



The Deanery in its synodical context

RELATING TO DIOCESAN SYNOD AND GENERAL SYNOD

Part of the work of a Deanery Synod is to develop and sustain links with those who represent local parishes at the Diocesan Synod and at the (national) General Synod, and to keep up to date with what is going on.

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

You will probably know your Diocesan Synod representatives, but will you know those who are elected to General Synod to represent the Diocese?

Details of your General Synod representatives, at least those from your archdeaconry, should be circulated with the Deanery Synod minutes following their election so that everyone knows a bit about them. Much of this information can be gleaned from their individual election addresses produced when they were nominated.

Members of Diocesan Synod and General Synod are there to represent you, and to be available to you, as part of the synodical government process. Your role and theirs is to communicate both ways, 'up' and 'down' (or perhaps we should say 'out' and 'back'), within that process. But don't let your representatives get away with the idea that the Deanery Synod is nothing more than a post box – just a channel of communication.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Your Synod Secretaries should make sure that the addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of your representatives are available and kept up to date.

RECEIVING REPORTS FROM DIOCESAN SYNOD AND GENERAL SYNOD

A report from the Diocesan Synod is likely to be routine at the subsequent deanery meeting, because those present at the Diocesan Synod are already members of the Deanery Synod.

However, reports from General Synod need more careful planning. In some dioceses each General Synod member takes responsibility for keeping in touch with one or more deaneries.

Anything fed back from General Synod needs to be both succinct and relevant. Blow by blow reports of proceedings at General Synod can be found in Church Times, and may well include arcane legal debates of no immediate interest.

Summary reports are issued by the Diocesan and General Synod secretaries, but these too will not be sufficiently targeted to the needs of deanery synod members.

The best way to ensure relevant and useful reporting is establish direct contact with a member General Synod (if one is not designated by the diocese) and work out a pattern that best suits your deanery. This could perhaps be

- A brief written report from your contact that is circulated in advance (not more than one side of A4!).
- A verbal report by your contact at the deanery synod meeting immediately after each meeting of General Synod (i.e. usually twice a year) offering personal highlights and impressions.
- This can then lead into direct questions and answers.
- A maximum amount of time for this whole agenda item needs to be agreed in advance – perhaps twenty minutes at most.

HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

For communication to work effectively within the synodical process, you as a deanery synod member need to play your part by ensuring that your views are made known, either through the Deanery Synod or directly via the members of Diocesan or General Synods.

However, your personal views are only a part of what others need to hear. As a representative, but not a delegate, you have a responsibility to relay views that are expressed in your parishes – but you are, of course, free to make your own judgements and express your own opinions.

No less important is the feedback to your parishes. If there is no written report produced by the Deanery Secretaries (complementing the minutes, which serve a different function), then you may need to write your own.

Personal impressions and opinions are important, but try to avoid mixing them up with an honest statement of what others had to say. At the end of the day others may be wiser than you!