



## DIocese OF SALISBURY

### SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD MINUTES OF THE 121<sup>st</sup> SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, CORFE MULLEN ON SATURDAY 4 MARCH 2017

#### 1. **Service of the Word and Presidential Address**

Members took part in the Service of the Word led by Mr Colin Brady. He used the themes of Lent, fasting and prayer and asked Synod to consider what it is like to fast when you already have nothing. He asked Synod members to use the experience of Lent to fight for social justice for those who are needier than we are.

The Bishop continued the theme with reference to the diocesan Praying Together booklet which was now also available by daily email and an app (full details here <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/worship/prayer/praying-together-2017>). There was an appetite for prayer as evidenced by the popularity of the prayer events run by Bishop Michael Perham and Brother Sam. Due to Bishop Michael's terminal illness the Bishop of Sherborne would now be taking over as Chairman of the Pray Forum. The Bishop announced the launch of a Lent appeal to raise funds for Southern Sudan whose people are facing famine (details here: <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/news/help-for-south-sudan>). He invited everyone this Lent to rediscover the joy of giving. He also updated Synod on progress with Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow, invited positive engagement with the agenda item on the Environment and reported on the decision by the General Synod not to "take note" of the House of Bishops' report on Marriage and Same Sex Relationships.

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. **Minutes, Notices, Co-options and Apologies**

Synod approved the minutes of the meeting on 12 November 2016.

There were no notices or co-options.

Apologies were received from 14 clergy and 13 laity.

#### 3. **Towards a Revised Environment Policy**

The Revd Dr Graham Southgate introduced the Motion stating his hope that the Fifth Mark of Mission might be brought to its rightful place of equal importance with the other four and that care for Creation might become second nature to all people. He then invited Mr David Morgan, Chairman of the Diocesan Environment Group (DEG), to address Synod.

Mr Morgan introduced the membership of the DEG. Synod then noted the report on DEG activities since its last report to Synod in November 2014. Synod considered the draft new Environment Policy and the list of aspirations for DEG for 2017-2021 with particular reference to EcoChurch, EcoDiocese and Creationtide. Members also viewed a short video clip describing the journey of two eco-conscious parishes. Synod then worked in groups with a selection of EcoChurch questions to answer:

- What have we done already?
- What would be the challenges?
- What might help you?

Comments and responses coming from the groups included:

- Composting toilets are an eco-friendly option for churches with no mains drainage.
- Salisbury Cathedral and several of our parishes have already obtained an EcoChurch bronze award.
- Churches are all very different so the approach each takes will be different.
- Parishes would benefit from people prepared to go out and speak to them because it has been helpful to see that eco-churchyards do not need to be messy and disposable cups can be eco-friendly.
- There is a danger that we go away with lots of good intentions but then just do the easy things that have very little impact.
- Churches need to be continually encouraged and challenged to keep taking the next steps.
- What can we do to engage the younger generation in these particular initiatives?
- Is it possible to buy green energy centrally to reduce costs? Answer - yes, The Big Switch is essentially a piece of central purchasing organised at National level.
- Solar panels remain a possibility even though the government FIT scheme has ended.
- There is much that can potentially be achieved through the Diocesan Finance Committee.
- The DEG and the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) need to work more closely together with leadership from the National Church.
- Churches need to link with the young, with green communities and local environmental groups and show that the C of E is not intransigent or irrelevant.

Synod then debated the Motion. Comments and observations included:

- If you wish to put solar panels on a church roof it requires approval from the secular planning authorities as well as Faculty. Please can this be tackled because both authorities are often very conservative in what they will allow.
- The EcoSchool scheme is a good way to engage children and young people.
- Filling in the EcoChurch questionnaire has benefits beyond seeking an award. It is a good way for churches to audit their environment-focussed activities, so please encourage people to sign up and engage.
- Years ago, FairTrade was largely a Church-led movement but now it can be found in all supermarkets. The Church can similarly have a huge impact on society in respect of environmental awareness.
- Please do more to emphasise the theological justification for creation-care.
- It is disappointing that there is not a greater emphasis on the issue of transport.
- With reference to the Diocesan Policy on Church Buildings, there is a conflict between conservation and being “green” when many of the buildings we are seeking to keep open are so difficult to heat and maintain in an environmentally friendly way.
- One of the ways we can help the Sudans is to amend our lifestyles, because the way we are living makes their lives worse.
- Please will parishes provide regular feedback on the impact of their environmental work.

The Revd Dr Graham Southgate, on behalf of the Diocesan Environment Group, then moved the Motion:

**In reaffirming its commitment to the 5<sup>th</sup> mark of Mission to “strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth”, this Synod agrees the new Diocesan Environmental Policy and notes that this includes our registering to become an “Eco Diocese”. We approve of the ambition of the Diocesan Environment Group in helping us to address the care of God’s creation as key to our Christian discipleship and proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

The Motion was carried unanimously and followed by applause.

#### **4. Renewing Hope Together**

Synod noted the Finance Report for year-end 2016. The Archdeacon of Dorset, as Vice Chairman of the DBF, reported that the figures had not yet been audited, but members were pleased to observe that 430 parishes, the highest number ever, had paid their Share in full for the year. There is, however, an overall deficit of £143,000 due to Share shortfall which

the DBF makes no provision for in the budget. The property department success has helped offset this shortfall.

