

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE EIGHTEENTH DIOCESAN SYNOD,
HELD AT ST JOHN, MEADS, EASTBOURNE AND BY TELECONFERENCE,
ON 18TH NOVEMBER 2023**

The meeting began with an act of worship.

PRESENT:	The Bishop (President)	
(in person or	Suffragan Bishops	2
on Zoom)	Clergy	61
	Laity	62
	Miss Gabrielle Higgins (Diocesan Secretary)	

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

1. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Bishop of Chichester gave a Presidential Address, in which he spoke about the role of judgment in Christian doctrine, the recent ecumenical Synod in Rome, the recent sessions of the General Synod, and the progress of the Living in Love and Faith workstream.

The Bishop noted that this was the day on which the Church of England remembered Elizabeth of Hungary, who was known for her care of the poor. The reading for the day included a parable, which presents a choice to the listener and reminds them that choices have consequences. However, this should be read as a statement of hope rather than a threat. He explained that, when reading about eternal punishment and reward, we need to take enormous care in how we interpret it. As Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 4-5, it is for the Lord to make judgments rather than us. However, there is a sense that we are all under judgement and that this could be an important corrective in our thinking and speaking.

The Bishop spoke of his predecessor, Bishop John Lake, who was Bishop of Chichester in the late seventeenth century and was imprisoned in the Tower of London by James II. On his deathbed, Lake made a beautiful statement about his love for the Church of England, which had nurtured his love for Christ. As he prepared himself for judgment, he was aware that, having made a judgment against others, he would have to answer for that judgment to God.

The Bishop explained that this does not mean that we cannot make judgments; at this terrible time globally, confronted by the horror of events in the Middle East, it was important to identify and denounce evil and to point out that those who perpetrated it would have to answer for it. In this world, judgment was dealt with through the due process of law while, in eternity, judgment belonged to God. It was against this backdrop of judgment that we needed to set the recent General Synod debate.

The Bishop explained that society demanded that the Church should strengthen cooperation. In the words of Pope Francis, synodality was walking on a path together, listening to each other, and seeking to hear from each other those words that speak to us

of Jesus Christ. This spirit of walking together did not mean that everything was perfect; it was expected that we would hear things that disturbed and challenged us from those with whom we shared a faith. At the recent Synod in Rome, Fr Timothy Radcliffe had drawn attention to the disciples setting off; they fell out, they argued, and were ambitious, angry and divided. Jesus did not tell them off but took them to the mountain and revealed his glory. This turned attention away from minor human concerns and conflicts, as all was set in a new context when they saw the glory of Jesus Christ.

At the recent meeting of the General Synod, the outcome of the motion on Living in Love and Faith was that the Church of England, by a slender majority, agreed to progress to the next stage. This was faster than expected and raised some challenges but was a road on which the Synod had embarked in February 2023 and went back to 2017, when a report was first brought to General Synod.

The Bishop explained that there was a need for additional work, to look at shaping the current tone and culture in the Church, in our attitude towards LGBTIQ people. He expressed sorrow that people had felt hurt, demeaned, and excluded within the life of the Church and explained that it was their church alongside everyone else's, one in which the baptised reflected the nature and glory of God. This was not about some random, external group of people but was about us, within our congregations, across the diocese. There was a diversity of views amongst the people described by the LGBTIQ label: for them and for many other people, this Synod would have been a moment of encouragement.

The Bishop read out the motion that had been agreed at General Synod. It was explained that there were some challenges ahead and some work still needed to be done on the details, including the dates, the implications, the response of those who wish to take up the offer and those who wish to be dissociated from it, and queries about legalities and processes. It was noted that this was the nature of living with division and that we did not yet have the answers. The Bishop explained that it was for that reason that he had not supported the motion; a really important document - the theological rationale - still had some serious gaps in its theological narrative. This was the document from which the pastoral guidance had been drawn, and some work still needed to be done on that to make the prayers and services complete. The next step would be for the House of Bishops to look at the pastoral guidance at their next meeting and it was hoped that it would be available in December. One of the questions raised at General Synod was how the changes would affect clergy and ordinands and whether clergy would be able to enter same-sex marriages. No deadline had been set for reaching an answer, but it was hoped that it would be looked at in early 2024.

