PRESENT : The President and 105 Members

The Archdeacon of Southend led the opening worship.

1. NOTICES

The Chair drew attention to the notices on the day paper. Filming would take place throughout the meeting.

In addition to the notices, the Chair highlighted that the Essex Clergy Charity had a stall at the meeting with packs to be collected by the Deanery representatives.

Amending Canon No. 39 was promulged.

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 15 JUNE 2019

The minutes were approved.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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


4. MOVING FROM SUBSIDY TO SUSTAINABILITY

The Chair pointed out that Synod was not being expected to make a decision on this item. Members would be invited to comment on the proposal and also to submit viable alternative solutions to the proposal.

The Chair invited the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary to address the Synod. The following points were made in his introduction:

- Members were reminded of the need for action. There was a growing general fund deficit; £0.7m in 2017 and £1.4 m in 2018. There had also been reductions in funding from national church; £2.1m per annum net by 2025. To be a Transforming Presence in the long term we have to find sustainable ways of resourcing ministry.
- At the March 2019 Synod Bishop Stephen spoke about the ministry deployment strategy. At that Synod it had also been noted that the Finance working group
were addressing process, roles and responsibilities and communication and training.

- Since the March 2019 meeting the following things had happened:
  - Process: In June, Diocesan Synod approved changes to the share process and a different shaped budget for 2020
  - Roles and responsibilities: The Deanery Finance Forum has been resurrected and we are consulting on a new set of Finance roles and responsibilities.
  - Communication and training: A prototype booklet has been produced explaining the cost of ministry
  - Deployment of Stipendiary Ministry: exploration of a range of options, with consistent feedback that vacancy process changes would be the most effective and proportionate. A new policy has been drafted.
- The new policy was detailed in paper DS(2019)07 and will be discussed at this meeting.
- Between this meeting and March 2020 it was proposed to do the following:
  - Revisit MMU and Deanery plans
  - Continue work on communications
  - Model impact of using investment income for mutual support
  - Review any other proposed solutions
- At the March 2020 Synod a decision on way forward will need to be made.

Members were then invited to share their reflections on the proposal. The following members made a contribution:

- Revd Canon Darren Barlow (Thurrock)
- Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
- Revd Dr Tim Platts (Colchester)
- Revd Dr Sue Lucas (Newham)
- Revd Simon Law (Basildon)
- Philip Carnelley (Redbridge)
- Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Braintree)
- Robin Stevens (Chelmsford North)
- Revd James Rodley (Harlow)
- Piers Northam (Harlow)
- Revd Brenda Wallace (General Synod)
- Nigel Dyson (Harwich)
- Christine Cox (Harlow)
- Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod)
- Mary Durlacher (General Synod)
- Revd Canon David Hague (General Synod and Havering)
- Revd Susan Iskander (Chelmsford North)
- David Martins (Newham)
- Revd David Lower (St Osyth)
- Revd Dan Pierce (Chelmsford North)
- Revd Jack Dunn (Redbridge)
- Canon Roger Ennals (Colchester)
The following points were made:

