

## **Report on Salisbury Diocesan Synod – Meeting on November 22nd 2008**

A mission based, forward-thinking agenda characterised the Salisbury Diocesan Synod meeting at Amesbury Baptist Church Centre on Saturday November 22nd.

The Bishop of Ramsbury, the Rt Revd Stephen Conway, opened the session with a wide-ranging address, mentioning the US elections, the economic climate, and how the Diocese could provide support both in times of trouble and of reaching out to others. Bishop Stephen looked forward to the organisations and groups working together in 2009 to galvanise mission and promote wellbeing, and ended by looking ahead to the hope represented by the coming Advent season.

The Dean of Salisbury, the Very Revd June Osborne, gave the Cathedral's first-ever annual report to Synod. The presentation included the 750th anniversary celebrations, celebrating achievements and outlining values and goals in the next ten years.

Fully Alive, a project for 2009-2010 drawing together a number of mission and discipleship strands in the Diocese, was presented by the Ven Paul Taylor, Archdeacon of Sherborne. Showing film clips of the Fr Timothy Radcliffe, the main speaker, he outlined the programme for 2009-2010, including Fr Timothy's talks, consultations between bishops and clergy, study material and engagement with local schools and projects. Fully Alive was a chance "to find new life and a new energy to live out the things that are most important." He added, "What we are visibly seen to be and to do is vital... living out that life in the context of the world."

Synod members commented on implications for relationships, study and being part of a wider community.

Next on the agenda were two brief reports. One, concerning the vacancy in the See of Sherborne, was delivered by The Bishop of Ramsbury, Chairman of the Advisory Group, confirming the vote by Bishop's Council to approve a new Bishop and progress made to date. Rachel Bussey, the Diocesan Child Protection Advisor, then looked at possible implications of signing up to the new Independent Safeguarding Authority, aiming to further protect vulnerable groups and individuals.

A discussion on clergy terms of service, led by the Ven John Wraw, Archdeacon of Wilts, examined possible strategy in light of the Measure approved by General Synod in July, gave a summary of legislation and advance notice of a Human Resources Advisor.

Synod approved numbers to be elected to Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Board of Finance, together with reports on DBF activities and notes from the General Synod in July.

Michael Birkbeck, a member of General Synod, in commenting on the General Synod report, praised the balanced report on the debate on women bishops, reminded members of those who could not accept the ordination of women and looked forward to the coming debate in General Synod.

In answer to a question from Revd. Ian Hobbs regarding the impact of the financial crisis on clergy pensions, Gil Williams, Chairman of the Board of Finance, addressed the timetable for the Pensions Board decisions but stated that it was difficult to tell what the outcome would be given the effect of the current economic climate on investments.

The next meeting of Synod will be an all day session from 10am on Saturday February 7th 2009 at St Nicholas Parish Centre, Corfe Mullen.