



DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD MINUTES OF THE 112th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, CORFE MULLEN ON SATURDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2014

1. **Opening Worship and Presidential Address**

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word and the Bishop delivered the Presidential Address.

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**

Bishop Elijah from the Sudan was welcomed to Synod.

The Diocesan Secretary outlined changes to Vacancy in See Regulations and advised Synod of the change in date for the next Synod to enable the outcome of the debate on Women Bishops to be available to General Synod. There is no requirement for Deanery Synods to debate, though they may do so if they wish and their voices will be heard. This time, however, they will not have to vote and report the figures unless they choose to do so.

Apologies were received from 13 clergy and 16 laity.

3. **Renewing Hope**

Bishop Nicholas introduced the theme of Renewing Hope and invited Synod members to reflect in groups on what had given them hope over the last few weeks.

4. **Recap on Mission Discussions in November**

The Bishop of Sherborne reminded Synod of the presentations and discussions given at the November Synod which had included a video on "Hope 2014", a presentation by the Bishop of Ramsbury on the social context of mission and a presentation by the Ven Alan Jeans and the Revd Penny Joyce on the initial findings of the Ministry for Mission project. Synod had also heard presentations from two mission projects funded by the Aldhelm Mission Fund and on New Wine by the Revd Canon Andy Perry. The focus for this, the second mission focused Synod, would be on Social Justice.

5. **Energising Local Ministry (ELM)**

Gil Williams, Chairman of the ELM Management Group introduced a presentation by the members of some of the pilot schemes. He reported that ELM currently operates within the existing parochial system, but seeks to:

- Create new structures of benefice organisation that free people from the myriad roles and responsibilities that are, unnecessarily, replicated in benefices and teams.
- Re-orient energies away from the 'keeping it going' syndrome and focus those energies towards mission - and the key areas of Christian life and witness

- Create capacity to achieve this through changing the mind-set of the benefice, from a number of separate congregations loosely affiliated; to a sense of being one congregation – one congregation with local groupings

The aim is to learn from what made the early Christians so distinctive:

- Christian life, centred on a life of discipleship; above all a life together – in other words a community
- Full participation in the ministry Christ entrusted to his Church - The Body of Christ
- The right perspectives and priorities; this life together, marked by its radical nature, reflecting a Kingdom defined by community and characterised by inclusive, gracious and generous relationships
- Its energy is 'flung' outwards – outwards-facing, which means self-giving, self-emptying.

In short, since we know that through baptism we are fully incorporated into Christ's Body all therefore have a full share in his life and ministry.

In practice this looks like an active partnership between different churches and benefices, representing different styles and contexts, in town and country, focused on practical projects that rest within the heart of Christian life. These are lay-led and inspired; they come from a developing, deepening, and ongoing group relationship rooted in prayer.

ELM does not reduce the importance of clergy – there are things that only clergy can do - but rather it enhances what can be achieved when clergy and laity work together in partnership and shared leadership, each playing to each other's different strengths in each location.

ELM is a 5-year project with the following initial aims:

- To model radical Christian community, characterised by venturesome love in social action and pastoral care
- To develop patterns for shared lay and ordained leadership which complement existing parochial structures.
- To understand that there is no single template; each pilot is different, reflecting differing community contexts and needs.
- To develop fresh ways of delivering local ministry, which integrate with existing patterns
- To explore sustainable patterns of worship, particularly for rural areas.

The end result is to offer the Diocese different 'Salisbury' operating models that work.

The Revd Alison Way introduced 3 representatives to talk about the pilot projects they had been involved with:

- Mrs Anne Pretty, LPA in the Royal Wootton Bassett benefice, described the cross benefice work that had been done to set up and run marriage preparation days.
- Mrs Janet Drury, LPA of Woodhill benefice, described the work done in local schools with the 'Open the Book' programme.
- Mr Dave May described the work done in setting up and running men's breakfasts within the Lyneham with Bradenstoke benefice.

6. Social Justice - Update on progress from the Social Justice Programme Manager, Colin Brady and the Ven Paul Taylor

The Social Justice Working Group reported back to Synod on some of their activity since Synod established the group last year. Members were identified from across the Diocese as well as people with specialist interests and an ecumenical representative. Colin Brady, who had been Social Responsibility Adviser for the churches in Dorset, was appointed to the post of

Social Justice Programme Manager. An initial programme was developed to include establishing 'Read Easy' projects, recruiting a network of Social Justice Champions, and engaging with the Cathedral's Magna Carta celebrations in 2015. Chaplaincy to Gypsies and Travellers continues with the Revd Adrian Brook in post, and support for clergy working in Urban Priority Areas has been renewed under the Revd Tim Gomm's leadership as UPA officer. The Environment Working Group continues to explore ways in which the Diocese can demonstrate a commitment to care for Creation.

Colin Brady updated Synod on the Read Easy project and Social Justice Champions. Read Easy is underpinned by research and evaluation that shows that it really does transform lives, enabling adults who have had difficulties with literacy to progress to being confident readers within a few months. The project has a well-developed set of procedures and is replicable in other areas.

There is now a growing network of Social Justice Champions. Not only can they provide a link with the Energised Local Ministry project, but they can be animators of new initiatives, and provide information and advice on a range of issues. The aim is to have two or three in each deanery as well including people with interests in issues such as environment, fair-trade, welfare and benefits etc.

