



OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

and

BOARD OF FINANCE

MINUTES

Of a meeting held

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

Saturday 12 March 2016

The Rt. Revd Colin Fletcher, Acting Bishop of Oxford, addressed the Synod and gave a brief welcome, asking members to remember The Revd Canon John Rees, Diocesan Registrar in their prayers.

1. OPENING WORSHIP AND DWELLING IN THE WORD

Revd Keith Dunnett and members of the Abingdon deanery led synod members in a period of worship using 'Dwelling in the Word' based around Philipians 1:27 to 2: 1-10.

2. NOTICES AND WELCOME

Bishop Colin formally welcomed everyone, and in particular new members of Synod. He thanked the refreshments team and signers and also welcomed Rachel Brockie running a stall in the foyer for the Children's Society. He asked for members' permission for the guest speaker, The Revd Canon Dr Sandra Millar to address the Synod, which they granted.

Bishop Colin noted that the next stage of appointing a new Bishop of Oxford had taken place that week with the meeting of the Crown Nominations Committee. He was not a member of this panel but understood the initial stages had looked encouraging.

Bishop Colin asked Canon Rosemary Pearce, Diocesan Secretary to update Synod on the office move to Kidlington. She informed members the plan was to move on Wednesday 23rd March. Phones would be switched off on that Wednesday and the plan was to re-open to the public the following Wednesday after Easter, 30th March. Staff would be on leave Maundy Thursday to Bank Holiday Monday. Bishop Colin asked for thanks to be passed on to staff at DCH and said this was a major project that had been managed very professionally.

Bishop Colin introduced Canon Andrew Anderson-Gear, the new Director of Mission. Andrew spoke of his hopes for his new role. He explained that at this time there were 3 key areas of work for the Board of Mission: developing discipleship, growing leadership and vocations. Andrew spoke of his call by God to take on this role and his previous experiences working in Oxford and Bucks. He commented that he was looking forward to getting to know people and noted the excitement that a lay person was undertaking this work. He noted as Director his role was primarily to develop strategy and other leadership to highly gifted colleagues to serve the churches of our diocese. Bishop Colin thanked Andrew and welcomed any questions.

Promulgation of Amending Canon No. 34.

As an additional item the **Amending Canon No. 34** was promulgated. This relates to changes in requirements around safeguarding. The full document is on the website. <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Amending-Canon-no-34.pdf>

3. MINUTES of the meeting held on Saturday 14th November 2015 were approved and signed.

4. QUESTIONS: No questions had been received under Standing Order 70.

5. FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Revd John Tattersall, Chair of the Board of Finance, reported on the draft 2015 outturn setting out a number of points. Although the final figures had still to be verified by the auditors, no significant changes were expected. He made a statement about the use of glebe income, in which he noted that currently 55% of glebe investment income, which can only be set against stipends, is allocated to defray the costs of ministry for poor parishes in areas of deprivation, and rural areas. This has increased from 38% in 2014. There is no policy regarding the percentage of investment income used – it is allocated as part of the revised parish share scheme.

The expected outturn for 2015, a surplus of £800k, just under 4% of revenue, was primarily due to the number of clergy and staff vacancies £620k savings, and a better than expected yield on investments. The financial implications of the move to Kidlington were expected to be broadly within budget. He noted Bishop's Council's decision at its last meeting to designate any surplus in 2015 to fund development posts and work in new communities in the next few years.

The Chair thanked all parishes, benefices and deaneries for their parish share contributions of 96.5% which were very warmly received by the diocese and extremely encouraging. A 3% underpayment in parish share was budgeted in 2016. Many conversations were already taking place concerning future deanery plans and it is hoped these will continue.

It seems that funds available for strategic projects from Church Commissioners funding, were not likely to be available until a new Bishop is in place and strategic plans agreed.

A number of general questions were raised and responses given (Mr Gavin Oldham, Ms Jayne Ozanne and Revd Jason St John Nicolle): The need to review outcomes of funding used to support archdeaconry plans, the conditions relating to national strategic development funding, the use of funding to support work in poor parishes and the factors included in setting share. The Chair clarified that it was not that the diocese could *not* access the strategic development grants but it would be better placed for such grants to be approved when a diocesan bishop is in office and a forward strategy was agreed. An interim application could be made if there was a definite project.

