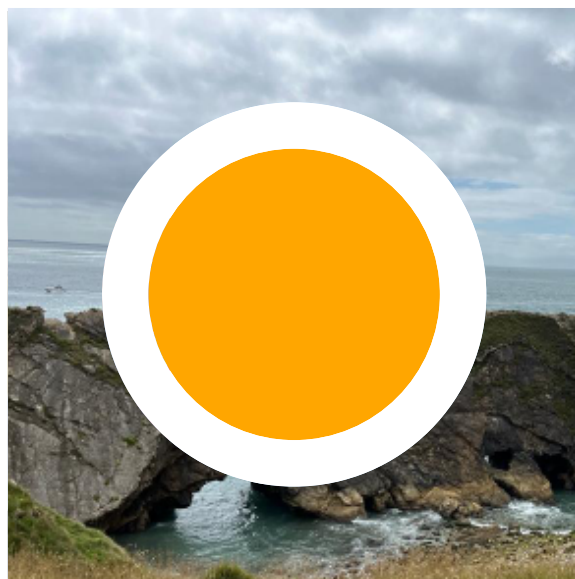


AN INTRODUCTION TO DIOCESAN SYNOD



September 2024

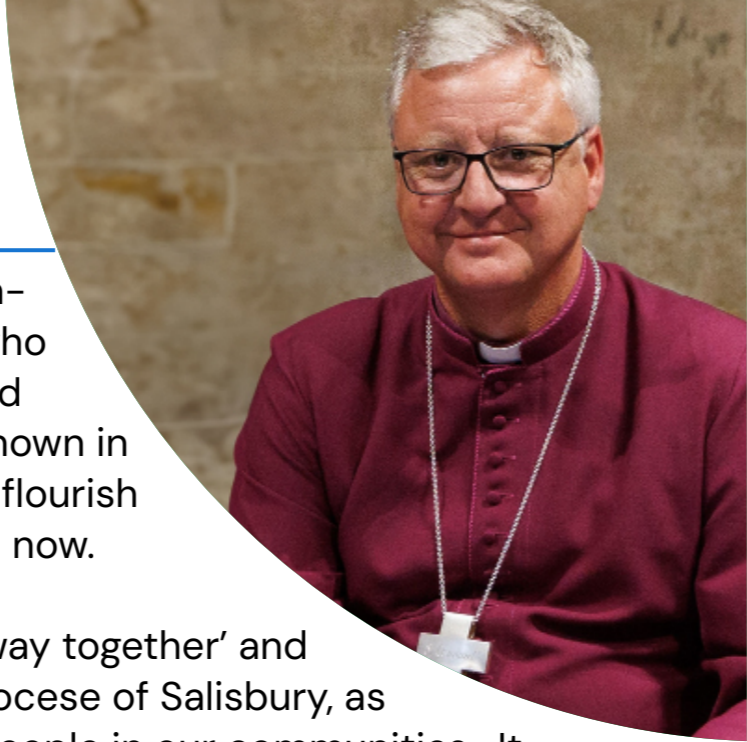
Welcome from Bishop Stephen

As Jesus Christ calls us to serve throughout our lives, I am grateful for all those who respond to His call, sharing their gifts and skills as we seek to Make Jesus Christ Known in the Diocese of Salisbury, so that all may flourish and grow, seeking his Kingdom, here and now.

Synod is a Greek term that means 'the way together' and this is what we are trying to do in the Diocese of Salisbury, as we seek to serve God and the 1 million people in our communities. It is where important decisions which affect the life of the church in the diocese are discussed and agreed and therefore, we actively seek to represent all the voices of the church – whatever your age, gender or lived experience. Our synod representatives come from every part of the diocese, which stretches from the North Wessex Downs to the Channel Islands. When we don't hear from everyone, we are diminished and less able to serve the whole people of the diocese.

