



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

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DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD

MINUTES OF THE 124<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT  
ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, CORFE MULLEN ON SATURDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2018

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

Members took part in the Service of the Word led by Mr Colin Brady. Synod remembered the martyrdom of Bishop Janani Luwum and prayed on themes of social justice.

The Bishop continued the theme with reference to the diocesan Praying Together booklet which is also available by daily email and an app (full details here:

<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/worship/prayer/praying-together>. He reflected on issues of poverty, the way in which we do or do not choose to live for the common good and the need to work to ensure that everyone has a decent standard of living. In respect of the safety of our young people, he made a special plea for all those who should be taking part in safeguarding training, but who had not yet done so, to see this as a priority. He also asked Synod to pray for Bishop Justin Badi as he prepares to become the new Primate of South Sudan.

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.

At various points during the meeting the Bishop welcomed the Revd Jane Burgess, Rector of Corfe Mullen, Brother Clark Berge, the newly appointed Guardian of Hilfield Friary, those speaking to the various agenda items and the new members of Synod attending their first meeting.

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

Synod approved the minutes of the meeting on 18 November 2017.

There were no notices or co-options.

Apologies were received from 11 clergy and 18 laity.

**3. Children and Young People in Society Today**

Professor Sir Al Aynsley Green, Professor of Advocacy for Children at Nottingham Trent University, began the session and asked Synod to consider why the nurture of children and young people should be everybody's business in the diocese. He observed that the situation for children in this country is getting worse and wondered why our society does not care enough for the children of others. He quoted an African proverb: "It takes a whole village to raise a child", and asked how we might improve factors such as community, education and government to ensure that every child can fulfil his/her potential. He recommended The Children's Society "Good Childhood Report 2017" ([www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)) and the BMA report "Growing Up in the UK Today" ([www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)) and questioned whether the Synod, DBF, DBE, clergy and parishes are fully aligned to improve this situation.

Mr Phil Raws, Children's Society Senior Researcher, outlined research findings and the work being done by the Society to respond to these findings. He observed that there was much negative reporting and inaccurate opinion about children and young people, but also a growing recognition that those showing bad behaviour outwardly may be suffering trauma inwardly. There is clear evidence of increasing problems with children's and young people's mental

health. There were, however, many things influencing their lives that we might be able to have a positive impact on.

Mr Jim Davis, Children's Society Head of Youth Engagement, led Synod in an activity where individuals positioned themselves on a continuum between "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" as a response to various statements. He then led Synod into discussion in small groups to consider three questions:

- What role can the local Church play in creating neighbourhoods that value and care for children and young people?
- In what ways can schools support young people's well-being? Do schools inhibit well-being in any way?
- How can we all better understand the challenges children and young people face as they grow up?

Comments and responses coming from the groups and the session facilitators included:

- The intergenerational divide can be a serious issue so it is very good to get young and old people together.
- Church schools have an advantage in that they teach values; this helps in the protection of children and young people.
- The digital world does present a risk which is why, as adults, we should be engaging and not abdicating responsibility in this area.
- Collaboration and partnership with other organisations is central to The Children's Society's ability to fulfil its aims.
- Would it be helpful to look in detail at the nurturative assets available in a couple of pilot localities in the diocese?
- May we develop a Children's Charter and a Parent's Charter so that people know what our values are and what we have to offer?
- The first few years of a child's life are so important and the diocese currently only works with schools, but can we perhaps also pilot working with nurseries?
- It is essential to listen to children and young people, but we need to find the right ways to do this.

Mr Phil Raws then spoke about The Children's Society's on-going surveying of children and young people to measure well-being and indicate trends. Those surveyed, although happier about friends and schoolwork, were less happy about life as a whole with girls becoming significantly less happy with their appearance. Quality of relationships was shown to be hugely important with the level of family support having the biggest (positive) impact on happiness but bullying having the next biggest (negative) impact. Mr Tim Davis added that the Society was now working increasingly with schools where small changes can make a big difference in respect of adding nurture rather than burden.

The next Report would be published in the autumn and Synod was encouraged to continue looking at the research in order to drive action.

Mrs Gill Ford asked members to look at the resources available on The Children's Society's stand in the Narthex; there was also a petition members might wish to sign. She reported that the Diocese of Salisbury had raised £79,095 for the Society in 2017. She asked Synod members to encourage parishes to hold Christingles between Advent 2018 and Candelmas 2019 to help celebrate 50 years of Christingles.

Synod agreed to:

- Take note of the issues raised and actions agreed and report back to deanery synods.
- Recognise and affirm the work of The Children's Society.

#### **4. Diocesan Links - Evreux**

The Archdeacon of Sherborne, The Revd Suzanne Pattle and Mrs Jill Minchin reported on the recent visit of members of the Diocesan Evreux Committee to our French link diocese. The link had been operating for thirty years with many shared interests and the celebration of many key moments together. This visit had focussed on the theme of social justice and the visitors had

been shown several projects aimed at helping the needy. They had also engaged with farmers and had attended Mass in Evreux Cathedral. This last had demonstrated a real integration of the generations in worship with many children attracted to worship because they were given an active role in the liturgy. A major difference between our dioceses is that Evreux has only 31 parish priests so there is a much greater role for the laity. In response to a question, the Archdeacon suggested that the older priests appeared more open-minded about this lay involvement than their younger colleagues, possibly because they had served their formative years under Popes with very different attitudes.

