

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE EIGHTEENTH DIOCESAN SYNOD,
HELD AT THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN, MEADS, EASTBOURNE AND BY TELECONFERENCE
ON 19TH NOVEMBER 2022**

The meeting began with an act of worship.

PRESENT:	The Bishop (President)	
(in person or	Suffragan Bishops	2
on Zoom)	Clergy	46
	Laity	63
	Miss Gabrielle Higgins (Diocesan Secretary)	

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

1. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Bishop of Chichester gave a Presidential Address, in which he reflected on the significant challenges facing the Diocese and the Nation, and the signposts that help us to understand our calling and point to our future direction.

2. YEAR OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Archdeacon of Hastings gave a brief introduction to the Year of the Old Testament, which was planned for 2023.

It was explained that this would be the first of three themed years; the Year of the Old Testament in 2023, the Year of the New Testament in 2024, and the Year of Faith in 2025.

It was explained that the Year of the Old Testament was intended to address a lack of knowledge within parishes around the Old Testament and the historical framework and context.

The diocesan resources would include a Lent Course, focussing on biblical passages and the way that these have been interpreted in the Christian tradition. A series of seminars was also planned, focussing on books of the Bible and including resources for study at different levels. There would also be a fortnightly book group. Although these would be the main three items, this was not an exhaustive list, and it was hoped that there would also be local initiatives as well.

3. PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

A short video was played, introducing the Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land planned for February 2023.

4. REPORT ON THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

The Bishops of Horsham, Lewes and Chichester gave an oral report on the recent Lambeth Conference.

The Bishop of Horsham explained that the Conference had taken place in July and had been a global gathering, attended by 650 bishops from 165 countries.

It had been a passionate meeting, involving people with many things in common along with some points of strong disagreement. It had felt at times like three conferences were taking place at the same time; the actual conference, the groups outside, and the debates taking place on social media.

There had been a sense of deep blessing of Christian fellowship. Over the two weeks, delegates had met for hours of studying every day, in geographically and theologically diverse fellowship groups.

The Bishop of Horsham highlighted the sense of fellowship amongst the 97 female bishops in particular.

The Bishop of Lewes explained that he had not been looking forward to the Conference before it started, as the social media in the build-up made it feel like people were focussed on particular issues and battles, and there had been a sense of gloom. However, the atmosphere when the Conference started was very different and the conference included incredible moments of hope and unity.

The Conference offered the opportunity to meet Bishops working in incredibly difficult contexts, including the Bishop of South Sudan, who is living in a refugee camp due to war, and the Bishop of Solomon Islands, where the population is deeply affected by climate change.

On the whole, it was a wonderful two weeks, which reminded delegates how much united them.

The Bishop of Chichester spoke about how the Conference, which was funded from external sources, would benefit the diocese.

The worship had taken place in two contexts. Many of the services had taken place in a large marquee where, despite the variety of types of music and the use of many languages and forms of service, there was always a strong sense of shared Anglican character and music, which made it possible to follow along. Other services had taken place at Canterbury Cathedral, an ancient place of pilgrimage and gathering, which was established in AD 597 by Augustine.

The worship at the Conference reminded Bishops how fortunate we are in our buildings and in our inheritance of faith.

Following on from the Conference, it was anticipated that there would be an ongoing online presence. A Bible study on 1 Peter was planned and an international group of theologians and scholars were hoping to work together on further resources.

5. EDUCATION UPDATE

Mr Trevor Cristin (Diocesan Director of Education) gave an update on the work of the Education Department.

He quoted the words of Paul in Romans 15, and explained that this passage, which emphasises the importance of hope and the Holy Spirit, is very relevant to the challenges and joys facing our church schools. It was explained that this was a particularly challenging time for schools and Synod members were asked to pray for schools to be beacons of joy peace and hope.

The challenges facing schools included budgets, and schools going into financial deficit. The Government's white paper was proposing systemic change and this was an uncertain time, as it

would be challenging for schools to grasp the new policy and apply it. Covid had also not gone away. Mr Cristin commended the perseverance and diligence of school leaders, including head teachers and governors over the past few years.

