



OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

and

BOARD OF FINANCE

MINUTES

Of a meeting held

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

Saturday 12 November 2016

The Rt. Revd Steven Croft, appointed as Bishop of Oxford on 6 July 2016, addressed the Synod and gave a brief welcome.

1. OPENING WORSHIP

The Revd Verena Breed and Ms Alison Birch, representing Bicester Team Ministry in the Bicester and Islip Deanery, led members in morning prayer based on the theme of Remembrance, linking this to the German born Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran Pastor and theologian who was executed during the Nazi occupation for his staunch resistance to the Nazi dictatorship. Also, remembering in prayer, the work of PACT and the work of the diocese.

2. NOTICES AND WELCOME

Bishop Steven gave a number of notices and welcomed everyone, in particular visitors and new members of Synod, this included the Venerable Guy Elsmore, Archdeacon of Buckingham. It was also Bishop Steven's first Synod following his inauguration in September. He thanked all those who had helped with the Synod in any way, in particular the welcome and refreshments team, Verena and Alison for their moving worship and for Caroline Kallipetis leading the reflection later. He also welcomed the signers and Jan Fishwick and Natausha Van Vliet from Parents and Children Together (PACT) who would be presenting later and as well as Anne Davey, Diocesan Director of Education with the Bishop of Buckingham who would update members on developments in education. He asked for members' permission to allow them to address the Synod, which they granted.

Bishop Steven briefed members on the retirement of Stephen Barber, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, after 13 years' service. He asked members for their permission to write to Stephen on their behalf in recognition of his excellent period of service and significant contribution. This is a key diocesan role which has a high profile in the work with parishes. Mr Barber will be succeeded by Mr John Nixon who will join the diocese in January 2017.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

In his Inaugural address, the Bishop of Oxford, outlined his three main priorities; children and young people, the poor and discipleship. He noted that strategy would emerge later but in the meantime, these were simple priorities he commended to members and that he would focus on and engage with in the coming months.

Bishop Steven reflected on a time of change, challenging us to think about what our calling as a Church should be in a time of such uncertainty. He said that every new bishop is called to listen, to take stock and reflect on future direction. He is already part way through the process of visiting Oxford and Cowley clergy through home visits. He noted his plan for 2017 to invite Area Deans and Lay Chairs, Bishop's Council and others to join him in a 3-day residential in May 2017 as an opportunity to reflect together.

Bishop Steven then gave a fuller account of his three priorities, Children and Young People, Poverty and Deprivation and Discipleship and how he would engage with his team to deliver a broader strategy. In Benedict's words he hoped there was potential for Oxford Diocese to become a school for the Lord's service, a place where we are shaped together into the likeness of Christ. He ended by noting that at such a time of great uncertainty, we are what God has made us. We were God's poem, God's story, God's new song in this place being called to be Christ-like. He added he very much looked forward to sharing the journey together.

(Full address can be found at <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/governance/diocesan-synod/>)

Following his address, Bishop Steven briefly adjourned Synod for the purpose of electing a new Vice-Chair of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance.

4. A MEETING OF THE OXFORD DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

Election of a Vice-Chair to the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance (ODBF)

The Synod adjourned briefly for a meeting to express their thanks to Michael Hardman now resigning from his current role and to elect a new Vice-Chair of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance (Separate Minutes are available). Synod was then reconvened.

5. **MINUTES** of the meeting held on Saturday 18th June 2016 were approved and signed by Bishop Steven. There were no Matters Arising.

QUESTIONS: ONE question had been received under Standing Order 70 from Ms Jayne Ozanne, General Synod Member:

“Given that enabling lay discipleship is one of Bishop Steven’s key themes, what consideration was given to the impact on lay participation of holding a mid-week Diocesan Leadership Community Conference – particularly when it involves lay members of Bishop’s Council and General Synod, who frequently have to give up a substantial amount of their holiday time in order to serve the Church?”

The Bishop of Oxford provided a written response:

“The opportunity for this conference was created by another event booked by the Diocese being cancelled in May 2016. It is a ‘one-off’ event rather than repeatable. It would not have been possible to change to a weekend in so short a time. However, the principle of thinking carefully about the timing of events in order to enable the participation of lay people is a vital one”.

