



SUPPORTING PAPERS

DIOCESAN SYNOD

ON 18TH MAY 2024



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**MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD
AGENDA ITEM 5.**

Plans for Sustainability and Development

1. Introduction

As agreed at the last Synod, this item informs Synod on the progress being made on reducing the level of financial deficit, whilst simultaneously seeking ways to see growth across the diocese.

With a budget deficit of nearly £1.6m in 2024, Bishop's Council has identified a need to reduce this by £1.5m through cost reduction or additional income. More than £1.2 million of savings have been identified, with more than £800k likely to come through into the 2025 budget. However, we also long to see the Church grow across the diocese, being more open, more converted to Jesus Christ, more generous and more engaged, and we are seeking ways of finding external resourcing, primarily from the national church, to support that growth.

2. Overall narrative

In essence, we seek to respond to a narrative of four elements:

- Our current levels of deficit are far too high to be sustained and we need to reduce cost (or increase income).
- We seek to grow and to make effective use of resources, our plans to do so will need to be targeted on a few key themes.
- There are very real pressures on parishes in terms of people and financial resources and funding for development will often need to come from elsewhere. We continue though to seek parishes to be as generous as they can be in sustaining parish share, as parish share largely funds parish ministry.
- We will seek external funding where we can get it and Bishop's Council will over time consider appropriate use of diocesan reserves to invest in seeking growth.

3. Reducing Cost

The 2024 budget shows an expected deficit approaching £1.6m, and we will seek to reduce the expected deficit by around £1.5 million.

Parish Ministry accounts for 80% of our costs, with the remaining 20% being in support budgets at Church House. Although the original target was to have 20% of the savings arising in Church House budgets (i.e. £300,000), our current plans expect to see savings in the Church House budgets of more than £500,000, meaning that we will need to seek lower savings from parish ministry. Annex One provides some headlines on where these savings will be found.

That still results in needing to reduce Parish Ministry costs by £1 million (or see increases in income). We have identified potential savings of £700,000 in Parish Ministry costs. Of this, £150,000 arises from a reduction in the clergy pension contribution rate. The other £550,000 comes from potential post reductions – although most of these will not be

immediate. The best way of reducing cost is gradually, taking advantage of the right opportunities as and when they occur.

As we know, Parish Share largely funds Parish Ministry – and our inability to grow receipts of Parish Share, especially in real terms is at the root of the challenge that we face. Seeking to at least maintain Parish Share contributions in real terms will be highly important if we are to sustain levels of ministry.

4. Plans for Growth

As explained earlier, the very real pressures on parishes in terms of people and financial resource mean that often we will need to seek funding from elsewhere.

The national church is seeking to support Dioceses that wish to grow through the provision of a Diocesan Investment Programme, and a number of dioceses have already made successful applications that have resulted significant funding for their plans.

There are a number of pieces of work that are required to get us into the position of being able to access this funding.

- A. Refreshing our diocesan Vision for Growth as the current phase runs through to the end of 2025.
- B. Gaining clarity on what would be the core elements of our application through piloting three strands of work:
 - Prayer and Worship
 - Children and Young People
 - Excellent Leaders
- C. Carrying out work to learn more about “what works” both within this diocese and from across the Church of England, and to understand our data better on where the church needs additional strengthening. The national church has provided us with funding to make three posts to support this.
- D. Continue to work on our financial sustainability to ensure that we are able to exercise good stewardship over our financial resources, using them appropriately to support the work that we want to do.

5. Accessing national funding

We have advertised a number of posts recently that have come about as a result of being awarded national funding. Some of these posts are ones that we would possibly not have chosen to fund if the money was needing to come from within our household of faith.

Where we have external funders, including the national church, who are wishing to fund programmes of work that are helpful to us, we will continue to seek access that funding.

Recent examples have included:

- Roles to help us with the capacity work listed in 4(ii) above which has been entirely funded by the national church on a three year basis.
- Roles to help us reduce our carbon emissions and move towards the General Synod aspiration of reaching Net Carbon Zero by 2030.

John Preston
8th April 2024

ANNEX ONE

Anticipated reductions in Church House budgets.

