

**The Parish of Marcham with Garford
Abingdon Deanery Synod Report for 2020
For Church APCM, 6 June 2021**

Abingdon Deanery Synod met on three occasions in 2020. Two of these were virtual meetings, with the ubiquitous Zoom; the January meeting was the last in person meeting. On that occasion, the visiting speaker (Heather Ramsey) was from the Church Mission Society. In that talk, the point was made that all of God's people are called to join God's mission, using their individual and specific gifts, skills and experience. This presentation ended with the questions: "what is mission to you?" "what is your heart/gift to the world?" and "how can you join in?" Good and thought-provoking questions for us as individuals, a parish and a deanery.

The meeting in September reflected on what ministry and parish life had been like during (what turned out to be) the first part of the Covid19 pandemic. The challenge of balancing online with face to face ministry, the additional burden of producing material online, and the financial impact that the lockdown had had in some of the parishes was discussed. The idea of a short term contingency fund was proposed. This would be funded by parishes in a stronger financial position and managed by the deanery. Its aim is to support parishes who this year would struggle financially because of the change in circumstances brought about by the measures to control Covid19. It has as its vision 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.

The final meeting, in November, was again via Zoom. This included a presentation by Ian MacDonald (the Diocesan Youth Adviser) on Children's and Families' Ministry. The importance of this ministry was affirmed, and the creativity that had sprung from parishes adapting their children's and family ministry to the constraints imposed by the pandemic were celebrated.

The deanery is awarded a grant from the diocese which is then disbursed to parishes that apply for mission grants. A number of parishes (including Marcham) were awarded grants this year to support the purchase of livestreaming equipment. A sign of what the church service is in 2020.

Caroline Manders
29/5/2021