



SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD
MINUTES OF THE 104th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
ST PAUL'S CHURCH FISHERTON ANGER ON SATURDAY 25 JUNE 2011

1. Opening Worship and Presidential Address

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word and the Bishop of Sherborne delivered the Presidential Address. He gave thanks for those bishops who have in the past served the diocese with love and dedication and expressed gratitude for the appointment of the Revd Nicholas Holtam as the next Bishop of Salisbury. In the context of a wider investigation of the working of bishops and archdeacons within the diocese, he reflected on the forthcoming consultation on the vacancy in the Bishop of Ramsbury post. He read out a letter from Bishop Daniel from the Episcopal Church of the Sudan where the Church had been a particular target in the current troubles and asked for prayers for Bishop Daniel, his clergy and his people. He spoke of the need to listen to children and young people when seeking to discern our mission in the diocese.

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

2. Notices, Co-options and Apologies

The Diocesan Secretary welcomed all visitors to the Synod and drew members' attention to a flyer requesting help with distributing the Sarum Link as well as the "pull-out" of the Annual Review for 2010 in the June edition of the newspaper. She announced that, if possible, a recorded extract of the debate on legislation relating to women in the episcopate would be loaded on the diocesan web site. Finally she thanked Mr Geoff Taylor who was attending his last Synod before retiring as diocesan Stewardship and Resources Officer.

Apologies were received from 21 clergy and 18 laity.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

4. Legislation Relating to Women in the Episcopate

The Chairman of the House of Clergy, Canon Paul Richardson as Chairman of this Session, introduced the debate and outlined the process. The Director of Education explained the process of consultation that had taken place with young people, at least 80% of whom were strongly in favour of women becoming bishops. The young people were, nevertheless, aware of the need to be sensitive towards those with other views so as not to create any more division in the Church. The Archdeacon of Sherborne asked that the outcome of the debate be reported back to the young people and that they be thanked for their contribution.

The Chairman of the House of Laity and General Synod member, Mr Robert Key, introduced the Motion and spoke in support. He reported that the members of deanery synods had voted 10:1 in favour of the proposed legislation. He felt that what had been drafted was as close to right as possible and a leap of faith was now required on the issue of delegation over imposed authority. He asked therefore that people find it in their hearts to trust each other. A full recording of this speech and the following speech against the Motion are available to listen to on the diocesan web site (address at the foot of these Minutes).

Mr Paul Boyd Lee (General Synod) spoke against the Motion. He felt that the legislation as currently drafted was more secular than theological and he felt that all safeguards would be removed. He commented that although codes of practice rely on trust, experience shows that trust is often breached. He asked that the broadness that our Church is used to should not be restricted. The crucial issue, he believed was whether provision can be put in place so that all can thrive within the Church of England.

In the ensuing debate Canon Richard Franklin (Weymouth Deanery, General Synod), Canon Jane Charman (General Synod), Mr Tim Price (Salisbury Deanery), Mr David Jones (Lyme Bay Deanery), Mr Roger Holehouse (Dorchester Deanery), the Revd Chris Strain (Poole Deanery, General Synod), Mrs Sarah Milne (Dorchester Deanery), the Revd Denis Brett (Heytesbury Deanery) and the Dean all spoke in support of the Motion. Comments included:

- If we have women bishops, it is vital that they are full and proper bishops.
- The proposed legislation does ensure sacramental assurance.
- Flying bishops must end when women bishops arrive because they act with the authority of the diocesan bishop and if the diocesan is a woman then who would provide the authority?
- It is untrue to claim that the Church does not care about those opposed to women bishops. The Church has worked for years to try to find solutions because it does care for those opposed. The legislation therefore represents the best efforts of a great many people.
- The legislation won't please everyone but it will work.
- The Code of Practice will flow from the primary legislation being considered today. It is vital to get the primary rules right first time because it is much easier to change the subsequent guidance materials than the fundamental rules.
- If the legislation comes into force it will be for this Synod to work out its own arrangements for delegation within its own Code of Practice. It will therefore empower us.
- If women are ordained priest there is no reason why they should not become bishops.
- The legislation is the best way forward, but it requires trust.
- The only new issue is that of sacramental authority. When you consider the failings of bishops down the centuries, however, you wonder whether there is apostolic succession there anyway.
- We cannot have women bishops with reduced powers.
- Amongst the evangelical Churches there is also a range of views on this issue.
- Many Christians are saddened by the Church of England's current obsessions with sex and gender. They feel we should instead be concerning ourselves with matters far more important such as poverty and the troubles in the Sudan.
- Some people have had a long journey to reach a point of support for the idea of women bishops, but are still seeking assurances and a Code of Practice that will help people to trust each other.
- One third of all licensed, ordained ministers in the Diocese of Salisbury are now women.
- This legislation started ten years ago. The revision committee included opponents to the legislation. A huge number of submissions has been considered and many amendments have already been considered and rejected. Please accept that the care of opponents has been the subject of intense scrutiny.
- We must send an emphatic message from the Diocese in support of the Motion with no follow-on Motions.

