

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHICHESTER DIOCESAN SYNOD AND CHICHESTER DIOCESAN  
FUND AND BOARD OF FINANCE (INCORPORATED)  
AT SUSSEX DOWNS COLLEGE, LEWES  
SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2018**

PRESENT:   The Bishop (President)  
  Suffragan Bishops 2  
  Clergy 70  
  Laity 81  
  Mr Matthew Chinery (Diocesan Registrar)  
  Miss Gabrielle Higgins (Diocesan Secretary)

APOLOGIES:                                       Clergy 29  
  Laity 18

**THE EUCHARIST** was celebrated by the Bishop of Chichester. He gave the Presidential Address.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRS OF THE HOUSES OF CLERGY AND LAITY**

It was announced that the Revd Canon Mark Gilbert had been deemed elected as Chair of the House of Clergy and that Mr John Booth had been deemed elected as Chair of the House of Laity.

**MEETING OF THE CHICHESTER DIOCESAN FUND AND BOARD OF FINANCE (INCORPORATED)**

**PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET FOR 2019**

Mr Philip Bowden, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the budget for 2019 for approval.

Mr Bowden thanked those involved in preparing the draft budget and explained that a significant deficit was proposed in contrast with the budgets of the past few years. This had been discussed at length by the Operating Committee and Finance Committee and was felt to be manageable, given the strong position that the diocese was in. It was explained that the main reason for the deficit was the increased costs associated with training new clergy. Synod had previously heard about the excellent work being carried out in encouraging vocations, to counteract the projected decline of clergy numbers and the resulting impact on mission and ministry.

It was noted that other dioceses were facing similar deficits, partly arising from the national Renewal and Reform programme. This had recently been discussed at the Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum and the national Church was aware of the issue and was considering how to help dioceses. In the meantime, it was important for this diocese to do all it can to help itself. Mr Bowden explained that the proposed budget allowed for a decrease in the costs of running the Diocesan Office. The Property Director had also identified some ways to reduce the property budget.

The deaneries and parishes were thanked for their generosity in contributing 80% of the funds needed and it was emphasised that parish share was crucial in resourcing mission and ministry. Parishes were encouraged to contribute an additional 3.2%, or more, if possible, in order to subsidise less wealthy parishes and contribute to the household of faith. It was also noted that there was a need to look at other possible sources of income. It had been agreed that a new Diocesan Fundraising Adviser should be appointed to assist parishes in attracting external funding. It was also explained that there was a need to discern key objectives for the coming years and to plan for the future in a way that is sustainable financially. Work on a rolling five-year projection of

finances was planned, which would allow trends and the cost and impact of long-term plans to be better understood.

In summary, Mr Bowden noted that, although balancing the books would be challenging over the next few years, the success on clergy numbers was good news and there was every reason to have hope and confidence in the future.

Mr Jeremy Kay noted that it would be important for the five-year strategy to be brought to the Diocesan Synod for discussion. With many parishes contributing 60% or more of their income in parish share, there was concern that parishes' cash reserves were being run to a level that would cause difficulty if they were faced with unexpected expenditure. Mr Kay also noted that many generous contributors were elderly and that their younger successors tended not to be able to contribute financially to the same extent.

Mr Chris Bell explained that, in light of his experience from years in business, he was concerned about this budget. It was not the first time that the DBF had have taken from the pastoral fund and he calculated that the real deficit was close to £2 million. He felt that this was not sustainable in the long term and expressed serious reservations about agreeing this budget.

Mr John Head expressed concerns about the Diocese's investment in overseas work, noting that the Revd Ian Cervantes Hutchinson had recently resigned from the post of World Mission Officer and there seemed to be no plan to replace him in this role. It was suggested that this could send out a signal that the Diocese was not interested in mission to its overseas partners.

In response, Mr Bowden agreed that there would be difficult decisions to make in relation to finances and strategy and that it was right that those should be brought to Diocesan Synod. The rolling five-year projection would not just focus on the General Fund budget but on the overall financial position. It was explained that the pastoral fund was important in two ways; it provided a cushion for unexpected events, and also provided investment income towards our yearly expenditure. Tough decisions would need to be made to ensure sustainability for the future.

