

Diocesan Synod

Report from session at Amesbury Baptist Church, Saturday 15 November 2014

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1. **Presidential Address**

The Bishop of Salisbury referred to his recent appointment as lead bishop for environmental matters, saying nothing will happen without prayer and spirituality as the basis of what we do.

If the last century was defined by the First World War, it ended with hope after the fall of the Berlin Wall, end of Apartheid and movements suggesting new global relationships like Make Poverty History. This century is being defined by the terrorism of 9/11 and the responses to it. Gerard W Hughes has said we are in a severe crisis of the church and the whole human race. Despite technical development we have become unhinged, losing the link between our words and actions.

Lonely Planet's listed Salisbury as 7th top place in the world to visit in 2015, and the Cathedral's plans a major Magna Carta events programme. Attendees were asked to note Sunday 14 June for a Diocesan Pilgrimage from Old Sarum to the Cathedral for Evensong.

Évreux and Latvia give fresh ideas on what it means to be European, while the Sudans remind us of the need to make a real difference. Kajo Keji recently received a new truck courtesy of Devizes Deanery. The Bishop of Sherborne is visiting the ECSSS House of Bishops next week.

The Church of England's is committed to 'Shared Conversations' about sexuality, particularly same sex relationships. 12 representatives, from a range of ages, views, sexualities and genders, will attend weekend regional consultation. Anyone in the Diocese can apply by sending the Bishop a note and a brief CV to express interest. There will be a report to General Synod in July 2016.

For the General Election, the Bishop requested parishes consider hustings to connect with the issues, the process and the community. The election of representatives for General Synod is also important, to give proper time to a range of issues all together and back in dioceses.

He concluded by saying, "We will be giving thanks for their ministry on the eve of the measure for the ordination of women as bishops becoming law on Monday. So we will move towards Advent and renewed hope. Thanks be to God."

Download the Address here: www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/whos-who/synods/diocesan-synod/2014.05%20Diocesan%20Synod-%20Presidential%20Address.pdf

2. **Minutes of the last meeting, matters arising and notices**

Minutes were approved with no commentary. The impending promulgation of women bishops legislation and rescinding of the Episcopal Act 1993 were announced. Diocesan Surveyor John Carley retires at the end of the year; delegates are invited to send a cheque to Church House.

RIP: John Walmsley and Paddy Bartholomew.

3. **The Church and the Environment**

The Bishop of Salisbury introducing, said, "Environment is seen as an add-on... but it's one of the five marks of mission": emotive, engaging and appealing to young people.

The Revd Michael Perry gave a theological contribution, speaking of the wonder of creation and quoting Colossians 1:16: 'all things hold together in Christ', recommending a 'horizontal' theology where we serve and protect creation, not a 'top-down' theology of domination,.

David Morgan mentioned practical examples such as God's Acre, Living Churchyards, Wilton electricity, Eco-congregations, Wimborne and Christian Aid campaigns, low-carbon buildings, secondary glazing and insulation, energy efficient doors and the 2014 Carbon Fast.

The Diocesan Environment Group's plans include solar panels on clergy houses, reworking guidance notes, devising special Sunday services, the Paris 2015 Climate Change Conference and work with other dioceses.

Parish options include the 2015 Carbon Fast; prayer and fasting for the climate on the first day of the month; low-energy and LED lights; banning disposable cups; special Sunday services; small-group study materials; renewables such as PV panels, biomass boilers or air source heat pumps; being an eco-congregation; appointing 'green champions'; visiting Hilfield Friary; and making sure the environment is on the PCC's agenda. The Environment Group can supply speakers.

Simon Dawson (Alderbury) raised the issue of pollution due to being car-based; Charlie Hodgson (Shrinking the Footprint) pointed to success in banning CFCs and the need to consult widely and ecumenically; Nigel Lloyd (General Synod) queried architects' commitment and training in this area; Norma Aitchison (Wimborne) spoke on being an eco-congregation and recommended having PV panels on the roof.

4. Renewing Hope - Pray, Grow, Serve

The Bishop of Salisbury said he received feedback from 60% of parishes through 'Let Us Talk'. Most want their churches to be open and outward-facing, serving the community. Being connected whether through ecumenical links, networks such as New Wine, and initiatives such as Energising Local Ministry helps.

Well led churches have a sense of purpose and mission. Culturally, being an "elderly church" can be a strength. More is going on than just Sunday services, from schools work to weekday provision to Messy Church to volunteering. The Bishop wants to create a culture that is about renewing hope... to pray, grow and serve in the manner of Jesus Christ."

'PRAY'

Prayer and Bible study are a key part of Bishop's Staff meetings, along with sharing hopeful stories. The Bishop asked, "What has renewed our hope since last Synod?" After group discussion, he observed Synod members had been animated by telling the stories.

