



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

**SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD
MINUTES OF THE 122nd SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
ST FRANCIS CHURCH, SALISBURY
ON WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2017**

1. Opening Worship and Presidential Address

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word led by Sister Debbie Orriss. The Bishop delivered the Presidential Address. He reflected on the recent terrorist attacks and the devastating fire currently raging in Grenfell Tower. He also referred back to the murder of Jo Cox which had taken place on the day of the June Synod in 2016. He observed that there is something about how we respond to tragedy which shows we were made for goodness, as with Jo Cox's husband organising The Great Get Together to pull communities together. There are deep divisions in the country, but it is much healthier if we find ways to reach out to one another and talk openly. The, possibly prescient, theme for this year's clergy conference was to be "Faith in an Age of Uncertainty".

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

Synod approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2017. There were no matters arising. There were no co-options.

Apologies were received from 17 clergy, 13 laity and 1 bishop.

The Chairman House of Laity had stepped down so a by-election was needed to elect a new Chairman. Information and nomination forms would be sent to members of the House of Laity.

The Bishop of Ramsbury was embarking on a cycle ride from Canterbury to Rome to raise funds for the Friends of Erlestoke Prison; sponsorship would be welcome.

3. Farewell to the Dean

The Bishop, on behalf of Synod, congratulated our "outstanding" Dean on her appointment as Bishop of Llandaff and thanked her for all she had contributed both to the Cathedral and to the Diocese of Salisbury. The Dean was then presented with Dahlia "Bishop of Llandaff" - to much amusement. The Dean thanked everyone for their love and prayers and commented that she had hugely enjoyed being the servant of the Synod and Dean to the whole Diocese rather than just the Cathedral. Synod showed its appreciation with loud applause.

4. Deepening Discipleship

Synod noted the introductory paper provided by the Diocesan Discipleship Co-ordinator, Sr Debbie Orriss, which explained her approach and some of the discoveries she had made since taking up this role. She then outlined the work that has begun and also that is being planned to deepen discipleship in the diocese. This included reflecting on what helps us so that we can help others to grow in faith, exploring lay pioneer ministries and developing a discernment process, resourcing churches and creating a network of local discipleship enablers who can support their local context. Reflecting on the introductory paper and presentation, Synod then discussed in small groups the questions:

- What has struck you?
- What have we missed?
- How can we take things forward?

The group responses were collected for consideration by Sr Orriss, and a selection were read out including:

- We need to have confidence in our own faith in order to share it.
- Discipleship starts with the relationships we build in small groups.
- The “This Time Tomorrow” resource referred to by Sr Orriss looks very helpful for connecting with people.
- The lack of men and young adults in our worshipping communities is a matter for concern.
- Please include specific reference to work with children and young people.
- Please make explicit that those in leadership roles are disciples too.
- People need help to integrate faith into their wider lives.
- It would be good to see greater encouragement and affirmation of discipleship at parish level, including local training.
- It is important to come alongside people where they are rather than expecting them to come alongside us in church; please may we have ideas to help us do this.
- Working with Social Justice and EcoChurch would be good ways of bringing people into the church family.
- Personal stories and testimonies are helpful.

Sr Orriss referred to several helpful resources and advised that she had displayed a selection in the foyer for those who wished to view and discuss them with her after the meeting.

5. The DAC Awards 2017

The DAC Chairman, the Rt Revd David Hallatt, observed that our award scheme is now being emulated by other dioceses. He then presented awards from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) to representatives from two parishes for outstanding applications and schemes.

Downton St Laurence had developed the church to provide meeting and communal facilities to serve both the church and the wider community. The award was received by Mr Ken Parsons.

Warmwell Holy Trinity, with its roof in a very poor state, had undertaken a major re-roofing scheme whilst safeguarding unusual “raised tie and scissor form” roof timbers. The award was received by the Revd Dominic Doble.

The Archdeacon of Sherborne thanked Bishop David, on behalf of Synod, as he now prepared to retire as DAC Chairman. He observed that Bishop David had supported parishes and the Committee with great wisdom and theological insight.

5. Annual Report and Accounts 2016

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) began the Annual General Meeting of the DBF and introduced the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2016. He explained that, in response to suggestions from Synod and others, a review document had been distributed to all members containing information distilled from the full Report and Accounts. This would be publicised widely around the Diocese and put on the web site with the intention of improving clarity and accessibility. The review demonstrated that the Church is alive and well in the Diocese of Salisbury with good progress evident in encouraging vocations, schools work, safeguarding, social justice and fostering prayer and spirituality. In addition, our bishops have been active beyond the Diocese on the national and global stage.

Turning to the financial overview the Chairman DBF reported that we are paying for the past through safeguarding and pensions, continuing to fund the present and investing in the future. We are maintaining a strong financial position with stable income, but expenditure had increased mainly due to stipends and clergy housing costs. The balance sheet looked strong, but it should be noted that the majority of this relates to fixed assets. Share collection was down slightly and it would help the financial position if progress could be made on the payment of historic arrears as well as payment of the current Share request.

Responding to questions, the Head of Finance advised that the pie chart in the review document differed from the stipends figure in the Budget Guide because one separated out pension and NI. She will seek to present like for like in future. The Diocesan Secretary reported that the DBF had been paying off the lay staff pension deficit. A more detailed response to these questions is attached to the minutes. The Chairman DBF explained that arrears for some parishes go back to 2003 although the majority were more recent. There was also a request for a “DBF for Dummies” workshop for those Synod members who struggle to understand the financial information.