It was explained that, under the new Measure of 2021, the Board of Education had been required to reconstitute and would be a much smaller group. Mr Cristin paid tribute to those who were standing down and thanked them for their service.

It was noted that, although this was a time of challenge, it was also a time of opportunity. The Diocesan team had tried to ensure that schools joined strong trusts and a new strategic partnership had been set up. Engagement with the Church of England continued to increase.

Despite the challenges, there was much to celebrate. 90% of Church of England schools in the Diocese were rated as 'Good' or better, which is above the national average of 86%. Representatives from 126 schools had attended conferences. 3500 children had attended leavers' services, along with an overwhelming number of parents and friends. The schedule would be expanding in 2023, to accommodate larger numbers of participants.

Mr Cristin outlined the team's plans for 2023, explaining that they would like to build on these successes in their day to day activities over the next year. This would include the Growing Partnerships initiative, which aimed to build partnerships between local churches and local schools, forming local households of faith. In 2023, the Education team was also hoping to provide more support for clergy where local schools are not Church of England.

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

1. PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET FOR 2023

Mrs Lesley Lynn, Chair of the Finance Committee, introduced the budget for 2023.

It was explained that the proposed budget represented a deficit budget for 2023. The Diocese never aimed to budget to make a profit, and the current budget was based on parish share returning to the level of 2019 (approximately £14 million), before the impact of the pandemic.

The proposed budget contained an assumption approved by the Remuneration Committee that staff salaries and stipends would increase by 5%.

Clergy pension costs had fallen as the deficit had been eliminated and that would save some money. However, the budget also proposed to restore the level of expenditure on clergy housing back to the proper level where it was felt that it should be.

There was uncertainty about inflation, so it had been decided to set a larger contingency than usual, of £200,000, to allow for possible inflation over the year.

There were no questions.

Mrs Lesley Lynn (Chair) moved "*That the budget of the DBF for 2023 be received*".

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

6. REPORT FROM FAMILY SUPPORT WORK

Mr Martin Auton-Lloyd (CEO of Family Support Work) gave a presentation about the work of Family Support Work. Mr Auton-Lloyd had previously given a presentation in November 2018, and had spoken about the 5-year vision, which set out to increase practitioners working across Sussex from 6 to 15 by 2023. This target had been achieved a year early and there were now 20 FSW practitioners working across the Diocese. Mr Auton-Lloyd expressed his gratitude to the diocese and parishes for their support, including the annual grant and practical support, parish support and prayers.

It was explained that, at a time when everyone was struggling with inflation and the cost of living, the services provided by FSW were more important than ever. FSW put no restrictions on services they provide, aiming to feed, clothe and support the stranger as, in helping people we do not know, we encounter Christ.

It was explained that 415 families were being supported, including a mix of single and two-parent families, a diverse range of nationalities, and some families where a parent had been a victim of modern day slavery.

FSW support families with facing a range of issues, including domestic violence, mental health, low income, and education. Practical help offered included a food bank, the winter fuel fund, support groups, and the fund for Christmas and birthday presents.

There was a growing need for services, and over half of practitioners currently had a waiting list. FSW was running pilot schemes with schools in East Sussex and was hoping to expand this programme. In 2023, FSW were planning to review their work and look at where they could grow and improve, but this would only be possible with the support of people and parishes across the diocese.

Mr Auton-Lloyd asked Synod members to keep FSW staff and families in their prayers, and to consider inviting him to speak to parishes and deanery synods about FSW and how they can support this important work.

7. PARISH, DIOCESAN AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES IN RESPONSE TO THE COST OF LIVING AND ENERGY CRISIS

A panel shared information on diocesan and national initiatives as follows.

Dr Emma Arbuthnot (Senior Church Buildings and Pastoral Reorganisation Officer), spoke about the impact of rising energy costs for church buildings and encouraged parishes to look at the resources on the Church of England's website, which includes recommendations for 'quick wins'. It was explained that the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules had been revised in July 2022, to encourage parishes to be more environmentally friendly in how they use and heat their church buildings. Under the revised Rules, it would be much more difficult to get permission for a replacement gas or oil-fired boiler, and parishes were encouraged to begin to explore and plan what their next heating system would look

like as soon as possible, so that they do not end up having to do this thinking in a hurry, at the point when the current boiler breaks down.