Whilst a number of the reductions we are working towards are confidential, and will require consultation with some employees on a number of matters, the progress that can be shared includes:

1. There is a change in the funding model for the Parish Giving Scheme, with the national church now funding this. This removes a cost of £46,000.
2. We will cease our contribution to Family Support Work, reducing it to a token grant of £1,000, saving £35,000. It is hoped that this may be reinstated when finances permit.
3. We have found an alternative way of staging Maycamp. The venue will remain at Plumpton Racecourse, but we will use their existing buildings rather than hire a marquee. We will also seek to increase income through finding “Maycamp Angels” – individuals or parishes who are willing to make specific gifts to enable this ministry to continue. This will save £23,000.
4. The increase in interest rates means that it is reasonable to expect an increase in interest income, and together with an increased focus on treasury management we expect at least £80,000 more interest income than budgeted.
5. There have been a number of staffing changes that have allowed a review as to how roles function. In three cases a full-time member of staff has been or will be replaced part-time, and two roles have not been replaced at all (Digital Media Officer and one role in the Education Team). The total saving here is around £80,000.
6. In January of this year we completed a plan to move our IT systems to become entirely cloud based. Not needing our own in-house server has reduced annual support costs by £15,000.
7. We are seeking additional income from schools through increasing the cost of the Partnership Agreement, which over time has lagged inflation. This is expected to bring in £31,000.
8. We have reviewed the way that we have been using some of our restricted/endowed funds, and have identified that there are ways to increase the support from these funds by £30,000 and still expect these to grow in line with inflation (i.e. the fund will still be able to provide the same level of support in future years).

AGENDA ITEM 6. REPORT ON THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

The Bishop's Council has met twice since the November Synod, at Church House Hove in December 2023 and April 2024.

In December the Council was chaired by Lesley Lynn chairman of the DBF. The Synod began with prayer after which Lesley welcomed John Preston as the new Diocesan Secretary.

Council received the **Annual Apostolic Life Update**: Canon Rebecca Swyer started by thanking the dedicated staff team and volunteers and highlighting the ongoing impact of the pandemic particularly with mental health issues. She noted the success of the second clergy wellbeing day and the helpful use of different media for one to one meetings in particular. She was delighted that there is increasing collaboration with other Church House Departments and grateful that national funding has enabled the recruitment of a Generous Giving Adviser and Parish Adviser. It was noted that there is a slippage in the number of candidates coming forward for ordination, this is happening across the C of E and there are reasons for it. There has been fantastic growth in Strategic Development Fund Project churches particularly in Crawley, their work with refugees, addicts and the homeless bringing the SDF church model to very different communities. It was reported that it is important to learn from this and develop younger leaders including those who have been in the care system and that the system needs to be broader to widen participation.

The Council received a **Safeguarding and Serious Incident Report Update**, Bishop Ruth spoke to Colin Perkins' paper. PTO, PSO, wardens and reader's training graphs have all gone up, it is difficult to get some PTO clergy through training and an immense amount of focused work has been done on that. Licenced clergy training has dipped because of the other work and the 3 year training cycle post pandemic but the backlog is being addressed. Some PSO were qualified in their other roles and did not have time to retrain, this is being tackled. Bishop Ruth confirmed that 28 parishes had not started Simple Quality Protects and this is being addressed through their Archdeacon.

The **Minutes of the meeting of 28th September** were Approved. Under AOB it was reported that Jane Wooderson has been appointed chairman of the Safeguarding Advisory Panel. The Minutes of the **Diocesan Board of Education** were noted

The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance said she thought the management accounts indicated a deficit of around £1.1M - higher than budget. The budget for 2024 included a deficit of £1.6M, some of the restricted reserves would be used to fund the deficit but this would reduce investment income. Further cost savings measures would be difficult and a way forward needed to be found. It was noted that costs savings would be known by Easter and that many parishes were struggling although some were successfully trying to increase giving.

Review of Alternative Parish Share Proposal (LLF Restricted Fund) Council agreed to extend the scheme on a time limited basis to be reviewed at the end of 2025 or sooner.

All Saints Hove SDF Funding It was noted that the parish has worked hard to make this work in difficult times. It was agreed they should apply for the extra funds if there was a significant increase in congregational giving and that the national church could stipulate their own conditions.

Review of the Diocesan Synod. The draft Minutes were approved. It was confirmed that Church House costs would be reduced.

Audit Plan After a tendering process it was agreed to reappoint Haysmacintyre as auditors. Council agreed measures to address review of journals at the commendation of the auditors.

Council noted **Insurance Renewals** and were asked to notify the Finance Director if they had concerns. It was reported that the Assets Committee had revised the **Investment and Treasury Policy** and confirmed that Shell and BP aimed to align with the Paris Agreement. The **Management Accounts** had been scrutinised by the Operating Committee and were noted, **Committee Vacancies and Appointments** were agreed and **Variations to School Instruments of Government** were noted.

The **April** meeting began with prayer led by Bishop Martin.

