



DIOCESE OF OXFORD

Serving Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

and

BOARD OF FINANCE

at St Andrew's Church, Hatters Lane, High Wycombe

MINUTES

Saturday 20 June 2015

All papers referred to in these minutes are available online at
www.oxford.anglican.org/diocesan-synod-papers

1. **OPENING WORSHIP**

The Revd Tim Norwood led members in a period of 'Dwelling in the world' based around Luke 10: 1-12

2. **NOTICES AND WELCOME**

The Bishop of Dorchester welcomed Synod members. He welcomed Peter Morgan, New Communities Development Officer, and asked the Synod's permission for him to address the meeting, which was granted. Bishop Colin noted with sadness the recent deaths of Bob Chapman, Deanery Treasurer of Burnham & Slough, and of the Assistant Area Dean of Aston & Cuddesdon, the Revd John Burrell. He thanked all those who had helped with refreshments. He explained that Canon Sue Booy and Judith Scott (Chairs of House of Clergy and Laity respectively) had both sent their apologies, and that, as set out in the Standing Orders Sue Booy had nominated the Revd John Tattersall to chair item 10.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2015 were approved.

4. **QUESTIONS**

A question under Standing Order 70 asked by Mr Mark Burton was answered by the Bishop of Dorchester as attached. The Revd Mark Bennet raised a supplementary question on the validity of the Usual Sunday Attendance figures which he felt gave a different picture in urban and rural areas.

5. **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

The Bishop of Dorchester spoke of the 'end of term' feeling of the synod at the completion of its three-year cycle. He thanked all those volunteers and staff who had supported its work. The new Synod would begin its work on 9 September with an induction evening and inaugural service at the Cathedral. He spoke of the disappointment that the CNC had been unable to nominate a new Bishop of Oxford. There would be some work needed to refresh the paperwork, and interviews would take place in March 2016. This means that the new Bishop will not be in post before the autumn of 2016. In the meantime, the diocese would not stand still. The posts of Director of Mission and Diocesan Director of Ordinands would be advertised very soon. Bishop's Council would be looking at the resource implications of the archdeaconry Mission Action Plans. This work would be linked with Living Faith and the national 'Reform and Renewal' agenda. The Diocese was looking to encourage spiritual and numerical growth in a number of different ways. He spoke about the way disagreement between people across the diocese is handled, referring to the forthcoming 'shared conversations' on sexuality. Robust discussions needed to take place, but in ways that recognise each other's humanity. The Oxford discussions are timetabled for next March, and will take place jointly with the Diocese of St Albans. Bishop Colin will be looking for volunteers reflecting views right across the spectrum. There will be a day at the Cathedral on 12 September on the issue of sexuality which would offer useful preparation. He hoped that some reporting back

to diocesan synod in June 2016 might be possible. For now, though, he pointed to ongoing discussion on the question of same-sex marriage elsewhere: the Canon Jeremy Pemberton case, where the Bishop of Buckingham was called as an expert witness on the relationship between Church law and doctrine; the referendum in the Republic of Ireland; the vote of the Scottish Episcopal Church; and the forthcoming meeting of the General Convention in the USA. He concluded by reiterating his thanks, and repeating the purpose of Living Faith: to join with God in creating a caring sustainable and growing Christian presence in every part of the Diocese of Oxford, enabling every Christian and every Christian community to live and share the love of God, seen in the life of Jesus Christ.

6. ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE DIOCESAN BOARDS, COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES ODS15.6

Mr Simon Richards, a member of the Bishop's Council spoke to the annual reports of the diocesan boards, councils and committees. He said it was a pleasure to present the reports which gave a brief flavour of the work undertaken to achieve the Living faith purpose. He drew members' attention to the map and which shows the scale of the diocese; and the table of share contributions which ranged from £100K to £3K. He drew attention to the extra workload being carried by Bishop Colin with the expanded archdeaconry, and his extended role as Acting Bishop of Oxford. The report on the work of Bishop's Council might only be a few words long, but it represented a great deal of work. Similarly, the report of the Board of Finance demonstrated largely good news, especially when compared to the beginning of the year. However he asked the Synod to note that one reason for the financial good health of the diocese was the high number of vacancies, which suggested a shortfall in human resources. He expressed gratitude to the buildings team who look after 450 clergy houses, and the DAC who considered a startling 643 cases in 11 meetings last year. The work in schools, he said, was exciting and it was positive to see the Church taking a lead. He pointed out that the Board of Mission had seen significant changes in key personnel, and agreed it was right to appoint a new Director in the current situation. The Mission and Pastoral Committee was looking for a new secretary and the Archdeaconry Plans were coming together. He drew attention to other areas of work that were smaller in scale but also important: the MU, PACT, the Ministry to the Deaf, and the Interfaith work, along with administration, the Board of Patronage, the work around Trustees, and Communications. 2014 had been a positive year, he said. Much had been achieved to further our purpose. The only note of caution he wanted to sound was the difficulty of finding and retaining staff. Synod approved the motion 'that this synod take note of the reports listed in paper ODS 15.6'.

7. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

The Synod adjourned for the Annual General Meeting of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance (see separate minutes). The Synod then reconvened.

8. OUTLINE REVENUE BUDGET 2016, PROJECTIONS 2017-19 AND DRAFT DEANERY SHARE APPORTIONMENT ODS 15.7

Bishop Colin introduced the item, and stressed that the Diocese of Oxford does not keep appointments open to save money, but that it sometimes takes time to make the right

appointment. He also mentioned the move to new office accommodation. We were in the due diligence phase, he said, but this was moving forward.

The Revd John Tattersall presented the outline budget and share allocation. Synod was being asked to 'note' the budget; there were likely to be changes over the summer before the budget returned in November for approval. This was a cautious budget, he said. Overall the proposed share increase is 1.25% with a provision for under-collection of 3%. The surplus shown is £220K which in a budget of £24m is under 1%. Provision for the vacancy rates has been increased, not because this was desirable but because it reflected the reality, with retirements coming up. Additional budget had been allocated for the important areas of mission, safeguarding and vocations. There was provision for a rise of 2% in stipends and salaries, but recently the Central Stipends Authority had recommended 1.5%, so this will be discussed in due course by Bishop's Council. Work is ongoing on the office move, but the plan is that this does not have a significant impact on the revenue budget. A contribution to national training costs is a significant factor in the budget. Bishop's Council would be considering the impact of Archdeaconry Mission Action Plans and any resource implications. The share allocation is also draft. The key considerations are the cap of plus 4% and the floor of minus 2%. House for Duty posts are now to be costed at the level of the diocesan housing allowance; and the urban/rural allowance has been revised. The Share Review Group came up with a number of other changes. While not all members of the group agreed with the details, in the spirit of compromise the members had given their support. The data used in the budget had been the best available at the time that it was drawn up: if new statistical data, for example on usual Sunday attendances, became available before the budget, then this would be used, but Mr Tattersall was not keen to make further changes to the model itself.

A number of members made comments or asked questions. Mr Philip Read, Mr Jeremy Twynam, the Revd Tim Stead, Mr Allan Whittow, Mr Paul Hiron, the Revd Kate Stacey, the Revd Mark Bennet congratulated those who had prepared the budget and asked if staff and clergy could have a catch up pay rise, expressed delight in the work of the share review group but hoped that it would still be possible to discuss and influence the way it was allocated, recognised that the changes, though not as much as desired, would help keep ministry going in deprived areas such as Cowley, welcomed the changes to rural and urban support, and asked if the under collection rate could be brought down, made a plea for the smallest churches, asked if statistics could be returned at a benefice level. In his response, Mr Tattersall said that staff and clergy had already had a catch-up in salary/stipend after a nine-month freeze in 2013, but that he recognised the importance of ensuring clergy and staff are adequately rewarded. He said he was always happy to take comments about allocations. The formula will not be changed at this stage but any errors will be addressed. Allowances for both deprivation and rurality had been made to recognise some areas of real difficulty for parishes: these were to be allocated to deaneries which could share them appropriately. Some deaneries had a mix of rich and poor parishes. He also said that multi-church benefices/parishes were taken into consideration as part of the rurality factor. Re mission statistics, he said that the national Church asked for the statistics by parish and the new person

working in statistics would follow up the question of benefice returns. The Revd John Tattersall moved the motion in his name, which was approved by Synod.

9. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BUILDINGS COMMITTEE (ODS 15.8)

Mr Robin Birch, chair of the Buildings Committee, spoke to his paper ODS 15.8 which set out a number of amendments to the constitution of the Building Committee. He said that the changes were “dull but important” in the light of the creation of the fourth archdeaconry, and would provide for more democratic representation. The Synod approved the amendment without comment or question.

10. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE DIOCESAN MISSION AND PASTORAL COMMITTEE (DMPC) (ODS 15.9)

The Bishop of Dorchester asked the Synod to approve the revised constitution of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee set out in paper ODS 15.9 which he moved on behalf of Bishop’s Council. He said that the purpose was to bring the work of the DMPC into Bishop’s Council as a way of linking strategy and resources. The membership of Bishop’s Council was wide ranging, he said. The Synod approved the motion, with 3 abstentions.

11. NEW COMMUNITIES

The Archdeacon of Oxford (Chairman of the New Communities Group) and Peter Morgan, New Communities Development Officer, gave a presentation on current work in this sector. Archdeacon Martin told the synod that creating community is in the Church’s DNA as Christians, and is something we should celebrate. However the challenge is on a whole different scale in the huge areas of expansion within our diocese, which is set to see the building of 211,000 new houses between 2007 and 2026. The diocesan New Communities initiative is there to help build new Christian communities; to build social capital; to plan, initiate and sustain ministry in new areas; and to learn from experience.

Peter Morgan gave a presentation which illustrated the extent of the areas of new housing. This was not urban renewal or regeneration, but entirely new areas of housing, often to the objection of residents. However, parishes had responded positively, he said, and were keen to engage with new and emerging communities. There are 38 active large scale housing developments within the diocese, all at different stages of development. There were challenges, but also opportunities for the Church. His job was to understand the development proposals and work with parishes to help deliver missional objectives. Progress was often slow, and partnerships were essential. Models varied from church planting to relocating accommodation for clergy, and in some cases appointing pioneer and community ministers. He said that this last approach was the most effective. Missional engagement at the formative stage of community formation helped build community and creates opportunity for fresh expressions. It was also welcomed by developers.

He gave as examples:

1. Bodicote parish: Longford Park Development. This had been unusual in that the section 106 agreement required the developer to set aside a land plot for sale with the sole purpose of worship. While this had not gone ahead, conversations demonstrated the openness of all parties to consider creative solutions. The incumbent and parish were working well at welcoming new residents.
2. EcoTown Exemplar Site in Bicester. The incumbent was in conversation about the use of St Laurence, Caversfield, as a neighbourhood centre and a community resource, the aim being to reimagine a viable reuse for St Laurence Church that would also meet the needs of the EcoTown community. Negotiations are ongoing.

Experience showed that the diocese has engaged well with local authorities and developers. There will be a series of 'Building Capacity – New Communities Forums' during September, bringing together those who are engaging with New Communities to share their experiences and good practice.

In summary, Archdeacon Martin stressed that major new housing development is a challenge, but also an opportunity. New people can help revitalise churches and villages. People moving in to new areas of housing want to be part of their community, and the Church can help that. But the Church needs to be in at the start, talking with councillors and planners, praying for new developments and for those who move into them.

The presentation stimulated significant debate. The Revd Bill Blakey, the Revd Mark Bennet, Mr Paul Hirons, Mr Peter Jeal, Mrs Diana Hasting, the Revd Robin Grayson, Mrs Julie Dziegiel, the Revd Jeff West, Mr Robin Birch, the Revd Tim Norwood, Ms Joan Walker, the Revd Canon Andrew Blyth, the Revd Clare Sykes - thanked the diocese for appointing Peter Morgan to get the work going but 3-5 years was not sufficient to embed the work, noted there was a need to be realistic about resources. The work was important but putting clergy in these posts might take them away from parishes, planning is needed for the long term if schemes are to be sustainable, where the size of developments was small scale the parishes felt on their own. Pioneer ministers could work at deanery level. There were issues of meeting development needs during an interregnum, and where it was creeping development; it offered an exciting opportunity in line with the national Reform and Renewal agenda. Prayer was needed to underpin this work; some communities that had fought most strongly against development were now very welcoming to newcomers. This was important work and sufficient resources were needed to support it. It was important to learn the lessons from the past, as in Milton Keynes; it impacted not only housing but the workplaces, in some places it generated second order change that altered everything. A holistic approach was needed, that used laity as well as clergy. Resources should be used entrepreneurially. We are all pioneer ministers now, the landscape was changing, we need to hear more about how pioneer ministers were making inroads.