Mr Scott Ralph (Property Director), spoke about work the department had been doing to reduce ongoing maintenance costs and to improve living conditions for clergy, not specifically for working towards being carbon neutral, for example: installing double glazed windows where possible, insulating lofts and installing newer, more energy efficient boilers.

In addition, the Property Department were engaging in some energy efficiency pilots to learn more about how systems work and their application in parsonage houses. Funds were allocated in next year's budget (2023) for energy efficient improvements, and grants for car charging points. The department were looking at allocating funds to an insulation programme, and were looking to access The Energy Company Obligation Fund. Leeds Diocese had done this as part of a project to install solar panels on vicarages. The Property Director was seeking to obtain funds to run an insulation improvement program and had started discussions with E.On about this.

Mr Ralph signposted Synod members to the Energy Savings Trust which offered much advice as to what can be done on an everyday level. He added that technology and tools that utility suppliers give their account holders allowed people to experiment with heating controls and how their heating works. People can make savings by learning how their heating works and adapting it accordingly.

Mr Trevor Cristin (Diocesan Director of Education) explained that the Education department signposted information to schools to open up opportunities for grants and money saving schemes to support the aim of maximum efficiency. All of the Voluntary Aided School projects were managed with the best principles of money and energy saving in mind and the Education department worked closely alongside their local authority colleagues to ensure all capital projects were efficient. The Education team were currently embarking on the long term project of de-carbonisation across our school sites.

Synod members were then invited to share parish and school initiatives:-

The Revd Phillip Coekin (Eastbourne 83) shared that energy bills at his Church were previously £300 for a service, but now the heating was turned on just 30 minutes before the congregation arrived while encouraging congregants to continue wearing warm clothing. His parish invested about £300 to have boilers accessible via a website on home laptops so that they could plan heating events more effectively and tailor heating events much more accurately.

Robert Pudney (East Grinstead 239) (RD) shared that he was a community outreach volunteer in the cost of living crisis and was a debt coach from the Crawley CAP (Christians Against Poverty) Debt Centre. RD explained that CAP signposted their clients to the Easter Team Food Bank in Crawley which provided electric or gas top ups as well as food. His parish had been collecting food through Covid and in 2022 had done four separate days of food collections on the shopping parades in the Parish, connecting with local people.

The Revd Jane Willis (Lewes & Seaford 127) thought about the cost-of-living crisis more widely and shared that Holy Trinity were running a Christmas presents toy bank, working with local schools and nurseries for referrals. So far, the church was giving toys for 31 children.

The Revd Andrew Woodward shared that St Marys, Kemptown (Brighton 34) was open most days, and was staffed by volunteers. In a deprived area, providing warm spaces was really important and there were various options for how this could be resourced.

The Revd Martha Weatherill (Chichester 61) (MW) spoke about warm spaces in Chichester Deanery. The Deanery had prayerfully discussed what they could do to support their communities during the cost-of-living crisis. The deanery did not want to reinvent the wheel so they listed what mission they were already doing, what they could cope with and put together a list. The local ecumenical churches, schools, and libraries were then invited to join us in this project. The local parish, city and county councillors were also invited to join us in working together for the common good.

The Councils' tools of communication were used to spread the Deanery's work far and wide across the Deanery. Local businesses and Trust Foundations began to hear of what the Deanery was doing, and they gave towards the mission. So far, a considerable amount of money had been raised to share amongst the churches. Those grants would help fund some of the following initiatives: Pop up food pantries, After School Homework Club, Saturday morning refreshments and advice on how to make ends meet, Lunch Clubs, Café Connect and much more. MW invited members to get in touch with her if they would like more information on how to apply for grants to fund mission initiatives or if they would like more information on some of the deanery's warm spaces mission ideas. MW gave the deanery website address: www.ChichesterDeanery.Org.