The Bishop explained that there were implications in terms of wider culture, and how to live together with these uncertainties and this level of division. It had been apparent at Synod that there was a profound and strong mistrust, largely of bishops but more pervasive than that. When the household is divided, when we cannot trust those with whom we disagree, we are lost. In this Diocese, within this household of faith, we were blessed in each other by a high degree of trust and respect, hope, and the centrality of Jesus Christ who had called us into this hope and had made this household of faith our home.

The Bishop concluded by reading the following extract from Carlo Carretto's *Ode to the Church*, that Fr Timothy Radcliffe had quoted:

*“How much I must criticize you, my church, and yet how much I love you!
You have made me suffer more than anyone and yet I owe more to you than to anyone. I
should like to see you destroyed and yet I need your presence.
You have given me much scandal and yet you alone have made me understand holiness.
Never in this world have I seen anything more compromised, more false, and yet I have never
touched anything more pure, more generous or more beautiful.
Countless times I have felt like slamming the door of my soul in your face and yet, every night,
I have prayed that I might die in your sure arms! No, I cannot be free of you, for I am one with
you, even if not completely you.
Then to where would I go? To build another church?
But I could not build one without the same defects, for they are my defects.”*

2. LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH - UPDATE

The Bishop invited questions in respect of the update on Living in Love and Faith.

Mrs Catherine Butcher (145) asked about the anticipated financial and missional risks following the proposed implementation of the Prayers for trial use.

The Bishop explained that, at this stage, there were still quite a lot of unknowns. For some months, the Bishop’s Council had been very alert to the possibility of some financial implications and had factored this into the Risk Register. Whilst recognising that it was not possible to quantify it accurately, the risk was being monitored and the Bishop’s Council was making provision for the way ahead over the next few years. However, no decisions had been made yet, as no hard accountancy facts were available at this point. In relation to mission, the Bishop emphasised that there would be no diminution to the mission of the Church in this Diocese. The future was impossible to predict. At this stage, we needed to trust in the working of the Holy Spirit and wait to see how this plays out.

Dr Simon Eyre (146) noted that the Bishop of Oxford’s motion called for experimental services to be introduced on a trial basis and asked whether there was any sense of how that would play out? Would it be geographic or throughout the church of England?

The Bishop explained that these details were unknown and that it was not possible to give any undertakings at this point.

3. EDUCATION UPDATE

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

Mr Cristin quoted Romans 15:13; “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” and explained that this was not only aspirational for the Education team but relevant for schools. While there was much joy and hope in our schools, there were many challenges too.

Synod members were asked to hold headteachers in their prayers. Amongst the challenges they faced were tight budgets, shortages of pupil numbers, threats around viability and threats of closure. However, the wider political landscape had calmed slightly, and there was a sense that people were awaiting the outcome of the next election.

Mr Cristin observed that the Covid pandemic had had a serious impact on children, mental health and communities. He thanked school leaders for their perseverance over the past couple of years and thanked the clergy who work with schools for their care and commitment.

It was explained that the Education Team try to come alongside schools and help find solutions, balancing competence and compassion. They were grateful for the wisdom and guidance of the Board of Education, and sad to lose Gabrielle, who had been a staunch supporter of schools in her role as Diocesan Secretary.

Mr Cristin spoke about opportunities for increasing engagement. Multi-academy trusts were growing and looking to widen provision further. It was noted that 91% of our schools are rated as 'Good' or better, compared to 88% nationally.

The Education team continued to increase engagement with schools through offering events and training. In the past year, 3600 children from 127 schools had attended leaving services, and the team was working on expanding the schedule to meet demand.

