

Higham Deanery Synod – report for use at 2010 Annual Parochial Meetings (if wished)

1. Higham Deanery Synod has met three times since the 2009 Annual Parochial meetings:
 - i) Thursday 25th May at St Peter's Church, Rushden: Revd Mark Lees, Development Worker, **East Northants Faith Group** (ENFG) and Pastor at Rushden Full Gospel Church spoke about ENFG. It was set up about six years ago by East Northants District Council to work with local churches after carrying out a community audit. Work has developed within the churches, such as the Night Shelter and Street Pastor projects. ENFG (at www.enfg.org.uk) has a real voice in the community and can reach out to people that the professionals can't reach. Christians Against Poverty is a national charity through which several local churches have offered a three-week money management course.
 - ii) Tuesday 20th October 2009 at Woodford Church: Rev Robert Hill (Diocesan Social Responsibility Adviser) and Tony Smith and Germaine Crisp (both of St Mary's, Rushden) gave a presentation on **autism**, as part of a Diocese-wide programme for raising awareness and supporting people who are affected. Dr Paul Middleton, Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee then gave a talk about the work done by the Committee in advising on changes to **the fabric of church buildings** in the Diocese.
 - iii) Wednesday 3rd February 2010 at Higham Ferrers Bede House: the guest speaker was Rev Miles Baker, the Diocesan Mission Enabler, who gave a presentation on **mission**, pointing out that the Deanery was there to be a 'permission giver' to individual churches and parishes – e.g. by providing support and encouragement, and promoting the idea of mission action plans. The importance of building on existing strengths was emphasised, as well as valuing the different styles of worship across the Deanery, and thinking imaginatively together about how to reach people who tend not to go to church, such as young adults. As requested by local campaigners, the Synod passed a motion taking a neutral stance on **the proposed wind farm near Ringstead** – in line with the approach taken by Ringstead PCC. Individual church members there are actively involved in considering the proposals.
2. Two events for the Deanery as a whole have also taken place:
 - i) A well-attended **Deanery Songs of Praise** service at St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers on Sunday 13th September: Ven David Painter (Archdeacon of Oakham) was the preacher
 - ii) The **"Moving Forward in Hope" Lent meeting** at Higham Bede House on the afternoon of Sunday 21st February. This was attended by over fifty people. It included input from Diocesan staff, DVD footage of mission activities across the Diocese (and of our new bishop, Donald Allister) and short talks about what three churches in the deanery are doing to reach out to their community.
3. Other points:
 - **Diocesan Synod elections**: Higham Deanery was the only deanery in Peterborough Diocese in which a vote was necessary, for the laity. Eight candidates put themselves forward for five places.
 - **Deanery Mission Plan**: this is a 'live' document, discussed at each Synod meeting. Rev John Humphries moved to Wales during 2009 and so Finedon is in an interregnum, with discussions on future pastoral arrangements being in hand. In addition, Canon John Westwood has recently moved from Irthlingborough to the Rothwell benefice, and Canon Peter Gompertz has retired from Woodford and the Addingtons, making it likely that the existing close links between the churches in Irthlingborough, Woodford and the Addingtons will be strengthened more formally during 2010.
 - The **Deanery website** continues to provide key information on the deanery and its constituent parishes. It is at www.highamdeanery.org.
 - **Meetings for PCC Treasurers** from across the Deanery were held on 15th April and 8th October. The next one is due to take place on the evening of Thursday 22nd April.

Andrew Presland (Lay Chair) and Canon Grant Brockhouse (Rural Dean)