



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD
MINUTES OF THE 92nd SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
ST NICHOLAS, CORFE MULLEN ON SATURDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2007

1. Opening Worship and Presidential Address

Members took part in prayers led by Mr Michael Armstrong, Lay Chairman of Devizes Deanery and the Bishop delivered the Presidential Address. He began by suggesting that the role of bishops in the House of Lords was to defend the human person and that human identity is expressed in our being persons who are free to choose. The question of unfettered choice should be challenged and that considerations other than purely economic should carry more weight. In reviewing his contributions to debates in the House of Lords, ranging from super casinos to the war in Iraq, the Bishop wondered where in the public domain we can handle issues of what is right rather than what is legal so that decisions sit with our wider responsibility to uphold a world order where peace, justice and truth prevail. Whilst recognising that the church does not have easy answers he stated that the church ought to be at the forefront of those who will work to develop the counter-cultural characteristic of the human person - to sacrifice all we are for something beyond our own limited horizons of self-satisfaction and to recover our future from the selfish consumerist culture that threatens to enslave us.

A full copy of the presidential address is available from the web-site or from fiona.torrance@salisbury.anglican.org at the Diocesan Office.

2. Notices, Co-options and Apologies

Apologies were received from 15 clergy and 14 laity.

The Bishop warmly congratulated The Reverend Canon Humphrey Southern, Team Rector in the Nadder Valley, Rural Dean of Chalke and Chairman of the House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod, on his appointment as the next Bishop of Repton in Derby Diocese and thanked him for all his work for the Diocesan Synod. Canon Southern will be consecrated at St Paul's Cathedral, London on 31 May and a service of installation and welcome will take place at Derby Cathedral on 9 June.

The Diocesan Secretary gave notice of a vacancy for a DBF member to be a member of the Redundant Church Uses Committee and asked that any Synod member who might be interested in this role to contact her for further details.

3 The DAC Annual Report and the DAC Awards

The Very Reverend June Osborne, the DAC Chairman, spoke of her DAC role, offering advice to parishes and the Diocesan Chancellor. She drew attention to the benefits of Ecclesiastical Exemption in comparison to listed planning consent, but noted that the care and costs of looking after churches can be a burden.

The DAC had looked at an average of 30 to 40 items per month and issued over 200 Form 1 Certificates. The benefits of parishes obtaining its early, informal advice were evident as most applications were agreed within the calendar month – 94% in January of 2007. The majority of applications were for heating, lighting and modern facilities to allow wider use of church buildings which reflects inspiring local ambition.

Site visits continued to be an important part of the DAC's work; visits are made by individual members or consultants, a small delegation or the whole committee can go out to the parish. The Chairman paid particular tribute to DAC members and consultants who give a great deal of their time on a voluntary basis.

The committee carried out the quinquennial review of the Salisbury Diocese List of Approved Architects and Surveyors and held its usual annual conference for members of the List. A review of the Salisbury Diocese Scheme for the Inspection of Churches began at the end of the year; the revised Scheme will be brought to Synod later in 2007.

The Chairman advised that English Heritage's 'Inspire' and the Church's own 'Next Steps' campaigns were launched in 2006. 90% of the 578 churches in the Diocese are listed, of which a higher percentage than average are grade I or II*. Almost all of the Church of England's 16,000 churches, including those in the Salisbury Diocese, are national treasures and the campaigns recognise that 70% of the costs of upkeep comes from church goers. The cost and care of these buildings is therefore a national issue and tribute is due to churchwardens and officers caring for their churches. Locally, we hope to work together and make wise deanery decisions. The Diocese is seeking to become ever more strategic in its approach and aware of place and presence as it is thinking out the use of its buildings, in the context of a well understood and trusted decision making process.

DAC Awards

These awards recognise excellence in Faculty application and works. The Dean presented 2006 DAC award certificates to:

- The Revd Sandy Railton on behalf of Aldbourne St Michael for work to the clock
- Ms Sue Clayton on behalf of Child Okeford St Nicholas for its scheme for new storage and provision of a WC in the vestry;
- Ms Janie Bell on behalf of Marden All Saints for proposals for a new panelled vestry and re-instatement of the west doors
- Mr John Brown on behalf of Wyke Regis All Saints for its scheme for the installation of a WC and new choir vestry on the ground floor of the tower.

4. The Church and the Environment

The Venerable Paul Taylor, Archdeacon of Sherborne, presented an update on the activities concerning the church and the environment since the initial debate on this subject in February 2006.

A working Group of 8-10 members has been established to help engage with the seriousness of the issue – by doing something. Their aim is to challenge each PCC and individual to four actions in the coming year:-

- 'Shrinking the footprint' – an audit of levels of energy consumption in each church
- Communicate to parishes through the Deanery Synods. Two from the group will visit each synod to show a DVD on climate change. Leaflets will be distributed that contain suggestions and possible actions together with a Churches Together in Wilts booklet.
- Support and publicity for the "Cut the Carbon" walk (from Dublin to Iona, through Scotland to England, ending at the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth in September).
- Producing guidelines for practical energy saving measures for parishes to think creatively and engage with.

5. The Human Person – Introduction

The Bishop of Ramsbury, having just returned from a trip to the Holy Land, said that he was looking for an open discussion in Ecumenical Relationships. We are actually "doing theology" all the time, living in the presence of God and seeking to understand who we are, becoming that person in Christ with an understanding of others. He said that we must not

be blind to the consequences of our actions on other and of their needs – we share a common humanity. We must step up and engage with tragedy, expecting both ourselves and others to be a real person, with the whole of our humanity engaged.

“We believe in life after death but need to celebrate hope in life before death with a God of new creation for fulfilment of life in Christ and fully respect one another. It is not a “shoddy” compromise but hope that Christ will change us,” said the Bishop.

The Bishop of Ramsbury then presented the “tool-kit” document that outlined four areas to consider when examining our own beliefs; using the bible, shaping the church, applying our reason and examining our conscience. He went on to say that the tool-kit was not how to think, but guidance in areas where there may be synodical debate in the future on how to treat each other as fellow beloved in Christ.

Synod then broke into facilitated discussion groups to consider how this tool-kit may be used to discuss the nature of the human person in three main areas; intimate life, public life and quality of life.

9. The Human Person – Closing Session

On returning from the discussion groups the Head of the House of Laity, Richard Southwell QC, exhorted all members of synod to take the tool-kit back to their deaneries and parishes and to encourage others to study its use.

The Bishop of Sherborne closed the sessions by saying what a stimulating, informative, thought provoking and enjoyable day it had been. He had valued the chance to reflect on the journey of one group throughout the day and had noted how Diocesan Synod members had grown in confidence with each other and in our confidence as Christians.

Further copies of the tool-kit are available on request from the Diocesan Office.

10. Questions

There were no questions.

11. Reports to Note

Diocesan Synod noted the Finance Report dated 31 January 2007.

12. Dates of Next Meetings

Diocesan Synod will next meet from 6.00 pm – 8.30 pm on **Wednesday 20 June** at St Paul’s Church, Salisbury.

The autumn meeting will be on **Saturday 3 November** from 10am – 4pm at Amesbury Baptist Church.

13. Closing Prayers

Synod closed with prayers and the Bishop’s blessing.