

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 140th meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 12 November 2016 at Chelmsford Cathedral**

PRESENT : The President and 118 Members

The Revd Gemma Fraser led Synod in a period of worship to open the Synod.

1. NOTICES

The Chair highlighted the bookstall and the filming arrangements for the meeting. A vacancy at the Diocesan Office was also brought to members' attention.

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 18 JUNE 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-stephen-all-are-pilgrims#.WCnhoMvct9A>

4. VOCATIONS

The Chair suspended Standing Orders for this item.

The Revd Canon Dr Roger Matthews was invited to introduce this item. He began by inviting people to reflect on their vocation, how it had developed and where it might go.

A series of testimonies were then given:

- A video from this year's Encounter scheme participants was shown.
- Caroline Harding spoke of her experience of being one of the first Licensed Lay Ministers in the Diocese.
- Marco Lopes spoke of his experiences as an Ordinand and how he had come to this stage of his vocation.
- Revd Tim Goodbody spoke of his experience of encouraging vocations in the parishes he serves.
- Revd Gemma Fraser spoke of a Deanery experience of helping people from a group of Churches to think about their vocation.

The Revd Canon Dr Roger Matthews then invited Revd Dr Elizabeth Jordan to speak about developments in lay ministry. The following key points were made:

- The challenge of thinking about vocations is to balance the belief that it is, on the one hand, God who calls - God who decides who to call and to what form of service and on the other hand the needs of the church and our own perception of who is suitable and whether what they offer fits the vacancy which we perceive to exist.
- The work of the SHAPE course and CCS were highlighted.
- A need for the boundaries around lay ministry to be looser than they currently are in order to form vocations around the gifts people have, rather than trying to fit them in to particular categories.
- Though people may have the same title they will exercise their ministry in different ways. The training that is given is less a qualification for a category of ministry and more a resource to enable someone to improve what they have already begun to do.
- Those who take an active role in the Church are far more likely to be sharing their faith with others.
- Those who are licensed are educators, trainers, supervisors and mentors of others' ministry, and may be the ones who convene, resource and support the authorised ministers. But there isn't a tight definition of what authorised ministers do in their leadership role, so that we may, as a diocese, see who God calls and how He wishes to shape His Church.

The Diocesan Director of Ordinands, Revd Canon Philip Need was invited to speak and made the following points:

- A longing for the day that it will be natural for people to offer themselves for ministry in the Church. Ordained ministry needs to be on the agenda.
- There is a strong DDO team including Assistant DDOs, Revd Hillary Le Seve and Revd Calvert Prentis, and the Diocesan Young Vocations Champion, Revd Andy Poultney.
- Members were invited to challenge people on their calling – ‘What about you?’
- More people are seeing vocations advisers.
- The decreasing number of clergy and the need for every member ministry means that there is a lot more work to do.
- The DDO team are committed to working with Synod to make this happen.

Next to be invited to speak was Revd Rob Merchant, who was director of the Chelmsford branch of St Mellitus College. He spoke of the following:

- A flourishing at St Mellitus due to the focus on vocations. 73 people gather each week in the Cathedral.
- All colleges need to be full in order to meet current demand and for the Church to flourish.
- The College is shaped by the values of generous orthodoxy.

Revd Sharon Prentis, a Tutor at St Mellitus, was invited to share more about the work at the College:

- A course, ‘Beginning Theology’ had begun. The College was one of only a few who had offered it.

- Half of attendees come from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- 60% of attendees are women.
- People are invited to use local resources, but there is the chance to engage with the experience at St Mellitus.
- There are two people who assist with the development of academic skills of those on the course.
- Members were invited to pray for the course as it continues.

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders and invited the Bishop of Bradwell to address Synod. In his address he made the following points:

- It is good to hear what is happening on the ground. However, we are still much too limited and need to be much more adventurous.
- Vocation is rooted in a theology of creation. A calling to be stewards of creation and a mutual responsibility toward our fellow human beings.
- Vocation is also rooted in birth and formative years.
- This means that it is not whether someone has a vocation, but a question as to what their vocation is.
- God's call is to all humanity and to serve the world.
- God's call is a collage, not a jigsaw puzzle. We should not begin with a preformed mould, but regard each person as unique.
- We are challenged with a priority of hidden treasure, groups who we have not in the past engaged with vocationally - Black and Minority Ethnic people, younger women, people with disabilities, those with few educational qualifications or from diverse social backgrounds, and those with little or no church background.

