



Questions and Answers

Synod venue

Mark Charmley- Guernsey

As “Climate Action” is one of the 5 areas of “Making Jesus Known” has any thought been put into the location of Diocesan Synod meetings from the perspective of the accessibility of travelling by public transport from all parts of the Diocese? (excepting the Channel Islands – as a Guernsey Representative I appreciate it will always be a challenge and our transport logistics shouldn’t be factored in to what works for everyone else)

Response: David Pain

Thank you Mark for the question. Synod meeting venues and the timing of meetings have been set in response to the feedback from members at the end of the last triennium; this includes the use of an online meeting to remove winter travel time. We are mindful of the importance of public transport for our carbon footprints and also conscious of the limitations of the public transport system in these counties.

For the in person Synods we do seek to find venues that are accessible from across the diocese, recognising the distances entailed from the further corners. Our approach has therefore been to hold at least one of the synods in the city of Salisbury with its rail and bus access. We have moved out to Amesbury when the Salisbury venues are not available.

In holding a meeting here in Sherborne we have been responding to the desire to express the importance of church/school partnerships and a venue that has space for a day meeting as well as being closer for Dorset members.

In terms of taking action to reduce individual carbon footprints when car travel is essential Synod members are encouraged to car share and/or to ‘double purpose’ their journey- (ie make use of the journey for a second purpose en route).

Safeguarding

The Rev'd Gerry Lynch
Devizes Deanery

Why are there no leadership level Safeguarding courses taking place on evenings or weekends in coming months for LLMs and clergy who work full-time in secular employment?

Response: Suzy Fitcher, Head of Safeguarding

Grateful for you raising this Gerry. We have had a significant increase of people attending the Leadership Safeguarding Course this year compared to last year, so our evening courses were fully booked. We have

now added more evening sessions. In the past we have run courses over weekends but have found these have been poorly attended.

Safeguarding

Oliver Iliffe

Marlborough Deanery

I understand that all PCC members in the diocese will soon be asked to complete DBS checks. Is this a legal requirement (if so, please cite the source) or will this be at the initiative of the Diocesan Board of Finance?

Response: Suzy Fatcher, Head of Safeguarding

Government DBS guidance ([Working with children in the charity sector and overseas aid organisations - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-with-children-in-the-charity-sector-and-overseas-aid-organisations)) allows trustees of any charity working with children or adults at risk to be subject to an Enhanced DBS check. Within this Diocese we have sought legal advice and taken the decision that all churches are, by definition, aiming to work with children and vulnerable adults, so they are “children’s” and /or “vulnerable adult’s” charities, and all trustees (i.e. PCC members or equivalent trustees in Jersey and Guernsey Deaneries) require a DBS check.

Synod meetings

Cedric Pierce, DBF Vice Chair, Bradford Deanery

Our Diocesan Synod generally opens with a Presidential Address from the Bishop and this time last year we received an address from +Stephen focussing on the three themes of lamentation, waiting and resurrection. He commended to us Paul Bradbury’s then recent book “In the Fullness of Time”.

I wonder how Synod is supposed to respond to a Presidential Address, and to what extent it informs our subsequent decisions and actions? In my limited experience, Synod hears what the Bishop has to say and then moves on, and I wonder if this is how it is meant to be? A place of lamentation and waiting seems to be where many of the people in our Diocese are at present.

Response:

Sue de Candole re Synod role

Neither the current **Salisbury Diocesan Synod** Standing orders nor any previous versions held in the Registry going back to 1993 make any provision for the contents or status of a presidential address, which happens by custom and best practise. The Bishop is the president of diocesan synod ex officio. The president chairs meetings of diocesan synod and the standing committee sets the agenda for each meeting. When considering the order of business, the standing committee shall give special

consideration to items brought before the synod at the request or direction of the president (Order 23).

Synodical Government Measure 1969 sections 4 (3) and (4)

(3) It is the duty of the bishop to consult with the diocesan synod on matters of general concern and importance to the diocese

(4) Diocesan synod shall keep the deanery synods of the diocese informed of the policies and problems of the diocese and the business which is to come before the meetings of the diocesan synod

In order to carry out these functions, synod is a communication bridge between the bishop and the deaneries and the presidential address is the bishop's opportunity to conform with S4(3) and (4) of the Synodical Government Measure, and by communicating his policies and problems to the diocesan synod members, they are also enabled to consult with him on matters of general concern and importance with the diocese.

The presidential address is the most effective way of summarising some or all of these matters before particular issues are addressed in more detail further through the further items on the agenda. The president sets the tone of the synod and reflects current pressures/ concerns/ aspirations in a general way. The presidential address is not by custom expected to be a tick list of actions requiring progress reports and completion. The following detailed examinations of particular issues are more likely to inform subsequent decisions and actions. Previous synod meeting minutes are considered at the next meeting and reports given to update where possible.

Bishop Stephen

I am grateful to Cedric for this constructive question and for him asking me about it before placing the question. The word cathedral comes from the Latin word cathedra meaning the teaching seat of the bishop. To some extent, and in Anglican polity, the Presidential Address is a cathedra moment, the chance for the bishop to speak on record into the matters of the day and for the people to hear him or her. In addition, it is an opportunity for the bishop to speak (and the people to hear) from the perspective of the overview of the diocese, rather than from just one aspect or place.

Cedric was clearly listening when I spoke about Paul Bradbury's reflections and his parish turned that into a house group discussion. I may say more if there is a supplementary, but our times do feel like a time of lamentation and patient waiting as Paul described, but he did go onto to express his confidence in the resurrection. Most of this is down to our confidence in the Gospel, but it is also down to us seeing ourselves, confidently, as the Easter people.

