Proposed motion for Storrington Deanery Synod

This Synod, noting that the imposition by the Government of 20% VAT on repairs to churches is a burden for volunteers who are already responsible for the entire funding of parish church projects and noting that museums pay 0% VAT on repairs, calls for churches and museums to be treated on the same basis.

Explanatory Note: The National Churches Trust (NCT) is campaigning against the imposition of 20% VAT on repairs to places of worship given that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have decided that museums and galleries offering free admission should pay 0% VAT. The NCT argue that it is unreasonable to treat historic churches - which depend entirely on local funding and volunteers - less favourably than museums; further it is wrong, they argue, that it costs zero per cent to demolish a listed church but parishioners will pay 20% tax to maintain the building.
Churches are being asked to add their voices to the campaign, hence this motion.
Steyning PCC passed this motion having noted that the current repairs to the church tower will cost an additional £53,000 in VAT.

Report from the Assets Committee to Diocesan Synod

At the November 2025 Synod meeting, the Assets Committee reported that they had decided to divest from BP and Shell for the time being as both companies have shifted towards less ambitious transition plans than the Paris Agreement.

At the time the Synod noted that it was likely that investment income would reduce as we had to dispose of the DBF holdings in M&G Charifund, which is an income driven fund. In 2026 we have seen the expected reduction in the investment income received by the DBF.

Over the past year the Assets Committee has been exploring the possibility of adopting a total return approach to managing the Stipends Capital Fund, an endowed fund which exists to produce an income towards stipends. The purpose of adopting total return is to enable Chichester DBF to maintain intergenerational equity without unnecessarily restricting the choice of investment assets. Total return allows the DBF to spend part of the capital growth in the investment portfolio as if it were income.

The Assets Committee made a recommendation to the July meeting of Bishop's Council, who voted in favour of adopting total return, on the following basis:

- The original value of the fund is the value shown in the statutory accounts at 31 December 1995 (first year shown in the diocesan statutory accounts)
- CPIH is used as the inflation index.
- The initial spending (drawdown) policy is to withdraw an amount equivalent to the average level of income received over the past three years adjusted for inflation. This should provide a sustainable contribution to stipends.

The Assets Committee is currently reviewing the investment mandate and liaising with the investment managers to implement the change of approach.

Synod is invited to note this report.

Kevin Edgeley, Chair of the Assets Committee
October 2026

Budget 2027 – *Booklet issued separately*

Sustaining Parish Ministry

The diocese has long sought to maintain parish ministry as a priority. This paper provides information on how our levels of parochial ministry compare with the wider Church, and supports a discussion as to how this can best be sustained.

Ministry

At August 2026, the Diocese had:

238 stipendiary clergy serving a population in the diocese of 1.704 million. This is one stipendiary clergy person for every 7,159 people around the diocese. Nationally, the Church of England has one stipendiary clergy person for every 8,449 people – so we have sustained stipendiary ministry at a level 18% greater than the C of E average.

We also have an additional 66 self-supporting ministers (including house for duty clergy) and 409 clergy with permission to officiate. Our level of PTO clergy is particularly high – 64% greater than the average for the Church of England per thousand population.

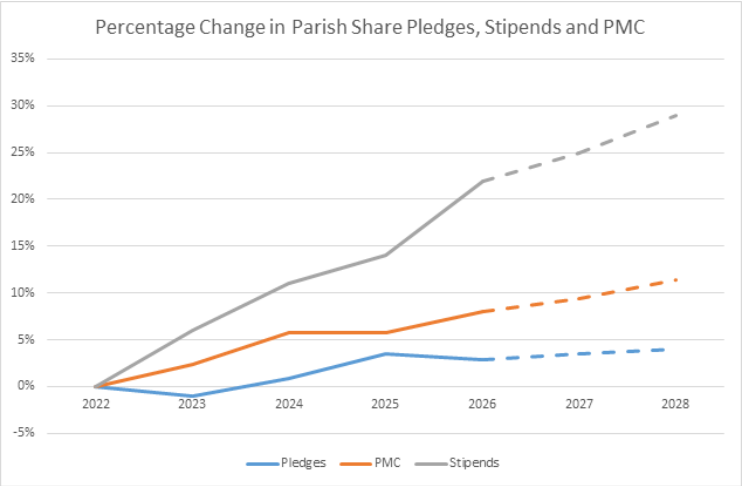
The Structural Challenge

As with most dioceses, we have faced long term financial pressures to sustain the number of clergy posts. The number of posts we can afford is directly linked to the amount of Parish Share received as

- Parish Share represents over 80% of our income, and
- Ministry related costs (including clergy housing) are 83.3% of expenditure.

General Synod made the decision in July 2025 to restore the value of stipends in line with 2011 values, and to increase stipends automatically each year in line with CPIH inflation (up to 5%). This led to an increase in the National Stipends Benchmark of 10.7% from April 2026. For Chichester, it was around 7% as we had sustained stipends at a higher level in previous years.

The chart on the right clearly presents the challenge from stipend inflation linking. This is a permanent challenge as Parish Share increases have consistently not matched Stipend increases over the past 25 years. This is particularly marked over the recent period shown on the chart due to the significant increase in stipends in 2025.



The grey line represents the increase in stipends. By working hard at managing other costs we have contained increases in average Parish Ministry Cost to the orange-red line. However, Parish Share has only increased at the level shown by the blue line.

We have around £3 million of other income we can apply to the gap between PMC and Parish Share contributed. In 2026 only 12 benefices have made a pledge in excess of PMC, and the aggregate shortfalls of the many benefices pledging less than PMC is far greater than the £3 million available.

Church House costs

Some national commentators have sought to suggest that central diocesan administrative costs have "ballooned" over recent years. That is not the case in this diocese:

- Parish Support Services represents 16.2% of the 2027 budget – lower than the 16.9% they represented in 2021.
- Total budgeted cost of Parish Support Services has actually reduced year on year – the 2027 budget is £18,000 lower than in 2026, despite budgeting for a 3% staff salary increase.
- Our last Annual Report showed 45.8 FTE employees funded by General Funds. We have 226.6 FTE clergy which is a ratio of five clergy people for every employee rather than the statistic quoted by Save the Parish of three to one.

Opportunities for Generosity

Individuals and parishes are in unique situations, and have different opportunities to give. We are called to give as we are able (Dt 16:17), neither reluctantly nor under compulsion (2 Cor 9:7), and to do so generously (several scriptures).

- Our parishes have 15,600 regular givers. The number has declined by 28% in the past ten years. The number of regular givers is 44% of our Adult Worshipping Community. (Some of these will give on behalf of a couple). There may be opportunity to increase the number of regular givers.
- Average giving in the diocese is £20.08 per regular giver per week. This is a 62% rising in giving per head over ten years. We are the 10th ranked diocese.
- These two statistics are the driving force behind the 12.8% increase in Total Giving (£) received by parishes over the past ten years. This is ahead of the increase in Parish Share – 2.1% between 2019 and 2025.
- Parish unrestricted reserves total in excess of £50 million – albeit these are unequally distributed.

