

BULLETIN 7

AUGUST 2023

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## INTRODUCTION

It has been a long time since the last bulletin, so this one is a bit of a 'catch up' on various topics.

We are looking forward to the **DEANERY ENVIRONMENT SERVICE** which is a great opportunity to get together and worship, so please do support it and let others know that it is taking place.

Details are set out below but the key points are:

**Sunday 3rd September, All Saints Churchyard, Great Ayton, Refreshments from 3.30 pm, Service at 4.00 pm. Combine it with a guided walk from Stokesley Parish Church along the riverbank to All Saints, leaving at 2.00 pm. (Please drop me a mail if you know in advance that you are joining the walk)**

As we seek to move forward on our journey, this bulletin looks at what Church opportunities are available across the Deanery, shares some dreams and takes a fresh look at our LCS plans.

Please share this bulletin with others as widely as possible. Telling others is one of our great challenges and opportunities. Feedback on any of the content is always appreciated.

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## NEXT DEANERY SYNOD

Wednesday 18th October, Kirkby Village Hall.

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## OVERSTRETCHED? DO WE NEED A BROADER OUTLOOK?

*"The overriding aim for the future is that any worshipping member of the Church of England, when asked by their friend where they could go to explore their faith, would be able to recommend an expression of Church locally that would really suit them."* **Stephen Cottrell**, Archbishop of York

Over hundreds of years we have built up our parishes to serve our local communities. But 'local' may not align to our parish structure or reflect people's willingness to travel. How would we be able to answer the question posed by the Archbishop if our own parish's offerings did not meet the needs of the enquirer? We have three potential responses:

- Explain what we can offer and hope that is sufficient;
- Work out how and when we might be able to offer something approaching their requirements, at some time in the future;
- Find out where something suitable may be available in a neighbouring parish.

Reality of course is a blend of all these, but only the final response gets close to the Archbishop's aim. As examples, consider the following two questions:

- If you are running an Alpha course, how would you feel about people attending from outside your parish?
- Someone in your community wants to attend a café church which is not available in your parish. Are you comfortable offering, or even promoting, the one taking place in the neighbouring parish?

Communication is a challenge at all levels, but it does appear particularly difficult across parish boundaries, even within the Deanery. Why is that?

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## WHAT DO WE HAVE TO OFFER?

As a start we need to know what expressions of Church are available from the parishes in our Deanery. Also, at this time of year we are planning our autumn and winter schedules for prayer and discussion groups, courses and other special events. As an attempt to pull some of this together, you will find a short questionnaire attached with this bulletin, so that we can build up a picture of our church at a wider deanery level. Please arrange for it to be completed and we will use it to update our website and for wider communication.

As we seek to move forward on our journey, this bulletin looks at:

- The Living Christ's Story programme – What's next?
- Dreams
- Environment and the Community

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## DREAMS

At the last Deanery Synod many members shared their dreams of what they would do if given £50,000. Below is a list of the ones that were noted down:

- Spiritual analysis of films programme, having the space and resources to show films properly;
- An overhaul of IT facilities both in Church and office, together with training to use it effectively;
- Hiring or employing a communications specialist with the technical resources to manage a social media presence and, or, provide technical IT support;
- Hiring or employing a music professional to go out into schools, focusing on enhancing the musical life of the Church through education, singing and instrument tuition;
- Promoting sport through church football, cricket or other teams, coaching, kit provision;
- Creation of a specific children's area within the Church, in sight of parents but sound proofed!
- Installation of a good sound and projection system;
- Purchase and operation of a 'Godly Play Bus' that can go out into the parish(es);
- Creating space for hosting film nights and developing a spiritual analysis of films.

- Building a worship space for younger children and resources that could be used during the week, not just Sunday;
- Developing and staffing a resource centre and high-profile leadership of church related activities;
- Operating and running a mobile café
- Establishing a creation group within the Church with different groups focused on the 5 marks of mission – Tend, Tell, Teach, Transform, Treasure.
- Purchase of a minibus to enable parishioners to attend worship and other events;
- Employing an outreach specialist for engaging with schools, young people and their families.
- Increasing facilities for education and training.

