



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

**SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD
MINUTES OF THE 115th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, CORFE MULLEN
ON SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2015**

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. Approval of Minutes of last meeting, Notices, Co-options and Apologies

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2014 were approved.

Synod formally noted the resignations of the Bishop of Sherborne and the Archdeacon of Dorset and the death of Andrew Johnson, Diocesan Registrar. Cathedral evensong on 19 April at 4.30 pm will be an opportunity to thank the Bishop of Sherborne. Any contributions towards a leaving gift may be sent to the Diocesan Accountant (details on the diocesan web site). There will be a service of remembrance for Andrew Johnson at the Cathedral on 2 May at 5 pm. The Bishop has appointed Mrs Sue de Candole as Acting Registrar and Legal Officer. The Bishop outlined the timetable for appointing a new Archdeacon of Dorset and the process and timetable for appointing a new Bishop of Sherborne.

The Bishop recommended to Synod the House of Bishops' pastoral letter regarding the forthcoming General Election.

Amending Canons No 33 and 32 were promulgated.

The Diocesan Secretary drew members' attention to hand-outs on the subjects of Lent Carbon Fast 2015, the Magna Carta programme and pilgrimage, the Diocesan Synod elections and the General Synod Digest.

Synod expressed its thanks to the Corfe Mullen team for providing refreshments.

Apologies were received from 22 clergy, 14 laity and 1 bishop.

3. Social Justice

The Archdeacon of Sherborne introduced the members of the Group and asked that if anyone wished to join the Group, or become a Social Justice Champion, they get in touch with Mr Colin Brady the Social Justice Programme Manager. Synod noted the report of the Social Justice Working Group for the year 2014. The Archdeacon drew particular attention to the work of the Gypsy and Travellers' Support Group and the Revd Jonathan Herbert, the new Chaplain to this community. He also wished to celebrate the growth of the Credit Union movement and the launch the previous week of the Churches' Mutual Credit Union. Synod watched a video clip of interviews from the first Social Justice Conference which had had over 100 attendees.

The Bishop of Ramsbury, referring to the bishops' pastoral letter, said that the key question is "what values do we as Christians stand for?". He commented that the Scriptures are profoundly political and that Christians should be involved in political debate. In this context it was good that the letter had annoyed some people because it had stirred them up and started a dialogue.

Synod then divided into twelve groups to consider the questions:

- What are the values we bring as Christians (to the election)?
- What are the issues we want to see debated?
- How can we make a difference?

Feedback included the following comments:

Values

- Time and patience and having a longer-term view.
- Wanting to be sensitive to others' point of view.
- Commitment to our communities.
- Everyone matters – and working to convey this, especially to young people.
- Justice.
- Importance of honesty in our debates.
- We are long-suffering and persistent.
- An over-riding commitment to others and equality before God.
- Belief in the parish system as a means of demonstrating our care of others.
- Sad that people tend to be valued in terms of their monetary earnings.
- A person is not of less value because of their gender, work status, ethnic group, etc.
- Important that the values we project are derived from our theology.

Issues

- Devolution and delegation of power.
- Impact of the drive for efficiency on human beings.
- Cynicism, particularly amongst young people.
- Individual choice versus the common good.
- Apathy.
- How we deal with resourcing responsibly and fairly.
- How we deal with refugees.
- The out-of-balance economy which needs re-shaping around environmental and social needs.
- Sustainability of the current model of the NHS. Also the environment. The problem that political parties can't safely debate either of these at the moment.

Making a difference

- Listen well.
- Get to know the candidates and those around us – be in dialogue
- Organise and take part in hustings.
- Encourage hustings and politics education in schools.
- Challenge, respect, listen to and value each other.
- Pray purposefully.
- Consider how we deal with refugees.
- Get young people to blog and comment.
- Treat people with dignity and give them quality time.
- Speak truth to power and never be afraid.
- Encourage volunteering.
- Encourage the media to take a more positive rôle.
- Parishes could be hubs for engaging and for encouraging change.

Group facilitators were asked to feed back more fully to Mr Colin Brady post meeting. The Bishop of Ramsbury encouraged everyone to get involved with the electoral debate, attend hustings, ask the deeper questions and vote. There is guidance on the diocesan web site.

The Social Justice Awards

Social Justice Awards reward great examples of care and volunteering. The Archdeacon of Sherborne presented awards to:

1. EPIC, a Pewsey Deanery initiative supporting young people along the path to employment.
2. The Footprints Project, based in Dorchester, which is reducing the risk of re-offending.
3. Salisbury Cathedral Magna Carta Project.

4. The DAC Awards

The Chairman of the DAC, Bishop David Hallatt, presented awards to:

1. Blandford Forum St Peter and St Paul for restoration of the landmark cupola plus essential repairs and restoration and improved access. The parish had produced very well considered and developed proposals.
2. Calne St Mary for the new heating scheme which had been carried out with minimal impact on both fabric and archaeology.
3. Mere St Michael the Archangel for excellent conservation of its nationally important James II coat of arms.
4. Moreton St Nicholas for the recent installation of Whistler's Forgiveness Window following good consultation and process.
5. Wareham Lady St Mary for sensitive incorporation of a new boiler into an existing very interesting Victorian heating system.