By way of a supplementary question, Jayne Ozanne noted that her point had not been about timing but about the consideration of the *impact* on many lay members in holding this mid-week and also how will lay members voices be heard in future. Bishop Steven responded noting that this was a clear consideration for future meetings but reiterated this was a ‘one-off’ situation in 2017 reserved before his arrival. He hoped the impact on lay people would be mitigated by the fact this was a ‘one-off’ event and not future strategy and good notice had been given. This is just one part of the consideration he intends to give to lay ministry.

Mrs Judith Scott took the Chair, inviting Canon Sue Booy to speak to this item.

6. **DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTIONS** **THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION COVENANT - WITHDRAWAL**

Paper ODS 16.08

Canon Booy explained this paper was essentially about housekeeping. Motions like this stay on the General Synod books and will remain until there is time to debate them. In 2012 Diocesan Synod passed a motion, which was then passed for debate to General Synod. She noted that this motion is now considered to be outdated and, since the appointment of Archbishop Justin, events in the Anglican Communion have moved on. Chelmsford Diocese had already withdrawn their identical motion as had other dioceses. She recognised that we still rejoice in the fellowship of the Communion but our motion is no longer needed and asked members to follow the lead of Chelmsford Diocese, in withdrawing this motion.

The Motion:

“This Synod notes and expresses appreciation for the work of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Anglican Communion since his appointment, note that the following motion passed by the Diocesan Synod on 24 March 2012 is now out of date, and therefore rescind the said following motion and withdraw the request for it to be debated by the General Synod”

‘This Diocesan Synod requests the General Synod to debate the following motion:

“That this Synod:

- (a) rejoice in the fellowship of the world-wide Anglican Communion, which is rooted in our shared worship and held together by bonds of affection and our common appeal to Scripture, tradition and reason;*
- (b) thank the Archbishop of Canterbury for his tireless efforts throughout the Communion to sustain and strengthen unity in difficult times; and*
- (c) call on the House of Bishops:*

- i. to find ways to maintain and reinforce strong links across the world-wide Anglican Communion and to deepen the Church of England's involvement with the existing Communion ministries and networks (especially the continuing Indaba process);*
- ii. to publicise and promote this work within the dioceses of the Church of England in order to broaden understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the Anglican Communion; and to encourage a wide understanding of, and support for, the next Lambeth Conference."*

There were no questions so on a show of hands **the Motion was passed by overall Consent.**

Following this the Revd John Tattersall, Chair of the ODBF announced the result of the election. Mrs Julie Dziegiel: 49 votes and Mr Simon Richards: 59 votes and John declared that Simon Richards was the new Vice-Chair of ODBF with immediate effect.

7. PRESENTATION ON THE WORK OF 'PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER' (PACT)

Mrs Judith Scott (Chair) introduced Mrs Jan Fishwick, Chief Executive and Ms Natausha Van Vliet, Director of Business Development, of PACT . She gave background to the relationship that PACT had enjoyed with the Diocese over the many years in supporting their work and expressed her thanks for the annual grant from the Diocese. PACT is regulated by OFSTED and is categorised as an 'Outstanding' adoption agency.

Jan Fishwick noted her aim was to share how two of Bishop Steven's priorities, working with young people and the poor, were an integral part of PACT's work. PACT are already committed to various projects involving children and young people in many ways. They too felt very much too part of God's poem. She thanked all those Synod members present who had links with PACT over the years, and said that without their generosity and support many of the projects would not be able to be developed.

Natausha Van Vliet spoke of some of the work PACT is involved with. Alana House is the cornerstone of PACT's work with vulnerable groups, particularly vulnerable women and women who are involved in the criminal justice system.

During the presentation there were some short film clips showing some of the projects and areas of work.

Following this a question and answer session was held. A number of people made comments or raised questions (*Revd Mark Bennett, Revd Canon Sue Booy, Mrs Heather Llewelyn, Mr Gavin Oldham, Mrs Jo Saunders, Revd Liz Carmichael, Judge Christopher Tyrer, Mr Paul Hiron, Revd Mike Smith and Mrs Kathy Winrow.*)

Clarification of how easy it is to get people referred to PACT and what gateways were available was sought; West Berkshire has a self-referral system but funds are limited and there is a waiting list. Local Authorities are faced with making heavy savings but they still have statutory obligations to make.

Four real needs for young people were identified: life skills, resources, hope and looking forward and a question What can people do for children and older children? Alana House is aimed at the 18+ age group but there is a huge gap for young girls 11-18. Thames Valley Partnership, Berkshire Youth and Reading Borough Council are all working on various projects together.