The Bishop of Horsham (2) explained that a Christian charity called Befriending was giving away 1000 thermal blankets to give away to the elderly, and encouraged parishes to look at their website for further information.

The Revd Martin Poole (Brighton 26) explained that his parish were moving away from gas and had recently installed an electric kitchen and infrared electric heaters. He emphasised the importance of heating people rather than places.

The Bishop of Lewes (3) encouraged people to think about switching to electric cars, which were now available second-hand for relatively low prices, and worked out as far better value despite the rise in electricity prices.

During this item, three mind maps of all the ideas that were put forward were created and displayed: [Help to Serve Others](#), [Help in the Home](#), and [Help in the Church and School](#).

It was noted that there was some overlap between this issue and Net Zero by 2030, but that the issues could be tackled together rather than being seen in opposition.

It was explained that the deadline for parish applications for heating funding was 30th November and all parishes were encouraged to apply.

8. DEANERY PLANNING UPDATE

The Revd Rob Dillingham (Parish Development Officer and Deputy Director for Apostolic Life) and Ms Gabrielle Higgins (Diocesan Secretary) gave an update on the Deanery Planning initiative.

Mr Dillingham explained that this work had begun at Pentecost 2021. Mission action plans had been submitted and then deanery assessments had been carried out. This had led to the creation of deanery mission action plans in collaboration with Rural Deans and Lay Chairs. The deanery plans

had been developed around the '4 Mores', and looked at key figures, including clergy roles, schools, and attendance data. This process was almost finished.

Some common headline themes had emerged across the 21 deaneries; in particular it had been identified that the following things were needed:

- Collaboration with youth and children's work
- Importance of church and school partnership working
- Increasing ALMs
- Training for roles within the church
- Demand for seeker courses – introduction to Christianity
- Opening churches
- Setting up pilgrimage trails
- Deanery confirmation and first communion prep
- Deanery coordinated response to housing developments
- Review of parish church websites
- More support for FSW
- Shared response to refugee ministry
- Mental health cafes
- Community engagement
- Wider use of alternative forms of giving
- Creation care and church eco awards, use of green space
- Development of apostolic partnerships

Some deaneries were already working together on plans for taking things forward, and more enquiries were being received by the Diocesan Office.

The Diocesan Secretary explained that the second strand to this project would be to work out how the Diocese could resource what it wanted to do.

It was explained that parishes are where the majority of mission and ministry was centred and where most of resources came from. 80% of the DBF's income came from parish share, and 90% was spent directly or indirectly on parish ministry costs, with 6% being spent on diocesan overheads.

Progress was being made with the shrinking of the deficit. Compared to before the pandemic, £600k was being saved on pensions, and more income was being generated from renting vacant parsonages. £100k less was being spent on clergy stipends and £700k less on curates and ordinands. Overall, this Diocese was doing better than other dioceses and was managing to achieve smaller deficits, but it was clear that the diocese could not continue on this track.

It would not be possible to make further savings at the Diocesan Office, so the only way to increase the amount of money available would be to increase parish share. It was explained that parish share represents the average cost of having a priest and support for both priest and parish, and was each parish's generous contribution to household of faith across the diocese. It would be important to widen awareness of the implications of average parish share and to encourage wealthier parishes to consider contributing more than this amount and set stretching goals over the next five years.

So far, the response to these discussions had been encouraging. Parishes were paying an average of 4% more this year compared to 2021; 41 parishes had increased their parish share by over 20%, 75 parishes were paying over 10% more, and 141 parishes had increased by over 5%. The aim was to increase parish share by 20% over three years. In light of the current financial challenges, it was felt that targets may no longer be realistic. However, all parishes who had given aspirations were being

asked to review them and those who had not yet given figures were being asked to look at this. The responses would form part of the plan for how the diocese could resource parish ministry across diocese.

It was noted that goals could be achieved if many people made small changes; there were 40,000 people in congregations across the diocese and if every person gave an extra £1.50 a week and half of that came to the diocese, it would produce an extra £1.5 million per year. However, amounts that are insignificant for some, are large for others.

The Diocesan Secretary thanked parishes for all that they do, and observed that ministry is only possible because of the time, talent and generosity of everyone in our parishes.

