



DIocese of Salisbury

SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD MINUTES OF THE 130th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, CORFE MULLEN ON SATURDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2020

1. **Opening Worship and Presidential Address**

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word led by the Social Justice Programme Manager, Mr Colin Brady. The Bishop of Salisbury delivered the Presidential Address on themes of Lent and climate emergency. He also spoke of the new Team structures at Church House and thanked the Revd Canon Jane Charman, outgoing Director of Ministry, and Mrs Judith Wilson, outgoing HR Director for their considerable contributions and vital service. He reported that, in order to avoid a conflict of interest, the Revd Canon Jonathan Triffitt would temporarily step down as Chairman of the House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod with effect from 1 March in order to act as Interim Director of Mission and Ministry and Deputy Diocesan Secretary.

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

2. **Approval of Minutes of last meeting**

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

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

In the absence of the Registrar Mrs Debbie McIsaac, General Synod Member, was invited to join the top table to advise on the debate during agenda Item 4.

There were a Sarum College bookstall, a Rural Hope display and a DAC help-desk available throughout the day.

Regarding Deanery Synod elections, members were asked to use the leaflets they had been given and try to recruit locally.

There were no co-options.

Apologies were received from 9 clergy and 9 laity.

4. **Diocesan Priorities and Financial Framework**

1. Renewing Hope, Refreshing our Priorities 2020

The Bishop of Sherborne presented the item. Her PowerPoint slides will be sent out with these minutes.

During a highly engaged debate, members expressed enthusiasm, asked for clarification of some of the terms employed and suggested areas for further attention and activity. The Bishop of Sherborne and the Diocesan Secretary responded to the various comments and questions which included:

- Asking at every level in our parishes and deaneries, "Who are our partners?" so that we do things together.
- The need to consider the question of Leadership at all levels.
- The value of developing Local Ministry Teams.
- The choices we make when considering Re-Patterning Ministry.

- How we are going to be Dynamic in order to respond to a changing environment.
- Conversations needed around defining Growth.
- The importance of effective Communications and also Marketing.
- The need to better understand our Demography.
- Defining what is best done at Local, Diocesan or National level.

The Bishop of Sherborne moved on behalf of the Bishop's Council:

“That this Synod celebrates the Renewing Hope journey that the Diocese of Salisbury has been on and adopts the priorities for growth and next steps as proposed.”

The Motion was carried with none against and 1 abstention.

2. 5 Year Financial Framework

The DBF Chairman introduced the item and reminded Synod that this was an early iteration and the detail was likely to change.

The Director of Finance, Property and Asset Management, Mrs Liz Ashmead, talked through the supporting paper. She explained that she was planning to work with four pilot deaneries and invited anyone who would like to be involved in this work to contact her.

To help frame the ensuing discussion, members considered:

- Do we support the goal to eliminate the deficit over 4/5 years?
- Will a potential uplift in Share of 3-4% per annum over the plan period be sustainable to parishes?
- Can we work with the projected reduction in clergy numbers? In the context of the above, is it too great or too little?

It was noted that the plans did not yet address the recent decision by the General Synod to achieve net zero carbon by 2030 but that the Bishop's Council had commissioned work to scope the implications.

Most Synod members supported the aim to eliminate the financial deficit over the coming 4-5 years, although some advocated a shorter timescale and some longer. It was explained that the longer the timescale the more the diocese will have to sell investments in order to meet the shortfall.

Although some members felt that the proposed increases in Share were unachievable, others felt that church members could increase their giving levels if they saw that it resulted in visible local resources. Reference was made to the financial awareness campaign of 2001-2003 with one member advocating a large one-off Share increase on the back of a similar campaign in order to set a new giving baseline; this would necessitate setting up relief for some parishes. A Stewardship Strategy was considered desirable.

There was concern over the proposed reduction of 10 clergy posts, both from the point of view of the effect on parishes and the additional strain placed on remaining clergy. It was, however, also noted that the diocese is having increasing difficulty in filling stipendiary clergy vacancies with fewer candidates coming forward. Reference was made to the fact that the current plans for reduction in numbers are not strategic because they are based on clergy retirements, an aspect which will be considered by the Bishop's Staff. In relation to this, it would be helpful to clarify the funding and support of lay ministers. There was a formal request for the Ministry Strategy to come to Synod as soon as possible.

The Director of Finance, Property and Asset Management invited members to contact her directly for any detailed explanations of the facts and figures.

Synod then voted to take note and support the direction of travel, with 2 members against and 6 abstentions.

