

## **KENN DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2019**

Kenn Deanery Synod met on three occasions in 2019.

The February meeting was held in St John the Baptist Church, Bishopsteignton. The speaker was Penny Mills, Branch Director of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, who showed a video outlining the work of CPRE and then spoke about the Best Churchyard competition, emphasising that it was not the best kept but the best for people and wildlife. South Tawton was the winning Churchyard in 2018 (Kenn Churchyard came second that year.)

In June, we were hosted by St Mary's, Dunsford, where the Speaker was Revd Rosie Austin from the Shirwell Mission Community in North Devon. Rosie talked about a book written for UK churches called "Stories on the street" and how it was used in her church community of seven parishes, including some small communities. The key questions from the book were "Why has God placed us here?" and "What has He given us to do?". The point is how you can use what you have to improve church life. After an entertaining 'ice-breaker', Rosie described the course related to the book. The course was made up of six modules spread over three sessions with a trainer from Wokingham. It was developed for urban use but had been adapted for a rural context.

The October Synod took place in St Paul's, Starcross. The Guest Speaker was Jackie, the new(ish) Bishop of Crediton. This took the form of a conversation with The Rural Dean, Dallas Ayling, with whom she was already acquainted when at Theological College. She spoke about her upbringing in a Christian family and training to teach before being ordained in the first tranche of women priests. She was also the first woman priest to have a family, being eight months pregnant at her ordination. She has been an Incumbent in Derby and, more recently, Archdeacon of Gloucester.

The Bishop seems well qualified for her position in a rural See, and feels that one aspect often forgotten, is that every single person in the country lives in a Parish, whether they attend a Service or not, and therefore are worthy of love and assistance. Her mission is to reach out whatever the challenges and there will always be challenges, to share God's love in Jesus Christ with all.

Synod meetings always include a number of business items, especially Diocesan and National events, such as the National day of Prayer, and Devon Historic Churches Trust Day which seeks to raise funds to support local places of worship, as well as being updated about the Diocese's ongoing link with the Anglican Diocese of Thika in Kenya.

Synod meetings are informative and enjoyable, with an interesting range of topics and speakers. They also introduce members to some of the more remote Parishes in the

Kenn Deanery.