5. The Sudan Link

The Bishop reported on the difficulties caused for the Episcopal Church in the Sudan and South Sudan by the Church of England debate on human sexuality and, in particular, those caused by his own views. For these reasons the Provincial Archbishop of Sudan had suspended the formal Sudan Link. Elements of the Link concerned with the relationships at personal, parish and deanery level should continue to be encouraged, supported and increased. The Bishop continued to have good relationships with a number of the diocesan bishops of Sudan. He spoke of the need to pray, hope and maintain the partnership as best we can. He had a strong commitment to solving this unfortunate state of affairs, but it would take time. When asked whether he had considered retracting his stated views the Bishop said that although he had considered it he would not retract because he believed in what he had said. He had, however, issued an apology which had been well received in the Sudans. Synod noted the written report.

6. Q & A with General Synod Members

Synod noted that the General Synod elections would take place later this year and discussed with current General Synod members what challenges and opportunities are likely to arise over the next five years. The General Synod members participating were Mr Paul Boyd-Lee, Mr Ian Bromilow, Mrs Christine Corteen, the Ven Alan Jeans, Mr Robert Key, the Revd Canon Nigel Lloyd, Mrs Debbie McIsaac and the Revd Chris Strain. Synod had previously taken note of information on the Archbishops' task groups (on Resourcing the Future, Resourcing Ministerial Education, Simplification, Discerning and Nurturing Senior Leaders and Optimising the Rôle of the NCIs). Comments about these included:

- The Groups need to come back to General Synod with a level of accountability.
- It is hoped that they will deliver positive outcomes.
- General Synod has to make great efforts to make sure it is not marginalised.
- General Synod can be reactionary and cumbersome so the Task Groups and the changes being driven by the Archbishops are very welcome.
- Those who stand for the new General Synod should be supportive of change.
- The "how do we help others to flourish?" approach, in the context of the women bishops debate, had been very encouraging. Hopefully this ethos will be the mark of the new Synod.

Diocesan Synod members asked what the time commitment would be for membership of General Synod. Responses included:

- There are two to three meetings per year, in London or York, lasting three to five days each.
- There is provision for some re-imburement of wages and other expenses.
- There is a considerable amount of reading and research in advance of each meeting. (although some can be done on the train travelling to meetings so potential candidates should not be put off).
- There are opportunities to become more deeply involved working, for example, on committees and advisory groups.
- The General Synod needs “ordinary” people to be part of the mix.
- It is a wonderful way to serve the Church.

Other subjects discussed included:

- The Lord Green report was requested by the Archbishops, not the General Synod. The Archbishops have made no firm decision as to whether or not to refer it to the Synod.
- Diocesan Synod members find the General Synod Digest (edited by the Revd Canon Nigel Lloyd) helpful and would like it to continue.
- Fairer Share membership is currently declining and we need to turn this around through the Renewing Hope process.
- As clergy numbers decline, it is necessary to address the matter of how we use the laity.
- Unlike some dioceses, we are fortunate in that we are financially solvent.

Synod noted that some of their current General Synod members intended to stand again for election, some definitely would not and some were undecided.

7. Magna Carta

The Archdeacon of Sarum introduced himself as “Diocesan Champion for Magna Carta” and reported on the plans for the Diocesan Pilgrimage on 14 June. He encouraged those present to ensure that the pilgrimage poster was placed in churches and as many people as possible invited to attend. More details on the pilgrimage are available on the diocesan web-site.

The Archdeacon also encouraged Synod members to take part in some of the many Magna Carta celebrations at the Cathedral during 2015, as outlined in the booklet that had been circulated and he emphasised that there would be no charge.

8. Constitutions

The Revd Canon Antony MacRow-Wood, Chairman House of Clergy, proposed the motion on behalf of Bishop’s Council. It was agreed to consider and vote on each item separately.

He asked first for Synod support for a minor amendment to the original proposals regarding changes to the size and composition of Bishop’s Council to replace reference to “Sherborne” and “Ramsbury” with “the Archdeaconries of Sherborne and Dorset” and “the Archdeaconries of Wilts and Sarum”. Synod voted to approve this amendment nem con. Synod then approved the amended proposal to change the size and composition of the Bishop’s Council nem con.

Synod approved amendments to the constitution and rules of Deanery Synods nem con.

Synod then considered the proposed amendments to the size and composition of the DAC. The Revd Pip Martin (Wimborne Deanery) proposed an amendment to remove reference to reducing the minimum number of clergy from 3 to 2. This was seconded by the Revd William Lang. Synod discussed and voted on the amendment which was defeated with 18 in favour, 24 against and 14 abstentions. In response to a question about inclusive language, the Acting Registrar confirmed that, in law, legislation that used the term “he” should be read as referring to both “he” and “she”. Synod then approved the proposed amendments to the DAC Constitution.

The following motion was then voted on and approved by Synod with 2 against and 8 abstentions:

“That this Synod approve amendments to the size and composition of Bishop’s Council; also amendments to the Constitution and Rules of Deanery Synods and to the DAC Constitution.

9. To Note

9.1 Synod noted the progress report on the Diocese’s response to the issue of Gender Based Violence.

9.2 Synod noted the Finance Report for December 2014.

10. Questions

There were no questions.

11. Any other business

11.1 Mr Robert Key, Chairman House of Laity, recommended members to read the News and Events section of the Diocesan web site and be impressed and enthused by the huge range of things going on.

11.2 The Bishop reported that, on behalf of the Church of England, he would be attending a meeting of bishops taking place in South Africa to discuss the environment. He asked for Synod’s prayers both for himself and the others taking part. There will be a blog to follow and a report when he returns.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 1830 to 2100 on Wednesday 17 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 4 May.