Council received a very comprehensive report from the **Church Buildings and Pastoral Organisation Team** led by Dr Emma Arbuthnot and the Archdeacon of Brighton and Lewes, Vice-Chairman of the DAC who praised the chairman Revd Paul Doick. DAC visits and applications have picked up since the end of the pandemic and parishes appreciate advice on building projects. Only 50% apply online so more parishes will be encouraged and helped to apply this way. Bishop Martin paid tribute to Emma and her team for their support for parochial church life and thanked Dr Katherine Prior for her work helping parishes raise funds for repair and restoration, she is leaving to work in Southwark, a replacement has been identified. Quinquennial Inspection records have been updated and those not up to date are being contacted. Some funding has been identified which will be able to help 20th Century churches which do not easily attract external funding. The Heritage Lottery Fund now seems more willing to look at churches than has been the case for some time and some excellent grants have been achieved in the last year. Parish reorganisations are time consuming and can be difficult however the team have been able to complete some.

The Council received the **Safeguarding and Serious Incident Report Update** delivered by the Bishop of Horsham. There has been one incident which was handled quickly and efficiently. A discussion followed about the need for a wide variety of church helpers to have basic safeguarding training, this is not difficult but needs to be dealt with sensitively, it is important to get into a culture of training and have a positive attitude to it. A major independent audit of diocesan safeguarding will happen in October by INEQE organised by the national church.

The **Minutes** of the December meeting were agreed and signed by Bishop Martin, there were no matters arising. The **Operating Committee Minutes** were discussed, these are at present very long and detailed and will in future be more streamlined, the Council also

received the Minutes of the **Diocesan Board of Education** and reports from **Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees, Parsonage and Houses Committees, the Assets Committee and the Audit Committee.**

The Chairman of the Finance Committee reported the Education teams bid to **Phase 3 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme** funding which was successful and will be spent on a trial project for heat pumps at 3 schools, more bids will be made, this was noted by council.

The Finance Director led the council through the new **Reserves Policy** and other significant changes to the Statutory Accounts. The **Statutory Accounts for 2023** were approved as was the **Letter of Representation and Assessment of Going Concern**. The Diocesan Secretary introduced his paper **Navigating Financial Pressures**. The budget contains a significant deficit of £1.6M is forecast. This deficit unsustainable and saving money is vital, plans have been made to reduce the Church House Budgets, to look at externally funded posts and a reduction in parish ministry costs will be required.

The Agenda for the **May Diocesan Synod** was approved. The **Risk Register** was discussed, five areas of concern were identified and a close eye will be kept on these items. The **Management Accounts** were noted as were the **2025 Meeting Dates** and the **2024 Elections** to General Synod, Diocesan Synod and Synod Sub-Committees.

Committee Vacancies and Appointments and **Variations to School Instruments of Government** were noted and a **Parish Joint Council** was deemed to have been approved.

The Council ended with Prayer.

Sara Stonor
22 April 2024

AGENDA ITEM 7. REPORT FROM GENERAL SYNOD

November 2023

Our meeting in November was mainly to debate the recommendations of the 'Living in Love and Faith' project and to consider the implementation of the prayers. However other items were considered too.

The Archbishops began with a joint presidential address; the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke about the situation in the Holy Land and the need for a just settlement. He referred to his trip to Jerusalem and we were invited to listen to a video recording from the Archbishop of Jerusalem. We were asked to keep the people of that place in our prayers and our hearts.

The Archbishop of York spoke about the LLF process and the implementation of the prayers and 'stand alone services'. He acknowledged that there was still fundamental disagreement on this subject and that some would think the proposals went too far and some felt they did not go far enough. This was repeated in subsequent debates by the lead Bishop, the Bishop of London. There were over 90 questions asked referring to issues that arose from the LLF report and in later debates 12 amendments were put of which only 2 were passed in all three houses so that the final motion was as follows:

'That this Synod, conscious that the Church is not of one mind on the issues raised by Living in Love and Faith,, that we are in a period of uncertainty, and that many in the Church on all sides are being deeply hurt at this time, recognise the progress made by the House of Bishops toward implementing the motion on Living in Love and Faith passed by this Synod in February 2023, as reported in GS 2328, encourage the House to continue its work of implementation, and ask the House to consider whether some standalone services for same-sex couples could be made available for use, possibly on a trial basis, on the timescale envisaged by the motion passed by the Synod in February 2023'.

It should be noted that the voting on all the amendments was very close – in some cases only one vote was a deciding factor. The final vote on the motion above was:

Bishops	23 in favour	10 against	4 abstentions
Clergy	100 in favour	93 against	1 abstention
Laity	104 in favour	100 against	0 abstentions

Members of Synod were concerned about the feared emotional intensity of the debates on LLF before Synod began. The chairman conducted a fair debate balancing speakers on either side. Balancing too those who wanted to speak on theology and those who wanted to speak on lived experience.

Other debates included the first consideration of the Redress Measure. There were concerns raised about the payments being made by PCCs for historic cases concerning safeguarding particularly if a PCC had changed insurers who would not consider such cases. This will now be sent to the revision committee for further work.

