

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD  
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 141st meeting of the Synod held on  
Saturday 11 March 2017 at Chelmsford Cathedral**

**PRESENT : The President and 106 Members**

The Bishop of Chelmsford led Synod in a period of worship. During the opening worship Revd Åse Lindberg was given Permission to Officiate as part of her placement with the Diocese.

**1. NOTICES**

The Chair highlighted the bookstall and filming arrangements for the meeting.

**2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 12  
NOVEMBER 2016**

The minutes were approved.

**3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

The Presidential Address can be found on this webpage:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/bishop-unpacks-archbishops-invitation>

**4. DIOCESAN YOUTH STRATEGY**

The Chair suspended Standing Orders

The Bishop of Chelmsford introduced the item. He recalled his personal experience of youth work in parish ministry. He then introduced Hannah Robinson, Youth Adviser for the Barking Area and Mark Tiddy, Youth Adviser for the Bradwell Area.

Hannah Robinson shared a possible vision for the Church, one that was centred on intergenerational ministry.

Mark Tiddy went on to explain the journey of the Youth Strategy document:

- There had been a substantive consultation process including parish surveys, consultation with young people in the Diocese and meetings with various committees.
- There was a hope to see this strategy put in to practice in every Mission and Ministry Unit and parish.
- The strategy was grounded in Transforming Presence, aimed at helping young people to grow in faith and to be part of a discipleship journey.

- The strategy sought to empower young people and support them in their transitions.
- We have to serve with accountability by safeguarding our young people, providing mentoring support and formally recognising youth workers.
- The priorities in the document were ordered by the young people involved in the consultation process.

Hannah Robinson highlighted two cross cutting themes in the strategy document - Rural and Urban contexts and Integrated and Intergenerational Church. Young people are more likely to remain part of the Church if they are given opportunities to serve within it. Some of the steps proposed for taking the strategy forward were highlighted.

Three young people from St Peter and St Paul's Church in Grays were introduced. These were Eno Essian, Anitie Essian, and Karis Barlow. There was also a longstanding church member, Rita Donaldson, present. The youth work at this Church is led by volunteers.

Mark Tiddy interviewed Eno Essian and Anitie Essian about what Church means to them. Eno and Anitie spoke about when they feel included and that leadership roles and service opportunities helped with this. They felt the most important thing was to listen to young people.

Hannah Robinson interviewed Karis Barlow and Rita Donaldson. Rita talked about how life has changed for young people over the years. Young people at St Peter and St Paul's used to have the Sunday school and youth group. Now young people have many choices. Rita stressed the importance of talking to young people and finding out about them and how they feel. This is a two way process. Karis spoke of how young people often don't understand what life was like for people and being part of a Church offers opportunities to learn. It is important to ensure services of worship are interactive.

Members were invited to think about two questions over the refreshment break:

How can you see the strategy working out where you are?

What would help support you in implementing this strategy?

After the break members were given an opportunity for brief reflection on the questions. The contributions highlighted that intergenerational Church should be the focus, that young people should be particularly included in mission and that if young people are to serve on PCCs and Deanery Synods they should not be elected on their own and that these meetings should be more interesting.

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders.

The Bishop of Chelmsford moved the motion that:

This Synod endorse these strategic priorities; thank and affirm the Diocesan Youth Advisers for their ministry; and ask them to report back in 2019.

The following members spoke in the debate on the motion:

Revd Canon Philip Ritchie (Chelmsford South)

Michelle Tackie (General Synod)

Revd Pete Hillman (Bishop's Nomination)

Canon Roger Ennals (Colchester)

David Martins (Newham)

Cat Trinder (Havering)

Revd Nick Rowan (Rochford)

Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod)

Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)

Revd Marion Walford (Hadleigh)

Revd Canon David Tomlinson (Saffron Walden)

Mary Durlacher (General Synod)

Revd Tim Goodbody (Dunmow and Stansted)

Mac Leonard (Redbridge)

The contributions made, including any responses which were given, were:

- There is no mention in the document of the many organisations which offer support and resources for youth ministry. We need to make use of these resources. Could we set up a forum with these other groups? *These partnerships are very important.*
- We need to be bold, Church is not just something which happens on a Sunday. Many Fresh Expressions, such as Messy Church, meet at other times in the week.
- Is the document aimed solely at young people, or at young adults as well?
- St Mark's College is a great place to take youth groups.
- 2017-2025 is a long time, should it be a shorter time period?
- Will the Area Bishop's be using this to form future role descriptions for Youth Advisers?
- How could the DBF budget be amended to support this?
- We should not distinguish between people who come to Christ. It is apparent that there are many hearts seeking and we need to create space for that. We also need to provide mentors and spiritual direction.
- On the graph in paper DS(2017)01 it is not clear how many of the percentage of attendees are Anglican.
- We have a long way to go with all age groups.
- What can we learn from other organisations?
- How do we support parents?
- We need to focus on evangelism, being in schools and encouraging schools to engage with Church.
- Church camps are an excellent way to grow people's faith. *Every Church should seek to fund a weekend away for its young people.*
- The focus of the strategy may be too narrow. We need a vision with Children and Young Families and to invest in work with toddlers. *This is only one side of the coin, members were encouraged to make use of the services of the Diocesan Children's Work Adviser and the Barking Area Children's Work Adviser.*