The Education team was also focussing on the growth of partnerships, encouraging the development of relationships between churches and schools, forming a household of faith within the local community. Over the last year, this work had expanded to encourage growing partnerships with maintained schools, and resources were being offered to support clergy working with local community schools, which could be harder and different.

Despite the challenges, schools were a good news story for the diocese, and played an important role, at the heart of mission, within the household of faith. Schools were becoming more distinctively Christian, and relationships were growing between churches and schools, which was exciting to see. Mr Cristin thanked all of those who were working to support schools across the diocese.

Dr Sue Greener (200) asked about how the Diocese works with other denominations in relation to education.

Mr Cristin agreed that this would be an interesting area to explore. In some areas, this seemed to work on a local level, and it would be interesting to explore this further.

The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (22) noted that one of the priorities for the Church of England is to grow younger over the next decade; he would love to see greater numbers of children and families coming to church from church schools and wondered how that was working?

Mr Cristin agreed that there was a challenge in bringing children into worship in church. However, in many places, families from the local community were attending school services during the week. The next step would be to think about how to encourage that at a strategic level, and work on translating that engagement into parish worship.

Mr Jonathan Cornell (203) explained that he is the son of a former headteacher and asked how the Education team was supporting headteachers in coping with the effects of Ofsted inspections?

Mr Cristin explained that the Education team worked closely with schools in the Ofsted window, offering support before, during and after the inspection. At a national level, the

Church of England had been talking to Ofsted about the overall national picture. It was felt that there had been a distinct change in the way that inspectors approach Ofsted inspections, following the tragic death of headteacher Ruth Parry; there seemed to be a more collegiate and supportive approach. In this diocese, there had been over 20 Ofsted inspections in the last six months, and the tone and approach had been much better.

4. CARBON NET ZERO STRATEGIC PLAN

The Archdeacon of Brighton and Lewes moved that:

“This Synod:

- 1. Supports the milestones outlined within the national Routemap to Net Zero Carbon and seeks to meet those as far as possible within the context of the Chichester Diocese and subject to obtaining external funding;*
- 2. Endorses the proposed Diocesan Net Zero Carbon Action Plan as a positive direction of travel and asks Bishop’s Council to oversee its implementation (and review as necessary in light of experience) reporting back to Synod regularly;*
- 3. Calls on parishes, and on others associated with the Diocese, to continue their positive work on creation care and form their own plans consistent with the Diocesan intention.”*

The Archdeacon introduced the motion, explaining that the diocese was being asked to join in with the National Church’s Net Zero programme, following a consultation with the dioceses the previous year.

With the help of an external consultant, the diocese had mapped progress so far, and had created a Net Zero Action Plan, which broke down the life of the diocese into various sections, including church schools, church buildings, parsonages, and the Diocesan Office, and set out an action plan for reducing carbon emissions year on year.

The total cost for achieving Net Zero had been estimated at approximately £69 million, which was an eye-watering amount of money.

In May, the Synod had voted against releasing diocesan money for capacity building. However, funding was now being offered by the central Church of England and the diocese had applied for funding for three new posts through this funding stream, as there was little capacity in the diocese within the current structure to take forward the Net Zero work.

According to the Net Zero action plan prepared by the external consultant, 7 posts would be needed in total, and the Diocese had applied for capacity funding of £159,000 to fund three new posts at this stage. If additional external funding was secured, it would then be possible to establish a Parish Energy Advisory Team (3 posts) and appoint an additional surveyor.

It was emphasised that further external funding would be needed, and it was hoped that the initial three posts would be able to secure additional funding to take the work forward; no parish or diocesan money was being requested at this stage.

The Archdeacon encouraged members to participate in this movement by registering for eco-church, thinking about individual actions, and by connecting with young people in their parishes.

In conclusion, the Archdeacon explained that this motion was missional and aspirational; it might not be possible to achieve everything set out in the Route Map, but through engagement and participation, we might achieve more than we thought was possible.