How are we combatting the structural challenge?

a. **Growing other diocesan income**: We are trying to grow that by selling surplus property and converting it into equities to give a higher yield than was obtained through renting property, which is also now more difficult due to the Renters Rights Act. Moving £20 million from property to equities would increase the income available to cover the gap between PMC and contributions by a further c£600,000 a year. We are part-way through that.

b. **Diocesan Growth Strategy:** We are implementing our plans to increase the underlying health and sustainability of at least 80 churches over the next ten years. We have some funding and training available to support every parish's plans for mission.

Three Underlying Questions

a. **How do we maintain a focus on growth?** As noted earlier, one of the underlying challenges is the reduction in the numbers of church members. Our Growth Strategy is vital – not just in response to the Great Commission and the cure of souls, but also in enabling our churches to become healthier and more sustainable. This in large part, is why the Growth Strategy seeks to engage with a large number of churches rather than focus on a few large projects.

b. **How can we increase generosity (both individuals and parishes)?** For some years individual giving has increased across the church, but a reduction in the number of givers has led to the overall amount of giving into parishes not increasing in line with inflation. Reserves continue to increase in aggregate, and the 2024 Returns of Parish Finance show over £50 million of unrestricted reserves distributed unevenly across our parishes.

c. **What are the implications for the kind of ministry & vocations we need?** Along with the rest of the Church of England, we will need assess the nature of ministry that we are able to support – the balance between full-time, part-time, house for duty and self-supporting ministry, and how we ensure the demands of ministry are realistic and enable wellbeing.

John Preston. 19th October 2026.

Diocese of Chichester Diocesan Synod

November 2026

Safeguarding Update

Purpose

This paper provides Diocesan Synod with an update on two safeguarding-related matters recently considered by Bishop's Council:

1. The approach to Enhanced DBS checks for PCC members;
2. Implementation of the Church of England Redress Scheme.

1. DBS Checks for PCC Members

The Bishop's Council has approved a revised diocesan approach to Enhanced DBS checks for PCC members.

The change follows developments in safeguarding law and practice, including a wider definition of what constitutes Regulated Activity with children. It also reflects communications from the Charity Commission to the Church of England during 2026, which emphasised the safeguarding responsibilities of charity trustees and the importance of appropriate safeguarding assurance and oversight.

As a result, Bishop's Council has concluded that, where individuals within a parish undertake Regulated Activity with children and/or adults, Enhanced DBS checks should be conducted on all PCC members. This approach is consistent with current Government guidance and reflects the important governance responsibilities exercised by PCCs in relation to parish activities and those who deliver them.

Whilst this is the firm recommendation of Bishop's Council, it remains a matter for individual PCCs to determine in light of their own circumstances and responsibilities. In reaching its decision, Bishop's Council considered advice from the Director of Safeguarding, the Diocesan Registrar, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel. The intention of this recommendation

is to strengthen safeguarding governance, support public confidence, comply with regulatory guidance, and ensure that those exercising responsibility for parish activities are recruited safely.

2. Church of England Redress Scheme

The Church of England Redress Scheme has been established under the 2025 Abuse Redress Measure, approved by General Synod and Parliament.

The Scheme provides a statutory route for survivors and victims of Church-related abuse to seek redress from the Church. It has been developed following extensive work across the national Church and is intended to provide a more survivor-focused response than has previously been available. The Scheme seeks to recognise the harm suffered by survivors and victims, acknowledge the Church's failures, and provide access to a range of redress outcomes.

Applications to the Scheme will be assessed independently. Redress may include financial award, therapeutic support, acknowledgement of harm, apology, and other forms of restorative response where appropriate. Awards themselves are nationally funded, underpinned by up to £150 million from the Church Commissioners

As a Diocese with a significant safeguarding history, Chichester is likely to engage substantially with the Scheme over coming years. Work is underway to ensure that the Diocese is prepared to support survivors appropriately, respond effectively to requests for information, and manage the practical implications of participation in the Scheme.

The Diocese remains committed both to supporting those who have been harmed and to continuing the significant safeguarding improvements that have been made in recent years.

Voluntary contributions towards individual awards may be sought from appropriate Church bodies, including the Diocesan Board of Finance and relevant PCCs, where this is considered appropriate under the arrangements of the Scheme.

Colin Perkins

Director of Safeguarding

Education Report for Diocesan Synod- November 2026

"Rooted to grow by faithfully shaping education to know, love and follow Jesus today."

Statutory Functions

As an aide-memoire from my annual report last year, the education department carry out the statutory functions as laid out in the DBE Measure 2021 on behalf of the DBE. The general functions state that each DBE must:

(a)promote or assist in the promotion of education in the diocese that is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England;

(b)promote or assist in the promotion of religious education and religious worship in schools in the diocese;

(c)promote or assist in the promotion of church schools in the diocese;

(d)promote co-operation between itself and other persons concerned with education in the diocese.

In addition, the DBE has a number of powers relating to consultation, consent and advice set out in both the measure and various education acts. It is worth noting that a significant proportion of the statutory functions relate to land and buildings, particularly in the areas that require DBE consent.

Other functions

There is significant work that is undertaken by the department that supports schools in a wider context and also supports the wider mission and ministry of the diocese. Some examples of this include:

- *Attendance at all SIAMS and Ofsted inspection feedback*
- *Training programme for schools and governors*
- *Year 6 Leaver's services*
- *Headteacher's Conference*
- *Growing Partnerships*
- *Faith in Action awards*
- *Supporting wider diocesan strategy for children and youth*
- *Growing Faith Hub work*
- *Resource boxes for schools, including the provision of bereavement resources to support schools in these difficult times.*

There are 153 Church of England schools across the diocese, following the closure of Twineham CE Primary School in August. In the last academic year, we had a renewed focus on our small and rural schools, having launched our Small and Rural Schools statement (290825_Small_and_Rural_Schools_Statement_FINAL.pdf). Across the Diocese, there are 105 schools (69%) with less than 210 pupils, which the Department for Education class as "small". 42 (27%) have 100 pupils or less on roll s at the January

2025 census. There are 96 schools (62%) that the Department for Education deem to be either *"smaller rural"* or "*larger rural"*.

Many of our schools are facing significant challenges to their long-term viability. Shifting demographics and a persistent low birth rate has a substantial impact on school budgets as much of the funding provided to schools is calculated on a per pupil basis. We are encouraging schools to have a long-term view of viability, thinking about the use of formal partnerships, federations and academisation where appropriate to join strong school groupings.

2025-26 Academic Year in Review

Throughout this year, the DBE has worked to refresh and renew its vision. This was approved at the July 2026 meeting of the DBE and is as follows:

"Rooted to grow by faithfully shaping education to know, love and follow Jesus today."