- In Thurrock Deanery 6 out of 9 benefices score under the average for LinC support. Transitional support of £400,000 is given. This is not sustainable. None of the benefices cover the full cost of ministry. This could be viewed as Thurrock’s problem, but the Church of England has long supplied ministry to all communities. It could be said that Thurrock need to find the ministers, but there are not a lot of professionals in the area to do this.
- There were concerns about how this would impact on clergy recruitment.
- This will have a negative impact on MMU formation.
- We struggle to get people to be Churchwarden. Serving Churchwardens may ‘throw in the towel’ on this.
- What is the projected income on parish share?
- This will have an impact on MMU formation. Previously this was administered through the Deanery, which was arbitrary.
- We need to be careful with our use of figures. £80,000 will seem absurdly high and may lead to embarrassment.
- Should we rethink the decision on increasing the number of stipendiary curates?
- The proposal is clear and easy to follow. It would help if a simple summary on how deficits have been covered and the projected costs.
- The pension scheme deficit will be cleared in due course, will this result in £800,000 of savings?
- It is delightful to be in a place where the ‘diocese’ is not thought of as the big ‘other’. There is work to be done to recognise what it looks like to be the body of Christ. The Barking Area roadshows are a start, but this needs to go to the grassroots.
- One member spoke of an exercise he did whilst parish treasurer. The giving of each church member was analysed and rather than giving £5.80 a week the members needed to give £24 a week. This lead to a discussion about tithing.
- Could we have clarity on how this proposal fits with MMUs?
- In membership organisations there is often a mentality of ‘I pay your wages’. This will give ammo to the bullies in the parishes and therefore needs careful explanation.
- One member spoke of their experience in their parish. Older members were dying off and younger members were not as committed financially as previous generations. Stewardship is important.
- The analogy of each member giving 50p more is flawed. Some people need to give more, others need to give less.
- We need to put the money in to the areas where there are poor and marginalised people.
- The £80,000 figure is fundamentally flawed and it is wrong to include fixed costs that would exist even if there were no clergy.
- How do we protect against the increasing expectation on clergy? This is not a good example of living well together. We need to move away from the language of clergy being a burden.
- We are one body and this is a problem for us all. The measures are punitive and we are too parochial. We should pay for each other.
• There was a request that this also include consideration on the impact on clergy wellbeing.
• One member pointed out that an increase of 50p a week in their parish would equate to £600. We need to think outside the box and consider what functions Deaneries and Churches can put on to raise money.
• Don’t put across the message of £80,000.
• We are the people of God and servants to people. There is great concern about the burdens on Churchwardens, Self-Supporting Ministers and others. There is not much evidence that these are supported and cared for. If we don’t care for each other, how do we care for the world?
• MMUs are more mainstream in strategy and governance. This does need to be more grassroots focused, with relational development and respect of traditions.
• Ordained Local Ministry would relieve the demand on sacramental worship.
• The proposal to communicate with patrons is welcomed.
• There is no mention of Minister Churches. These are a gift and resource.
• The MMUs mean that the Deanery is now in an ambiguous place.
• Forecast of demographic change is missing. This might impact ministry deployment and church closures.
• In other denominations, they have to pay for the ministry they receive.
• Can we have more information on Church attendance? Churches may have to be closed, they are expensive buildings.
• What is the percentage of total income that should go to the parish share?
• Will parishes be able to keep the fees from occasional offices?
• Why do PCCs maintain the inside of the houses?
• Where will the House for Duty priests come from?
• If we have such a drastic focus on clergy and not parishes we may have viable organs with no body.
• One member commented that they should have voted against the percentage increase in share for those not covering their cost of ministry. We are all in this together and there should be increases for all.
• Costs can come down, we can reimagine ministry with House for Duty Bishops and Archdeacons. There are also opportunities in Lay Ministry, an example of one Church which has grown since moving to a lay led model was given.
• The proposal is predicated on the assumption that the parish share is met from income. For many parishes it is met from reserves. It would be helpful to have more information on parish reserves and investments.

The Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary thanked members for their contributions and invited members who had not had their say to email him.

The Bishop of Chelmsford responded to those points he was able to in the time allowed. In summary:

• This is not ‘us’ vs ‘them’.
• A lot of the responses assumed clergy reduction, the Bishop stated he did not assume this and that he felt we will rise to meet the challenge.
• The proposal can be criticised, but members must be prepared to come up with a viable alternative. It is up to us as the people of God.
£80,000 does not refer to the priest, it refers to the ministry received. It is the resource for the whole people of God.
We believe we can make a difference but we need help from everyone.

