



DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD MINUTES OF THE 117th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT AMESBURY BAPTIST CENTRE ON SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2015

1. **Opening Worship and Presidential Address**

Members took part in the Eucharist and the Bishop delivered the Presidential Address. This was based on Romans and the relational aspects of the Christian life. 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 promulgated an Act of Convocation, being a Resolution Approving the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy. The document is available on the Church of England web-site. Clergy will be informed of changes to diocesan guidelines and policies in due course.

The Diocesan Secretary also promulgated Amending Canon No 35, removing the requirement in Canon B12 for the Bishop to grant authorisation to distribute the Holy Sacrament. Regulations on the administration of Holy Communion have been published and are on the diocesan web site: <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/whos-who/registry/communion>. Guidelines are being developed by the National Church.

Apologies were received from 14 clergy and 10 laity.

The Diocesan Secretary reminded members of the need for nominations to the Vacancy in See Committee by 9 November.

The House of Laity co-opted Mrs Sue Oldrey and Mrs Ann Howard (Diocesan President of the Mother's Union). It was noted that Mrs Howard would step down as President at the end of December and Synod thanked her for her dedicated service in this role.

The House of Clergy co-opted Canon Harold Stephens (Director of Education), Canon Ann Philp and the Very Revd Alan Woods (Clergy Retirement Officers) and the Revd John Cowburn (Chaplain to the Deaf).

The Bishop announced that Canon Sue Groom had been appointed Archdeacon of Wilts and it was hoped that she would join the diocese in February 2016.

3. **Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow**

Synod noted the outline of the Renewing Hope vision and the linked priorities for Bishop's Council. The Bishop reflected that this was creating energy around the diocese – although, of course, not everywhere. He recapped his deanery visits and the questions he had posed:

- What do you pray for?
- Whom do you serve?
- How will you grow?

Synod then broke into discussion groups to consider the questions:

1. What are the things that have renewed your hope?
2. What are you hoping for in the life of this Synod?

Responses were written down and collected for later collation and analysis, but brief initial feedback included:

Question 1

- Engaging young people with a new youth centre with a focus on the things that they want to do.
- Energising local ministry with a group of very small congregations learning to work together.
- Offering prayer around a council estate and finding that this has touched lives and made a difference.
- The wide range of activities now taking place under the mantle of ministry and mission.

Question 2

- Investigating how Synod can support and encourage other forms of Church.
- Encouraging ministry and growth in the rural Church.
- Vocations work.
- Recognition of the importance of communicating well and how we relate to the media.

4. Diocesan Synod Induction

The Diocesan Secretary gave an overview of the diocese emphasising its richness and diversity. The majority of parishes are rural and although church attendance is high (at 3% of population) compared with the national average, 52% of parishes have fewer than 30 members so there is plenty of potential for growth. Synod then heard brief outlines of current work and priorities from the Mission Council and the Learning for Discipleship and Ministry Team. The Finance Committee was covered at Item 6.

Mission Council

The Archdeacon of Sarum and Mr Stephen Dawson (Chairman and Secretary respectively of Mission Council) reported that the Council had recently realigned its priorities around Pray, Serve, Grow and was reconsidering its membership to reflect this. They sought to develop more effective partnerships and to work “smarter” with diocesan colleagues. They recognised that there was a need to be very intentional about going for growth.

In response to questions the following comments were made:

- The Council has been slow to engage with local authorities, such as Wiltshire Council, but a report had been commissioned to help understand, amongst other things, where the opportunities for such engagement might lie.
- Regarding new housing estates, the Council is looking at which ecumenical groups are affected and where it can feed into partnerships.
- The Council needs to prioritise its efforts whilst at the same time tapping into the will to achieve things that comes from working with enthusiasts.

Learning for Discipleship and Ministry Team

Canon Jane Charman (Director of Ministry) and the Bishop of Ramsbury (Chairman LDMT) reported that they would be working closely with the Mission Council. Their four priorities were:

1. Developing disciples.
2. Nurturing vocations.
3. Equipping ministers (including a new training pathway for those ministering in rural contexts).
4. Growing Church.