The Revd Canon Mark Redhouse (89) observed that a lot of pressure was being put on churches to meet the Net Zero target, but that it was not straightforward when dealing with large, listed buildings. While his church had a vast roof space, their architect had advised that they would be unlikely to get permission for solar panels.

The Archdeacon agreed that there was a balance to be struck between heritage and reducing carbon emissions. The recent changes to the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules aimed to support churches in meeting Net Zero targets. It was pointed out that the DAC was generally supportive but that, in some cases, while the DAC had been willing to support an application for solar panels, the planners had not been willing to grant planning permission. He hoped that permissions would become easier as this work gathered momentum and the culture around this continued to change.

The Revd Philip Coekin (83) asked when parishes might be asked to stump up money towards the cost of the Net Zero work and observed that many parishes were already struggling financially.

The Archdeacon explained that it was difficult to predict with any precision when this would affect individual parishes, as all churches were in different states of repair and disrepair. The Diocese was encouraging parishes to begin planning the replacement of their heating systems further ahead so that, if an oil or gas-fired boiler failed, the parish would already have a plan for a replacement heating system. It was hard to predict when the financial burden would fall on individual parishes as every church is different.

The Archdeacon of Hastings (203) explained that the motion had come from Bishop's Council but that he would like to share his personal misgivings about the Net Zero programme with the Synod. He observed that Christians are called to care for creation, but that commitment to Net Zero targets was not the sum total of what the Church was there to do. He shared his pastoral concern for people affected by this, noting that the projections of lower costs seemed fanciful and that energy costs for ordinary people were likely to rise steeply, which would have the biggest impact on the poorest people in society. He was also concerned about the impact that catastrophic predictions about the climate were having on people as they pushed people into despair about the future, noting that, as Christians, we have a more hopeful eschatology. Finally, he expressed his concern about the central Church pushing us in the direction of unachievable targets and noted that it was concerning that new paid posts were being created within the Diocesan Office at a time when reductions were being considered in other areas.

Mr Jonathan Cornell (203) explained that as a Building Control surveyor, he shared some of the concerns expressed. He agreed that a holistic approach to buildings was needed. Part of the problem was that buildings were old, cold and badly insulated and the Church needed buildings that were fit for purpose.

The Revd Paul Boulter (49) shared the concerns expressed by the Archdeacon of Hastings and explained that he was not sure what to do with the current motion. He asked whether there was an alternative and whether it was possible to support the direction of travel but not the proposed timeline or all the finer details outlined in the Action Plan.

The Archdeacon of Brighton and Lewes responded to the questions and points raised. He agreed that the Diocese might not achieved everything outlined in the Action Plan but felt that a target would help the Diocese to get further than it would have done otherwise.

The motion was carried on a counted vote:

For:

Church: 41	Zoom: 36	Total: 77
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Against:

Church: 11	Zoom: 8	Total: 19
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Abstain:

Church: 8	Zoom: 13	Total: 7
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MEETING OF THE CHICHESTER DIOCESAN FUND AND BOARD OF FINANCE
(INCORPORATED)

1. ETHICAL INVESTMENT

There was a debate on the following motion:

“This Synod re-affirms that care for God’s creation is foundational to the Christian gospel and central to the church’s mission and, recognising (a) the importance of working towards a future which does not depend on fossil fuels; (b) the need to both develop alternative energy supplies and reduce the demand for energy before freedom from fossil fuels can be achieved; and (c) the central role that large energy companies have to play in developing alternative energy supplies, agrees that it will continue to invest in Shell and BP only while those companies have a clear strategy aligned with the Paris Agreement goal to limit the increase of average global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels .”

Mrs Lesley Lynn (Chair) introduced the motion and explained that it was possible for people to agree on a problem, including the solution to the problem, but to disagree on tactics. She explained that, while her heart was with those protesting outside and expressing their concerns about climate change and the need for action, she was not able to agree on divestment.