5. PASTORAL ADVISORY GROUP PRINCIPLES

The Chair suspended Standing Orders and invited the Revd Ade Eleyae to address the Synod in relation to the Pastoral Advisory Group Principles. The following points were made in the introduction:

- The principles had been formed by the national Church’s Pastoral Advisory Group (PAG). The purpose of the PAG is to help the Church model the Archbishops’ desire for “radical Christian inclusion founded in scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology and the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it”.
- The Church wants to ensure that it offers pastoral care to all people, especially in the context of changing perspectives on gender, identity and sexuality.
- One of the tasks of the PAG has been to set out some principles of pastoral practice for how the Church of England can live well together within the parameters of its current position on marriage and the different deeply held convictions that individuals and churches hold on these matters. The outcome of this work has been the production of the Pastoral Principles for living well together.
- The principles offer the opportunity to examine our life together. There will be different reactions in different places. We want to encourage all to engage.
- The principles document identifies six ‘evils’:
  - Prejudice
  - Silence
  - Ignorance
  - Fear
  - Hypocrisy
  - Power
- At least some of these evils will be at work in your church, even if not with respect to LGBTI+ people. Who is missing? Who is present? Who is silent?
- The principles do not suggest we should not disagree, but we do need to see the lack of hospitality and the risk of becoming gatekeepers for the House of God. We often end up engaged in arguments over whether people should be here or not.
- However flawed the document may be, it offers us the opportunity to look at our flaws and our conduct toward those who are different.
- The ‘elephant in the room’ is how we apply this whilst holding on to our convictions. Is it possible to extend hospitality with those who we disagree?
- The principles can be used by clergy and laity, for welcome and study groups.
- Parishes were advised to use discretion when using the principles at local level. If this will result in extreme reactions they should not be used. It also helps to depersonalise. The best starting point is that we are all human beings and all have intrinsic value having been made in the image of God.

Synod members were then invited to discuss some questions in small groups.
The Chair drew an end to the group discussions and invited members to contact Revd Ade Eleyae if they wish to discuss further.

Members were invited to share their responses. The following members did so:

- Revd Jane Richards (Basildon)
- The Archdeacon of Harlow
- Mark Tiddy (Bishop’s Nomination)
- Canon Roger Ennals (Colchester)

The following contributions were made:

- One member shared their personal experience of how they and their family members had been made to feel unwelcome in the Church. They were currently encouraging their Church to become an Inclusive Church.
- The extent to which we can have this conversation extends to how far Churches are willing to have the conversation. In some Churches this is very difficult.
- Another personal experience was shared and the importance of us helping each other to think differently was emphasised.
- The feedback from the Youth Synod was that young people say they regularly witness prejudice. This is not always easy or safe to challenge. The terms ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ are still used as insults. The six principles are the least challenging way to look at this and are a big step forward. People should respect the beliefs of others until they disrespect someone else. The Youth Synod endorsed the passing of the motion for this item.
- Listening is important. It is not the job of the clergy to solve this.
- We should be very careful in our use of language. This is Christ’s Church, not ours.
- Relationships do break down and that is why we have Bullying and Harassment Advisers. In some cases it would help if these Advisers were involved at an earlier stage than they sometime are.

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders.

The Bishop of Chelmsford expressed his gratitude to the Revd Ade Eleyae. He then moved the motion:

‘This Synod note the Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together and commend them for discussion and use across the diocese.’

The Chair put the motion to the vote. The motion was overwhelmingly carried.

6. **MISSION AND MINISTRY UNIT MOTION UPDATE**

The Chair invited the Revd Canon Dr Roger Matthews to address the Synod. In his presentation the following points were made:
• The paper detailed the progress made on the motion passed in March. If there were updates that had not been captured in the paper these should be forwarded to the Head of Service Delivery.
• We are aiming to conclude MMU formation in 2021. However this must not be the end and we cannot end up with fossilised structures.
• Missional and ministry needs will change. It is really important that we don’t take our eyes off what God is doing.
• Finance is becoming more prevalent in these discussions and it is important that we don’t take the edge off of developments.
• There was a renewed call to prayer and to put mission front and centre of the developments.

The Bishop of Chelmsford commented that there was no such thing as a ‘self-selecting’ MMU. The proposals are coming from the ‘bottom up’ but they do have to be considered by the Deaneories and the Area and Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees. Sustainability is much more likely within an MMU.

Members noted paper DS(2019)09.

7. DEANERY SYNOD ELECTION FORMULA

The Chair moved the motion that:

‘This Synod
a) note the feedback from the consultation on the formula for use in the 2020 Deanery Synod election formula and
b) approve the formula, as set out in paper DS(2019)10 for use in the 2020 Deanery Synod elections.’

