

DEANERY REPORT

Richmond and Barnes Deanery is a grouping of Anglican parishes within the Diocese of Southwark, encompassing areas like Barnes, Kew, Mortlake, East Sheen, Richmond, Ham, and Petersham. The deanery acts as an intermediary between the parochial church councils and the diocese and provides a platform for cooperation and collaboration among the parishes to:

- Promote faith and environmental awareness
- Address local issues
- Support the work of individual parishes
- Share information and resources relevant to Mission Action Plans

The 15 churches within our Richmond & Barnes Deanery hold synod meetings three times each year. The Deanery Synod comprises both clergy and lay members, who are elected from their parishes to represent local parish views and experiences and relay information back to the PCC.

Year-in-Review Summary

1. Growth in Children, Families & New Forms of Worship

The standout development this year has been the **remarkable growth of Messy Church at Christ Church East Sheen**. From the minutes:

“This has expanded to be around 40 children and 29 adults... Hearing children’s voices in church again is a real blessing.”

Key points:

- Messy Church has grown from a small Monday gathering to a major intergenerational ministry.
- Strong pastoral connections with parents have emerged.
- A child-friendly chapel and craft-based learning environment have been created.
- Sunday attendance patterns continue to shift due to family schedules, but Messy Church is drawing new families into the life of the church.

This reflects a wider deanery trend: **energy for change, growth among children and young people, and appetite for collaboration**.

2. Towards a Deanery Strategy

The Area Dean has begun shaping a clearer sense of purpose for the Deanery Synod, rooted in the Southwark Diocesan Vision:

“Christ-centred, Outward-focused... A church of missionary disciples... younger and more diverse... mixed ecology as the norm.”

Key themes emerging:

- **Mission, Discipleship, Sustainability** as shared priorities.
- A desire to ask: **“What can we do better together than apart?”**
- Recognition of both **joys** (community engagement, volunteer commitment, youth growth) and **pressures** (finances, buildings, volunteer fatigue, attendance changes).

A major practical next step is **rebuilding the Deanery Leadership Team**:

- Lay Chair and Deanery Secretary urgently needed.
- Additional roles encouraged: Assistant Area Dean, Lay Champion, Children & Youth Champion, Eco Champion.

3. Eco & Net Zero Developments

The Eco Champion provided a substantial update (Sept 2025):

“There have been many significant developments over the past year... including national funding and diocesan initiatives.”

Highlights:

- National Church Net Zero programme funded through 2028, with further funding expected to 2034.
- 70% of Southwark churches completed the Energy Footprint Tool — the largest dataset yet.
- Local eco initiatives thriving (e.g., Kew Eco Fair, LED upgrades, youth eco projects).
- Encouragement for parishes to share eco activity via the *CreationCare* WhatsApp group. Can get ideas, view upcoming opportunities and eco-church events.

4. Kingston–Matabeleland Link: Renewed Energy

The long-standing diocesan link with Matabeleland has been revitalised.

From the minutes:

“This link... reminds us of our corporate identity as the Body of Christ... There is a much wider sense that we share prayer, fellowship, and how we are the Body of Christ.”

Key points:

- Bishop Martin undertook an **extraordinary 267-mile run along the Pennine Way** — one of the UK’s toughest national trails — to raise over **£35,000** in support of **children’s education in Zimbabwe – specifically St Cecilia’s School in Lupane**, strengthening the long-standing link between the Kingston Episcopal Area and the Diocese of Matabeleland.
- Relationship focus areas include children’s education, homelessness, and poverty reduction.
- Strong emphasis on mutuality, not charity.
- Plans for shared Pentecost Bible study (“many nations, many tongues”).

Overall, it’s been a year marked by creativity, collaboration, and a real sense of shared purpose.

Prepared by Renée Fletcher (St Matthias)

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