, with the help of volunteers, opened up both churches from 6th July. Encouraging people back to church, they're wondering about balance between online church and consumer church. Attendance was down at services in both churches even given COVID allowances. Services continued to be streamed.

Revd Chris Boland (Fulwood Christ Church): checked with PCC early on and they preferred weekly service on YouTube rather than Facebook. Some parishioners were willing to join in with own video clip of reading/prayers. The parish set up phone circles, weekly email to parish & monthly letter to those not on-line. Soon also had weekly Zoom Coffee Morning hosted by a parishioner. When they could use the building, they kept the service the same as on-line and opened for prayer one morning mid-week. This followed extensive work by Elizabeth Bailey on Risk Assessments. He offered a copy for any church to make their own. They had recently begun Holy Communion Services and were aiming to run 'The Bible Course' on Zoom.

Revd Mark Bradford (Fulwood St Cuthbert's): are using 'Rhythms of Prayer' and Lectio 365 for on-line morning groups Mon-Thurs; there are also evening sessions, but with greater variety and regular attendance of 15-20 people. They set up telephone service for people to ring up and listen to sermons (01772 347828) which has been appreciated. 24/7 prayers running from tonight (3rd Sept) to Sunday where will be praying for local schools as they return to lessons. Partnership established with their local primary school: 27 families in need have received food each week, 6,000 items gone out so far. Canon Andy Pratt is their Fair Share contact. The next challenge is 'how do we support families in debt and crisis?' Despite all of this on-line activity, as with other churches, their Church income has taken a big hit during Covid.

At first the Church used E-cam Live video streaming from people's homes (only on Mac). This was preferred by some of the Ministry Team, although others without Apple computers use Streamyard on Windows 10 platform. Initially it went out on Facebook, but was then extended to YouTube which allowed feedback. Sunday (30th August) they tried OBS (Open Broadcaster

Software) also from home. This is preferred by their Church Tech Team whilst the planned live stream project from church is rolled out.

Revd Dave Hanson (Preston St Stephen's): progress with Community Connectors: jointly with Mosque, Temple, School, Church and Cricket Club, people have taken responsibility for each street. Collectively they held an event in July with 13 streets involved. It was a wonderful day and they were amazed at the desire in the community to connect with each other. The number watching services on-line has far exceeded those we usually have in church. Used a CPAS survey to understand this new 'community.' There is a wide variety including family members of congregation from across the world! Some others prefer on-line rather than coming to a church building. 60% of those who answered questionnaire were ready to return to church for services, 84% asked for on-line to continue too. From October will be live streaming Services.

Deanery Synod was advised that Archbishop Temple School have vacancies for 2 new Deanery Governors, preferably with expertise in (1) Finance and (2) SEN.

Deanery Synod – 22nd October 2020

Bishop Philip had requested this Synod to consider and discuss **“The Updated Vision 2026 Implementation Plan”** and Carolyn Barton, Bishop Philip and Archdeacon David spoke with feedback discussion in small groups.

Bishop Philip: “One thing I love about the Diocese of Blackburn is that we reject wholeheartedly the narrative of decline and misery that has got hold of so much of Western Christendom. We say **NO** to that, we believe the Gospel can change lives. We believe that churches can grow and that healthy churches can transform their communities. That is why we have **Vision 2026**, which is a growth plan. It's now half-way through its life, hence Carolyn is leading this wonderful work of revision. Initially planned to meet and consult with Deaneries, but along came Covid which has huge implications for our churches and our Diocese. It's taking quite a time to recover church life to where it was, many parishes have done a fantastic job in getting worship going again but many are reporting reduced numbers and damage especially to ministry with families and children.

I think this pandemic has shown the need that the nation has for its church. People are willing to engage with us like never before. There's been an incredibly imaginative, agile response from the parishes, quickly changing long established patterns to get worship and prayer streamed, reaching an audience which includes a new fringe. People serving their communities and serving the needy, including those looking for answers to the big questions: about life and its purpose, and death, people are willing to engage with us. So this work of revising our vision, with mission at its heart, matters more than ever.

