

THE ANGLICAN ARCHDEACONRY OF FRANCE

SPRING SYNOD



Part 1 Saturday 1 June 2024, 9:30-13:00

Held by Zoom video-conference

A total of 65 people attended all or part of the meeting, and apologies had been received from Sally Davies, Nick Finlay, Chris Probert, Vivian Sockett
In addition to Elected Lay Representatives and Licensed Chaplains, the meeting welcomed a number of Chaplains with PTO, Readers, Treasurers and Churchwardens.

The Archdeacon Peter Hooper welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Reverend Charlotte Sullivan led a service of Morning Prayer.

1 A Review of 2023

The Archdeacon spoke of recent work to restructure the Archdeaconry Synod and also our operating procedure.

There are 33 legal entities in the Archdeaconry, plus Monaco, and 32 of these re-registered during 2023 in order to conform with French legal requirements. The other chaplaincy, Strasbourg is based in Alsace which has different regulations, but discussions are ongoing.

At an Archdeaconry level, we now have **two** new Associations:

1.1 1901 Association

This functions in the usual ways, and manages the Synod and the CME.

Although the Archdeaconry functioned originally without official French Association status, it needs to be properly documented at the very least for banking. In addition, it has now become an employer. Two Diocesan employees (the Refugee Officer and the Net Zero Officer) are based in France and although funds come from other sources, our association is able to be the employer. So we now have a properly registered association with updated statutes.

We are currently investigating whether there is a way to reduce bureaucracy for chaplaincies by bringing together individual 1901 associations. More on this in due course.

In order to help members of the Standing Committee who have had to take on new responsibilities concerning employees, we are also in the process of establishing book-keeping assistance from within France.

1.2 1905 Association

This is a religious association which federates the registered members, the individual chaplaincy 1905 Associations. According to recent French legislation, we are obliged to have one simple legal contact point, but local legal responsibilities remain in force.

In autumn 2024 there will be an update from the lawyer helping us with all these new regulations in terms of record keeping and financial accounting. A Zoom meeting for Treasurers will be put in place.

Like all Associations, we need to update the Prefecture with any changes to the Council Officers. These updates need to be supported by copies of the reports from the AGM and Church council where officers are elected and appointed; all documents need to be in French. (French national law says that only documents in French are valid; however, some information is available in English).

See the attached document for links to helpful sites for doing this.

1.3 Discussions with the FPF

Discussions are ongoing as to the possibility of adhering to the FPF (Fédération Protestante de France) in January 2025. This would simplify immigration requirements for new members of clergy and enable us to use a simplified visa system, the “*formulaire unique*”.

1.4 New chaplains in the Archdeaconry

The Archdeacon said that we have been blessed by the large number of ordained ministers recently licensed in France and Monaco. He welcomed the 16 new priests (see separate list) and also mentioned:

- 6 chaplaincies currently recruiting
- 4 chaplaincies currently in discussions

Those of the recently appointed chaplains who were able to be present introduced themselves and all said how happy they are to be here.

1.5 PTO, Readers and CWL

The Archdeacon said that he was aware of the huge contribution of clergy with PTO, Readers and Congregational Worship Leaders in this Archdeaconry.

He said that it had been difficult in the past to have clear information about who was working in which area, and he hoped to move towards a more efficient database of everyone who was working in the Archdeaconry, in their different roles and functions.

An advantage of online meetings was that we could invite everyone to attend, not just synod members.

1.6 Mission and Outreach

Now that the structure of the Archdeaconry has been set up, the Archdeacon said that it was an exciting time and he wanted to find ways to grow. A new focus on Mission and Outreach would enable us to help build the Kingdom of God, which is what we are all called to do.

The Archdeacon concluded this part of the meeting by extending a particular welcome to all those attending the synod for the first time.

2 Synod business

2.1 Minutes

The Secretary said that the minutes of the meeting in Spring 2023 had been posted on the Archdeaconry website. The meeting in September had been devoted to breakout groups and feedback to the Standing Committee.

The minutes taken at this June meeting will be posted on the website along with speaker presentations in order to share as widely as possible.

Suitably adapted and translated into French, they will also provide the basis for the minutes of the French 1901 and 1905 Associations; these will be sent to the Préfecture along with the updated list of Council Members.