Finance

Oliver Iliffe

Marlborough Deanery

In order to assist a better understanding of mandatory and discretionary expenditure, the impact of grant funding, comparisons between budgeted and actual figures and like-for-like comparisons over time, please would the Diocesan Board of Finance (“DBF”) annex to or otherwise accompany its budget and accounts presented to diocesan synod each year, an unaudited computation showing projected (in the case of the budget) and actual (in the case of the accounts) cash amounts for the following categories:

1. Under “Receipts”:

- (a) Parish Share (including all donations received from parochial church councils, “PCCs”)
- (b) Receipts from National Church Institutions, including the Church Commissioners and the Archbishops’ Council, identifying the institution and corresponding amount.
- (c) Other donations (identifying any single item over £100,000)
- (d) Income from residential property
- (e) Income from other property (including glebe)
- (f) Other investment income
- (g) Capital receipts from residential property
- (h) Capital receipts from other property (including glebe)
- (i) Statutory fees
- (j) Other receipts (identifying any single item over £50,000)

Separately identifying under 1(a) to (j) above, the total amount of receipts to which any enforceable restriction applies (e.g. under contract or trust law) other than the statutory charitable purposes of the DBF.

2. Under “Expenditure”:

- (a) Direct ministry costs, with separate categories for:
 - (i) Stipends of parish clergy
 - (ii) Pension contributions in respect of stipendiary parish clergy
 - (iii) Accommodation costs on housing occupied by stipendiary parish clergy¹
 - (iv) Other expenses or allowances paid directly to stipendiary parish clergy
- (b) Expenditure on mandatory functions (defined as those functions which are required by law to be discharged by the DBF) and other mandatory expenses, with separate categories for:
 - (i) Chancellor’s office, under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure

¹ Or on vacant accommodation which is intended to be re-occupied by curates or clergy within one year.

2018 (“EJCCM 2018”), s.1.

- (ii) Registrar (EJCCM 2018, s.30).
 - (iii) The Diocesan Board of Education (Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021, s.3 and Sch 1).
 - (iv) Administration of the Diocesan Advisory Committee(s), under EJCCM 2018, ss.37 and 60.
 - (v) Diocesan safeguarding officer and other safeguarding requirements under Regulations made under Canon C30.
 - (vi) Other specific functions or expenses (identifying any single item over £50,000)².
 - (vii) Overhead administration costs of the DBF, including management, finance, legal and technical support.
 - (viii) Expenses relating to investments which arise under a legal obligation.
- (c) Discretionary expenditure (defined as expenditure within the statutory charitable purposes of the DBF which is not applied in respect of another defined statutory function at paragraph 2(b) above), with separate categories for:
- (i) Services provided to bishops.
 - (ii) Services provided to incumbents, priests-in-charge, “house for duty” parish clergy and curates.
 - (iii) Services provided to other non-stipendiary ministers and other volunteers.
 - (iv) Services provided to PCCs.
 - (v) Training costs for those entering ministry or moving from one vocational role to another (including Sarum college).
 - (vi) Donations to National Church Institutions.
 - (vii) Donations to the Episcopal Churches of Sudan and South Sudan.
 - (viii) Communications (including Grapevine).
 - (ix) Expenses relating to investments which are discretionary.
 - (x) Other donations (identifying any single item over £50,000).
 - (xi) Other discretionary expenditure, including investments (identifying any single item over £50,000).

² Including, for example, administration of the Diocesan Parsonages Board (Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972, s.1), the Mission and Pastoral Committee (Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, ss.3 and 55), the Diocesan Board of Patronage (Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, s.26), diocesan trusts (Diocesan Boards of Finance Measure 1925, s.4).

Separately identifying:

- (A) under paragraph 2, the amount met by grants restricted by their terms to that particular category;
and
- (B) in respect of paragraph 2(c)(i) to (iv) above, where possible, a breakdown by cost of the services provided (especially where these are substantial) or, where insubstantial or impractical, a list of services provided in order of significance;

and, under paragraphs 2(b) and (c), to the extent that personnel time is split between different categories, the costs of the relevant personnel being apportioned between the relevant categories in estimated proportion to the time regularly expended on them.

Response

Jane McCormick

DBF Chair

Thank you, Oliver, for the question and for the dialogue David and I have had with you on this and earlier matters. We remain open to continuing discussions and actions which enable greater transparency and understanding of the finances of the diocese with you and all members of the synod.

As a money matter I am willing to take this forward for discussion with the Finance and Resources Committee and the Bishop's Council.

We are obliged to report our accounts based on the Charity SORP and FRS102 as well as seeking to follow formats used by the church nationally which enable comparisons to be made across the dioceses. We can present the budget in a range of ways, and as you will have seen in the papers for today and the preliminary meetings held in the run up to today Elizabeth and her team are in an ongoing process of refining these to help improve transparency.

The budget numbers only really make sense in their context. Therefore, it is important for Synod members to be invited into these conversations – it has been good to see the high number of synod members and others participating in the events being created by the DBF team.

We want to ensure all synod members have a better understanding of mandatory and discretionary expenditure, the impact of grant funding, comparisons between budgeted and actual figures and like-for-like comparisons over time. We will share back with you where this is relatively straightforward to achieve and then discuss further with you any matters that may unintentionally create what may be superfluous work. I want to avoid the need to disaggregate costs when these relate to staff, archdeacons or even clergy time that might be involved in the boards and committees you have mentioned in your question.

So, thank you for making the request and we will stay in conversation with you regarding the best presentation to achieve the principles you have highlighted, and I will bring an update to the February

Synod meeting and give Synod the opportunity to express its view on how this could enhance the 2027 budget process.