

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 135th meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 1 November 2014 at Chelmsford Cathedral**

PRESENT : The President and 109 Members

The Synod began with a time of worship led by Revd Canon Carol Smith.

The Chair welcomed Bishops Roger Morris and Peter Hill as the new Area Bishops of, respectively, Colchester and Barking; also Rebecca Swinson, a member of the Archbishops' Council who had recently moved into the Diocese and, as an ex officio member of General Synod, had become a member of the Diocesan Synod.

1. NOTICES

The Chair highlighted two points from the day paper, the presence of representatives from St Mark's College and also of the bookstall.

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 14 JUNE 2014

The minutes were approved.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Presidential address can be found on this webpage:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/uploads/Evangelising%20Effectively%20Address%20to%20Synod%201%20Nov%202014.pdf>

Members were also provided with a paper to take away with them. It provided a summary of where we are with evangelism and an outline for a discussion at a PCC meeting.

4. EXTENDED GOOD NEWS STORY

A selection of good news stories about mission events in the Diocese were heard by members. In summary these were:

High Beach – held The Big Lunch in June at which at least 250 people from the local community attended. These were mostly people who had a link with the Church through occasional offices. Each family was given a holding cross and they are staying in touch through other events organised by the Church. Nurture courses are being organised.

Sandon – the parish began by listing all the people they had contact with and they singled out those tending graves in the churchyard. They altered the

signs in the churchyard so they were more conducive to a welcoming atmosphere and encouraged people to come into the church building, the numbers doing this have gone up. 12 people from the Church are attending listening courses so they can better serve those visiting graves. Other ideas are being explored.

Braintree, St Paul – the Church held a Messy Funday, which served as a taster for the Messy Church the parish were setting up. A team of about 50 people from various local community groups as well as the Church organised it. Including adults and children the estimated attendance was between 400-500 people. Involving the participants in the planning was a make or break point. They also held prayer walks, a gift day and a celebration to give thanks to God. The first Messy Church meeting will be held in a few days.

Forest Gate, Emmanuel – The Church organised events for the public. These were a breakfast club for homeless people, an after school event 'the Big Start' and a BBQ in the churchyard, to which came many people from various faiths. Leaflets describing what the Church does had been given to all who attended. Emmanuel Church are now discerning how best to follow this up.

Church Schools – The Archdeacon of West Ham shared a summary of how Church Schools had engaged in the Centenary, This was largely facilitated through a poster which suggested 100 collective activities to fulfil throughout the year. Some responses included an Easter Garden, a pupil led pilgrimage and a Cathedral day for schools. In 2015 each school will receive a visit from a member of Bishop's Staff. Schools are becoming increasingly diverse and the question is how do we ensure that voice is heard at the Synod?

5. GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON MISSION WEEKENDS

Members discussed these suggested questions in small groups:

- Has your church done anything like this before?
- If not what did you learn about how it went?
- Will your church be doing this again?
- What follow up are you using to get/keep new people in your church?

6. MISSION WEEKENDS: PLENARY AND DEBATE

The Chair invited the Bishop of Chelmsford to move the motion for this item. The Bishop of Chelmsford moved that:

'This synod celebrate the mission weekends that have taken place in 2014 and call on every deanery, benefice, parish, BMO and Fresh Expression of church to make plans for evangelism in 2015 and beyond so that the disciplines of communicating, commending and teaching the Christian faith and then forming new disciples in the Christian life are embedded in the ministry of every Christian community in the diocese of Chelmsford.'

The following members spoke in the debate:

Revd Brian Surtees (Harlow)
Revd Canon Ian Tarrant (Redbridge)
Revd Tim Goodbody (Dunmow & Stansted)
Revd Steven Hanna (Barking & Dagenham)
Revd Pete Hillman (Bishop's Nominee)
Roger Ennals (Colchester)
Larry Morris (Havering)
Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
Mary Durlacher (General Synod)
Christine Horton (Chelmsford South)
Vevet Deer (Bishop's Nominee)
Revd Canon Carol Smith (Chelmsford South)
Anthony Nicolle (Vice Chair DBF)

The comments made were as follows:

- Those who have no social credibility do not receive the welcome in Church that others do. The spiritual need is the same.
- Many parishes held events rather than weekends. Therefore an amendment was proposed to use the word 'events' rather than 'weekends'.
- There needs to be a key focus on relationships not on the events themselves. A lot of weight fell on the clergy. We need to make it business as usual without the extra events.
- The events would not have happened without the leadership of Bishop Stephen. The culture spoken of in the motion needs to be perpetuated at a senior level and this should be part of the understanding.
- Great to hear many are self-financing, but is this somewhere the MOF can help?
- We need to get out to people and not expect that they will come in. Christ travelled the road and we need to be encouraged to do the same.
- Some places have a culture of mission and evangelism, others do not. It is important to encourage this culture and be persistent. We also need to remember to include a sense of welcome and joy.
- Whenever you fall on your face it is worth it. The good news stories helped to clarify things and generate ideas. We need to share our stories, not everyone has engaged in this sharing.
- Thanks for getting mission back on to the agenda, keeping it there and leading on it.
- Setting up a lay group to look at mission and evangelism is a positive development.
- One member spoke of the experience of their Church tying this in with their 40th anniversary.
- Another member spoke of Transforming Presence fatigue. They had a long way to go in their Churches but one recently had said that this had started as the Bishop's mission, but it is now theirs.

