



**OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**and**

**BOARD OF FINANCE**

**MINUTES**

Of a meeting held  
at **St Andrew's Church, Hatters Lane, High Wycombe**

**Saturday 18 March 2017**

**DRAFT**

The Rt. Revd Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford, addressed the Synod and gave a brief welcome to new members and visitors.

ODS/17

## **1. OPENING WORSHIP**

On behalf of the Maidenhead & Windsor Deanery, Revd Sally Lynch led Synod members in Morning Prayer for Lent.

## **2. WELCOME AND NOTICES**

Bishop Steven gave a number of notices. In addition, he noted that Robin Birch, one of the Bishops' nominations, serving as Chair of the Diocesan Buildings and Glebe Committees, had stepped down from Synod due to sudden illness and asked Synod for permission to write to thank him for his contribution, which was warmly granted. He then paid tribute to Sarah Meyrick, Diocesan Communications Officer who will leave the Diocese in April. A small token of appreciation on behalf of Synod was made. He noted Sarah's significant contribution in the parishes over the past 11 years and briefly as his own Press Officer.

## **3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

Bishop Steven's opening words were.... "They have treated the wound of my people carelessly" says the prophet Jeremiah of the leaders of his day. "They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying "Peace, peace" where there is no peace" (Jeremiah 8.11). All those called to leadership in society and the church need to pay careful attention to the wounds of God's people. God's people in every part of the world. There are no simple solutions to those ills. There is no remedy in pious slogans. Reality is not changed by soundbites. The answer does indeed lie in peace, shalom, wholeness but words alone are not enough to mend the fractured earth. "They have treated the wounds of my people carelessly." The world is facing the worst humanitarian crisis since 1945 according to the United Nations. A terrible famine stretches across Africa from Nigeria to Yemen through Somalia and Sudan. The Disasters Emergency Appeal was launched at midnight on Wednesday. I hope we will respond generously as individuals and churches. The full text of Bishop Steven's address "On Fragmentation" can be found at <https://blogs.oxford.anglican.org/onfragmentation/>

## **4. MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 11th November 2016 were approved and signed by Bishop Steven on behalf of members.

## **5. QUESTIONS**

TWO questions had been received under Standing Order 70 from Revd Mark Bennet, Newbury Deanery Synod member.

### ***Question ONE:***

"Further to the resolution passed by this Synod in March 2016, what progress has been made in securing a review of way in which Diocesan Bishops are appointed, and what further contribution can members of this Synod make to secure a review and to inform its substance?"

The Diocesan Secretary, as Secretary of Synod, responded:

"Following the passing of the Resolution at Diocesan Synod in March 2016 ODS 16.01 put forward by High Wycombe Deanery: "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” The Motion was referred to General Synod for consideration. It is currently with the Business Committee waiting its turn and is set out in the General Synod Agenda (item Special Agenda iv) <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3857971/gs-2042-agenda.pdf> We will report further as this matter progresses”

#### **Question TWO:**

“What plans does the diocese have to apply for funds available through the Renewal and Reform Programme, in particular (since these may be relevant to Newbury Deanery) to support innovations in rural mission and ministry, and in moving on from our many contact activities with people towards deeper engagement?” The Diocesan Secretary, as Secretary of Synod, responded: Discussions took place with members of the national church to consider an appropriate application to the Strategic Development Fund. We were informed that it was unlikely that a bid would be successful until a new diocesan bishop was in post and a diocesan strategy for the next phase were in place. We are in the process of developing such a strategy and when it is complete we will move to the formal stage of preparing an application.

Revd Mark Bennet then asked two supplementary questions:

In relation to question one he asked why, given the urgency of the request of this Motion, had no consideration been given to its timing and why has this got to be done by General Synod and not the Archbishops’?

Canon Pearce responded and reiterated that the procedure is that Diocesan Synod Motions are referred to General Synod. The Diocese has no authority to instruct the Business Committee when Diocesan Synod Motions are taken as General Synod business. Mark Bennet responded and asked if this could be directed to the Archbishops’ for a response. Canon Pearce agreed to follow this up directly in writing with the Archbishops’.

In relation to question two, he noted that the renewal and reform funding forms part of the conversations at every deanery chapter meetings and asked if members were as disappointed as he was that this is a top down process and that we are dependent on having a bishop in place to be able to access these funds.