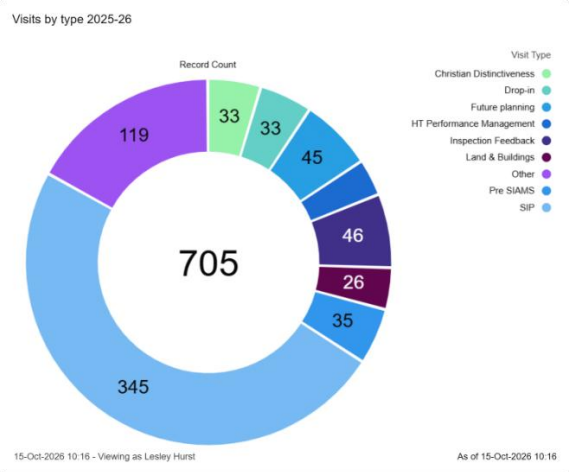
Our vision is to promote and assist in a transformative education across the diocese that is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England. We are committed to growing church schools where worship is central, and where every child is recognised as uniquely made in the image of God with inherent human dignity.

Grounded in Christian teaching we foster a culture of learning that seeks to release the God-given gifts of every individual. Through co-operation with our schools, academies, and partners, we empower all to know, love, and follow Jesus today, enabling our communities to experience life in all its fullness.

In September 2025 we welcomed 4 new members of staff to our team, 3 x School Effectiveness Officers and 1 x Christian Distinctiveness, RE and SIAMS Manager. Thanks to the forward thinking of the Diocesan Board of Education and careful stewardship of the Uniform Statutory Trusts[1], we were able to increase our School Effectiveness Officer Team to enable the Deputy Director of Education to move into a more strategic role rather than carrying their own portfolio of schools. The new team have settled well and there is a sense of joy and commitment to serve our schools which flows through the team.

As a result of the growth in our capacity, we have increased our school visits to 705 this year, up 139 on the previous academic year. We have also ensured that the categories better reflect the wide array of reasons that the team may visit schools. There is still though, a vast number which sit within the "SIP" category (School Improvement Partner) which is broad in definition.

[1] The Uniform Statutory Trusts (or Aided Schools Fund as it is more commonly known) is where any proceeds of sale of school land and buildings is held. The use of this money is heavily restricted and must be used in accordance with Section 36 of the Education Act 1996. One such permitted use is the provision of advice, guidance and resources in connection with any school in the area.



This year, 144 schools paid the partnership agreement, which has led to a slight increase in our income generation as the price was raised. This was only the second raise in price since Covid, as we are mindful of the pressures on school budgets. It is therefore encouraging that we saw the same number of schools paying this year as we did in the previous year.

We have taken the decision that we will not increase the cost in the 2026-27 academic year. Rather, we are going to take the time to review the Partnership Agreement in consultation with both our schools and our Multi Academy Trusts, an exercise we have not undertaken for 10 years. We will then reshape our offer and align the pricing accordingly.

There were 19 Ofsted inspections with 7 judgements attached to specific categories for each school giving 133 individual judgements. In addition, each school also has a 'Safeguarding' judgement with 100% schools achieving the 'Met' target. Schools can only achieve a particular standard if every single criterion is achieved as a secure fit. Many schools say the bar has been raised again, as judgements were previously made on a 'best fit' basis.

No longer do Ofsted put a single judgement statement on a school. By analysing the 133 specific judgements, 89% of judgements were awarded at 'Expected Standard' and above. 23% were rated 'Strong Standard'. As a diocese, 'Personal Development and Well Being' was our strongest area with 100% schools meeting 'Expected' or 'Strong Standard'. 'Leadership and Governance' and 'EYFS' were the next strongest areas with only one school missing the 'Expected Standard' in each category. Four 'Needs Attention' grades were given to schools for 'Achievement' and 'Curriculum and Teaching'.

There were 38 SIAMS inspections across the year, only one of these was judged and not living up to its Christian foundation and there is support in place to help this school to improve.

Land and Buildings

For Voluntary Aided schools, the diocese receives funding directly from the Department for Education specifically for the maintenance of school buildings. This is the School Condition Allocation (SCA). For the 2025-26 financial year, the diocese administered £2.014 million of SCA funding for 44 VA schools. Projects were undertaken at 30 VA schools including electrical works, drainage works, boiler replacement, roofing works, security and fencing improvements, fire door upgrades, LED lighting upgrades, asbestos removal works and WC refurbishment.

In addition to this, our work on the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme projects has continued with the three initial projects to decarbonise heating systems coming to an end, and 2 new projects started during the summer. Looking to the future, our work around decarbonising schools is significantly limited given that there is no replacement for the PSDS funding. We will continue to work collaboratively with local authority and Multi Academy Trust colleagues, as well as schools and external organisations to help schools work towards net zero targets from both the Church of England and the Department for Education.

Alongside the SCA work, our Land and Buildings Officer has assisted numerous schools to navigate the complexities of sites held on trust and therefore gain the required permissions as stipulated in the DBE Measure Section 8[2] for the provision of nursery spaces, wraparound care provision and special support units in a number of our schools.

We unfortunately did see the closure of Twineham CE Primary School this year due to low pupil numbers, budgetary deficit and concerns around the standards of education. This means that we now have 3 closed schools where the site is yet to be disposed; with the responsibility for the security and insurance for 2 of these. These expenses are met through the UST's on the understanding that when the site is disposed, the costs will be recouped. Unfortunately, disposal is a long process, in some cases requiring the permission of the Secretary of State for Education. We must also meet the provisions under charity law to gain "best value" and then apply to the Department for Education to move the money into our UST's by way of a section 554 order[3]. This entire process can take 2-4 years, sometimes longer. With the potential for further school closures due to the demographic changs, this poses an increased financial risk.

School Governance

For the majority of this academic year, we have not had a School Governance and Admissions Officer. We have covered the training by utilising the skills of a very experienced governor, who was previously a National Governance lead before this role was abolished. Our Governance Administrator should be highly commended for continuing to support the appointment process for Foundation Governors.

[2] Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021
[3] Section 554 orders - GOV.UK

There are currently c.460 Foundation Governors (including ex-officio foundation governors) serving our schools. During the 2025-26 academic year the team have processed the appointment/ reappointment of 130 Foundation Governors.