OK, this is a bit of a brain dump but there are a lot of great ideas, many of which could be the seeds for action. A lot of these would appear to be held back by resources other than just money. They may just need one or two people to get together, evaluate the requirement, assess the options and set out a proposed solution. This could be done within a Parish, or together with other parishes who have a similar dream. Raising money is much easier once you know what you want to achieve and how much it will cost.

There are a number of dreams that are clearly shared by a number of parishes, for example use of IT resources. We will investigate ways in which we can turn some of these into reality.

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#### DIOCESAN DISCIPLESHIP AND EVERYDAY FAITH SURVEY



Separate mailings have gone out asking as many people as possible to complete the Diocesan Discipleship and Everyday Faith survey. <https://forms.office.com/e/9L2LENUK1b> This is Living Christ's Story at a personal level, addressing how we expand our faith in everyday life. It is also linked to the Rhythm of Life programme which was launched, very quietly, at the beginning of the year. I am not aware of anything happening in the Deanery so far but am happy to be proved wrong.

<https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/uploads/attachment/5901/rhythm-of-life-booklet.pdf>

Whilst it is easy to be skeptical about the value of such surveys, we really should support the Diocese in this. Most of our Living Christ's Story plan is about what we do together, as groups. The Rhythm of Life is a challenge to all Christians, on an individual basis, to show what it means to be a disciple.

More on this later in the year.

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#### DEANERY ENVIRONMENT SERVICE

Summer is here (really!) and we're getting ready for our first Deanery Environment Service on Sunday September 3rd - All Saints churchyard, Great Ayton.

Our musicians & singers (ably led by Nadine Brown) are working on Creation / Environment songs for all ages for us to sing. There will be shakers & rattlers available for children (and all who are young at heart).