## **5. Social Justice Report and Work with Refugees**

Mr Colin Brady, Diocesan Social Justice Programme Manager, introduced the Social Justice Programme Annual Report for 2017 which focussed on themes of food, finance, environment and sanctuary. Work continued towards the aim of achieving EcoDiocese status and he encouraged parishes to sign up for and pursue the EcoChurch scheme. The rest of the session then focussed on the topic of sanctuary.

Mr Irwin Buchanan, Company Secretary at International Care Network (ICN), an independent faith based charity supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Dorset, addressed Synod. He explained that refugees and asylum seekers accounted for a very small proportion of those coming to live in the UK and the reason many give for wanting to settle here is because they feel it is safe, especially for their children. He thanked local community groups and volunteers in Dorset and Wiltshire for all they do to help such people and make them welcome. The conflict in Syria is a major driver for the current influx of refugees. ICN helps with a range of things needed by refugees arriving here, including advice and support, accommodation, English classes and a women and families programme. It also provides support for unaccompanied asylum seeker children. Mr Buchanan hoped he had inspired Synod members to pray for refugees coming to the UK and to do what they could to help. (ICN - [www.icn.org.uk](http://www.icn.org.uk))

Mr Brady reported on those local groups and churches which had already worked to provide houses for refugee families. There was a continuing need for homes and he asked Synod members to get in touch with him if anyone could help.

Synod then received a powerful presentation from some of the young people at Christ Church Creekmoor. They had made a commitment to try to help refugees after watching a video produced by Save the Children - which they played to Synod members. They involved members in an exercise to consider what few items they might take with them if they themselves suddenly became refugees. They provided members with packs detailing what the Christ Church young people had done plus information on ICN. They also handed out Christingles and challenged everyone to take them back to their churches and pray about how they might bring light into the lives of refugees.

Mr Brady summed up the session saying that we can help by providing homes, safe spaces and community and that we should remember the potential power of young people working with young people to improve lives. Synod then noted the Social Justice Annual Report 2017.

## **6. Finance Report**

The Archdeacon of Dorset, Vice Chairman DBF, presented the Finance Report. 2017 unaudited and draft figures showed only £8,000 deficit against the Share budget and nearly 98% of Share collected. In addition, £157,000 of historic arrears had been paid off. The 2018 budget was under pressure due to shorter clergy vacancies than expected and greater provision for ordinands.

The draft 2019 budget was currently indicating a 2.76% Share increase although this included £100,000 mitigation from reserves. Financial challenges included £640,000 per annum to pay down the clergy pension deficit, resourcing safeguarding, lower vacancy rates and declining church membership. Future pressures would include an increasing number of curates, additional funding demands from the Archbishops' Council and the DBE, decreasing vacancy rates, declining membership and, over the next seven years, the clergy pension deficit. The Finance Committee was exploring continued cost containment, further strategic development

funding bids, the potential of a major Share increase to meet our strategic aim of increasing clergy in training by 60% and Total Return, being a mechanism for releasing unrealised capital gains from the DBF's permanent endowments.

Synod then discussed the following questions in small groups:

- Have we got the right priorities?
- Would you support a seven year strategy to see us through the pension deficit?
- How do we develop and embed a culture of generosity?
- Is a 10% rise in giving feasible?
- Could your parish up its category?
- What else do we need to do?

Synod members wrote responses on postcards to be collected in and considered later. They also provided some feedback in plenary:

- It would have been helpful to have had the financial information in advance of the meeting. It would also be helpful now to have more time to reflect on the questions.
- The priorities seem right, but if consulting more widely please can these questions be circulated so that others can consider the priorities too.
- This diocese is near the bottom of national league tables for generosity.
- There isn't much scope to increase giving in very small parishes.
- Many parishes are already struggling to pay their Share so a stepped increase may be better.
- The diocese increased Share by 30% in 2002 after a financial awareness campaign and parishes rose to the challenge.
- We should not be frightened. We should ask for the money and see if God blesses us financially.
- Stewardship campaigns can lead to amazing generosity; it's about asking and about how you do it.
- It is important to link giving with a clear vision.
- The deaneries should be consulted about a big stewardship campaign.
- With additional safeguarding and data protection requirements parishes already feel that they are being asked to do more.

In summing up, the Archdeacon said that this was the start of a consultation on future funding and no decisions were expected at this stage.

A workshop is being provided for those who struggle with financial information ("Accounting for Dummies" at Church House, Salisbury on 26 June, booking via diocesan web site [www.salisbury.anglican.org](http://www.salisbury.anglican.org)).

The Finance Report PowerPoint will be circulated to Synod members with these minutes.

## **8. Synod Agenda**

Synod reviewed the business covered so far this triennium. About half the items originally suggested by Synod members had been covered. Members were asked to reflect on the "still to do" list, mark priorities 1-3 and return to the Diocesan Secretary to help shape the agenda for the remaining two meetings of the triennium. It was noted that it would be helpful in future to add standing items such as the budget to the list of business completed.

## **9. Questions**

There were no questions.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

Synod will next meet from 1830 to 2100 on Wednesday 20 June 2018 at St Francis' Church, Salisbury. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 15 May 2018.