In response to Mr Bell, Mr Bowden agreed that the deficit between our income and expenditure was the £1.9 million (before transfers from the Pastoral Fund), not the bottom line. This was not a new situation but was a consequence of how the Diocese had been moving forwards and was largely due to the earlier decisions to allocate Pastoral Fund money to education and property. It was planned that, after 2019 or perhaps 2020, this extra investment allocated from the Pastoral Fund in those areas would cease.

In response to the final question, Mr Bowden explained that there had been a long debate at the Bishop's Council and that, in light of the deficit for 2019, the Council had reluctantly agreed that the World Mission Officer could not be replaced with a paid role at this time.

Mr Bowden moved that the budget of the DBF for 2019 be received.

*The motion was carried on a show of hands, with one against and three abstentions*

The Bishop of Chichester thanked the Chair of the Finance Committee and Finance team on behalf of the Synod.

## **MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD**

### **WELCOME TO THE NEW DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

The Bishop welcomed Mr Trevor Cristin as the new Diocesan Director of Education.

Mr Cristin thanked the Bishop and Synod for their welcome. He explained that this was a challenging time for the diocese's schools, 47% of which were small and rural. There was a need to identify and develop new school leaders. Whilst there were challenges, there were also opportunities, including the unique opportunity that schools have to demonstrate what being Christians in the real world looks like.

Mr Cristin explained that the way the Diocesan Board of Education works was being looked at; its size could sometimes inhibit discussion and there was a need to harness skills whilst improving efficiency. A new executive committee was planned, which would be answerable to the DBE but would be able to make routine decisions and carry out ground work for major decisions which could then be presented to the DBE for discussion and a final decision. It was hoped that this new model would be launched in the spring.

In conclusion, Mr Cristin noted that there were challenges and opportunities but that the emphasis should be joy and hope.

### **THE CHICHESTER DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILY SUPPORT WORK**

The Bishop welcomed Mr Martin Auton-Lloyd, who gave a presentation about the work of Family Support Work in the diocese.

Mr Auton-Lloyd thanked the Bishop for the opportunity to address the Synod and explained that he wanted to share the good news about the very important work that Family Support Work carried out across the diocese and how it can work with parishes to promote the Common Good.

It was explained that FSW had come a long way; since the 1980s it had helped families that were struggling and in crisis, with an emphasis on engaging with the whole family and staying involved in the long-term rather than through single interventions. This was a time-consuming but effective approach which involved listening, reflecting, advising and guiding.

In the current climate, there were lots of challenges facing families across Sussex, including unemployment, low-paid employment, mental health and family issues. 2,000 boxes of food were sent out to families last year. Whilst work was often with the adults in the family, it was important that the focus was always also on the children.

FSW were working on a plan to have at least one practitioner in every deanery. In Rustington, FSW had been working with families over three years, dealing with 30 families, and had seen real progress. Their work had also led to many families attending Messy Church and church services.

FSW had also been heavily involved in some very difficult and complex cases; whilst the outcome was not always positive, it was very important work, particularly in the current context, when the State's resources are stretched and there are significant gaps in the services provided. For example, in 2019, East Sussex will take away all services for families except child protection.

Family Support Work represents service to people and embodies the mission of the Church to society. Mr Auton-Lloyd explained that the partnerships with the diocese and its deaneries and parishes is crucial to FSW's work and emphasised the need for support, energy and prayers, in addition to financial support.

### **TOGETHER IN SUSSEX**

The Bishop welcomed the Revd Diane Watts, who explained that she is part of Together in Sussex, a joint venture between the Diocese and the Church Urban Fund.

It was explained that Together in Sussex provides resources to parishes, whilst also linking more broadly with the rest of the country. Whilst Together in Sussex cannot run projects on behalf of parishes, it could build links with other organisations and support parishes and deaneries in setting up projects aimed at addressing the issues in their local communities, including homelessness, food poverty, mental health and well-being, budgeting and debt relief, loneliness and isolation, new house building, and modern-day slavery.

It was explained that help could be offered in the early stages, through assisting PCCs and congregations to reflect on their situation and local needs and helping them to work out what capacity they might have to help and identify suitable partners. The key aim was to build relationships and contribute to the Common Good across Sussex.

### **REFLECTIONS ON THE LAST THREE YEARS**

The Bishop of Chichester reflected on the previous few years.