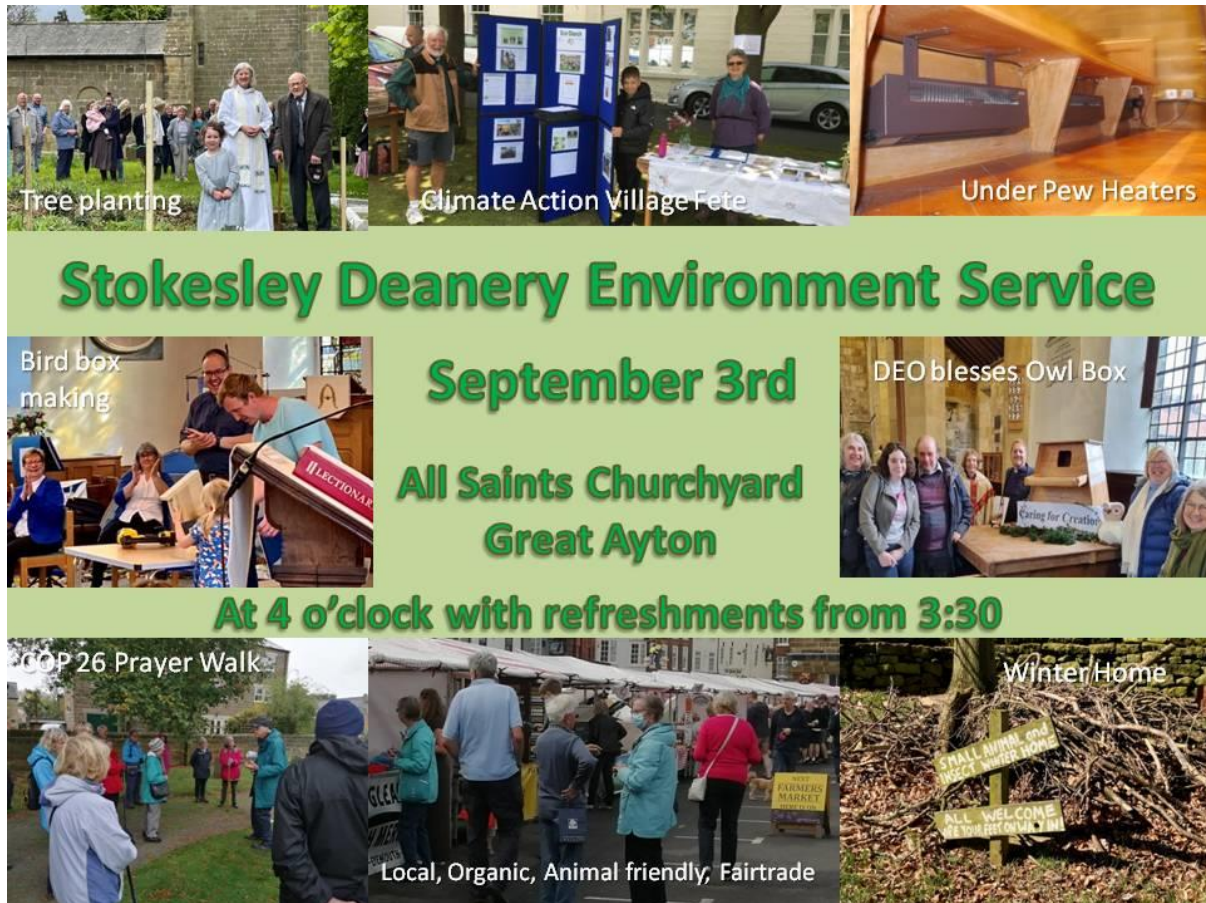
For the more energetic we are getting everything set for the Prayer / Environment Walk / Pilgrimage from Stokesley Parish Church (assemble at 2 o'clock) - John Stinson will be our Environment Guide (if you have binoculars do bring them).

Helen Land has the baking well in hand for our refreshments (available from 3:30)

Members of the network will be leading prayers and readings - if you would like to volunteer please get in touch.

It would be great to have a display featuring photos (and a few words) from each of the parishes - please let us have copies by Monday August 21st at the latest (or if you prefer to bring your own copies on the day please let me know how much space you'll need!)

Contact Geoff Jaques [jaques132@gmail.com](mailto:jaques132@gmail.com)



Tree planting

Climate Action Village Fete

Under Pew Heaters

## Stokesley Deanery Environment Service

Bird box making

### September 3rd

DEO blesses Owl Box

### All Saints Churchyard Great Ayton

At 4 o'clock with refreshments from 3:30

COP 26 Prayer Walk

Local, Organic, Animal friendly, Fairtrade

Winter/Home

#### LIVING CHRIST'S STORY – WHAT NEXT?

*“But in all of this, the core principles of Living Christ’s Story: Becoming more like Christ; Reaching people we currently don’t reach; and Growing churches of missionary disciples that are younger and more diverse will be central.”*

*“But it will be a mixed ecology of Church, where, within our ministry units, we will find ways of revitalising our parishes, but often we will find the best way of doing this is by also focusing on new initiatives, and new communities of faith that reach out to new groups of people.”*

These are two ‘but’ statements taken from the Archbishop’s presidential address to Diocesan Synod on 1 July 2023. The full address can be found here and is worth reading.

<https://anglican.ink/2023/07/03/archbishop-of-yorks-presidential-address-to-his-diocesan-synod/>

I also attended the first Diocesan meeting of the Implementation Co-ordination Group on 26th June. It was a useful day aimed at networking, but the clear message was that Deaneries should look to the Diocese for resources and assistance, but not for leadership. New initiatives, such as the re-

vitalise programme, are being implemented by the Diocese directly with the Parishes concerned. It is up to the Deaneries to fit them into the LCS plan.

