

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHICHESTER DIOCESAN SYNOD AND CHICHESTER
DIOCESAN FUND AND BOARD OF FINANCE (INCORPORATED)
AT EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE, LEWES
SATURDAY 18 MAY 2019**

PRESENT: The Bishop (President)
 Suffragan Bishops 2
 Clergy 59
 Laity 68
 Mr Darren Oliver (Deputy Diocesan Registrar)
 Miss Gabrielle Higgins (Diocesan Secretary)

APOLOGIES: Clergy 38
 Laity 34

THE EUCHARIST was celebrated by the Bishop of Chichester

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

Welcome from the Bishop

Particular welcome was given to the New Archdeacon of Chichester, Luke Irvine-Capel, and the New Deputy Diocesan Register, Darren Oliver.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2018 ACCOUNTS

Mr Philip Bowden (217), Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the statutory accounts, DBF Annual Report and Red Book of Management Accounts for approval and moved that the Annual Accounts and report of the DBF for 2018 be received.

Thanks were given to Catherine Dawkins, the Finance team and everyone involved in the preparation of the reports, and also to parishes and deaneries for the Parish share which is crucial to the Church's mission across Sussex.

There were no comments or questions.

Philip Bowden moved that the Annual reports were received

This was approved by a show of hands, with no votes against and no abstentions

The Bishop expressed thanks to Philip Bowden for the hours spent preparing the detailed reports and to the team led by Catherine Dawkins. Parish and Deanery treasurers should be confident that financial administration is in good hands.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Mr Philip Bowden, Chair of the Finance Committee, moved that haysmacintyre LLP, Chartered Accountants, be re-appointed as auditors of the Company to hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

This was approved by a show of hands, with no votes against and no abstentions

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

MAY CAMP

Mr Dan Jenkins gave a report on the youth work including May Camp. This flagship youth festival has run for 30 years. Chichester is the only Diocese that runs something this like this. This year it was called Wildfire, and would be taking place from 24-27th May 2019.

Mr Jenkins presented a video to give an idea of May Camp and how Synod members could get involved. The festival is a fun packed weekend with workshops and seminars about discipleship, teaching and worship and encouraging young people's faith in Jesus Christ. Young people are encouraged to work with their local leaders in their own local Church following the camp.

The festival costs more to run than it makes in sales. Dan Jenkins encouraged Synod members to consider sponsoring a young person to attend.

The report was received.

PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING

Ms Nicola Canham, Diocesan Head of Pastoral Care and Counselling, and Mrs Elle Weaver, Mental Health & Wellbeing Facilitator of Together in Sussex, a joint venture between the Diocese of Chichester and the Church Urban Fund, introduced themselves and gave a presentation on mental health in the context of the Church, noting that it was Mental Health awareness week.

A review had been carried out as to how to more proactively promote clergy wellbeing, in recognition that the clergy role is rewarding but increasingly demanding and can be somewhat isolating, especially in rural parishes. A programme had been set up to demonstrate the Diocese's commitment to the wellbeing of clergy and their families. Reflective practice groups and counselling are provided, and debriefing sessions are offered after traumatic events including signposting to other areas of support.

There was encouragement for all Churches to have a mental health and wellbeing contact.

There were no questions.

The Bishop reminded Synod members to visit the Together in Sussex stall at synod and thanked the team for their important work.

BISHOP GEORGE BELL:

Mr John Booth (166), Chair of the House of Laity, took the chair for this item, which arose from a question from Dr Brian Hanson at a previous Synod.

For the text of the Bishop's speech, click [here](#).

Dr Brian Hanson (255), Storrington Deanery

Dr Hanson stated his appreciation for Bishop Martin's presentation on this matter and the opportunity for debate. He was aware that it had not been possible to have a debate before today due to the legal process that had been ongoing.

Dr Hanson outlined the history of the matter, highlighting that while he acknowledged that everyone acted in good faith, early on Chichester cathedral had renamed George Bell House with consultation with the Council, and other institutions had followed suit. He commented that the Archbishop of Canterbury had said that if the process was flawed, the Church would have to apologise, but after Lord Carlile's findings that the process was not thorough, the Archbishop, far from apologising, had made his notorious comment that George Bell remained under a significant cloud.