There were concerns that a number of charities offering such services to ex-offenders and vulnerable women already exist, for example New Leaf is a project offering help to short term prisoners returning to Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes working with the Thames Valley Partnership. Could all the groups support themselves and how could they work with some of these agencies to draw together all disparate strands and provide a more robust service? Currently PACT appeared to be stretched geographically. Jan Fishwick noted that they employ contractors to work in different areas of the South East.

Another issue raised was the demands on the government to speed up the adoption process. It is important to recognise matching is very important but not necessarily exactly like for like, for example, a Nigerian child with a Nigerian family. A great deal of care and all sorts of families are needed. The most important consideration is that the families will love, care and keep safe those they are matched with. Jan Fishwick welcomed the change.

One member's concern was around the difficulties that could be experienced in a child's transition to secondary school and there being nobody to link with. This is still a big issue. There was discussion of teenagers' attachment issues, the need for help for congregational members who have had children removed, the benefit of thinking further about the need to think further about the theology of adoption and adopted parenthood, the need for a spread of PACT's services across the diocese, the existence of a group for clergy who are adoptive parents.

Natausha Van Vliet noted PACT's desire to be able to offer more opportunity for outreach work but essential funds have to be directed to those projects already in existence. She added they are working hard with multiple agencies to share resources and learn from each other, avoiding overlap of services. They would like to work more with schools because currently some schools are reluctant to acknowledge that there is work to be done, particularly those in more affluent areas. She noted it takes time to challenge people and send the right messages. There is plenty of scope for outreach projects but again limited funding.

Jan noted adoption was the core of the work undertaken and at the heart of Faith. The aim is to train and equip as many families for the future. It was important to recognise the correlation between the charity and the Church. Specialist work is taking place for clergy who wish to follow the adoption route and remains an important link. Judith Scott thanked Jan Fishwick and Natausha on behalf of members for their presentation. The presentation can be found at <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/governance/diocesan-synod/>

8. ELECTED LAY REPRESENTATION ON DEANERY SYNODS 2017-20 *Paper ODS 16.09*

In preparation of Deanery Synod elections in 2017, Mrs Judith Scott introduced a paper showing the process for determining the number of lay people to be elected and the calculations made. She noted that a former colleague had undertaken a review of the process but the impact had not been substantial enough for it to be changed at that time. Members were offered a chance to raise questions before voting.

In response, two questions were raised, *Revd Mark Bennet and Mr Hugh Rees*, concerning the future impact on deaneries in a changing deanery structure. Some thinly spread rural populations found it difficult to identify Synod members. It was asked if this would be given consideration to eliminate the impact on some deaneries, particularly where they were likely to be disadvantaged through the result of amalgamation of parishes under pastoral reorganisation schemes. It was felt important that they had sufficient deanery representation to engage in a broad spectrum of views and the current scheme would not support this. It was recognised that this would not be possible in the current year due to insufficient time but with the advancement of new communities and other factors, this was recognised as a serious concern to be considered in future.

Summing up Judith Scott noted Synod's concerns and then moved to a vote by show of hands.

Members voted with 2 abstentions and therefore the Scheme was **approved unanimously** subject to the agreement that future years' electorate would be reviewed again in the light of continued changes in deanery reorganisation and the new communities that may have impact on the future balance of deanery representation.

9. THE 2017 REVENUE BUDGET AND 2018/20 PROJECTIONS AND AUTHORISATION OF EXPENDITURE, AND DEANERY SHARE APPORTIONMENT *Paper ODS 16.05*

The Revd John Tattersall, Chair of the Board of Finance, presented the outline budget and share allocation 2017 noting the similarity to the presentation in June.

The Chairman referred to the introductory paper and talked about the key assumptions, pointing out an increase in the allocation for stipends and salaries of 2%, which was more than the national minimum stipend benchmark. He argued that this remains appropriate in an area where the cost of living is high.

John Tattersall noted that in 2017 it was planned to review the formula to address some concerns, though there would not be fundamental changes while some deaneries were still in the transitional phase. Any changes are not likely to be implemented before 2019, so giving time to make adjustments.

John Tattersall thanked all parishes, benefices and deaneries for the work that was taking place in getting parish share in under difficult circumstances.

