



## DIocese OF SALISBURY

### SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD

#### MINUTES OF THE 127<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, CORFE MULLEN ON SATURDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2019

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

Members took part in the Service of the Word led by the Dorset, Sarum and Sherborne Rural Field Officers.

The Bishop gave the presidential address on themes of resources, rural hope and our values as Christians. 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.

The Bishop welcomed new members of Synod and new staff members. He also welcomed friends from the Episcopal Church of Sudan: Francis, Bishop of Rokon and Moses, Bishop of Maridi. He reported that our partners in Sudan will be invited here, with their spouses and partners, for the week preceding the Lambeth Conference in 2020 so there would be a large job of hospitality to be done across the diocese.

He announced that the diocesan Praying Together booklet had been produced again for Lent. It is also available by daily email and an app. Full details here: <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/worship/prayer/praying-together>.

The Bishop concluded by giving a notice regarding safeguarding and the current Past Cases Review. A letter would shortly be sent to all incumbents and a 100% response rate was necessary.

Bishop Moses and Bishop Francis then brought greetings and prayers from their dioceses to the Synod and asked that the Diocese of Salisbury might pray for God to bring peace to their nation.

#### 2. **Getting to Know You**

Synod heard the Bishop of Sherborne in conversation with the Rural Field Officers for Dorset, Sarum and Sherborne. It was noted that the Wilts RFO had now been appointed but was not yet in post. Each said something about where they had come from, what they are doing now and also what a favourite picture meant to them.

The Revd Canon Richard Hancock had come from a rural benefice in the Diocese of Oxford because he was looking for a diocese really engaged with rural mission. He is working with Thrive which is just launching in the diocese. He hoped we would be an intentional Church. His picture was an icon which showed Christ with his arm around a pilgrim. He presented the Bishop of Salisbury with a bottle of "Dorsecco". Mrs Claire Horton is an LLM with past involvement in the training of ordinands. She knew pioneering was in her heart so, she said, when God opened the RFO door she stepped through. She had various initiatives underway involving "cake and hospitality". She looked for us to be prayerful but building communities. Her picture was a sunrise image, representing new beginnings. Mrs Alice Farnhill had been working in reconciliation ministry as Cross of Nails project officer at Coventry Cathedral and her chosen picture was of the baptistery window. She had also worked in tourism development in rural Dorset. From her own journey she said she felt for those who come late to Church or who struggle to come through the doors. She had past experience of a pioneer ministry creating growth and she saw rural Church as to do with community, welcome and diversity.

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

Synod approved the minutes of the meeting on 3 November 2018.

Synod members were asked to collect Praying Together booklets for distribution in their own benefices and deaneries.

The House of Clergy co-opted the Revd Bill Cave, Lead Chaplain for Wiltshire Police and Diocesan Interfaith Adviser.

Apologies were received from 7 clergy and 20 laity.

### 4. **We Pray, We Serve, But Are We Growing? Part 1**

The Bishop introduced the session. Growth was proving to be problematic and he wanted Synod to begin a conversation that would lead to action. He gave the example of Kew Gardens' Wildflower and Fungi project which was enthusing and engaging with young people. This was in contrast to the messages coming from the Church of England Research and Statistics Unit which focussed on decline and were negative and demoralising. Nevertheless, 60% of people in this country had been in church at some point in the past year so it is evident that average weekly and Sunday attendance statistics do not describe the social impact and reach that we are having. It is therefore important to consider what we are measuring and reporting. We know, however, that this diocese is losing c 1% of Fairer Share numbers each year, which is a significant statistic because these can be viewed as our core group. We are committed to reversing this decline and to do so will require our discussions to be much wider than Fairer Share numbers and finance. We shall need to be open to change.

The Bishop of Ramsbury continued the growth discussion with gardening metaphors and how we can encourage and sometimes hinder growth. He asked Synod members to discuss three questions and write brief answers on post-it notes:

- What is God growing where you are?
- What are the inhibitors of growth?
- What encourages growth?

The post-it notes were collected and the responses are appended to these minutes. They will be collated to seek to identify common strands for further attention.

The Revd Canon Andy Perry and the Revd Tess Nisbet gave a presentation on the Missing Generations. The last forty years had seen a major decline in church attendance in the 9 - 50 age bracket and especially amongst men. Amongst the outcomes of a 2017 "Attracting Millennials" conference was the fact that many in this age group find church desperately boring. This is despite the fact that the same people want to engage with the big questions. How can we respond to this? Because most parishes still just about pay their Share, we are lulled into a false sense that things are all right. We need, however, to view things through a theological, sociological and ecclesial lens. This includes re-considering what features most highly on our PCC agendas. There were good examples of growth in the diocese with no one model for success but some shared principles - we need to be willing to experiment and to take risk. A recent church graft from St Mary's Longfleet to St Michael's and St Gabriel's Hamworthy was leading to growth in Hamworthy. In addition, Giving had increased so new things could take place to benefit the community including Alpha, a holiday club, a foodbank and café and lots of contact with schools. It involves a lot of time, effort and resource but showed what was possible when you try to change the culture.

The Archdeacon of Sarum reflected on the Mixed Economy. He believed that good pastoral care and community engagement would keep the Church of England going into the future, but the issue of who is missing from our congregations should cause concern. There are plenty of new worshipping communities in our diocese, but we don't know exactly how many because they are not always reported. People become involved with them because they meet a need; the most popular form of outreach to families is Messy Church. Ministry for Mission was particularly keen to engage in the new housing being developed across the diocese. Synod should also remember that schools are worshipping communities and we should consider joining the children

at their worship rather than expecting them to come to ours - school churches rather than church schools.