Mrs Lynn explained that the arguments in favour of continuing to invest in fossil fuel companies was set out in the paper circulated to members. In summary, it was felt that it was better for the diocese to remain a stakeholder and exercise influence in that way rather than walking away. It was explained that this was not straightforward as some companies responsible for fossil fuels were also working on developing the technology for renewables.

It was explained that the issue of divestment had been discussed at length with the NCIs earlier this year; they agreed that engagement with the companies was working but felt that it was not moving fast enough. They agreed that divestment does not

change anything but, by divesting, the central Church of England was intending to expressing its displeasure. While the effect was that they lost their shareholder vote.

Mrs Lynn explained that there is no agreed scientific methodology for assessing whether a particular company is aligning with the Paris Agreement, and that the Transition Pathway Initiative methodology was flawed and since it did not take future plans into account and double counted traded product. For example, this Diocese was not currently aligned with the Paris Agreement but had just passed a motion aiming to meet the Net Zero by 2030 targets; there was a question mark over whether the intention should count for anything or only definite progress.

World Benchmarking Alliance was a better way of looking at things, as it allowed a more nuanced understanding of how companies were doing.

It was also explained that the financial markets punish companies for saying that their strategies align with the Paris Agreement, as the markets did not believe that peak oil usage had been reached yet.

It was explained that the IEA produces a 1.5-degree global warming scenario in which the world transitions so rapidly to low carbon that the remaining demand for oil and gas could be met by supply from existing fields. But there was still investment required globally of around \$455 billion per year through to 2030 in those existing fields. It was hard for anyone to comprehend the sheer scale of spending in the energy industry and the amount of money being spent made some people think that the oil companies were not Paris aligned.

Mrs Lynn explained that the focus on divestment was a distraction from the real challenge, which was to find the solutions that would reduce the reliance of the world on fossil fuels. Casting fossil fuel companies as the villains detracted attention from the responsibility of individuals and society to change their behaviour. There were lots of misconceptions around divestment. For example, people thought that, to reduce use, there was a need to cut supply. Recent experience had shown that this did not work; when the war in Ukraine broke out, the issues with supply resulted in prices rises and inflation and other producers moved in; it pushed people into poverty but did not really reduce the demand for fossil fuels. She concluded with an analogy about chopping a tree down; if a tree was standing and there was a need to cut the tree down to save the world, would it be best to sell the axe to the people on the other side trying to hold the tree up, or retain the axe and keep chopping?

The Revd Martin Poole (26) introduced his amendment, which proposed that the main motion should be amended as follows:

“This Synod re-affirms that care for God’s creation is foundational to the Christian gospel and central to the church’s mission and, ~~recognising (a) the importance of working towards a future which does not depend on fossil fuels; (b) the need to both develop alternative energy supplies and reduce the demand for energy before freedom from fossil fuels can be achieved; and (c) the central role that large energy companies have to play in developing alternative energy supplies,~~ agrees that it will continue to invest in Shell and BP only while those companies have a clear strategy aligned with the Paris Agreement goal to limit the increase of average global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels .”

The Revd Martin Poole thanked Mrs Lynn for bringing this issue to the Synod and thanked the Diocesan Secretary and Registrar for their assistance with drafting the amendment. Mr Poole explained that the first two thirds of the main motion was a description of how we look after the environment and the role of fossil fuel companies, while the last bit suggested that the Synod should therefore continue to invest in fossil fuels companies. This was not the overall conclusion reached by most people, and many other companies, including the central Church of England, had now disinvested. He encouraged members to accept the amendment and to vote against the main motion, whether or not the amendment was accepted.

Mrs Lynn responded briefly.

There was a counted vote on the amendment, which was defeated:

For:

Church: 10	Zoom: 15	Total: 25
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Against:

Church: 42	Zoom: 36	Total: 78
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Abstain:

Church: 5	Zoom: 6	Total: 11
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There was a debate on the unamended motion.

