

Deanery, Diocesan and General Synod reports for APCMs Saffron Walden Deanery 2025

Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod met in May, July and October 2024 and in February 2025, with the meeting in July being a Deanery Service.

At our meetings there is always a chance to share what God is doing in our parishes and benefices, as well as an update on finance and any benefices in vacancy. We usually have a presentation- often from an outside speaker

Presentations included:

Archdeacon of Stansted, Kate Peacock, who encouraged Synod to “ tell their faith story”. We met 2 new members of clergy: Revd Gary Fleming (Clavering et al) and Revd James Webster (IWP parishes).

“Open the Book” (which is our Deanery Fund project) was introduced by Debs Webster and parishes were encouraged to consider if they would like to receive training to take Open the Book into “signed up” local primary schools.

The Diocesan Secretary and CEO, Michaela Southworth gave a presentation explaining Diocesan funding and how the Parish Share is used.

Meetings are open to all, though only Deanery Synod members may vote.

Next meetings:

Thursday May 22 nd - Chrishall Church
Thursday July 17 th - Deanery Service, St Mary's SW

Diocesan Synod

The new triennium for Diocesan Synod members began in November 2024, which means that members sit as representatives until 2027.

Diocesan Synod met only twice, in June and November 2024 with the meeting planned for March 2024 being cancelled for lack of business.

There is always a Presidential Address when Bishop Guli speaks, and often a financial update or a Budget to approve. There is also an opportunity to pose questions about aspects of the Diocese.

Topics covered included:

Carbon Net Zero- how the church can contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

Parish Support and the Church Buildings Roadshow which aims to help churches with DAC applications etc.

Safeguarding

The next meetings are scheduled for March and June 2025.

General Synod

General Synod met twice, in July 2024 and February 2025 against an increasingly febrile backdrop especially after the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury in December 2024.

Topics covered in these sessions included:

Safeguarding- responses to various reviews and adopting an independent scrutiny of safeguarding

LLF- updates on the work being done around the blessing of same sex couples and whether same sex married clergy can be ordained and licensed.

Finance- poor financial stability is a result of a missional crisis

Changes were made to the makeup of the Vacancy in See Committees and Crown Nominations Committee

A wide-ranging Governance Review was presented and approved. This streamlines many functions and increase accountability and transparency. It is something I am particularly pleased about as I am part of the team working on this review.

The next meeting will be held in York in July 2025.