The Bishop of Ramsbury asked Synod members to briefly share with each other what had struck them so far and what they needed from "God the Gardener" to enable growth to take place.

**5. DBF Finances**

The Head of Finance provided an optional lunchtime session on DBF Finances as requested at the November 2018 Synod.

**6. Presentation of Eco-Diocese Award**

A representative from A Rocha was unable to attend but it was hoped to return to the subject at the November 2019 Synod as we work together towards our diocesan Silver Award.

**7. Getting to Know You**

The Communications Director led a "Desert Island Discs" style conversation with the new Bishop of Ramsbury, the Rt Revd Dr Andrew Rumsey, Archdeacon of Sherborne, the Ven Penny Sayer and Diocesan Secretary, Mr David Pain.

The Diocesan Secretary spoke of his teenage children and of music at Glastonbury Festival. His chosen music was "Ready to Change" by Kodaline. This spoke to him because Jesus was about change. He observed that what holds us back is often ourselves. His chosen picture was an image of the constantly flowing wellspring at Mottisfont Abbey which he described as a "thin" place where one may feel close to God. The Bishop of Ramsbury showed a picture of himself playing in a band. He said that the other members were better musicians than he but it was important to learn from others. His chosen music was "The Good Old Way" by the Watersons because he felt it stirred faith and hope against challenge and adversity. His picture was the cover for the novel "Watership Down" because it is the story of a community travelling to a place of hope. The Archdeacon of Sherborne's music was "Brothers in Arms" by Dire Straits. It was a call to get the skeletons out of the cupboard because, if not, they will come back and bite you! Her picture was the album cover of the same name because, she explained, she held the briefs for social justice and clergy wellbeing. She looked after herself through music and reading and she asked clergy to look after themselves well also, and the laity to look after their clergy.

**8. We Pray, We Serve, but are we Growing? Part 2**

Four workshops were offered with Synod members invited to each attend two. These were opportunities for exploration around subjects with particular relevance to the growth discussion. The subjects offered were:

- Growing Rural Mission and Ministry, with the Revd Canon David Baldwin and Mrs Sarah Keen.
- Church Graft in Hamworthy, with the Revd Tess Nisbet.
- "Church School" or "School Church"? with Mrs Mandy Christopher.
- Growing our Social Action across the Diocese to meet Real Needs, with Mr Colin Brady.

**9. Additional Item**

Sister Debbie Orriss spoke to Synod about the Commissioned Lay Pioneer discernment and training pilot schemes which she is working on. A brochure had been produced and Synod members were asked to get in touch with her if they would like further information ([debbie.orriss@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:debbie.orriss@salisbury.anglican.org)).

**10. Drawing our Discussion Together/Next Steps in our Review**

The Diocesan Secretary updated Synod on the Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow interim review process. This was being undertaken by the Rt Revd John Gladwin, retired Bishop of Chelmsford and Guildford. A questionnaire would shortly be issued, which will also be available online. Bishop John will be in the diocese from 10 to 15 March 2019 to hold meetings with groups and individuals. His report should be available by Easter and the Bishop's Council will consider the report at its May meeting.

Questions for Synod members to consider included:

- What kind of Church do we want to hand on and what do we need to do to make that a reality?
- How do we ensure a thriving Christian presence in every community in 2030?

Regarding finance, the Finance Committee is moving towards a three-year framework so we shall plan and budget to a slightly further horizon; there will be a particular challenge to address in the £1.2 million gap between current income and expenditure. We shall have to make choices together as we work towards the desired future.

The Diocesan Secretary hoped that Synod members had been inspired by the day and would take home ideas for things that can take place in their local communities.

## 11. Questions

On behalf of Bradford Deanery a question had been received from Mr Christopher Fielden:

“Further to the minutes of the last Diocesan Synod and the question, and supplementary, asked by Bradford Deanery, what progress has been made in the establishment of a forum to discuss how the faculty application process might be made less onerous?”

The Diocesan Secretary responded that Faculty is national legislation and not something determined at diocesan level. Nevertheless, Lists A and B, which are used when full Faculty is not required, are currently under review at national level to determine if the scope of works included can be extended. In addition, the diocese will soon move to the national on-line Application and Faculty Petition process which will introduce some change for parishes, but not to the legislative requirements of Faculty Jurisdiction itself. An updated information page can be found on the diocesan website at <https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/parishes/church-buildings/faculty-jurisdiction-ecclesiastical-exemption>.

## 12. Any Other Business

The Archdeacon of Dorset/Chairman of the Board of Education reported that Mrs Clare Tunncliffe had been co-opted onto the Board of Education.

Mrs Gillian Clarke, Chairman House of Laity, thanked the hosts at Corfe Mullen and all support staff for facilitating the meeting. She asked Synod members to send her feedback about the meeting stating what had gone well and what not so well ([gillianmaryclarke@hotmail.com](mailto:gillianmaryclarke@hotmail.com)). She encouraged members to take copies of Grapevine and the Rural Hope leaflet away with them.

The Bishop presented the Diocesan Secretary with the EcoChurch Bronze Award Certificate achieved by Church House, along with a challenge for Church House to reach Gold level in due course.

## 13. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 1830 to 2100 on Wednesday 19 June 2019 at St Francis' Church, Salisbury. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 14 May 2019.