6. DEANERY SYNOD MOTION from the Wycombe Deanery.

Paper ODS 16.01

'That this Synod invite the Archbishops to initiate a review into the role of the Crown Nominations Commission, including consideration of alternative methods of appointment for diocesan bishops'

Proposed by: David Baldwin, Deanery Synod member Wycombe Deanery

Seconded by: Ann Cartland, Deanery Synod member Wycombe Deanery

Both David Baldwin and Ann Cartland spoke to the paper and gave background to its presentation as a formal Motion. It had been widely supported and approved locally. Due to the failure to appoint a new diocesan bishop under a system that was not considered to be transparent members of Synod were asked to support a national request to review the current process. Experience in both the current appointment and in the selection of Bishop John had taken considerable time, unlike our Swedish partner diocese where the Bishop had been appointed and in role in a matter of days. A lengthy delay had meant that Bishop Colin was currently covering two roles and this could not be sustained long-term. The synodical system allows parish proposals to be considered and passed through the higher synods to the General Synod for consideration. David Baldwin proposed the Motion which was seconded by Ann Cartland.

In debate (Revd Canon Sue Booy, Sir Tony Baldry, Revd Kate Stacey, Revd Andrew Lightbown, Ms Prudence Dailey, Mrs Julie Dziegiel, Mrs Diana Hastings, Ms Jayne Ozanne and Mr Mark Burton), both Ms Prudence Dailey and the Revd Canon Sue Booy declared an interest as they were members of the Crown Nominations Commission. The Crown Nominations Commission regretted the delays; however as a 'State' Church it is important that there is national and local input into the process. Delays had essentially been around the Archbishops' availability as, having not appointed in round one, we then needed to re-start the process and take our place behind other dioceses involved in the same process. There was general agreement that the current system was not deemed fit for purpose and a need to move forward to a more transparent process was important. The problem may be with the timing rather than the process as elections can be problematic too. There was an observation that the Motion could be much stronger but this was not moved to a change to the Motion.

After a lively debate David Baldwin responded to the points made and moved to a formal vote. Full details of the Motion can be found at <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/governance/diocesan-synod/>

Vote: The Motion was carried with 5 votes Against (Abstentions: 6)

Bishop Colin thanked members for their words of support during the debate.

7. HALF A MILLION PEOPLE EVERY WEEK: MAKING THE MOST OF MISSION THROUGH WEDDINGS, FUNERALS & BAPTISMS.

The Revd Canon Dr Sandra Millar, Head of Projects and Developments, for the national church gave a lively delivery of the research projects she had headed up.

Over the past few years Archbishops' Council has invested in wide research and developed resources to support parish ministry to those we meet at key times in life, whether in celebration or sadness. Dr Millar's presentation shared the key themes that have emerged out of that research and the tools that will help to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

The research centred around three purposes: To attract people to come to church at 3 transitional moments of life. To build understanding that we care about what we do. And to enable a life changing relationship with God. Occasional offices are part of the ministry of God. In funeral ministry: the presence of Jesus transforms funerals from hopelessness to hopefulness. The Church of England has access to large numbers of people through the occasional offices, through weddings 47,000 nationally a year (Oxford 2,490), funerals 146,000 nationally (Oxford 5,920) and baptisms 684,000 nationally bringing at least 2 parents, 2 godparents and a baby to church. It is widely recognised that there is a better chance the family will return to church if the baptism has taken place as part of the regular service and not separately. There is concern around the lack of younger people in congregations, particularly the 18-45 range but many such people are already there, coming to church for occasional offices.

Following this a number of questions and observations were made (Mr Gavin Oldham, Mrs Jo Saunders, Revd Keith Dunnett, Revd Clare Sykes and Revd Rob Glenny), around the use of trained lay volunteers to provide bereavement support, the use of christening rather than baptism, for baptism preparation, giving information about what the church offers through the networks of partner organisations, is there a way of signposting gay friendly churches for baptisms etc, are there ways of sharing resources across deaneries to help churches with most occasional offices.