Presentation by Carolyn Barton. (Slide 1) A Vision of a Transformed Lancashire - The strapline of the Diocesan Vision is “Healthy Churches Transforming Communities”: What is a transformed community? The Bible is full of idyllic pictures of God's future world, this implantation plan draws particularly on one, Isaiah 65:17-25, *“For behold I create a new heavens and a new earth; a beautiful depiction of a future world where God and humanity live in perfect harmony, where people live in right relationship with each other and with the created world, where relationships are restored; a world where every single human life is precious and the dignity of every person is respected.”*

That's the future, that's the transformed world, that's what God is doing, that's the world that Jesus is bringing in and will bring in when He returns in glory. Our challenge as Christians today is to live that future now! We live on the same planet as everyone else, we eat the same food, we wear the same clothes, we spend the same money, we send our children to the same schools but we do so for a completely different set of rules. We're living lives that make no sense for many people because we're living now to the values of a future kingdom. It's God who transforms but it's us who are bearing witness to His future world; we're pointing to his freedom; we're changing lives.

The implementation plan points to 6 features:

How can we live God's Future now?

- We will build communities and a country that reflects something of God's future kingdom through:
- Worship – our primary purpose
- Conversion to Christ
- Incorporation into the Christian family
- A hunger for justice
- Care for Creation
- Partnerships with people of goodwill.

Archdeacon David. (Slide 2) To Transformed Communities, we need Healthy Churches – if we have a healthy church, communities will be transformed because of that church

Marks of a Healthy Church - picture of tree with full root system – a Healthy Church: (from Matthew: a healthy tree bears good fruit, a healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit). It has deep roots – do your church roots go deep into God through inspiring worship, deep prayer, meditation on scripture, spiritual renewal – the activity of God's Holy Spirit in our midst?

It is growing – think about who has joined your church in the last few years? Does your congregation represent the true diversity of your local community? If not, what should we do about that?

It bears good fruit – do outsiders when they look into your church see the fruit of the spirit in: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control within the church family?

It is good for its environment – how are we having that transforming life-giving effect on our community? How are we changing thru God's Spirit the whole feel and atmosphere of the community we serve?

It needs to be pruned – in order for it to bear fruit. This has been a time where people have deepened in their prayer together and are making it a time to take stock. What are the things in your church that take time and effort and actually don't help us in our desire to make disciples, to be witnesses, to grow leaders and to inspire children and young people in line with our Vision? What might you have to prune?

It produces new saplings – when was the last time your church started a new service maybe or even planted a new congregation?

(Slide 3) Foundations on which Vision 2026 rests (using image of foundations and Christ the cornerstone – the Cross): It is centred on Christ which is fundamental. It is a response to the vision of God and of God's Kingdom. It rests on a solid theology of the mission of God – think about the 5 marks of mission. It involves active repentance – come before God with prayer and fasting – to acknowledge those times when repentance needs to be an active part to us living out our vision. It depends on the generosity of heart of God's people – austere times but we need to still respond. It requires the wind and breath of the Holy Spirit – renewal in the Holy Spirit not an add on, it's fundamental part of who we are as the church. God breathes new life into His people.

Breakout groups were asked to consider what was exciting and challenging about the Vision, Marks of a Healthy Church and the Foundations in the first part of the Plan and the leaders responded to the feedback.

Part II: Building blocks of Vision 2026: (Slide 5) Making Disciples of Jesus Christ:

... knowing the scriptures better through reading, teaching, preaching and study

- . . . praying with greater depth and urgency for the Kingdom of God to come
- . . . offering worship in spirit and truth through the ministry of word and sacrament
- . . . giving generously of our time, talents and money to the cause of Jesus Christ

In the next stage of our vision to develop and promote a rule of life as a key aspect of **Vision 2026**, encouraging all of us to adopt rhythms and patterns in our lives that draw us closer to Jesus.

Our aspiration is to see five thousand people signing up to a **Rule of Life** by 2024. To offer a diocesan wide initiative that encourages and offers **mentoring** as a tool for discipleship for all, both ordained and lay. The aspiration here is to see 75 churches signing up to work on that mentoring for discipleship initiative by the end of the next phase of our Vision.

