

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 146th meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 17 November 2018 at the Chelmsford Cathedral**

PRESENT : The President and 119 Members

The Synod began with the Eucharist.

During this time the Revd Canon Louise Williams led the Synod in an act of reflection. Members were asked to write down their hopes for the next three years and bring them to the front as an offering.

During the opening worship the Bishop of Chelmsford delivered his Presidential Address. The text of the address can be downloaded from here:

<https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/bishop-we-commit-ourselves-to-two-paradoxical-truths-sticking-at-what-we-ha>

1. MEETINGS OF HOUSES

The Houses of Clergy and Laity met. See separate minutes.

2. MEETING OF CHELMSFORD DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

The Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance met. See separate minutes.

3. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 16 JUNE 2018

The minutes were approved.

4. NOTICES

The Chair drew attention to the notices on the day paper.

It was noted that filming would take place during the Synod meeting and if members had a concern with this they were invited to submit these via email.

The results of the elections to the Bishop's Council were noted. The new Bishop's Council took office from the date of this meeting.

The consultation on the proposed National Clergy Covenant was highlighted and members were encouraged to engage in this.

5. MINISTRY TO REFUGEES

The Chair suspended standing orders and invited the Bishop of Barking, the Revd Gareth Jones (Diocesan Refugee Coordinator) Eddie Campbell and Chris Springett (Essex Integration) to address the Synod.

The Bishop of Barking introduced the item and raised the following points:

- Scripture instructs us to welcome strangers and foreigners.
- Five years ago work began on this in the Diocese, mainly through DNA Networks. The work continues today in four areas, lone children, hosting, family resettlement and community sponsorship.
- Over the course of three weeks the parishes within the Diocese raised £108k to create a diocesan fund to support this work.
- The government committed to receiving 20,000 refugees over 5 years. At present 12,000 have been accepted.
- Local authorities are crucial to this work. Essex County Council have been the most supportive of all local authorities in our Diocese.
- Essex Integration had won the contract to work on the resettlement.

A video which illustrated some of the work done by Essex Integration was shown.

Chris Springett spoke of challenges in funding the work. A total of 115 individuals (28 families) had been assisted through Essex Integration. Areas of support included language, access to benefits, advice, signposting and general support. The financial support given by national government tapers off over a period of 5 years.

Eddie Campbell spoke of some of the outcomes of this work. Seven people had passed their UK driving licence. Five people had obtained employment. One is at University. All children are in full time education and adults on ESOL or ITL courses. Two befrienders groups had been set up in Maldon. There are also two Church groups in Braintree who are now working together. One of the main early priorities is to establish people financially and get a credit rating. The Diocese and Local Authorities were thanked for their generosity in supporting this work.

The Bishop of Barking explained that in the London Boroughs it was much harder to obtain housing. Three houses had been used from the Diocesan portfolio. However, community sponsorship was very important. He introduced the Revd Gareth Jones, who was coordinating this work.

The Revd Gareth Jones made the following points:

- He was being assisted in this work by the Revd Alex Guest.
- The group Refugee Welcome Dagenham had been launched.
- Community Sponsorship is similar to the resettlement programme explained earlier, but it is administered in different ways. Both seek the same end.
- Community Sponsorship is administered by a gathered local community group with support from the Local Authority and other groups and agencies.
- A year ago a steering group was formed to explore Community Sponsorship in our diocese. St Mary's, Ilford became the sponsoring charity and Refugee Welcome Dagenham was born out of that.
- This work was supported by a house from the Diocesan portfolio and the Diocesan Refugee Fund.
- The local authority gave their support to the project and a Community Sponsorship application was made to the Home Office and endorsed by them.

- 20+ volunteers were recruited to work with the steering group.
- Refugee Welcome Dagenham expects to welcome a family from Syria in the first quarter of 2019.
- The hope is to grow this work across the Diocese. There are 8000 Syrian refugees who have been identified for resettlement but remain in the UNHCR camp.
- The future aim is to establish one group per Archdeaconry by the end of 2020.
- The experience obtained through the establishment of the first group makes this achievable and with the support of the Diocese and the grace of God we can achieve this.

The Bishop of Barking closed the presentation with an explanation of how the money raised for the Diocesan fund had been used. £51k remains in the pot, with £20k ringfenced for community sponsorship.

The Chair reinstated standing orders.

