

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 143rd meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 18 November 2017 at St Stephen's Church in Colchester**

PRESENT : The President and 83 Members

Opening worship was led by the Archdeacon of West Ham and the Revd Christiana Asinugo.

1. NOTICES

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

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 17 JUNE 2017

The minutes were approved.

3. SETTING GOD'S PEOPLE FREE

A video about being a 24/7 Christian was played.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders and invited Dr Nick Shepherd, Programme Director for Setting God's People Free, to address the Synod.

In his presentation he made the following points:

- The report, Setting God's People Free, is about how we tackle those things that stop us shining like a light and being a transforming presence. It is a great opportunity.
- We have some unhelpful distinctions between clergy and laity as well as Church and workplace. We want to change that culture and encourage mutual recognition and support. We are all called to minister through our Baptismal vows.
- We need to consider how our structure can work together at all levels to make this happen.
- Eight areas for change had been identified. They were:
 - Enhancing gathered worship to better form and shape everyday discipleship,
 - Biblical vision for the calling and vocation of all to serve God's mission,
 - Equipping of people for lives in home, work and community,
 - Bishops and senior clergy modelling interest and concern in lives and roles of wider church,
 - Listening to lay voices and experience of being Christian,
 - Representing the diverse presence of the church in the places we are sent,
 - Reforming church structures to strengthen relationships between clergy and lay people,
 - Changing the way we use communications.

- There were three workstreams underway already; resourcing whole-life discipleship; the Discipleship Learning Community and resourcing mission & ministry
- Chelmsford Diocese can help the process by discussing it in Deaneries and Parishes, through active use of communication channels and participating in the Learning Community.

He finished with some questions for reflection. Members discussed these with their neighbour.

The Chair then invited Nick Shepherd, the Bishop of Chelmsford, Canon Robert Hammond and Michelle Tackie to form a panel to answer questions put forward by the Synod. The following members asked a question or commented:

Revd James Rodley (Harlow)
 Revd Tim Goodbody (Dunmow and Stansted)
 Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod)
 Diana Bengé Abbott (Bishop's Nomination)
 Isabel Adcock (General Synod)
 Cat Trinder (Havering)
 Canon John Winterbotham (Harlow)
 Mary Durlacher (Colchester)
 Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
 Piers Northam (Bishop's Nomination)
 Revd Brenda Wallace (General Synod and Rochford)
 Sylvia Halford (Braintree)
 Kathy Playle (General Synod)
 Revd John Dunnett (General Synod)
 Canon Roger Ennals (Colchester)

The comments and questions submitted were as follows:

- Who will be representing the Diocese in the Learning Community? This is being decided.
- Will 'Baptismal Mutuality' be enough to overcome the Church's structures? The Bishop of Chelmsford responded that he agreed with this aim, but not how some were proposing to get there. We need to better understand ordained ministry. We are an ordered Church and that is part of the gift. Nick Shepherd also pointed out that we are often having theological discussions in contested spaces. If this was wider, then the respective Houses would contribute differently. We need to focus more on the power of Baptism and broader sense of calling.
- What do each of the panel find most helpful to them in living out their life as a disciple? Members of the panel shared their personal reflections on how they were inspired to live as disciples. Members of the Synod also offered some reflections.
- Thank God for the Reformation. The report does not mention sin.
- At a recent vocations day all the people who delivered presentations were ordained. It did not feel as if lay ministry was being grounded in that day. The Bishop of Chelmsford responded to say that was not the intention and that this

was a failure. Nick Shepherd shared that this would likely be replicated across the country. You can't really fail the vocation process, but a number of people feel they have.

- The report ends focusing more on lay leadership than lay discipleship. Is this a tick box exercise or does God take us as we are? How does this report speak to those with no power? Robert Hammond responded that those points had been raised in the General Synod debate. Reports are always long, wordy and a snap shot in time. We should not worry about the report, but focus on the programme. Nick Shepherd supported that comment by pointing out that the report is only a starting point and that there are opportunities for all to feed in.
- At the recent CCS ceremony lay ministers were asked to stand and reaffirm their commitment. Only a few did, because of a misunderstanding. It would seem that we need to tap in to the things that people already know, but are not doing and make it more overt.
- 98% of the Church is comprised of lay people yet the Synod is a 50/50 split between clergy and laity. Should we change this? Robert Hammond clarified that General Synod was the only body that can do that. The Bishop of Chelmsford added that this was part of the catholic nature of the Church and we need to better understand what this means.
- What scenarios have the panel members had of sharing their faith outside of a Church context? Michelle Tackie and Nick Shepherd shared personal examples. The Bishop of Chelmsford added that schools are one of the key areas where we have this opportunity.
- Half of those surveyed in the report said that they did not have a story. 60% said they have had no training in discipleship.
- Structure reinforces culture can we think of how we can do things differently with the concepts like the cure of souls, sacramental responsibility and chairing of PCCs? Nick Shepherd pointed out that he will be working with the Faith and Order Commission on such issues. All traditions have an understanding on these matters, but none are doing them particularly well.
- This involves a generosity in sharing. One thing that would help is involving a wider group than the PCC. Nick Shepherd responded that it involves a mixture of releasing and more people stepping forward.

