



DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD MINUTES OF THE 128th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT ST FRANCIS CHURCH, SALISBURY ON WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2019

1. **Opening Worship and Presidential Address**

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word led by the Archdeacon of Dorset. The Bishop delivered the Presidential Address on themes of living with hope, the strength that comes from variety and our shared work towards a three year financial plan and a ten year diocesan vision.

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. **Approval of Minutes of last meeting**

Synod approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2019. There were no matters arising.

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

The Chairman House of Laity promulgated Amending Canon 38.

There were no co-options.

Apologies were received from 15 clergy and 11 laity.

4. **Renewing Hope Review and Next Steps?**

The Bishop of Sherborne introduced the "Renewing Hope" Consultation Report by Bishop John Gladwin and explained that Bishop John had affirmed the Pray, Serve, Grow (PSG) vision so the diocese was now looking towards PSG phase 2. Synod discussed the report in pairs then small groups and completed written feedback under the headings of "Deepening Spirituality", "Going Local" and "Travelling Light" at Parish/Benefice, Deanery and Diocesan levels. The Bishop of Sherborne will collate the responses and add them to the wider feedback on the Report. All feedback will be submitted to Bishop's Council on 25 July and will help discern priorities.

The Diocesan Secretary reported to Synod on the reviews currently taking place to establish priorities and a financial framework for 2021-2023. These covered Mission and Ministry, Property, Diocesan Offices, Fairer Share, Information Technology and Communications/ Engagement. Comments and suggestions were invited with the hope that these would include voices not typically heard. Recommendations will come back to Synod on 16 November.

Mrs Rosemary Cook (Pewsey Deanery), member of Bishop's Council and the Finance Committee and Lay Chairman of Pewsey Deanery, gave a progress update on the review of the Fairer Share scheme. A Task Group was looking at all parts of the Fairer Share mechanism. A report will go to the Finance Committee and to Bishop's Council and the proposals will go in October to Focus Groups representative of the different types of parish in the diocese. The intention was for the final report and recommendations to come to Synod on 16 November. Any thoughts or comments should be sent to Rosemary c/o fiona.torrance@salisbury.anglican.org. Any changes resulting from this review will be incorporated into the 2021 Share request.

5. The DAC Awards 2019

The Diocesan Secretary updated Synod on the situation in the DAC office where the ill health and subsequent retirement of the DAC Secretary had resulted in a backlog of work. A new DAC Secretary, Mrs Sarah Baines, was now in post and temporary additional support hired in. This together with the launch of the on-line Faculty system would hopefully enable her and her assistant to resolve the backlogs as soon as possible.

The DAC Chairman, the Very Revd John Seaford, welcomed Mrs Baines to her first Synod and voiced his disappointment that some parishes had allowed their frustration at the situation to boil over into abuse of staff. He then presented awards from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) to representatives from five parishes for outstanding applications and schemes:

Coombe Bissett St Michael and All Angels for a new Remembrance window "Lest we Forget". The award was received by Canon Jenny Taylor, Mrs Mary and Mr David Parson, Mrs Heather and Mr Michael Pearce, Mrs Mary Harris, Mr Robin Maycock and Mrs Daphne Woolnough.

Great Bedwyn St Mary for cleaning and restoration of the JW Walker Organ. The award was received by the Revd Michael McHugh and Mr Andrew Hutchison.

Great Cheverell St Peter for installation of a lavatory in the vestry, reconfiguration of the remaining vestry space plus provision of a servery in the Townsend Chapel. The award was received Mr Robin O'Neill.

Heytesbury St Peter and St Paul for a replacement chancel lighting scheme. The award was received by Mr Tom Roberts and Mrs Christine Sitwell.

Seend Holy Cross for installation of a lavatory in a former bier store plus amendment to an earlier scheme for re-ordering the interior of the church. The award was received by Mrs Anne Ewing and Mr Neil Yockney.

6. Directors' and Trustees' Report and Consolidated Financial Statements 2018

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) began the Annual General Meeting of the DBF. The Head of Finance introduced the Directors' and Trustees' Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2018 and talked through the financial statements. Members noted the new format which set out how the DBF had performed against its objectives as well as looking to the future. It also explained why there is now an operating deficit. An additional hand-out provided more detailed information on income and expenditure and clarified some of the less easily understood figures in the statutory accounts. The Auditors' report was again unqualified.

There were no questions. The Chairman DBF therefore moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

"That the Diocesan Board of Finance adopts the Directors' and Trustees Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2018."

Synod as the DBF approved the Motion unanimously.