The Archdeacon of Horsham (6) observed that the Church did not invest in tobacco, drugs, the sex trade, or arms for ethical reasons, and that it should also not be investing in fossil fuels. The issue that most young people cared about the most was the environment and continuing to invest in fossil fuels would give the impression that the church cared more about financial gain than the planet. While she understood the arguments in favour of continuing to invest and maintaining a voice in the room as a stakeholder, progress was too slow. Only three dioceses in the country had not divested, including this diocese; what message did that send out? She encouraged members to vote against the motion.

Mr Ian MacDowell (217) understood that Shell had been reducing investment in renewables; he asked if that was correct and whether our continuing engagement was having any real impact?

The Revd Martin Poole (26) explained that he had spoken to Alan Smith (First Church Estates Commissioner), who had been keeping General Synod engaged with the work of the Church Commissioners. He had explained that there had been a unanimous vote in favour of divesting this year because of the lack of progress. It was felt that the overall picture had got worse since 2021, and there was no confidence that progress would be made through further engagement. Mr Poole argued that, from a long-term perspective, it did not make sense to invest in things that were finite. None of the fossil fuel companies were aligned with Paris Agreement and the Global South was

already being seriously already affected by climate change. In relation to the overall investment landscape, he pointed out that this diocese was one of only three that had not yet divested; of the other 39, 27 had pledged to never invest in oil and gas. While there would be a financial cost to divesting, there would at least be a planet to invest in, and there was an important missional aspect to this. He encouraged members to vote against the motion.

Mr John Booth (171) understood the sense of passion and urgency about the climate emergency but felt that it was important to maintain a distinctive and Christian voice in the conversation with fossil fuel companies. It was regrettable that the Church Commissioners had chosen to withdraw that voice by diverting. He observed that, in their written reports, the Commissioners are much more nuanced in their comments around this topic. He pointed out that the members of the Diocese’s Assets Committee had been selected for their expertise in this area and were used to weighing up the ethical issues and responsibilities around investment. He suggested that decisions around investments should be delegated to this committee, as they deal with the investment managers who are directly involved in dialogue with companies. Mr Booth encouraged members to support the main motion.

Mrs Lesley Lynn responded to the points raised in the debate. While she agreed that it was right to avoid investing in armaments and tobacco, fossil fuels were different as they were currently used and needed right now, and it would not be possible to stop using them straight away. In relation to whether the funds could be used to invest in renewables instead, she explained that was not how investment portfolios work.

In relation to supply and demand and the impact of divestment, she explained that, in 2022, the demand for oil went up; it was society that was driving the demand rather than the fossil fuel companies. Mrs Lynn concluded by saying that the most constructive form of stakeholder engagement was to vote at the AGM.

The (unamended) motion was carried on a counted vote:

For:

Church: 26	Zoom: 36	Total: 62
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Against:

Church: 16	Zoom: 16	Total: 32
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Abstain:

Church: 7	Zoom: 2	Total: 9
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2. PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET FOR 2024

Mrs Lesley Lynn (Chair) moved *“That the budget of the DBF for 2024 be received”*.

Mrs Lynn introduced the diocesan budget for 2024. She explained that, if parish share did not recover to pre-pandemic levels, some difficult decisions would have to be made.

Following two difficult years in 2020 and 2021, there were hopeful signs in 2022 that parish share could return to pre-pandemic levels. However, with inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, this now seemed unlikely.

Before the diocese's financial position would become precarious, the DBF had about 12 months to judiciously make decisions about where to cut costs. A deficit of approximately £1 million was expected in 2023, and the 2024 budget anticipated a £1.6 million deficit.

The Finance Director had been through the restricted funds to identify funds that could be used towards existing expenditure, but this was a one-time only fix that would subsidise parish ministry costs in 2024.