Dr Hanson stressed that in English law someone is presumed innocent until found guilty, and commented that the presumption did not discredit a complainant who may be confused or mistaken as to identity. He said that Bishop Bell had been proved innocent by Lord Carlile and Mr Briden, and that while Canterbury had tried to make amends by proceeding to erect a statue to Bishop Bell, he saw no such efforts in Chichester.

The Church should now accept that Bishop Bell should be declared innocent of the allegations made against him.

Mrs Joanna Chivers-Gibbs (178), Chichester Deanery

Mrs Chivers-Gibbs raised concerns that the Diocese had not accepted one of the major recommendations from the Carlile Report and from IICSA, but Synod had not been told which IICSA recommendation this was. She commented that the Church wide body did not accept that it does not have the expertise to investigate serious allegations of terrible behaviour towards children and other vulnerable people despite evidence to the contrary and that the Church could not even brief Lord Carlile properly to use the right kind of forensic psychologist.

Mrs Jane Wilkinson (182), Westbourne Deanery

Mrs Wilkinson raised the concern that a dead person could be accused without the Church having the guts to say that it was probably a case of mistaken identity. This position could allow anyone to be accused of being a child abuser with only thin circumstantial evidence, as had happened with the notorious case of 'Nick'. Mrs Wilkinson stated that it was clear that Bishop Bell was innocent.

Mr Alfred King (194), Battle and Bexhill Deanery

Mr King had been confirmed by Bishop Bell and expressed the view we should state we did not believe Bishop Bell had done anything and that we should admit that a terrible mistake has been made. There would be no harm for Carol as she would not even know about this being stated.

Mrs Helen Bridger (192), Battle and Bexhill Deanery

Mrs Bridger agreed that more could have been done in the investigation but noted that she had not heard any one say ‘what about the victim?’ A victim does not just ‘get over it’. Whether he did it or not, she believes she was a victim. She does matter. Bishop Bell matters, everybody matters, but we should not go down the route that victims do not matter just because there is doubt. Things that happen 30 or 40 years ago still matter and lives are ruined; it don’t go away because there is doubt. There may be doubt over who abused her but we should not forget that she had the courage to say she was abused. Bishop Bell may be innocent or he may not; we cannot know as we were not there. Nobody should say that victims don’t matter.

The Chair invited the Bishop to make some closing remarks.

The Bishop thanked those who had spoken, noting that it was right to hear the dismay and hurt, the shock and the pain, and to recognise, amongst other failures, the failure that Bishop Bell had no one else to speak for him. He thanked those who had spoken for him today and also thanked Mrs Bridger for reminding Synod of the wider context. He emphasised that everyone would hear what this Synod would say on this matter and it was not possible to say privately something that would make us feel better among ourselves.

The Bishop clarified a misunderstanding and stressed that it was not the case that any recommendation from IICSA had not been accepted; only the part of one recommendation from the Carlile report dealt with in the presentation had not been accepted. He also noted that one of the drivers for making the statement in the first place had been acceptance of the recommendations of the Archbishopial Visitation.

He emphasised that we should say what we can that is proper and right and positive about Bishop Bell, not just because there is pressure to do so. Carol herself said she recognised the esteem in which he was held and did not require us to dismantle his reputation. Some work had taken place already such as the restoration of paintings in Berwick in which George Bell features, and celebration of what he achieved at the forthcoming Coburg conference, which is the fruit of his ecumenical and international work. There are positive statements that can be made and seek to balance where we have destroyed access to the presumption of innocence. Today, as previously, we apologise for that. Now, processes for the future are better and more trustworthy.

The Chair thanked Dr Hanson and the Bishop and the members who had spoken, and the Bishop resumed the chair.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Bishop of Lewes gave a presentation on the next phase of the Diocesan Strategy. The next 5 years would focus on the Household of Faith. This was not a new strategy but rather an evolution and continuation of what has been taking place.

He explained that mission statistics are used for strategy and planning. The October 2018 count of Church attendance showed 25,666 adults and 3,200 under 16s. Numbers have declined by 0.8% on 2017, although there is considerable variety as some churches have seen growth and trends such as decreasing frequency of attendance can affect the interpretation of the figures.