The Archdeacon of Dorset then gave an overview of the draft Budget for 2018. The proposed Share increase is 2.5%, in line with inflation. He said that at present we are paying for the sins of the past in terms of safeguarding provision, now 1% of expenditure; we are also covering our current costs with inflationary pressures on such items as water rates and council tax and investing in the future to support our ambitions for increasing funding on vocations and discipleship.

The DBF spends more on supporting ministry and mission than is collected from Share, with the balance being raised through investments and other income sources. Less than 4% is spent on central administration. There is a continued focus on cost containment although there is an inevitable higher cost associated with increasing vocations. This budget has seen the diocesan contribution to the National Church increase to 12% of budget to cover increased ministerial training. The adoption of the Parish Giving Scheme and Giving for Life should help parishes in financial administration and in reviewing their stewardship. A new Financial Strategy Development Group will be looking for options to raise money from sources other than Share. The Diocese is also submitting a strategic funding bid to the Central Church with the objective of strengthening and supporting rural ministry and mission.

Synod then considered the following questions:

- How do we develop a culture of generosity?
- What could the DBF do in respect of fundraising?
- Could your parish raise its Share category?
- Have you examples of successful local initiatives?
- What else do we need to do?

Comments and feedback included:

- More teaching is required from the pulpit about sacrificial giving together with an annual reminder to review our giving.
- People are often very generous, just not necessarily towards the Church.
- We suffer to some extent from being the Established Church with the assumption in some minds that somebody else pays for it all.
- We need to explain better in the parishes what the money is needed for.
- We are trying to encourage vocations to both the stipendiary and non stipendiary ministry, although it is accepted that non stipendiary costs less.
- It may help if we challenge parishes to justify why they should not be a Share category "A" because there are still some inequalities of category selection. The guidance notes for Share categories have been simplified, but we are trying to achieve a culture change amongst parishes.
- A regular Thanksgiving Service can be a good opportunity to talk about giving and it may help to have someone other than the priest speaking on the subject.

Before breaking for lunch, the Revd Canon Thomas Woodhouse, Chairman House of Clergy, asked Synod to hold John and Gillian Wraw and their children in their prayers.

## **5. Whom do we Serve?**

The Archdeacon of Sherborne, Chairman of the Social Justice Working Group (SJWG), introduced, and Synod noted, the Report from the SJWG on its current work and future plans. He asked for any volunteers with suitable skills and enthusiasm to volunteer to fill vacancies on the Group. He also asked for any last-minute sponsors who might wish to support the Archdeacon of Sarum who had just completed the Big Sleep Out to raise funds for Alabaré.

Mr Colin Brady introduced the SJWG plans for 2017-2020. These focussed around food, finance, environment and sanctuary. He highlighted issues such as the need for Food Banks and the fact that Weymouth and Portland have the second lowest wages in the UK. He spoke of concerns around the closure of high street banks and lack of access to financial

services. He commented on the generosity of those private landlords who had offered houses for placing Syrian refugee families and emphasised the urgent need for more homes to be found. On a positive note, there is to be a Housing Justice roadshow in Salisbury in October 2017 (<https://www.housingjustice.org.uk/Event/upcoming-roadshows>). In addition, three people had come forward to progress work on disability, the network of Social Justice Champions had grown much faster than anticipated and Bournemouth and Poole had established a City of Sanctuary group to assist with the Syrian refugee settlement programme with many similar generous responses from around the Diocese.

Synod members were then asked to name local projects which served the community. These were written on cards which were placed geographically on a large floor map in the adjoining room where members also then looked around social justice information stands. The community project information will be collated by the SJWG. Synod then reconvened and, in response to a comment from the floor, Mr Brady asked that the Diocesan Social Welfare Fund be borne in mind by Synod members as a source of grants for suitable projects.

#### **6. Cathedral Strategic Plan**

The Dean reported on the Cathedral's plans for the next five years. She reassured Synod that finances are robust unlike for some cathedrals that are currently in financial difficulties. On 23 February the Cathedral Masterplan had been endorsed by Wiltshire Council. This included increased accessibility to areas of The Close, an emphasis on outreach, increased access to archives, a new Song School, flexible meeting spaces and a Cathedral House. The Strategic Plan will be formally and publicly launched in May and is shaped around Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow.

The Dean concluded by asking for Synod's prayers for the girls, boys and staff on a choir tour to California from 15 March.

#### **8. Questions**

Mrs Christine Corteen asked the Bishop "What he considers are the next steps for this Diocese in response to the Lay Leadership Task Group report entitled 'Setting God's People Free' which was debated and overwhelmingly accepted at General Synod two weeks ago?"

The Bishop responded that, as Chairman of the House of Laity, Mrs Corteen could bring this matter to the Bishop's Council for consideration and direction.

Mrs Corteen then asked the supplementary question, "Given the importance of this report in terms of the crucial role of the laity in God's mission, would the Bishop consider seeking the wisdom of this Synod by debating the report at the earliest opportunity in order to be in a position to respond quickly and contextually to the Archbishops' Council's implementation plan therefore sending a positive message to the lay people of this Diocese?"

The Bishop responded that this would best be brought to Bishop's Council to address within the context of the first question.

#### **9. Date of Next Meeting**

Synod will next meet from 1830 to 2100 on Wednesday 14 June 2017 at St Francis' Church, Salisbury. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 25 May 2017.