It was emphasised that no decisions had yet been made about cutting expenditure. It was felt that there was little fat to strip at Church House.

Mrs Lynn explained that the 2024 budget included a rise in clergy stipends of 5%. There was a delicate balance to be struck between affordability and the rising cost of living; 5% did not seem enough in light of inflation and it was explained that, if parish share exceeded expectations in 2024, the DBF would consider a further increase. The budget also included a significant increase to the clergy housing budget, which was due to inflation and rising costs. However, it was felt that the welfare of clergy families was of vital importance.

Mr Jeremy Kaye (238) noted that the proposals for cutting costs would involve a reduction in both Diocesan Office and ministry costs. He observed that the Diocesan Synod has always kept a sharp limit on the Diocesan Office's costs and was concerned about the proposal to make 20% of the cuts at Church House. He noted that no decisions had yet been made but that, by next November, the changes would need to be in implementation. He asked whether an outline of the proposals and an indication of the direction of travel could be brought to the Diocesan Synod in May 2024, as this could have major implications and early consultation would be better than waiting for next November?

Dr Simon Eyre (146) observed that most organisations try to present a balanced budget and that it did not seem responsible to present a budget with a major deficit.

The Revd Sam Carter (47) thanked Mrs Lynn and the Finance team and asked about the current uncertainties within the wider church; had these been reflected in the Risk Register and the 2024 budget? The amount of contingency that had been allowed seemed to be the same as last year. He asked Mrs Lynn whether she could comment in the current risks and uncertainties and how they have been reflected and whether they could have a major impact?

Mrs Lynn responded to the queries and points made. She agreed to bring an interim proposal to the Synod in May 2024. In relation to the deficit, she explained that no one was happy about running a deficit and that it was not a sustainable position, but the Finance team had identified approximately £800,000 that could be used in 2024, as a one-time fix. She explained that most other organisations respond by laying

people off. Within the church, this was more time-consuming and complex in a church context. While the majority of cost savings would need to come from parish ministry, this would take time to consider and get right and it would not be possible to move very quickly.

In relation to the current risks and uncertainties, she explained that the 2024 budget had been set in August and September. By that stage, some parishes were already withholding parish share. An interim solution had been found but it was not yet clear whether further parishes would withhold parish share following the recent General Synod decision and whether that solution would work for them.

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

3. 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 motion was carried on a show of hands.

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

5. DIOCESAN SYNOD ELECTIONS

Mr John Booth moved *“That this Synod resolves to adopt the Scheme set out on pages 9-12 of the supporting papers for the Diocesan Synod elections in 2024”* and *“That this Synod resolves that a simple majority voting paper shall be used for the elections.”*

Before introducing the motion, Mr Booth paid tribute to Gabrielle Higgins, noting that she had brought the rigour of her classical education to the role of Diocesan Secretary.

Mr Booth explained that the diocesan elections would take place in 2024 and that the Synod needed to determine how members should be elected to the Diocesan Synod.

It was proposed that there should be no major change. Under the Church Representation Rules, the number of lay members elected to the Synod is generally calculated based on the electoral roll of each parish in a deanery.

As 15 parishes had not returned their electoral roll numbers, the figures were distorted, particularly in the deaneries of Storrington and Uckfield. The Bishop’s Council proposed to use the figures of the previous year’s electoral roll numbers for these parishes rather than applying a zero.

It was explained that the voting methods would be the same as last time.

Mr Booth highlighted the importance of asking friends and neighbours to join the electoral roll, noting that this was an important step in encouraging people to get more involved in their local church.

Both motions were carried on a show of hands.

6. RACIAL JUSTICE UPDATE

The Revd Dr Godfrey Kesari (Racial Justice Officer and Interfaith Adviser) gave an update on the progress of the Racial Justice programme, noting that this was hard but important work and that love for God includes love for our neighbours.