The Bishop of Bradwell then moved that:

This Synod

- a) Celebrates the achievements in vocational work since passing the 2010 motion.
- b) Reaffirms the beginning of the 2010 motion:

“This Synod rejoices in the variety of gifts entrusted to God’s people for mission and ministry in the church and world, and

 - i. endorses the commitment to raise the number of vocations in order that the gifts of all God’s people are valued, discerned and released; and the full range of ministerial resources are available to support God’s mission and ministry in the future
 - ii. recognises that the first responsibility for discerning and fostering vocations rests with the local church; and calls on every PCC to work actively with their licensed ministers to provide discernment opportunities that nurture the vocations of all the baptized to fully reflect the rich diversity of our communities.”
- c) Invites each Deanery, Mission and Ministry Unit and Parish to examine the national and diocesan resources and to develop appropriate local strategies to foster the full variety of vocations in their contexts
- d) Commends the Bishop’s plans for the School of Disciples initiative in 2017
- e) Commits to the Renewal and Reform target of an increase of at least 50% in ordinations on 2013 figures sustained annually from 2020

- f) Requests Bishop's Council to examine the adequacy of our vocational processes and resources.

The Chair invited members to speak in the debate. The following members contributed to the debate:

Revd Canon Julie Fleming (Barking and Dagenham)
Rosalind Tatum (Waltham Forest)
Revd Penny Sayer (Bishop's Nomination)
Revd Canon Martin Wood (Bishop's Nomination)
Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
Revd James Rodley (Harlow)
Vivien Whitfield (Bishop's Nomination)
Piers Northam (Epping Forest and Ongar)
Revd Jonathan MacNeaney (General Synod)
Revd Canon Philip Ritchie (Chelmsford South)

The following points were made during the debate:

- Is there a strategy accommodating the increasing number of ordinands? *There are parts of the Church that are really struggling with numbers of ministers so we need to look at how we can support them and also find new paths.*
- The motion is encouraging, but can we manage this with the resources we have? *There is a challenge with money, but money does not solve every problem.*
- The Dioceses approach to lay ministry should be applauded. However, there are a small number of parishes who foster lots of vocations and others send none.
- A member recalled that the 50% increase target was formed after the national Church asked Dioceses to set out what they need to grow. This is the level required to do that. If we don't hit that target, then we need to re-imagine what we are seeking.
- It will be key to take back the concept of pilgrimage.
- Would we be able to get some demographic indicators, particularly on socio-economic backgrounds?
- The Church flourishes best when it looks out at every tradition. If we raise up ministers will they be open to every tradition or will they be there to push their tradition? *We don't serve our own agenda, the call is to serve God's Church.*
- A member from the Diocese of Chelmsford Deaf Church shared the sign for vocation – a tap on the shoulder from God. *The Bishop thanked the speaker for this helpful visual reminder of vocation.*
- If we get in to an attitude of preaching about vocation, then we are on to a winner. *Yes, we need a culture of vocation.*
- One member shared that the Scottish Episcopal Church first look at budgeting to resource ministry. If the laity are resourced then giving will increase and it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- The male and female split in vocations has been highlighted at General Synod. There is a criticism that training benefits young men more so that young women. What are we doing to understand and assist? *There is a young vocations day in the Cathedral soon. We have some good role models but there is more work to be done.*
- How can we evaluate the effectiveness of SHAPE?

- If vocation stems from Baptism then the focus is discipleship. A disciple is only a disciple when they can disciple others. The sense of vocation needs to be broader. *Yes, we desperately need a wider vision.*

Members voted on the motion. The motion was overwhelmingly carried, with one abstention.

5. GOOD NEWS STORY: PARISH GIVING SCHEME

The Revd Canon Martin Wood introduced this item. The Parish Giving Scheme brings many benefits to parishes, particularly less administration and better cash flow. The scheme has been successful thus far, so much so that they are having a consultation to deal with some issues. It enables parishes to keep control of their finances. Givers are able give anonymously if they wish.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders to allow Graham Cook, Treasurer for the parish of the Sampfords, and Revd Canon Jane Freeman, Team Rector of Wickford and Runwell, to speak about their experiences of the scheme. They highlighted the following points:

- The scheme was working well in both places,
- They supported the earlier comments about the assistance this gives to parishes – it is simple to use.
- Take up can be slow initially.
- It is really important that the incumbent and treasurer are supportive of the scheme.
- Trust is also very important.
- It assists people to serve the Church, particularly those involved in Church finance and when seeking people to serve.

