STOKESLEY DEANERY In the Diocese of York

Minutes of the Deanery Synod held at Christ Church, Great Ayton, July 8th 2026

Attendees: Clergy: Revds. Tessa Stephens (Area Dean) Darren Moore (Asst. Area Dean) Kate Brown, Sarah Cliff, Jon Dean, Anne Heading, Geoff Jaques, Laura Wild. **Lay:** John Dickinson (Lay Dean), Liz Taylorson (Secretary) Bob Ardley (Treasurer), Ken Taylor (DFA) Malcolm Granville, Olwen Hopkins, David Heading, Diane Brown, Paul Brown, Haley Durant, Julia Ardley, Jenny James, David Hand, Avril Rhodes, Sarah Weyell, Beryl Nadin, David Local, Neill Burgess.

1. **Prayers (Revd. Sarah Cliff)**

2. **Apologies for absence**
   Clergy: Revds Liz Brown, Emma Cain, Elaine Curry, Brenda Forrester, Ben Gunter, Vanessa Kirby, Donneta Thomas. **Lay:** Carol McGee, Nick Land, Sally Hamlin, Margaret Lawrance, Margaret Laycock, Linda Wells, Christine Young, Linda Smith, Angela Beckwith.

3. **Minutes of last meeting (17th March 2026)**
   Agreed: Minutes unanimously accepted

4. **Good News – Short stories from around the Deanery (John Dickinson, Lay Dean)**
   Revd. Donneta Thomas sent her thanks to all those who attended her ordination.
   The Churchwardens Admission Service held in our Deanery this year was successful and well attended.
   In Great Ayton, the spire refurbishment at Christ Church is complete, and, thanks to a generous benefactor, there is also a new sound system.
   At Kirkby-in-Cleveland an Easter Godly Play workshop was a huge success, bringing new family groups into the church. The upper age limit was removed when older children wanted to continue to attend!
   The Pilgrim Pop-up Café at Kildale is another success story (every second Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm). There will be a **Pilgrim Walk** to Kildale from Newton-under-Roseberry (another Pilgrim Place) on Saturday, 8th August, leaving St. Oswalds at 9.30 and arriving at St. Cuthbert's for lunch.
   A Joy of Creativity event on 4th and 5th July celebrating arts and crafts in Bilsdale was greatly enjoyed.
   Family Church at 4 at Brookfield had started at the beginning of July, every other Sunday afternoon, welcoming baptism families and those with toddlers.
   A Bronze Eco Church award has been awarded to Hilton Church.
   Work Experience at Yarm – a Conyers school student had requested the chance to complete his work experience placement with Revd. Darren Moore at Yarm Church. He had the opportunity to experience work in the café, get an insight into chaplaincy (hospital and prison) and also attended worship.
   Stokesley Church family and youth work is flourishing. A family service with worship band is well attended, and recently two of the teenage attendees volunteered to run a service themselves, on a theme of winning and losing.

5. **Welcome to a new triennium! Introduction to the role of the rep and the Synod (John Dickinson)**
   Following the recent elections, new members Beryl Nadin, Diane and Paul Brown and Neill Burgess were welcomed to their first Synod. At a typical Synod, as well as the formal business we usually explore different aspects of Deanery life in a wide variety of 'carousel conversations'. All members are encouraged to think of subjects that they would like to see covered in future.

6. **Elections to Diocesan and General Synod – how you fit in and why it matters (Neill Burgess)**
   Neill comes to our Synod as a member of General Synod who worships in Stokesley Parish Church. He explained that the Church of England is a complex organisation with 42 Dioceses in the country, and within our own Diocese (York) 21 Deaneries. The General Synod is a legislative body, which makes important legal, strategic and financial decisions that apply across the whole church. Individual parishes are all independent charities and the support of a parish priest is provided by the Diocese. General Synod is the highest legislative body, responsible for policy-making. At Diocesan Synod level there is strategic decision making and budgeting, supporting Deaneries. Deaneries have no authority over parishes but are a support network for learning and sharing.
   Deaneries also work as a conduit to Diocesan and General Synod with items proposed at Deanery level affecting policy at higher levels – our own motion on Safeguarding was discussed at Diocesan Synod, and subjects such as sustainable church flowers and Palestine being discussed at General Synod, having come from Deanery Synods. News from General, Diocesan and Deanery Synods are all passed, via the Deanery Synod, to each PCC.
   In September there will be the 5 yearly elections for Lay and Clergy reps to the Diocesan and General Synod. It is the responsibility of Deanery Synod members to vote, and closer to the time you will have a chance to vote based on an election address from each candidate. Neill recommended the Diocesan Website as a good source of information about the role of a Deanery.
   The Living Christ's Story project will be discussed at Deanery level with a focus on four areas – Becoming more like Christ, Reaching people we currently don't, Growing churches of missionary disciples, Transforming our finances and structures.