The Chair brought an end to the panel discussion, reinstated Standing Orders and moved the motion:

'That this Synod take note of the 'Setting God's People Free' report.'

The motion was carried with one abstention.

4. GOOD NEWS STORY: RURAL CHAPLAINCY

The Chair invited Revd Janet Nicholls, the Diocesan Rural Adviser and Agricultural Chaplain to speak about her role. She highlighted the following points:

- There are three parts to the role; working alongside Revd Lydia Smith in supporting the Rural Church, working with the Rural Community (RCCE,

Strategic Board of ERP, Rural Crime prevention, EALC, Local Service Funding Panel, local issues) and the Agricultural Chaplaincy.

- There is concern on the impact of the 2020 Agricultural Policy. This currently involved working with the NFU to see how it can be made to work for farming communities.
- Resources for the main agricultural festivals had been launched.
- Janet Nicholls had been invited to be a part of a meeting with the Secretary of State to share in conversations about vulnerable people in rural areas.

5. VACANCY IN THE SEE OF BRADWELL

The Chair invited the Bishop of Chelmsford to speak to this item. The Bishop pointed out that it did not feel right to move quickly to fill the vacancy in the See of Bradwell after John Wraw died. However it was clear that we needed to have three Area Bishops in post and therefore a proposal had been made to begin the process of filling the vacancy.

The draft documents had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. It was pointed out that there was no explicit reference to mutual flourishing within the draft documents. The Bishop of Chelmsford agreed that there was a need to make this more explicit and that they would be amended accordingly.

The Bishop of Chelmsford moved that:

‘This Synod wish to support in principle the appointment of a new Bishop of Bradwell and ask the Bishop of Chelmsford to appoint an Advisory Group to work with him and the Bishop’s Council in taking the appointment forward.’

The motion was carried unanimously.

The Bishop of Chelmsford moved that:

‘This Synod note the draft statement of case for the vacancy in the See of Bradwell and the role specification for the Area Bishops in the Diocese of Chelmsford, and ask the Bishop of Chelmsford to commence the appointment processes.’

The motion was carried unanimously.

6. BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

The reports were received by Synod.

7. 2018 DIOCESAN SYNOD ELECTION FORMULA

It was noted that the triennial elections were scheduled for next year and therefore the formula for the number of representatives from each Deanery had to be agreed this year.

The Chair moved the motion that:

‘That this Synod approve the formulae for the allocation of seats in the 2018 Diocesan Synod elections based on the following ratios:

- a) The House of Clergy – One seat for every six clergy in the House of Clergy of the Deanery Synod
- b) The House of Laity – One seat for every 550 people on the combined electoral rolls’.

The motion was carried unanimously.

8. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS BRIEFING

The Chair suspended Standing Orders and invited the Pastoral Secretary to address the Synod. In his presentation he made the following points:

- On 25 May 2018 a significant change in data protection law takes effect, under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- The new legislation is very much grounded in the current law set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.
- The 1998 Act defined how an individual’s personal data may be held lawfully by organisations, set out 8 principles for processing of data and created a regulatory authority for data protection, the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).
- Under the GDPR the legal bases and 8 principles remain. More personal data and sensitive personal data are defined. Enforcement is much more stringent and it applies to the Church as with any organisation.
- Some of the key developments between the current and new law were highlighted.
- The recently published guidance from the National Church was highlighted and commended to Synod members.
- Training events for parishes and clergy were being planned for early in 2018.

The Chair invited questions. The following members asked a question:

Revd David Tomlinson (Saffron Walden)
Revd Jo Delfgou (Basildon)
Revd Canon Martin Wood (Bishop’s Nomination)

The questions were as follows:

- What affect is there in consents for pastoral databases? The Pastoral Secretary responded that any consents acquired previously were likely to be invalid under the new law. It would depend on what the subjects were told when obtaining the consent and grounds for processing.
- Can the slides be made available? Agreed via the website.
- An example was given as to how the new law would affect local community communications.