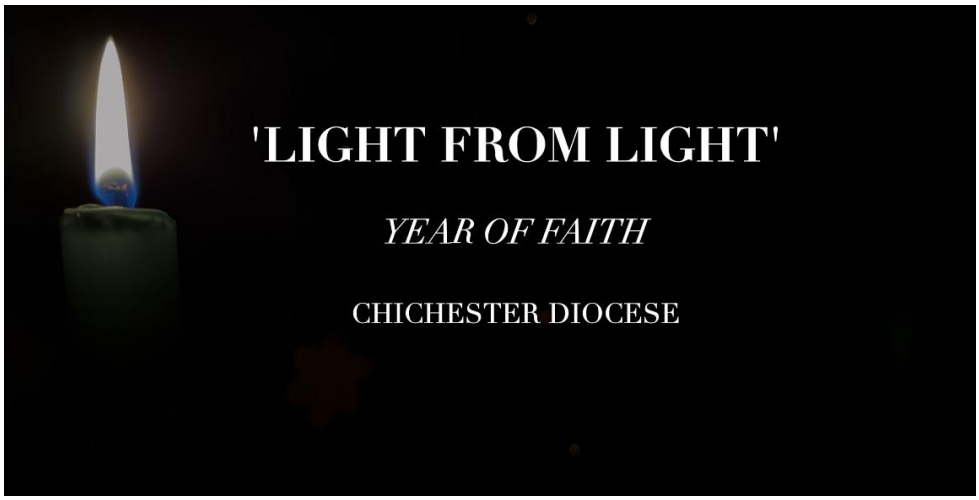
We work closely with colleagues in the Multi Academy Trusts to ensure that governance at a local level in our academies remains robust, and we ensure that at trust level there is appropriate church representation on both the board of trustees and the board of members.

We are conscious that it is difficult to recruit Foundation Governors and therefore we will be creating a new Foundation Governor Recruitment campaign through the 2026-27 academic year to try to support both schools and churches in filling this most vital of role.

Other projects of note

This year we worked to ensure that any additional projects we took on, over and above our normal work with schools, met the requirements of the core functions as prescribed in the DBE Measure.

We were delighted that we were able to complete our Year of Faith project with our secondary schools, exploring the Nicene Creed through music and producing a new worship song, "Light from Light". This can be viewed on YouTube and is now featured as a song on the Royal Society of Church Music resource "Hympact!". Press ctrl and click on the image below to view the song:



We have now had our first cohort complete the Faith in Action Award following our pilot year last year. 4 schools took part, 3 primary and 1 secondary with 45 children and young people receiving awards. The main celebration took part as part of evensong at the cathedral at the end of June, and one school was visited by Bishop Will as they were unable to attend the cathedral.



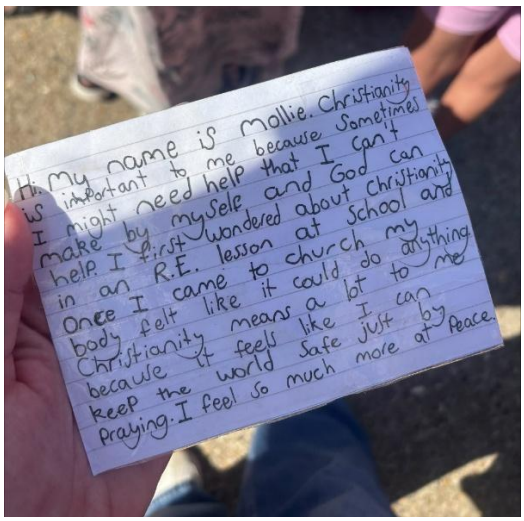
Working in collaboration with Dan Jenkins and Belinda Ramsay from the Parish Support Team, we have been able to start work towards our Growing Faith Learning Hub funded project. The aim of this is to develop a resource for an after-school club that will work with children and their families to explore faith together, with a secondary benefit of supporting parenting. This project is being completed with St Andrews Church of England Primary School in Furnace Green alongside St Andrew's Church.

Year 6 Leavers Services

It would be amiss of me if I failed to mention the scale and impact of our Year 6 leavers services. I can say with confidence that I am yet to speak to a Diocesan Director of Education in another diocese who does more services than us or directly engages with so many Year 6 pupils through their services as us. The numbers really do speak for themselves:

14 Services across 7 venues; 2 Bishops; 3 Members of clergy; 3545 Year 6 Children, 492 members of school staff and 1599 parents, carers and family and friends in attendance.

...and finally!



This year I would like to give the final word to Mollie from her baptism in August. I regularly find myself speaking with members of clergy who are frustrated that their engagement with the school doesn't necessarily equate to children and their families coming to church. My answer to this is very often that we are here to provide the space for the roots of faith to develop. We don't know the speed at which these may grow, it could be many years later, or it could ignite a spark that we see flourish immediately. However long it takes, we should continue to provide those roots.

Moving into the next academic year, synod members may may wish to consider:

- ***How to encourage more clergy to effectively work with Church of England schools in their parishes, encouraging more children and young people to faith.***
- ***How to encourage more lay members of congregations to support schools through governance roles or supporting initiatives such as the Faith in Action Awards.***

Lesley Hurst
Diocesan Director of Education
November 2026

Agenda Item: 08

CHICHESTER DIOCESE NET ZERO CARBON PROGRAMME
AN UPDATE FOR DIOCESAN SYNOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020 General Synod voted to reduce Church of England carbon emissions. The CofE national Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Programme started in 2023 to help meet that aim.

Reducing carbon emissions is grounded in caring for God's creation including drawing on the new House of Bishops June 2026 teaching document "Hope for All Creation". Climate change is a major threat to God's creation.

The Chichester Diocese NZC Programme is funded by a national Church of England grant. This pays for two part time Net Zero Carbon Officers – one for Parishes and one for Schools. In addition the part time volunteer Diocese Environment Officer has an important role. Staff in the Church Buildings and clergy property teams also play a part. The national CofE NZC Programme also provides focused grant assistance for project implementation.

The majority of Diocese greenhouse gas (carbon) emissions come from church buildings (38%), church schools (36%) and clergy housing (20%). The paper summarises work to reduce carbon emissions in these areas. As well as reducing carbon emissions many of the measures make our buildings warmer, more comfortable and brighter spaces to deliver our missional purpose.

We aim for all ***church buildings*** in the Diocese to have zero carbon emissions over time. We want buildings to reduce carbon emissions as quickly as possible, although in practice many will need to reduce emissions in stages. The NZC programme helps parishes to improve their knowledge and capability to implement improvements most suited to their own circumstances. We also help parishes to be better equipped to finance zero carbon improvements. The CofE national NZC Programme provides some grant support for church building improvements. 40% of parishes are now part of the Eco Church scheme. Around 35 parishes have installed low-carbon heating systems and other carbon reduction measures. Many other parishes have started their journey to low carbon buildings. For example 50 churches have completed independent energy audits to identify tailored practical improvements.

For ***schools*** we have supported them to plan and implement decarbonisation projects. Twenty seven schools were helped to produce their Climate Action Plans (CAP.) We helped five schools to secure a total of £1 million of funding from the Government Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) for significant decarbonisation projects, and then supported schools to implement the projects. The PSDS has now ceased and until a replacement scheme is announced we aim to identify other capital funding and sources of support.

For ***clergy housing*** we aim to meet the same energy efficiency standards as housing in the private sector. The current Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating for Diocese clergy housing is the same as the average for all housing in England. We have implemented a system that allows us to use EPC information in planned energy improvement works, as well as clergy housing Quinquennial or ingoing works. Routine maintenance and improvements often include NZC-related work such as improving insulation, double glazing and draft proofing. We plan focused work on cavity wall insulation. A clergy house demonstration project at Seaford, funded by the National Church of England NZC Programme, improved insulation, installed air source heating and installed PV solar.

