

# THE DEANERY OF HEYWOOD and MIDDLETON

[www.heywoodandmiddletondeanery.org](http://www.heywoodandmiddletondeanery.org)

Minutes of a special open meeting of the Heywood and Middleton Deanery Synod held on 29<sup>th</sup> November at St Martin, Castleton

Canon Nick Feist opened the meeting at 7:35pm with a reading from 2 Corinthians, Chapters 8 & 9 (on the subject of Christian giving). There followed a short period of silence for reflection.

Present:

All parishes, except St James, Heywood were represented.

Purpose of Meeting:

To provide an opportunity to explore the new way the Parish Share is calculated and to share in discussion any issues that it has 'thrown up'.

Discussion:

Copies of sheets were distributed showing how the new scheme distributed the Parish Share between parishes showing a comparison with previous years. Each was briefly outlined.

Nick explained that he was speaking on behalf of the Diocese. He explained that the overall scheme was that approved by the Diocese and General Synod. The Standing Committee had met to exercise the authority vested in it by the Deanery Synod at an earlier meeting to vire the Diocesan calculated quota to take into account local situations and means. Moreover, there were concerns that basing new share exactly on the Diocesan figures had some potential dangers of unfairness and skew for a number of reasons:

- Surveys may have inadvertently been filled in incorrectly.
- Part of the weightings were based on attendance figures from too small a sample (4 weeks)
- Where regular average congregation numbers over the 4 weeks were less than the number of surveys (only filled in by 'regular' attendees) then the Parish Points calculation was based on the 4 weeks ASA figure not the 'true' regular attending figure which was, by definition, indicated by the form returns.

It was also explained that the Standing Committee had decided that where the new Parish Share was computed to be less than the parish was previously contributed then the old figure would try to be maintained unless current circumstances suggested it was not prudent to do so. This was a policy the Deanery had adopted for many previous years.

The sheets showed the result of the viring process against the original Diocesan figures.

What appeals had been received by the Diocese had already been incorporated in the latest set of figures. It was explained that any reduction of one parish's share had been absorbed centrally and had not been redistributed to the remaining parishes in the Deanery.

Nick asked that each parish should study the figures and if they felt that they would have particular difficulty in meeting the new allocations they were free to meet in private to discuss their particular issues.

Rev'd Andy Pell pointed out an error in the Rhodes AWA 3 year rolling average attendance figures. It was explained that this was simply a transcription error for that column alone in not showing the adjusted reduced figure when the St. Thomas and St. Mary sub-totals were deducted from all the other total AWA figures for the parish. The correct average figure was used in the final calculations.

The following comments and observations were received from the floor.

- Assuming a parish priest costs £30K (incl on-costs) a deanery of 12 priests cost £360K. Only 2 parishes were 'paying their way' under that criteria.

# THE DEANERY OF HEYWOOD and MIDDLETON

[www.heywoodandmiddletondeanery.org](http://www.heywoodandmiddletondeanery.org)

- St Michael's reported that they had used £6k from reserves last year to meet the quota. Even if all the residual reserves of around £3K were used this year, there would still be a shortfall of £2.5K on the new figures. However, the TRIO initiative had been run and they had experienced a 14% uplift in regular giving as a result.
- St Leonard's reported that the new share allocation would be a 'struggle'.
- St Martin's expressed the general sentiment that, "We would all do our best to meet our share".
- Any reductions in Deanery share would severely impact Diocesan resources, which were cut last year by £100K and resulted in redundancies. Admin is already pared to < 10% of total budget.
- To enhance accuracy and fairness of the income survey returns and to be more responsive to changes of circumstances, should we not consider doing the survey annually and not 3 yearly as recommended by the Diocese and attendance figures done on a larger number of weeks, if possible on the average regular attendance over a whole year.
- Where is budget for Mission?
- Where is budget for Youth Workers?
- £1/week increase by each current attendee would generate the extra £45K needed.

## Conclusion:

The meeting closed with a general consensus, reflecting the views expressed earlier that we would all seek "to do our best" to meet not only our own parish shares but those of the whole Deanery.