6. RETREAT HOUSE PLESHEY UPDATE

The Bishop of Chelmsford introduced this item. We need a place where we can go into ‘the zone’, not just retreat. We need to take seriously our spiritual health and wellbeing. The Diocese had struggled for many years over the future of Pleshey. A legacy was received, which acted as a catalyst for change. He thanked the Manager of the House, Stewart McCredie, for his oversight of the work. It was hoped to make a half time appointment for someone to take a lead on the spiritual life of the House.

Stewart McCredie spoke of the work that had been done so far, including a new chapel and a new orangery. Extra capacity had been created so that two, possibly even three groups could use the House at one time. Work was about to begin on the next phase, including ten new en suites and a lift. Members were asked to pray from the staff at Pleshey. He also asked members to consider supporting the House financially and he gave details on how that could be done.

7. MOTHERS’ UNION: GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PROJECT

The Chair of the Chelmsford Branch of the Mothers' Union (MU), Judith Meaden was invited to speak to Synod and made the following points:

- This year marked the 140th anniversary of the MU.
- There are 1700 MU members in the Diocese.
- The MU exists to serve God and the Church.
- The MU can be the backbone of many ministries in the Church.
- The MU in Chelmsford is currently supporting the Diocesan Discipleship initiative. They also support overseas communities.
- One of the key projects that the MU is involved with at present is a campaign to end Gender Based Violence (GBV).

At this stage Judith Meaden introduced Rose Wright, Campaigns & Social Policy Officer for the National Mothers' Union. The presentation continued with a focus on the GBV campaign:

- GBV is specifically violence against women and girls because of their gender. Men and boys are also affected, but women and girls are disproportionately affected. For example, in 2012, one in two women killed in a homicide was killed by a partner, former partner, or family member. One in 20 men were killed by a partner, former partner, or family member. Also, 4.5 million people worldwide are victims of forced sexual exploitation, 98% of these are women.
- This is rooted in unequal power structures between genders.
- It happens everywhere – even in the UK. 4.6 million women in England and Wales have experienced domestic abuse. Two women a week are killed by a partner or former partner in the UK.
- There is hope. The MU grounds its action in prayer and fellowship.
- The MU provides practical support. There are various programmes, including literacy and numeracy. Studies have confirmed that violence against women reduces with the increase in economic independence.
- The MU provides Bible based support groups and safe spaces.
- The MU is also involved in advocacy and campaigns. It responds to policy documents. It works with other groups and organisations. It also organises or takes part in marches and protests.
- The MU has consultative status with the United Nations. The MU also works alongside the UK government.
- 16 days of activism to raise awareness on GBV will begin on 25th November.

Members were thanked for their support and were encouraged to get involved through prayer.

Members were invited to comment. One member drew a parallel between this and the safeguarding. Safeguarding is often thought about as only relating to children, but this fits in their as well.

Another member commented that the fact that this happens in the Church is a sobering reality. How can the Church address this? Rose Wright replied by saying that a group called Restored support and resource Churches in this area. One of the best approaches can often be to talk about the issue. There is a lot of stigma still.

8. DIOCESAN REFUGEE GROUP UPDATE

The Chair invited the Bishop of Barking and Martin Mitchell to speak to this item.

Martin Mitchell, Chair of the Diocesan Refugee Group, spoke of the good response from Churches in Colchester, Epping, Newham, Brightlingsea, Southend and Harlow, where main activity in the refugee support had happened. Good ecumenical partnerships had been forged. Most of the £100,000 raised in the appeal remained in the fund and further thought was needed as to how it could be spent. Some small grants had been made and it was likely that the remaining funds would be used to enhance the support already given by the government.

The Bishop of Barking spoke of his experience with the refugees in Calais, especially with child refugees. There were three categories of child refugee 'Dublin children', who relatives in the UK and numbered about 200, children who came under the Dubs amendment, also numbering around 200 and then 1,500 who remained in the camp at Calais. This camp had now been demolished in what was an urgent and haphazard response. The 1,500 children remained on streets and have now been dispersed all over France. He urged members to keep the political pressure on so that children are safeguarded.

Members noted the report and the Chair thanked the Bishop of Barking and Martin Mitchell.

