



## DIocese OF SALISBURY

### **SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD MINUTES OF THE 110th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT ST PAUL'S CHURCH FISHERTON ANGER ON THURSDAY 13 JUNE 2013**

#### **1. Opening Worship and Presidential Address**

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word which was led by members of the Sudan Link as part of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Link. The Bishop Licensed Mr Colin Brady as Diocesan Social Justice Programme Manager and the Revd Penny Joyce as Learning for Discipleship Support Officer.

The Bishop delivered the Presidential Address, beginning by praising those diocesan representatives who had recently defeated the Church of Scotland at golf as part of the Church of England team and the cricketers who have taken Salisbury Diocese through to the quarter finals. He welcomed fourteen Sudanese bishops plus the Provincial Secretary to Synod and reflected on the history and success of the Link. A Memorandum of Understanding is being developed to set out the principles at the heart of the Link. The Bishop reported that new proposals regarding women bishops would go to the General Synod in July and a full report is on the diocesan web site. He commented on his recent statement on the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill, the views in which had been expressed with the blessing of the Archbishop of Canterbury and he hoped that the conversation around this subject would continue both in church and in society. He referred Synod members to the social justice agenda and the new models of ministry. Finally, he congratulated and thanked those who run the DBF in such a confidence-inspiring way.

A full copy of the presidential address is available from the web site at [www.salisbury.anglican.org](http://www.salisbury.anglican.org) or from [fiona.torrance@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:fiona.torrance@salisbury.anglican.org) at the Diocesan Office.

#### **2. Notices, Co-options and Apologies**

The Diocesan Secretary reminded Synod that nominations were being sought for elections to fill casual vacancies on the Bishop's Council.

Apologies were received from 17 clergy and 15 laity.

#### **3 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

#### **4. The Sudan Link**

The Bishop of Sherborne reported on the diocesan celebrations and the positive impact that the Sudan Link is having. Bishops Samuel, Stephen and Bismark commented on what they felt God was saying to them through the Sudan Conference and the ways in which the Link is enriching to all. Synod heard also about the transforming effect of the Link for those deaneries with specific links to Sudan dioceses. There was scope for more such links to be forged. The Bishop of Sherborne reminded Synod members that the annual Sudan Garden Party was due to take place on the following Sunday. Synod asked for greetings to be taken back to the Sudan with the returning visitors.

#### **5. Let Us Talk**

The Bishop presented his first reflections on the Let Us Talk conversation. Over 50% of parishes had responded, either at parish, benefice or deanery level, together with a number of individuals, reflecting great thought and effort as well as transformed lives. The Bishop

noted a great sense of the Church being deeply committed to our communities. Specific themes included the need both to nurture the young and to value the aged. There were, however, big challenges identified:

- Some worried about survival.
- There was a lack of confidence in some places.
- Although plenty of people were thinking about buildings, community and finance, there was very little mention of discipleship.

There were many different views on the personality and character of the local church, and also many priorities identified by churches such as:

- Provide regular, different, good worship.
- Be active in the community.
- Increase the congregation.
- Maintain the building.
- Start a café

The Bishop was amused to note that pubs featured in several responses. Some parishes were doing a great deal while some felt that it was too hard to do anything outside the parish, so two issues were to prioritise more and to identify how we can all work together to achieve more.

When considering how best to measure the quality and impact of church life, it was important not just to measure finance and numbers. Other areas to look at included:

- Stories of transformed lives
- Presence and reputation of the local church in the community
- Deepening faith
- Quality of church
- Environmental awareness
- Work in schools and youth centres
- Use of the church by others and the length of time it is open
- Time spent on internal and external matters on the PCC agenda
- Time spent on overseas matters.

The Bishop said he did not wish to cut across deanery plans but he was seeking energy, enthusiasm and engagement. He and the Bishop's Staff will also identify and articulate the core purposes and values of the diocese. The responses, together with the Bishop's presentation, are on the web site to be shared and discussed and would provide resources for a considerable time. All respondents would be receiving an individual reply from the Bishop in due course.

## 6. **Annual Report and Accounts 2012**

The Chairman of the Board of Finance introduced the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2012. He commented that spending is controlled, equity investments have performed well and Share receipts have increased. This diocese has maintained one of the lowest Share assessments in England. There was a positive variance, mainly because of a higher than expected number of vacancies amongst stipendiary clergy. In addition, the Property Department was now tending to rent rather than buy curates houses. Over 98% of 2012 Share had been paid and many parishes had also paid off or reduced historic arrears. Only one of the problem parishes identified previously had made no effort to improve. He thanked parishes for their magnificent efforts and asked deaneries to review their parishes regularly and ask for help before problems grew to become major issues. He thanked colleagues in the Accounts Department, on the Finance Committee and at the Diocesan Office. He then moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the Directors' and Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2012”

Synod approved the Motion nem con.

## **7. Appointment of Auditors**

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the re-appointment of Mazars LLP as the auditors for the Diocesan Board of Finance”

The DBF approved the Motion nem con.

## **8. Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2014**

The Chairman of the Board of Finance introduced the Budget for Share Assessment 2014 which proposed yet another sub-inflation increase of 0.91%. He commented on the influence of Votes 1-5 of National Church expenditure. Training for ministry was the largest area and would increase by 2%. National Church responsibilities and administration would decrease by 2%. Grants remained unchanged. Reserves were being used for mission agency pension contributions this year, but this area would increase by 34% next year. CHARM retired clergy housing will increase by 1.3% in 2014. The budget assumed no increase in clergy pension contributions for 2014 but it was likely that this would increase in 2015. The Chairman drew attention to the following significant items:

- Provision for an additional stipendiary post due to fewer training curacies.
- Up to £40,000 to be made available from reserves to the Aldhelm Mission Fund, for one year only, to bridge until a fund-raising strategy had been put into practice.
- Additional DBE expenditure (c £100,000) which would be balanced by UST grants.

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance then moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance/Synod approves the annual Budget for Share Assessment 2014”

The Motion was carried nem con. The Budget will be available on the diocesan web site.

## **9. Women in the Episcopate**

The Bishop outlined the proposals (Options 1 – 4) from the House of Bishops that would be presented to the General Synod in July. He sought a steer from Diocesan Synod in advance of General Synod. In discussion, there was strong support for Option 1, being “the simplest possible legislation” and that which relied most on love and trust.

## **10. Magna Carta 2015**

The Chairman of the House of Laity, as Chairman of the Cathedral Magna Carta project, outlined the opportunities for parishes and schools in the diocese to be part of the plans for marking the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta. There was to be a new liturgy and a new mass, a series of lectures and a huge education and outreach program, including a social responsibility program and a major history project, as part of both national and international celebrations. Mr Key will be writing to parishes with further details in the autumn.

## **11. Questions**

There were no questions.

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

Synod will next meet from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday 9 November 2013 at the Amesbury Baptist Centre. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 11 September 2013.