



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIocese of SALISBURY

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

Prayers

Prayers were led by the Bishop.

Notices, Co-options and Apologies

Apologies were received from 7 clergy and 17 laity.

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.

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. She commented that we need to create lifestyles that remember the future. We should try to reduce the size of our carbon footprint and begin growing a greener Church which is less damaging to our God-given world. If Synod sets up a working party then this will help parishes put their aspirations into practice.

The Revd Bill Blakey (Purbeck) urged that the working party take note of the issues of heritage versus conservation and the need to get the science right as well as the theology. There is a huge wealth of scientific expertise in the diocese which should be tapped into. In Purbeck deanery there is particular expertise relating to the nuclear industry. Mr Malcolm Read (Alderbury) asked for politicians to be bolder with, for example, green taxes and attitudes to aviation. He questioned whether we should expect to eat food that has been flown half way around the world. He suggested that we should live more simply so that people of the future may simply live. Mr Tim Price (Salisbury) stated that aviation is responsible for less than 2% of CO2 emissions. Mr Paul Boyd-Lee (General Synod) announced that General Synod would be considering CO2 emissions at its next Group of Sessions in July and requested that those with scientific expertise relating to environmental issues contact their General Synod member to assist them in contributing to informed debate. Mrs Deirdre Ducker (Bradford) asked that government be encouraged to develop trains and the transport of goods by train. Mrs Jean Naish (Salisbury) commented that by taking more responsibility for our own choices and actions we shall have greater credibility when urging government for change. She asked that the working party ensure the veracity of any information it might circulate.

The Archdeacon of Sherborne then 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.

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 has been operating for more than 30 years. It is a partnership with both sides having much to learn from, as well as offer, each other. There are many problems in Sudan to do with internal and external conflicts, oil and fundamentalist religion, but the Link, working with the Episcopal Church and other supportive Churches, has clear objectives to try to improve the situation. The Episcopal Church seeks to:

- Create a Sudan-wide community
- Cross tribal barriers
- Create respected leadership
- Facilitate reconciliation
- Work ecumenically
- Provide education

There are, however, too many dioceses to administer effectively and many of the senior clergy are ageing. Also, many clergy have received no training and some cannot even read or write. Priorities are therefore to help the Episcopal Church:

- Develop a retirement scheme for elderly bishops
- Pay stipends from ECS resources
- Put in place a 5% tithe to the ECS from giving to projects
- Support a scholarship committee
- Undertake a restructure of dioceses
- Enact a moratorium on Episcopal appointments
- Enact a moratorium on ordinations until the present clergy have been trained

The Medical Link is a continuing success. It provides standard UN healthcare packs to local clinics. It hopes in the future to be able to fund medical training also.

The Diocese raises c £150,000 per annum and increased income is urgently needed. Synod members were therefore asked to:

- Publicise the work of the Link in their parishes
- Take pride in the Link
- Recognise that peace represents even greater challenges

- Strengthen the Sudan Committee which is currently seeking a web site manager and an information officer
- Provide prayer support

The Bishop referred to the problem of encouraging skilled people to return home to the Sudan to help rebuild their country. He believed that the provision of secondary education was a key priority and that the diocese might be able to help by resourcing teacher training. The Revd Chris Tebbut suggested that parishes might, when raising money for their own church projects, put some money aside to support a project in the Sudan also.

In response to a question from Mr Lawrie Smithson (Devizes) the Revd Ian Woodward confirmed that the Committee can provide information for parish magazines if required.

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 Bishops is considering possible frameworks for legislation. The three options are:

- 1) A single clause option together with a code of practise for those who cannot support it.
- 2) The creation of a Third Province. This would have the effect of splitting the Church of England into two churches so is not a popular option.
- 3) Transferred Episcopal oversight, where parishes may ask for oversight from another bishop. This would mean enacting legislation that is deeply discriminatory against women.

The House of Bishops will bring a recommendation back to the General Synod. It is likely that the General Synod will soon hold a debate on the principle of women bishops. 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. There are theological arguments in favour of women bishops as well as against. Those considering the matter should be intensely aware of the very deep hurt felt both by those who cannot accept women bishops and by the women themselves.

7. Summary Annual Report and Accounts 2005

Canon Jeremy Oakes, Chairman of the Board of Finance, presented the Summary Annual Report and Accounts 2005. It had been a year of transition with the Area Resource Groups establishing themselves and the Fairer Share bedding-in. Share returns had improved although £329,000 remained unpaid at the end of 2005. Stipends must still be paid regularly so Reserves are very important when there is such a shortfall. In response to a question from Mr John Stidolph (Heytesbury) the Archdeacon of Wilts reported that, although not mentioned in the Report, parishes were pursuing initiatives to improve access to churches for the disabled and infirm and that most had undertaken access audits. The Area Resource Groups will be looking to see how to support parishes in this matter. Synod noted the Summary Annual Report and Accounts 2005 nem con.

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%. This still manages to be on a par with the RPI. The aspiration for a 4% increase in clergy stipends had been retained. It was not felt appropriate to fund the increase in pension contributions from Reserves because this would simply defer the necessary increase in Share to the following year. The Revd

Bill Blakey (Purbeck) wondered to what extent parishes were using their own reserves in order to pay Share. The Revd John Holbrook (Wimborne) thanked the outgoing DBF and its Chairman for their stewardship of the diocese's resources and the progress made in increasing clergy stipends. He commented on the recent meeting of the DBF and the Bishop's Council with Mr Shaun Farrell from the Clergy Pensions Board and suggested that Synod should have confidence in the high calibre of those in the Central Church Institutions handling the pensions issue on dioceses' behalf. 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 reflected that deanery plans are becoming more adventurous and he detected a shift in how we want to be the Church in this diocese. Election papers would soon be distributed seeking Chairmen for the Houses of Clergy and Laity of the Diocesan Synod and for the new DBF as well as members for the future Bishop's Council. Electors should take their responsibilities seriously.

The Bishop concluded by thanking out-going members of the Synod and Boards for their contributions to the governance of the Diocese and he especially thanked Canon Jeremy Oakes who is retiring as Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance. He also made special mention of Mr Neil Whitton who had served as Chairman of the House of Laity of the Synod and he thanked the Diocesan Secretary and her staff at the Diocesan Offices.

12. Retiring Collection

There was a retiring collection in favour of the Sudan.

13 Date of Next Meeting

The Diocesan Synod will next meet at 10 am on Saturday 4 November 2006 at Amesbury Baptist Church.