In adult attendance there has been no significant sign of decline. However, the number of children attending Church has seen an 8.4% decline on 2017. If that were to continue, there would be no children in church by 2031. This is a serious trend with rural areas being the hardest hit and there remains a significant challenge of reach and numbers of children attending Church. However Messy Church adds nearly 50% to the numbers, demonstrating a dramatic shift in child attendance patterns.

The Diocesan Survey had received 780 responses from people in a variety of different roles, with around 10% from clergy and 90% from laity, and fairly representative age profiles. It focussed on 4 areas of the marks of the Diocese going forward: to be More open, More converted to Jesus Christ, More generous, and More engaged.

The Bishop of Lewes summarised the responses, noting a general welcome for the themes. There was great appreciation for the clergy and concern, particularly in smaller parishes, about the ability to find parish officers to keep the show on the road let alone deepen engagement. Help was sought with training particularly youth and children's work, and with administration to simplify the many demands placed on parish officers. Better engagement with schools was also highlighted.

He also noted widespread misunderstanding about money, with a belief that parish share funded the diocesan operation and had nothing to do with their clergy, whereas in fact 80% of our expenditure goes on parish ministry. There was also a belief that there was a magic money tree in the form of buildings that could be sold; parishes sitting on huge amounts of money that could be given to poorer parishes; the Church Commissioners holding billions that could be released to fund parish ministry; and the possibility of a bonfire of bureaucracy. None of these are right; the buildings and funds must be used for other purposes and even if they were applied to parish ministry, would dry up in only a few years, and Church House is run very leanly providing essential services. It is the current congregations who foster resourcing ministry, and better communication around resourcing is needed.

The President asked for any comments or questions.

Mrs Brenda Large (238), Horsham Deanery

Better school engagement was mentioned. The Diocesan Board of Education engages very well with its Church schools. There should be more enabling of parishes to engage with state schools in their areas, and the many parishes with good expertise in this should be enabled to share it.

Revd Dr Andy Angel (118), Hurst Deanery

We should encourage our Churches to increase their giving and increase the number of clergy to be able to carry out the mission. Encouraging visits from bishops were helpful, and in Peterborough increased giving significantly. Parishes should not be spared the bad news of the need, and reminded that Jesus encouraged tithing and giving alms on top of that. Our vision of generosity should be less diminished.

Revd Martin Poole (27), Brighton Deanery

What is the next step for this Strategy and when do we start to put it into practice?

The Bishop of Lewes responded that the next steps would be to launch this strategy at Synod in November 2019. Over the next few months there would be more flesh on the bones of what is being shared today.

The Diocesan Secretary advised that the survey is not yet closed and encouraged everyone to complete this if they have not yet done so. Anyone can respond.

GROWING IN FAITH

The Archdeacon of Horsham, Mr Ross MacLennan, Fr Rob Coupland and Mr Trevor Cristin, the Diocesan Director of Education, gave presentations.

The Archdeacon of Horsham gave a summary of the Growing Faith initiative, more information about which was in the supporting papers. She spoke of the importance of the childhood experience of faith.

Growing Faith incorporated 4 key themes: Integrated intergenerational approach; Equality; Leadership – employed or volunteers; and Room to explore faith without fear of being judged.

Mr Ross MacLennan, youth pastor at St John's Crawley, gave a video presentation of Kindle. This had been active in Crawley for 12 years, with many expressions of worship across different churches, including what it means to worship and minister to one another. The aim is to encourage young people into leadership through worship bands and worship leadership. Young leaders and parents are encouraged to be involved, with an intergenerational approach. Young people love having people of different ages around.

Fr Rob Coupland, Assistant Curate at Brighton St Michael and All Angels and St Paul, spoke about the Walsingham Children's Pilgrimage during Lent, in which 150 primary age children took part.

