



Minutes — Diocesan Synod

Meeting Date	15 th March 2025
Times	1000 – 1300
Venue	St Paul's, Fisherton Street, Salisbury. SP2 7QW

Item	Description	Action Outcome / Initial
1	Welcome, Apologies and notices +Stephen welcomed all to the meeting and synod welcomed Elise Beaumont as a new lay member (Bishop's nominee). Opening prayers were led by Taizé Haine. Apologies were received from 18 clergy and 22 lay members, so the meeting was quorate. Minutes from the previous meeting (12 th October 2024) – an amendment was made to include a supplementary question and response raised by Oliver Iliffe regarding the level of <i>direct</i> financial support from the Church Commissioners to parishes in the diocese in recent years (zero). Minutes approved with this amendment.	Approved
2	Presidential Address +Stephen shared his presidential address; reflecting on Matthew 5.43: around the uncertainty of life: asking if the church is ready to respond. <i>You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you</i>	Received

	<p><i>doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'</i></p> <p>Read the whole address here.</p>	
3	Safeguarding Annual Report	
	<p>Suzy Fitcher (SF) joined Diocesan Synod (DS) to share the annual report:</p> <p>A new Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel is currently being sought.</p> <p>We continue to be in challenging times with an ever-changing landscape. Amid this, the safeguarding (SG) team continues to work with purpose, responsibility and strengthening systems. Practice within the diocese is good and the real strength is our people at parish level, as illustrated in the external audit and that resilience is something we can be proud of.</p> <p>SF spoke around the SG dashboard and shared the news that a new system is being rolled out next year.</p> <p>She also spoke about who is responsible for SG – which is everyone but particularly PCC trustees and incumbent and the DBF trustees.</p> <p>This work is emotionally demanding on all involved as well as slow, but she still believes change is possible and is happening. Questions to SF included:</p> <p>Use of case management system, 'MyConcern' system is used to manage case information.</p> <p>Accountability – SF wanted to assure all that this is in place but are also working hard to improve.</p> <p>Recognising the need for professional support to staff, member asked how can we help and offer support – SG is a multi-agency team including supervision and wellbeing support.</p> <p>Confidentiality and lack of knowledge – quite often decisions on who needs to know what are made by judgement – responsibility/accountability/governance are all vital and always learning. SF took note.</p> <p>PCC within multi-parish benefice, how to make work – all can be adapted locally, speak with the SG team who will be happy to help and advice.</p> <p>Dashboard maintenance – should be maintained by PSO and incumbent BUT there is no limit to number that can be added to aid with this, however, need to ensure it is maintained procedurally – again speak to the SG team to help/advise.</p> <p>+Stephen thanked SF and her team for all their efforts over this hard 18-month period.</p>	Received

4	General Synod Report	
	<p>Synod received a verbal report on the General Synod (GS) – the focus of which was:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening to the voices that are often not heard • safeguarding message was a powerful reminder of those who have been hurt • the need for racial justice at ALL levels • working class disadvantaged in the vocational journey to become clergy • the overwhelming need to become younger and more diverse – 200 18-25yr olds will be sought to join GS • considerable distress that women are still not being heard in the church • new CDM measure was debated and unanimously supported • stigma surrounding poorer churches being seen as a failure – this needs to stop; an amendment was brought forward cure of souls in ALL areas must come first • felt there was a lot of bad behaviour and language used which caused distress over certain topics 	Received
5	Church Buildings for mission	
	<p>+Andrew led this section stressing the need for strategic thinking re church buildings and heritage or we are at risk of losing these precious buildings.</p> <p>DS were asked to discuss further in groups; topics raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost of maintenance/heating which is becoming a burden on the lay members (who are largely 70+ years) • challenges around procedures • security and vandalism • faculty process and time taken • opportunity for renewing sense of community • need to 'make fit' for modern use to encourage communities (+Andrew made all aware of Toni Bush, Church Buildings Community Enabler) • Jersey has moved to secular planning- much worse • +Andrew also informed DS of the Preservation Trust <p>+Andrew also supplied updates on the following as points of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Buildings Working Group meets monthly and reports into Bishop's Council • Grants Scheme – possible to claim back VAT on church repairs. This has been extended for 1-year and is 	

	<p>capped at £20k. There has been lobbying around this for a further extension and to raise the amount.</p> <p>+Andrew encouraged all to write in to promote and help this to happen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Project office for the heritage trust role is being considered (at a diocesan level) <p>Dan Crooke (DAC Secretary) and Jonathan Triffitt addressed the meeting to discuss and help de-mystify the faculty system. (See process slide here)</p> <p>The Church Buildings department/DAC will undergo an external review and the Terms of Reference have been shared (here) for transparency.</p>	
6	Board of Education Annual Report	
	<p>Katie Fitzsimmons (Director of Education) gave her annual report to DS outlining the challenges they are meeting especially around Growing Faith. Read Katie's full report here. She ended with a prayer for all schools including support for governance and encouraging others as governance is a form of service.</p> <p>Finally, Katie extended her thanks to AD Antony for all he has done as Chair of the DBE; Ad Penny will become DBE Chair.</p>	Noted
7	Palestine and Israel motion	
	<p>Dean Nick proposed a motion and outlined how this concern was at the heart of working for justice as we seek to Make Jesus Known. He outlined the long history behind the conflict since 1967 and 1948</p> <p>Following a discussion and a series of amendments through which a wide range of views were raised Dean Nick proposed to adjourn the debate and the Chair accepted this adjournment since it had been proposed by the mover of the motion.</p>	
8	Questions	
	<p>Questions were submitted prior to the meeting and answers were shared with all (and can be found here).</p> <p>Supplementary questions were received from:</p> <p>Gill Versoyle- re national funding and discussion of changes. Director of Finance confirmed that £1m was currently paid in apportionment to the national church; this is under review in the national Diocesan Finance Review process.</p> <p>Jo Haine asked about how low income communities were supported within the new share model. Director of Finance</p>	

	<p>confirmed that the Stipend Capital Fund is being used to give this support.</p> <p>Oliver Illife –</p> <p>Q1 – in relation to clergy numbers and the cost of ministry, insufficient number of priests and asked what steps being taken to fill vacancies. +Stephen pointed out there is a process that we must adhere to. AMW said that he did not recognise the figures being quoted in the verbal supplementary question and offered to speak with Oliver after the meeting to clarify confusion over figures.</p> <p>Q2 – Oliver reminded Synod that share payment are voluntary and that the bishop has a duty to provide ‘sufficient’ priests. He asked whether legal advice been sought on this matter? {following the Synod legal advice was taken and in light of this the policy was withdrawn; synod were informed of this out of meeting}</p>	
9	Any Other Business	
	<p>Deanery Synod rules:</p> <p>The Chair of the House of Laity moved that: “This Synod approves the updated Rules of Denary Synods” 1 abstention otherwise unanimously approved.</p> <p>Noting further raised.</p> <p>Meeting closed in prayer.</p>	Approved