5. **Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together**

The Bishop of Ramsbury introduced the Principles which had come from the Pastoral Advisory Group of the C of E and were intended to run alongside the programme "Living Together in Love and Faith". Synod members discussed the Principles around their tables whilst bearing in mind:

- What strikes you about the Principles?
- What questions do they raise for you?
- How might we make the most of these principles as a diocese?

Members shared observations and stories in plenary. It was felt that the Principles were a helpful resource which could be used in both church and professional contexts. The Bishop of Ramsbury stated that further advice and information would be made available in due course.

The Revd Chris Tebbutt (Wimborne Deanery) also commended a course entitled "Difference" sponsored by the Archbishop of Canterbury, <https://difference.rln.global/>.

6.a **Draft Channel Islands Measure**

This was an additional item of business. The Archdeacon of Sarum reported that the draft Channel Islands Measure had been expedited at General Synod in February with the expectation of final approval and enactment later this year.

6.b **General Synod Report**

Mrs Debbie McIsaac gave a brief report on the February Group of Sessions with particular reference to matters which will have a significant impact on this diocese. She also encouraged engagement with the deanery synod elections.

7. **Fairer Share**

Mrs Rosemary Cook introduced the principles, process and proposals for a revised Share system. The DBF Chairman advised that the proposals would now go out for discussion and consultation and invited anyone who would like to be involved on the Fairer Share Review Group to contact him. He reported that the Share Payment certificate had been modernised. He also advised that the direct debit discount for 2021 would be reviewed as he accepted that a single, advance lump sum penalised smaller parishes.

The Diocesan Secretary explained that the Fairer Share consultation would be in two stages, the first talking about the principles and the second modelling the implications. Information and resources would be provided to facilitate conversations taking place as widely as possible. In the meantime, he invited members to contact him if they would like to join a focus group.

During discussion a wide range of views and comments were expressed including:

- Please state the exact cost of a priest and also ascertain the numbers of economically active persons in our parishes.
- The present Share system is weighted towards urban parishes and is unfair to rural multi-parish benefices. For example, in a 16 parish benefice each church is assessed separately, but when it comes to the clergy the benefice is taken as a whole.
- Rural churches pay more for mileage and for looking after additional buildings.
- We mustn't lose sight of our values and that any system will be a compromise.
- Should the name be changed? In some dioceses Share is referred to as "Common Fund".
- Has any consideration been given to encouraging churches with historic reserves to help fund "resource churches" or help to sponsor struggling churches?
- Using size of parish as a major element of any system causes problems when a parish draws a significant part of its congregation from outside the parish.

Mrs Cook urged everyone to take part in the forthcoming consultation exercises. Synod formally noted progress so far.

8. **Social Responsibility**

The Social Justice Programme Manager introduced the Social Justice Working Group annual report. He also stated that, having recently moved to the North of the diocese, he was looking for more invitations to work with northern parishes.

9. To Note

Synod noted that a Resolution had been received from Bradford Deanery Synod relating to the allocation of parochial fees:

“Bradford on Avon Deanery Synod notes with concern the changes relating to fees paid in respect of cremations, graveside services or services in funeral directors’ chapels of rest, whereby a parish may provide a priest to officiate, but no longer receives any part of the fee. The Synod urges Diocesan Synod to take note of this, and to invite the Diocese to remit to the parishes an appropriate part of the fee. Synod also urges that in the next quinquennium General Synod representatives press for the Fees Order to be amended to correct the obvious anomaly that the parish that does the work receives no financial recompense.”

The Head of Finance, Property and Asset Management reported that there was no prospect of a change from General Synod before 2021 at the earliest. The matter will be discussed by the DBF Finance Committee on 20 March and a report will come back to Synod.

11. Questions

The Revd Keith Brindle asked, “Regarding defining the net zero target, are we going to play the numbers game or seriously reduce our carbon emissions?” The Bishop responded that the Church is seeking to achieve a 70% reduction by 2030 and to have the technology to do this, but we don’t have a base figure to start from so parish returns this year will ask the question. Work was going on at National level to define what is meant by net zero.

The Revd Keith Brindle also asked, “Will the National Church do what it needs to do or will parishes be left to deal with this?” The Bishop responded that ways would need to be found so as not to cause resentment in parishes. It will be a challenge because there are 49,000 buildings in the C of E and decisions about these need to be taken locally. There are no answers or framework yet, but work is going on at National level to address this.

12. Any other business

There was no other business.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 1830 to 2100 on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at St Francis’ Church, Salisbury. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 11 May 2020.