The following members spoke in the debate:

Diana Kennedy (Waltham Forest)
Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod)

The comments and questions were:

• How do Churches that are linked with Churches in other Deaneries fit in to this? How do we contact people? The Chair encouraged the questioner to contact their Archdeacon.
• The cap on Churches with large electoral rolls should not be applied? In response it was noted that this was indeed proposed that it not be applied.

The Chair called for a vote. The motion was overwhelmingly carried.

8. BISHOP’S COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Paper DS(2019)11 was received.
9. QUESTIONS

Q.1: Nick Ellis (Hinckford) to ask the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary:

Why, when considering the sale of Diocesan owned land or property does the Diocese not consult the relevant incumbent, churchwardens and PCC as part of the decision making process as the impact of such sales can affect the mission and ministry in the parish?

A.
We always seek to work collaboratively with parishes when considering potential development opportunities for glebe land. The timing of any consultation with the incumbent and PCC is a judgment call that has to be made on a case by case basis given that we do not want to cause unnecessary local concern about early exploratory work which may come to nothing. In taking this approach we seek to follow the Church Commissioner guidance below:

"It is always a matter of judgement as to how far a DBF should proceed with identifying potential development sites and undertaking preliminary discussions with potential developers before alerting the clergy, churchwardens and PCC concerned to the possibility of glebe development. There is an understandable wish not to cause unnecessary local concern where the possibility of development is at an exploratory stage and may come to nothing. However, the DBF should always try to avoid the parish first becoming aware of possible development from a source other than itself."

Supplementary

Q. Why did this process not take place in Pebmarsh?

A. The parish were written to in 1998 about the potential for the development. These proposals often take decades to reach fruition and the change of personnel will mean that the corporate memory has been lost.

Q2. Nick Ellis (Hinckford) to ask the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary:

Why are arrangements not in place for co-operation between neighbouring dioceses so that retired clergy who have met all safeguarding training requirements in one diocese are not obliged to meet the same requirements in the neighbouring diocese?

A.
We do liaise with other dioceses where PTO Clergy have received their training and vice versa, but this will involve a level of communication between the 2 safeguarding teams for that to happen. The only difference in training is that we have
incorporated two national specialist modules (DV and Safer Recruitment) into our C3 module.

In respect of DBS checks we need to ensure than all those with PTO have a DBS for each Diocese they have PTO in as they are separate organisations. The only exception to this is if the individual has signed up to the update service and therefore have a ‘portable’ DBS.

**Q3. Canon Christine Horton (Chelmsford South) to ask the Diocesan Bishop**

Would the Bishop explain the reason for, and benefits of, making Archdeacons Chairs of all twinning committees (Sweden, Kenya, Trinidad and Tobago etc.), rather than them serving on those committees and not allowing lay or other clergy, naturally and democratically, to remain or evolve as Chairs?

**A.**

I am grateful for Christine’s question as it gives me the opportunity to thank her publicly for all that she has done to contribute to the development of our partnership with the Diocese of Karlstad as chair of the link group and I am pleased that she will continue to serve as a member of the group in future.

Historically, our link groups have formed organically and there has been no single system of appointing chairs.

Our partnerships with the World Church are increasingly important to us. We now have numerous initiatives with our 5 partner dioceses in the Anglican Church of Kenya and with Karlstad Diocese in the Church of Sweden. And, although there is less direct activity, we maintain good relations with the Diocese of Trinidad & Tobago and the Archdiocese of Iaşi (pronounced Yash) in Romania.

The idea of asking each archdeacon to take a specific interest in one of our partner dioceses emerged in 2018 and has been formalised this year. This will bring greater awareness of our international partnerships to discussions at both Bishop’s Staff and Bishop’s Council which will be especially important in preparation for Canon Roger Matthews’ retirement next year. It is for this reason that it makes sense for an archdeacon to take responsibility for the link committees if only for a season. This will not reduce the involvement of others in the developing life of each partnership.