In discussion, questions were received from *Miss Prudence Daley, Ms Julie Dziegiel, Bishop of Dorchester, Mr Philip Read, Mr Mark Burton, Mr John Smith, Mr Hugh Rees, Ms Jayne Ozanne, Mr Michael Hardman, Revd Andrew Lightbown and Mrs Jo Saunders.*

There were general concerns about the pressures on parishes already struggling to meet their parish share obligations, many churches are now having to use their reserves to do this. This was clearly not sustainable in future years. In some cases churches were borrowing from others in the deanery. A 2% increase is difficult but more needs to be put into mission funding.

An example of funding for a post in the Education Department negotiating bids for new schools, including a new church school in Grove was given. This would not have happened if funds had not been released to appoint someone with the right skills to negotiate through a complex process. This work was an excellent example of good use of mission funding.

There was concern about the long-term future and commitment to increasing future clergy numbers. There is an aspiration under the Renewal and Reform national programme to increase numbers in ministerial training by 50% by 2020. It was asked whether there is any long-term budgeting for this increase.

Concerns were raised that the budget does not pass the two tests of Appropriateness and affordability – is consideration given to whether things should be done at diocesan or parish level. Not enough is being done for individual parishes where the impact of increases has a detrimental effect. The share review should look again at the position in relation to fees.

At next Diocesan Synod, a Private Members’ Motion is being considered by a member based on the need to invest in those parishes deprived financially.

With the level of giving in parishes varying so widely it was felt a need to look at how the level of giving in this diocese could be increased overall per electoral roll member as this is very poor in Oxford Diocese compared to other dioceses nationally.

Other concerns were about the need for contingency and to undertake a risk assessment in relation to a sector of the church wanting be more separate, including funding. How does diocesan risk assessment reflect planning for future funding requirements or any major shocks?

In response, the Chairman noted that already in budget there is an allowance for a Christian Giving Adviser to help increase giving. He recognised that some parishes are still facing some significant increases in parish share during transition and noted there is a recovering deaneries programme to address individual cases. The treatment of occasional office fees will also be reviewed. The Diocese is still committed to supporting new mission opportunities. The budget will be considered closely to see whether any costs could be cut, using a zero-based approach. As stipends and salary costs are our biggest expenditure, it takes time to make changes.

Summarising, the Chairman asked the Synod to approve the outline budget and deanery share apportionment as presented and Canon Sue Booy moved to a vote by show of hands:

“That this Synod,

- a) Approves and adopts the 2017 budget as set out below and in the accompanying papers;*
- b) Authorises the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance to expend in 2017 a sum not exceeding the following net amounts:*

BUDGET HEAD		AMOUNT (£000s)	Note
	<u>Net Revenue Costs</u>		
1	Parish Ministry	14,222	

2	Diocesan Administration and Finance	468	1
3	Mission in the Diocese	3,054	
4	National Church Responsibilities	1,055	
5	Transfers to Unrestricted Reserves	14	
	<i>Total Net Revenue Costs</i>	18,813	
	<i>Funded by</i>		
6	Net Parish Share (see c) below)	18,813	
	<i>Capital Costs</i>		
7	General Fund Expenditure	33	
8	Capital Transactions – Houses	-	2
9	Loan Transactions	-	3

- c) requests that such expenditure be financed in part by deanery share apportionments for 2017 based on the figure of £18,813k being net of allowances for rebates and under-collection (Head 6);
- d) notes, in the accompanying papers, the projections of income and expenditure for 2018 to 2020.”

Notes

- 1 Gross Administration and Finance £781k, less income from investments and trusts £313k, net £468k.
- 2 2017 budget for Capital Transactions – Houses is a net cash inflow so no vote is required.
- 3 No funds need be voted for loan transactions as these are funded by the CBF.

Vote: was approved with 7 votes Against and 2 Abstentions. The Motion was duly carried.

10. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WORK OF THE OXFORD DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Paper ODS 16.11

Bishop Alan, Bishop of Buckingham and Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education, and Mrs Anne Davey, Director of Education, presented an update on the work with schools within the diocese. He started by thanking Bishop Steven for putting children at the centre of mission. He said people are looking for distinct values, noting that church schools exist to offer values such as hope, wisdom, community and dignity.

Anne Davey noted that recently the diocese’s 284 church schools had increased to 285 and wanted to celebrate that achievement. Service Level Agreements were extremely important to the Board 82% of schools had now bought into the three-year agreement. She noted Kirsten Roberts had been recruited and was working on another 10 new school bids and thanked Synod for allowing the Board to recruit the right staff.

