

**SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD
MINUTES OF THE 96th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
ST PAUL'S CHURCH, FISHERTON ANGER ON WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2008**

1. Prayers and Presidential Address

Prayers were led by the Bishop.

In his presidential address the Bishop touched on the theme of Ordained Local Ministry training which had been taking place in this diocese since 1997 and had pioneered some distinctive characteristics over the past 10 years. He stated that STETS had now taken our model of working with a local parish team on board for all training. He said that ordinations to the diaconate for all candidates are now held at Michaelmas: all candidates have a three month period of inculturation in the local church as lay ministers before ordination. The Bishop stated that 19 priests and 26 deacons were being ordained this year; the cost would be over £1m a year – the best investment we can make in our future.

The Bishop referred to the planned diocesan Lent course to be held in 2009 and 2010 which was to be called 'Fully Alive' and led by one of our Sarum Canons, Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP, the author of the best-selling 'What is the point of being a Christian?' Fr Timothy would be speaking both in the north and south of the diocese as well as at the cathedral. Course Material and a DVD would also be available for local groups.

The Bishop asked for prayers for the following matters: firstly for our Sudanese partners who would be here for a fortnight pre-Lambeth to share our lives, have a conference with all our partners and to visit the Deaneries of the Diocese; secondly the General Synod would be debating, amongst other topics, the ordination of women to the episcopate in July.

Finally the Bishop stated that we would miss Bishop Tim and how much we valued his ministry in this diocese. There would be a formal farewell to him and Sian at the Cathedral on the afternoon of Sunday 12 October in the Cathedral. There would be wide consultation as to whether we ought to fill this post.

2. Notices, Co-options and Apologies

Apologies were received from 17 clergy and 18 laity.

3 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

3.1 Thanks were given to Deaneries for their contribution of flowers for the Flower Festival held at the Cathedral as part of the 750th Anniversary Celebrations.

- 3.2 Roger Holhurst referred to Item 8 of the February Diocesan Minutes 'A Strategy for Deployment of Ministers' and stated that, in his view, the promulgated figures had been based on incorrect data. He said that the figures should be formulated again and that Military land should be excluded from the calculations. Mr Holehouse also asked for confirmation that that the Diocese should be able to afford numbers of clergy above projected 'Sheffield' levels, were it to choose to do so, certainly at least up to the current 'Sheffield' base level.

The Archdeacon of Wilts stated that more up to date information on population distribution had recently been received which changed the number of posts slightly but that the numbers were still within the range given to Diocesan Synod in February. The question of Military land would need careful consideration. Excluding this land mainly affects Devizes and Stonehenge. Revised figures would be issued as soon as the population figures had been verified.

Mr Gil Williams confirmed that the deployment strategy was not being driven by financial reasons but a commitment, made by Diocesan Synod, to conform to the national allocation of stipendiary clergy known as the Sheffield allocation. The financial forecast for 2011 proposes a higher number of posts than the projected Sheffield allocation but these may be a more flexible mixture of lay and ordained posts. There is a potential to fund to the current number of posts but this requires more funding from external sources and asked that deaneries come forward with their initial indications of number of posts.

4. Funding for Mission: the new Pioneer Posts

The Revd John Holbrook referred to the new Pioneer Posts, funding for which had been agreed at the November 2007 Synod. He stated that seven projects had been submitted. The three successful projects were then presented to Synod:

The Revd Chris Tebbutt on behalf of Devizes Deanery spoke about the proposed work of the Devizes Children and Families Worker; Betty Suttcliffe, on behalf of the Revd Tony Stephens, spoke about the Weymouth Town Centre Pioneer Ministry and the work of the Weymouth Street Pastors and the Revd Canon Nigel LLoyd on behalf of Poole spoke about the opportunity for a Pioneer Ministry within the Poole Regeneration Area.

5. Better Training for our People and Ministers

5.1 South Central Regional Training Partnership

The Bishop of Sherborne spoke about the South Central Regional Training Partnership and its vision for providing better training for people and ministers, not just ordination training but in identifying other areas where we could work together such as lay ministry, leadership training and fresh expressions. The aim is to make better use of our national resources. He stated that the Partnership consisted of the five Church of England Dioceses of Guildford, Oxford, Portsmouth, Salisbury and Winchester. Other church bodies would also be able to join. The Bishop went on to explain how the partnership would carry out its work.

5.2 New delivery proposals for the OLM Scheme

The Bishop of Ramsbury spoke about the OLM Scheme which the Bishop had referred to in his Presidential Address. He stated that the Diocese had formed a partnership with STETS and to further this partnership there would now be a shared appointment in the Revd Dr Paul Overend as Principal of the OLM Scheme who would have particular responsibility for the care and formation of local candidates in this STETS training. This work would be closely aligned with other work in vocations, ordination and post ordination training.

6. Diocesan Board of Finance Annual General Meeting

6.1 Annual Report and Accounts 2006

The Chairman DBF presented the annual Report and Accounts 2007 which had been circulated to members in advance. He thanked the Accountant for his work during this year and previous years. He also thanked Mr Michael Armstrong and the Diocesan Secretary for the work that they had done during his absence as a result of ill health.

