

## Report on Salisbury Diocesan Synod – Saturday 6 November 2010

There was a full agenda at Market Lavington Hall on the 6th at 10.00am, the last Diocesan Synod to feature the Bishop of Ramsbury, Stephen Conway. The Synod was also attended by the Bishop of Sherborne, Dr Graham Kings; the Dean of Salisbury, the Very Revd June Osborne; Sir Al Aynsley-Green, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education; the president of Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Salisbury Ann Howard, and vice-president Jane Lax.

Synod also welcomed the Dean of Riga Cathedral (Latvia), Elijs Godins, as a guest.

Bishop Stephen, presiding, gave a wide-ranging address approving of women bishops, calling for prayers and support for Sudan, and referring directly to lessons learned from governmental actions (on both sides of the Atlantic) and from collaboration with the diocese of Évreux, in reference to the 'Big Society', concluding:

"Our Archbishop has described our Christian Tradition - the Scriptures and the life of the Church – not as a constricting space but as a large room for us to inhabit. I believe this passionately. We are a learning Church facing many challenges. It won't do anymore for people to say, "oh well, that went above our head and it's nothing to do with us." All of us are called to stand on tiptoe, look to see what God is doing, and join in."

For a copy of the address, go to <http://www.salisburyanglican.org.uk/admin/showpage.asp?page=247>.

After notices and welcomes for new General Synod representatives, the main agenda item was the ordination of women bishops, referred to dioceses by General Synod for consultation. The Dean, in conjunction with The Revd Dr Richard Harper, Vicar of St Paul's Weymouth, carefully presented to Synod the questions that the proposed legislation presents to those with different theological standpoints, ensuring breadth to the issues raised. Areas of agreement included the recognition of baptism, the importance of securely-grounded theology, and the need to strengthen and heal relationships, including the vocabulary used to refer to female clergy. Areas of difficulty included the nature of delegated authority and which preferred options would have to be let go of in reaching agreement.

Groups of delegates discussed various issues in depth, and reports were gathered by the group facilitators. Bishop Stephen thanked the Dean and The Revd Dr Richard Harper for their sensitive presentation and "mature and lengthy relationship, which has led to us being able to have this discussion in this manner." The Synod agreed to refer the legislation for further discussion in Deaneries, and voting on during Diocesan Synod in June 2011.

Archdeacon John Wraw gave a progress report on Clergy Terms of Service, in preparation for January 2011, with emphasis on selecting the right clergy for posts, the need for personal development, and for clergy support. He noted that "this will shape the culture of the Church over the coming years," and commended the Revd Jonathan Ball for his hard work on the project.

After lunch, the newly appointed Chairman of the Board of Education, Sir Al Aynsley-Green, gave a presentation, setting out his vision for partnership between schools, parishes and communities, noting that "we have outstanding opportunities to show some real leadership" and calling for ideas from the diocese as part of shared working.

Canon John Holbrook then presented proposals for the relocation of diocesan offices, drawing parallels with the Cathedral moving from Old Sarum to Salisbury water meadows. Plans for purpose-built premises shared by the Board of Education and the Board of Finance received cautious responses from Synod members, with some raising financial and time-pressure issues, while others noted the need to seize the opportunity. Chairman of the Board of Finance, Mr Gil Williams, stressed that there would be no impact whatsoever on parish share.

The President of the Diocese of Salisbury Mothers' Union, Ann Howard, produced a model of a dinosaur to show how the organisation was evolving and moving on. She then set out plans for the future, noting various levels of involvement, asserting the need to be "undergirded by prayer", and asking for closer partnership between diocese and Mothers' Union. Delegates received a handout to aid their responses.

The latest report from the Board of Finance showed a steady financial picture, and slightly increased giving by parishes compared to the same period in 2009. The report was noted by Synod.

Bishop Graham briefly mentioned the newly-formed Mission Council, listing its membership, its secretary (Mrs Debbie Albery) and upcoming meetings, and referring to the new combined diocesan website as an ongoing forum for shared working, ideas and information.

Canon Paul Richardson, Chairman of the House of Clergy, announced that Mr Richard Southwell QC had stepped down as Chairman of the House of Laity and thanked Mr Southwell, in his absence, for his invaluable contribution to Synod . He also asked delegates to show their appreciation for Bishop Stephen, making his farewell appearance at Synod. There was a sustained standing ovation.

Dates for 2011: 5 February, 25 June, 5 November.