

# Tone Deanery Synod - Annual Report for 2019

Tone Deanery comprises six benefices, 31 parishes, with 35 churches. Rev Helene Stainer is Area Dean

There were three meetings of the Tone Deanery Synod in 2019, with the first meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February at St John's Wellington Church Centre.

There was discussion of and agreement to provide some funding to three initiatives within the Deanery, at Langford Budville, Wiveliscombe and Rockwell Green. As two of these involve transport, there is a clear need to find the most cost effective solution in each instance and to share the information found so as to avoid repeating the work done by others.

Rev Selina Garner stated that we have been successful in our bid to obtain a rural pioneer for Tone Deanery. To aim for an appointment by September. We need to carry out an assessment of how we as a Deanery might benefit from a pioneer, so we need to manage expectations too. The person will be tasked with creating two projects within the Deanery. Our reputation as being an active Deanery is spreading. We have already had two students come to do placements with us

The main discussion of the evening was on "Disagreeing well". Those present were asked to consider how our calling as Christians has an effect upon how we respond. How do we challenge cultural norms? If someone responds "everybody does that", do they really?

The second meeting of the year took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> July at St Luke's, Cotford St Luke.

Rev Alison Norris welcomed everyone to the new church. She thanked all those parishes that supported Cotford in getting the church built.

At the previous meeting, synod approved three donations to support local initiatives. Two more had been received and synod was asked to support these. There was an animated discussion. As our new Pioneer will soon be taking up their post, we will have to be mindful of what our financial obligations are likely to be and not to deplete our accounts now. A vote was taken and the decision made that we suspend that support until we have a better idea of what the impact will be of providing for our rural pioneer. The Secretary then presented a gift to Rev Alison Norris, who retired at the end of July. Alison had been in the Deanery since 1990 and 17 years in her current post.

Discussion of the new pioneer post followed. We need to manage expectations. This new person will not be running toddler or youth groups. She will be coaching others to do that. The discussion had 3 questions:-

- How do we grow our churches younger in our parishes?
- What would you tell our new pioneer were the opportunities for growing the church younger in your parish?
- Who might they work with?

Those present were urged to consider who Katherine might be working with. It was felt that there is not sufficient understanding of this new role and what she will actually be doing. We need to go out to people, it is not enough to wait for them to come to us. Part of the challenge is how we engage with young families.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> Sept, our new Children and Families Rural Pioneer, Katherine Lyddon was commissioned by Bishop Ruth at Wiveliscombe.

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The final meeting of the year took place on 29<sup>th</sup> October at Bishops Lydeard Church Centre. The Secretary explained that the last standing committee had considered holding four meetings next year rather than three. The fact that we are coming to the end of the triennial makes this tricky, so the proposal is to hold a short welcoming service, followed by Tea/coffee, at St Andrew's Wiveliscombe, on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to give new Deanery Reps the chance to meet. (Other meeting dates for 2020 are listed below.)

The Area Dean introduced Katherine Lyddon, our new Children and Families Rural Pioneer and explained that now that Katherine is in post, that the DMPG has looked at our action plan and now wants to concentrate upon communication. There are various magazines and newsletters used across the Deanery. If you are aware of something that deserves a wider audience, please let your neighbouring parishes/newsletter editors know too

Katherine thanked everyone for all their hard work in making it possible for her to be here. She challenged "Who are we", as individuals, as parishes, as a Deanery? What is it that people need?

Rob Walrond, Rural Affair advisor, is looking for farms to host a "journey to Bethlehem", where a cast of children arrive at a farm entrance and go on a journey, meeting different characters before arriving at a barn to meet Mary and the baby. This is aimed at class groups of 25 or so primary school children, the idea being to get them thinking about Jesus rather than tinsel. Please contact Rob if you know of a farm (with suitable coach access,) that may be able to host some of these next Christmas.

## **Footnotes**

There are two vacancies in Tone Deanery at this time, for the Bishops Lydeard benefice and for Heathfield/Cotford St Luke.

### **Tone Deanery Synod meeting dates. (7.30pm start.)**

Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	St John's, Wellington.
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Appley Pavillion.
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Ash Priors Village Hall - Venue to be confirmed.