Synod is asked to note the aims of the Chichester Diocese NZC Programme, the assistance available and the progress to date.

1.0 CONTEXT

In 2020 General Synod voted to reduce Church of England carbon emissions. Recognising the urgency of tackling climate change it set an ambitious aim of net zero carbon emissions by 2030, which was upgraded from the originally proposed timing of 2045. This reflected the scale and urgency of the issue and was a Christian response to the environmental crises faced by God's creation.

Projections indicate that the Church of England will not achieve net zero carbon by 2030. But the general intention and 2030 target has helped galvanise action across the Church. The journey towards net zero carbon will continue beyond 2030 - it is a marathon and not a sprint. Though the path is longer than first hoped, the ambition has driven substantial change and progress that would not have happened otherwise.

The changes we make are also a sign of our witness to caring for God's creation. They are practical demonstrations of hopeful change to local communities, as well as providing witness to global justice and compassion in addressing climate change.

"Hope for All Creation" is the June 2026 CofE teaching document from the House of Bishops on the theological response to the environmental crisis. The document emphasises climate change as a major threat to God's creation. "Hope for All Creation" says that we are called to make creation care integral to everything we say and do. Parishes, local churches, our CofE schools and our other buildings offer opportunities to reduce our environmental impact and take the practical action inspired by "Hope for All Creation". Reducing greenhouse gas (or carbon) emissions from our buildings is one of the most important steps we can take.

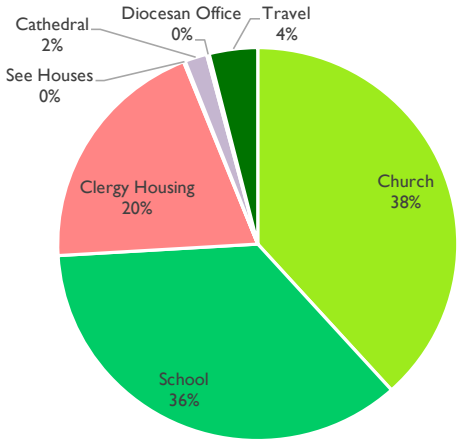
The CofE national Net Zero Carbon Programme started in 2023 to help meet the aim of reducing carbon emissions. The national Programme provides resources to reduce carbon emissions across the Church of England. It boosts the capacity of dioceses to help parishes and schools to implement actions that reduce carbon emissions, as well as action on clergy housing. The Programme also provides focused grant assistance. The national Net Zero Carbon Programme has been extended to at least the end of 2034. The focus is not only on a single end date, but on the long-term transformation needed to care for God's creation.

2.0 THE NET ZERO CARBON PROGRAMME IN CHICHESTER DIOCESE

We know where church carbon emissions come from across the Diocese, and this helps frame our actions. Greenhouse gas (carbon emissions) are produced by the fossil fuel energy (gas and oil) we use in church buildings, schools and clergy housing. We are significant nationally - Chichester Diocese has the 10th largest emissions of the 44 dioceses.

Chichester Diocese Carbon Emissions

Total10,283 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, CO2e.



The Chichester Diocese NZC Programme is funded by a national Church of England grant. This grant pays for the time of a Net Zero Carbon Officer for Parishes (0.6 full time equivalent), and a Net Zero Carbon Officer for Schools (0.6 full time equivalent). In addition the part time volunteer Diocese Environment Officer has an essential role. Other DBF staff also promote reducing carbon emissions where appropriate to their roles. This is focused on people in the Church Buildings and Education Teams. The DBF property team aims for improvements to clergy housing to reduce associated carbon emissions.

The Decarbonising Churches Grant Fund (DCGF) of the national NZC Programme provides grants for improvement to church buildings. But the Fund is limited, and the Diocese can expect investment support for just a few parishes a year.

Carbon reduction improvements to schools comes from existing school budgets and other resources, and some Government grants have been available. There is some limited national NZC Programme funding to help improve clergy housing.

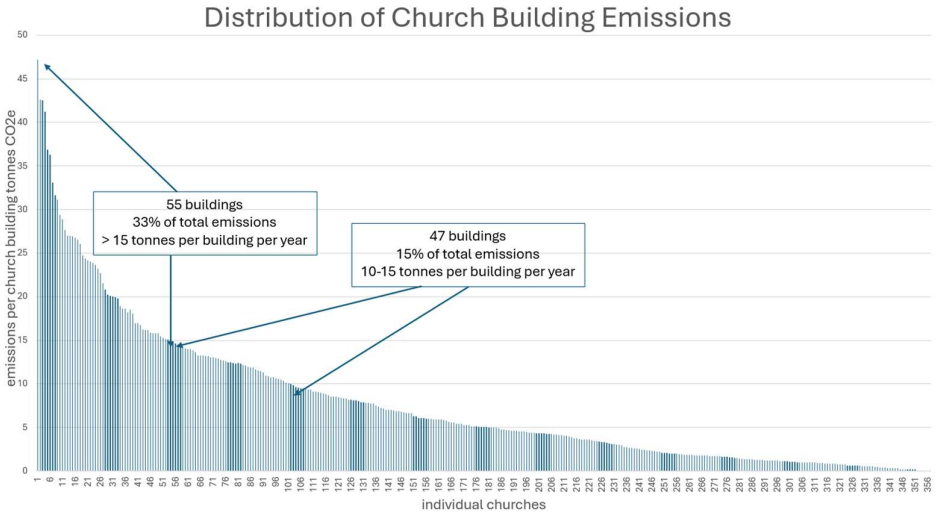
3.0 PROGRESS ON CHURCH BUILDINGS

Our objective is for all Chichester Diocese church buildings to have zero carbon emissions over time.

The resulting modernised buildings will also make for:

• warmer, more welcoming spaces for worship and community use
• buildings that can be used flexibly and frequently, strengthening the connections between churches and their communities
• sometimes, lower energy bills that can release church funds for other mission and ministry

The larger churches and those with high use contribute a large share of the carbon emissions. A long tail of less used and smaller church buildings individually contribute a smaller share. This is illustrated below.



We aim for parishes that produce most emissions to make significant progress. But every church building can make a difference and we value the contribution that all parishes can make – even those with lower carbon emissions.

In each building the energy used in space heating produces by far the most carbon emissions. Typically 80% to 90% of carbon emissions come from gas or oil based heating, with the rest from water heating, lighting and appliances.

Changing from gas and oil boilers to electric heating in church buildings will reduce the most carbon emissions. For example, using electric radiant heaters, air source heat pumps or pew heaters instead of a boiler system. Switching to a green electricity tariff will also reduce electricity related emissions. Adding solar PV, under the right conditions, will also help.