Over the next few months we will be establishing a new International Committee to be chaired by Bishop John. This group will bring strategic coordination to all our international interests including the current link committees. It is, therefore, an open question as to who will be best placed to chair the individual link committees, and this may well change in the future as it has in the past.
Supplementaries

Q. Selecting Archdeacons to chair these groups does send out a message that there is a glass ceiling for laity. How does this sit with initiatives to strengthen lay involvement?

A. We hope to build a better partnership through these groups. These decisions may only be for a season and will change in the future. Lay and Ordained people will take responsibility.

Q. What consultation happened with the chairs of these bodies before the decision was reached?

A. This was not known but the answer will be established.

Q. Are there new ways of making appointments that can lead to greater diversity of church tradition?

A. Yes, there is this possibility for the international links.

Q4. Margaret Henning (Hadleigh) to ask the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary:

Parishes invest their funds with the Diocese. Can you please explain how these funds are invested and what is done to ensure parishes get a good return on their investments, at least as good as if they invested the funds themselves?

A.

The Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance holds legal title for some trust funds on behalf of parishes as custodian trustee. These are trusts which the Chelmsford DBF is obliged to hold as custodian trustee, either because this is specified in the trust document or because they are legally obliged so to do.

The parishes are managing trustees. As such they retain the management of the funds. The Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance is able to hold funds on behalf of parishes with the following fund managers: CCLA and M&G.

It is the decision of the managing trustees as to which type of fund is chosen. Both CCLA and M&G have a variety of funds: investment funds (equities, bonds etc) and traditional cash deposit accounts from which the managing trustees can choose. Both CCLA and M&G regularly deal with the investment of charitable funds, and managing trustees are very welcome to contact them to discuss their investment options.

Supplementaries

Q. How do we make sure parishes make best use of their investments?
A. This depends on the risk appetite of the PCC. The recent CCLA session held encouraged parishes to consider whether they can invest in other opportunities.

Q. Why has one parish received a ‘brush off’?

A. We apologise if a parish has received a ‘brush off’. The person was invited to raise their concern and see if it can be addressed.

Q5. Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Braintree) to ask the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary:

Given that in March this year the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that no new homes should have gas boilers from 2025 has the Diocese considered using this as an opportunity to further enhance our environmental credentials by formulating a plan that when gas boilers need replacing in Diocesan houses, they should be replaced with non fossil fuel alternatives?

A.

Thank you for raising this point, so far only one air source heat pump has been installed in a vicarage. The Houses Committee is continually looking at ways to improved environmental performance and at its last meeting approved the installation of charging points in any vicarages undergoing a rewire or where the occupier has purchased an electric car. I will ensure that non fossil fuel replacement boilers are discussed at the next Committee meeting.

Q6. Diana Benge Abbott (Bishop’s Nomination) to ask the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary:

How many people across the diocese, (in addition to the Lead Minister of the BMO for the Diocese of Chelmsford Deaf Church*) lay or ordained, have been made redundant, or apparently forced to resign or take unsought early retirement, in 2019? What support was given to them during the consultation period beforehand and in the following months?

* Reference: The report of the July meeting of the DMPC includes the line: Approved the extension of the BMO for the Diocese of Chelmsford Deaf Church. NB The new Lead Minister of the BMO holds the role in addition to that of a busy parish and other extra-parochial roles such as college chaplain.

A.

There have been no redundancies within the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance over the past year and no one, lay or ordained, has been forced to resign or to take early retirement.

Where redundancies have occurred in the past, we have managed the process in accordance with our internal policies and statutory provisions. We also have
supported people by being flexible with notice periods, providing time off for job searching and interviews and we have offered support via external specialist coaching for interviews.

A handful of people have left the diocese during 2019 by mutual consent but it would be inappropriate to comment on individual cases.

The Bishop had recently appointed an Equality Adviser and part of their role will be to consider how we respond to issues of disability.

Q. How can we learn lessons as people move on?

A. We are always willing to learn lessons.

CLOSE

The Bishop of Chelmsford publically commissioned the Revd Ade Eleyae as his Equality Adviser. Prayers were offered for this new role.

The President closed the Synod.