'GROW'

Christ came that we might have life abundant: if we don't become bigger people through Church are we worth joining? 60% in the UK describe as Christians; 85% have visited a church at least once in last year; baptisms, weddings, funerals add to the attendance figures of 1m on Sun, 1.3m a week. Please remember, our statistics are only as good as your returns.

Church of England dioceses are mostly declining in attendance, including Salisbury. There is considerable internal variation: 45% of our parishes have declined, 34% have grown and 21% are roughly the same. We are a diocese with a large rural component and a small church is not necessarily a failed big church. Changing from 1% annual decline to 1-3% growth in numbers would make a big difference to us.

'SERVE'

The Christian life is rooted in the service of others. One way is our commitment to being a Christian presence in every community, through the parish system. The inherited parish model still serves well here despite strains. Churches also need to be entrepreneurial, hence the importance of, Ministry for Mission (M4M) and ELM. We also need to develop some non-parochial experiments like Poole Missional Communities.

There is a need to find new vocations, lay and ordained. This is to feature in the planned tour of Deaneries next year. All are welcome, and it is important that key leaders make an effort to attend. Each Deanery will be asked the same questions during a 90-minute session.

Next steps

The hope is that 'Pray-Grow-Serve' will become an inspiring framework, renewing hope for us as a

Diocese. The next stage will be to think much harder about what it is to live as Christians: to grow, explore our vocation and serve.

Roger Holehouse (Dorchester) queried whether we were wise in clinging to existing structures. The Bishop responded that if you close a local CofE church, people don't transfer allegiance. Michael McHugh (Pewsey) concurred, mentioning the Arthur Rank Centre's findings that closing a church or chapel loses the congregation, as the Methodist Church has found. The Bishop said he hoped to set an agenda enabling growth, focussed on core priorities.

Download the Bishop's speaking note here: http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/whos-who/synods/diocesan-synod/2014.11%20Bishops%20Presentation%20on%20Renewing%20Hope%20Deanery%20Visits.pdf/at_download/file

5. Ministry for Mission (M4M)

The Archdeacon of Sarum, Alan Jeans, and the Revd Penny Joyce presented. Penny Joyce's post is funded externally until the end of 2015; objectives have been met so far, including training events and efforts to start new initiatives.

A Clergy Conference survey and Articles of Enquiry led to a mapping project, looking at type and location of projects, composition of leadership, and training needs, with results available by the end of 2014. Important success factors are: collaborative leadership with clergy and laity, welcome to all, being intentional about growth and relevant community contacts. 1 in 3 parishes are trying new things. Nurture, time and money are all required. Links between parishes and school resulted in many new initiatives on school premises. Confirmations are a vital part of this, with 90% coming from parishes running discipleship programmes. More post-confirmation programmes are needed.

700 places were taken on courses run in 2014. Over half of all new initiatives are led by lay people. The 46 Messy Churches in the diocese have seen growth. 'Messy Church Hubs' gather practitioners for mutual support and training.

Alan Jeans observed that developing new congregations requires new personnel and a 'mission imperative'. 'Currently, half of our parishes are open to plans and support.

The need to manage training needs, foster traditional structure alongside new patterns of ministry, promote stories of projects, and fund an ongoing post were stressed. New housing estates will see the Diocese's population grow by 120-150,000.

Mary Gange (Children's Society) said the best way to reach parents is via children. Chris Tebbutt (Wimborne) added that Aldhelm Mission Fund money is available for parish projects [www.salisbury.anglican.org/mission/funding]. Peter Breckwoldt (Wimborne) remarked that the need for church planting means we have to learn from London and Winchester. The Bishop of Sherborne responded that there would be a 2015 conference with Andy Perry. Sarah Gooch (Stonehenge) asked for clarification that the 60,000 new homes included military quarters: Alan Jeans confirmed.

6. Cathedral Annual Report

The Dean said she believed the Cathedral should be accountable to the Diocese, for reasons of shared mission rather than finance. No parish share goes towards the Cathedral. Citing the mission statement, "Making a difference for God through exceptional worship and outreach", she noted that this meant saying yes to some things and saying no to others. In 2013-2014, the Cathedral staff set 59 goals and achieved 50 of them (86%).

Goals included impact of worship and inspiration on visitors through reordering spaces, services and the visible, audible rhythm of cathedral life; Little Paradise and really good toilets; almost there with North side repairs; successful fundraising; arts such as Helaine Blumenfeld, John Maine and Bruce Munro; a refurbished Refectory; a new website; acknowledging and addressing struggles such as legacy campaign, variable visitor numbers, staff capacity and mission links with the diocese; preparing for Magna Carta; work with wider bodies such as the Trussell Trust and Stanford University, USA; and social enterprise schemes.