Canon Pearce again noted that the Archbishops’ Council have been very particular in the way they allocate these funds. The Commissioners are concerned that the funding is closely integrated with strategic direction and that we can demonstrate where we can make most impact in terms of mission and sustainability. She noted that in discussions with the Church Commissioners they urged us strongly to have a Bishop in place before submitting an application as this would ensure that the application was part of ongoing strategy. The funding to be sought would be in the region of £1m and therefore a very strong application was needed.

## **6. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE DEAN *Paper ODS 17.12* AND CANONS OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL OXFORD, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2016**

The Dean of Christ Church, The Very Revd Professor Martyn Percy, gave an overview of the year’s activities noting that the report had been superseded by events due to the difference in the year end reporting timescale, this being based on an academic year compared to the Diocesan calendar year end. He noted that one of the greatest achievements was the developing education work which had now served some 300 schools during the year and was a very important piece of outreach ministry. The Dean noted that the highlight of the calendar year 2016 was Bishop Steven’s enthronement,

which would not be reported on fully until the next report! The Dean outlined the differences between life in a cathedral and college community and that of a normal parish church setting. He noted that most of the worshippers are visitors rather than regular attenders who can simply dip in and out.

The Dean noted that the financing of the cathedral was unusual. The treasury oversees the administration of visitor fees which are shared 50/50 between college and cathedral. Oxford Diocese benefits from the support of a well-endowed institution with its college links and therefore has limited support from the Church Commissioners. He noted the plans were underway to appoint a new residentiary canon following Angela Tilby's retirement whose role will be split with the diocese.

The Dean reflected on Bishop Steven's remarks as to where we are as a diocese, in terms of courage, compassion and contemplation. He noted the life and work of the Dean and Chapter is fundamentally a ministry of hospitality, to be a house of wisdom, welcoming visitors from across the world and the home of Bishop Steven himself but above all else it remains a place where people can savour the presence of Christ in a way that speaks warmly and truly of dwelling in the sacred centre.

There was an opportunity for questions (*Ms Jayne Ozanne, Mr Gavin Oldham and Revd Tim Harper*).

Concerns about the level of corporate grant and how it was calculated were raised. Although in the previous year visitor numbers were up was the way the grant adjusted a fair system? Is there mutual support with other cathedrals where visitor numbers were not generating income and where they were faced with financial difficulties. The Dean was thanked for his excellent work on ministry training for curates and lay readers and for his social media engagement which has a large following.

In response, the Dean acknowledged that the corporate grant was adjusted each year according to the needs of the cathedral. As leader of both cathedral and college he is in a unique situation to ensure the benefit of both entities. He had no concerns about how the annual grant is adjusted. In terms of other cathedrals, he noted the existence of the Association of English Cathedrals who look at common themes such as tourism and income. The cathedral deans meet every quarter and engage in mutual flourishing with an element of peer review.

## **7. GENERAL SYNOD MATTERS**                      *Paper ODS 17.13*                      *[GS Agenda & GS 2055]*

Mrs Judith Scott introduced Dr Andrew Bell, General Synod representative, who gave an overview of the February Group of Sessions.

He noted some highlights:

The House of Bishops report on Marriage and Sexuality, to be discussed later.

In the 500th Anniversary year of the Reformation – a debate on the mutual understanding and reconciliation between churches, and the ability to share the gospel of salvation with all the world.

Archbishop Justin's Presidential Address. A key message "We cannot ever forget that as Christians we are a cross shaped people" and "We are to carry the cross as we follow. We are to be publicly, openly and convincingly those who are Christians".

A Private Members Motion calling for bans of marriage to be replaced by a Marriage Schedule issued by the civil registrar. The proposal was defeated in all 3 houses. The main reason being that bans being read was a pastoral opportunity that would cease to exist under the proposed arrangement.

A reduction in the maximum stake on machine gambling was discussed and a vote took place to welcome Her Majesty's Government's review of the maximum stake for such terminals and call on Her Majesty's Government as a matter of urgency to bring forward proposals

- i. for the amendment of existing legislation to reduce from £100 to £2 the maximum amount which may be wagered on a single game at such terminals and
- ii. ii. to grant local authorities the power to make provision about the number and location of such terminals in order to reduce the risk of harm to large numbers of vulnerable people.'

