

Ely Deanery Synod Report for 2023

Over the course of the year the following officers were elected:

- Revd Canon Mark Haworth was elected Rural Dean, together with Revd Canon Jeremy James as Assistant Rural Dean.
- Elizabeth Stazicker as Lay Chair.
- Gordon McGinley as Deanery Treasurer.

It was also decided that PCC members could attend DS as observers (without a vote).

The main work of the Deanery Synod during 2023 continued to be the reorganisation of the Deanery. It was agreed that a Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) be formed to build on work of the previous year's working groups and produce a Deanery Plan to present to Deanery Synod (DS).

Following three meetings of the DMPC and a meeting with Revd Nigel di Castiglione, Team Rector of the Papworth Team Ministry and with experience of a large rural team, a draft plan was agreed as follows:

1. A single benefice at Littleport (1 stipend)
2. A single benefice at Soham (1 stipend)
3. A joint benefice of Ely, Chettisham and Stuntney (2 stipends)
4. A joint benefice of Sutton, Mepal, Witcham, Coveney, Haddenham, Wilburton, Wentworth, Witchford, Little Downham, Little Thetford and Stretham (2 stipends)

A Drafting group then collected data from parishes to produce a formal proposal.

In progressing this plan, however, it became apparent that Little Downham and Stretham had reservations about leaving the Ely Team. So, while a presumption of proceeding with the plan was agreed, work with the three villages joined to Ely was pursued in parallel to determine their concerns.

Consultations with the three Ely Team villages were still ongoing at the time of the last meetings of the DS and the DMPC in October. Furthermore, following a presentation by the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech (Ven. Richard Harlow), concern arose over whether the deanery could affordable 6 stipends. So, while a group of 11 villages demanded 2 stipends, it wasn't certain that they could both be full time.

A further DMPC meeting was scheduled for 10th January 2024 to finally determine the structure of the deanery in time for the DS to adopt this structure at its meeting on 29th January 2024.