

City of Milton Keynes Deanery Synod

Report to Parishes – October 2026



I've always found September to be a month of changes. Children go back to school to a different academic year and maybe a new school. Work colleagues return from leave and projects get re-started. The garden decides it's had enough of summer and starts preparing for winter with leaves being shed. The Deanery Synod is very similar this year with many changes to our lay and clergy membership and projects to develop our ministry in the city really starting to move. Read on ...

Here is the report to parishes following the Deanery Synod's meeting on September 24th, 2026 which was hosted by the Church of the Servant King, Furzton.

People changes

- Stony Stratford & Calverton - Father David Jarratt has joined as rector;
- St. Mary's Bletchley - Revd. Andy Gliddon has joined as rector;
- Cornerstone - Revd Sarah Eden-Jones has joined as vicar and Revd Lara Deen has joined as curate;
- Wolverton - Revd. Virginia Kagunda has joined the Wolverton Benefice as curate;
- St Frideswide's - Revd. Rowena Gliddon will be joining as curate in the near future.

BUT ... the perhaps most significant change is that our Area Dean, the Revd. Paul Oxley, has decided that after 5 years it's time to let someone else take on the role so that he can give more focus to his other jobs - running St Mark's and St Mark's Meals. Paul stood down officially on September 30th. The post will be filled within the next 6 months and in the interim the Revd. Canons Catherine Butt and Gill Barrow-Jones will act as co-interim Area Deans. Paul's very significant work and leadership in moving the Deanery's Mission forward to the point where (at last!) the needs of the church in the growing city of Milton Keynes are being recognised and supported by significant resources was honoured at the recent Synod meeting with prayers, of thanks for his work as Area Dean and of hope for his future work, and with gifts of flowers, chocolates and theatre vouchers.

The September meeting of the Synod also saw the election and re-election of members to several posts. David Thom remains in post as Lay Chair, Bob Scarff was re-elected as Treasurer and myself, Ian Watson, was re-elected as Secretary. Jonathan Bailey was re-elected as the lay member of the Standing Committee and Mike Morris joins the Standing Committee as the elected Clergy member.

Mission Progress

In the last report to parishes I outlined the 5 areas into which Bishop Dave had broken the strategy - here's an update on three of them.

1. **Transforming Christ the Cornerstone.** As reported above, there's a new Vicar and a new Curate at Cornerstone.
2. **Rebalancing the LEP parishes** to reduce the strain on clergy. The current focus here is on Woughton with work going on to appoint new clergy and to establish the related financial footing to support this in the longer term. Elsewhere, good progress is being made at Walton to appoint two lay posts.
3. **Reviving Work for Children and Young People** - the Deanery Synod have agreed to co-fund with the Diocese the role of a full or part-time 'Youth Enabler' minister to work within

the deanery. Preparation of a job description as the first part of the recruitment process has already started.

Parish Share

The Deanery's treasurer, Bob Scarff, has been doing a lot of work over the summer with parish treasurers to develop a proposal on the amount of financial contribution (share) each parish should make. The figures are based as a starting point on a formula created by the Diocese that reflects the size of each parish and the resources the Diocese provides to keep them running. Added to that are such factors as Social Deprivation to come up with a suggested amount for each parish. Bob's work has been focussed on also building in the liability of each parish being able to deliver what the Diocese has suggested and the need to build the Deanery's mission fund to support the Mission Plan and to support those parishes which might struggle to meet the level of funding asked of them.

The Synod will take a vote on the final proposals at their meeting on November 25th 2026.

Ian Watson, Secretary
October 5th, 2026
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