(Slide 6) Being Witnesses to Jesus Christ:

- . . . sharing the Gospel of salvation with confidence
- . . . meeting human need – actions as well as words – this is particularly important for the Blackburn Diocese with about a third of our parishes in the bottom 20% nationally for income deprivation. So enabling action that has a real transformative impact on our communities is absolutely vital
- . . . planting 10 strategic Church Plants and 200 New Local Congregation – hopefully a familiar goal – vision of New Local Congregations will be prominent in our new phase, that's setting up new services, starting new services at different times, different locations, reaching out to different groups of people.
- . . . caring for God's Creation – goal is to become an Eco-Diocese by 2022

(Slide 7) Growing Leaders for Jesus Christ:

- . . . developing a diocesan-wide culture of vocational discernment for all God's people – particularly exciting area in the last couple of years when we've seen a remarkable increase in the number of people coming forward to discern their vocation and we just long to see more of that as we move forward with Vision 2026.
- . . . forming theologically literate Christ-centred lay and ordained leaders
- . . . nurturing healthy partnerships between clergy and laity by fully implementing the Lay Majority

Ministry Framework – launched earlier in 2020, four part framework of informal lay ministry: authorised lay ministry, licensed lay ministry and Church Army Evangelists.

- . . . generating a pipeline of highly motivated deacons and priests to enable the Diocese's clergy deployment strategy

(Slide 8) Inspiring Children and Young People for Jesus Christ:

- . . . nurturing children and young people in their faith and supporting them as disciples of Jesus Christ
- . . . holding regular worship that is accessible and appealing to children, young people & their families
- . . . enabling growth in the number of leaders of children and young people
- . . . pursuing a step change in ministry with those aged 11-16: fascinating in the Parish Vision Survey which many churches helped to complete at the beginning of 2020, Parishes lacked confidence and were not sure where to go next in reaching out to teenagers. That is reflected in our statistics where we do see rather a cliff edge in attendance at 11 yrs when children can vote with their feet. Next phase of our Vision, want to see a step change in our ministry here.

. . . facilitating effective partnerships between churches and schools – we are so very blessed as a diocese with our church schools – by their number and quality – and in normal times 33,250 children experience a Christian act of worship every single day in our church primary schools. Next phase of our vision we want to acknowledge the role of our school and also facilitate good and effective partnership between churches and schools, recognising the distinct roles they play.

(Slide 9) Key contextual Aspects: Urban Estates and Presence and Engagement Parishes.

(Slide 10) Vital Role played by our Wider Diocesan Family: Blackburn Cathedral, Whalley Abbey, Schools, University, Prison and our hospital Chaplaincies

(Slide 11) Enablers: Vision Support and Finance – last year Diocesan Synod agreed to invest £1M a year over 3 years from Diocesan Reserve to help parishes reach their full payment of their parish share by 2023. Covid has interrupted all this in many ways and in the next phase Stewardship and generosity will take on a whole new importance. Communications – Diocese is keen to support and enable parishes to really embrace the new online era by offering weekly online worship by streaming of services or otherwise and engaging with an active social media feed, again much more about that in the written plan.

Safeguarding, Property, Recruitment, Clergy wellbeing, training & support including our lay leaders wellbeing. It is vital that our leaders are healthy and energised if they are to grow and nurture healthy churches that transform communities.

We want to engage with the nation project that's taking place at the moment and commit as a diocese to developing a culture in which our clergy and lay leaders are generously supported by senior staff and others in their parishes.

(Slide 12) I Corinthians 6:3: Conscious that we are talking about what we can plant & we can water but it is God who will cause it to grow. Calling out for God to pour out his Spirit across Lancashire and across our Diocese.

Another breakout session considered this part of the presentation and received responses.

Bishop Philip concluded the Synod presentations: Vision 2026, where do we start? With what you've got now, the people God has given you, buildings, gifts people have in your congregation, look at your assets. It's a plan for every single person, every church but it will only really take off when every single person joyfully accepts their part in it; when everybody wants to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ; when everyone is looking for ways to bear witness to their faith through sharing it through acts of love & service, when we're spotting those new leaders (lay & ordained) who will be excited to take on bigger roles. It's a vision for everyone.

Despite the loss of Deanery Synods in person, the Zoom sessions worked well.

Training Session on Mark's Gospel – the Gospel for 2021. In addition to the Synods, a training session by Rev. Ian Paul was held on Zoom covering Mark's Gospel on the 22nd of October.