



DIocese of Salisbury

SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD MINUTES OF THE 113th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT ST PAUL'S CHURCH FISHERTON ANGER ON THURSDAY 15 MAY 2014

1. **Opening Worship and Presidential Address**

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word led by the Revd Maureen Allchin. The Bishop delivered the Presidential Address. He referred to the business of the evening and commented in particular on the need for continued engagement with the women bishops' legislation, the smooth progress of which could not be taken for granted. He reflected on the newly-installed Forgiveness window at St Nicholas' Church, Moreton. He had concern for the rise in foodbanks and the delays in benefits payments to low-paid workers which was often at the root of the problem. In the context of the terrible conflict in South Sudan, he acknowledged the strains in the Anglican Communion over the human sexuality debate and reported that the Bishop of Sherborne would be working with the Archbishop of Sudan and others to rebuild relationships. Meanwhile, financial aid continues to flow together with prayers and visits both ways. He also looked forward to the pilgrimage to the Holy Land which he was about to lead.

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. **Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Chairman reported that this would in future take place and the minutes would be sent out with the agenda and papers for the next meeting.

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

The Diocesan Secretary reported that, regarding the Pilling Report, national material is being prepared for facilitated discussions to take place over the coming two years. The diocese would engage with the national debate. She thanked all who had taken part in the Lent Carbon Fast and asked them to remember that actions should be ongoing. A SW Dioceses environment web site has been launched at <http://ecochurchsouthwest.org.uk/>

Apologies were received from 24 clergy, 13 laity and 1 bishop.

The Archdeacon of Sarum reported that Mrs Christine Romano, Pastoral and Patronage Secretary, would retire at the end of July. He thanked her on behalf of all the Synod for her expert help to parishes, archdeacons and others. There was sustained applause.

Synod noted the summary report of Bishop's Council business prepared by Mrs Gillian Clarke.

4. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

5. **Women in the Episcopate**

All 19 deaneries had considered the draft legislation, although not all had chosen to debate it. All had voted in favour with just two abstentions in one deanery.

Mrs Christine Corteen (General Synod), speaking in support of the Motion, gave a brief resumé of the actions taken since the November 2012 Group of Sessions where the failure of the Measure had caused disarray:

- A Steering Group had been appointed at the February 2013 Sessions which had come up with 4 options and 5 guiding principles.
- The July 2013 Sessions had produced an overwhelming vote for Option 1, the simplest possible solution.
- The November 2013 Sessions repealed the 1993 Measure.
- The March 2014 Sessions debated and quickly approved the draft legislation by a majority vote and also agreed a shortened consultation process for dioceses.

There was now much greater consensus with a feeling that those in favour of the legislation were in a place of good disagreement with those not in favour. The 34 dioceses which had so far voted had all supported the current draft measure with a 93% overall majority.

Mr Paul Boyd-Lee (General Synod), opposing the Motion, asked that the exuberance of supporters should not obscure the pain of those who opposed the legislation. For them, it was not a matter of equality but of compromising their faith. He said he was partly a spokesperson for those who were not members of Synods or who felt pressurised to vote with the majority on this issue. He acknowledged that much of the package under debate was to make provision for such people so that they would have a secure place within the Church of England. He felt, nevertheless, that to vote for the legislation when one's conscience was against it would be dishonest and to abstain would be abrogating responsibility. He hoped that the long term outcome would be the diocese truly supporting a diversity of integrities amongst its members and working towards everyone flourishing in the sense that the documentation suggested.

The Very Revd June Osborne (the Dean), speaking in support of the Motion, commented that the Church of England had been giving the false impression that one could separate priests and bishops theologically. There was evident national goodwill towards women priests. Many of those who had originally opposed the legislation now supported it. She hoped that all would now step ahead together, pledged to one another, so that there was no victory or defeat.

Mr Philip Sankey (Lyme Bay Deanery), supporting the Motion, reported that there was a Forward in Faith congregation in his deanery which had no representative on any Synod, but that there was good will between this congregation and the rest of the deanery. He hoped that its members would continue to be supported as they had been in the past.

The Revd Peter Breckwoldt (Wimborne Deanery) stated that, although opposed, he hoped that the legislation would go forward because there were greater needs for the Church to focus on. He desired the integrity of Headship to be addressed and he commented that there needed to be trust as all moved forward together. He intended to abstain at the vote.

The Revd Richard Franklin (General Synod) wished to emphasise the point that most on General Synod who had originally opposed the legislation now supported it.

Mr David Jones (Lyme Bay Deanery) stated that most non-church people had been amazed when the 2012 legislation had not been approved. He appealed to all Synod members to support what he felt was a very reasonable proposal which made provision for everyone.

Mrs Christine Corteen then moved:

“That this Synod approve the proposals embodied in the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and draft Amending Canon No 33.”

The Motion was carried as follows:

Votes	Laity	Clergy	Bishops
For	48	35	2
Against	1	0	0
Abstentions	2	3	0

The Chairman requested that Synod members now pray for the passage of the legislation through General Synod.