The department had been re-structured with new staff appointed to support these aims.

5. Syria and the Refugees – The Churches’ Response

Synod spent a short time of quiet to remember the situation before Mr Colin Brady, Social Justice Manager, spoke to the subject. He referred to our own migrations and those of our ancestors. He spoke of the strong tradition in scripture about care for the stranger. He reported that Churches Together has been working with various bodies to see what can be done to help refugees, and not just those from Syria. Our first response has to be prayer and beyond that we can:

- Support our local and national politicians as they work on these issues.

- Give sacrificially.
- Challenge untruths and hatred.

He commented that if we as churches and individuals struggle to welcome the strangers already in our midst, how can we hope to welcome the strangers yet to arrive among us.

Mr Paul Boyd-Lee (General Synod) reported that the General Synod would be debating the migrant crisis on 24 November and asked Diocesan Synod members to let him know of anything they might like him to feed into the process.

The Bishop asked Synod to pray for Mr Brady in his work in this area.

6. Election of New DBF Chairman

The Bishop paid tribute to the out-going Chairman DBF, Mr Gil Williams, who sadly could not be present on this occasion due to ill health. He spoke of widespread public acknowledgement of the very great contribution Mr Williams had made to the diocese which, in his capacity as Chairman DBF, he had served for nearly 10 years. He had engaged with people and established good relationships which had translated into the current over 99% Share collection and a 0% Share increase for 2016. As a “thank you” the DBF would be making a contribution to Lepira – a cause close to Mr Williams’ heart since his early life in India. If members would like to make any further donations, these should be directed to the Diocesan Accountant. The Bishop then moved:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance elects Mr Nigel Salisbury as Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance for the triennium 2015-2018.”

The motion was passed unanimously.

Mr Salisbury then paid his own tribute to Mr Williams before commenting more generally on the work of the Finance Committee whose main purpose was to ensure that resources are available for Mission and Ministry. The main points mentioned were that:

- Finances are in a strong position.
- We have a rigorous budgeting system and Synod is recommended to read the Budget Guide 2016 <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/parishes/finance/2015%20Finance-%20Approved%20Budget%20Guide%202016.pdf>
- There are challenges ahead, for instance we have ambitious plans in respect of vocations and growth.
- Although our diocesan church attendance is higher than the national average, our giving is considerably lower so there is scope for improvement.

He commented that we have much to be thankful for and that our current message is about continuity, serving mission and a collegiate approach. Finally he asked that if there were people in the diocese with talents which they would be willing to use for the benefit of the Finance Committee they should be asked to contact him.

In response to a question, the Archdeacon of Sarum clarified that although parish Share category assessments are sent to deanery standing committees for review, they are also sent to Archdeacons who may intervene. It is important to maintain a dialogue, otherwise it is easy for parishes to drive a steady downward momentum in categories.

Mr Roger Holehouse (Dorchester deanery) made the point that, regarding our apparent low giving figures, the national statistics base their calculation on our high electoral roll which makes our giving look low compared with dioceses with low rolls. This is why the Fairer Share is based on a much more detailed Count of actual church attendance and not on the church electoral roll.

The Archdeacon of Dorset suggested a simple diagram might help new Synod members better understand our structures, and was then tasked with producing one.

7. Education Annual Report

The Revd Canon Harold Stephens, Chairman of the Board of Education, introduced Mrs Mandy Christopher (Deputy Director of Education) and Mr Giles Pugh (DBE Finance Manager). They all then introduced the Annual Report to Synod from the Diocesan Board of Education. They explained that the DBE is a charity which receives no national funding and only 20% of its funding from the DBF; the rest it has to earn. Part of this earning was the Partnership Service Agreements which the DBE entered into with schools and which an increasing number of them were buying into. The Pray, Serve, Grow vision is at the heart of the DBE's agenda and its priorities and they referred Synod members to the Board's strategic plan 2015 – 2018. They made the point that the children in our church schools are the biggest regularly worshipping community in the diocese.

