

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 138th meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 12 March 2016 at Chelmsford Cathedral**

PRESENT : The President and 113 Members

The Very Revd Nicholas Henshall led Synod in a period of worship to open the Synod.

1. NOTICES

The Chair promulgated Amending Canon No 34.

**2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 14
NOVEMBER 2016**

The following amendments were recorded:

- On Page 5 in the 5th bullet from the foot of the page removal of the duplication of “the PCC did not reflect the congregation”.
- On Page 7 in the last bullet point of item 9 removal of the superfluous word “will” in line 3.
- Reserve levels to be recorded in the minutes are that at the end of 2014 free general reserves stood at £0.7m. In 2015 we recorded a surplus on the general fund. Final figures for 2015 are being processed in line with the new SORP, but we would expect free reserves to have increased.

Subject to these amendments the minutes were approved.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Presidential Address can be found on this webpage:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/eu-referendum#.VuIQsvct9A>

4. GOOD NEWS STORY: DIOCESAN REFUGEE ACTION GROUP

Martin Mitchell, Chair of the Diocesan Refugee Action Group, delivered an update on the Diocesan response of welcome to refugees. Key points from his presentation were:

- The Diocesan appeal held in 2015 had raised £100,000 in a couple of months.
- There are 21 government bodies across the Diocese which are involved in the response to refugees. Most had decided to welcome refugees, however some had said they were not prepared to provide for refugees.
- Colchester Borough Council had been the first to welcome a group prior to Christmas – DNA Networks were taking the lead on this.

- Those refugees being accepted into the country are coming from Syria, not any other camps in Europe.
- The effort by local authorities and government departments was commended; we need to supply the welcome.
- Work was beginning with the Bishop of Durham who was leading the national response.
- None of the money raised had been spent thus far. It was noted that there is a need for financial support of support workers and other professional support to lead the team of volunteers. It is hoped that the money raised could be doubled to expand the capacity here.

The Bishop of Barking recorded his thanks to Martin Mitchell. Members were invited to ask questions.

One member asked whether there were any plans to offer support for foster carers and the various challenges of welcoming them. In response to this it was noted that Krish Kandiah has some good resources on this topic. It was also noted that it was not yet allowable to bring individuals to the UK.

Another member asked how we could persuade those, who had decided not to accept refugees, to reconsider. It was noted that there is a need for education as this sort of thing has not been done before. Also, the quicker refugees can be brought in and settled the more grounds there would be to accept a greater number.

5. PARISH SHARE SCHEME PROPOSAL

The Chair invited the Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson to speak to the item. In the opening statement the following points were made:

- Money is given very generously in this Diocese.
- Money follows the mission and ministry in this Diocese. We will never say that ministry cannot be provided because you cannot give.
- There is £5 million of mutual support – this will not disappear but will transform into a fund, rather than a formula.
- Why change? We are experiencing a change in the pattern of ministry and therefore we need a new scheme to respond to this change. The direct support from National Church is being phased down and so another reason for change was to be able to distribute support in line with national principles.
- In response to the previous consultation the proposals had been changed to bring in an allocation to a benefice where there is no Mission and Ministry Unit to allocate to.
- The finance team have the capacity to provide tailored support for each MMU or benefice with any mutual apportionment.
- In the consultation there were a large number of responses stressing the need for a robust system to ensure that the Mutual Support Fund is fair. In part this would be done by inviting each unit/benefice to look at the statistical information in comparison with the rest of the Diocese.
- When the amount each parish is to contribute under the new scheme is agreed the PCC become accountable for the delivery of this commitment.

- Many people had responded to say that they appreciated the simplicity of the proposed scheme, the earlier information and the fact that a fund would be used for mutual support, not a formula.
- We are not giving anything to the Diocese, we are giving to God.

The Chair invited members to ask questions of clarification. The following members asked questions:

Revd Quintin Peppiatt (Newham)
Revd Canon Julie Fleming (Barking and Dagenham)

The question asked and the responses were:

- How are the deprivation criteria broken down to parish level? *There is a need to be accountable to the national church, which focuses on the local authority level and doesn't go beyond that. We need to have a discussion on what appropriate level of measurement could be used for the local level.*
- How will one parish not paying its share impact on others? *The reasons as to why the share is not being paid will matter, but once the share is agreed the PCC are responsible.*

The Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson moved the motion that:

'This Synod note the Final Report of the Parish Share Review Group and request the Bishop's Council implements the new scheme and transitional arrangements (including suspension of the current Deanery Share Scheme) from 1 January 2017.'