6. Communicating to Those Beyond the Church

The Bishop of Sherborne asked Synod members to form groups of 4 with each group to discuss and come up with an answer to the question "Why do you believe in Christianity?" Answers were posted on a notice board before being gathered for discussion later in the year by the Communications Group. Feedback will come to Synod in due course.

7. Annual Report and Accounts 2013

The Chairman of the Board of Finance introduced the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013. With more parishes paying Share in full than ever before, he thanked parishes for their support and their generosity towards local activities. He apologised to Synod for the major positive spending variance of £445,233, mainly due to unfilled clergy posts. Share percentage payment was lower, resulting in a net positive variance of £208,766. Stock markets had recovered and investment income, which was a significant contributor to reducing the Share burden, had been steady so the under-spend money would be contributed to additional investments to further benefit parishes. He reported a 0.86% drop in Share collected, the main problem lying with just 8 parishes. There had been a record January Share payment of £2,396,660 but Share payment overall would fall behind again unless those few problem parishes improved their performance. There was a need in future to address both the under-spend and the Share shortfall. He thanked parishes for their continuing efforts and colleagues in the Accounts Department, on the Finance Committee and at the Diocesan Office.

Mr Geoffrey Taylor (Chalke Deanery), referring to Page 5 of the Report, asked about when a course might be expected for Lay Worship Leaders. The Diocesan Secretary apologised that this had not yet happened due to pressure of work in the Learning for Discipleship and Ministry Team but believed that something should be available before the end of the year.

Mr Roger Holehouse (Dorchester Deanery) asked if the positive variance in clergy vacancies was due to increased difficulty in filling posts or increased turnover. The Diocesan Secretary reported that it was more the latter, but that positive steps were being taken to try to encourage clergy to come to the diocese.

The Revd Chris Tebbutt (Wimborne Deanery) made a plea on behalf of larger parishes which see big Share increases against a backdrop of high Reserves and high under-spends and find the situation hard to understand.

The Chairman then 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 2013"

Synod as the DBF approved the Motion unanimously.

8. 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"

Synod as the DBF approved the Motion unanimously.

9. Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2015

Due to previous items running slightly over time, Synod agreed to extend the meeting by 15 minutes under Standing Order 43 in order to complete the business on the agenda.

The Chairman of the Board of Finance introduced the Budget for Share Assessment 2015 which proposed yet another sub-inflation increase of 0.68%. He asked that, in return, all

parishes should pay their Share. The Chairman drew attention to the following significant items:

- Both clergy and lay staff pension contribution rates are due to increase and there is provision for this.
- Provision has been made for a 2% increase in clergy stipends and lay salaries.
- The Finance Committee is finalising plans to rebalance the investment portfolio and put a further £1.5m into equities to boost income by c £60,000 per annum and thus provide lower Share increases than would otherwise be the case.

Mr Peter Hime (Salisbury Deanery) explained that each year there was no opposition to the budget because the Chairman DBF was a master at explaining it to the Synod.

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 2015”

The Motion was carried unanimously. The Budget will be available on the diocesan web site. Synod thanked the Chairman DBF.

10. General Synod Elections

Mr Robert Key (Chairman of the House of Laity and General Synod Member) introduced the proposal and suggested that the current situation was both anomalous and unfair to Dorset. Mr Philip Sankey agreed that the proposed change would provide better representation. Mr Robert Key encouraged people to use their right to vote and then moved the Motion:

“So that the Diocese of Salisbury shall be one electoral area for the purposes of elections to the House of Laity of the General Synod, this Synod revokes the arrangement for division of the Diocese into two electoral areas.”

The Motion was carried nem con.

11. Questions

The Revd Peter Breckwoltd (Wimborne Deanery) asked: “Has the Most Rev Canon Dr Daniel Deng Bul, on behalf of Episcopal Church of Sudan and South Sudan, broken fellowship with Salisbury diocese and as a consequence the Church in Sudan and South Sudan are refusing all monies from Salisbury because of the stance that has been taken over Same Sex Marriage by some in this diocese, and if this is the case why has this decision not been circulated to local churches who support churches in that region?”.

The Bishop responded that the Archbishop of the Sudan had not broken fellowship with the Diocese of Salisbury. He had expressed concern following publication of the Pilling Report and also with Bishop Nicholas' views on same-sex marriage. There were currently some difficulties in relation to funding but Christian Aid would, if necessary, assist with the distribution of aid from the Diocese of Salisbury. Conversations and meetings were still taking place and the Bishop of Sherborne had been asked to lead in rebuilding relationships. In this context he had been invited to meet with the Archbishop and his bishops in Juba later in the year. The Diocese of Salisbury remained as committed as ever to praying for our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Sudan and in South Sudan. When the picture was clearer, this would be communicated to the Diocese.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday 15 November 2014 at the Amesbury Baptist Centre. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 22 September 2014.