



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIocese OF SALISBURY

**SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD
MINUTES OF THE 91st SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
AMESBURY BAPTIST CHURCH ON SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2006**

1. Liturgy of the Word with Presidential Address

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word and the Bishop delivered the Presidential Address. He reminded members that the context for the work of the Synod was our life together in Christ which is why we celebrate the Eucharist together. This allowed for differences of opinion, but was rooted in mutual support and respect. During his visits to the Deaneries in the Diocese to discuss their vision for the future, he had discerned a change in the churches' attitudes and priorities. Deanery plans now include developing chaplaincy in secondary schools, developing training resources, working across parish and benefice boundaries, training lay ministers, developing excellence in worship and building active and outward-looking cells of the Church's life everywhere not just in Church buildings on Sunday morning. To help deliver what is needed, new and unified structures of governance are in place together with a new Chairman of the DBF and a new Director of Education. Both internationally and domestically the Church is alive and well.

2. Notices, Co-options and Apologies

The Chairman of the House of Clergy welcomed Mr Richard Southwell QC as the newly elected Chairman of the House of Laity. The Diocesan Secretary reported that Mrs Kathleen Ben Rabha had stood down as General Synod Representative for the Ramsbury with Salisbury Area. The casual vacancy had, however, occurred within two years of the original election and so the election had been re-run using the existing votes. As a result, Mr Michael Burbeck had been elected to replace Mrs Ben Rabha, The House of Laity co-opted the Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union, Mrs Bridget Trump, and appointed Mrs Miriam Darke as Secretary to the House. Apologies were received from 20 clergy and 15 laity.

3 The Diocesan Young People's Conference

Synod, at its meeting on 5 November 2005, approved the concept of a Diocesan Conference for Young People and charged the Diocesan Board of Education with its preparation, organisation and management. The Youth Officer now outlined plans for the Conference, to take place on 14 July 2007 in Salisbury Cathedral and Bishop Wordsworth School. The day will be in four sections encompassing a Market Place, a daytime session entitled "All About Me", social/workshop time and an evening celebration "All About God". Clergy, including bishops, will be present for the young people to talk to and question. Ecumenical partners were being consulted.

Mr Homfray Vines (Wimborne Deanery) observed that youth work is given a high priority in the Diocese of Sudan and it would be good if the Diocese of Salisbury could give it similar priority and find the money for the Conference itself rather than asking for sponsors.

The Archdeacon of Dorset then proposed,

That this Synod:

- a) Supports the concept for the Young People's Conference in 2007
- b) Encourages the Conference Management Team to find external sponsors to cover the estimated cost of £3,500 and agrees that any shortfall in funds is met

jointly by the Board of Finance and the Board of Education.

The Motion was carried nem con with one abstention.

4. The School at the Heart of the Church's Mission to the Nation: Progressing the Dearing Agenda

The Chairman and the Director of the Board of Education introduced a debate on what should be the Diocesan priorities for work in this area over the next five years. The challenge is to ensure that the work that goes on in schools and the work that goes on in parishes is co-ordinated and moving in the same direction. Synod broke into discussion groups to share experiences of good practice and success. Specific points raised are to be returned to the Diocesan Secretary who will communicate them to the Board of Education or other relevant groups.

The Archdeacon of Dorset moved,

“That this Synod:

Supports in principle, and subject to further investigation of the financial implications, the key directions detailed in the paper *The School at the Heart of the Church's Mission to the Nation – Priorities for the Diocese 2007 – 2011.*”

The Motion was carried nem con with one abstention.

Mr Timothy George (Marlborough Deanery), although happy to accept the Motion, asked that the Board of Education give due importance to the place of, and support for, religious education in our schools.

The Archdeacon of Dorset, on behalf of Synod, thanked the Director of Education.

5. The Learning Church

The Bishop of Ramsbury introduced a discussion on life-long learning and church growth. He emphasised the importance of lay learning for our future as a Church. Synod broke into discussion groups to consider:

1. What do you do to nurture life-long learning and spiritual nurture in your church?
2. How are you co-operating with other churches near you, Anglican and others?
3. What resources, beyond yourselves, might you need?

The Chairman, House of Laity, reminded the lay members that they have a responsibility to return to their deaneries and parishes and discuss the issues raised at Synod with them.

6. Annual Stewardship Sunday

The Revd John Holbrook on behalf of Bishop's Council presented proposals to re-introduce the concept of an annual Stewardship Sunday which would give the opportunity for thanksgiving, reflection, and reviewing our giving of time, talents and money. Resources will be made available to help parishes undertake this. He proposed,

“That this Synod:

Approves the re-introduction of an annual Stewardship Sunday, beginning in October 2007, and agrees that the Board of Finance meets the cost of materials up to £1,000.”

The Motion was carried with the majority in favour, five against and six abstentions with the rider that the choice of day should be a local matter.

7. Reports to Note

Synod noted:

1. The report on the clergy pensions consultation that will form the Diocesan Response to the Archbishops' Council Task Group.
2. The finance report for 30 September 2006.

8. Questions

Mr Malcolm Read (Alderbury Deanery) asked:

"The minutes of the meeting of Synod at Corfe Mullen 12 months ago (item 4) gives a list of nineteen topics which members would like to discuss at Synod. When will the minute be implemented?"

The Chairman of the House of Clergy responded:

"The list of topics raised at the Synod in November 2005 was very wide-ranging – from Women Bishops to the War in Iraq, from Diocesan Links to Ecumenism, from the Abolition of Fairer Share to how best to use our LPAs.

The topics of the responsibility to the environment and the Diocesan Sudan Link have been discussed in 2006. Another item that was raised was the timings of Synod and, for 2007, the evening meeting in June has been changed from a Friday to a Wednesday.

Work is being done to collect examples of new expressions of church and the development of LPAs and Reader ministry to bring to Synod next year and the new Bishop's council will also report on its activities. Other issues such as Patronage and pastoral issues and women bishops are waiting for further information from the National Church which it is hoped will be forthcoming in the next 12 months.

However, there is a number of topics that Synod will be asked to give its views on in the next triennium that need to be thought about from a theological point of view and in February 2007 Synod will begin with a period of study aimed at helping Christians make decisions using theological reflection, interpretation and social experience so that Synod can have open and honest debates on some of the more challenging subjects form the list."

10. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 10 am on Saturday 17 February 2007 at St Nicholas Church Centre, Corfe Mullen. Meetings will also take place on the evening of 20 June at St Paul's Church, Salisbury and 3 November at Amesbury Baptist Church.

11. Liturgy of the Eucharist

Synod closed with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

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>