The Chair invited members to speak in the debate, the following members spoke:

Rosalind Tatum (Waltham Forest)
Revd James Rodley (Harlow)
Robin Stevens (Co-opted member)
Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
Revd Canon David Tomlinson (Saffron Walden)
Canon Harry Marsh (Chelmsford South)
Bishop of Chelmsford
Revd Jo Delfgou (Basildon)
Archdeacon of Harlow
Canon Roger Ennals (Colchester)
Revd Canon Philip Ritchie (Chelmsford South)

The contributions and responses from Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson were as follows:

- As the early life of unit formation will be crucial one member requested that a MMU be given the option of up to two years from the point of formal commissioning before being given a unit allocation. *This is understood, but such a decision is not in our gift. It is possible that this sort of provision could be considered by the unit. They would all have a share allocation, in any case, at benefice level.*

- What happens if we cannot/will not pay? We hope it will turnaround, but if the consequences are decided within the unit this could raise huge issues and the implications should be considered. *Decisions about appointments are made between the MMU, the Bishop and the Archdeacon.*
- Up until now the shares have been decided by formula and there is often a parish which receives a request that everybody knows it cannot meet. The proposed scheme will avoid this by encouraging generosity. The system will not work if we all try to pay the minimum. It will work if they are all disciples. This would enable more resources to do more for God's Kingdom.
- Can a guarantee be given that the Diocese will be generous with the figures provided to make decisions on share allocation? *The information will be provided and it is hoped this will help people to work together and have a better understanding.*
- The National Church is in a crisis and we are responding to that through Renewal and Reform and Transforming Presence. Having the information on units is key to getting this right in the future.
- There is no mention of a budget consultation, has this been abolished? *This is not a decision the Share Scheme Review Group could make. There is no intention to abolish the consultation. It could work alongside the ongoing consultation with units.*
- This is the synodical process working at its best. It is very workable and understandable. We will need to keep track of things as we go and generosity is key. The vast majority of parishes pay their share in full and those who don't/won't need help to raise their game. Why is our vision so small? Think what we could do with a surplus.
- Some are worried about figures, but that makes us run to a world of scarcity. *Generosity is integral, not an add on – mutual support is central to the scheme.*
- Harlow Deanery has been operating a model similar to the share scheme. This had led to a change of language and culture. *This is very encouraging.*
- There is potential for slippage in the timetable as it is tight.
- What are the standards for the Area Mission and Pastoral Committee? *This will need to be worked out as part of the gradual change process.*
- There may be issues where a Deanery has not fully established its MMUs.
- We need to remember that generosity includes the diocese, but it also includes giving to mission partners, local charities and the like and this need to be held on to. *The Scheme will liberate us so that money plays its proper part.*

Members voted on the motion. The motion was carried by an overwhelming majority. There were seven abstentions and three votes against the motion.

6. UPDATE ON MULTI ACADEMY TRUSTS

The Director of Education, Revd Tim Elbourne, was invited to address the Synod to update members on the development of the Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) in the Diocese. In his presentation the following points were made:

- We want our schools to be the best, maintain credibility and hope to be entrusted with more schools.
- In the league tables we are doing ok and we want to continue to improve, but behind every statistic is a real story.

- Inhabiting the world distinctively - Living the Gift. Schools living out a coherent and compelling gospel narrative. God wants the best – all schools to offer that 90% Good or Outstanding (Ofsted) – 100% (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools).
- Evangelising effectively - Sharing the Gift. Schools that share their Christian vision with confidence, vitality and consistency - so offering pupils 'a life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ'. Resourcing Mission to all schools and establishing new church schools for new communities.
- Serving with accountability - Enjoying the Gift. Schools that are good news to the communities they serve—educationally and spiritually. A DBE and Department that is regarded as exemplary and resourcing mission with all schools.
- Re-imagining ministry - Shaping the Gift. New patterns of school organisation—The Vine MAT with Hubs; church school led MATs. Development of teachers, governors and clergy.
- As the government was moving to make all schools academies it was possible for church schools to join with other outstanding schools or to join the Diocesan MAT. A full time person had been appointed to lead the MAT.

