

Connections with the wider church

General, Diocesan and Deanery Synod

This year most of the synods took place virtually.

I attended a small socially distanced general synod in 2020 which passed amendments to standing orders which allowed some urgent work to be done virtually such as the budget. Less substantive work than usual was done this year because of the inability to meet due to lockdown restrictions. Although debates and votes took place virtually, the conversations and meetings and informal learning do not tend to be so successful in my experience which meant that the general synod meetings were less successful. The Living in Love and Faith material was published but there has not been much work at general synod level on this which is likely to have to wait until the next series of sessions.

There will be elections later this year for new general synod representatives.

Maggie Perrins became a Deanery Synod representative this year. She and I attended a virtual meeting where we were split into different chat rooms to discuss how our churches had coped during the pandemic. Maggie explained in her group how we had managed to keep Holy Trinity Church open when allowed for private prayer and the use of a card machine for donations, and I shared with my group how we held blended services where people could join on zoom or in person when possible, so as many people as possible were able to attend church.

We also discussed how things might be different when lockdown ends, with some churches concerned that some people won't return and others feeling that they had managed to build relationships over the past year.

Carolyn Graham

Deanery synod representatives: Carolyn Graham, Maggie Perrins, Alwyn Marriage

St. Mark's Church Wyke

St. Mark's Church Wyke is a small parish church in the village of Normandy situated between Guildford and Aldershot. Normandy has approximately 3000 residents. The church has 87 people on its electoral roll and our congregation consists mainly of senior citizens, we have very few families with children.

Like all other churches we closed our doors on the 22nd March last year due to COVID and our Vicar zoomed services from the Vicarage - we have no internet in St. Mark's so were unable to offer zoomed services from the church. Unfortunately just prior to the churches reopening at the end of July 2020 our Vicar became unwell and remains unwell. As Churchwardens we and our PCC were faced with a dilemma - do we open St. Mark's for services or do we keep the church closed and have nothing to offer our congregation. We decided to keep our church open and apart from being locked down by the Government in November last year St. Mark's has remained open with support from our neighbouring parishes in the first instance. We also received help from our Archdeacon the Venerable Paul Davies who took a service at the War Memorial in the village on Remembrance Sunday and came to St. Mark's on Christmas morning to take our service.

On behalf of our PCC and our congregation we are extremely grateful to Robert and the Holy Trinity and St. Mary's clergy, Rod, Jonathan and Tom, for all the help and support we have received from them over the last months. We know they are all busy people, but to receive a reassurance from Robert that they would commit to taking all our Sunday services until the end of April, was such a weight off our shoulders. Robert took an Ash Wednesday Service for us and Tom has chaired one of our PCC meetings. It has also been agreed that either Robert or Tom will chair our forthcoming APCM in April. With their help and support we are now able to have a service for the burial of ashes in April and a wedding in July this year. We cannot thank them enough.

*Alison Davies and Clare Sherwood
Churchwardens St. Mark's Church Wyke*