Diocesan Synod is people coming together, seeking to make a difference as we care about the church's impact on the world and our communities. I hope that this leaflet provides you with helpful information about the synodical structure of the Church of England and the important role and responsibilities of Diocesan Synod and its members. I pray for your involvement with God's work in our communities.

+ Stephen Samman



Synods of the Church of England

There are three tiers of Synods of the Church of England:

General Synod:

General Synod consists of bishops, clergy and laity who meet three times a year to make decisions on the policies and practice of the Church of England and to make ecclesiastical law. As well as matters of worship and discipline, it also addresses wider concerns, both national and international. Elected members serve for five years.

Diocesan Synod:

The Diocesan Synod for the Diocese of Salisbury is mainly a consultative and advisory body, considers matters sent to it from General Synod and from deaneries. It formulates diocesan policy advice, debates important local and national issues and advises the Bishop as appropriate. Members also agree proposals for the DBF annual budget and receive the Annual Report and Accounts. Elected members serve for three years.

The Salisbury Diocesan Synod is held three times a year usually in February, June and October and has roughly 100 elected members.

Deanery Synod:

Each deanery has its own synod which reflects on issues of concern to the local church and community. Matters can be sent to Deanery Synods from Diocesan or General Synods. Resolutions passed by a Deanery Synod can be sent for discussion at higher levels. Elected members serve for three years and are the voters in elections for Diocesan and General Synods.



What does Diocesan Synod do?

Diocesan Synod considers matters referred from General and Deanery Synods, and from individual Diocesan Synod members. Diocesan Synod is made up of ordinary people who are committed to sharing the news of Christ's transforming love with our communities. It is where important decisions which affect the life of the church in the diocese are discussed and agreed. It was with the agreement of synod that our new vision, Making Jesus Known, with its emphasis on mission and evangelism, justice and climate action, was unanimously supported.

Members of the Diocesan Synod are also members of the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF), the legal charity and company that resources ministry and holds property, funds and assets and other resources to support the purposes of the Church of England in the diocese.

- They consider matters concerning the Church of England and make provision for these matters in relation to the diocese.
- They consider and express an opinion on matters of religious or public interest and on any matters referred to it by General Synod.
- They offer advice to the bishop on matters they may wish to consult on.
- They consider and express their opinion on any matters referred to them by the General Synod and, in particular, to approve or disapprove provisions referred to them by General Synod.
- As the DBF, they elect the Bishop's Council, Chair and Vice Chair of the DBF, consider the annual accounts, approve the annual budget and appoint the external auditors.

As a diocese we are committed to acting in accordance with Jesus' teaching – and that means showing courageous leadership, growing a church for everyone, working for justice, and caring for the climate. If you care about these and local community issues, joining Diocesan Synod is a good opportunity to make a difference!

Who's who?

President

Bishop of Salisbury, The Right Revd Stephen Lake



Chair of the House of Laity and Vice President

Richard Chitty



Chair of the House of Clergy and Vice President

The Revd Canon Andrew Perry



Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance

Jane McCormick



Diocesan Secretary

David Pain, The Diocesan Secretary



Diocesan Registrars

Sue de Candole and the Revd Gavin Foster

A mutual commitment

Our diocesan synod members are an essential and valued part of the Diocese of Salisbury. The diocesan vision to Make Jesus Known is dependent on their and other volunteers offering up skills and time in the service of Christ. Being part of Diocesan Synod should be an enjoyable and rewarding experience and the Diocese of Salisbury aims to be flexible and supportive of all those who volunteer their time on synodical bodies and other committees. The relationship is built on prayer, trust and mutual understanding. As with all those who volunteer their time, we seek a mutual commitment which we outline in the following terms:

We ask that you:

- Participate in this role with prayerful dedication and commitment.
- Take part in any suggested training and development to inform your role, including Safeguarding training.
- Have a strong commitment to the Christian faith and worship regularly.
- Be supportive of the charitable work of the Diocese of Salisbury and DBF.
- Act with respect, integrity, transparency, model positive examples of behaviour and recognise that people can be adversely affected by words and actions. We will not tolerate offensive, racist or abusive language or behaviour and appropriate action will be taken as required.
- Act responsibly and within the law at all times.
- Maintain confidentiality as appropriate.
- Work in partnership with other members and DBF staff in support of the charitable work of the diocese, as we seek to fulfil our vision and strategic plan to Make Jesus Known.
- Meet agreed time commitments and give reasonable notice when you are not available so that arrangements can be made.
- Inform Bishop of Salisbury and/or the Diocesan Secretary if you have any concerns, feedback or complaints.

A mutual commitment

In return, we will:

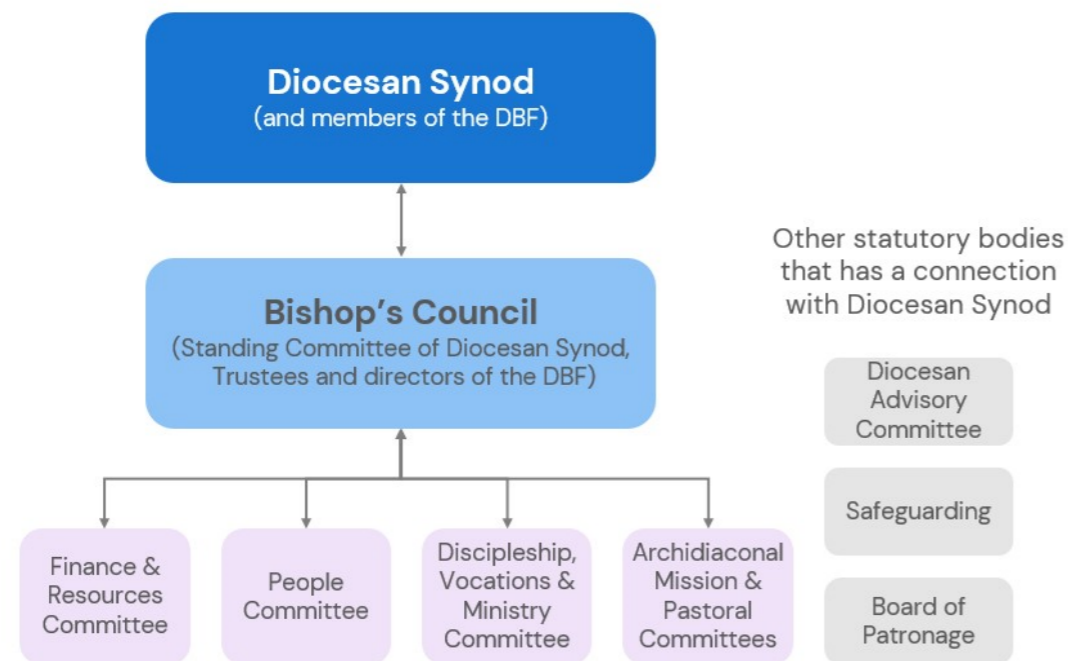
- Introduce you to and give information about how the diocese of Salisbury and the DBF works and your role within it.
- Offer training and support for your role.
- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure volunteers with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions, are not substantially disadvantaged.
- Strive to resolve any concerns fairly and reasonably, applying our complaints procedure when it's needed.
- Respect and listen to your feedback, and keep you informed of any changes.
- Act in ways that support your health, safety and welfare.
- Encourage a positive and supportive Diocesan Synod experience.



How does synod relate to other governance?

The diocese existed in church law before charity or company law. One of the many unique and challenging aspects of our governance is that it is derived from three sets of laws – ecclesiastical, company and charity.

