

### **ROTHERFIELD DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

There have been two meetings of the Deanery Synod since the last APCM in October 2020 both mediated by Zoom. The meeting on November 3<sup>rd</sup> was attended by George Pulman and Chris Bithell. Sadly Chris was the only representative at the second meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup> after George's untimely death.

The meeting in November focussed on Diocesan and Deanery finances and we were addressed by the respective Finance Officers. They spoke warmly of their appreciation of the generosity of parishes but were also making us aware of the significant deficits resulting from the Covid-19 crisis. The Diocese has taken steps to reduce its deficit, including reducing the number of new curates from 13 to only 4 this year, and funding no quinquennial improvements to vicarages. We were encouraged to maintain our parish share this year if possible.

At the second meeting in March the topic was the aim that the Church of England should be carbon neutral by 2030. We heard the new Bishop of Lewes who said that the Church now has an opportunity to proclaim God through the natural world of which we are stewards. He said the environment makes us proclaim who created it, and question who we are. He thinks we should preach and teach more about it.

We heard that there is work going on at the diocese. An environmental subgroup of the Common Good Committee that is beginning to scope out how they can help parishes; there are missional opportunities in doing community projects such as heating, solar power etc.

The meeting concluded with a presentation by Penny Evans, wife of the Vicar of St Mary's Ticehurst. She described the journey that St Mary's has been on towards becoming an Ecochurch. This is an A Rocha UK project, set up 5 years ago and now there are 3,300 churches registered. All aspects of church life are included: worship and teaching, management of buildings and church land, community and engagement, and lifestyle.

Penny's Powerpoint presentation is available for anyone interested in more detail, and we were encouraged to discuss this widely and consider joining.

*Chris Bithell*

*Deanery Synod Representative*