7. Appointment of Auditors

The Chairman DBF moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

"That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the appointment of Haysmacintyre as the auditors for the Diocesan Board of Finance."

Synod as the DBF approved the Motion unanimously.

8. Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2020

The Chairman DBF introduced the 2020 Diocesan Budget Guide. In response to previous feedback, this was a consolidated budget which made the contribution of Share clear. It also tried to be as transparent as possible about what the money would be spent on. The Count for Share Assessment had been brought forward in 2019 in order to bring to Synod the per capita Share increase as well as the proposed overall increase of 1.48%. The continuing decline in membership meant, however, that the resulting per capita increase would be 2.86%. The Chairman DBF emphasised that this was a transitional budget whilst wide-ranging reviews are underway with a view to eliminating the operating deficit from 2021 onwards. The Revd Charlie Boyle (Poole and North Bournemouth Deanery) wondered whether it was unrealistic to assume that parochial fees would not reduce, but the Head of Finance replied that audits and increased scrutiny were resulting in better payments. Synod as DBF then considered the Budget and the Director of Communications led a question and answer session with responses being provided by the Chairman DBF, Diocesan Secretary and Head of Finance:

Q – Looking at the costs of Learning for Discipleship, CMD programme, Mission initiatives, Diocesan resources, Clergy Conference every three or four years, there are clearly some important choices to be made if there is a need to cut costs. How will this be managed?

A - Pages 13-16 of the Budget Guide have some of the detail and these areas are all part of the Mission and Ministry review. Decisions will be based on review feedback as well as data plus evidence of participation in programmes and listening to the National Church. It should be noted that training and discipleship are very important.

Q – What is the process for handling requests for leniency over arrears and Share payments?

A - Requests go first to Archdeacons then are considered by the appropriate Area Fairer Share Review Group. If accepted, a request is put forward by the relevant Archdeacon to the Finance Committee of the DBF. The Finance Committee makes every effort to respond to requests with understanding, but it does not review or change Share categories – that is a local decision.

Q – There is a £100,000 contribution to the pension deficit so what is happening?

A - £100,000 will be paid out of reserves in 2019 and 2020 to reduce the costs of clergy pensions within the Share request. The pension deficit is expected to be repaid by 2023 after which there will be a saving to the Diocese of 6.9% of the current pension cost according to the latest calculations from CEPB. This represents a reduction in payments of c £150,000 each year which, although welcome, is not as much as had been hoped for.

Q - Are changes being considered to the provision of clergy housing bearing in mind the green book rules?

A - Clergy housing is a significant area of expenditure. A survey is being sent out to clergy in the next few days. DBF guidelines will be reviewed so clergy know exactly what to expect.

Q – If houses are vacant could they be used for social housing which would be charitable and also bring in rental income?

A - Social housing is considered and sometimes the DBF does as suggested but this has to be balanced against the requirement to maximise income.

Q – How is IT being utilised to improve efficiency?

A - This is one of the areas under review. The National Church is currently investing in improved IT infrastructure and the Diocese is moving to online Faculty Applications.

Q – Should a parish priest in a half time post be more accurately described as occupying a half stipend post because the cost is actually two thirds of a full time priest?

A - This will be considered as part of the ongoing reviews.

Q – How long is the average vacancy, is the time being extended and how do we compare with other dioceses?

A - The average is currently 10 months and this is increasing slightly. There is no plan to have increasingly long vacancies, but they have come about because of difficulties in recruiting clergy.

The Chairman DBF then moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance/Synod approves the annual Budget for Share Assessment 2020.”

The Motion was approved with none against and two abstentions. The approved Budget Guide for 2020 will be available on the diocesan web site.

10. Questions

Mr Nick Baker (Salisbury Deanery) asked – “In how many deaneries is there at least one youth worker employed full or more than 0.5 FTE by a parish or benefice?” Mrs Lizzie Whitbread, Senior Adviser for Work with Children and Young People, had sent a written response that there are 8 deaneries that have at least one youth worker employed by parishes more than half time. Mr Baker then asked if there is any strategic plan to develop this important provision. Mrs Whitbread’s response, received subsequent to the meeting, was that “There are many issues related to the employment of parish or deanery youth workers – not least it is very hard to recruit even when parishes do want to invest in a youth worker. Our current DBE strategy probably best outlines our current plans in developing work with young people across the diocese particularly the focus on developing community hubs. It can be found here: www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/schools1/contact-us/2018-2023-salisbury-diocesan-board-of-education-strategic-plan-oct-2018. If anyone wishes to talk further about this I would be willing to talk to them directly.”

11 Any other business

There was no other business.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday 16 November at Amesbury Baptist Church. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 7 October.