It was noted that the diocese has come a long way and has made significant progress in key areas, with new energy being put into promoting the Common Good, important work being carried out in re-imagining ministry, and excellent work being carried out by the DDO and his team, in increasing number of ordinands.

Major progress had been made in the area of Safeguarding, with changes in policy being accompanied by a change in culture. In particular, the excellent response from parishes was helping to ensure that the Church in this diocese was as safe as it could be. There had also been significant investment in education and this had made a clear impact.

In relation to diocesan administration, the Bishop thanked the Diocesan Secretary for her work in ensuring that the quality of administration was as good as possible. Key improvements had been made in relation to the database and the IT system was in the process of being upgraded.

The Bishop explained that it was important that the Diocese looks to the future and seeks to discern what God is asking of us as the household of faith.

### **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

The Bishop of Lewes explained that the process of looking forward to 2020-2025 has begun. Substantial progress was made in 2015-2020 and there would be a need to build on the strategy of 2015-2020, continuing and developing those things that have already been started, whilst also facing new challenges and the changing context the Diocese finds itself in.

A Planning for the Future group had been set up and Terms of Reference agreed. It had met a couple of times already and would need to have several more meetings into the spring.

In developing the new strategy, the group would need to take into account the theological underpinnings, practical considerations, and the timeframe for how and when the strategy would unfold. Key questions included who we are and what our identity is; it was noted that, as the household of faith, there were parameters for how we live our lives and our interaction with our communities. The group would need to revisit those questions and find purpose that would become strategy and inform how the Diocese's resources should be deployed.

The group was intending to produce a strategy document but would also look at more dynamic ways to communicate with the wider Diocese. The strategy would guide decision making and form a framework through which the difficult budgetary decisions to be made over the next five years could be approached. The approach would include consultation with parishes, through the episcopal visitations that have been planned for the first half of 2019 and through circulation of proposals for comment. The aim was to help people in the Diocese to understand the realities and challenges, including financial pressures, demographics, vocations, and engagement with younger people. It was planned that the strategy would be presented to Synod next November.

The Revd Canon Mark Gilbert expressed concerns about the resourcing of the Diocesan Overseas Council and connecting with the developing world and asked how this would be tied into the strategy?

The Revd Martin Miller observed that when there were previous consultations in relation to the formulation of diocesan strategy, there was under-representation from some areas, and asked if it would be possible to make events more widespread and encourage more people to attend and engage?

Mr Andrew Crighton asked about deanery reviews and how deanery plans would fit into the strategy.

In response, the Bishop of Lewes explained the recent decision in relation to the Diocesan Overseas Council was illustrative of the difficult decisions that would need to be faced. It was hoped that some responsibilities could be spread out around the committee and some people had volunteered help already.

In relation to consultations, it was agreed that it would be important to encourage as many people to attend and engage as possible.

In relation to deanery plans, it was noted that recent legislative changes place a greater emphasis on deanery plans and that they would be an integral part of the strategy. It would be up to deaneries, benefices and parishes individually to work things out in their local context but this would be an ongoing process.

The Revd Angela Martin observed that we need younger people in church. However, the number of births is falling and she wondered what the strategy would say about how we can work with what we have; an aging population that is living longer?

The Revd Lisa Barnett observed that consultations should not just be about attending meetings and that we would need to find other ways of consulting, including use of SurveyMonkey.

In relation to deanery reviews, Mrs Janine Hobbs observed that the deanery synods can be seen as a non-entity and that, in the past, large amounts of work have gone into deanery plans that have gone nowhere. It would be important to ensure that reviews are led by an Archdeacon and that the recommendations are carried through.

In response, Bishop Richard thanked the Revd Angela Martin for the point about demographics. He noted that many churches have no one under 70 in their congregations and that it is very difficult to find a way back from that and bring in children. In this context, schools are even more important in providing an understanding of the Christian faith and the Church also needs to explore how we can engage most effectively with families, even if it's not in the context of Sunday morning services.

Bishop Richard thanked the Revd Lisa Barnett and agreed that was a good point.

In relation to reviews, Bishop Richard agreed that the way in which reviews were carried out in the past was not ideal but that more recent reviews, such as the Horsham and Crawley Review provided an excellent example of best practice. In respect of deanery synods, it was difficult to know how they could be made to be more effective; this was a national question which needed consideration.