The Revd Adrian Brook, Chaplain to Gypsies and Travellers, spoke about his work and the needs of the community he serves. He outlined the key needs of having somewhere to live, access to education, and addressing the attitudes of society. A support group has been established drawing on people with experience of the work as well as members of the travelling communities. He asked synod to work with him by having the issues raised on PCC agendas, including Gypsies and Travellers in prayers for Holocaust Memorial Day, countering prejudice, and supporting the search for sites.

Rosemary Macdonald, a member of the Social Justice Working Group and Chief Executive of Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation, addressed Synod on the importance of social justice in the mission of the church and on plans for developing the social justice programme in the Diocese. The key challenge from the Christians in the Community consultation had been to identify priorities that would help to focus resources and to structure support. The consultation had shown that there was concern across the Diocese for the needs of young people, issues of international development, changes to social welfare and pensions, and the distinctive needs of rural and urban parishes. Engaging with social justice has the potential to restore the church's place at the heart of the community and to engage more people in the life of the church. By starting small, building on local strengths, working in partnership with others, and celebrating success, parishes should be able to see ideas turn into good projects.

Looking to the future the Social Justice Working Group is considering a number of areas:

- Food – support for food banks but also for community food projects including cookery courses, parish lunches, allotments and gardening.
- Fuel – continuing to work with the two Community Foundations on their winter fuel allowance projects and ensuring that more people are brought out of fuel poverty.
- Finance – promoting the work of credit unions, advice on budgeting, challenging systems that keep people in poverty, supporting the Living Wage, and sharing knowledge about the benefits system and forms of social support.
- Franchise – looking to European and General elections and being prepared for church based hustings, as well as encouraging more people to participate in the democratic process.
- Fun – intergenerational projects, after school clubs for cooking, sewing and knitting. Men's Sheds, an international movement that encourages men to socialise around practical activities (for example, in Ireland there are groups that share in boat building projects).
- Fast – the Carbon Fast 2014 which invites churches and church members across the South West of England to reduce their carbon footprint in Lent.

Rosemary identified some of the resources available to local churches interested in taking new projects forward. These include using the experience of the social justice champions' network, accessing grants from Community Foundations, the Diocesan Social Welfare Fund, and other trusts, engaging with other partners from the voluntary sector, and using toolkits for specific projects from the Social Justice team or others. She highlighted the fact that Community Foundations are currently able to draw on additional funds to be added to any dormant charitable trusts that are transferred to them and this might be of interest to some parishes.

7. What Can We Learn About Mission from these Examples?

The Bishop of Sherborne led the subsequent Q&A. Several contributors spoke of the need for caution in direct comparisons with Evreux, where church buildings are state-funded; the limitations of ancient buildings; the fact that many of the examples given were already being done in other places and the need to publicise these; the need for the 'animation' of the Holy Spirit as the laity were given licence to exercise their gifts and for further theological work; the need to use existing facilities creatively; that 'God's justice' was preferable to the term 'social justice'; that mobiles and emails were useless in some areas; and that urban areas might pave the way of good practice in rural areas.

8. DAC and Social Justice Awards

The Chair of the DAC, Bishop David Hallett, presented awards to Hawkchurch St John the Baptist (bells restored in our only Devon parish), Royal Wootton Bassett ("awesome" reordering after vandalism and smoke damage) and Woodford All Saints (a new window with narrative detail and interest, an aid to worship by a leading glass artist).

Colin Brady introduced the inaugural Social Justice Awards, given to Bemerton St Michael for 'Coffee and Chat' and Portland for their community lunches, and the Bishop of Salisbury presented the certificates.

9. An Introduction to the House Of Bishops' Working Group Report on Human Sexuality (known as the Pilling Report)

The Revd Dr Malcolm Brown, Director of Mission and Public affairs for the Church of England, introduced the House of Bishops' Working Group Report on Human Sexuality (known as the Pilling Report). Quoting the Archbishop of Canterbury's remarks that "The cultural and political ground is changing... there is a revolution... and we have not fully heard it," Dr Brown recommended reading the prologue to the report and stressed that the listening process was pivotal: "We need to listen to those we disagree with."

He noted that there were minorities in most votes and that "we have to give attention to how the Holy Spirit speaks to those who 'lose'. This is NOT about the majority getting its way; votes will not stand forever. Any of us could be in a losing position in a given vote."

In response Synod members highlighted the need to express views as well as listening; to consider the existing frameworks in the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer and Lambeth Resolutions; and to exercise extreme caution in any attempt to 'trade theology'.

10. Carbon Fast 2014

The Bishop of Ramsbury proposed the motion to adopt the '40-40-40 Challenge' approach to the 2014 Carbon Fast during Lent, a Salisbury Diocesan version of the South West Dioceses' commitment to reducing carbon as a learning exercise. David Morgan gave brief details and played the official Tearfund clip.

In a mixed response, Synod members questioned the validity and feasibility of the Challenge; asked why long-term measures were not being put forward; and raised the issue of how future generations would view the actions to be taken.

Bishop Edward quoted Desmond Tutu who, having said he believed Apartheid would end, was challenged by his interviewer who suggested that this was over-optimistic, to which he replied, "Brother, the whole of Christianity is hopelessly optimistic!"

Synod voted overwhelmingly in favour of the motion.

11. Renewing Hope

The Bishop of Salisbury invited Synod members to reflect in small groups on the theme of 'renewing hope' and what they would take away. Concluding, he spoke of the positive feel of the day and, quoting the final verses in Paul's Letter to the Philippians, he asserted, "We're in this together!"

12. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 1830 to 2100 on Thursday 15 May (changed from 18 June) at St Paul's Church, Fisherton Anger, Salisbury, Wilts. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 25 April.