# Deanery Synod Report 2021

Dunstable Deanery Synod met three times (in March, July and December) during 2021 online via Zoom due to COVID. We had good attendance from both clergy and lay members at all three meetings.

Safeguarding remains a key item on our agendas to ensure that all parishes continue to have appropriate policies and officers in place and that all those who need appropriate training have been able to do this. The December meeting highlighted the significant changes coming into place for January 2022.

In addition to other standing matters on General synod reporting; Eco Church and the Environment, we had invited speakers at each meeting:

At our March meeting, the Archdeacon of Bedford, Dave Middlebrook spoke about the continuing impact of COVID at that time and the uncertainty this had and was creating but also some opportunities for reaching out into our communities. He then answered questions on topics such as Living in Love and Faith and the COVID impact on parish and diocesan finances.

At our July meeting Christian Cole, our Diocesan Youth Missioner talked about the Faith in Young People Report that had been done for the diocese by [Youthscape](https://www.youthscape.co.uk/) and how parishes might be able to develop their youth ministry and engagement. Christian left the meeting with three questions:

* As we emerge from the pandemic what opportunities do you see for churches to welcome and support young people?
* How might your congregation grow in confidence in its support of young people?
* Could a partnership with other churches support young ministry in your context?

At our December meeting, Revd Charles Burch, our Diocesan Vocations Officer spoke about the changes to the selection process for ordained ministry – now a “Shared Discernment Process” and the Diocesan framework for lay ministry training with new opportunities including commissioned Lay Leaders of Worship (LLWs) and Foundations courses. He also reminded the meeting that everyone has a vocation, but it may not necessarily lead to being ordained as a minister; there are many areas in life where people are called – visible “front of house” to vital “behind the scenes” with quiet ministry and witness.

Tricia Humber and Linda Morris

Deanery Synod Representatives

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