The Chairman DBF 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 2016.”

Synod as the DBF approved the Motion unanimously.

6. Appointment of Auditors

The Chairman DBF reported that Mazars had been the Board’s auditors for several years but that a review and re-tendering process had taken place and the DBF Executive recommended a move to Haysmacintyre. In response to a query, he confirmed that Synod as the DBF votes annually on the re-appointment or otherwise of its auditors.

The Chairman DBF then moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the appointment of Haysmacintyre as the auditors for the Diocesan Board of Finance.”

Synod as the DBF approved the Motion with one abstention.

7. Diocesan Budget for Share Assessment 2018

The Chairman DBF introduced the Budget for Share Assessment 2018. The proposed Share increase was 2.9% which reflected inflationary pressures together with the increased costs of safeguarding, the new Apprenticeship Levy and elements of our investing for the future such as funding vocations and discipleship. Synod as DBF then considered the Budget. The Diocesan Secretary clarified that the apparent removal of two clergy posts reflected one where external funding had been found; the other brought the total number of posts back to the 2014 level which Synod had previously decided to maintain. The balance between parish ministry and support ministries such as bishops, archdeacons and other officers of the diocese remained the same as in 2014. In response to a question as to whether adequate provision had been made for a possible major increase in inflation, the Chairman DBF said that, although hard to be certain, he believed enough had been asked for to cover the expected costs for 2018.

The Chairman DBF then moved on behalf of the DBF Executive:

“That the Diocesan Board of Finance/Synod approves the annual Budget for Share Assessment 2018.”

The Motion was approved with one member voting against and one abstention. The approved Budget Guide for 2018 will be available on the diocesan web site. Synod thanked the Chairman DBF and the members of the Finance Committee.

The Diocesan Secretary proposed an additional motion to correct the spelling of the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance which had been corrupted at Companies House:

“That the name at Companies House – Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance (The) – is changed to – Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance.”

The Motion was approved unanimously.

8. Questions

In response to a question from Mrs Carole Jones, Devizes Deanery, the Diocesan Secretary stated that the Review of 2016 would be available on the diocesan web site with a link from the E-Bulletin.

A question had been received from Mr Christopher Fielden: “Given the decision taken by the Episcopal Church of Scotland last week to permit same sex weddings in their churches, is this likely to expedite the taking of a similar decision within the Church of England?” The Bishop responded that he did not believe this decision had any direct bearing on the Church of England; there would, nevertheless, be discussions taking place and we will need to find ways of accepting people for who they are.

9. Any other business

Synod congratulated the Revd Vanessa Herrick on her appointment as Archdeacon of Harlow.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Synod will next meet from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday 18 November at a Wiltshire venue to be confirmed. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 20 September.

Answers to questions raised at Diocesan Synod 14 June 2017

1. Lay Pension Deficit

The DBF uses two pension schemes for lay staff that are provided through the National Church Pensions Board.

The first is the Lay Staff Defined Benefit Scheme. This scheme was closed to new members in 2009. The scheme was last valued in December 2013: a further valuation up to 31 December 2016 is currently being carried out. Although overall the scheme at 2013 was indeed in deficit as reported of £12.9m, the scheme covers a number of Dioceses and other church employers across the country. At any one valuation some schemes will be in surplus and some in deficit. Salisbury was in fact in surplus by £571,500 at 31 December 2013, mainly due to payments made to correct previous deficits in 2011 and strong investment returns on those payments. Because the scheme was in surplus at December 2013, the employer contribution rates were adjusted downwards from 32.3% to 29.7%. Part of the contribution goes towards paying towards the deficit. Once the results of the December 2016 valuation are known then any adjustments will be made to compensate should this be necessary.

The other scheme for lay staff is the Pension Builder Scheme which is a hybrid defined benefit/defined contribution scheme. This scheme was in surplus of £.5 m at its last valuation at December 2013. Early indications show this scheme may be in deficit at the latest valuation at 31 December 2016. The deficit is not looking substantial and will not affect members benefits, and the Pensions Board will not ask for extra payments to cover any shortfall.

2. The differences on pie charts between Annual Review and Budget Guide

Firstly the pie charts detailed in the Annual Review are based on the statutory accounts and thus the income and expenditure encompasses not just the budget for share but also the income and expenditure of all the other funds as well. The Annual review does include a reconciliation of the performance against budget back to the overall funds movement. The pie charts in the Budget Guide only reflect that element of the income and expenditure account that directly relates to the budget.

Because of this percentages on the income and expenditure on the Annual Review are not going to be comparable to those on the Budget guide as they are relating to a bigger overall expenditure.

Secondly the Stipends total on the Annual Review chart includes ERS Nic and Pensions less any stipend recharge to other departments – I will amend the wording to show this before it goes on the website to make it clearer

Thirdly the clergy pension contribution in the statutory accounts is reduced by the payments of pension that are towards the deficit as this is set off against the pension creditor so the contributions are lower than those shown in the budget for share because this element of paying for deficit is removed.

In conclusion the two pie charts are not really comparing like for like – I appreciate that this does cause confusion and is something we can think about for next year's budget guide

A very good question thank you and good food for thought!

Liz Ashmead, Head of Finance