- The 'strong' need to support the 'weak'. A lot of parishes are worrying about resources and in that situation they should be encouraged to work together.

The decision on whether to accept the proposed amendment by Revd Canon Ian Tarrant to replace the reference in the motion to 'weekends' with 'events', having been accepted by the Bishop of Chelmsford was voted on by members. The proposed amendment was carried.

The Bishop of Chelmsford responded to the comments made. All too often evangelism is seen as a social event, but the crucial point is to sit down with non-church people. There was a huge fear that this would be seen as the 'Bishop's thing'. He expressed agreement with many of the comments made. The motion celebrates, but urges the process, we have to learn and stick at it.

Members voted on the amended motion. The amended motion was carried unanimously.

7. SERVING WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

The Ven David Lowman spoke to this item. He opened by stating that this is a time to look at an often overlooked part of Transforming Presence. The account of the early Church in Acts Chapter 2 offers a tremendous description of what the Church could look like. He continued, making the following points:

- As a way to facilitate a conversation about accountability a set of criteria was devised covering the areas of Worship, Spirituality, Nurture, Evangelism, Vocation, Service, Hospitality, Interdependence and Generosity. This was not to ensure we are doing the same things but to develop an underlying DNA.
- The questions arising from the nine criteria may help us to grow and articulate what it is to be Church.
- We do not want this to be another survey to be forgotten about, we want it to be the life blood of the Church.
- It is proposed that this would be achieved through the Archdeacons Visitation process. This process asks some very procedural and administrative questions so why can't we ask questions on spirituality, prayer and mission.
- This is not being done to achieve a sort of ecclesiastical OFSTED, but as a way of enabling the proclamation of the Gospel.
- The questions would be looked at on a three year rolling basis.
- A set of parishes are currently engaged in a pilot process.
- The key question is how we can be accountable to God and each other.

The Archdeacon invited anyone who has comments or suggestions to contact with him directly. Members were also given an opportunity to make a few comments at this meeting. The following members did:

Robin Stevens (General Synod)
Piers Northam (Epping Forest & Ongar)
Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)

The comments made were as follows:

- We need to strengthen a few areas. Under generosity we should indicate that mission will only be sustained through sacrificial giving, not fetes etc. Also, in the Annual Report of the PCC the impact the PCC is having on its local community should be shown.
- It is always good to do a health check. However, it falls down when not followed up. The rolling programme would help this to have focus.
- The process needs to be two-way and to apply to the Deanery and Diocesan level.

The Archdeacon thanked members for their comments.

8. STEWARDSHIP LETTERS

The Bishop of Chelmsford recalled the huge financial challenge the Diocese faced with a shortfall and many parishes having to dip into their reserves. Christopher Barker, a longstanding member of the Church in this Diocese, had offered to pay for a mailing to go out to each parish that focused on the issue of stewardship. He had requested that these be prayed for before they are sent.

Christopher Barker spoke of the need for good stewardship. He also spoke of his experience with Crowhurst Christian Healing Ministry where they prayed for every letter before it was sent. As a result they obtained the money they needed to cover their costs within days.

The Bishop of Chelmsford thanked Christopher Barker for his service and generosity. Generosity is not measured by how much you give, but how much you have left over. He then led the Synod in prayer.

9. BISHOP'S COUNCIL, DIOCESAN MISSION & PASTORAL COMMITTEE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

The reports were received.

10. 2015 BUDGET

The Chair of the DBF moved the motion that:

‘This Synod:

- a) approve the Diocesan Budget for 2015 and the Deanery Share of £16,103,077; and

- b) approve the apportionment of the total Deanery Share to deaneries in accordance with the Deanery Share Scheme subject to a ceiling of 1.44% in rises over the Diocesan Share increase of 1.56%, compared with 2014.’

The Chair of the Budget Committee was then invited to speak to the motion.