Mr Trevor Cristin, Diocesan Director of Education, talked about the diverse role of schools, which includes school improvement, leadership and organisation, buildings and land, being good stewards. The Education team supports the Christian distinctiveness of our schools, helping our children to learn about the Christian faith. Growing faith recognises the key role that schools have to play in this area. What can they do? Schools have to be inclusive as there are a variety of mindsets, with a majority of families attending Church schools of no faith. Schools seek to come alongside families where they are, not to force them into Church. There is a broader sense of mission.

The Church of England 2016 Vision for Education is about being deeply Christian and serving the common good. It talks about the importance of relationships and having a life enhancing encounter with Jesus Christ. The parish and school partnership is pivotal to this. There are some fantastic examples of where the relationship is seamless, working hand in hand. Here, the impact is quite profound. This partnership can have enormous impact. The Church-School relationship is key. A Strategic Plan was being developed, exploring what the partnership could look like and how school and church can gain from one another.

Synod were asked to break into small groups to discuss the matters raised.

Feedback noted efforts to combine the school choir with the church; that children were keen to participate, but encouraging families to support that was more challenging; the importance of coming to faith at an early age of 5 or 6; that planning for Sunday schools can be difficult with very fluctuating child attendance, but Sunday School in a Tin was a great resource which helped with this; and that trainers in RSE did not necessarily uphold Christian beliefs and preparation was needed for that.

Archdeacon Fiona closed by noting the importance of relationships with our children and young people and how uplifting it was to hear the good news stories of how they engage with faith.

PROMULGATION OF AMENDING CANON NO.38

The Bishop of Chichester promulgated amending Canon No.38.

REPORT FROM GENERAL SYNOD

Mrs Mary Nagel, Chichester Deanery (137) moved that her report on General Synod be received.

There were no questions or comments.

The report was received.

REPORT ON THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

Canon Mark Gilbert had sent apologies and the Revd Martin King, Horsham Deanery (115) moved that his report on the Bishop's Council be received.

There were no questions or comments.

The report was received.

QUESTIONS UNDER SO69

There were none.

Farewells:

The Bishop of Chichester gave thanks to and bade farewell to the Diocesan Registrar, Matthew Chinery, and to the Bishop's PA, Margaret Gibson.

Matthew had been with the diocese through some of the most tumultuous challenges around safeguarding, legal challenges, and reshaping our administrative life. He had been amazingly resourceful, and imaginative and helpful through difficulties. Congratulations were given for his promotion to the Church in Wales, and a presentation made.

Margaret could not attend, but Synod would want to record our thanks for her work over 5 years. Margaret has been an example of vocation, being cheerful, kind, helpful and hospitable to the Christian faith. In her absence there was a round of applause.

The Acting Archdeacons of Chichester David Twinley and Mark Standen have been managing the vacancy before the appointment of the new Archdeacon of Chichester. Thanks were recorded and applause given.

This was the last Synod for Bishop Mark, Bishop of Horsham. The Bishop noted that it is too soon to say farewell but wanted to record thanks from Synod although there would be much more to say. There would be a farewell service on 13th July at 3.00pm at St Mary's Horsham to celebrate Bishop Mark and his wife Ruth. There was a round of applause.

The Bishop reminded Synod that on Sunday 9th June at Brighton Dome, there would be an event, Many Voices One Spirit, to celebrate Pentecost, a great wave of attention to God across the globe as part of Thy Kingdom Come, and to pray for May Camp next weekend and support it financially if you can.

The Bishop of Chichester thanked the following people for their part in arranging Diocesan Synod and the Eucharist Service: -

- Bradley Smith for the Eucharist arrangements
- Patrick Woodward, for the sound support
- Mike Neeson of East Sussex College
- The fantastic team of volunteers from Church House
- Anne-Marie Mizler, for organising Diocesan Synod

The meeting was closed by the Bishop of Chichester.

Absent without apologies: Revd Canon JM Baldwin, Revd AGJ Birks, Revd DJ Gillard, Revd DT Henderson, Revd MG Lane, Revd MJ Lyon, Revd SR Merriman, Revd M Miller, Revd CJ Powell, Revd CA Smith, Revd RJ Stagg, Revd DB Welsman, Mr R Bricknell, Mr M Clayton, Mr MJ Harris, Mrs D Kutar, Mrs PAH Steel, Mr CD Willis.