Anne noted one of the biggest challenges remains finances and school budgets are under severe financial scrutiny. There is also a recruitment issue for school governors and she thanked those members that act in this capacity and urged them to encourage others, mindful of the commitment this means in taking on that role. The education context is constantly changing – they are now working with Regional Schools Commissioners but our forebears would be pleased that the Church has remained at the cutting edge of education and an increase in professionalism has provided access to high level discussion.

Anne shared with members the recent opportunity to be part of an experiment on BBC2 in a reality documentary series through a local school. As an inter- generational project, this was a good indication of how misconceptions could be changed and highlighted the broad spectrum of work the diocese was engaging with.

The team are undertaking a series of deanery meetings, thinking about how the DBE can work with deaneries to develop their work with schools and young people, sharing Eucharistic materials.

There were a number of general questions, *Bishop of Dorchester, Ms Norma Fergusson, Revd Jason St John Nicolle, Revd Tim Harper, Revd Heather Carter and Mr Geoff Strutt.*

In new multi academy trusts (MATs) including community and church schools how do you prevent loss of Christian identity? There was concern that school governors were becoming over-worked and therefore people were resigning and recruitment was becoming more difficult. There were challenges ahead for the funding of local schools, SIAMS inspections helped to preserve Christian identity and standards within the diocese are improving. Should the balance of funding between PACT, the DBE and Board of Mission be revisited?

In general, the comments supported wholeheartedly the work the Education team were doing and much praise was given, particularly in the development work of multi-academy trusts.

Judith Scott thanked Anne Davey and Bishop Alan for their presentation.

11. UPDATE ON LEAD THEFTS ACROSS THE DIOCESE

Mr Charles Baker, Chair of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, had circulated a briefing paper for members to take away. His presentation brought to members' attention the sharp rise in lead thefts across the diocese since May 2016. Many churches had been targeted more than once. He noted these were no longer remote isolated spots but those in built up areas, often in the daylight, where thieves are being much bolder in their approach. He urged members to spread the word and to be as vigilant as possible as techniques were becoming more advanced. This is now a highly lucrative business on a large-scale operation. Mr Baker noted that one way to ensure continued cover for insurance purposes was to have a roof alarm installed. Once installed the roof would then be monitored by a remote monitoring station by CCTV. For those insured with EIG, this combined with SmartWater would guarantee a 100% cover level for lead theft and associated repairs.

12. REFLECTION

Mrs Caroline Kallipetis, Bracknell Deanery, gave a reflection on the morning's business. She paid tribute to Bishop Steven's address and the messages that emerged from that, particularly his three key priorities for his future ministry in Oxford which linked to many other parts of the agenda. She reflected on how, at the heart of each discussion, the importance of Mission was key to all areas of work.

13. CLOSING PRAYERS were led by the Bishop of Oxford

ATTENDANCE

4 bishops, 61 members of the House of Clergy, 66 members of the House of Laity and 1 ecumenical observer indicated their attendance. 47 Apologies for absence were received from:

The Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone	The Revd Marcus Green	Mr David Phillipson
Mrs Judith Babb	The Revd Darrell Hannah	Mrs Juliet Rudolf
The Revd Paul Boughton	The Revd Mary Harwood	The Revd Paul Smith
The Revd Ron Bundock	Mr Martin Hughes	Mr David Soward
Mr Bob Collard	Mrs Elizabeth Jones	The Revd Kate Stacey
Mr Chris Cook	The Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones	The Revd Tim Stead
The Revd Rod Cosh	Mrs Penny Keens	The Revd Clare Sykes
The Revd Keith Dunnett	The Revd Chris Leslie	The Revd Ben Topham
Mrs Barbara Eaton	Mr Jamie Macdonald	Mr Jim Tucker
Mrs Anne Eccleston	The Revd Pam McKellen	Mr Colin Turner
The Revd Jenny Ellis	The Revd Canon Andrew Marsden	Mrs Jane Venables
Mr Henry Gibbon	The Revd David Meakin	The Revd Camilla Walton
The Venerable Martin Gorick	Miss Lindsay Mills	Mrs Emma Webber
The Venerable Olivia Graham	Mr Chris Newman	The Revd Katie Windle
The Revd Dr Robin Grayson	The Very Revd Prof. Martyn Percy	The Revd Claire Wood
		Mr Steven Young