The Chairman DBE introduced Mr Neil Larkey and the Young People's Confirmation Project which is looking into and developing best practice to encourage more people to be confirmed.

The Chairman DBE then explained the rationale for greatly reducing the size of the Board of Education and moved:

“That the Diocesan Synod confirms the appointment of those nominated to the new Diocesan Board of Education 2015 – 2018.”

The motion was passed unanimously.

The Chairman DBE extended an invitation to Synod members to visit the Diocesan Education Centre in Wilton.

8. The Church and the Environment

Mr David Morgan, Chairman of the Diocesan Environment Group, informed Synod about the Green Ribbon Campaign in support of positive action at the UN Climate Change Summit (30 November – 11 December). This supported the 5th Mark of Mission. Our political leaders need to know that we are praying for them and that we believe this matters.

Mrs Elizabeth Perry shared stories of some of those peoples now affected by climate change. These are available as transcripts from Mrs Perry and she asked that the stories be taken out into our parishes and that people be encouraged to pray. She also spoke of her impending pilgrimage walk to Paris. Pilgrims from all over the world were setting out to converge at the Paris Summit.

In response to a question about what positive actions were being undertaken to reduce diocesan and personal carbon footprints in the diocese, Mr Morgan cited:

- Work by the Property Department to improve the carbon credentials of vicarages including putting solar PV on some clergy houses.
- Eco-Congregations re-launching next year as Eco-Church and the hope that many congregations will wish to be involved.

Additionally, the Revd Maria Shepherdson (Marlborough deanery) reported that pagan leaders, atheists and buddhists were joining our campaign as a matter of the utmost importance. The Bishop of Ramsbury challenged everyone to seek to reduce their own carbon footprint. Mr David Morgan will take part in the London Climate March on 29 November and invited others to join him: <http://www.campaigncc.org/climatemarchlondon>

The Bishop asked that the diocese show its prayerful support for the campaign and that people should wear the green campaign ribbons and clergy the green collars.

9. Cathedral Annual Report

The Dean tabled the Cathedral Annual Report which covered the period April 2014 to April 2015, but focussed her report to Synod on the Cathedral's hosting of the major exhibition and related events entitled: "Spirit of Justice, Power of Words" which had been part of much

wider celebrations of the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta in 2015. The year had seen a 15% increase in visitor numbers. She then referred Synod to the Cathedral's draft Master Plan, which represented Chapter's thoughts and aspirations and which was out for public consultation until the end of the year. She asked Synod members to respond to the online questionnaire (hard copies available from Mrs Miriam Longfoot at the Diocesan Office) and to publicise the consultation widely. There would be an open day on 19 November for members of the public to come and ask questions. All were asked to pray for the Cathedral.

10. Changes to Archdeaconry Boundaries

Synod noted the current imbalance between archdeaconries and approved unanimously the motion moved by the Archdeacons of Sherborne and Dorset, on behalf of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee:

“That Salisbury Diocesan Synod approves the transfer of Blackmore Vale Deanery from the Archdeaconry of Dorset to the Archdeaconry of Sherborne.”

11. Questions

There were no questions.

12. Future Business Items

Synod members were invited to discuss and write down any suggestions for business which they would like the Synod Standing Committee (Bishop's Council) to consider bringing to future meetings. These were collected at the end of the meeting.

13. Items to Note

Synod noted the DBF Financial Report for September 2015.

14. Additional Item

Newly elected members of General Synod made themselves known and referred Diocesan Synod members to the diocesan web site where all election addresses are available for perusal. They also referred members to the General Synod web site where Sessions are streamed live and all papers are available.

15. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday 13 February 2016 at St Nicholas Church, Corfe Mullen. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 22 January 2016. Further meetings are planned for 16 June (evening) and 12 November.