The Diocese is making significant progress. So far about 35 parishes across the Diocese have installed low carbon heating and other measures. Many other parishes have started their journey to low carbon buildings. For example, 50 parishes have had independent energy audits to plan the action needed to become zero carbon. Two examples of churches that have installed low carbon measures are in the Annex.

Not all parishes will be able to become zero carbon in one step. While we want all of our buildings to reduce their carbon emissions as quickly as possible, many will need to reduce carbon emissions in stages.

Low cost measures are useful first steps to reduce carbon emissions. This includes better control of heating to keep people warm only when needed, and changing to LED lighting. Usually significant investment is needed to make big reductions in carbon emissions. Investment costs should be weighed against the benefits, both financial and non-financial.

Financial benefits are reduced energy bills and other running costs. Non-financial benefits often include warmer spaces for services and other events, and buildings that can be used more flexibly and frequently. And the contribution to caring for God's creation is less tangible but perhaps the most important benefit.

The Net Zero Carbon programme equips parishes to take realistic action in their own context.

The Programme has two main sets of activity to help parishes overcome the main reasons why it is difficult to make the changes that reduce carbon emissions.

a) We help parishes to improve their knowledge and capability to implement improvements most suited to their own circumstances.

Our activities focus on a combination of general awareness and making information available on specific types of practical action. Each parish needs to identify their own specific actions in their particular building and worship setting. Parishes have varying levels of expertise on which to draw, and may need to commission expertise to develop and implement their plans. We provide information to guide parishes through that process and signpost to sources of required expertise.

Activities are:

Activity	***Summary Progress***
Parishes participate in the Eco Church scheme. This provides a framework and action plan to care for creation.	40% of Chichester Diocese parishes have now registered for the UK Eco Church scheme. There are 60 Bronze, 20 Silver and 4 Gold Award churches.
Provide "Carbon Literacy" training - a national project to raise awareness of carbon impact and motivate reduced emissions.	Representatives of parishes across the Diocese have participated in the Carbon Literacy course for Christian congregations.
Provide toolkits for parishes to identify the options that best suits their needs, including planning for when the gas or oil boiler fails or is coming to the end of its life	We promote national NZC Programme guidance and information useful to parishes and their particular circumstances. Initial guidance includes - What is a Net zero carbon church | The Church of England - Practical Guide to making church buildings Net Zero - final-pptzc-guide_1.pdf We promote guidance and information on specific options for low carbon electric heating. This includes: -the principles and approaches to church heating -heating options appraisal -radiant heating -air and ground source heat pumps -solar PV -temporary heating (See the following links: More information about net zero carbon technology | The Church of England; Heating | The Church of England)
Assist the use of independent Energy Audits for churches to identify the most suitable modern heating that also reduces carbon emissions.	50 parishes so far had energy audits in their church buildings by independent experts. Parishes then decide how they want to implement identified actions.
Produce Diocese specific case studies from which other parishes can learn.	So far 9 Diocese specific and practical case studies have been produced on: Electric radiant heating (chandeliers and other types) Air source heat pumps Pew heating Solar PV Heating controls In addition St Peter and St Paul, Wadhurst is a national NZC Programme demonstrator church – it installed air source heat pumps as part of extensive reordering.
Promote the use of green electricity tariffs for electricity use to be zero carbon emissions.	The CofE "Great Switch for Creation" campaign helps parishes to make the switch to a green electricity supplier and select from one of eight suppliers judged to provide a valid green tariff.
Provide specific advice to individual parishes.	The Diocese NZC Officer for Parishes provides proactive and on demand advice to parishes (about 28 parishes so far in 2026).

b) We help parishes to be better equipped to finance zero carbon improvements.

We provide guidance and information that helps parishes to assess the costs and benefits (both financial and non-financial) of NZC improvements. Parishes can use this when making decisions on how best to use available resources. We also signpost parishes to sources of grant funding and other external finance and provide guidance on how to access such funding.

The Decarbonising Churches Grant Fund (DCGF) of the national NZC Programme can provide grants to parishes to identify and implement improvements. For church buildings with higher carbon emissions (greater than 10 tonnes of carbon emissions per year) it can provide grants for energy audits, project development and capital investment. Any church, including those with lower emissions, can apply for a grant if their gas or oil fired boiler has failed. The CofE can also provide small scale grants from the "Give to Go Green" match funding scheme.

Although funds are provided directly by the national NZC Programme the Diocese supports parishes to apply for funding. Applications must be approved by the Diocese to be successful. However, the Fund is limited and the Diocese can expect support for just a few parishes a year.

The Diocese Net Zero Quick Wins Fund also provides grants of a few thousand pounds for parishes to make improvements to church buildings. Finance is provided by the national NZC Programme, but is administered by and channelled through the Diocese. These grants often kick start larger scale improvements.

Activities are:

Activity	***Summary Progress***
Promote the use of financial information resulting from independent Energy Audits	The 50 audits to date identified practical, costed options to reduce building carbon emissions. This includes the running cost benefits, and helps parishes to consider the financial case for changes.
Promote guidance that helps parishes to understand the costs and benefits of low carbon investments, e.g. types of electrical heating systems	Some of our Chichester Diocese case studies include information on the costs of electrical heating types. CofE guidance on heating include information on the costs and benefits, e.g. that on "Options Appraisal" - heating_options_appraisals.pdf
Provide Diocese NZC Quick Win grants to parishes.	Between 2024 and 2026, 30 parishes were supported by the fund. Examples of the type of support have been LED lighting, electrical upgrades, radiant heating and pew heating.
Support selected parishes to access the national NZC Programme Decentralising Churches Grant Fund (DCGF).	We support Chichester Diocese parishes to obtain a fair share of the DCGF, for example to cover some of the installation costs of new heating. However, funds are limited and each diocese can only expect to receive support for a few parishes per year.
Identify complementary sources of funding for NZC investments, such as grant and other finance, and promote them to parishes.	We promote CofE guidance and information on fundraising especially for capital projects. A new regional NZC Fundraising Officer, funded by the national NZC Programme, is being recruited to cover Chichester, Rochester, Canterbury, Guildford and Portsmouth dioceses. That person will work with parishes and the Diocese to identify and help apply for sources of funds.

Good communications underpin these two sets of activity. Communication tools include incorporating messages into general Chichester Diocese communications such as the Faith in Sussex publication and parish newsletters. We have specific environmental communication tools to promote, for example, the guidance, information and cases studies identified above.

- *The Parish Environmental Support Network* connects representatives of parishes that are taking broad action to care for God's creation. It is a forum for sharing guidance and information for example on implementing the Eco Church framework. Its tools include FaceBook pages, a monthly newsletter and an annual Diocese conference.

- *The Parish Net Zero Network* of parish representatives is a group for those wanting specific guidance and information on how to reduce carbon emissions from church buildings

- *Net Zero Carbon webinars* are held jointly by Chichester, Guildford and Portsmouth diocese with speakers on aspects of reducing carbon emissions from buildings. These webinars, for example, have been on the topics of: taking action on energy audits; radiant heating; heat pumps; switching to a green electricity provider; and fundraising.