The presentation was very well received. Further information and resources are available from the Church of England Website. <https://www.churchofengland.org/weddings-baptisms-funerals.aspx>

8. MATTERS FROM GENERAL SYNOD

Paper ODS 16.02

The synod split into 12 groups led by a General Synod member. This was a chance to discuss matters raised at February's Sessions. No feedback was sought at the meeting but the General Synod members would later be asked for their feedback on discussions they had led. Details of the agenda items and discussions can be found at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/agendas-and-papers/february-2016-group-of-sessions.aspx>

9. QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTIONS IN THE DEANERY

Paper ODS 16.03

Mr Charles Baker Chair, DAC presented a proposed change to the Diocesan Scheme for quinquennial inspections.

Mr Baker reminded members that the DAC would be 100 years old in April this year. He proposed a change to the diocesan scheme for quinquennial inspections set in 1993 when this diocese required every deanery to organise quinquennial inspections. Since then practice has varied widely. Following discussions with Area Deans and Lay Chairs, he recommended that these rules be removed.

Questions (Mr James Adam, Geoff Strutt, Mr Philip Read, Jason St John Nicolle, Ann Cartland and Mark Burton) were taken and concerns were essentially connected to payment of professional fees incurred from inspection costs. The average cost is currently estimated at £1k, i.e. spread over 5 years would be £200pa. Deanery officers work with archdeacons who should enquire about the state of the fabric of the church. The question to be asked should be 'Is there urgent work to be done in next 5 years?' Parishes sometimes default and this is against the rules but an archdeacon has the power to instruct that a quinquennial inspection is carried out. Currently the scheme requires the deanery to organise payment. This scheme reverts to the parish being responsible for their inspection. It was reiterated that this is an extremely important exercise and should not be ignored. It was asked that a message be conveyed to parishes that if they have any problems to use diocesan support staff that we have in place.

There were concerns about follow up. If a church does comply with carrying out an inspection who is responsible for following up any remedial works highlighted? Area Deans when visiting could monitor this. If the Archdeacon has to order an official instruction to do the survey, would trustees be legally responsible for making these payments? Charles Baker hoped that the central database would include details of quinquennials and enable the following up of any omissions.

The Motion was then moved to a formal vote.

The Motion was carried with 6 votes Against (Abstentions: 9).

This will come into immediate effect. The full paper setting out the proposals is available on the website.

Bishop Colin thanked Charles Baker, the DAC and archdeacons for all the work they do to help keep church buildings in good condition.

10. REFLECTION Mr John Smith, Sonning Deanery Synod Lay Chair, gave a reflection on the morning's business.

11. CLOSING PRAYERS were led by the Bishop of Dorchester.

ATTENDANCE

3 bishops, 59 members of the House of Clergy, 68 members of the House of Laity and 1 ecumenical observer indicated their attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Revd Mark Bennett	Revd Harry Latham	Revd Sharon Roberts
Revd Edward Bickersteth	Miss Geraldine Lea	Mr John Seedell
Mr Robin Birch	Revd Rachel Lewis	Revd Liz Simpson
Revd Heather Carter	Mr David Lillycrop	Mr Graeme Slocombe
Revd Canon Charlie Cleverly	Mrs Heather Llewellyn	Revd Mike Smith
Mr Bob Collard	Revd Sally Lynch	Mr David Soward
Revd Kevin Davies	Revd Canon Andrew Marsden	Revd Tim Stead
Revd Graeme Fancourt	Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby	Mr Jim Tucker
Revd Alison Finch	Revd Pam McKellen	Mrs Rachel Vander Elst
Mr Henry Gibbon	Revd Sam McNally-Cross	Revd Camilla Walton
The Venerable Martin Gorick	Prof John Missenden	Mrs Wendy Wickens
Mrs Gillian Gyenes	Revd Mike Morris	Revd Katie Windle
Revd Mary Harwood	Revd Ross Northing	Mrs Kathy Winrow
Mrs Julia Hunt	The Very Revd Prof Martyn Percy	Revd Claire Wood
Mr Peter Jeal	Mr David Pickup	Revd Toby Wright
Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones	Mrs Julia Reece	
Mrs Penny Keens	Mr Kevin Rillie	