Mary Nagel
17 November 2023

February 2024

We met for five days in London for what seemed like an even longer Synod. Various items of legislative were finished and started. A motion requesting fees for funerals taking place at crematoria and cemeteries should be payable to the PCC rather than the Diocese was passed. The Archbishops' Council had been asked to draw up a Code of Conduct for PCCs to include a disciplinary process for the removal from office in cases where this is not followed. There was also a debate about the bullying by lay officers. It was sad to hear of cases where a parish priest's health has been badly affected by the ways in which they have been treated by church wardens or other lay officers. The Archbishops' Council was asked to bring forward legislative proposals which would enable a Churchwarden, PCC member or other lay officers to be disqualified from holding office.

Safeguarding Independence was reviewed in the light of the Wilkinson and Jay reports. The former report sought to address the problems which led to the abandonment of the ISB (Independent Safeguarding board) last year. The Jay report gave recommendations of the way forward. As members of GS only received the Jay report two days before the start of Synod it was felt that it was difficult to debate the report in detail. However, after a long and, at times, emotional debate the motion to apologise for any stress, harm and professional embarrassment former members of the ISB have endured and the necessary implementation of recommendations be pursued as a matter of priority was passed.

We had a debate on 'Racial Justice' commending the positive outcomes in the report 'From Lament to Action'. The motion requested that the national Church ensures that resources remain available including appropriate governance arrangement and funding. It also recommends that Dioceses give priority to the collection, monitoring and measuring of relevant data and encourages parishes and deaneries to develop local action plans to address the issues of racial injustice.

The Bishop of Durham led a debate on Families and Households. The debate acknowledged the different kind of families from the single life to blended families, both small and large. The motion commended the Report 'Love Matters' and its recommendations for consideration across the whole Church, encouraged the Archbishops Council to develop practical responses in response to the report's recommendations and urged HM Government to implement recommendations made to Government. Sadly, an amendment to 'reaffirm the value of marriage as providing the most stable and permanent environment for bringing up children' was not carried.

An enthusiastic debate was held on Estates Evangelism. This debate followed on one 5 years previously. It commended the work done on large estates, called on the whole Church to address the structural and financial injustices that prevent flourishing and sustainable worshipping communities on every estate and commits to taking the steps to raise a new generation of lay and ordained leaders from estates and working-class backgrounds. We heard a number of stories of those who have experiences of estate evangelism and who had come to faith through such work but we need to expand such work and commitment.

Living in Love and Faith debate was on the agenda led by the Bishop of Leicester. He asked that we welcome the further work carried out on LLF and the focus on reconciliation and

bridge building and that the proposal for a set of commitments through which the whole church can continue to pursue the implementation of the motions previously passed by Synod on LLF be brought back to Synod as soon as possible. There was much debate on both sides of the issues presented. In a close vote an amendment was lost on acknowledging that there are for many in the CE issues on which they cannot agree, as was an amendment calling for legal structural provision. In the end a motion of next business was called which means that this motion or one similar in content cannot be brought to Synod again in this quinquennium. It was not clear what is to happen next.

We had a debate on the Ukraine war. The amended motion made it clear that we were calling on the Government to maintain support for Ukraine until there is a just peace.

Other debates included the 'Future of Work' looking at the economic effects of the pandemic and the impact of new technology. The Bishop of Norwich introduced a debate on Land and Nature welcoming the work being done by the Church and requesting each diocese to have a named person/committee to create an action plan to achieve the 'land' section of the Eco Diocese at Silver level by 2026.

We debated clergy pensions and how they have fallen behind requesting that they should return to the pre 2011 status.

Finally, we looked at removing the canon requiring divorcees who remarry to get a faculty to train for ordination. This was amended so the decision was a matter for the Diocesan Bishop rather than the Archbishops.

It was a long Synod and I have tried to give you a taste of the breadth of debates.

Mary Nagel

AGENDA ITEM 8. AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDER 9(v)

With regard to Standing Order 9 for administrative expediency, it is proposed that in subsection (v), the text in red and struck through below shall be removed.

9. The Diocesan Secretary shall be Secretary, and shall:

(i) be responsible for the administrative arrangements for meetings of the Synod;

(ii) be in attendance at such meetings;

(iii) prepare the draft agenda papers and minutes of the Synod;

(iv) act as Secretary of the Standing Committee;

(v) shall call Minutes of the proceedings of the Synod to be recorded ~~including the naming of members who are not present and fail to send apologies for absence~~. Such Minutes shall be approved by the Bishop's Council and posted on the website.

(vi) It is part of the duties of the Diocesan Secretary to address the Synod.

John Preston
22 April 2024