- *The annual Net Zero Carbon joint conference* between Chichester, Guildford and Portsmouth brings together parish representatives aiming to make progress on their decarbonisation journey. It features inspirational guest speakers and bishops from the three dioceses, as well as a series of workshops and panel discussions on practical ways to reduce carbon emissions. The third such conference will be hosted by Chichester Diocese in January 2027.

- *The environment and net zero carbon web pages* of the Chichester Diocese website provides information and guidance for parishes.

4.0 PROGRESS ON CHURCH SCHOOLS

There are seventy two Church of England schools in the Diocese that are within the remit of the NZC Programme (voluntary aided and church majority - Multi Academy Trusts). We also encourage and support action across an additional eighty Church of England voluntary controlled schools.

We support schools with their production of climate action plans (CAP). In partnership with the Ashden Let's Go Zero initiative for schools we encourage schools to:

- Make a declaration and nominate a sustainability lead
- Assess their current approach and consumption of resources
- Create a climate action plan (CAP)

Twenty seven schools now have a CAP in place. Schools are provided with help and assistance through a series of seminars, workshops and one-to-one guidance.

We have helped our schools to secure funding for, and are supporting the implementation of significant decarbonisation projects

This has involved funding from the Government Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to finance significant decarbonisation projects in our schools. This was to help decarbonise school heating systems. Demand for available PSDS funding massively outstripped supply.

The Diocese played a key role in accessing the PSDS funding and supporting the management of the projects in five schools. The application process was onerous, and most schools were not able to undertake the necessary work, so the Diocese played a key role in accessing the funding and supporting the management of the projects. These schools secured total grant funding of £1 million, with match funding of £648k of School Condition Allocation (SCA) £884,000.

- Ashurst Primary School
- Bury Primary School
- St Mary's Pulborough Primary School

- Arundel Primary School
- St Mary's Clymping Primary School

In addition St Peter's School in Cowfold was able to secure PSDS funds directly which enabled it to replace its old oil boilers with a state-of-the-art ground source heat pump. The grant was also used to insulate the school building so that the heat pump would be more effective.

The PSDS has now ceased and plans for a replacement scheme have not been announced. We aim to identify new capital funding sources post-PSDS and other areas of support (volunteers/advisors/etc), plus options for external finance. In the absence of such funding our focus will also shift to low capital energy efficiency measures and behaviour change programmes.

4.0 PROGRESS ON CLERGY HOUSING

For parsonages we aim to meet the same standards as housing in the private sector with regards to energy efficiency.

We also aim to support clergy in their homes by continuing to look at ways we might improve energy efficiency.

We now have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for all diocesan houses. An EPC rates a property's energy efficiency from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient). The current EPC average for Chichester Diocese housing is EPC D – which is the same as the average for all housing in England, so our estate is currently broadly in line with the national average.

At the current time the minimum standard is an EPC E, with it being illegal to let a house below E. The government aims to move the minimum EPC rating to C, by October 2030.

We have implemented a system that allows us to interrogate the EPC information and plan energy improvement works. We also use this system when doing clergy housing Quinquennial or ingoing works to identify quick wins to implement.

Routine maintenance and improvements often include NZC-related work
As a matter of routine, the Property Team undertake repairs and upgrades to properties, particularly during clergy vacancies. This includes:
- Ensuring all loft insulation is 400mm thick;
- Insultation to unlagged pipes;
- Installing Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TVRs);
- Fitting double glazing where not already fitted / upgrade older style double glazing where frames are deteriorating;
- Ensuring good draft proofing (mindful of the need to maintain adequate ventilation);

A clergy house demonstration project at Seaford has been completed. With funding from the National Church of England NZC Programme, the Diocesan Property Team has completed a pilot 'decarbonisation' project in the vicarage at Seaford. The work involved replacing the former gas boiler with 2 air-source heat pumps, fitting 'air driven' radiators (which help circulate heat around rooms more efficiently), installing solar panels, checks to the airtightness of doors and windows, cavity wall insultation and fitting 'heat recovery extractor fans' in bathrooms.

The DBF has committed £100k towards cavity wall insulation installations/upgrades. We have decided to start with the deaneries with the highest level of deprivation, and surveys have been ongoing to identify suitable properties. We are currently putting these works out to tender.

We have secured funding from the central churches Net Zero Carbon 26-28 Housing Grant – this amounts to £84,000 and are in the process of looking at how we can utilise these funds.

ANNEX
EXAMPLES OF CHURCH BUILDING LOW CARBON MEASURES

St Matthew's Worthing: A Journey to Net Zero

For St Matthew's Church in Worthing, the journey to Net Zero is about far more than reducing carbon emissions. It is about embedding care for God's creation into the life, mission, and ministry of the church.

St Matthew's has adopted a deliberate, step-by-step approach. The journey began with an independent energy audit, which provided a clear roadmap for future improvements.

It then introduced energy-efficient LED lighting, and upgraded heating controls. In 2023 it installed an 8kW solar panel system, generating electricity for both the church and the adjacent church hall. On sunny days, the system enables St Matthew's to be self-sufficient in electricity, with surplus power exported back to the grid. It next replaced a gas boiler in the office and meeting room with an air source heat pump. In January 2025, the church hall benefited from new ceiling insulation and improved LED lighting. The next phase will see the replacement of old gas heaters in the church hall with an air source heat pump and three heating and cooling units. old gas heaters in the church hall with an air source heat pump and three heating and cooling units.



Solar powered electricity at St Matthews Church Worthing

St Wilfrid's Bognor Regis: Heating People, Not Buildings

St Wilfrid's Church, Bognor Regis, has been taking practical steps to reduce its carbon footprint. This included installing LED lighting, fitting thermostatic radiator valves in its hall and office, and carrying out ongoing repairs to window frames and mullions to improve the building's efficiency.

In May 2025, the church replaced its ageing gas-fired hot air heating system with eight electric infrared "Halo" chandelier heaters coupled with six wall mounted radiant heaters. The old system was ineffective, costly to run, noisy, and difficult to maintain, and often failed to keep the congregation warm. In winter people were wearing coats to keep warm during a service.

The Halo chandeliers 'heat the people' rather taking a traditional 'heating the space' approach, made more difficult at St Wilfrid's because of the high ceiling (45 ft height) and poor insulation. The heaters can be switched on just 20 minutes before a service or event and turned off immediately afterwards, helping to reduce energy use.

The response from the congregation and other users has been mostly positive. People report being more comfortable than with the previous system, and many have commented favourably on the appearance of the new heaters.



Halo heaters in the nave at St Wilfrid's

Report from the Bishop's Council to Diocesan Synod – November 2026

The Bishop's Council met in July and October 2026, Bishop Will chaired both as Acting Bishop of Chichester, both meetings began with prayer.

