

STOKESLEY DEANERY In the Diocese of York

Minutes of the Deanery Synod held at St. Mary Magdalene, Yarm, 17th March 2026.

Attendees: Clergy: Revds. Tessa Stephens (Area Dean) Darren Moore (Asst. Area Dean) Kate Brown, Liz Brown, Emma Cain, Sarah Cliff, Elaine Curry, Jon Dean, Brenda Forrester, Ben Gunter, Geoff Jaques, Laura Wild. **Lay:** John Dickinson (Lay Dean), Liz Taylorson (Secretary) Bob Ardley (Treasurer), Ken Taylor (DFA) Malcolm Granville, Olwen Hopkins, Judy Hall, Linda Wells, David Haworth, Haley Durant, Christine Young, Linda Smith, Julia Ardley, Jenny James, David Hand, Avril Rhodes, John Rhodes, David Local, Nick Land. **Visitors:** Beryl Nadin, Angela Beckwith, David Young and Laura Beesley (Diocesan Head of Communications)

1) Welcome and Prayers (Rev. Tessa Stephens, Area Dean)

Lou Beesley from the Diocesan Communications Team was welcomed to Synod and Tessa read the Magnificat – appropriate for a focus on good news!

2) Apologies for absence

Clergy: Revds Anne Heading, Vanessa Kirby and Donneta Thomas. **Lay:** Astrid Wood, Carol McGee, Maggie Lawrance, Sally Hamlin, Roy Parsonage Frances Brown and David Heading.

3) Minutes of last meeting (8th October 2025)

Agreed: Minutes unanimously accepted, proposed by Christine Young, seconded by Ben Gunter.

4) Good News (John Dickinson, Lay Dean)

Rev. Darren Moore – Yarm has been advertising for a Director of Music/Organist and has had four applications; they hope to appoint after Easter.

Nick Land – Great Ayton's Café Church is proving successful, with a range of attendees including a group of teenagers who were welcomed by Revd. Sarah Cliff. The 'Quiet Revival' in action!

Rev. Brenda Forrester – Ingleby Barwick now has 4 'home groups' operating including a men's group, which have been enthusiastically received by new church attendees. Teesside Church Leaders Together group has been approached by the Bible Society looking for an area of ecumenical co-operation to invest £400,000 of advertising. Teesside hopes to be a strong contender for this investment.

Linda Smith – Nunthorpe is celebrating its centenary year with a range of events including a concert series.

Rev. Ben Gunter – music at Stokesley is proving a success with many people wanting to join the band, and attendance increasing – the perceived stigma of attending church is diminishing.

Rev. Liz Brown – Ingleby Barwick is planning a living nativity for 2026 – with a real camel (and other animals)

Rev. Kate Brown – 'The Holy Spirit is moving in Kirklevington' with increased numbers of both older and younger children for messy church

It was also reported that **Revd. Vanessa Kirby** is working in Hemlington and Coulby Newham on outreach projects, including a drop in for international women and a joint project with the Beacon Baptist church.

5) **Deanery Financial Adviser Update (Ken Taylor, DFA) and Listed Places of Worship Scheme and its replacement:**

Good News – all parishes/benefices have paid their FWO until March!

As we enter APCM season, parishes need to produce:

- Financial accounts for 2025
- Signed statement from an Independent Examiner
- Annual (Trustees) Report containing aims and objectives, achievements and performance, finance review, reserves policy, future plans and admin/governance details.

These should be submitted to the Diocese no later than 28th May.

Listed Places of Worship Scheme and its replacement: The Listed Places of Worship Scheme (for recovering VAT on projects) has now closed and will be replaced by the **Places of Worship Renewal Fund**. This promises:

- £23 million per year for 4 years (same as LPoW scheme)
- Is a capital fund providing up-front grants for capital works
- Unclear whether this will include VAT
- Will be managed by Historic England.

Uncertainty over this new scheme makes grant availability even more important. The Cornerstone Grants Database, available from Phil McBride of the Generous Giving Team, is an invaluable source of information about available grants. This database is best used to apply to multiple small grants

6) **Finance (Bob Ardley, Treasurer)**

The Deanery Accounts (Appendix 1) have been informally examined by Sally Hamlin – many thanks to Sally.

Income: Deanery levies covering 37 of our 38 reps have been received.

