

## **STAMFORD DEANERY SYNOD 18 APRIL 2016**

### **REPORT FROM DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING OF 19 MARCH**

We received a report from the Diocesan Board of Education, introduced by the Director Jackie Waters-Dewhurst. She commented that the Government's aim, as part of the initiative to move all schools to academy status, was for schools to be grouped under multi-academy trusts of 40+ each. The Lincoln Board was gearing itself up to grow towards this level.

Last autumn, nine people (including Martyn Taylor) from the Diocese attended the 'Shared Conversations' on human sexuality organised in the East Midlands Region. At Synod, they each had an opportunity to describe briefly their impressions of the three-day event, and any conclusions. My overall impression was that they had found it a valuable exercise, and that all those involved shared a commitment to 'hang together' as a communion, despite deep differences. Our Synod members might want to ask Martyn to say something about this when we meet.

The Diocesan Secretary Angela Sibson described progress towards a strategic plan for the Diocese, something that would be owned by all. She emphasised the diversity of the Diocese, and the importance of local ministry supported by the staff in Lincoln. Specifically, she floated the idea of developing learning communities across the Diocese, bringing together people from similar benefices, some of which could be geographically defined (eg coastal towns). Their aim would be to share experiences and learn from one another. Martyn suggested it would be useful to develop a community of market towns, drawn from across the Diocese, and to bring in outside speakers to lead the learning. Synod agreed that Ms Sibson should develop the idea further, and bring it to Synod again. Ian Silk said we needed a stronger theological vision for the Diocese.

We received a report of the work of the Parish Share Committee. In discussion with parishes, the Committee had agreed reductions of share requests totalling £400k for 2016, out of the budgeted income from share of £4.8m. So the Finance Committee would need to dig that much deeper into reserves to fund the budgeted expenditure. There was no sign as yet of the necessary increase in giving. In discussion, the point was made that comparable parishes in other dioceses were paying much higher shares than ours. Manlake Deanery moved a resolution asking the Finance Committee to cap increases and decreases in share to a single figure percentage change in any one year and to introduce more bands for the relative deprivation and the population of parishes. This was passed. The Chair of the Share Committee, Archdeacon Mark Steadman, did not resist the resolution, but suggested that it would be premature to make any change to the new formula during the first year of a three-year transitional period.

Philip Dale