- We need to have clarity for the focus of the strategy, not talk about ‘faith’, but ‘the faith’. Jesus asked people to come to Him, not the Church. *It may benefit from being more explicit.*
- It is not rocket science, young people need the same as other people need.
- We would benefit from doing exit surveys to help us learn why people don’t stay. *This is worth following up on.*
- One member spoke of their experience working in a college and a university campus. Young people have many ideas and we need to encourage informed ideas.
- What will happen if the motion is passed? The ideas need to be taken down to the grassroots.
- Are we giving enough resources to youthwork? We are asking a lot of our Youth Advisers, are we giving them enough support? *We do need to look in to this and report back to Synod.*
- One member spoke of their experience with Through Faith Missions and work in schools.
- It is encouraging to see mentions of rural youth work. Resources are not as plentiful in these contexts.
- Hearts may sink at another strategy so we need to listen carefully at what is going on and not steamroll what is already happening in parishes.
- If a teacher talks to a class for longer than six minutes they will be failed by OFSTED. The Church needs to make its preaching and teaching more interactive and engaging. *We must have space for a learning community, but there is still space for talking.*

The Bishop of Chelmsford thanked Hannah Robinson and Mark Tiddy.

The Chair put the motion to the vote. The motion was overwhelmingly carried.

## **5. GOOD NEWS STORY: YOUTH WORK**

The Chair suspended Standing Orders.

Revd Liz Paxton, Jordan Goodchild and Layla Goodchild spoke of their experiences attending Soul Survivor and how it had deepened their relationship with God and other Christians.

Matt Key, youth worker at Lifestreams in Prittlewell, spoke of the work on building a community of young people and adults in a house in Prittlewell.

## **6. THANK YOU AND BRIEFING FROM THE CHILDREN’S SOCIETY**

Emily Timmins and Charlotte Driscoll, from the Children’s Society, addressed the Synod. The key points from their presentation were:

- The funding provided by Churches had enabled the Children’s Society to work with 1,487 children last year.

- The Children's Society offers a child centred approach on a range of issues facing children and young people.
- The Children's Society is involved in campaigning and lobbying.
- The Boxes and Christingle collections provide a great deal of finances to support the work. However other resources are available which can be made use of by Churches, such as reports and theological reflections.
- There is work going on with early intervention over substance abuse, young people in carer capacities and many other issues.
- As part of working in partnership the Children's Society can come to talk to Churches, Deanery Synods and Chapters.

The speakers thanked members for their support.

## **7. BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders. The report was noted.

## **8. ANNUAL PARISH BRIEFING**

Synod received the Annual Parish Briefing.

## **9. QUESTIONS**

### **Q.1: Revd Brenda Wallace (Rochford) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford :**

Following the debate at General Synod on the Bishops' Report, 'Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations', and the Synod's vote to not take note of the Report, would the Bishop advise us what action will be taken in this Diocese to follow up on the Archbishops' subsequent letter, to ensure that we move towards being a Diocese in which attitudes in our churches are, in the Archbishops' words, 'based on good, healthy, flourishing relationships, and in a proper 21st century understanding of being human and of being sexual.?'

### **A:**

I hope that my Presidential Address this morning has gone some way towards providing an answer to this question.

### Supplementary Questions

Q. Why does unity have priority over the Church's relationship with the LGBTQTI community?

A. The report that was put before General Synod was not noted. This moves us in to a new chapter.

Q. Would the Bishop value parishes and individuals writing to him on this issue?

A. There are already a significant number of people writing to the Bishop on this issue. The Bishop confirmed he would be happy to receive correspondence from others, but people do need to be realistic in response times.

**Q.2: Revd David Lower (St Osyth) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford :**

In his moving letter to the clergy in the diocese Bishop John expressed his hope that in time the Church of England would fully accept same sex marriages. Links and references to this letter were included on the front page of the diocese website and in the latest news bulletin from the department of education. Are Bishop John's views now the default position of the diocese and the department for education and if so, what reassurances can be given to this synod and the children attending our church schools that the (now compulsory) relationship and sex education given in our schools affirms and promotes the traditional view of marriage being between one woman and one man for life?

**A:**

No, Bishop John's letter is his personal view and a helpful contribution to the ongoing debate about human sexuality, relationships and mission. I can confirm that the Christian understanding of marriage is taught in our schools.

Q. Will we continue to uphold this teaching or be shaped by our culture?

A. We will continue to uphold the traditional teaching on relationships but we are considering how same sex relationships are recognised and open to development.

Q. Does the Bishop agree that appropriate training and great sensitivity is required to deliver this teaching?

A. The Bishop agreed with this and expressed his confidence in the Board of Education to deliver this.

**Q.3: Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod) to ask the Chief Executive :**

What is the process for who chooses and authorises what is posted on the diocesan web-site, and what then is the status (ie authority, approval, legitimacy, fuel for debate, etc) of anything that is posted?

