



DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD MINUTES OF THE 123rd SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT SARUM ACADEMY, SALISBURY ON SATURDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2017

1. **Opening Worship and Presidential Address**

Worship was led by members of the diocesan Mission Council. The Bishop delivered the Presidential Address reflecting on the nature of Christianity as an evangelising religion that changes relationships and walks alongside people in difficult circumstances. He also commented on the “Good” Ofsted report just received by Sarum Academy which represented a major turnaround for the school. Synod thanked staff, governors and students for this tremendous improvement.

A full copy of the presidential address is available from the web site at www.salisbury.anglican.org or from fiona.torrance@salisbury.anglican.org at the Diocesan Office.

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

Synod members were asked to remember in their prayers Mr John Lello and Mrs Beth Buchan, current and former member respectively of the Synod, who had died since the last meeting.

Synod approved the minutes of the 122nd Session held on 14 June 2017.

Apologies were received from 15 clergy and 8 laity.

Synod welcomed Mrs Gillian Clarke as the new Chairman of the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod.

Members were asked to collect envelopes from the Reception desk to help distribute safeguarding posters and leaflets to their churches.

It was noted that there was an error in the directions to the venue and this would be corrected in future.

3. **Shaping Strategies for Mission and Growth in Rural Multi-Church Groups**

Synod welcomed Mrs Jill Hopkinson, National Rural Officer, who presented the findings and implications of recent research that has direct relevance to multi-church groups. It was noted that over 10,000 Church of England churches are rural, representing two thirds of the total, whereas only 9% of the national population live in rural areas. The research concluded that mission is nevertheless possible in small rural churches provided certain catalysts are in place such as:

- Intentional focus.
- A group of people committed to mission.
- A culture of discipleship.
- Clergy prepared to envision, nurture and equip the ministry of lay people.
- Co-operation and collaboration.

Synod members were then invited to give examples of the “real” story of the rural church. These included:

- Involvement of the whole community in order to successfully raise a huge sum of money for repairs to the church roof, ie, it’s not just about those who go to church.
- 30 people attending a harvest breakfast service in the same benefice that Jeremy Paxman recently used to illustrate a Church dying on its feet.
- Events that bring in people who have never attended church before, such as large numbers of people attending a thanksgiving service for the life of a non-churchgoer and a baptism that filled a church with non-church-goers.

- The fabric of rural churches is in really good condition these days which is testament to how they are valued in their communities.
- The good relationships built between rural churches and their local primary schools.

Mrs Hopkinson commended these examples and spoke of the factors that help contribute to church growth such as a clear vision and purpose, a willingness to reflect, change and adapt and the involvement of the laity. Contrary to what many assume, the greatest decline nationally in church membership is in towns and city centres.

Synod then divided into groups to consider the following questions:

1. Dream some dreams: how would you like your churches to reproduce?
2. What steps do you need to take to create the time and space within your local churches for these dreams to happen?

Reponses from the plenary session included:

- Greater involvement and empowerment of lay people.
- Church buildings given back to the village to use for the things the wider community wants to do; it's the medieval model, but it works.
- Village church schools becoming the heart of mission in their parishes.
- Alternative forms of church such as House Groups or Breakfast Church are a good way of involving people, including children, who may not come to traditional forms of church service.
- We need to help those people achieve a work/God balance who work away from the area in which they live, and who perhaps are too tired to give time to their local church.
- It would help if the diocese were able to grant parishes a Jubilee from form filling and other types of bureaucracy.
- The Church of England needs to come up with a pattern of administration that recognizes the small size of many rural churches.
- There is a need to spread the work between more people, but it can be very hard to get new volunteers.
- Some volunteers need to learn to share their skills and allow space for new people to get involved.
- Big things grow from small beginnings.

Synod members received materials produced by the Arthur Rank Centre aimed at supporting rural churches. These included Country Way magazine and information on Germinate resources www.germinate.net.

4. Renewing Hope Through Rural Ministry and Mission

The Diocesan Secretary outlined the key elements of this strategic programme and how parishes could get involved. She welcomed the first two members of the new Rural Ministry Experience Scheme, Amy Stevenson and William Spooner, who were attending Synod as observers. She also welcomed Mrs Sarah Keen and introduced her to Synod as the part-time Programme Manager overseeing delivery of the whole programme. Synod members noted an explanatory leaflet summarising the programme. In this diocese 90% of parishes are rural which is above the national average and why this project is such a high priority for us. Further information will follow as the programme develops.

5. New Housing Policy

The Archdeacon of Sarum presented the proposed diocesan Policy for New Housing against the backdrop of an estimated 46,000 new homes planned or already under construction in this diocese. A Good Practice Guide was being prepared to accompany the Policy. There are many excellent models of emerging mission to new housing areas, but there is a need to keep new housing estates on our PCC agendas and on the agendas of our Mission and Pastoral Committees.

