



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

DIocese OF SALISBURY

**SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD  
MINUTES OF THE 98<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT  
ST PAUL'S CHURCH, FISHERTON ANGER ON TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2009**

**1. Prayers and Presidential Introduction**

The Bishop welcomed Bishop Ezekiel Kondo of Khartoum, Sudan, and Bishop Pavils Bruvers of Liepeja, Latvia to the Synod.

The Bishop announced that the Ven Alistair Magowan, Archdeacon of Dorset, had been appointed Bishop of Ludlow and also Archdeacon of Ludlow. He announced the retirement of Mr Chris Dragonetti, the Diocesan Accountant for the past 22 years. The Bishop has nominated Mr Dragonetti for a St Aldhelm's Cross in recognition of his invaluable service. He commented on the forthcoming retirements of Mrs Gill Hunter, Adviser for School Development and Miss Jo Little, Departmental Secretary and Receptionist and the departure of Mrs Nicky Davies, Editor of the Sarum Link and thanked them for their outstanding work for the diocese. He also thanked Mrs Jean Naish who was stepping down after serving the Synod for 33 years.

The Bishop reported that he had been officially signed-off by the stroke doctor and he thanked everyone for their past prayers and requested their on-going prayers.

Synod noted that the Revd Dr Graham Kings, the new Bishop of Sherborne designate, would be consecrated on 24 June.

Prayers were then led by the Bishop.

**2. Notices, Co-options and Apologies**

Apologies were received from 15 clergy and 13 laity.

The Diocesan Secretary drew attention to the 2008 review of the diocese in the June edition of the Sarum Link. She reported that nominations were being sought for members of Bishop's Council in the next triennium together with chairmen of the Houses of Clergy and Laity of the Diocesan Synod and of the Board of Finance. Additional nomination papers were available on request. She advised that, because the Archdeacon of Dorset had been required to visit Ludlow and was therefore unable to be present to lead Item 8 on the agenda, this item would not now be taken and a paper would instead be circulated with the minutes.

**3 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Environment Group**

The Archdeacon of Sherborne reported that, since the original mandate from Diocesan Synod in 2006, matters had progressed and all the dioceses of the South West were now working together as a region.

The Revd Dr Jean Coates described what the Environment Group had undertaken to date including deanery presentations, seminars, informing the annual Clergy Day in 2008 and providing publicity.

Mrs Fiona Hulbert outlined current projects including investigations into the feasibility of installing photo-voltaic cells on church roofs, a bulk energy purchase scheme, the possibility of using glebe land for windmills, support for Countdown to Copenhagen and involvement in

the SW dioceses' environment network. The network steering group included representatives from the SW dioceses and the Archdeacon of Sherborne and Mrs Miriam Darke are representing the Diocese of Salisbury.

The Archdeacon of Sherborne presented a proposed Environment Policy to Synod. This was broadly welcomed but with the request that the governments of the world invest in research and development to find an equitable solution to the world's energy problems. The Archdeacon of Sherborne then moved on behalf of Bishop's Council that:

"This Synod adopts the Salisbury Diocesan Environmental Policy".

The Motion was carried with one member against.

The Archdeacon of Sherborne then introduced a Motion that had arisen from the SW dioceses' environment network. The intention was for all dioceses of the SW region to pass an identical motion in order to galvanise support for specific actions locally and by the Prime Minister, to maximise influence at the Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009 and also to underline dioceses' shared commitment to Shrinking the Footprint. For this reason, the wording of the Motion was not negotiable.

There was general support for the motives behind the Motion. Some members would have liked to refine the wording, but it was recognised that this was just the beginning of a process and the important issue was to bring pressure to bear on the government to help the Church and individuals do the environmentally responsible thing. The Archdeacon of Sherborne then moved on behalf of Bishop's Council that:

"This Synod

1. Calls upon all Dioceses, PCC's, Governing bodies of VA/VC schools, and all Church members to (i) take steps to reduce consumption of energy derived from fossil fuels and, (ii) to purchase their electricity from any supplier which provides a Green Tariff and which undertakes to invest heavily in the production of energy from renewable sources and, (iii) to invest in renewable energy sources.
  
2. Calls upon the Prime Minister to forge a new partnership between the government and the Church (all denominations), with the aim of ensuring that the buildings and land in the control of the Church can be the means of producing 100% green electricity and heating from such as wind, biomass and solar sources; facilitated by (i) relaxation of planning constraints and (ii) the provisions of grants and long term interest free loans."

The Motion was carried with two members against.

## **5. Diocesan Board of Finance Annual General Meeting**

### **5.1 Annual Report and Accounts 2008**

The Chairman DBF presented the annual Report and Accounts 2008 which had been circulated to members in advance. He commented that the collapse in equity markets had impacted upon the lay and clergy pension schemes and the lay staff pension benefits had been changed as a result. Nevertheless, investment income had continued to rise which had helped keep Share increases low. There was also a continued improvement in the percentage of Share paid with £106,000 more paid in 2008 than in 2007. He drew members' attention to the new Public Benefits statement which was now a required part of the Report. He also commented that the Board was showing a negative free reserve for the first time in many years, although this was not necessarily a problem and there was no indication that the diocese should be restricted in mission or other diocesan initiatives. Mazars, the Board's auditors, had given unreserved approval to the financial statements.

The Chairman DBF then gave a valedictory address for Mr Chris Dragonetti on his forthcoming retirement and the Board of Finance gave Mr Dragonetti a vote of thanks.