A Private Members Motion from Mr Gavin Oldham, Oxford Diocese concerning centralisation of administration was carried and now rests with the Archbishops' Council to move forward.

The "Setting God's People Free" debate was very important and would be discussed later by the Diocesan Synod.

Work on Renewal and Reform national programme continues to develop.

Full agenda and report on proceedings can be obtained from:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/aboutus/structure/general-synod.aspx>

Following this a panel of General Synod Representatives present at the February meeting were asked to give their personal reflections on the debate on Human Sexuality (*Ven Martin Gorick, Revd Andrew Atherstone, Canon Sue Booy, Mrs Julie Dziegiel and Ms Jayne Ozanne*). Bishop Steven set the context. The motion to 'Take Note' of the House of Bishops' Report had been defeated in the House of Clergy however there had been a very high quality of debate and a sense of calmness and deep listening. It was recognised that the shared conversations that already took place across dioceses helped set the tone. Each panel member spoke of their personal reflections on the debate and their response to it.

There was an opportunity for people to raise questions (*Miss Prudence Daley, Revd Rosie Harper, Mr John Smith, Miss Margaret Drage, Revd Harry Latham, Revd Andrew Lightbown, Revd Marcus Green, Mrs Juliet Rudolf, Revd Mark Bennet, Mr Gavin Oldham and Mrs Brenda Kerr-Muir, The Very Revd Martyn Percy*)

There was some frustration that the time was not yet right to have an open discussion and that Synod was simply being asked to reflect on discussions already held. Some concerns were also raised that the makeup of the panel members did not give a balanced view. There still exists a vast lack of understanding about the issues surrounding this debate. Some people had felt highly disappointed at the report's contents which had appeared not to address the underlying issues, others felt it lacked courage, others had viewed it as respectful and well balanced. Some felt the report had not addressed the theological issues and was devoid of any meaning and substance.

Bishop Steven summarised the discussions noting it was clearly difficult to respond appropriately in a short time to the strength of feeling. He recognised the call for further biblical and theological input to engage with some of the most substantial issues. He would meet with General Synod representatives to take these discussions further. His hopes were that we would continue to debate with honesty and clarity, with love and respect. He ended his reflection with a short prayer.

## **8. DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PRACTICE**

*Paper ODS 17.14*

The Diocesan Secretary, Canon Rosemary Pearce, updated members on the arrival of the new Safeguarding Adviser, Mr John Nixon. There would be an opportunity to formally welcome John at a later Synod. Canon Pearce noted the diocese's commitment to safeguarding and the importance of

people having confidence in the church and being safe within the church community. John's work would be a key part of this process.

The national church requires that safeguarding policies, already scrutinised by diocesan committees now need to be formally endorsed and adopted by the Diocesan Synod. This was done. Members were briefed on the safeguarding inspection of the diocese planned to take place in June 2017 by an external agency acting on behalf of the national church. Some parish documentation could be included in the inspection. The Diocese will provide more information to parishes about this.

Mrs Judith Scott moved the Motion:

*"That this Synod...*

*Adopts the safeguarding policies as set out in the accompanying papers as recommended by the Bishop's Council".*

**This was carried unanimously.**

## **9. "SETTING GOD'S PEOPLE FREE"**

*Paper ODS 17.15 [GS 2056]*

A Report from the National Lay Leadership Task Group

Mrs Judith Scott introduced Mr Matthew Frost, who chaired the national working group and he addressed Diocesan Synod. The full report had been circulated to members ahead of discussion.

Both the full report and Matthew Frost's presentation are available from <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/governance/diocesan-synod/>

The focus of the report was the question "How can the Church of England increase the effectiveness of lay people in leading where they are called to serve". It draws on the idea of whole life discipleship. Matthew Frost noted how it reflected his own journey of discipleship. It was about leadership and influence as well as specific roles and the scattered church Monday to Friday – not just a Sunday. Another group are looking at lay involvement in worship and church based ministry. Many Anglicans feel they get little help with issues of work and life. Knowledge of existing resources is sketchy but there is also little demand.

