

During 2021 three Deanery Synod meetings were held.

At the deanery 'Zoom' meeting held on 21 April 2021 the Archdeacon of Exeter, the venerable Andrew Beane was guest speaker; and his contribution included insight as to how he saw the church moving forward in the delivery of Christian mission and ministry as we began to emerge from the pandemic, and he endorsed the approach agreed by General Synod of addressing a complex system of government within its structures and working towards a humbler, simpler but bolder approach in our engagement with the world. Within the new patterns of ministry, this called for the church to be **relevant** in its sharing of the good news about Jesus out into the community; to **reinvest** in its structures and strategy, and to take stock of the impact as a consequence of the global pandemic with the increasing use of social media, delivery of online services reaching a far wider audience than just weekly Sunday services in church buildings, and the impact on the environment of gatherings hosted via 'Zoom' etc.; and taking time to **refocus** before moving forward positively and proactively in our future engagement out into the local community.

At the 4 July 2021 meeting, again via 'Zoom', the Revd Carolyn Keep [a Methodist minister] compared and contrasted the workings of the Methodist Church and the Church of England based on her own experiences. The business section included the approval by synod members of Will Halse, taking on responsibility for managing Kenn Deanery's own financial accounts until the end of this triennium [June 2023]; announcing the election results for both lay and ordained members standing for diocesan synod; and the promotion of the Devon Historic Churches Trust 'Ride & Stride' fundraising events planned for September 2021, as we began to emerge from the stricter government covid restrictions.

The meeting held on 13 October 2021 was the first where members attended in person since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, and was hosted at the Lord Haldon Hotel at Dunchideock. And it was at this meeting that the Revd Dallas Ayling announced that she was stepping down as Rural Dean at the end of 2021.

The Revd Pete James was then invited to share his role and responsibility as a Rural Church Plant Pioneer Minister, leading a team forming St Basils Community, meeting in renovated farm buildings and the grounds extending across the boundaries of both North Kenn Mission Community and Teign Valley and Haldon Hill Mission Community. He also shared the history behind this pioneer 'fresh expression' of church by building and growing a community around the values of Basil of Caesarea [330–379 AD] by offering a new monastic contemplative approach and reaching out specifically to those who are on the fringe of society. In response to a question raised by the Revd Carol Green, Kenn Deanery congregations were being invited to contribute by prayer towards this evolving community; that it may become a place of deep discipleship to help make it creative, with bold and innovative followers of Jesus; and in a way similar to Basil of Caesarea, for the church plant to offer prayer and a holistic approach by offering hospitality, healing and restoring dignity to those who feel they are on the fringe of society. St Basils also currently works in partnership with Exeter Network Church who assist in providing practical resources alongside contact being made via social media / internet etc.

At these meetings there are also the financial report updates on the contribution towards parish share payments etc; an update of Diocesan Synod business through comprehensive reports submitted by the Revd Ruth Frampton and circulated to all members; and the deanery's contribution towards the upkeep of churches through the Devon Historic Churches Trust event hosted in September accompanied by the 'Ride & Stride' fundraising initiative – with St James Church contributing the majority of the monies raised via Kenn Deanery for 2021. And to record an additional thank you to everyone who contributed towards this, in addition to the thanks offered through the notices given at the St James Sunday Service on 28 November 2021.

Anna Venables

Elected lay member West Teignmouth [St James] and Kenn Deanery Standing Committee member [January 2022]