The Revd Lee Duckett explained that his deanery was going through a deanery review. The latest Review document acknowledged that Hastings deanery had unusually high levels of deprivation and needed support but that, in the long-term, it may be necessary to reduce the number of clergy posts. He explained that it was hard enough to find clergy for posts in this area without assurance that they would have job security. How would the Diocese support the poorest areas of the diocese to enable them to have the mission and ministry that they need?

Mr William Holden observed that this was the Year of Vocation and that it was a year for all to look at how they as individuals could contribute to the life of the Church; how would that feed into the strategy for the next five years?

Mrs Sharon Phillips asked how can we could combine activities in order to take a cohesive approach across geographical areas?

In response, Bishop Richard observed that the household of faith concept was key and that there was a need to make sure that resources were shared equitably. He explained that wealthier parishes needed to subsidise those that had fewer resources and, as the established church, the Church of England had a responsibility to everyone living in this country. Whilst sustainability was to be encouraged, there would also need to be mutual support and consideration would need to be given to ensure that ministry would be financed properly in areas that cannot afford it. Bishop Richard explained that he could not envisage a situation where clergy would be made redundant to push through a scheme but that difficult choices would generally be faced at the points when benefices went into interregnum.

In relation to the Year Of programme, it was noted that many good things had flowed out of these initiatives. The Year of Vocation had focussed on helping all people to feel that, as baptized members, they had a calling. It was very much hoped that this would generate more service of the Lord and would feed into the life of the Diocese.

The Bishop thanked Synod members for their participation in this discussion and asked them to keep this matter in their prayers, observing that there was a need to reflect on how we create forums that are lively and take us forward, and how deaneries could play their part. In relation to

the forthcoming visitations, it was explained that these would be 'lighter touch' than the previous round of visitations.

#### **REPORT FROM GENERAL SYNOD**

The Revd Andrew Cornes moved that the report from General Synod be received.

*The motion was carried on a show of hands.*

#### **REPORT OF THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL**

The Revd Canon Mark Gilbert moved that the Report on the Bishop's Council be received.

Dr Brian Hanson observed that a great deal had been achieved but urged the Bishop's Council to consider the role of the Diocesan Synod. He felt that there was a tendency for Synod to be talked at rather than allowing it to engage with the issues of the day in genuine debate.

The Bishop thanked Dr Hanson and asked the Diocesan Secretary to feed that back to the Bishop's Council.

*The motion was carried on a show of hands.*

#### **RESULTS OF ELECTIONS FOR CHAIRS OF HOUSES**

As the elections were not contested, this item was not needed.

#### **QUESTIONS UNDER SO69**

No questions were received under SO69.

#### **THE ORDER OF ST RICHARD**

Mrs Sara Stonor introduced this new project, which was due to be launched in January 2019. The Order of St Richard would make forty awards (ten from each archdeaconry) every year. Nominations would be confidential, and each nomination would be made by a member of the parish clergy and two lay sponsors. The nominations would be received by the archdeacon and then reviewed by a panel, who would make recommendations to the Bishops. The recipients of awards would be presented with a medal at an annual service. The Order of St Richard was being organised at no cost to the Diocese, as the costs were being met by external funding organisations.

Mrs Margaret Heald observed that many people across the Diocese work very hard under the radar and may not want to be publicly recognised. There was also a risk that clergy could be subjected to pressure by people who would like an award.

In response, it was agreed that these were good points, but it was hoped that the system would be completely confidential and would have enough safeguards built into it. Bishop Martin explained that the process for Maundy Money had changed so that nominations are invited from across the diocese. Four people from this diocese were nominated and participated last year and it was understood that they had found the experience very rewarding.

Mr Michael Hoare observed that there are many benefices in vacancy, which have very deserving people working in them, and asked how that would be dealt with. It was explained that the Rural Dean or Archdeacon would be able to make the nomination in those circumstances.

The Bishop thanked those who had organised the service and assisted with the liturgy, the staff of the Sussex Downs College, and Mrs Anne-Marie Mizler, who had been responsible for the practical arrangements.

The meeting closed with prayers and the blessing.

Absent without apologies:

The Revd Canon JM Baldwin, The Revd AJR Murley, The Revd RJ Stagg, The Revd DM Swyer, Mr M J Harris, Mrs D Kutar.