**A:**

Many people are authorised to post various types of content to the website. They generally make their own choices but they are supervised by the Communications Team. The status of the posts varies with the type of content.

Q. Would other personal statements be welcome?

A. We would be happy to consider a process of how this could happen.

**Q.4: Revd Clive Hillman (Hadleigh) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:**

In the light of the large numbers of priests being ordained this year, it seems that the reasoning for local ordinations no longer holds, as each candidate can only invite a relatively small number of guests, thereby disrupting the worship of parish churches, whilst not affording every parishioner an opportunity to attend the local ordination. Might the Bishops be minded to review the situation, by either bringing priestly ordinations to the cathedral, or having more ordination services with a maximum number of candidates allowable at each service?

**A:**

I want to thank Fr Clive for this helpful question. The increase in ordinations to the diaconate and the priesthood in the Chelmsford diocese is a cause for celebration, but as he rightly points out it might also be the occasion for reviewing our practice. We will look into this.

**Q.5: Canon Ron McLernon (Hadleigh) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:**

There was a 'conference on 23rd October 2012 at St Mary & St Michael's Church Manningtree titled Seeing Silver'! There used to be a working group "Ministry with the Elderly" Chaired by Revd Canon Theologian Andrew Knowles and reporting to the Faith in Action Group Chaired by Bishop Stephen; but to my knowledge this group has not met or reported to the Faith in Action Group since the retirement of Andy Knowles.

Please will you advise who is the lead person in the Diocese for Ministry with the Silver (Elderly) people, given that they are one of the largest groups in the Diocese and what action is being under taken?

**A:**

Thank you for your question. No one person particularly has the portfolio for ministry with elderly people, however work has been done on this issue recently by the Barking Area Evangelism Adviser, Revd Canon Hugh Dibbens, and the Canon Theologian, Revd Canon Edward Carter.

**Q.6: Canon Ron McLernon (Hadleigh) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:**

In a Parish where 'The Churchmanship is Anglo-Catholic and the Episcopal sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish is provided by the Bishop of Richborough', a male whether he accepts or rejects women's ministry is ordained to the priesthood using a different order of service by the Bishop of Richborough, to the order of service to the priesthood used by other Bishops for those male deacons who fully accept women's ministry. Why are they treated differently please?

Is the same order of service used across the whole of the Diocese of Chelmsford and the Church of England please?

**A:**

The rite of ordination that is used for deacons and priests in the diocese of Chelmsford is identical whichever bishop is presiding and follows the order set out in Common Worship. However, I understand the question to refer not so much to the rite itself but to some of those customs such as prostration, presentation of chalice and paten and vesting in chasuble that can be helpful additions to the rite and are permitted in the accompanying notes and rubrics. These matters are always being reviewed and I am grateful for the question. This year we are including the presentation of chalice and paten alongside the presentation of the Bible as a way of visibly demonstrating that all priests, whatever their church tradition, are ordained as ministers of word and sacrament. We are considering whether prostration or kneeling or some other physical expression of surrender and devotion could also be included, though there are, of course, practical considerations that need to be borne in mind. We are not minded to vest newly ordained priests with a chasuble as part of the rite itself, though this can and does happen after the service in some cases. As we are reviewing how best to do this across the whole diocese, then we will also on those occasions when the Bishop of Richborough or the Bishop of Maidstone conduct an ordination make sure they understand and comply with diocesan practice.

**Q.7: Mary Durlacher (General Synod) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:**

In the light of the motion unanimously passed at General Synod, what plans are there to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, by *'giving thanks to God for the rich spiritual blessings the Reformation brought to the Church of England'* (a), and in particular, what initiatives are there to foster a better understanding of what the Reformers meant by 'justification by faith' so that there may be a genuine reconciliation between churches, *"for the sake of our deeper renewal in the grace of God and our ability to share the gospel of salvation with all the world"* (c)?

**A:**

Beyond the individual initiatives and responses of individual parishes, we have no specific plans as a diocese to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, though would be happy to receive suggestions and ideas. It is however something that is bound to be discussed and celebrated at ecumenical meetings in the diocese, and I certainly commend to the diocese study of the ecumenical documents mentioned in the question and the General Synod motion.

Having said that, we are cautious about too many centrally driven initiatives. We do not have the resources to do this, and we do not think the parishes and mission and ministry units would thank us if we sought additional funding for this kind of initiative. As far as possible it is our policy to limit centrally resourced and funded initiatives to those things which flow directly from our Transforming Agenda or are requested from the bottom up.

Nevertheless, this is an important anniversary and I am pleased to mention the work of the Council for Christian Unity in disseminating information and the Reformation Anniversary page that is on the Church of England's website (<https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/work-other-churches/reformation-anniversary.aspx>).

I am also pleased to say that Bishop Sören, the Bishop of Karlstad, will be with us for our **Refresh** gathering in July and will be contributing a workshop on Luther. And I expect that we will be represented at Karlstad's own conference on Luther that is happening in November.

**CLOSE** The President closed Synod.

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