Members were offered the opportunity to comment or ask questions. The following members asked questions:

Revd Quintin Peppiatt (Newham)
 Revd Canon Jeremy Fraser (Newham)
 Revd Canon David Tomlinson (Saffron Walden)
 Bishop of Bradwell
 Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford North)

The questions and responses were:

- How do we develop schools in East London? *A meeting is being held with the Barking core team to look at how this might be done.*
- There is no comment in the report on whether there is a policy for accepting children from church communities. *By and large schools are welcome and open to all people. We are not in the business of setting up tribal schools.*
- Is the political debate on academies over? *Yes, the debate is over, however there are significant risks with academies over the next 3 to 4 years.*
- There are exciting opportunities here, what can be done to support the work of the DBE? *The success will depend on the involvement of local people, so thinking about opportunities here would be welcomed.*
- Do church schools have to join the Diocesan MAT? *It is possible for church schools to join with other outstanding schools or to join the Diocesan MAT.*

7. REPORT ON SHARED CONVERSATIONS ON SCRIPTURE, SEXUALITY AND MISSION

The Archdeacon of West Ham delivered a report on the engagement of representatives from this Diocese in the shared conversations on scripture, sexuality and mission. Twenty representatives from this Diocese had joined with

representatives from London Diocese for facilitated conversations. A wide variety of views had been represented.

The three days included plenary sessions discussing perceptions and language, the changes in culture surrounding human sexuality, and different approaches to Scripture. Then, in smaller groups the issues were considered more closely, and in small groups personal journeys of understanding about human sexuality were shared, in most cases with people of differing experiences and views.

Two members of the Synod, Piers Northam and Michelle Tackie shared their reflections on shared conversations. Both reflected on how the conversations had been well facilitated, explored Scripture and had enabled a safe space to talk freely about the different views held. They also attested to the greater understanding between those who had participated and the overwhelming desire to stay together.

The Archdeacon of West Ham completed the presentation by adding that there had been real and meaningful opportunities to talk to people of very different views and to be listened to. As this had been done, issues and problems became the stories of real people and real Christians seeking to be faithful to their calling. What was most striking was the whole group's desire to see the church – and this diocese - stay together, working hard to live and walk alongside each other in the light and love of Christ. It was noted that there may be an opportunity for the Synod to have a similar experience and this was commended.

Members were invited to ask questions or comment. One member commented that the readings on the Shared Conversations website were very useful and were commended to Synod.

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

The reports were received.

9. ANNUAL REPORT TO DIOCESAN SYNOD

One question arising from the contents of the Annual Briefing for Parishes had been submitted by the Revd Andrew Grey (Brentwood).

The “Annual briefing for parishes (financial year 2015)” records that “Our diocese became a training partner in an initiative with the Department for Education and Stonewall to combat homophobia in schools.” Given the sensitivities and difficulties surrounding these issues please would you give Synod the following information? (i) An explanation of how the Diocese came to partner with Stonewall and what consultation preceded the formation of a partnership with an organisation many of whose commitments are known to be different from the Church of England's stated position in these areas; (ii) A summary of the initiative itself, including information about which schools have been and will be involved, and who within the Diocese is leading the initiative.

The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education responded:

This training initiative flows from the Archbishop of Canterbury's public commitment to supporting our schools in eradicating homophobic bullying. In May 2014, the Archbishops' Council Education Division published a guidance document for Church of England schools on challenging such bullying under the title *Valuing All God's Children*.

The programme we offer is entirely consistent with that document. It is funded by the Department for Education through Stonewall, and it is specifically in this anti-bullying initiative that we are participating as a training partner. The operational decision to do so was taken by the Diocesan Director of Education after consulting senior colleagues and the Church of England's National Society itself. We understand that other dioceses, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, are doing the same. This anti-bullying training represents no more of an endorsement of every position that Stonewall holds than it represents an endorsement by Stonewall of every position that the Church of England holds.

The programme is entirely delivered by one of our own diocesan Schools Advisers following participation in a 'Train the Trainers' course. The scope of that course was:

- Consideration of skills and knowledge to train school leaders on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying;
- an overview of such bullying and its impact on pupil achievement and school performance;
- Ofsted and legal requirements under the Ofsted framework and the Equality Act 2010;
- practical techniques to train other staff in their school on tackling such bullying;
- sharing best practice including resources to help schools benchmark progress on tackling such bullying.

There have been two self-contained training days so far, attended by a total of eight church schools represented by headteachers, heads of school and deputy headteachers. As a matter of principle, it is for individual schools and their governing bodies to decide how and where their participation is publicised, and such information is not for me to give here without their consent.

The Archbishops Council's guidance document, *Valuing All God's Children*, is positively commended as part of the training. The written feedback from participants to date has been universally very positive.

Supplementary questions

Q. Are we missing an opportunity to work with other organisations which do not hold views which are out of step with the Church?

A. The Chair of the DBE quoted from the Archbishop of Canterbury's report:

"Church of England Schools have at their heart a belief that all children are loved by God, are individually unique and that the school has a mission to help each pupil to

fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually.