As well as the fact Bishop's Council is the Standing Committee of Diocesan Synod, Bishop's Council members are also the trustees and board of directors of the DBF. Bishop's Council members therefore have wider responsibilities, sharing with the Bishop in aspects of the leadership of the church in the diocese and are accountable to God and their consciences, as well as to the people of the diocese. Dioceses have a number of statutory and non-statutory boards and committees, several of which are rolled together under the Bishop's Council. This over-arching leadership role unites the charity, company and ecclesiastical frameworks.



For more information about the role and duties of Bishop's Council, [see Welcome pack](#).

Synod meeting practicalities

How are Synod agendas drawn up?

The agenda is discussed and agreed by Bishop's Council as the Standing Committee and takes into consideration matters referred by General or Deanery Synods or ongoing business of the diocese. Any member can suggest topics for discussion by contacting the Diocesan Secretary.

How can I bring a proposition or motion to Synod?

Ways that a member of Synod can have an item of business included on the agenda:

- Submit a question in advance. Although questions are not formal propositions, they can bring important matters to the attention of Synod.
- Suggest a motion to the Diocesan Secretary and Bishop's Council will consider whether to bring the motion in its name.
- Raise the issue at your Deanery Synod; if colleagues agree, then a deanery motion can be considered for discussion at a meeting of the full Diocesan Synod. Ultimately, the Diocesan Synod has the ability to pass such a motion to General Synod for discussion at a national level.
- Please contact the Diocesan Secretary as soon as possible for advice on preparing and wording the motion to ensure it does not contradict Standing Orders, overrule existing legislation, or other technical issues. Deanery Synods should authorise their Standing Committee to agree the final wording of any motion to ensure minor amendments can be properly approved before the matter is taken to Diocesan Synod.

What is the normal format for a debate to follow?

There are normally five steps:

- The motion is put forward by a member of Synod;
- The Synod will discuss and debate the motion;
- Any amendments to the motion (duly notified in advance) are proposed & voted on;

Synod meeting practicalities

d) The final motion, with any successful amendments, is formally proposed;

e) The Synod votes.

How can I submit a question in advance?

Any member may ask a question of any officer or office holder of Synod, provided that it is relevant to their duties. A written answer will be provided at the Synod meeting. Once a question has been submitted and the answer given, the questioner is entitled to ask a supplementary question on the same subject. Questions should be submitted in writing (email) to the Diocesan Secretary at least seven days before the meeting.

Speaking at Diocesan Synod

Any member can request to speak on any item of business, but they can only speak once per item. Members are requested to let the Diocesan Secretary know in advance if they wish to speak in a particular debate, but this is not a formal requirement.

How are Synod members elected?

Members of the House of Clergy and House of Laity are elected for a term of three years by the Deanery Synods. Numbers are determined by total clergy numbers and electoral roll numbers in each Deanery.

What is the procedure for filling a casual vacancy on Diocesan Synod?

As soon as a vacancy occurs on Diocesan Synod, the diocesan office: parishsupport@salisbury.anglican.org should be informed. Casual vacancies can be filled by holding an election at a meeting of the relevant House of the Deanery Synod.

What is the procedure for voting at Synod meetings?

Depending on the issue, voting will usually be by a show of hands. If the meeting is held via Zoom, this is done using electronic voting buttons.

Synod meeting practicalities

Quorum of the meeting

One Bishop of the House of Bishops and at least one third of each of the Houses of Clergy and Laity must be present. However, the quorum is only really relevant when there is a need to take a vote.

Contact us

We recognise that there is a lot of information to take in. Please do remember that the staff team at the DBF are here to support you. There are no 'silly questions' and staff are available by telephone or email.