The Archdeacon of Oxford responded and expressed gratitude to members of synod for taking the issue seriously. He thanked those who had shared their experiences, and invited members to come to the forums in September (22 September, Bicester; 26 September, Aylesbury; 30 September, Finchampstead), which would be useful for those with infill and smaller housing developments. He noted that the training of pioneer ministers by the Church Army and others

helped to reduce the use of parochial clergy; he encouraged people to make use of Peter Morgan and recognised that building capacity was a key task for the next 18 months. The next stage of resourcing is being considered, perhaps through the archdeaconries. Churches were hardwired to build community, where developers couldn't manage alone.

12. **ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Bishop of Buckingham, Chair of the Board of Education, presented the Annual Report and Accounts and called on Synod to take note of the report. He drew the Synod's attention to the fact that our schools now serve 58,000 children and young people, or 150,000 people within the church school family. The impact for the Kingdom was extraordinary, he said. However, the context was incredibly complex. He drew members' attention to the Bill going through Parliament that could mean diocesan consent was no longer necessary for academisation. He wanted the synod to understand that a variety of church sponsor board members were needed, as well as school governors, who shared the vision for education. It was also important that those acting as education land trustees fully understood their responsibilities. The Revd Jason St John Nicolle said that this was a great success story. However, he asked about the planned reserves. The Bishop responded that this was being put aside for some big pieces of work, such as creating more multi academy trusts. It was necessary to build in capacity. The Synod took note.

13. **FAREWELLS**

The farewells had been made earlier in the meeting.

14. **REFLECTION**

The reflection was given by Mr John Sykes.

15. **CLOSING PRAYERS**

The Bishop of Dorchester closed the meeting in prayer.

ends

ATTENDANCE

3 bishops, 34 members of the house of clergy, 53 members of the house of laity and 1 ecumenical observer indicated their attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr James Adam

Revd Ron Bundock

Revd Tim Davis

Mr Charles Baker

Revd Nicholas Cheeseman

Dr Philip Giddings

Revd Piers Bickersteth

Revd Canon Charlie Cleverly

Mr John Glanville

Revd Canon Sue Booy

Revd John Cook

Revd Canon Richard Hancock

Mrs Mary Braybrooke

Revd Canon Adrian Daffern

Mr Michael Hardman

Revd Mary Harwood

Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones

Mrs Penny Keens

Revd Pam McKellen

Mr David Morgan

Mr Gavin Oldham

Mrs Gillian Ovey

Revd Heather Parbury

Dr David Pocklington

Mrs Judith Scott

Revd Linda Smith

Revd Canon Dr Chris Sugden

Mr David Pittaway

Revd Camilla Walton

Revd Toby Wright

Revd Canon John Wynburne

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Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

Held at St Andrew's Church, Hatters Lane, High Wycombe HP13 7NH.20TH June 2015

1. The meeting* received and approved the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21 June 2014.
2. **Directors' Report and Accounts** The Revd John Tattersall drew the Synod's attention to the surplus of approximately £2.4 million in 2014, after taking account of gains and losses which he said had come about as a result of the unexpected level of clergy and other vacancies, and an underspend on the repairs to parsonages due phasing of quinquennial inspections and to better than expected weather. Income from rentals and fees was also higher than anticipated. The Bishop's Council had approved transfers from this surplus to designated funds and of this money, £300K would go towards development posts in new areas; £80K would be allocated for diocesan events; £500K would be set aside to defray the costs of moving offices. Bishop's Council had also approved a proposal to make a one-off refund of around £400K to deaneries on the basis of 2% of the parish share they had paid last year. It would be up to deaneries to decide how to spend their refund. There were no questions and the meeting received and adopted the Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2014.
3. **Critchleys Accountants LLP** were appointed to hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting. The meeting also authorised the Directors (the Standing Committee of the Board) to fix the remuneration of the Auditors. The Revd Jason St John Nicolle reminded the Synod of their stewardship responsibilities and that it was essential that the auditors should be independent and challenging. The Chairman assured the Synod that they were tough while nevertheless being supportive of the mission of the Diocese of Oxford.

*The meeting consisted of those members present at the meeting of Diocesan Synod.