The Secretary asked everyone to make sure that the Church Officers form was updated and sent to the Diocesan Office, as we rely on the database for up-to-date information on contacting everyone. She apologised for any errors, but thanked everyone who had made efforts to update contact details.

2.2 Chair of the House of Laity

Diane Murray, who had served as Chair of the House of Laity for some 5 years, had resigned in 2023 and sadly passed away recently.

Her husband the Reverend John Murray asked us to thank everyone for all their messages of support and condolences.

As this post became a casual vacancy, the Standing Committee was able to appoint someone and we are fortunate that Catherine Chambers has volunteered to take on this role during this triennial and until the next elections.

For the purposes of French Association laws, this nomination was put to a vote by Lay Members of the Synod and was approved unanimously.

2.3 Accounts

The Treasurer presented the accounts for 2023 for the 1901 Association. The summaries are attached.

- He explained that when preparing the budget for 2023, there had been no knowledge of future

employees, so for ease of understanding, he was showing the accounts in two parts, one for the standard income and expenditure and the second one showing the income and expenditure for the two employees.

- The final consolidated accounts would be prepared for the Prefecture.
- He reminded members that income (apart from interest on savings) only came from the chaplaincies who contributed to costs via the Archdeaconry Quota and the CME Fund.
- General income was almost entirely dedicated to reimbursing travel costs for an in-person synod and as there had not been one in recent years, there had been no request for funds.
- The CME fund is dedicated to further education for Clergy and Readers but is currently at a positive level and therefore no request for more funds had been made.
- Different agencies contribute to funding for the two employees, no Archdeaconry funds are involved. And the Archdeaconry is not the decision-maker in either case.

The Archdeacon reminded the meeting that because the rules for 1901 and 1905 Associations are different, we are able to accept funding from abroad to support the employment of lay officers in France through the 1901 Association. Restrictions on income from abroad are much stricter for 1905 religious organisations.

The Treasurer asked members to accept the accounts and to agree the budget for 2024 and this was agreed unanimously.

3 Guest Speakers

3.1 Barbara Alger, Diocesan Net Zero Officer

Barbara Alger is based in Lyon, France, and since April, has taken on responsibility as Net Zero Officer for the whole Diocese. She gave a short and stimulating presentation which highlighted the urgent need for action, and the way that we can contribute by reducing our carbon footprint. Even if we feel helpless, there are ways to act, for example:

- join Eco Church or Eglise Verte
- measure progress, fill out the building survey
- take part in the season of creation
- check our own carbon footprint

She said that we need data scientists, documentalists, engineers to take part in our efforts so volunteers are very welcome. There are grants available in some cases for works to improve church buildings.

She encouraged everyone to share good news stories with the Diocesan communications team. Her presentation will be shared on the Archdeaconry website and also a poster with QR codes for links to useful and interesting websites and organisations.

The Archdeacon said that we still need to find someone who will be our French Archdeaconry Environment Officer. We are planning a further Zoom meeting of the Archdeaconry Eco group after the summer and encouraged and encouraged all chaplaincies to participate.

3.2 Bradon Muilenburg, Refugee Officer

Bradon was already living and volunteering in the Calais area before being appointed as the Anglican Refugee Support Lead. He liaises with the three partners responsible for his work, the Diocese of Canterbury, USPG and the Diocese in Europe to keep them informed and part of his work involves relationships with other churches and groups also working with refugees.

Since the large camp in Calais was dismantled, small temporary camps have cropped up as far west as Boulogne sur Mer, but he explained that these camps are evicted, tents slashed and thrown away, every 48 hours. There has been evidence of police violence and people have lost papers and documents as well as their temporary homes. Sadly, Calais has become a dangerous place.

Several groups including the Secours Catholique are trying to support those suffering, and he works in particular with the Maria Skobstova house which offers hospitality to women and children. The

different groups work together and share information, which is then fed back. The joy of sharing between hosts and guests, and sometimes exchanging roles is of particular importance. The well-being of volunteers is sadly of concern but there is support from within the community of volunteers. Not all of them come from a religious background. There is so much suffering but we can all fight for justice.