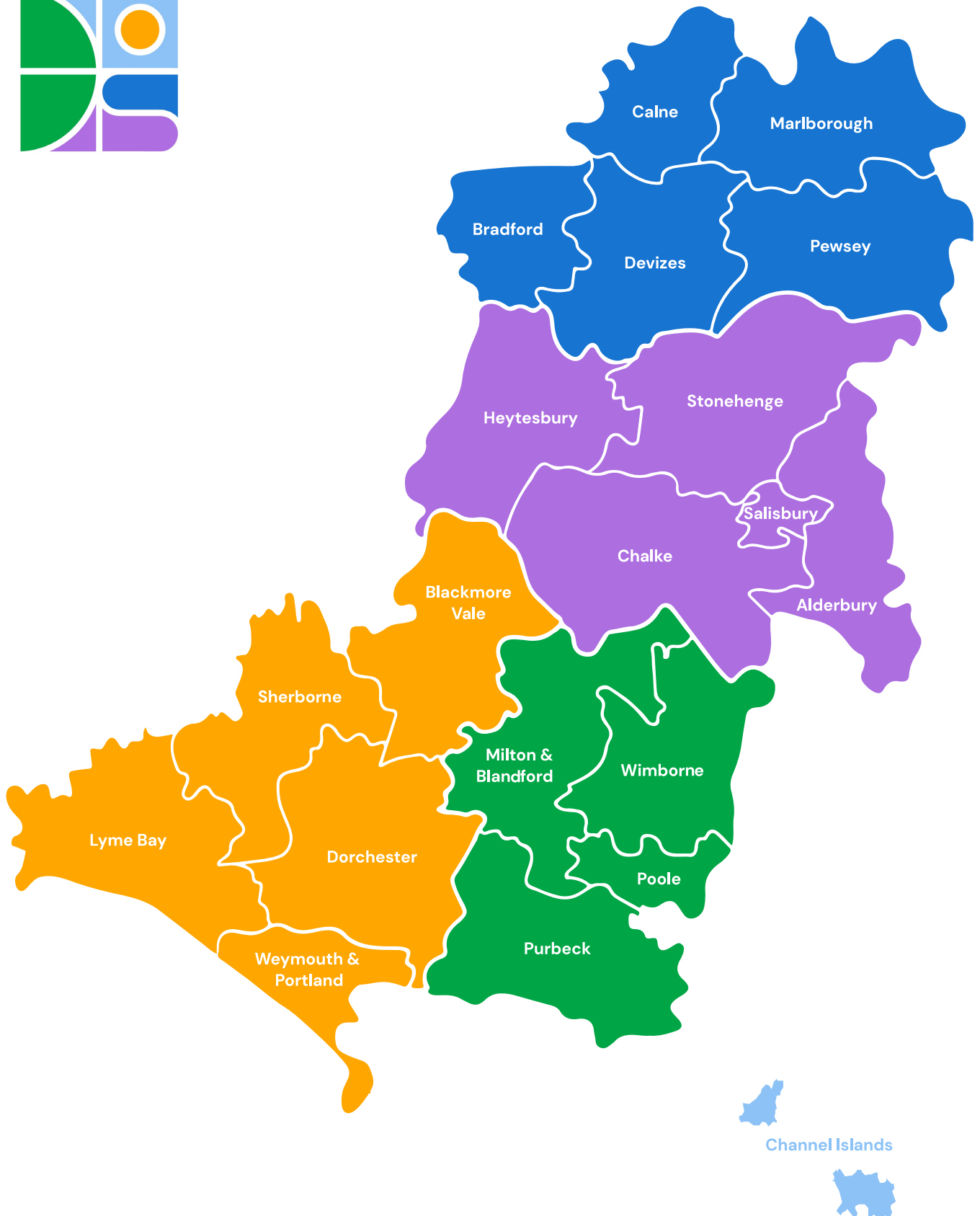
Get in touch via email: parishsupport@salisbury.anglican.org or call 01722 411922 for assistance. All DBF staff emails are Name.Surname@salisbury.anglican.org and our telephone number is as above with added extensions:

For specific queries, you can contact:

David Pain – (Diocesan Secretary/DBF CEO), extension 312

Elizabeth Harvey – (Director of Strategy and Operations), extension 315

Miriam Longfoot – (Governance and Pastoral Planning Manager), extension 342



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