The Dean hoped 2015 would be a wonderful Magna Carta year when partnering with parishes became the priority goal.

Report page is: www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/about-us-governance/annual-review-and-accounts

7. Education Annual Report

After lunch, Canon Harold Stephens, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) asked to record Synod's gratitude for Chris Shepperd's work as Director of Education. He then commended his successor Joy Tubbs. Joy thanked Synod for her warm reception. The DBE's core work is the distinctiveness of church schools. DBE influence has increased as Local Authorities' has diminished and DfE expectations grow. A school improvement consultant has been engaged and new partnerships forged.

The Partnership Service Agreement (PSA) comprises 133 schools and a 'tailored' approach to meeting educational and leadership needs. Most church schools in the diocese and most have subscribed. Info: www.salisbury.anglican.org/schools/by-category/psa

Two sponsored academies in Poole and Salisbury are a significant responsibility. Each has its own challenges and DBE is looking to secure their future, strengthen leadership, build parish-school relationships and help pupils achieve as much as possible. The Diocesan Education Centre supports outstanding work, brings in revenue and is often full.

'Transforming Lives' is a simple leaflet with the DBE vision and priorities. *Download it here:* www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/schools1/publications/2014%20Transforming%20Lives-%20RE-%20CW-%20Spirituality.pdf

The Revd William Lang (Devizes) asked how well DBE knew the schools and how to help. Mrs Tubbs responded that staff have made several visits to the 130 schools, with a further 30 approached. The PSA is the vehicle for the required support; prioritising maximises the resources. Archdeacon Jeans asked whether DBE is talking to developers of the 60,000 new homes. Mrs Tubbs replied that they are.

7a. Motion

Canon Stephens noted that the Diocese of Salisbury is said to have the biggest Education Board in the world. A major report recommends restructuring. This formal Motion needs Secretary of State approval, has official support from the existing DBE, and Bishop's Council's general approval.

13 skills-based, responsive members rather than 43; up to 2 could be co-opted as required. The 4 existing committees would feed in, but not necessarily be members of the Board. Synod could nominate co-options. DBE would be accountable to Synod.

Christopher Fielden (Bradford) seconded the motion.

Perry Chadwick-Healey (Calne) asked if there would be an open mind regarding teachers from non-outstanding schools. Canon Stephens said there would be. Paul Boyd-Lee (General Synod) asked how skillsets would be determined, and inquired about ex-officio nominations. Canon Stephens replied that there was a wide range of skills on the list and that co-options could plug any gap. Debbie McIsaac (Alderbury) asked if it was possible to have no limit to terms. Canon Stephens replied that no problems had arisen but it could be discussed.

The vote was carried overwhelmingly, with one against and one abstention.

8. Gender Justice

The Dean began the presentation, proposing discussion in more detail at the next Synod. Gender-based violence is a global problem, contributing to poverty. This human rights issue is highlighted by the UN. She discussed her recent trip to Kerala, and alarming statistics from Lesotho and Pery.

Surveys show that, in armed conflict, it is more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier.

Steve Long, Chairman of the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group and former Deputy Chief Constable for Wiltshire, said that gender-based violence impacts mainly on women and girls. Abuse is mainly about control. 630,000 incidents of domestic violence are reported each year, with 6000 in Wiltshire, compared to 250 in 1995. Police training and setting-up of domestic violence

units contributed to the rise in reporting, but only 35% of incidents are reported and, on average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before her first call to the police.

There were three further questions for Synod to consider.

- How can you raise awareness across the diocese of the scale and nature of the problem?
- What practical steps could you take to improve the support of victims of domestic abuse?
- What are you going to do with the Mothers' Union leaflet on your chair?

Chris Corteen (General Synod) observed that abuse is more prevalent than we are aware, and that debate needed to be sensitive to abuse experienced or witnessed by members of Synod. Ann Howard (Mothers' Union) said that white ribbons, leaflets, posters and prayers are all available as part of the '16 Days' campaign (www.salisbury.anglican.org/mission/mothers-union/16-days).

Robert Key, chairing, said this would form part of the Social Justice agenda. He asked for Synod's agreement to return to the topic in February. The vote was carried with no disagreement or abstention. Synod was asked to contact Lucinda Herklots, Diocesan Secretary on this.

9. General Synod and Diocesan Synod Elections 2015

There were no items to discuss.

10. Questions

Sherborne PCC asked a question about the link with the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church (LELC): what activities were going on and was it was appropriate to continue the link in light of "the current Archbishop's antagonism to the ministry of women." Robert Key read a written response: the matter was being looked at. Following up, David Smart (Sherborne) asked for events to be added to the website and inquired would there be a Committee meeting soon. Robert Key replied that the Diocesan Secretary would oversee web updating and look into the Committee situation

After the Bishop's prayer & blessing, Synod closed at 1510.

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