Mr Philip Sankey (Lyme Bay) wondered what the effect would be of rejecting the Motion. The Revd William Lang (Devizes Deanery) supported the principle of women bishops but was not sure that he could support the legislation as drafted. He wondered if it was unnecessarily divisive and he worried about the lack of a Code of Practice. He felt that the great strength of the Church of England has always been its breadth and flexibility and he asked whether losing those who could not agree with women bishops was a good exchange.

The Chairman of the House of Laity responded to the debate by summarising the comments of the speakers. He confirmed that the Church would maintain the accrued pension benefits of any who decided to leave as a result of this legislation. He then moved on behalf of Bishop's Council:

"That this Synod approve the proposals embodied in the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and in draft Amending Canon No30"

The Motion was carried with the following votes:

House of Bishops:	1 for
House of Clergy:	37 for – 2 against – 1 abstention
House of Laity:	48 for – 6 against – 1 abstention

The Sherborne Deanery follow-on Motion was withdrawn through lack of a proposer. Synod then agreed to propose and debate follow-on Motions from Weymouth and Portland Deanery and Devizes deanery together.

Mr Lawrie Smithson (Devizes Deanery) then spoke to the Devizes Motion:

"That this Synod

1. Desires that all faithful Anglicans remain and thrive together in the Church of England; and therefore
2. Calls upon the House of Bishops to bring forward amendments to the Draft Bishops and Priests (consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure to ensure that those unable on theological grounds to accept the ministry of women bishops are able to receive episcopal oversight from a bishop with authority (ie ordinary jurisdiction) conferred under the measure rather than by delegation from a diocesan bishop."

He explained that this Motion sought to protect those who did not agree with women bishops and to re-instate what the General Synod had originally voted for.

The Revd Ian Hobbs spoke to the Weymouth and Portland follow-on Motion:

"That this Synod ask for statutory protection to be provided for those who cannot accept the ministry of women bishops in order to safeguard the unity of the Church."

He expressed concern for the anglo-catholics and others in the deanery whose holding to a view opposed to women bishops was not eccentric or unfounded. He hoped that statute could provide a little more reassurance for them.

Mr Tim Price (Salisbury Deanery), the Archdeacon of Sarum (General Synod), Mrs Chris Corteen (Purbeck Deanery, General Synod), Mrs Debbie McIsaac (General Synod), the Revd Vanda Perrett (Alderbury Deanery) and the Archdeacon of Wilts spoke against the follow-on Motions. Comments included:

- This will create two-tier authority and second-class bishops.
- Every effort has been made to make the provisions acceptable but in the end we cannot have a situation where we effectively offer people an alternative diocesan bishop.
- These types of Motions have all been defeated in General Synod in the past.
- Senior women are unlikely to wish to serve under legislation framed in these terms.
- The measure is specific, detailed and robust. It is so robust in its protection for those of an opposing viewpoint that the law of the land, the Equality Act, is having to be amended because the provisions would otherwise be illegal. There is maximum provision and flexibility for those in the local context. The problem is therefore lack of trust. It requires, however, graciousness from all, including those for whom the provision is being made.

- There are some real problems with all the follow-on Motions, including the cost of maintaining parallel arrangements. The triumphalism of those who were victors in the original vote has, however, caused obstacles to future progress.
- Women priests often have to operate under shared arrangements and are used to working together. (Here the Revd Vanda Perrett described some of the work being done by other bodies working with those in dioceses both in favour and against womens' ordination and women in the episcopate). As we learn over the next few years we will grow in faith and love and the mission of the Church can be transformed.
- It is easy to see these follow-on Motions as tweaking, but it will actually be a wrecking of the main Motion that Synod has just passed.
- The young people spoke of the need for unity. It can be very fruitful to work with those with very different views from our own. Our faith calls us to remain together and work with each other.

Mr Paul Boyd Lee (General Synod) supported the follow-on Motions and felt that sufficient concern had been expressed by those in the deaneries to justify the legislation being revisited. He hoped that this might result in legislation that was acceptable to all members of the Church of England.