9. FINANCIAL UPDATE AND FEEDBACK FROM BUDGET CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary spoke to this item. He made the following points:

- The Diocese had achieved a 100% return for the 2015 statistics. These statistics showed that some of the gradual decline in membership is slowing, perhaps even reversing. There is still a notable decrease in occasional offices.
- The 2017 Budget Consultation – there had been a change in approach. Longer term questions were asked to begin to develop principles for longer term budgeting. There were five key headlines.
- Firstly, strong support for the principle that budgets should follow (rather than determine) mission and ministry plans.
- Secondly, on basis for future stipend levels, almost all responded that average earnings, forecast inflation or a combination of both should be used. An increase of 1-2% p.a. generally felt to be 'about right'.
- Thirdly, on retention of ordinands as curates, there was support or guarded support for seeking to retain, but concern about playing fair with other parts of the country.
- Fourthly, on shortfall provision, only 1 in 5 felt no provision should be made. There were differing answers on how much provision to make. Respondents from parishes with a history of shortfall tended to opt for a higher provision.
- Finally, in response to a question on future share trajectory there was a preference towards lower increase. 3 in 4 felt this should be either the same as

the stipend change or 1-2%. There may be a challenge reconciling this with other answers, e.g. future curates, but it gives a good guideline.

- A number of interesting conversations had arisen out of the consultation.
- Some ways for parishes to save money were highlighted.

Members were invited to ask questions.

One member asked about the clergy pension deficit and whether we should be concerned? The Chief Executive responded that all sorts of questions had been raised. The fund had been valued some time ago and this is an issue. However there was nothing to worry about at present.

Another member asked about the availability of hard copies of the budget consultation document. The Chief Executive highlighted that the majority of respondents are in favour of email circulation. Those who do not have an email address would receive a hard copy. If anyone else wanted to request a hard copy they could do so from the Diocesan Office.

10. 2017 DEANERY SYNOD ELECTION FORMULA

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders. The Chair highlighted an amendment, submitted prior to the meeting, from Canon Ron McLernon (Hadleigh). He drew attention to the information showing the net effect on the lay representation in each Deanery of the formula proposed and the formula as amended.

The Chair moved the motion that:

This Synod approve the election formula, as set out in paper DS(16)13, for use in the 2017 Deanery Synod Elections.

Canon Ron McLernon was invited to speak to the proposed amendment:

That the recommendation in paper DS(2016)13 pertaining to the formula for seat allocation in the 2017 Deanery Synod elections be amended so that the first line include parishes and BMOs with an electoral roll of between 1 and 25 having an allocation of one elected lay representative and the second line include parishes and BMOs with an electoral roll of between 26 and 80 having an allocation of two elected lay representatives.

He stated that he felt that the amendment would bring the Deaneries closer in line with the Church Representation Rules. The proposed formula discriminates against small parishes. Due to limitations in public transport in some places it would be safer to have two lay representatives from each parish. It is not compulsory to fill all of the seats.

The Chair then invited members to debate the amendment. The following members spoke in the debate:

Canon Christine Horton (Chelmsford South)
Canon Harry Marsh (Chelmsford South)

Canon Gordon Simmonds (Rochford)

The points made were as follows:

- The amendment would mean that persons accompanying members may be able to vote rather than just attend. Small parishes are often isolated and if one representative misses the Deanery Synod they can become disengaged.
- The proposer of the amendment was consulted earlier in the year and the amendment was not raised then. The amendment had also been considered by the Bishop's Council and voted down. The proposed formula has been in use for 12 years and, the amendment would see a large increase in some Deanery's representation.
- It would be helpful if consultation with the parishes and deaneries happened earlier in the year preceding the election.
- It is possible for laity to car pool with the clergy.
- Deanery Synods form the electorate for Diocesan Synod and General Synod. The proposed amendment would lead to over representation of small parishes.

Members voted on the amendment. The amendment was lost.

Members voted on the motion, which was clearly carried.

11. BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Synod received the reports.

12. QUESTIONS

Q.1: Canon Lynne Bennett (Havering) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:

With the average age of church members being 63 years of age and the rising retirement age in secular society approaching 68 years and likely to rise further to 70 years, would it now be appropriate to consider the raising of the retirement age of Licensed Lay Ministers to 75 years? Would this then obviate the present need for the granting of Permission to Officiate (PTO) for three years or alternatively move it on by five years?