Bradon suggested two areas where chaplaincies could potentially contribute:

- unwanted mobile phones
- contributing to the cost of funerals for refugees who have died whilst trying to leave France.

(Information on these possibilities will be shared as soon as possible)

4 Closing Remarks

The Archdeacon thanked everyone for attending. He said that working together is what is important and that we would do this both as an Archdeaconry and in the four Deaneries. In the next session, on Tuesday evening, we would look at how we can work together at the autumn Synod.

This session closed at 12:15

Part 2 Tuesday 4 June 2024, 19:00-21:00

A total of 45 people attended all or part of the meeting, and apologies had been received from Maggie Devos, Morag Jordan and Arthur Reynolds.

In addition to Elected Lay Representatives and Licensed Chaplains, the meeting welcomed a number of other chaplaincy members.

5 Introduction by the Archdeacon

Peter Hooper said that we would work together to further God's purpose, through thought, prayer and practical activities.

There needs to be a circular flow of information from the ground (chaplaincies), up through Deaneries, Archdeaconry, Diocese to General Synod and down again. And to bear in mind that this Diocese covers a huge area, from Iceland in the north to Morocco in the south and Turkey in the east.

All Archdeaconries face the same challenges, to maximise benefits of meetings while minimising costs. He reviewed the previously circulated presentation (attached) which set out the proposals for this year and how we could better integrate what we do, and how we do it, into a wider picture. He reminded the meeting that an in-person meeting for the whole Archdeaconry involved a total cost of about €50 000. This money came entirely from the 33 chaplaincies, either directly through accommodation costs or indirectly via the Archdeaconry quota, which was used to pay travel costs.

Conscious of a clearly expressed wish for more relational contact, an in-person meeting was proposed for each deanery (NW, NE, SW, SE). A shorter one-day meeting, more local, with lower travel costs would foster relationships. Each deanery would choose the manner of meeting and a sub-committee would be set up in each deanery to organise details. Some funds could be available to help with meals or room rental and perhaps any necessary overnight accommodation.

Each deanery would be free to decide what would work best in their region; with that in mind, the Archdeacon asked each group to consider:

How to meet; **When** to meet; **What** the content of the meeting would be; **Where** it would be held; **Who** would be invited to attend.

The meeting then split into groups by Deanery, and on returning to the meeting, each group summarised their thoughts.

South-West

John Errey reported that the group had decided to meet in Montauban in October, from Friday overnight to Saturday. Chaplains and other council members could be invited.

He asked for contact details of the Deanery. The agenda would include information from the Diocesan Synod, and from the communities and they would look to work together.

He asked if the Archdeacon would be present.

North-West

Chris Probert summarised the discussions. This group considered travelling distances involved and thought that Avranches or Ploërmel would be the most accessible. They would prefer to meet for a day mid-week.

They thought that the meeting should be ministry-focused rather than a business meeting and should inspire those attending.

They also suggested a preliminary Zoom meeting to get to know each other before the in-person meeting itself.

South-East

Ben Harding said that the main criteria for choosing a meeting place would be journey time, and available train travel. They suggested that each chaplaincy might choose 5 people the most energised by the subject of the meeting.

This group also thought that business, budgets, buildings etc were best done on Zoom.

Finally, the group wondered if they might be able to organise a Sunday Deanery Worship service together following the meeting.

North-East

This group also thought that business was best done on Zoom. They wanted to meet in person, overnight from Friday to Saturday and although several chaplaincies could host the meeting, they thought that a different setting would better foster relationships.

They decided to keep the meeting small and that they could share ideas on missional, ecumenical and youth work, with the goal of supporting each other.

The Archdeacon concluded by saying that there were so many new people involved, that the relational aspect was important. And indeed, as for the first part of this meeting on 1 June, business could be concluded via Zoom.

Closing remarks

The Archdeacon and the Secretary would ask Lay Representatives to agree (or not) to sharing contact details within deaneries, and how best to do this. The secretary said that there were several possible methods of sharing amongst ourselves and she would investigate.

No personal details could be shared without permission.

The meeting ended with a service of **Compline**, led by the Reverend Ben Harding

The meeting closed at 21:15

Rosemary Ulyett
Secretary
5 June 2024