

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **BISHOP'S COUNCIL, DIOCESAN MISSION & PASTORAL COMMITTEE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

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This paper summarises the business of the Bishop's Council since the November meeting of the Synod.

December 2017

Bishop's Council

- Received an update on the vacancy process in the See of Bradwell.
- Agreed to end the encounter scheme in its current form and to continuation through another route linked with the Church of England Ministerial Experience Scheme (CEMES).
- Received the report on the Cathedral Visitation.
- Approved an action plan for compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.
- Noted the timetable for the 2018 Diocesan Synod elections.
- Approved a strategic decision regarding a house being used to support the refugee response.

DMPC

- Noted the formal recognition of four further 'Mission and Ministry Units' by the Area Mission and Pastoral Committees,
- Approved the proposal for the termination of the Chelmer Crouch Group Ministry;
- Agreed that the proposal for closure of Holy Trinity Abridge be sent to the Church Commissioners to continue the next stage of the closure process.

Finance Committee

- Approved auditors remuneration for 2017 audit.
- Approved treatment of historic loan to Sparrows.
- Approved an appointment to the Sparrows Board.
- Approved the purchase of a house for a Team Vicar in Epping.
- Noted outcome from the new parish share process and approved some changes in the process based on those learning points.

January 2018

The Bishop's Council held its annual day meeting where members consider strategy. This year the Council considered potential next steps in respect of Transforming

Presence. There was a discussion on what projects should arise as outworkings of the values and aims of the Diocese. The Bishop's Council also received data protection training.

There was a meeting of the Finance Committee held on the same day which transacted the following business:

- Noted the update on 2017 Share and Outturn
- Considered the feedback from consultation and agreed the closure of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme with mitigation measures
- Noted and raised no objection to the proposed TUPE of Bishops' support staff to employment by the Bishop of Chelmsford
- Agreed authorised signatories in relation to a parish trust matter

February 2018

Bishop's Council

- Received a presentation from the Director of Church Planting and approved a further application being made to the National Church for more funding to support this work.
- Noted the Cathedrals Working Group Draft Report and agreed to send a response supporting the Dean of Chelmsford's submission.
- Agreed proposals to revise the Standing Orders of Diocesan Synod.
- Agreed a proposal to produce a slimmed down version of the Diocesan Directory for 2019, whilst GDPR compliant consent is gathered. Also agreed was a review of the Directory to inform content on future publication.

Finance Committee

- Completed the annual risk review and approved the strategic risk register. (A summary of the most significant risks is disclosed with the Annual Report and Accounts.)
- Finance Committee considered in detail the financial outturn report and parish share report for 2017. Members were concerned that following three successive years of reducing share shortfall, shortfall had increased to over £0.9m in 2017. It was noted that £0.5m of the shortfall is attributable to just 20 parishes. With clergy vacancies at a higher than expected level and other savings the net effect is expected to be a deficit of over £0.5m on the general fund in 2017. This represents a serious depletion of free general reserves. (A final report including audited accounts will come to the June Synod.)
- Members then considered the potential 2018 position in light of the 2017 position. It was noted that some painful savings have already been agreed and have been implemented and will have a significant financial benefit in 2018. Members gave serious consideration to further short term savings such as delaying stipends increases or temporarily cutting back on property improvements, and concluded that a drawdown from capital funds (selling a house) would be more appropriate at this time. Finance Committee further agreed that more work is required on longer term responses to shortfall and the implications.

Members are asked to NOTE the report.