Members were given time to reflect on two questions: What can we learn from the report, and how could those ideas work in our deaneries and the Diocese? A number of comments and questions followed (*Revd Keith Dunnett, Mr Mark Burton, Mr Philip Read, Mrs Elizabeth Jones, Mr Graeme Slocombe, The Ven Martin Gorick, Mrs Jo Saunders, Mr Gavin Oldham, Revd Sarah Fitzgerald, Mrs Julia Hunt, Ms Jayne Ozanne, Mrs Alison Birch, Revd Jenny Ellis, Revd Geoff Price, The Very Revd Martyn Percy*)

One member commented that lay people often feel a lack of confidence and there was a lack of investment in our laity. God equips the called, not calls the equipped.

There was a call for a much broader theological engagement with the whole Church and more recognition of the role of the Holy Spirit. It was about the liberation of all God's children, clergy and lay. Self-Supporting Ministers could play an important bridging role as could industrial chaplains.

It was clear that a number of members were interested in Oxford Diocese taking part in the pilot scheme. Some deaneries had already distributed this report widely across their deanery.

There was a call for more stories as these were inspirational.

Matthew Frost responded to the points made and acknowledged the need for more resources, implementation will need the redeployment of resources nationally. He noted the desire to move this forward theologically and spoke of the reframing of a bigger canvas. In cultural change, most experts say symbols and stories must be thought about carefully not revisiting the past but moving forward.

Mrs Judith Scott thanked Matthew Frost for his presentation and said we now need to consider how we respond to this report and its implementation.

#### **10. OXFORD DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE – YEAR END RESULTS**

Canon Sue Booy introduced The Revd John Tattersall, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, who gave a verbal update on the year end position noting that currently, subject to audit, the budgeted surplus of £100k was likely to be nearer £500k. This would be held in diocesan funds as currently the reserves are below the 3 months level set by the reserves policy. Savings were due primarily to a better return on glebe investments, the bad weather buildings contingency was not used and an underspend on the Mission budget due to posts not being filled.

He noted that the Planning and Budget sub committee felt that a radical review of the Parish Share should follow from the developing strategy meanwhile a more limited review was being undertaken. Its proposals will be brought to the June Synod. This was a sensible approach recognising future plans may need additional funding.

No questions were raised at this time. Canon Booy thanked the Chair and the finance team for their work.

#### **11. FAIRTRADE CHURCHES**

Canon Booy introduced Mrs Maranda St John Nicolle, World Development Adviser, who gave a brief update on the Fairtrade Foundation's relaunch noting this had been delayed until later in 2017. The Diocese would continue its work until then but when it does launch it will be easy to engage with because the criteria is unchanged and the admin will remain simple. She noted that Fair trade is a moral issue and linking to Bishop Steven's address added that it takes seriously the wounds of the people, reflecting on the recent visit to the Diocese by Greg Valerio who helped lead a revolution in the jewellery industry, bringing human rights and social justice into the jewellery value chain. She noted Fairtrade offers hope and promotes responsible care. Although there has been great progress the job is not yet complete. She hoped all churches would engage with this when the time comes.

#### **12. REFLECTION**

Revd Claire Wood, Newport Deanery, led a period of reflection on the work of the morning.

**13. CLOSING PRAYERS** were led by The Bishop of Oxford

#### **ATTENDANCE**

4 bishops, 40 members of the House of Clergy, 63 members of the House of Laity and 1 ecumenical observer indicated their attendance. 32 Apologies for absence were received from:

House of Bishops and Clergy

The Revd Jonathan Beswick  
The Revd Chris Bull  
The Revd Heather Carter  
Canon Charlie Cleverley  
Canon Adrian Daffern  
The Revd Skye Denno  
The Revd Norma Fergusson  
The Revd Dr Peter Groves  
The Revd Mary Harwood  
The Revd Hannah Higginson  
Canon Dr Simon Jones  
The Revd Sam McNally-Cross  
The Revd Angie Paterson  
The Revd Sharon Roberts  
The Revd Jason St John Nicolle

The Revd Paul Smith  
The Revd Tim Stead  
The Revd Clare Sykes

House of Laity

Mrs Judith Babb  
Sir Tony Baldry  
Mrs Alison Bennet  
Lady Alison Buckinghamshire  
Mr Bob Collard  
Mr John Davies  
Mrs Diana Hasting  
Mr Jamie Macdonald  
Miss Lindsay Mills  
Mr David Pickup

Mr John Seedell  
Mrs Rachel Vander Elst  
Mr Michael Waring  
Mrs Kathy Winrow  
Mrs Carol Worthington