In response to a variety of questions and comments the following points were clarified:

- Incumbents and PCCs have to be engaged at an early stage.
- The seed corn funding mentioned is currently the Aldhelm Mission Fund.

- The Good Practice Guide will include reference to new communities and the provision of community facilities.
- The local community will decide who leads, but the Church of England will look to work in partnership as appropriate.
- The suggestion that community can be built through web sites and social media is a good one and will be included in the Good Practice Guide. Additionally, the diocesan Communications Department runs some very helpful training for setting up web sites, use of social media, etc.
- It is important to have key team members living on the new developments because evidence suggests that this is the best way to achieve effective mission to the new community.
- The need for early engagement with planners and builders is part of the Good Practice Guide.
- The assumption that this number of new houses represents 100,000 additional people may be too low.
- Church schools are central to our mission across the diocese.
- The Archdeacon of Sarum is working with the army with regard to their re-basing programme across Wiltshire.
- The diocesan Good Practice Guide will be on the web site and Synod members should refer to this and related information regularly and give the Archdeacon of Sarum feedback on how their plans are progressing locally.

The Archdeacon of Sarum then moved on behalf of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee that:

This Synod:

- 1. Welcomes the work done to date to plan for Mission and Ministry to Areas of New Housing in the Diocese**
- 2. Approves the Mission to Areas of New Housing in the Diocese of Salisbury Policy**
- 3. Commends the Policy to the Archdeaconry and Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees for future planning for Mission to New Housing Estates.**

The motion was carried unanimously.

Cathedral Annual Report

The Acting Dean introduced the Annual Report. Synod members received printed copies and the Acting Dean highlighted:

- Another busy year of worship, major arts installations and other events.
- Completion of work to the North side of the Cathedral.
- The achievement of a Bronze EcoChurch award.
- Unanimous approval by Wiltshire Council of the Cathedral's Master Plan for the Close environment.
- That the Cathedral finished the financial year much more strongly than anticipated due to a late surge in visitor numbers.

In addition, the post of Dean had just been advertised nationally to fill the vacancy resulting from the Very Revd June Osborne's departure to be Bishop of Llandaff.

6. Diocesan Board of Education Report

Synod welcomed children from Dunbury Church of England Academy together with their Headteacher, Mr Ben Barker and the Headteacher of Weymouth Preston St Andrew's CE VA Primary School, Mrs Sarah Patterson.

The Director of Education reported that by Easter 2018 over 50% of our church schools will be in multi academy trusts (MATs). She and Mr Mark Lacey, Chief Executive Officer of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust (DSAT), spoke of the collaboration fostered by MATs and the close working relationship between DSAT and the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) to provide the support that made school improvement possible. They were now

seeking to create within DSAT hubs of geographically adjacent schools which could work more closely together.

Mrs Sarah Patterson spoke of her positive experience of belonging to DSAT as Headteacher of Trent Young's School, to the extent that, when she moved earlier this year to be Headteacher of St Andrew's, she arranged for her new school to join DSAT also.

The children then gave a colourful and energetic presentation of some of the things that had enthused them and enhanced their learning over the past year.

The Director of Education introduced the summary Report from the DBE entitled "Transforming Leadership, Transforming Lives". She drew attention to the support and services provided by the DBE and the positive transformation seen in some of our schools. She also highlighted the national "Understanding Christianity" resource which she deemed excellent in helping headteachers engage with what it means for a school to be distinctly Christian. Given how central foundation governors are to this distinctiveness, she asked Synod members to encourage people with suitable skills to put themselves forward. She referred to a recent external review of the work of the DBE which had praised the DBE across the range of areas assessed and which now challenged it to explore further with schools, parishes, the DBF and others what it really means for Church schools to be central to the mission of the Church of England.

Synod formally received the DBE Annual Report.

7. Deanery Synod Elections 2018

Synod approved the following motion nem con:

- a) "This Synod, in order to ensure a majority for the House of Laity and that the total membership of the Synod and Board of Finance lies between 150 and 270 members, determines that the formula for clergy members to be elected by the Houses of Clergy of the deanery synods shall be on a proportion of 23% of the membership of those Houses.
- b) It further determines that the form of voting paper to be used by the deaneries in this election and for any election to fill a casual vacancy occurring during the next ensuing three years shall be that contained in Section 7 of Appendix 1 of Church Representation Rules, which is for elections to be decided by simple majority."

8. Questions

There were no questions.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm on Saturday 17 February 2018 at St Nicholas' Church, Corfe Mullen. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 4 January 2018.