



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

**SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD  
MINUTES OF THE 90<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT  
ST PAUL'S CHURCH, FISHERTON ANGER ON FRIDAY 16 JUNE 2006**

**1. Prayers**

Prayers were led by the Bishop.

**2. Notices, Co-options and Apologies**

Apologies were received from 7 clergy and 17 laity.

**3 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

With reference to the provision for a lay learning post, agreed at the meeting on 17 June 2005, the Bishop reported that candidates had been interviewed but the right mix of skills had not yet been found. The needs of the post were being re-evaluated by the Bishop's Ministry Forum with a view to recruiting again in due course.

**4. The Church and the Environment**

The Diocesan Advisor on Environmental Issues, the Revd Canon Dr Jean Coates, introduced a policy paper from the Environmental Working Group. The Archdeacon of Sherborne moved on behalf of the Bishop's Council:

"That this Synod:

- a) Endorses the General Synod report "Sharing God's Planet – a Christian Vision for a Sustainable Future" and commends it for further study;
- b) Recalls the responsibility of every Christian in the field of energy conservation, and recommends that at all levels of the Diocese Christians should aim to reduce their carbon footprint, by saving energy in all practicable ways, both in their daily lives and in respect of the churches and other properties for which they have responsibility;
- c) Invites the leaders of the Church to play an appropriate and active role in the national and international debate on the issues of climate change and global warming, and to afford pastoral leadership in this field to the people of the Diocese;
- d) Encourages the Bishop's Council to maintain its awareness of the problems of the environment, and in particular of global warming and climate change, and to report as appropriate to Synod on the development of sustainable policies on energy conservation for the Diocese;
- e) Sets up a working party to take action in response to the above. The working party would look particularly at:
  - i. Ways of helping parishes and deaneries engage with the issue theologically and practically in conjunction with the National Church initiative "Measuring our Footprint";
  - ii. How the DAC and other relevant diocesan and national bodies can help guide parishes in the application of energy conservation."

With the addition of the word “scientifically” after “theologically” at e.i, Synod approved the Motion nem con. It was requested that those with scientific expertise relating to environmental issues contact their General Synod member to assist them in contributing to informed debate at the July Group of Sessions of General Synod.

Dr Coates distributed copies of a leaflet entitled “Fit for our Children – Lifestyles that remember the future”, which had been produced to provide practical ideas for sustainability for Wiltshire churches.

**5. The Sudan Link**

The Revd Ian Woodward reported on the work of the Sudan Link. This is a partnership with both sides having much to learn from, as well as offer, each other. There are many problems in Sudan but the Link, working with the Episcopal Church and other supportive Churches, has clear objectives to try to improve the situation. The Diocese raises c £150,000 per annum and increased income is urgently needed. The Sudan Committee is currently seeking a web site manager and an information officer.

**6. Women in the Episcopate**

The Revd Canon Nigel Lloyd, member of the General Synod and of Bishop’s Council, reported on the debate about Women Bishops. The House of Bishop’s is considering possible frameworks for legislation and will bring a recommendation to the General Synod. It is likely that the General Synod will soon hold a debate on the principle. The matter will then be passed to dioceses and parishes for discussion with views passed back to the General Synod before a final decision is made, possibly sometime in 2007.

**7. Summary Annual Report and Accounts 2005**

Canon Jeremy Oakes, Chairman of the Board of Finance, presented the Summary Annual Report and Accounts 2005 which Synod formally noted. Although not mentioned in the Report, the Archdeacon of Wilts confirmed that parishes were pursuing initiatives to improve access to churches for the disabled and infirm and that most had undertaken access audits.

**8. Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2007**

Canon Jeremy Oakes, Chairman of the Board of Finance, introduced the Draft Budget. A major increase in clergy pension contributions must now be budgeted for from 1 January 2007. This is due to new government regulations relating to the funding of pension schemes for all defined benefit schemes, the funding difficulties resulting from more cautious predictions on investment returns and the likelihood of increased life expectancy. This would have resulted in a Share increase of 4.65% instead of the planned 1.8%. Costs had been cut where possible and the proposed Share increase had been kept to 2.75% with the aspiration for a 4% increase in clergy stipends retained. The Chairman of the DBF moved:

“That this Synod approve the annual Budget for Share Assessment 2007”.

Synod approved the Budget for Share Assessment 2007 nem con.

**9. Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972**

Canon Jeremy Oakes, Chairman of the Board of Finance, moved on behalf of Bishop’s Council that:

“This Synod approves the amendment to the diocese of Salisbury Scheme under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 to permit the Board of Finance to delegate its functions and responsibilities as Parsonages Board to the Diocese of Salisbury to the Executive Committee of the Board of Finance.”

No objections having been received by the due date and time this Motion was deemed to have been approved nem con.

## 10. Questions

Mr Richard Chitty (Salisbury Deanery) asked:

Since the percentage of Share collected last year (94.5%) showed an increase on the previous year (92.9%), and appears to be on its way to recovering to the pre Fairer Share level of 96%, how much of the surplus in reserves does the Board of Finance expect to use to cover the deficit in Share this year?

Subsequent to this year's Report, the Board agreed to increase the pension contributions in 2007 by 21% and the additional amount of £271K would be collected through an increase in Share, rather than from the surplus reserve. What was the reason behind this decision and does the Board of Finance expect any further increases in pension contributions in 2008 which would warrant keeping this surplus reserve?

It is noted that the Aldhelm Fund is standing at £345K and that some of the money is being used to support the Poole Civic Chaplaincy. Can the Diocese give an update on what new projects the fund will be supporting this year?

It is also noted that the budget for 2007 includes the provision of four 'Deanery Mission Posts'. Can the Diocese let us know what plans are in place to recruit these people so that they are in place for January next year, and in light of the Deanery Strategic Plans, where the Diocese intends to place them?

David Hughes (Pewsey Deanery) asked:

Are churchwardens required by this Diocese to be CRB-checked?

Answers to these questions were tabled at the meeting and will also be posted on the diocesan web site.

Mr Chitty asked a supplementary regarding whether surplus reserves could be released back into mission in the Diocese. The Chairman of the Board of Finance responded that, given the pensions issue, it would be prudent to assume that there will be unexpected calls on reserves in the immediate future. The matter would be kept under review.

## 11. Looking Forward

The Bishop outlined some items of ongoing and future work for the new Synod and Board of Finance. These included:

- The environment
- The strategy for mission
- Pensions
- Women bishops
- Findings of the diocesan youth conference
- The use and development of church buildings

He also thanked out-going members of the Synod and Boards for their contributions to the governance of the Diocese and especially thanked Canon Jeremy Oakes who is retiring as Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

## 12. Retiring Collection

There was a retiring collection in favour of the Sudan.

## 13 Date of Next Meeting

10 am on Saturday 4 November 2006 at Amesbury Baptist Church.

An informal report of Diocesan Synod prepared by Mrs Miriam Darke, Assistant Diocesan Secretary, may shortly be found on the diocesan web site at <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org>