The Revd. Hugh Dibbens' course on Evangelism in the Third Age in Chelmsford Diocese is stirring the retired and older church members to mobilise for Christ. Those who wish to study for Licensed Lay Ministry will not be able to do so under the current age restrictions. With regard to this specific issue, is there a future strategy to allow for the increased longevity of church laity?

A:

Thank you for this question. Not least because it gives me an opportunity – having missed the Day of Celebration for Lay ministry this year - to acknowledge the

important ministry of Readers and LLMs – both those who are licenced and those who hold permission to officiate – and thank them for their ministry.

There is no legal requirement for Readers to retire at the age of 70 but the House of Bishops' Regulations state that Readers should move from Licenced Ministry to Permission to Officiate at the age of 70. That is a national policy and written into the Licence of every Reader. But as a matter of fact there is no difference in the scope of ministry for a Reader or Licenced Lay Minister under a Permission to Officiate and a Licence.

This parallels the situation for clergy who have to retire at 70 – though for them there is limited provision for continuance of a licence for a period over the age of 70.

The question raised is an important one and I will ask the Diocesan Reader and LLM Working Group to consider the question and report to me.

Can I also acknowledge the work being done by Canon Hugh Dibbens, who through his excellent course on Evangelism in the Third Age is showing us the important ministry of older people and we all need to affirm and encourage such ministries.

Supplementary questions

Q. Could PTO Readers be included in parish entries in the Diocesan Directory?

A. This will be considered.

Q. Are PTO Readers deployable across the Diocese?

A. Yes.

Q.2: Canon Harry Marsh (Chelmsford South) to ask the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary:

As has been the case in several earlier years recently, Church House, London did not pass to Diocesan Offices information as to national requirements as regards the final version of parish annual returns of both statistics and finance until one week before the attendance figures for October 2016 were due to be counted. This meant that our Diocesan Office staff were only able to email them out at the last minute, and local Churchwardens had become anxious as to what they were required to do.

Surely it is quite possible for preparation of such annual jobs to be programmed so that appropriate paperwork is circulated to dioceses much earlier, even if there is a previous stage of a request to dioceses for an initial view on a provisional (and incomplete) draft. Onward transmission to parishes of the final version would not then be delayed.

Are you able to arrange for some protest to be lodged with Church House, London, on behalf of both diocesan staff and parish officers, please?

A:

In response to this question, the Head of Research and Statistics for the National Church has confirmed in writing that dioceses will receive the final form “by Easter 2017”. I anticipate our diocesan office would distribute it shortly after Easter

Q.3: Canon David Banting (General Synod) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:

Where on the Diocesan Website or in the Diocesan Directory (or elsewhere) is the new and distinctive role of the Bishop of Maidstone in this (and potentially every diocese) explained and offered?

A:

The Bishop of Maidstone is a full Assistant Bishop in the Chelmsford Diocese, and, like the Bishop of Richborough is listed as such in the Diocesan Directory and on the website. The document “Diocese of Chelmsford: Arrangements to implement the House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests” may be downloaded from the policies section on the website.

No explanation of his role is currently given, nor that of the Bishop of Richborough, though this is something that could be considered.

Q.4: Canon David Banting (General Synod) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:

Who or what is in place to monitor how the Five Principles ‘held together in tension’ are working in practice to ensure mutual flourishing, with particular reference to the formation of MMUs and the processes and outcomes of clergy appointments in this diocese?

A:

In this diocese archdeacons and area bishops lead the appointment process for a new Incumbent and with the Area Dean are responsible for both the formation and monitoring of Mission and Ministry Units. Since the diocese is committed to holding together in creative tension the Five Principles so that there can be mutual flourishing for all parishes, it follows that the responsibility for this lies with them. However, with regard to Mission and Ministry Units there is the additional role played by the Area Mission and Pastoral Committee and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee. Were there to be any suggestion that the Five Principles, or any other principles for that matter, were not being adhered to either in letter or in spirit, this is the place where I would expect that to be raised and dealt with. With clergy appointments there is, of course, the additional safeguard of the Letter to the

Diocesan Bishop requesting ministry by a male priest. This replaces the Resolutions which lapse at the end of this month. Completing the circle of information and accountability, in the document sent to all parishes about seeking alternative episcopal oversight, we added a sentence about Mission and Ministry Units to the national guidelines. As I'm sure the questioner remembers, he was a member of the group that helped produce this guidance.

CLOSE The President closed Synod.

DRAFT