

Report to St Peter's Fremington Church PCC AGM, Sunday 18th May 2025, on proceedings of Barnstaple Deanery Synods held 18th July, 17th October 2024, and 3rd April 2025

The Deanery has a website. Click on headings for minutes and agendas.

First Synod, at St Augustine's Heanton, 18th July

This Synod saw the commissioning of Rev. Chris. Painter as Rural Dean, by Rev. Veronica Breed, Archdeacon of Barnstaple, in a separate service in the church, and was then followed by the business meeting in the Church Hall.

The meeting opened with Synod members describing initiatives undertaken by a local Church working with children, and also a leadership course put on by the Diocese. This was followed by a detailed talk by Chris Painter on the role of the Synod with respect to all of the local Churches, with an emphasis on cooperation and the exchange of news and ideas.

In Matters Arising, there was a wide ranging discussion on a variety of topics, including Canon Law, the wealth accumulated by the Church during the years of the Slave Trade, Safeguarding Issues and the excessive hours worked by some clergy.

In the report from the Diocesan Synod, members were informed that both John McKee of Fremington and Fr. Dr. Benjamin Williams from Barnstaple, have been elected onto the Diocesan Synod.

Second Synod, at All Saints Chapel, Instow, 17th October

The meeting opened with a short act of worship, followed by a very informative talk by Jessica Taylor, from the organisation North Devon Against Domestic Abuse. See website for details about this very important organisation.

In Matters Arising, Rev Caroline Raby submitted her researches into Canon Law with respect to the proper nature of Communion wine and bread. Further clarification is expected.

Our treasurer, Paul Cooper reported that the accounts were quite healthy, and no further levy is required from parishes.

Fr. Benjamin gave a summary report from the Diocesan Synod. Further information can be obtained from the Diocesan and General Synod websites.

With respect to our own Deanery, Mandy Lewry and Rev. Caroline Raby have taken on Admin. roles, and Rev. Marilyn Sanders was licensed on 17th Nov. to St. Paul Sticklepath.

A new Choir school at St Peter's Barnstaple has been founded, employing the talents of KS2 children.

Third Synod, at The Parish Church of St Peter and St Mary Magdalene, Barnstaple, 3rd April 2025.

The Synod was opened with the service of Evensong, followed by a short break for refreshments.

In the Matters Arising section, it was pointed out that, with reference to a previous meeting, the General Synod **may** approve the blessing of same-sex relationships and not, **will** approve the same. An important distinction.

The treasurer, Paul Cooper, presented the end of financial year accounts, which were adopted unanimously.

Simon Friend Presented a report from General Synod, and John McKee for the Diocesan Synod.

Our next meeting will be at St. John the Baptist Church, Newport, 10th July. Our newly appointed Bishop Mike will be with us, and again on 16th October 2025; location yet to be decided. Bishop Mike will also be at Fremington church on Friday 9th May at 7-00 pm to talk about his career path and favourite music.

The chaplain at the Military Base Chivenor is building links to Heanton Church. Local Churches are also liaising informally with the two Hospices in North Devon.

The meeting closed with prayer.