Expenditure: all cheque payments have been cashed or cancelled. The main expenditure for 2025 was to Nunthorpe PCC for secretary's salary, 15 book grants to LLMs and ALMs and reimbursement of the Area Dean's expenses for the lunch with Bishop Barry.

The opening and closing balances were:

- 1.1.2025 - £2808.10.
- 31.12.2025 - £2818.55

The Deanery Budget (Appendix 2) shows an increased cost for the Secretary's pay (£1190 projected in 2026, compared to £1022 in 2025), proposed by Nunthorpe's Treasurer, Gary Cox, and agreed by Bob on behalf of the DLT. These figures are net of a £500 grant from the Diocese. The Budget also shows a reduction of lay reps from 1st July 2026, from 38 (2023-2026) to 33 (2026-2029) with a consequent reduction in budgeted income.

Agreed:

- **The Parish Deanery Levy** should remain the same as 2025 at £50 per rep allowed in the parish, irrespective of the number of reps elected.

- **The book grant for 8 LLMs and 7 ALMs** should remain the same as 2025 at £45 per LLM/ALM

Proposed: Revd. Brenda Forrester. Seconded: Revd. Jon Dean.

7) **Communications – Laura Beesley, Head of Diocesan Communications Team.**

Good news stories (item 4) are always appreciated by the Comms Team! Laura is new to her role, having previously worked in the hospice sector and in prison reform, and is keen to look at what the team is doing, what they should be doing, and how they can help parishes. Storytelling is the most effective way to communicate, and sharing good news brings hope and encourages new people to come into the church – all good news stories are gratefully received. The other side of the job is that the team has to manage bad news situations too.

Question: How do you propose to communicate with those outside the C of E?

Answer: Connecting with the community through local contacts (local radio, press etc.) but this will vary between areas – some areas already have contacts to build on.

8) **Carousel Conversations:** all on the theme of communication.

- **Social Media** – Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp – inspiration and guidelines, with Fr. Darren Moore.
- **Perfect Posters** with Revd Tessa Stephens and Liz Taylorson.
- **Canva for beginners** with the Revd. Ben Gunter.
- **Websites and A Church Near You** – Laura Beesley.

9) **What's on around the Deanery and beyond.**

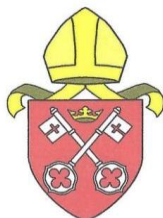
- **Cream Teas and stalls** – Easter Sunday, 1-5 at Chop Gate Village Hall.
- **'Here and Now' art exhibition** at Hutton Rudby, Monday 30th March – Thursday 2nd April. "What if Jesus lived here and now in Hutton Rudby?" Art by Hutton Rudby Primary School.
- **Centenary concert series** at Nunthorpe – first concert is an organ recital on April 18th.
- **Owl evening talk** – Saturday May 9th at Chop Gate Village Hall, 6.30 for 7.00 pm, £5 entry. Tickets from 01642 778217.

10) **AOB and Date of Next Meeting:**

- Revd. Donneta Thomas (curate at Whorlton Benefice) is to be ordained as a Priest on 28th June at 4 pm in Swainby Church.
- Revd. Ben Gunter has been appointed as the Deanery Vocations Champion.
- Parishes/benefices are reminded to submit their electoral roll stats to the Diocese (and Liz) and to pass the names of newly elected Synod reps to Liz.
- Date of next Synod: Wednesday 8th July 2026.

The meeting concluded with the Grace.

Appendix 1



Diocese of York

Stokesley Deanery Synod

Deanery Accounts

for the year ending

31st December 2025

Hon Treasurer:

Bob Ardley (PCC Secretary and Deanery Synod member, Stainton)

B. Ardley 2/2/2026

Hon Independent Examiner

Sally Hamlin (Deanery Synod member, Hilton)