Mr Lawrie Smithson and the Revd Ian Hobbs responded to the debate, asked Synod to consider whether the proposals would result in greater division or more unity for the Church and moved their respective deanery Motions. Mr Tim Price (Salisbury Deanery) proposed, and Synod agreed, that the votes be taken by houses. The voting results were:

On behalf of Devizes Deanery:

House of Bishops: 1 against
 House of Clergy: 1 for – 35 against – 1 abstention
 House of Laity: 4 for – 36 against – 2 abstentions

Weymouth and Portland Deanery:

House of Bishops: 1 against
 House of Clergy: 1 for – 31 against – 3 abstentions
 House of Laity: 7 for – 44 against – 2 abstentions

Mr Richard Irwin (Marlborough Deanery) introduced a follow-on Motion from Marlborough Deanery which he hoped would move the whole issue forwards:

“That this Synod declares that it favours the ordination and consecration of women to the episcopate without conditions, and believes that the proposed Code of Practice and diocesan schemes should be subject to review after no more than 10 years.”

There was a brief debate in which some sympathy was expressed but Synod favoured sending this as a comment to the General Synod rather than passing the Motion. Mrs Debbie McIsaac proposed and Synod agreed that this vote also should be taken by houses. Mr Richard Irwin then moved, and Synod defeated the Motion with 1 member of the House of Clergy in support plus 8 abstentions from each of the Houses of Clergy and Laity.

5. Annual Report and Accounts

The Chairman of the Board of Finance introduced the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2010. These had again received a very positive unqualified report from the auditors. All main areas of work had been funded and spending was under control. Share payment was slightly down on the previous year, which was disappointing, but nevertheless stood at 95.4% against a national average of 93%. Many parishes were also clearing past arrears. It was hoped that by keeping Share increases low that 99% payment could be achieved. The £900,000 deficit on the General Fund was principally caused by the downwards revaluation of the Church House offices and the net shortfall in collection of Share. However, there is no cash impact from property impairment reviews and this will not affect the operating ability of the diocese. Investment income was

recovering and was expected to remain steady and the annual investment review had concluded that no significant changes should be made.

The Chairman of the Board of Finance then thanked the accounts team at Church House and the Stewardship Groups in the Areas. He also paid tribute to all those in the parishes whose combined support enables mission and ministry throughout the diocese and asked that parishes be encouraged to think of their own Report and Accounts as a valuable mission document. He then moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the Directors’ and Trustees’ Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2010”

With the correction of a typographical error on page 9, Synod approved the Motion nem con.

6. Appointment of Auditors

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance 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”

He confirmed that the auditors had been reviewed within the past four years, that Mazars’ fees were considerably lower than the local firm the DBF had been using and that the DBF receives a very good service. The DBF then approved the Motion nem con.

7. Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2012

The Chairman of the Board of Finance introduced the Budget for Share Assessment 2012. He commented that reducing expenditure to live within our means as a country is painful and that the DBF needs to ensure that costs are properly controlled and that the diocese is efficient in its work. For those costs within the DBF’s control, a small overall decrease on the 2011 budget had been achieved. Unfortunately it had not proved possible to absorb all the pension increases handed down from the National Institutions and this therefore had resulted in a small budget increase of 0.69%. Parishes must, of course, remain aware that the figure which impacts on any individual parish may be greater or less than this figure. Share payment discount rates had not been changed which should be an attractive option for parishes at the start of 2012. If any parishes were experiencing problems they should be encouraged to contact the Diocesan Office for assistance.

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance then moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance/Synod approves the annual Budget for Share Assessment 2012”

The Motion was carried nem con.

8. Salisbury Magna Carta Project

The Chairman of the House of Laity, as Chairman of the Cathedral Magna Carta project, reported on plans to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Salisbury Magna Carta in 2015. He reminded Synod that several Magna Carta still exist but that Salisbury owns the best of the four remaining original documents from that earliest date. There is already a new display for visitors to the Chapter House. Further plans include exploration of the legacy of the document and presenting the document in its contemporary environment. The Magna Carta celebrations will be global but the Salisbury project seeks to draw national and international attention to Salisbury Cathedral. Events would begin in 2014 and it was hoped that parishes and schools would all feel some ownership of Magna Carta. In respect of finance, the project was expected to cover its own costs and sponsorship will be sought for the main events.

9. Representation of Persons to whom Mission Orders Relate

The Bishop of Sherborne introduced the Motion and explained that the desire was for Fresh Expressions to be more fully a part of the family of the diocese. He reminded Synod of the objectives of the Missional Communities and confirmed that funding is kept under review but that the intention was that such developments should become self-funding. He then moved:

“That this Synod approve the Scheme to amend the Rules for Synodical Representation and provide for representation on Poole Deanery Synod to the Poole Missional Communities in line with Church Representation Rule 27A”

The Motion was carried nem con.

10. Questions

There were no questions.

11. Report to Note

Synod noted the proposals for a consultation regarding the vacant role of Bishop of Ramsbury.

12. Dates of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday 5 November at the Community Centre, Market Lavington. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 3 October.