From the experience of the last twelve months it is clear that Parishes are more comfortable seeking their own paths to implement Living Christ's Story in a way that works for themselves. Working together across benefices, something that our plan focuses on, adds another layer of complexity. Our history, parochial structure and the renewed emphasis on the parish in the Archbishop's address, all suggest that Parishes might agree the common objectives, but that everybody is happier to take their own approach.

Our vision, mission priorities and key principles all remain as agreed. The sections on 'Becoming more like Christ', 'Re-imagining Mission and Ministry', and 'Transforming Structures and Finances' are sound guiding principles, to keep us focussed.

However, we could change our implementation plan with less focus on coming together across the Deanery for planning and discussion. Instead, each benefice should work on their own Living Christ's Story programme, focusing on new initiatives, and new communities of faith that reach out to new groups of people, as well as organising their parish or benefice around this objective.

Basically, we put less emphasis on coming together to plan what we should do, and concentrate on sharing what we are doing and have done.

- Identify the initiative(s) your parish will undertake;
- Make the outcomes measurable in some way;
- Be prepared to share this with the Deanery.

We will use the Deanery Synod carousels as part of this sharing activity and, where there is commonality, encourage groups to get together on specific matters.

That then leaves the Deanery LCS team to support the benefices, help with resources where needed and to spread the good news of what works and avoid that which does not. After 6 to 9 months we can assess what is going on and decide how to fill the gaps in the Deanery Plan.

In all this, the Finance track stands as an example of what can be achieved, having clear objectives, measurable outcomes and accepted accountability for them. It should be our aim to apply such characteristics to all our initiatives.

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## LIVING CHRIST'S STORY – WHAT HAS STARTED?

As examples of Living Christ's Story initiatives that have started, we had a carousel table at the last Deanery Synod hosted by Revd Darren Moore and David Local. They explained how, at St Mary Magdalen, Yarm, they have agreed that routine Parish affairs will orientated towards Living Christ's Story. Small groups of interested people, drawn from the PCC and non-PCC members, are being set up to consider issues such as Fabric and Generosity of Loving Disciples (GOLD). These groups will undertake due consideration of issues and bring appropriate recommendations for the consideration and hopefully approval of the PCC.

As a result they have been able to seek feedback from the parish as a whole with initiatives having started, such the Alpha course and Church café. They have also identified priorities and dreams including Church WiFi and Church Hall improvements.

At St Francis of Assisi church in Ingleby Barwick, Rev Brenda Forrester and her team have embarked on a programme to put Living Christ's Story into practice under the banner of the Creation Club. Again, this is a fundamental change to the way that they organize the work of the parish, in this case setting up project groups, each of which has objectives linked to the 5 marks of mission:

## 5 Marks of Mission



The individual groups exist under the umbrella of the Creation Club Council, which sounds complicated but allows a larger number of people to be involved through the different interests and objectives.

The two key characteristics of both these initiatives are the change in perspective and the increased involvement of non PCC members in undertaking the work of the Church.

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### WHO HAS MOVED

There have been three key moves over the Spring and Summer. Most readers will now be aware of them but, for the record:

The Revd Laura Wild remains in the Deanery, taking over as Vicar of Brookfield, Stainton, Hemlington and Hilton in June;

The Revd Jane Robson moved out of the Deanery in July, taking up the post of Priest-in Charge of Kirkleatham;

The Revd Paul Peverell has moved house, but most definitely remains Vicar of Great Ayton with Easby! However, Paul has been appointed a member of the College of Canons of York Minster as Canon & Prebend of Husthwaite.

Our congratulations, prayers and best wishes to Laura, Jane and Paul

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### SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Safeguarding Training (Basic and Foundation) for all those who prefer to receive face-to-face training, is taking place on Friday 1 September, 10:00 am, at Ingleby Greenhow village hall. Details have been sent out separately, but please contact Mark Sutcliff on 07783 517870.

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