9. QUESTIONS

Q.1: Revd Jo Delfgou (Basildon) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

In the light of the immediate decrease in clergy numbers and the changes in the nature of clergy deployment, has there been any discussion within the 'Transforming Ministry', 'Transforming Leadership' or Reimagining Ministry' of those in Diocesan roles offering themselves to dual role ministry by also holding the cure of souls of one of the many smaller parishes that currently have no direct stipendiary input?

For example:

The incoming Bishop of Bradwell holding the cure for Horndon-on-the-Hill, a small parish currently one of three under a single stipendiary priest.

This would certainly enable a better spread of clergy, relieving the stress and pressure upon many who have multiple roles and also root the senior leadership in the pastoral life of a parish.

Of course, as a consequence, we might need more bishops or archdeacons.

A:

In 2011, the Leadership Review Group considered the question of beneficed bishops and archdeacons as part of its review of leadership structures in the diocese. The group concluded that the disadvantages outweighed the potential benefits. In particular, if one of the aims was for archdeacons to be more visible across their area, having their own parish was likely to defeat this aim.

The questioner also concedes that pursuing such a policy may mean we end up needing more bishops and archdeacons. I am not convinced that this would be a strategy that would command huge support. It would almost certainly cost more.

However it is worth noting that while the total number of adviser posts has reduced in order to meet the cost of additional archdeacons most of these either hold a dual role in a parish or have a specific associate ministry role in an SSM capacity.

Q.2: Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest) to ask the Chief Executive:

The Diocesan Policy, committing to the Environment, pledges that “We will consider the environmental impact of all our policies and plans, and accept that additional costs may be incurred”, as well as “We will encourage environmentally-friendly forms of transport ... keep journeys to meeting venues short.”

What environmental considerations were taken into account in deciding today's venue, with its distance from the nearest mainline station and the advertised rail disruption, and in the light of the previous commitment given to this synod that meetings will be scheduled so that they can be held at the Cathedral, as Chelmsford is relatively central to our large diocese and the cathedral is within walking distance of the town's station?

As a preface to his answer the Chief Executive thanked the Revd Canon Ian Hilton and St Stephen's Colchester for their hospitality in hosting Synod.

A:

Normally Synod is held at the Cathedral. The dates and venues for Synod are set well in advance. The date of this meeting was set more than 18 months in advance with options limited by Remembrance Day and Advent Sunday. The Cathedral was unavailable for this date. There were no published rail alterations for this date at that time.

When not in Chelmsford, the Standing Committee seeks to ensure Synod is held reasonably close to the major transportation routes to allow for alternative travel options, taking into account accessibility, environment, and other factors. There have been several Synods in the west end of the diocese and it was time to come east. Sadly the positioning of suitable churches in Colchester is not as convenient for rail travel as in other towns. It is also worth bearing in mind that there are some who have difficult journeys wherever Synod is held.

Rest assured, the Synod will usually meet in the Cathedral.

Q.3: Canon Ron McLernon (Hadleigh) to ask the Chief Executive:

Will you please provide details for each of the Stipendiary posts that were included in the 2017 Share Establishment; but are not in the 2018 Share Establishment, showing the post, amount saved during 2017 by non-payment of that stipend and also if that post was removed under a pastoral scheme?

A:

There are three reductions in the 2018 Share establishment compared to 2017. These are:

- a Team Vicar in the Canvey Team,
- a Team Vicar post in the Walthamstow Team becoming half stipend
- a reorganisation of posts in the Rochford deanery releasing 0.4 FTE

None of these changes relate to pastoral schemes.

The saving is in principle the pro rata reduction in the cost of stipend, national insurance and pension. In practice the budget already assumes that there will be a number of vacant posts at any one time, so the 'real' saving after vacancy factor is difficult to determine.

I am sure it is the Hadleigh deanery post that most interests you. It is a good example of how the share tends to follow the ministry change.

So, when the Canvey team increased from 2 to 3 stipendiaries during 2012, no additional parish share was requested in 2012. Indeed, under the deanery formula only a small increase was requested in 2013, despite a significant ministry change.

Supplementary:

Q. Will you please state what has happened in respect of the accommodation per post i.e. sold (amount), monthly rental (amount of rent received), how long the property has been empty and is expected to remain empty?