The July meeting received the annual report from the Education Team, this impressive document and presentation welcomed the continued strength of engagement with church schools and their support for governors, chaplaincy ministries and the new diocesan vision 'Rooted to Grow', a framework for supporting children and young people in exploring faith and spiritual development within schools

Members considered a range of financial and governance matters, including a draft Trustees Code of Conduct designed to support positive and respectful working relationships between trustees. Council were given a comprehensive explanation of the Total Return approach to the Capital Stipends Fund and recognised it's potential to support long-term financial sustainability and stewardship of diocesan assets while protecting a realistic income. They considered the strategic challenges facing the Diocese, including clergy costs, parish share, housing provision and long-term financial sustainability. Council acknowledged the pressures facing parishes and the Diocese they emphasised the importance of careful stewardship, clear communication and maintaining a positive focus on mission and growth.

The draft 2027 budget was approved for recommendation to the Diocesan Synod. The Council also reviewed matters relating to the management of the Pastoral Fund, National Church grant agreements and associated funding conditions and received assurances that appropriate governance, monitoring and compliance arrangements remain in place. Council were delighted by positive progress in National Church-funded projects supporting children, youth and family's ministry, focal ministry and parish development.

The Vacancy in See Committee were thanked for their work as was the Church House team who worked exceptionally hard to support them, Council received an update and the names on those elected to the Crown Nominations Commission.

Safeguarding continues to be a priority and council welcomed the progress towards a fully staffed safeguarding team while noting continued implementation of recommendations arising from the INEQE review. The Council appointed two Lead Safeguarding Trustees to strengthen oversight in all safeguarding matters and to comply with national recommendations, they approved a role description for these roles. Council considered wider safeguarding matters, including guidance relating to DBS checks for PCC members.

Council Members took the opportunity to thank Canon Mark Gilbert, Chair of the House of Clergy, for his faithful service to the Bishop's Council, the Synod and the Diocese and wished him a happy retirement.

Bishop Will thanked Members of the Council for their continued service and commitment to the life and work of the Diocese.

Sara Stonor - October 2026

General Synod Report to Diocesan Synod – November 2026

During a hot few days in York we debated a variety of topics and looked at various pieces of legislation. Here is a glimpse of what was decided by the General Synod.

The Archbishop of York opened with a presidential address saying that our focus must be on Jesus and His Church of missionary disciples aiming to become bolder, younger and simpler. A debate then followed on affirming neurodiversity in the life of the Church. During this debate we heard stories of people with some form of difficulty being accepted or not in their local churches. We were urged to carry out training and to appoint neurodiversity champions to work with Diocesan Disability advisors.

A debate was held on Same-sex relationships and compatibility with Christian Discipleship. It was an emotive debate and although there were many amendments to the original motion the final vote was lost in the House of Bishops.

A private members motion on support for looked after children and those in care was carried. We learned from members who themselves were looked after or cared for them. The motion was asking for a Bishop to be a lead Bishop with a brief recognizing the challenges facing children and young adults. 'Hope for all Creation' was a presentation showing climate change and its risks. Hope is grounded in God's promise and the challenges we face calls for a change of heart. Science and Government should be working together.

The motion, heavily amended by the Bishop of Norwich, on the Urgency of Climate and Biodiversity crises asked the Church commissioners to consider responsible investment efforts to contribute to the UK Government's implementation of the goals of the GBF. Another presentation on the 'Routemap to NetZero' showed the considerable efforts that have been made in the past 10 years. It was acknowledged that 2030 is an aspiration to meet the deadline but a notable effort has been made.

A Diocesan Synod motion was debated on the situation in Palestine. It called us to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian Christians in non-violent resistance to the ongoing occupation. It rejected antisemitism and anti-Muslim hostility and all forms of prejudice based on religious affiliation and ethnicity. There are various documents on this subject but some are divisive, particularly the Kairos Palestine Declaration 2009, and call into question whether we can give an unbiased opinion of the situation in Palestine and Gaza. In an amendment we were encouraged to 'hear' rather than to 'receive' some of these documents.

A debate was held on the use of digital communications in the Church and how it can be targeted more effectively in relation to its different audiences. A presentation was given on the Challenges of Trustworthiness in the CofE. Many interviews have been undertaken around the country. These highlighted cries of pain leading to hope for the

future. Praying the psalms daily and returning to the wisdom of the cross. Trust needs to be earned daily; no-one was happy with the status quo. There was much in this report for the Church to work on and deliver.

Liturgical business saw the passing of the liturgical texts for the Festival of Creation in Christ (first Sunday in September) and the Commemoration of the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya (15th February).

Inevitably there were various pieces of legislation to be dealt with. The Governance measure was found to be 'not fit for purpose' by the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament. Safeguarding had not been adequately addressed. It will therefore be reconsidered. The 'Vacancy in See Committees Amendment Regulation' was amended and proclaimed an Act of Synod. One useful amendment was that although General Synod has been dissolved those who have started the work in Vacancy in See may continue.

This is my final report to you as I will be stepping down from General Synod. It has been a privilege to serve the Church for the past 36 years in this way. Thank you for your support.

Mary Nagel, July 2026

Vacancy in See Process

Report to Diocesan Synod – for information

1. Synod's contribution

The Vacancy in See Committee expressed its thanks to members of Diocesan Synod for their feedback on the diocesan consultation at the last Synod. The Committee found these contributions useful in refining the Statement of Needs and is grateful for the care and thought with which members engaged with this important part of the process.

2. Statement of Needs

The Statement of Needs has now been completed and published. It has also been sent to the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments and the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary to inform the next stages of the appointment process. The Statement describes the diocese, its mission and ministry, the challenges and opportunities it faces, and the hopes for the ministry of the next Bishop of Chichester.

3. Appointments Secretaries' consultation

The Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments and the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary have now completed their separate consultation, carried out during September. This provided an opportunity to hear a range of perspectives from within the Church and the wider community on the diocese's needs and the ministry of the next bishop. The programme included online conversations, a public meeting on 17 September and a visit to the diocese on 22 September. Their consultation will inform the CNC's deliberations alongside the Statement of Needs.

4. Crown Nominations Commission

The following six members of the Vacancy in See Committee have been elected to serve as the diocesan representatives on the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC):

- **The Revd Canon Lisa Barnett** – Team Rector of Horsham.
- **The Revd Anita Colpus** – Rector of Trinity Lewes.
- **Bob Chambers** – St Margaret's, Angmering.
- **Michelle Lashley** – Early Years Minister at Hailsham Parish Church.
- **The Ven Martin Lloyd-Williams** – Archdeacon of Brighton and Lewes.
- **Bradley Smith** – Churchwarden at Aldingbourne, Barnham and Eastergate.

5. CNC meeting dates

The CNC is scheduled to meet on 11 March 2027 for shortlisting and on 20–21 April 2027 for interviews and discernment of a nomination for the next Bishop of Chichester.

Synod is invited to note this update. As the Diocesan stage of the Vacancy in See process has now concluded, this report is provided for information only.