The Bishop of Barking moved the motion that:

This Synod:

- i. *renews its commitment to partner with Essex County Council, the Home Office and local church and community groups in supporting refugee families who are legally re-settled in the diocese;*
- ii. *recognizes and gives thanks for the transformational ministry of Essex Integration as the diocesan support agency for refugees;*
- iii. *encourages church members and PCCs to consider financial support for Essex Integration through their charitable giving;*
- iv. *and promotes the setting up of Community Sponsorship schemes as an alternative means of supporting incoming families.*

The following members spoke in the debate:

Canon Robert Hammond (General Synod and Chelmsford North)
 Archdeacon of Chelmsford
 Bishop of Chelmsford
 Revd Clive Hillman (Hadleigh)
 Revd Helen Georgiou Gould (Harlow)
 Revd Susan Lucas (Newham)
 Canon Gordon Simmonds (Rochford)

The points raised during the debate, along with responses from the Bishop of Barking in italics, were as follows:

- The Colchester Area Youth Synod had discussed this and in particular wanted to encourage a young befrienders group.
- The Bradwell Area Youth Synod had also discussed this issue and had four suggestions. Firstly that greater awareness is raised, that interfaith services and events are held, that information on how to support the project could be

disseminated and to encourage Churches to work with local schools. *The Bishop of Barking thanked the Youth Synod and said he would respond to the points submitted.*

- This matter is of national significance, therefore would it be possible to consider a motion to commend this work to the National Church? *The Bishop of Barking confirmed he was part of the National Church working group and would be glad to work on such a motion.*
- There is a lot of interfaith and interchurch work going on in the Southend area, is this known to the coordination group? *It was confirmed that this work is known about.*
- One member gave a personal account of how this work had helped them and their family and encouraged wider publicity of the work being done.
- With the national government funding decreasing over time, are there resources available for greater support. *It was noted that, although the funding decreases over time, different needs begin to emerge: for example, mental health issues begin to surface. If we could supplement the work financially that would be terrific.*
- Is there an underlying issue that is preventing those resettled from being employed? *Yes, limited knowledge of the English language is a barrier. Transport can also be a factor.*

The debate closed and the Chair moved to a vote on the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

6. GOOD NEWS STORY: STREET AND RAIL PASTORS

The Chair suspended standing orders and invited Phil Norton to address the Synod.

During his presentation Phil Norton made the following points:

- Street Pastors go out in the night time economy and minister to the public. There are some large towns that do not currently have a Street Pastors group.
- Recruitment is solely from Christian Churches.
- Street Pastors are there for the needy and vulnerable. There is no judgment as part of this ministry.
- Members were challenged to see whether they would be able to be part of this. They were encouraged to join a night patrol to experience what it is like.
- Schools Pastors groups had been set up. In a climate of cuts to school funding, in particular to pastoral support, the pastors were helping to fill this gap.
- Rail Pastors were also started and of particular note was this ministry had saved two people from committing suicide. It was hoped to have a team at every station and level crossing.

The Chair thanked Phil Norton for his presentation and invited questions or comments from members.

One member spoke of his involvement with the street pastors. He spoke of the prayer that is offered and often accepted by many people encountered.

7. YOUTH SYNOD

The Chair informed members that, at its earlier meeting, the House of Laity had committed to using three of its co-options on members of the Youth Synod when the appropriate people had been identified.

The Chair then invited the Colchester Area Youth Adviser, Dot Salmon, to update members on the Youth Synod.

It was noted that the Youth Synod had held Area meetings in Bradwell and Colchester. The Barking Area had not been held yet, but soon would be. The main aim is to give young people a say in the Diocesan governance structures. There will be three meetings a year, two in the Areas and one combined meeting across the Diocese. The agenda for a Youth Synod meeting is similarly structured to that of the Diocesan Synod.

Dot Salmon commented that it is exciting to see how this has captured people's imaginations. Interest in joining the Youth Synod has grown. Members were invited to contact the Youth Advisers if they were aware of any other young people that may want to join.

The next Youth Synod will be held on 9 March and it was proposed that a Diocesan Synod rep from each Deanery be present at that to help strengthen the link.

Dot Salmon closed her presentation by thanking members for their support.

8. BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair reinstated standing orders.

The Chair explained that the reports from the Bishop's Council, DMPC and Finance Committee came to the meeting as a summary of the main points of those meetings. The report strengthened the accountability to Synod. If members had specific points they wished to explore further they could submit questions, or if more appropriate, contact the relevant person.

