

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 142nd meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 17 June 2017 at Christ Church in Wanstead**

PRESENT : The President and 82 Members

Opening worship was led by the Archdeacon of Stansted. As part of the worship Synod members from the Stansted Archdeaconry shared something about their respective Deaneries and the current issues affecting ministry in their contexts.

1. NOTICES

The Chair highlighted the bookstall and filming arrangements for the meeting. The Chair also highlighted that the November Synod will be held at St Stephen's Church in Colchester.

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 11 MARCH 2017

The minutes were approved.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Presidential Address can be found on this webpage:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/bishop-stephens-latest-address-to-synod>

4. 500th ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION

The Chair suspended Standing Orders.

The Chair introduced Revd Dr Charlotte Methuen, Senior Lecturer (Theology and Religious Studies) at Glasgow University who delivered a presentation on the Reformation and why it is still relevant to us today.

After the presentation the Chair invited members to discuss with their neighbours about whether there were any questions that they would like to ask. The following questions were asked and the responses from Charlotte Methuen are included:

- Was the empowerment of laity an issue which came out of the Reformation, or did it exist in the Pre-Reformation period? *This largely comes about because of the rise of an educated middle class. It led to the massive increase in church buildings. Luther promoted the idea of a priesthood of believers, all in the same relationship with God through our Baptism. However, the structures were still very much focused on the proper call of the Church and it was not about all being able to become leaders of worship.*

- What was Cranmer's view of Holy Communion at the time? *When he was appointed he had a similar view as Luther, but later his views changed to be more in line with Zwingli's. There is a revealing exhortation in the BCP about spiritual union with Christ.*
- Are there any points that we could return to without going back to the Catholic tradition? *Scripture is fundamental. The BCP is the primary way in which we recognise our Anglicanism. Some texts can be lived out in different ways. It would be more difficult in respect of liturgy.*
- How do you decide on different interpretations? *We need to sit down and pray together. It is concerning about how we have forgotten this and the emphasis on praying and working together. Piety from the Catholic tradition is important. Scriptural interpretation and empowerment of the laity is important from the Protestant tradition. The Reformation is being marked by both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church.*

The Chair thanked Charlotte Methuen for her presentation.

5. SCHOOL FOR DISCIPLES UPDATE

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders and invited the Bishop of Chelmsford to deliver his update on the School for Disciples roadshow.

The Bishop reminded members that the roadshow was inspired by the overwhelming voice from Time to Talk events that people wanted help in prayer and reading the Bible.

Eighteen of the twenty events had been held. It was too early to draw conclusions. Over 2000 people had attended the roadshow so far.

The emphasis on the events has been how we can look at the life of Christ through the lens of discipleship. Resources had been given out to those attending.

The Bishop thanked all those who had supported and made the events happen.

6. DBF AGM

See separate minutes.

7. 2018 BUDGET

The Chair invited the Chief Executive to deliver a presentation on the Budget for 2018.

The following points were made:

- Last year's budget consultation had proved very useful in the formation of the proposed budget. It had provided a good steer on principles for longer term budgeting as well.
- National Church funding will continue to reduce over the next ten years.
- Nationally there is a 14% increase in the numbers coming forward for Ordination and in 2018 this Diocese will have a record intake of eighteen stipendiary

curates. The implication of this meant that the largest growth in the budget was under the future ministry costs heading.

- Continuing challenges included; responding to strategic mission priority areas, balancing retirements and costs of new vocations, affordability for worshipping communities, opportunities to be found and the share shortfall.

The Chair moved the motion:

That this Synod

- a) approve the Diocesan Budget for 2018 and the total Share of £16,858,676*
- b) note the outline plans for 2019 and 2020*
- c) approve the apportionment of the total Share according to the approved Share scheme; and*
- d) agree a cap of 2.5% in increases in gross share (before credits) compared with 2017, for benefices operating under transitional Benefice Share, except where specific agreements are made.'*

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

Revd James Rodley (Harlow)
Mary Durlacher (General Synod)
Revd Quintin Peppiatt (Newham)

The questions, along with responses from the Bishop of Chelmsford and the Chief Executive, were:

- *Are we delivering central costs in the most efficient way? Are there opportunities to find savings by working with neighbouring diocese? Many central costs have come down and where there have been increases these have been justified. £50,000 had been saved through efficiency savings. The property department has been restructured. We share some resources with other dioceses: for example our safeguarding training module is used by other dioceses. There is scope for further sharing of resources, but this is limited. Moving the Diocesan Office would not work from a financial perspective. The office is owned by a Trust and the Trust could make increased contributions to running costs.*
- *The Church Commissioners investment portfolio has done very well. When will that filter down to the parishes? Do we have enough flexibility built in to the budget if this were to happen? It is not clear whether it will filter down as a matter of course, but there will be more scope to put in bids in to the national church for financial support. The Diocese had recently received a grant of £2 million for mission in new housing areas. We are looking at options for further funding opportunities.*
- *It is good that the new share scheme is a conversation rather than a calculation. How will this roll forward and if the Mutual Support Fund ends at some stage, what will happen? The MSF will go down over time due to national funding, although it is proposed to grow investment income. The support will not just disappear, otherwise the system will not work. The new scheme makes the levels of support visible for the first time. This is the new scheme and we must work together to make sure the system works for everyone.*

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

8. SAFEGUARDING

The Chair suspended Standing Orders and introduced Sir Roger Singleton, Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group, to speak to this item. In his introduction he made the following points:

- For centuries the Church has done excellent work with vulnerable people, however, from time to time, there are errors of omission or commission, which undermine this work. This attracts media attention. Abuse is a fact, there have been cover ups nationally and many of these instances of abuse are historic cases. So the Church does need to do all it can to recognise this.
- In a recent independent safeguarding audit Chelmsford Diocese had done encouragingly well. This was down to a strong lead by the previous and current Bishops of Chelmsford. We are one of the first dioceses to have a substantial safeguarding provision. The audit cannot be published until it is seen by the Bishop's Council, but it rates the diocese as very good. However, this should be no ground for complacency.
- The new national policy identified six commitments, these are:
 - Promoting a Safer environment and culture
 - Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church
 - Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
 - Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
 - Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
 - Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Synod can rest assured that the skills and resources to implement these commitments effectively are in place.

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

Canon Gordon Simmonds (Rochford)
Revd Helen Gheorghiu Gould (Harlow)
Sylvia Halford (Braintree)

The questions and responses from Roger Singleton are as follows:

- What changes are being proposed under the new national policy? *The biggest focus in the new policy is fostering cultural change in the Church. People in leadership positions need to work at promoting safeguarding. The national church will be providing guidance and we will work to harmonise that with the diocesan guidance.*
- One member spoke of how the safeguarding team had assisted them. The support available should be publicised more? *It was agreed that communication was vital*

- There is no identification for those not considered under the formal definition of vulnerable. It is often the case that this identification is crucial. It would be good to recognise this in the policy and guidance. *It was noted that the diocesan policy does include bullying and the national focus has been on incorporating domestic violence victims. It was agreed that this point should be taken further.*

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders.

The Bishop of Chelmsford thanked Roger Singleton. He noted the substantial financial commitment made by the Synod over the last five years, but assured members that the cost of ignoring safeguarding was much greater. The Church is one of the few organisations which welcomes everyone. This is why there is such a great need to get safeguarding right.

The Bishop of Chelmsford moved the motion:

'That this Synod adopt Promoting a Safer Church, the Church of England's national safeguarding policy Statement to sit alongside our diocesan policy and guidance, and commend this Statement to all worshipping communities in East London and Essex.'

The motion was carried unanimously.

9. BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

The reports were received.

10. QUESTIONS

Q.1: Rosalind Tatum (Waltham Forest) to ask the Chief Executive :

It is good that, whilst we consider a new Safeguarding policy statement from the House of Bishops elsewhere in today's agenda, as a Diocese we already have a variety of different Safeguarding training opportunities, some online and some face-to-face.

As well as the requirement for Parish Clergy, I understand that all Self-Supporting Ministers, Licensed Lay Ministers and Readers are expected to attend a C3 Level whole day training session every 3 years. The diocesan website gives 16 dates from November 2016 to November 2017 for training to be held in various parts of our diocese, but only one of these 16 sessions is on a Saturday. This allocation of dates makes it difficult for many SSM, LLM and Readers to attend.

When dates are considered for training sessions for 2018, will there be greater flexibility by offering more Saturdays, dates in school holidays and / or some evening sessions?

A:

In short yes. In addition to the sessions already arranged (details of which are given on the Day paper), a further 10-12 C3 sessions for licenced Clergy, LLMs/Readers and those with PTO are due to be arranged to ensure that there are spaces for everyone in these categories participate.

It should be noted that one third of the sessions booked since the start of 2016 have been on Saturdays. This does not include bespoke sessions such as those for Pastoral Assistants which are typically on Saturdays.

In addition we are beginning to plan the C2 training programme which is for a much wider group. Approximately 15-20 sessions need to be offered a year in order to achieve the numbers required.

Supplementary questions

Q. Will the principle of weekend training be extended to other training sessions?

A. Yes, where possible.

Q. If a parish already provides C2 training, will this be sufficient, or will people still need to go through Diocesan training?

A. This question should be directed to the Safeguarding Team.

CLOSE The President closed Synod.