

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD, INCLUDING THE AGM OF THE CHICHESTER DIOCESAN FUND AND BOARD OF FINANCE (INCORPORATED)

Held by teleconference on 22nd May 2021

DIOCESAN SYNOD

The meeting opened with prayer.

1. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Bishop of Chichester gave a Presidential Address.

Bishop Martin spoke about the impact that the coronavirus has had on the Church and the nation, noting that people were exhausted and demoralised but that, as they moved towards Pentecost, people were looking forward to an easing of the restrictions.

Bishop Martin explained that, despite the difficulties of the past year, it was important to retain hope and faith in Christ Jesus. The Book of Common Prayer invites us to find comfort in the Sacrament, there is comfort to be found in acts of worship that involve being participants with others in a sacred place.

2. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS (pages 1 - 4 of the supporting papers)

Mr Colin Perkins introduced the new Safeguarding Training Arrangements, explaining that the arrangements were set out in the paper circulated to Synod.

It was explained that the diocesan team had made a couple of amendments in collaboration with the National Safeguarding Team, who were going to incorporate some of these changes into the National Framework. The tweaks related to churchwardens and clergy with Permission to Officiate. There would be a handbook for churchwardens explaining their safeguarding responsibilities and it would be up to PCCs to decide whether their churchwardens should undertake the leadership training. Clergy with PTO would be required to do basic and foundation level training, and whether they would also have to do any further training would depend on their role and ministry.

It was noted that Safeguarding Training was going well and levels of compliance were very good.

The Revd Martin Poole asked whether it would be possible to arrange for some of the training sessions for Safeguarding Officers to take place outside normal working hours? Mr Perkins explained that they were aware that this was an issue for some Safeguarding Officers and that this was being arranged.

The Revd Andrew Woodward asked who would be responsible for ensuring that clergy with PTO, who also had a leadership function, would do the Leadership training?

Mr Perkins explained that they were still working on the details but that it would probably be the PCC and Rural Dean.

3. DIOCESAN OVERSEAS COMMITTEE

The Bishop of Horsham introduced the proposals set out on pages 5-7 of the supporting papers.

Bishop Ruth explained that the DOC would be liaising closely with the DBF, but would also welcome views of the Synod, as there were large sums of money involved and the DOC were keen to get it right. The DOC felt that the money should be spent rather than just accrued, as there was severe need and it would be possible to give sizable sums of money to organisations that would use it responsibly to alleviate suffering.

Mr Jeremy Kaye pointed out that, in relation to the Harvest Appeal and Kakuro Appeal, donors expected monies donated to be applied promptly. In respect of whether the whole amount proposed should be allocated, Mr Kaye suggested that the DOC should give a report on how monies raised have been spent.

Mr Ian MacDowell asked whether money given through Harvest Appeal, would be offered through the dioceses mentioned or through the organisations mentioned.

Mrs Karen Hill (President of the Mothers' Union) explained that the Mothers' Union would direct the money as instructed by the Diocese. The MU were particularly keen for some of the funds to go to Sierra Leone, where there had been an outbreak of Ebola, followed by the coronavirus.

The Revd Andy Angel suggested that all of the monies should be allocated, keeping just £5000 in reserve.

The Revd Christine Keyte explained that some students were still at college and that the DCO needed to ensure that there would be funds available to cover the remainder of their courses.

Bishop Martin noted that the Mothers' Union played a key role at the forefront in pastoral care and meeting needs.

Bishop Ruth explained that in saving £60,000, the thought had been that it was best to save a pot in case of a natural disaster, but that the DCO would be happy to spend all of the funds if that was what Synod felt would be best.

Bishop Martin noted that it would be up to the DOC to listen to the views offered and make a decision but advised that it would be wise to hold on to some funds.

In relation to the proposal to donate money to MU, USPG and Tearfund, 104 of 113 members voted, with 97% in favour.

In relation to the proposal to pause the Harvest Appeal this year and reflect on how best to organise it in future, the Synod voted unanimously in favour.

Bishop Martin thanked Bishop Ruth and the Revd Christine Keyte for all of the important work that they and the DOC do on behalf of the diocese.