9. DEANERY SYNOD ELECTIONS

Mr John Booth, Chair of the House of Laity (Arundel & Bognor 171) explained that, every triennium, the Diocesan Synod is required to regulate the number of deanery synod representatives .

Mr Booth introduced the paper and explained how the numbers proposed had been arrived at. He explained Items B and C related to representatives from the Cathedral and BMOs, and that passing these two motions would make members of diocesan synod from these constituencies also members of their deanery synods .

A. Mr John Booth moved *“That pursuant to Rules 19(2) and 19(3)(a) of the Church Representation Rules, the numbers of parochial representatives of the laity to be elected from parishes of the Diocese to Deanery Synods shall be calculated by reference to the numbers of names on the rolls of the parishes in 2022 as notified under Rule 10 in accordance with the table on page 14 of the supporting papers.”*

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

B. Mr John Booth moved *“That this Synod make the Scheme relating to representation of Cathedral clergy and laity on Deanery Synod set out on pages 15-16 of the supporting papers.”*

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

C. Mr John Booth moved *“That this Synod make the Scheme relating to representation of clergy and laity from mission initiatives on Deanery Synod set out on pages 17-18 of the supporting papers.”*

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

10. REPORT FROM GENERAL SYNOD

Mr Bradley Smith (148) moved *“That this report be received”*.

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

11. REPORT ON THE BISHOP’S COUNCIL

Mrs Sara Stonor (Dallington 201) moved *“That this report be received”*.

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

12. QUESTIONS UNDER SO69

One question was received under Standing Order 69, from Revd Martin Poole (Brighton 26):

St. Luke's Prestonville has been quoted £36,000 for our renewable electricity bills next year compared to £4,600 this year. The last Diocesan Synod was advised to vote to continue investing in oil companies on the grounds that it was 'better to be in the room' than disinvest. Can the investment committee tell us what discussions have taken place with those companies in recent months to help the churches of this diocese with utility bills?

Mrs Lesley Lynn responded on behalf of the Assets Committee. Mrs Lynn advised that the parish should seek quotations from alternative energy providers.

In respect of the question of whether the Diocese should invest in BP and Shell, it was explained that, as these companies do not currently supply electricity in the UK, it would not be helpful to engage with them about electricity prices. Generally, conversations with companies are held through asset managers as they have significantly more clout with these companies than an individual diocese would have. The Church of England has signed up to Climate Action 100+, which enables investors to collectively exert influence on key companies.

Mr Poole explained that St Luke's, Prestonville have secured a much lower quote and asked a supplementary question about the confusion between oil company profit and what's happening with energy bills. He asked if the Diocese could share more information about its investments.

Mrs Lynn agreed to consider that and promised that she would write to Mr Poole.

13. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Bishop recommended a new book by the Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam called *Sleepers Wake: Getting Serious about Climate Change*, which the Archbishop of York had chosen as his Advent Book for 2022.

The Bishop thanked the team at St John Meads for hosting the Diocesan Synod and for all of their help with the live-streaming of the meeting. He also thanked the Diocesan team.

14. CONGRATULATIONS TO BISHOP MARTIN

The Bishops of Horsham and Lewes congratulated Bishop Martin on the ten-year anniversary of his enthronement as Bishop of Chichester and introduced a slideshow showing highlights from the past decade.

The meeting ended with a blessing.

Absent without apologies: Revd AGJ Birks, Revd SJ Davies, Revd DR Hill, Revd DJ King, Revd MG Lane, Revd T Marshall, Revd SP Mills, Revd AJR Murley, Revd HA Neale-Stevens, Revd PHT Pearson-Miles, Revd DL Pegg, Revd RJ Stagg, Revd JC Wall, Mr R Aylott, Mrs HR Bridger, Mr JW Ellis, Mr DG Gordon-Watkins, Mrs BP Large, Mr R Maryan, Mrs AD Murphy, Mrs I Nicholas, Mr MN Puttick, Mr TM Reid, Ms V Sanders, Mrs D Styles, Mr J Townsend, Mr C Willis.