

Deanery, Diocesan and General Synod report for APCMs 2026

Deanery Synod met 3 times with business meetings in May 2025, October 2025 and February 2026 with another planned for April. The Deanery service did not take place in 2025 for lack of a speaker.

Presentations included:

Sarah Newman from the Diocesan Comms team gave a presentation on digital communications and how to use social media for church. In October we heard an encouraging update from Debs Webster on the progress of the Open the Book Project and in February Revd Gary Fleming demonstrated the church administration software iknowchurch.

We also had updates from Revd Jeremy Trew about bids for Mission Opportunity Funding available to the deanery, along with a wonderfully encouraging set of news from churches across the deanery.

Deanery Synod elections take place this year and representatives will serve from 2026-29. Please ensure the Deanery Secretary has the contact details of Deanery representatives after your APCMs, as details need to be sent to the Diocese in June.

Diocesan Synod met in June and November 2025 and March 2026

Alongside topics like racial justice, carbon net zero, there were updates from the Diocesan Board for Education, and the Diocesan Board of Finance and the new Cathedral Dean.

We engaged in a consultation exercise on Living in Love and Faith.

In November "Travelling Well Together: sustaining Ministry beyond 2026" was unveiled; this includes a call to 100 days of prayer, followed by reflection and listening with a final report to Synod expected in 2027.

In March the annual report from the Safeguarding Panel was presented, and 2 of our BMO (Bishop's Mission Orders) churches were granted lay representation on Deanery Synods. The 2027 Diocesan budget was noted and an amendment to make the training element of Share proportionate to parish clergy provision was carried. This means that parishes with, say, 0.5 of a full-time minister will pay less into the training fund. Parishes with a full-time stipendiary minister will have to pay more.

General Synod met in July 2025 and February 2026-

Business included approving the next set of triennium spending plans; approval for an improvement to clergy pensions and retirement housing; approval for the Abuse (redress) measure and the approval of the new National Church Governance measure. Other topics debated included Living in Love and Faith (now replaced by the Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Working and Consultative Groups), evangelism, estates ministry, and the importance of prayer.

Archbishop Sarah gave her first Presidential speech in February where we also discussed safeguarding structures, adult social care, mental health and the church, along with approving some liturgical items.

The last meeting of this quinquennium will be in July 2026 after which elections will take place for the next quinquennium 2026-31. Chelmsford's electoral roll has fallen, and we are now only allowed 6 (instead of 8) lay and 6 (instead of 7) clergy representatives on General Synod.