7. **Lay elections:**
   The Deanery Leadership Team (DLT) consists of Revds. Tessa Stephens and Darren Moore (Area Dean and Assistant Area Dean). Lay members are John Dickinson (Lay Dean) Ken Taylor (Deanery Financial Advisor) Bob Ardley (Treasurer) and Roy Parsonage (elected Lay member). Liz Taylorson (secretary) is not an elected member of Synod and therefore not a member of DLT. All current post holders are willing to continue, and no other volunteers came forward. Lay members were invited to vote.
   - Agreed: John Dickinson to be re-elected as Lay Dean. Proposed: Roy Parsonage. Seconded: Avril Rhodes. Unanimously agreed.
   - Agreed: Bob Ardley to be re-elected as Treasurer. Proposed: Ken Taylor. Seconded: David Local. Unanimously agreed.

- Agreed: Roy Parsonage to be re-elected as a lay Synod member. Proposed: John Dickinson. Seconded: Sarah Weyell. Unanimously agreed.

8. **Deanery Financial Adviser Update (Ken Taylor, DFA)**
    - A reminder that all Annual Report and Accounts should have been submitted to the Diocese by the end of June. Reports from 7 parishes (Ingleby Greenhow, Faceby, Carlton, Brookfield, Bilsdale, Kildale and Nunthorpe) are still outstanding.
    - At a meeting in Northallerton in June to discuss the Free Will Offer, two leaflets were produced to inform PCCs and congregations about the FWO. Packs should have been sent to all PCCs, but Ken has some spare copies. The main discussion point is that the direct cost of ministry will increase from £57,770 to £60, 926 in 2027 (due to an increase in clergy stipends.) The total cost of ministry will rise from £76,721 to £81,3000, which will become the new ministry unit target for 2031.

9. Finance (Bob Ardley, Treasurer)

- Account Balance: The Current Account balance on 7th July 2026 was £2,533.02
- Deanery Income: Now that we are at the beginning of the new triennium, with newly elected DS Reps in place, Bob shall be sending requests to Parish Treasurers for payment of the Deanery Levy of £50.00 per DS Rep. If you have a new PCC Treasurer in post since the 2026 APCM please will someone from your Parish let Bob know his/her contact details.
- Deanery Expenditure: Nunthorpe PCC has been reimbursed for the Deanery contribution to the Deanery Secretary's pay for Jan – Aug 2026. Bob has asked the Area Dean to check if the Diocese is again going to pay a grant towards the Secretary's pay for 2026-2027, and asked Nunthorpe PCC Treasurer to invoice him for the Deanery contribution for Sept-Dec 2026 (to be paid in September, and which will include the Secretary's increase in pay from 1st September).
- On Bob's return from his summer holiday, he shall send out (via Incumbents) the Deanery Book Grant cheques for LLMs and ALMs. If there any new LLMs or ALMs to be created at the "Celebration of Lay Ministries" service in York Minster on Sat 12th September 2026 please send their details to Bob so that they can be added to the list of Book Grant recipients

10. Deanery planning – a very brief introduction (Revd. Tessa Stephens)

We are to make a new start to the *Living Christ's Story* planning process (as mentioned above), learning from previous attempts with a simpler planning process. This will result in shorter, deliverable plans for the Deanery, which, we hope, will produce positive actions. There is a 4 page framework guide on the Diocesan website which will help us to work towards an achievable plan for the Deanery, and we have made a simple timeline that we should be working to. (See appendix 1). We hope that this process will provide a way that we can work in unity and learn together.

11. **What's on around the Deanery and beyond.**
    - See the Good News section above for information about some new initiatives in the Diocese, and also 'What's on' leaflet handed out.
    - An organ recital by Harry Brown will take place on Friday 24th July at 7 pm at Kirklevington.
    - Stainton Mothers' Union will be hosting a Strawberry Tea on Monday, 21st July, starting at 2 pm.
    - Nunthorpe's Centenary celebrations continue on Friday 17th – Sunday 19th July.

12. A reminder that events are listed most weeks on our website and Facebook pages. Roy suggested that similar leaflets might be produced for Christmas and Easter services, and Liz is happy to do this (this information is already provided on our webpage (https://stokesleydeanery.org/) and Facebook feed at Christmas and Easter) but the timing may not fit well with Synods for distribution of a physical leaflet.

13. AOB and Date of Next Meeting:
    - On 12th September at the Minster there will be a celebration of lay ministry and licensing of readers a ALMs. Please let Bob Ardley know of any attendees, as they will need to receive a book grant.
    - Date of next Synod: Wednesday 4th November 2026, venue TBC.

The meeting concluded with the Grace.