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

1. PRESENTATION OF THE 2020 ACCOUNTS

Mrs Lesley Lynn (Chair of the Finance Committee) introduced the 2020 Annual Accounts

It was explained that, due to the pandemic, it had been a particularly difficult year and that the accounts represented a slight miracle. This time the previous year, the Diocese had asked parishes for a forecast, when it became clear that the 2020 budget was not one that it would be feasible to stick to. The results were that the Diocese received more than expected in parish share. Mrs Lynn expressed the DBF's gratitude to God, and to the parishes of the Diocese for their generosity and steadfastness

The Diocese had taken what steps it could in terms of saving money; the Property Department budget had been cut by eliminating the budget for improvement work on parishes. There would be a continued budget for necessary and structural works but not for the upgrading of kitchens and bathrooms. The furlough scheme had been used judiciously, but had increased the workload for those who remained working. As a result of savings, the outlook was significantly better than hoped for and resulted in a modest loss compared to what was expected.

Mr Chris Willis thanked Lesley Lynn for all of the work that she does as Chair of the DBF.

The Revd Martin Miller thanked brother and sister parishes for their generosity towards parishes like Newhaven.

Mrs Lynn explained that a new modelling tool from the NCIs had been very helpful in modelling the future, particularly the clergy costs. For a sustainable future, there would need to be a return to pre-pandemic levels of parish share.

Mrs Lesley Lynn (Chair) moved *"That the Annual Accounts and report of the DBF for 2020 be received"*.

The Synod voted in favour, with 99% in favour and 1% abstaining.

The Bishop thanked Mrs Lynn for all of the work that she does.

2. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Mrs Lesley Lynn (Chair) 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”*.

The Synod voted unanimously in favour.

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

4. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Diocesan Secretary explained the timing of the Planning for the Future initiative was both too early and too late; the aim had been to launch it the previous year, but it would have been impossible at height of the pandemic. It was also too early in some ways, as the parishes had not yet had time to recover.

The Diocesan Secretary explained that, whilst she is grateful for all the hard work and service and appreciated that parishes would like to sit back for a bit and recover, there was no time for that and this process was something that needed to be begun at this point.

As the Synod was aware, the Diocese could not continue to run a deficit; whilst the Diocese had healthy reserves, it could not continue to run at a significant loss each year.

In some diocese, the response to this issue was to just cut clergy posts. However, whilst the majority of expenditure did go towards paying for clergy, it was felt that clergy were a vitally important part of mission and ministry and the Diocese was firmly committed to keeping priests in parishes.

A plan had been developed for starting a deanery planning process and the briefing of diocesan leadership teams had already begun. The hope was to link this with an outpouring of the Spirit and embark on this with faith and hope.

Phase I would involve asking parishes to refresh Mission Action Plans, and for the Rural Dean to organise meetings of deanery chapters. These would be submitted by Advent.

Phase II would focus on finance and exploring the potential for increasing income. Parish share provided the majority of income and, at first sight, increasing this would be an impossible task. However, there were a lot of reasons to feel optimistic. This phase would include briefing Rural Deans, Lay Chairs, and Deanery Treasurers to look at potential in that deanery and looking at how resources from Church House could best be targeted and what support would be helpful to parishes. The deaneries would report back in September.

It would then be possible to look at diocesan wide results and work out how many stipendiary clergy the diocese can afford. Combining this information with the Mission Action Plans, it would be possible to have a preliminary look at deploying different types of ministry including retired clergy, Readers, self-supporting clergy, and lay people, as well as stipendiary clergy.

The Revd Graham Lewis hoped that the Diocese would look at the SSM clergy and Lay Ministers as a key part of the mission strategy, rather than just as a way of saving money.

Bishop Martin agreed.

The Revd Andrew Angel pointed out that the laity and clergy are part of the people of God but that, with diminishing funds, working out how the Church's ministry could be shared with laity and how we equip lay people in mission and evangelism was very important, and he asked whether that would form part of this project.

The Revd Phil Coekin felt that the timing of this exercise was not good. It would be happening at the same time as the Living in Love and Faith conversations and many parishes were very concerned about the direction of the Church of England. If the future of Church of England was divided, its finances would be too and parishes needed some clarification around these issues.

Mr William Holden explained that he was a mentor on the Living Faith course and a lot of work was going on with the laity and empowering them. He had seen many people going into different roles, including ordained ministry and lay ministry, and going on to be chaplains and mission enablers. This course gave people the confidence to play different roles in the local community and he encouraged parishes to send more members of congregations to do this course.