He made the following points:

- The main drivers of the Budget are clergy stipends, pensions, NI and housing costs.
- With clergy numbers not expected to change and with the direct costs of a vicar increasing by 2.7% the first draft of the Budget was looking at a 3% increase.
- However, at the June Synod it became clear this would be a serious challenge and thus the Budget Committee proposed that the extra costs from the pension contributions should be phased in over 2 years. This brought the proposed increase to 2%, which was used in the Budget Consultation.
- The response in the Consultation had been very good. 79% of respondents supported a 2% increase, although many conceded this would be a challenge.
- The 2015 Budget assumes a more normal vacancy rate, 2013 having been unusually low. With this and a few other savings the Deanery Share increase was further brought down to 1.56%.
- The Budget presented to the Synod had a gross expenditure of £21,350,290.
- In terms of income we continue to be substantially supported by a grant from the Archbishops’ Council. The major part of our income must continue to come from the parishes. Whilst the Budget makes a shortfall provision of £650,000, the actual shortfall is expected to exceed this by a considerable margin. Steps are being taken to help parishes with their shortfall but in the short term we plan to use £300,000 from our reserves to cover the additional shortfall.
- To limit the impact on individual Deaneries a cap of 1.44% was also proposed so that no Deanery would have an increase of more than 3%.

The following members spoke in the debate:

Jackie Bliss (Southend)
Revd Peter Smith (Epping Forest & Ongar)
Larry Morris (Havering)
Percy Lomax (Chair DBF)

Their comments and questions, along with the responses (in italics) were:

- The share increase was almost double the average in half of Deaneries. Many parishes do not see the increase as an opportunity and references to this should be phrased more carefully. *Deanery Treasurers have been provided with much more detailed information on the indirect costs. We have*

gone some way to addressing this and we need to keep reviewing this as Mission & Ministry Units come into being.

- One of the problems is that we ask the parishes to cover the cost of ministry, which, to some, sounds like all clergy earn £60,000 a year. Could we a bit more cautious in this area? *The Chair of the Budget Committee spoke of personal experience of some people's misunderstanding of clergy stipend. The Share Review Group will look at this issue.*
- What is the DBF's reserves policy? *The DBF reserves policy is to have enough to cover one month's expenditure. At present the level of reserves would cover 18 day's expenditure. At the moment trustees are happy with this given the pressure on parish share and that investments are doing well.*
- Chelmsford is a relatively poor Diocese which receives the largest grant from the National Church. We can't continue to be dependent on them and we can't continue to cut the levels of stipendiary clergy.

Members voted on the motion. It was passed overwhelmingly, with one abstention.

II. BARKING & DAGENHAM DEANERY SYNOD MOTION: PAROCHIAL FEES

The Chair invited Revd Steven Hanna to speak to this motion which had been put forward by the Barking and Dagenham Deanery Synod. He thanked members for giving the motion enough support to get on to today's agenda. He moved that:

'This synod request the Archbishops Council to review the level of fees for weddings and funerals, with a view to ensuring that they are not so high as unintentionally to discourage take-up of the offices of the Church, thus undermining the pastoral and missional opportunities they offer'

In making the case for the motion he put the following points to the Synod:

- Is there really the freedom to waive fees?
- There were some good changes brought in by the recent fees legislation. It changed who the fees were payable to and limited extra fees that parishes are allowed to charge.
- Although not much impact has been seen on weddings in the Deanery, they have seen a large impact on funerals.
- Very few funerals are referred by the funeral directors. Funerals can be done a lot cheaper by non-Anglican ministers.
- Has there been a notable change at Diocesan and National level?
Regardless of the motion it is worth doing research on this so we can see the true effect of the changes.

Members were invited to debate the motion. The following members spoke in the debate:

Revd Paul Trathen (Waltham Forest)

Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
Rosalind Tatum (Waltham Forest)
Patricia Stanbury Sandford (St Osyth)
Revd Martin Howse (Havering)
Bishop of Chelmsford
Revd Canon Peter Mann (Harwich)
Don Cardy (Bishop's Nominee)
Bishop of Colchester
Revd Tim Goodbody (Dunmow & Stansted)
Roger Ennals (Colchester)
Revd David Marshall (Havering)
Revd Bryony Morrison (Epping Forest and Ongar)
Archdeacon of Colchester
Mary Durlacher (General Synod)
Rebecca Swinson (Archbishops' Council)

The following contributions were made:

- The motion is welcome, but its instincts lead down the wrong track. To get the data would be useful, but this is not a change that has occurred over the last few years. The changes brought a welcome benchmark to fees for weddings. Funerals are more of an issue and it would be interesting to know whether the changes are counterproductive.
- The motion would allow us to engage in a conversation. It goes to the heart of what we are about, a ministry of being there, to engage with people who want something spiritual. Why does the PCC now get a fee when the funeral is not held in the building? It would be good to have an evaluation.
- The motion is inappropriate and unnecessary. The legislation was debated in a measured and careful way at General Synod and it was important to set a standard that avoided the post code lottery. It is too soon to have a proper evaluation and needs more time to register. The rights to waive fees are there and should be used to avoid anyone being denied the ministry of the Church. We could also look at the level of social inequality, it is also a pastoral challenge.
- Why should we reduce the fees? True meanings of value and worth have been lost.
- The fault is with the standard of service provided in many places.
- Is taking this to Archbishops' Council the best way. Could Barking & Dagenham do some proper research themselves?
- People are usually surprised when they find out how inexpensive weddings are. In terms of funerals, the directors play a huge part in whether they engage the Church and you need to build up a relationship with them.
- The decline in the number of occasional offices began some time ago and is a national trend.
- There may be other ways of achieving the desire of the motion, e.g. cremation without a service.

- The fee does make a difference to some self-supporting ministers so if it is to go forward we need to include provision that it not be so low as to discourage ministers from providing the excellent service they do.
- Get out there to the wedding fayres.
- One member wrote to all the funeral directors in the Deanery. Only one responded and explained that many clergy don't bother to respond and they have pre-booked slots at the Crematorium that need to be filled quickly, so they go to others.
- These are pastoral opportunities, opportunities to touch people's hearts. We need to think about some fees, for example the Verger's fee.
- The National Funerals Project has been launched and this makes some good links to show how ground has been lost in the funeral market. It is largely about relationships and availability.
- Every side of the argument was considered by General Synod, at least four sessions were spent looking at the detail. More time does need to be given to see the impact.
- If it comes to the Archbishops' Council it will take a long time to get through the process. This body already has a lot of work and a lot can happen without going through this process.

Revd Steven Hanna responded saying he took the point about the call for more time. He also agreed with the idea that we are providing a service, but noted the busyness of the clergy is an issue.

Robert Hammond (General Synod) proposed a motion to move to next business. The motion was carried overwhelmingly and the deanery synod motion therefore lapsed.

12. 2015 DIOCESAN SYNOD ELECTION SEAT ALLOCATION

The Chair moved the motion:

That this Synod approve the formulae for the allocation of seats in the 2015 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'.

Members were invited to debate the motion. During the debate the following people spoke:

Roger Ennals (Colchester)
 Revd Brian Surtees (Harlow)
 Revd Paul Trathen (Waltham Forest)
 Revd Tim Goodbody (Dunmow & Stansted)
 Susan Atkin (Colchester)

The comments made were as follows:

- Could Lay Chairs and Area Deans become ex-officio members of the Synod?
- The smaller Deaneries seem to be disadvantaged.
- Leaders may not be clergy so would it be possible to not be so clerically focused?
- In practice there are very few ballots to the Diocesan Synod so a number of members of the Synod are not actually being elected with consequences for the democratic nature of the process. We will never get this absolutely right.

The Synod voted on the motion. The motion was carried by a large majority.

13. PROMULGATION OF ACT OF SYNOD RESCINDING THE EPISCOPAL MINISTRY ACT OF SYNOD 1993

The Chair promulgated the Act of Synod rescinding the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993.

14. PROMULGATION OF AMENDING CANON NO. 31

The Chair promulgated Amending Canon No. 31.

15. QUESTIONS

Q. Margaret Henning (Hadleigh) to ask the Chief Executive & Diocesan Secretary:

Tutors of CCS and other people have traditionally used the Diocesan Office car park when attending meetings at the Diocesan Office. This has been abruptly changed, apparently arbitrarily as no explanation has been given. Is it possible to restore this provision? If not, would you please give an explanation to the Synod and to those concerned?

A.

In the past there was a practice of visitors to the diocesan office and cathedral seeking to reserve a parking space. In reality this arrangement was unworkable and unenforceable. With the volume of events on at the office, cathedral and chapter house the car park is often full, and it has sadly been the case on more than one occasion that a visitor expecting to be able to park has taken out their frustration verbally on employees, particularly the receptionists.

Standard practice now is to advise visitors that we cannot guarantee parking in the car park, and to advise them of the travel alternatives including the park and ride services and other local parking. If then a visitor on diocesan or cathedral business is able to find a space in the car park they are more than welcome to use it. I am sorry Margaret that you feel the

communication has been unclear. In the light of your question guidelines have been reissued to staff this week.

Two further points: first, for certain volunteers such as CCS tutors, car parking is a reimbursable travel expense, but you are welcome to use the car park if space is available. Just occasionally there will be events with an attendance far in excess of the capacity of the car park, in which case invitees are discouraged from parking for obvious reasons.

Second, the Guy Harlings Trust, which is responsible for the whole estate has recently agreed to fund a small project to create half a dozen additional spaces, which will hopefully all help. This work is planned for early December.

CLOSE The President closed Synod with his blessing.