

DIOCESAN SYNOD

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

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The Bishop's Council met on 26 April. The main items from that meeting are listed below.

In addition to the usual report, Statutory reports including the annual report of the Investment Committee, Houses Committee, DMPC and the Diocesan Advisory Committee can be found in the appendix to this paper.

Bishop's Council

- Endorsed a strategic funding bid to the national church for mission to new housing areas,
- Approved proposals arising from the Strategic Review of the Retreat House at Pleshey,
- Noted developments in the CMEAC programme and progress around the four areas of Developing Awareness and Unconscious Bias Training, Minority Ethnic Vocations and accessible training, Communications and Representative leadership and training specifically for Minority Ethnic clergy. Diversity & Inclusion training was undertaken by all diocesan employees and the Bishop's Staff. Two members of the CMEAC team have undergone a three-day "train-the-trainers" version of the training. There has been some discussion about how the training could be delivered. Priority groups include: Training Incumbents, Incumbents, Area Wardens of Ordinands, Area Deans and Parish reps for appointments. Initial conversations have taken place on vocations, including with the teaching staff of St Mellitus, but more work to do. On communications four priority areas for action have been agreed. On representative leadership three minority ethnic clergy from Chelmsford Diocese participated in a three-day leadership training event and it is proposed to encourage nominations to current diocesan committee vacancies to broaden the diversity of these groups and move towards diocesan committees better representing the diversity of the diocese.
- Discussed working more closely with Citizens UK as part of Diocesan Social Responsibility,
- Noted an update on developments in training provided by the Mission and Ministry team,
- Agreed that, as far as reasonably practicable, this diocese should adopt and work towards implementing the current suite of national safeguarding policies and practice guidance.

DMPC

- Approved the sale of the closed church of Romford St John,
- Received a report from the March AMPCs and approved the extension of the lease of All Saints Church in Langdon Hill.

Finance Committee

- Received a report on Sparrows and authorised an additional loan (previously agreed by the DBE) to the Sparrows Board,
- Approved the 2015 Annual Report and Accounts,
- Approved proposals arising from the Strategic Review of the Retreat House at Pleshey,
- Considered the emerging budget for 2017 and approved a cap on benefice share increases to be recommended to Synod,
- Approved a parish loan facility for Loughton St Mary,
- Approved three proposals relating to house purchases,
- Approved a proposal for a building acquisition to support one of the BMO churches.

Members are asked to NOTE the report.

APPENDIX

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

The Investment Committee oversees the diocesan glebe and other investments on behalf of the trustees. The accounts show that at the 31 December 2015 investment assets totalled £45.49 million, of which £34.9 million is held in managed funds, with the remainder comprising investment land and properties including the diocesan glebe. These assets delivered an income of £1.8 million across all funds in 2015 (2014: £1.7m). The Investment Committee monitors the performance of all the CDBF's investments.

The Committee decided to reduce the CDBF's exposure to directly held commercial property. During the year Kestrel House was sold for £1.6m, in excess of a valuation of £1.4m. The proceeds of this sale were reinvested through our investment managers.

Consents were obtained to enter into an option agreement on a glebe site in North Weald which is being promoted as part of a larger development. Development proposals were progressed for a number of other sites including the former All Saints school site in Maldon and an affordable housing scheme on a rural exception site near Chelmsford.

HOUSES COMMITTEE

The Houses Committee oversees the care of the 420 clergy houses in the diocese on behalf of the CDBF Trustees and Synod.

During 2015 the property team carried out periodic inspections of 87 properties and conducted 39 pre-appointment meetings. The property improvement programme delivered 17 kitchen replacements, 12 bathroom replacements, 2 driveway refurbishments, 3 window replacement projects, 1 roof replacement and 2 extension projects. Expenditures on property maintenance and improvement totalled £1.84 million.

A new vicarage was completed at the Ascension Victoria Docks. This A rated house won the award for most sustainable building at the Green Essex Awards 2015 and was shortlisted for the Sustainable City Awards 2015/16.

The CDBF continued the policy of purchasing houses for curates using mortgage finance as an alternative to renting. Four such properties were secured in 2015. This policy is estimated to be saving in excess of £50k compared to the costs of renting since 2014. Seven surplus properties were sold in 2015 including those as part of replacement schemes. Another new vicarage was built in Brightlingsea and completed in early 2016.

This is a year of change with three long serving members of the property team (Richard Smith, Trevor Martin and Sheila Downs) all retiring between Christmas 2015 and Easter 2016.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE DIOCESAN MISSION & PASTORAL COMMITTEE

In 2015 the Diocesan and Area Mission & Pastoral Committees continued to monitor the development of 'Mission and Ministry Units'. At each Area meeting each Deanery provided updates on any changes, challenges and successes and shared in the mutual learning process. At the November Colchester Area Mission and Pastoral Committee the first 'Mission and Ministry Unit', the Deanery of Saffron Walden, was given formal approval.

