

## DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2010-2011

Wheathampstead Deanery Synod, made up of elected clergy and lay members under the leadership of the Rural Dean and Lay Chairman, met three times in the last year and was privileged to have two bishops and one canon as speakers! As part of his programme of deanery visits (to 'get to know his new diocese') Bishop Alan visited various parts of our deanery during a day in March (including Rothamsted Research) and in the evening met with Synod to expand on his vision for *Going Deeper into God, Transforming Communities* and *Making New Disciples*. He also listened to our comments in relation to what goes on in the churches and communities within our deanery. It was a great opportunity to hear Bishop Alan, who also made a presentation to Michael Hughes on behalf of Synod for his service and dedication as its Secretary over the last eight years.

In July Synod heard about the diocesan budget, the parish share scheme and forthcoming changes to clergy pensions from the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, our own Canon David Nye. As always, David made what is a complicated – and possibly dry – subject intelligible to the non-experts amongst us, and also faced us with the challenge of increasing parish giving [in relation to estimated average incomes, here in St. Albans diocese people give 2.9% compared with a national average of 3.4% (31/42 dioceses)].

Synod welcomed the new Bishop of Hertford, Bishop Paul, to its November meeting. He spoke about modern developments in liturgy and the current state of church life in England. Bishop Paul believes there is a whole generation growing up that knows nothing of the Christian faith and, as in New Testament times, people are hearing Jesus' stories for the first time – not a tired and familiar message but new and exciting. People have a longing and desire to meet God through the worship offered in our churches week by week, and the occasional offices in particular should be used creatively. As well as discussing these important topics, Deanery Synod members also received regular reports on Diocesan Synod meetings and from General Synod. Last year Deanery Synod members took part in the election of five clergy and six lay representatives who, together with our three bishops, will represent St. Albans diocese on General Synod for the next five years. [An election by single transferable vote which was an interesting process.]

The deanery also held a supper party for the churchwardens of every parish in the deanery, allowing them to meet with their fellow wardens and discover the similarities and differences in their parishes. A similar occasion was arranged for Readers and their spouses in appreciation of their ministry around the deanery.

Finally at the annual Deanery Evensong last October the Revd Will Gibbs, vicar of Redbourn, was commissioned as Rural Dean by the Archdeacon of St Albans, succeeding the Revd John Green from Flamstead.

Elizabeth Brown  
Deanery Synod Secretary and member of Diocesan Synod