Questions were invited: Mr M Burbeck asked when the Diocese was going to start looking at a strategy for funding should the introduction of the ordination of women bishops lead to a reduction in church attendance. The Chairman said that this should wait until after the General Synod.

Mr H Privett referred to legacies. He stated that we should encourage people to leave legacies to the church. He wondered whether the recent legacies had been allocated to specific purposes rather than simply added to the general fund. The Chairman said that the mission proposals brought to Synod in February had been some of the specific purposes that the legacies had been allocated to.

The Chairman DBF moved, on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the Directors’ and Trustees’ Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2007.”

This was approved by the Board of Finance.

6.2 Appointment of Auditors

The Chairman DBF moved, on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the re-appointment of Mazars LLP as the auditors for the Diocesan Board of Finance.”

This was approved by the Board of Finance.

6.3 Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2009

For the purposes of this item, members acted as both the Board of Finance and Synod.

The Chairman DBF presented the Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2009. The Revd S. Everett asked whether there had been a trend in member numbers. The Chairman stated that there had been a slight increase in the number of fairer share members however some concern had been expressed that more parishes had lowered their category than raised it. If this trend continues it will affect the share allocation. He asked Rural Deans to challenge any category changes.

Mr R. Chitty asked how the new Pioneer Posts were to be funded in the future. The Chairman stated that time-limited funding would come from Reserves and not Share.

The Chairman DBF moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance/Synod approves the annual Budget for Share Assessment 2009”.

This was approved by the Board of Finance and the Synod.

7. Proposals for a Voluntary System for Parochial Fees

The Revd Canon Trevor Stubbs made a proposal for the Abandonment of Statutory Fees which are set out each year in a table received from the Church Commissioners. Canon Stubbs felt that fees were not compatible with authentic mission, that they interfered with genuine pastoral care, that they were not biblical and that they were a link with an unhealthy mediaeval past. He felt that the church would be regarded as a pure charity if fees were abandoned and anticipated that people would be more ready to give donations.

There was a general discussion during which some welcomed the proposals as offering a chance to give freely in faith, whilst others expressed concerns about the amount of money being put at risk especially small parishes where fees are a substantial percentage of income. Some suggested that a pilot scheme should be run to evaluate the idea rather than reject it however it was felt that this could not be undertaken without authority.

Canon Trevor Stubbs, elected clerical member for Lyme Bay Deanery then moved:

“That this Synod:

1. Acknowledges that life-changing events (such as marriage and bereavement) are occasions when the church is called upon to give especial attention to the ministry of care and proclamation of the Gospel, and that the charging of parochial fees at these times can hinder the impact of that ministry and mission;

2. Calls upon General Synod to explore methods by which the statutory fees as currently set out in the Table of Parochial Fees (Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals and Burials, Monuments and Searches in Church Registers) can be phased out and replaced by voluntary giving.”

The vote was 32 for and 36 against. There were 15 abstentions. Consequently the motion was lost.

8. Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee

The Archdeacon of Dorset spoke briefly about the new Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Measure which moved the legislation from managing our own assets and internal processes to supporting the church in effective mission to transform communities. He said that this motion is to ensure our legal processes and governance support this aim. He asked Synod to note the following addition to the section entitled 'Composition' in the Terms of Reference of the Bishop's Council.

Co-opted members shall not also be members of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee if the effect of the co-option is to increase the differential between numbers of clergy and numbers of laity in the membership of the Council.

The Archdeacon of Dorset moved on behalf of Bishop's Council:

"That this Synod:

1. approves the amendment of the Terms of Reference of Bishop's Council to enable it to carry out the functions of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee
2. approves the creation of a constitution for the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee which is compliant with the requirements of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 and enables the Bishop's Council to fulfil the requirements of such constitution
3. approves the present membership of Bishops Council to be also the membership of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee for the remainder of the 2006-2009 triennium.
4. requests the Standing Committee of Synod to make the necessary amendments to Standing Orders to make them conform with the Terms of Reference of Bishop's Council insofar as they relate to the Standing Committee of Synod

and agrees that these provisions should come into immediate effect."

This was approved by Synod.

9. Papers to Note

Synod noted the Regulations as revised by the Chancellor of the Diocese and approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

Synod noted the Finance Report.

Synod noted the report on the February meeting of the General Synod.

10. Questions

Robert Key, MP asked what the current position is in this diocese regarding the parishes that passed Resolutions A and B and Act of Synod petitions since 1994?. The Diocesan Secretary replied that since 1994 30 parishes in the diocese out of a total of 458 have passed either or both resolution A and B. However 16 have since rescinded their resolutions, 8 of which have been in the last 5 years.

11. Dates of Next Meeting

10 am on Saturday 22 November 2008 at Amesbury Baptist Church.

10am on Saturday 7 February 2009 at St Nicholas Church Centre, Corfe Mullen

The text of the Bishop's Presidential address may be found on the diocesan web site at <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org>