Schools have a duty to try to remove any factor that might represent a hindrance to a child's fulfilment. We want all pupils to want to engage in learning in a safe and welcoming ethos.

Homophobic bullying, alongside all forms of bullying, is a factor that can inhibit a pupil's ability to feel safe and have a sure foundation for learning. So, Church of England schools have a particular duty to implement measures to combat it. The official Church of England teaching about the human sexual act is that "it is an act of total commitment which belongs properly within a permanent married relationship and that homosexual acts fall short of this ideal". Yet within the Anglican Communion there exists a wide spectrum of beliefs about this issue and it is a very divisive matter for the Church at this time. Within a school community of pupils, staff, parents and governors many different views may be held and it should be acknowledged that this is a sensitive topic.

However, the purpose of schools is to educate and the aim of this guidance is to protect pupils in Church of England schools from having their self-worth diminished and their ability to achieve impeded by being bullied because of their perceived/actual sexual orientation. This guidance intends to prompt Church of England schools to seriously address this issue. It is not the intention to provide lesson plans or materials for PSHE or Sex Education but to challenge schools to ensure that they work towards a consistently welcoming culture for all pupils under the gospel mandate to "love your neighbour as yourself."

Q. How can we ensure that we are delivering best practice in this area?

A. The law requires that all staff in schools are trained in this area, no one is in favour of homophobic bullying.

10. QUESTIONS

Revd Quintin Peppiatt (Newham) to the Bishop of Barking :

The Methodist Church in London has produced a Lent Course about the various issues for Londoners in the run up to the election of the Mayor of London this year. Jointly with our local Methodists we are using this material. The feedback from these discussions across London the Methodist leadership is taking to meetings with Mayoral candidates to raise the concerns that are identified.

Could the Bishops tell the Synod how we are listening to the concerns of the congregations and parishes in London and lobbying the candidates in the run up to the Mayoral election in May?

A

It is excellent that Anglican and Methodist Christians in East Ham are engaging together on various key issues for Londoners leading up to the Mayoral election in May.

Several other parishes in the Barking Episcopal Area have also been involved in listening and training exercises to identify issues of common concern to east Londoners, facilitated jointly by The Centre for Theology and Community and Citizens UK. Citizens UK is also working with other churches and faith groups in a similar vein. These issues are being fed into CUK leadership meetings with the Mayoral candidates and their teams, especially Zac Goldsmith and Sadiq Khan, in which I myself have been involved.

The culmination of this exercise is a major Citizens Assembly, organised through the London Citizen's branch of CUK, on the evening of 28 April at the Copper Box on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, for 6,500 citizens. Our bishops are encouraging parishes in London to be strongly and visibly represented at this major event. Sadiq Khan and Zac Goldsmith are committed to being present to hear our concerns and respond. The main issues identified in the listening exercise and to be addressed that evening are affordable housing, responding to the refugee crisis and the extension of the Living Wage campaign.

This past week has also seen a creative and effective event organised by Carol Richards, our Diocesan Regeneration Officer on Community Land Trusts, part of the affordable housing campaign, to which a number of London parishes sent representatives.

The above strategy is the focus of diocesan input and support in advance of the London Mayoral Elections. This we believe remains well within the confines of the new Lobbying Act.

Revd Jo Delfgou (Basildon) to the Bishop of Chelmsford :

Having received a total of nine parcels filled with high quality materials in our Parish alone, would it be possible to ascertain the drive behind and the cost of the latest raft of Transforming Presence materials?

A

The Diocese has the Allchurches Trust to thank for funding the full cost of creating and distributing these resources to Church leaders and officers. The aim is to help our Church leaders engage 40,000 people in our parishes with the priorities of Transforming Presence. The total cost of this will come to about £18,000 including VAT, or 45 pence per person, but not a penny of the cost will be borne by the parishes themselves.

The driving force behind our efforts is the feedback to our consultations on Transforming Presence through Time to Talk and other feedback from deaneries and

congregations, and to provide church leaders with resources to help them share these priorities locally and share the gospel.

Feedback on the resources has been overwhelmingly positive and the high quality of the resources has been remarked on in each response we have received. However, the value of the resources cannot be measured by their cost nor by the quality of their design but by whether they are useful to our Church leaders for engaging congregations, schools, and others with our priorities and our mission.

Supplementary question

Q. Is the Bishop aware of the Allchurches Trust grants available to Dioceses and Cathedrals and the grants available to support Churches in their work?

A. The Bishop responded to express his gratitude for raising these possibilities.

CLOSE The President closed Synod.