Dr Kesari spoke about his childhood and his experience of coming to this country in 2003, which involved moving to live in a majority Christian country for the first time and then realising that he was a minority in terms of ethnicity.

Dr Kesari explained that racial justice is hard work. He had received some hate mail, which had led him to reflect on why this was difficult for people. He felt that it may be because it involved asking people to lose something – how they had done things in the past and possibly an aspect of their own identity. In India, different Christian denominations had come together, losing their own denominational identity to come together as a new church. The loss of identity could be part of finding a new identity, and it was the same with racial justice, which could be a new way of doing church.

Dr Kesari spoke about the recent progress made in the diocese. To mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush, the Rt Revd Leon Golding (Bishop of Montego Bay, Jamaica) had visited the diocese for a week of events and visits to churches and schools across the diocese. In October, the Revd Dr Guy Hewitt (Racial Justice Director for the Church of England), had preached at a service at Chichester Cathedral to mark Black History Month. Dr Kesari concluded with a quotation from Revelations 7, which spoke of the nations coming together.

Bishop Martin thanked Godfrey for his work and encouraged him to keep the Synod updated on progress.

7. REPORT FROM GENERAL SYNOD

Mrs Tina Nay moved *“That this report be received”*.

The Revd Philip Coekin (83) observed that the report contained a comment from a Chichester member of General Synod about the positive effect that the LLF discussions had had within one parish, and asked whether there had been any feedback from this diocese about people finding it difficult?

Mrs Nay could not remember any specific feedback but was sure that there was a diversity of opinion on the helpfulness of the process and the materials.

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

8. REPORT ON THE BISHOP’S COUNCIL

The Venerable Luke Irvine-Capel moved *“That this report be received”*.

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

9. PROMULGATION OF AMENDING CANON NO. 42

The Bishop of Chichester promulgated the Amended Canon:

“I give notice that, at its July 2023 group of sessions, the General Synod resolved that Amending Canon No. 42 be made, promulgated and executed. Amending Canon No. 42 amends Canon C 30 by replacing the requirement for the bishop of each diocese to appoint a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) with a requirement for the bishop to

appoint a Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) with responsibility in the diocese, independent of the bishop, for professional leadership on and management of safeguarding matters. The Canon also provides for the professional supervision of DSOs and for the quality assurance of their work by the National Safeguarding Team. The changes will come into force diocese by diocese upon certification by the Archbishops' Council."

10. QUESTIONS UNDER SO69

There were no questions under Standing Order 69.

11. FAREWELLS AND THANKS

The Bishop of Chichester explained that Mrs Sue Atkins would be retiring at the end of the year, having served the Diocese as PA to the Archdeacon of Chichester and the Archdeacon of Horsham. He thanked Mrs Atkins for her cheerfulness and commitment to the Diocese over the past 20 years.

The Bishop noted that Mrs Wendy Greenan would also be retiring in the spring, having worked within the Apostolic Life department for many years. He thanked Mrs Greenan for her service to the Diocese and wishes her a happy retirement.

The Bishop thanked the Revd Giles Carpenter and the volunteer team at St John for their hospitality in hosting the Diocesan Synod. He also thanked Mr Marc Sacher and the team of staff volunteers.

12. FAREWELL TO THE DIOCESAN SECRETARY

The Bishop paid tribute to Miss Gabrielle Higgins, who would be stepping down from her role as Diocesan Secretary at the end of November, after almost nine years in the role. The Bishop particularly highlighted Gabrielle's capacity for detail, the progress made in the areas of safeguarding and compliance, and her engagement with the opportunities and challenges put before the diocese by the National Church. He noted that nine years as Diocesan Secretary was almost a record and was a huge achievement.

The Diocesan Secretary thanked the Bishop and explained that it had been a joy and a privilege to carry out this role over the past nine years. It had been inspirational to work with so many talented and committed members of staff, clergy, volunteers in parishes and it was the people she would miss most, and Diocese of Chichester would always hold a special place in her heart.