Mr Philip Bowden expressed support for Gabrielle and the Church House team, commended the plan to parishes and deaneries, and asked for prayers for the process over the year ahead.

The Diocesan Secretary agreed that Self-Supporting Ministry was not about ministry on the cheap but was about responding to the needs of God's people. It was not just about ordained ministry and lay people would be an essential part of Phase III, which would look at resourcing in the widest possible sense.

The Revd Rebecca Swyer (Director of Apostolic Life) echoed this, explaining that, once mission needs had been identified, they would be looking strategically at how to deploy people and what lay ministries were needed. However, it was important not to jump the gun as the discernment process was important.

Mrs Rachel Moriarty echoed what others had said about lay people, and pointed out that it was important to put more stress on the talents, skills, and experience that lay people already had and could offer. It was not necessarily about training but about people discerning what they could offer through their gifts.

The Revd Rory Graham asked how deanery action plans would be involved in income saving?

The Revd Natalie Loveless suggested that there should be ongoing feedback and that the rationale for how end results had been arrived should be shared.

The Revd Steve Burston pointed out that the Church needs to think about how it engages the next generation. Young people were sceptical of institutions and were not currently represented on PCCs and Synods.

The Diocesan Secretary explained that the process would focus on needs and opportunities, and identifying resources already in parishes. There would be feedback down the chain and the process would involve consultation all the way through, with deanery leadership team being very involved.

The Revd Rebecca Swyer explained that the draft deanery action plan would be shared with people in the deanery and finalised in consultation. When looking at resources, there may need to look across deanery boundaries.

Mr Chris Bell said that, as Lay Chair of East Grinstead, he was very pleased that it was a very constructive process and that, as a two-way street, it would actually produce results.

The Revd Lee Duckett asked what role church plants and resource churches have in the diocesan plans and in deaneries.

Bishop Martin explained that there would need to be a balance between approaching the process with a lighter touch while still being responsible. In relation to lay ministry, there was a need to hear more about what lay people do in daily life, not just within the life of the church. There needed to be greater confidence when looking at the contribution and importance of the laity.

5. SCHEME UNDER THE ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION AND CARE OF CHURCHES MEASURE 2018

The Revd Paul Doick (DAC Chair) introduced the new Scheme for the Inspection of Churches, explaining that some new legislation had come into effect in 2020, which made some changes to the process for appointing Quinquennial Inspectors and who parishes may appoint. The revised Diocesan Scheme was intended to ensure that the system in this diocese would be compliant with the new legislation.

The key changes were that the DAC would no longer keep an 'Approved List' of architects and surveyors but would maintain a Register of all those currently working as Quinquennial Inspectors and those interested in getting involved in this work. Parishes wishing to appoint a new quinquennial inspector would need to consult the DAC before making any new appointment, and the DAC would advise on the suitability of the proposed candidate. The DAC's advice would generally be in line with the Church Buildings Council's guidance on Quinquennial Inspections, and would aim to ensure that each church would be inspected by a suitably qualified person, who would have the experience and expertise needed.

Mrs Joanna Chivers-Gibbs felt that the changes described would not make any difference. The DAC agreed and explained that the intention was not to make radical changes but to tweak the system so that it would be compliant with the revised legislation.

The Revd Marc Lloyd asked whether parishes had to take the advice of the DAC. The DAC Chair explained that they were not legally obliged to take the DAC's advice but that it would be sensible to do so.

The Revd Paul Doick moved "That the Scheme on pages 9 - 10 of the supporting papers be made".

The Synod voted in favour, with 96% in favour, 2% against, and 2% abstaining.

6. NOTIFICATION OF BISHOP'S INSTRUMENT OF DESIGNATION OF A DIOCESAN RECORDS OFFICE

Mrs Jane Wilkinson pointed out that the correct terminology was "Record Office" rather than "Records Office".

7. PROMULGATION OF AMENDING CANONS NOS. 40 AND 41

The amending canons were promulgated.

8. REPORTS FROM GENERAL SYNOD – written reports

Mrs Mary Nagel moved "*That these reports be received*".

The Synod received the reports.

9. REPORT ON THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

Mrs Sara Stonor moved "*That this report be received*".

The Synod received the report.

10. REPORTS FROM BOARDS, COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

These reports were not discussed as no member had given in notice in writing that they wished to have a discussion.

11. QUESTIONS UNDER SO69

There were no questions under Standing Order 69.