Over the year a total of 4 Pastoral Schemes and Orders (legal documents drawn up under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011) were completed, including:

- The union of the benefice of St Osyth and the benefice Great Bentley;
- The union of the benefice of Steeple Bumpstead and Helions Bumpstead and the benefice of Ridgewell with Ashen, Birdbrook and Sturmer – now known as the Two Rivers benefice,
- A Pastoral Order to amend the benefice and parish name of East Ham with Saint Alban, Upton Park and Saint Edmund King and Martyr, Forest Gate to 'East Ham, Holy Trinity';
- The creation of the new parish of Great Baddow, St Paul and the new parish of Great Baddow, Meadgate, along with the subsequent renaming of the parish of Great Baddow to Great Baddow, St Mary the Virgin, all within the area of the benefice of Great Baddow.

In relation to churches closed for worship:

- A Scheme authorising the sale of All Saints, Sutton for community, civic and cultural purposes was approved. The sale is still pending.
- Work towards a Non-Statutory Public Inquiry for St Peter's Church in Birch continued. It is likely that this will take place in July 2016.
- A new short lease for the closed church building of St John the Divine, Romford was arranged whilst preparations for marketing of the building were made.

The Area sub-committees are responsible for monitoring suspensions of presentation in their respective areas. Throughout the year the Area Committees endorsed proposals from the Deaneries for:

- 16 suspensions for a further period,
- 17 new suspensions,
- 1 suspension lifted or allowed to lapse.

Full details can be found on the Diocesan website at:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/policies/suspension>

A full list of the Committee and Area sub-committee memberships can be found at:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/diocesan-synod-and-committee-members>

Nathan Whitehead
Pastoral Secretary

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Last year, the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) considered 278 applications for Faculty permission from the 463 parishes in the diocese. Together with the other matters considered by the Committee, the total number of consultations was 549, slightly lower than the previous year, spread over its 9 meetings. DAC members continued to give face-to-face advice and guidance at site visits with a total of 98 such visits being made during the year, an increase of approximately 30% over the total for 2014. Despite this increase, the DAC continues to encourage parishes to seek the committee's advice sooner rather than later and to engage with other consultees at the earliest appropriate opportunity especially where works are proposed that will clearly have a lasting impact upon a church building or its setting.

There is a growing awareness that our church buildings can and should be reinvigorated as local assets, as well as places of worship, reaching out to and serving the entire community. Many congregations are exploring how their buildings can offer welcoming, flexible and hospitable spaces to accommodate the needs of the parish they serve. An essential part of this process is the understanding of the significance of the existing building and what the impact of changes to it might have. In the light of this, the Committee continued to urge parishes to complete Statements of Significance for their churches, regardless of whether any major changes are proposed. These documents – and Statements of Need – form key components of applications for a Faculty and consultees are increasingly unwilling to engage in the consultation process until these have been produced.

The Committee arranged its biennial one-day 'Caring For Churches' conference in 2015 and put together a programme of presentations that it considered to be of value to churchwardens and others responsible for caring for the wide variety of churches in the diocese particularly in the light of the changes brought about by the introduction of the new Faculty Jurisdiction Rules in 2015. These conferences have always been well attended in the past but despite trying to keep the costs low, the response was way down on previous years' events and we had no option but to cancel the event at relatively short notice due to the poor ticket sales. The Committee will review whether such events should take place in the future.

On a more encouraging note, there was a good response to the biennial Design Awards Scheme which attracted 11 entries. Of these, three were highly commended – a new votive candle stand at St. Edmund's church, Chingford, a new lighting scheme at Holy Trinity Church, Littlebury and a pair of silver candlesticks at St Alban's Church, Romford. The winning entries are illustrated below.

It was with sadness that the resignation of long-standing committee member, Mr Ted Bryant, was accepted in December last year. Ted had served on the committee since July 1996 and brought to the committee not only specialist experience as a civil engineer but also much common sense experience gained as a churchwarden for many years at Felsted. His wise guidance will be greatly missed. The committee was pleased to welcome two new members, David Carmichael and Stephen Hayden who are the principles of Hayden Arboricultural Consultants, and continued to search for other new members to broaden the knowledge base of the committee.

Malcolm Woods, DAC Chairman



Votive candle stand at St Edmund's, Chingford



New lighting scheme at Holy Trinity, Littlebury



Silver candlesticks at St Alban's Church, Romford