A. In the case of the three posts referred to earlier, one house is being let long term, another remains in use and another due to be sold. A detailed note had been sent to the questioner.

Q.4: Canon Ron McLernon (Hadleigh) to ask the Bishop:

What action is being taken to encourage all Parishes to pay their Share Assessment in full given the current estimated shortfall?

A:

First of all let us celebrate the fact that the vast majority of our parishes meet the Share in full, faithfully, generously, year after year.

But yes we do have a shortfall and it is too high. There are some parishes that are struggling and can't pay. There are other parishes who, for whatever, reason won't pay. This is something that every parish, Mission and Ministry Unit and Deanery needs to have on its agenda. Archdeacons will continue to take a lead in helping to address this issue, but all deanery officers and diocesan staff share this responsibility. In fact, it is the responsibility of every one of us. The ministry and mission of the church must be paid for by the church. Therefore we should all regularly examine our giving to the church, and we should all be involved in helping and encouraging parishes to pay their share in full.

Synod might also be interested to know that over half the shortfall relates to around 20 parishes.

A few years ago we were awarded an £850,000 grant from the Church Commissioners for projects to support parishes facing significant mission or financial performance barriers. Through the assistance and interventions of our Interim Ministry Project the total shortfall has improved and the data suggest that those parishes which have asked for support from this team are doing better than those who have refused the offer of help.

Supplementary:

Q. What are the impacts of Share shortfall other than reduced income?

A. The impacts of shortfall can be significant. In addition to the loss of income, over time sustained Shortfall would diminish the investment funds available and therefore the investment income. This is a loss to everyone. It also has an effect on the assessment of our covenant strength for evaluation of the pensions deficit and repayment plans. There is also a significant loss of morale.

Supplementary

Q. How many of the parishes referred to are ones which cannot pay and are these increasing?

A. Information to answer this question was not available at the meeting. There is often a spiritual problem underlying non-payment of share. We need to provide an intervention rather than being negative about these parishes.

Q.5: Larry Morris (Havering) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

The following document having been attached to the doors of a number of cathedrals in recent days indicates the high level of concern over the matters raised.

Is the Bishop willing to affirm its contents and fulfil the requests made in the last two paragraphs?

The Southwark Declaration

We affirm the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and their supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. We affirm with Canon A5 that ‘the doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures.’

We affirm, with Article XX, that ‘it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s Word written.’

We affirm the teaching of Scripture (Genesis 2.24, Mark 10. 7, Matthew 19.5), the Book of Common Prayer, and Canon B30 (‘Of Holy Matrimony’) that marriage is the union of one man and one woman for life.

We affirm it is the one God-ordained context for sexual intercourse. We affirm resolution 1.10 on human sexuality of the Lambeth Conference (1998).

We call upon all the Bishops, Archdeacons, and the senior staff of the Diocese, alongside all clergy and licensed lay ministers, to affirm these truths, live by them, and to teach in accordance with them.

We call upon the Bishops to appoint to positions of teaching authority only those who hold to these truths in good conscience.

A:

Every deacon, priest, bishop and licensed lay minister in the Church of England is required to make the declaration of assent: that is to affirm, and accordingly declare their belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, bear witness.

Although there is much about the Southwark declaration that is commendable, I do not ask any deacon, priest, bishop and licensed lay minister to swear any more or any less than that which is already required by Canon Law. Neither will I ordain, license or appoint any minister who is unable to make the declaration of assent.

Supplementary

Q. Does the Bishop believe that homosexuality is in accordance with Scripture?

The Chair ruled this question out of order as it requested an opinion to be given and thus was contrary to the Standing Orders.

Supplementary

Q. Will the Bishop confirm that he has no plans to introduce liturgy for prayers for people in same sex relationships?

A. The Bishop of Chelmsford responded that it was not in his power to make such a decision. This was up to the House of Bishops working with the General Synod.

Q.6: Larry Morris (Havering) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Can the Bishop outline the process required to bring matters for debate to this synod?

A:

This is set out in Standing Orders which can be found on the Synod page of the website.

Aside from matters which are referred to Diocesan Synod from the General Synod and the agenda items which are set by the Bishop's Council as the Standing Committee for Diocesan Synod, other matters can be brought to Diocesan Synod for debate under two routes detailed in the Standing Orders.

The first is a motion put forward by a Deanery Synod under Standing Order 88.

The second is a Private Member's Motion under Standing Order 91.

Standing Order 92 sets out the process which a motion brought under either Standing Order 88 or 91 must go through before it can be considered for inclusion on a future Diocesan Synod agenda.