There were no questions.

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 2008.”

This was approved by the Board of Finance.

#### 5.2 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.

#### 5.3 Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2010

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 2010. Clergy pensions were having a major impact on the budget. The pension fund deficit had grown by £211 million over the past two years. The current contribution rate is 39.7%, which will rise to 45% (representing an additional £226,000) in 2010. Provison of over £100,000 will be made in 2009 towards this. There will be further savings in 2010 due to the changes in the lay staff pension scheme and reduced stipend costs. It has therefore been possible to keep the proposed budget increase in 2010 to 1.79% whilst still retaining the focus on mission as a high priority.

On the subject of Share payment, the Chairman commented that the Board of Finance had done its part by keeping Share increases low and now looked to the parishes to play their part. He asked all DBF members to encourage the parishes in their deaneries to pay on time. Over 35 parishes had paid nothing towards their Share in the first half of the financial year 2009. He pointed out that, as an organisation, the diocese had exceptionally low administration costs but there were important costs to cover such as maintaining and improving the housing stock and supporting our schools. Parishes should contact the Diocesan Office if they had a particular problem with paying.

In response to a question, the Chairman DBF explained that the Fairer Share Working Group deals with policy relating to Share. It normally meets twice a year and will meet again in the autumn to consider the returns made by parishes and any “S” category requests. The Group’s activities are reported to the Finance Committee and to Bishop’s Council.

The Chairman DBF moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance/Synod approves the annual Budget for Share Assessment 2010”.

With the correction of a typographical error, this was approved nem con by the Board of Finance and the Synod.

### 6. **Strategy for the Deployment of Ministers**

The Archdeacon of Wilts, together with representatives from Calne (the Revd Thomas Woodhouse and Mrs Pam Evans) and Dorchester (Mr Roger Holehouse) Deaneries, reported on progress made since the Diocesan Synod Motion of February 2008. Specific points made included:

- The value of growing, being outward-facing, bringing people together and discovering gifts and skills.
- Deployment should not be driven by numbers and statistics.
- A plan should be an important part of the life of the deanery. The planning embraces mission opportunities and generates energy and progress.
- Where there is lively debate the vision is enriched and confidence grows.
- There are challenges to meet regarding pastoral reorganisation, energising parishes and benefices to look at ministry in new ways and encouraging a sense of “deanery”.
- There are also challenges in linking future appointments with the priorities of the deanery strategic plans and in encouraging vocations.
- The diocese might explore further the development of clergy who hold portfolios and the sharing of ministry.
- The deanery points system is a sound system, although the current interpretation of the data, if projected forward to 2016, has the net effect of shifting clergy to areas with the greatest MOD presence.
- Laity are looking for stability in their relationships outside the parish.
- Big benefices can lead to overstretched clergy.
- Dorchester Deanery is looking to develop clusters of parishes with wider partnerships of clergy. The boundaries between clusters and partnerships will remain stable, but with fluidity of personnel as necessary and as the plans develop.
- It would be good to have development posts to grow our curates.
- The clergy in the Diocese of Salisbury have more members per person to look after than in any other diocese.

In summing up, the Archdeacon of Wilts identified three over-arching challenges:

1. The need to keep things under review.
2. The need to ensure that there are posts suitable for those coming out of curacies.
3. The continuing need to explore and develop all forms of vocations.

In discussion it was noted that clergy numbers can be fairly reliably predicted up to ten years ahead, that there are issues still to be addressed regarding Common Tenure and that a portfolio holder is someone with particular skills who is allowed time in their ministry to make use of those particular skills. The Archdeacon of Wilts asked everyone to recognise that the diocese needs to be more mission-focussed.

## **7. Additional Motion**

Lady Sarah Gooch of Stonehenge Deanery moved that:

“This Synod should reduce to two regular meetings per year”.

She recognised the value of meeting together, but felt that the Synod should have regard to its carbon footprint and to the cost of attending and organising meetings. Canon John Holbrook responded on behalf of Bishop’s Council explaining that he had sympathy with the concerns expressed, but felt that it was important for people to be together in communion and also that the new Synod should have the option of three meetings per annum at the start of its new triennium. Mr John Wolfe-Barry spoke formally in support of the Motion.

In discussion, a variety of views were expressed including:

- The travel involved in Synod meetings is a major problem. Members should do their best to arrange car sharing or other forms of transport.
- Separate meetings in episcopal areas could reduce the overall mileage.
- People may value two meetings per year more than they value the current three and attendance may be better.
- There are precedents for carrying out some of the minor business electronically.
- The enriching experience of open debate and group discussion can only be found by meeting face to face.
- Some people do not currently put themselves forward for election to Synod because they feel it requires too much time.
- Fewer meetings may not encourage younger members to join.

- The Synod Executive needs to do more to keep Synod informed of what is going on between meetings.

In her response to the debate, Lady Gooch accepted the importance of meeting together, but noted that there had been no problems resulting from the cancellation of the February Synod due to bad weather.

The Motion was lost with 14 voting in favour and 65 against.

**8. Questions**

There were no questions.

**9. Close of Synod**

The Bishop recorded his thanks to Mr Gil Williams, Chairman DBF and to Mrs Fiona Hulbert who will shortly be leaving the post of CeFAS Co-ordinator at Sarum College with particular focus on Social Responsibility in the Ramsbury Area.

The Bishop then closed Synod.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

10am on Saturday 7 November 2009 at Amesbury Baptist Centre