S.A. Hamlin 2.2.26

Stokesley Deanery Synod accounts FY 2025.xlsx

Stokesley Deanery Synod									
Payments and Receipts Account									
For the year ending 31st December 2025									
Balance on 1st January 2025 (2024)	No	@ EX	Actual 2025	Budget 2025					Actual 2024
			£2,808.10	£2,808.10					£2,435.63
RECEIPTS									
Parish Levy	37	£50.00	37/38	£1,950.00	£1,900.00			38	£50.00
								1	£40.00
Sub-Total				£1,950.00	£1,900.00				£1,940.00
Total Receipts				£1,950.00	£1,900.00				£1,940.00
PAYMENTS									
Deanery Event									
Deanery Event (+Barry Deanery Lunch 22/9/25)			£124.85	£124.85	£400.00				£0.00
			£124.85						£0.00
Administration			#####	£950.00					£849.33
Deanery Secretary Pay (2hr/1wk at £10/hr)			£0.00	£20.00					£0.00
Deanery Secretary Expenses			£0.00	£20.00					£0.00
Area Dean Expenses			£0.00	£20.00					£0.00
Lay Dean Expenses			£0.00	£20.00					£0.00
Deanery Treasurer Expenses			#####	£1,022.30	£330.00				£849.33
IT / Website maintenance									
(Sec) Website hosting for 12/12 (24/12)			£62.40	£65.00					£43.20
(Sec) New website design and construction			£62.40	£62.40	£65.00				£43.20
Donations and Grants									
7/7 Deanery ALMs' Book Grants	7	£45.00	£315.00	£315.00				7	£45.00
7/8(+1) Deanery Readers' Book Grants	7	£45.00	£315.00	£360.00				8	£45.00
			£530.00	£675.00					£875.00
Total Payments				£1,835.55	£2,070.00				£1,567.53
Increase (Decrease) in Funds				£10.45	-£170.00				£372.47
Statement of Assets and Liabilities									
As at 31st December 2025 (2024)									
Bank Accounts									
Current Account as of 31/12/2025				£2,816.55	£2,638.10				£2,808.10
Debtors (2025 Parish Levies unpaid at 31/12/25)	1	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£0.00			0	£40.00
Creditors (Area Dean - Lunch for +Barry)	0	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00
As of 31/12/2025 - Total				£2,866.55	£2,638.10				£2,808.10

R. Bradley
2.2.2026

S.A. Hamlin
2.2.26

Appendix 2

Stokesley Deanery Synod accounts FY 2026 Budget.xlsx

Stokesley Deanery Synod									
Payments and Receipts Account				Budget				Actual	Budget
For the year ending 31st December 2026 (2025)				2026				2025	2025
Balance on 1st January 2026 (2025)				£2,818.55				£2,808.10	£2,808.10
	No	@ £X				No	@ £X		
RECEIPTS									
Parish Levy	33	£50.00	£1,650.00			37	£50.00	£1,850.00	£1,900.00
(Debtor - 2025)	1	£50.00	£50.00			37/38		£1,850.00	£1,900.00
Sub-Total			£1,700.00						
Total Receipts			£1,700.00					£1,850.00	£1,900.00
PAYMENTS									
Deanery Event									
Deanery Event (eg Quiet day at Wydale)			£400.00					£124.85	
(+Barry Deanery Lunch 22/9/25)			£400.00					£124.85	£400.00
Administration									
Deanery Secretary Pay									
(2hr/wk at £14.94/hr Jan - Aug									
2hr/wk at £15.48/hr Sep - Dec									
NO Dioc Grant from Sept)			£1,190.00					£1,022.30	£850.00
Deanery Secretary Expenses			£20.00					£0.00	£20.00
Area Dean Expenses			£20.00					£0.00	£20.00
Lay Dean Expenses			£20.00					£0.00	£20.00
Deanery Treasurer Expenses			£20.00					£0.00	£20.00
			£1,270.00					£1,022.30	£930.00
IT / Website maintenance									
(Sec) Website hosting for 12/12 (24/12)			£65.00					£62.40	£65.00
(Sec) New website design and construction			£0.00					£0.00	£0.00
			£65.00					£62.40	£65.00
Donations and Grants									
7 x Deanery ALMs' Book Grants	7	£45.00	£315.00			7	£45.00	£315.00	£315.00
8 x Deanery Readers' Book Grants	8	£45.00	£360.00			7	£45.00	£315.00	£360.00
			£675.00					£630.00	£675.00
Total Payments			£2,410.00					£1,839.55	£2,070.00
Increase (Decrease) in Funds			-£710.00					£10.45	-£170.00
Statement of Assets and Liabilities									
As at 31st December 2025 (2024)									
Bank Accounts									
Current Account as of 31/12/2026(2025)			£2,108.55					£2,818.55	£2,638.10
Debtors (2026 Parish Levies unpaid at 31/12/26)			£0.00			1	£50.00	£50.00	£0.00
Creditors (LLM/ALM book grant not cashed)			£0.00			0	£45.00	£0.00	£0.00
As of 31/12/2026(2025) - Total			£2,108.55					£2,868.55	£2,638.10