Supplementary

Q. When was the last time a Private Members Motion was put forward?

A. Information on this was not available at the meeting, but this can be researched.

Supplementary

Q. Is the Bishop aware of a mechanism whereby we give the right amount of debate to a major issue? The process used in General Synod is unsatisfactory.

A. The Bishop responded to say he shared frustration over the time given to debate major items and suggested that this issue be raised with the General Synod Business Committee.

Q.7: Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Preface: *Every Ordination service underlines the teaching responsibility of Christian ministers in each of the Orders of Ministry and the minister's declaration and promise 'to affirm their loyalty to and belief in the inheritance of the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures'.*

Will the Bishop (and his Council) consider a moratorium in this Synod of any motion on issues in human sexuality (such as was tabled and passed in Hereford) before 2020, the date when the House of Bishops promised to discharge their particular episcopal responsibility to teach and guard the faith by bringing a major Teaching Document to the General Synod?

A:

The previous answer set out the means by which business is brought before the Synod. At this date, the Bishop's Council as Standing Committee of the Synod has received no motions such as those referred to in the question, nor has it discussed initiating such a motion. If the Council did receive such a motion then it would have to bear in mind the House of Bishops' document and decide whether it would be helpful or not to discuss the proposed motion prior to the publication of the document referred in the question. All such decisions would have to be taken with due regard to the requirements of Standing Orders.

Supplementary

Q. Will the report from the House of Bishops be available before 2020?

A. In response to this the Bishop confirmed that he had no further update to give.

Q.8: Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Preface: *Safeguarding continues to be a high priority and cost in terms of personnel, time and resources in the diocese.*

However, the Carlile Report (on the Bishop Bell case) is now with the Archbishop of Canterbury's office for initial consideration before any full publication, and it makes clear that there is a case and call for a significant change of emphasis and approach in Safeguarding at national and local level. The gist and justice of the Report can be seen in a guest Blog by Martin Sewell, an established member of General Synod, himself a retired Child Protection lawyer, who has sent it very recently to all fellow GS members. (<http://archbishopcranmer.com/church-u-turn-sex-abuse-must-believed-taken-seriously>)

Given that a formal and full complaint has been made about the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST)'s recent performance and attitude and that a legal challenge may yet be forthcoming to a recent outcome of its work and the ongoing consequences, can the Synod be assured that the DST still commands the diocese's full confidence in the DST's training, procedures and pastoral competence and in the sufficiency of the personal experience and understanding of the faith and fellowship of the Church among the DST's own full-time staff?

A:

Our safeguarding provision and the work of our safeguarding team was reviewed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence in April of this year. The report, which is extremely positive about the work of our Safeguarding professionals, is published on the Safeguarding page of the diocesan website and members may recall Sir Roger Singleton, Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Advisory Group commenting on this as recently as the last meeting.

I hardly need remind Synod that safeguarding is an area of our life where the Church has not always acted well. This has severely damaged our reputation and adversely affected our mission. Worst of all many people have suffered because we were not the safe place we should be. Safeguarding is now a vital part of our mission. It is difficult and sensitive work, and sometimes outcomes are challenged. Neither the questioner, nor Synod would expect me to comment on ongoing safeguarding cases. However, I can assure Synod that any complaints are dealt with fairly and transparently and that I have every confidence in the expertise, diligence and faithfulness of our team. They carry out this important work on our behalf and deserve our support.

In the preamble to his question, the questioner mentions the Carlile Report. This report is not yet published, so it would be inappropriate to comment upon it. But I have read the Gibb review into the case of Bishop Peter Ball. It is a harrowing read which highlights how easily power and influence can be misused and the quiet voice of the victim lost. I urge all members of Synod to read this report and reflect upon it.

Supplementary

Q. Concern about processes has shown that we may need some review to ensure proportionality. Few members of the DST are members of a Church. What requirements are there for DST members to be practicing Christians?

A. The Bishop of Chelmsford reminded Synod that all employed roles have to conform to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and only certain posts are eligible for a Genuine Occupational Requirement to be practicing Christians. It will be important for the whole church to reflect on the conclusions to the Carlile Report when it is published.

10. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The text of the Presidential Address can be downloaded from here:

<http://www.stephencottrell.org/news/article/bishop-stephen-lets-not-be-abashed-to-talk-about-the-reality-of-sin>

The Bishop of Chelmsford licensed the Bradwell CMD Adviser, Revd Andy Griffiths, as a Public Preacher

CLOSE The President closed Synod.