Paper DS(2018)09 was received.

9. QUESTIONS

Q.1: Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Is the Bishop able to confirm that, as promised initially at the introduction of the whole idea, the formation of MMUs has no direct or legal connection with either Parish Share or Pastoral Reorganisation and will not be used as a means to either of these ends?

A:

To respond first about Parish Share: the terms of reference for the Review of Parish Share asked the group to make recommendations for 'an appropriate share scheme or equivalent which will support and enable all the proposals in Reimagining Ministry'.

The group accordingly included the proposals for Mission and Ministry Units in its thinking and final report, which was approved by Diocesan Synod in 2016. As ministry in the diocese is financed through Parish Share, there is bound to be a connection with MMUs and it would be disingenuous to pretend otherwise. I am not aware of any such promise relating to Parish Share being made.

Financial authority continues to rest with the PCC as the legal body.

Transitional arrangements thus far have held Share increases at around 2% for benefices not in MMUs, unless other factors apply, such as a change in stipendiary posts. However, once the new Scheme is fully implemented, all parishes, as part of an MMU, will be asked to make an offer or a request to the Mutual Support Fund, as set out in the report.

With regard to Pastoral Reorganisation, Mission and Ministry Units are not legal entities, and therefore this is not necessary in order for lay and ordained colleagues to work collaboratively in the service of the Gospel. Any proposals for pastoral reorganisation are subject to the usual statutory processes set out in church legislation.

Supplementary

Q. What new steps are being put in place to help those who fear institutionalised pressure coming from the move toward MMUs?

A. The anxiety being expressed in some quarters is well known. No new steps are being taken, but genuine care is being made in the ways of working.

Q. Are there any non-geographic MMUs?

A. There is one MMU which is non-contiguous and this is in Waltham Forest Deanery. It is hoped that there will not be a need to look at non-geographic MMUs as we hope for mutual flourishing for the good of the Gospel. There are now many working examples.

Q.2: Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest) to ask the Diocesan Bishop :

At its meeting on 6 June 2015, the Diocesan Synod was informed that there was "an aspiration to meet the relevant living wage rate" for all CDBF and CDBF- subsidiary staff, and that the synod could not be told about whether parishes were paying the living wage rate as "we do not collect this information". In the light of the Bishop of Durham's Guardian article arguing that "the living wage is a powerful weapon against poverty" and that "more must pay it" (5 November 2018), can we have an update

on (1) whether the “aspiration” has now been realised and (if not) details of how many staff are still not paid the living wage, and (2) what steps have been made to collect the information from parishes? If parish information is still unavailable, can we have a commitment that this will be included in the 2019 Articles of Enquiry, or (if not) that the diocese will implement an alternative to ensure this information is collected in 2019?

A:

It is still the case that there is an aspiration to ensure all CDBF and CDBF subsidiary staff are paid the living wage. Sparrow’s staff, at present 20 employees, are currently not paid the living wage. However, the Sparrows Board has committed to this when Sparrows is in a financial position to do so. Remember that Sparrows is still a relatively new venture and operates in a complex sector. I’m pleased to say that the financial position of Sparrows is improving, but it is not there yet.

With regard to the collection of data from parishes and the proposal to include in the Articles of Enquiry, firstly, the Archdeacons decide what questions are included in the Articles of Enquiry. We must be mindful of the significant amount of information we ask of from PCCs each year and the fatigue being expressed in some places. Each PCC is a separate legal entity, therefore, even if we had collected this data, there is nothing we could do to ensure that they paid the living wage to all their staff. It is my hope that, where a PCC can afford to do this, it would pay the living wage to its staff.

Supplementary

Q. Can we include the collect of data through some means?

A. We need to be careful with regard to the Articles of Enquiry, but the request will have been heard by the Archdeacons.

Q. What definition is being used for the references to ‘living wage’?

A. It was confirmed that the references were to the living wage foundation definition.

Q. Could we consider using the ‘Serving with Accountability’ process to obtain this data?

A. This was a matter for the Archdeacons to consider.

CLOSE

The President noted and welcomed the election of Canon Robert Hammond and Revd Canon Louise Williams as Chairs of their respective Houses.

The President noted that this would be the last Synod for the Ven Annette Cooper. He paid tribute to the tremendous difference that her ministry had brought to the Diocese, in particular in the area of safeguarding. The Ven Annette Cooper delivered the blessing. The President closed Synod.