

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 145th meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 16 June 2018 at the University of Essex**

PRESENT : The President and 68 Members

Opening worship was led by Isabel Adcock.

1. NOTICES

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

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 17 MARCH 2018

The minutes were approved.

3. STEWARDSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Chair suspended standing orders and invited the National Stewardship Adviser, John Preston, to address the Synod.

The key points from this presentation were:

- Stewardship is our response with that entrusted to us by a generous God, in all aspects of our lives as followers of Jesus. It includes regard to money, but also in other areas. It also applies to us as individuals and as Churches.
- Communication is vitally important to convey the need to give. There are distinctive faith perspectives on giving and generosity. The vision, purpose and impact on giving needs to be communicated, so donors understand the difference the church is making in its community. Information on the costs and financial situation also needs to be communicated so church members can form a realistic understanding of the scale of the challenge.
- One method developed to combat static giving is the Parish Giving Scheme. This is now offered in 13 dioceses, with several others joining in the next year or two. 18,000 people are currently giving through the scheme nationally. The take up in Chelmsford is notably behind the curve.
- Churches should consider providing ways for people to give that suit them. Most people now carry less cash and donations by card are bigger than cash donations. Card is suitable for payments, and for offerings pre or post service, but it is not yet suitable for offertory collections because of need to choose size of gift. Web based options are available.
- Another recent initiative aimed at helping parishes to be good stewards is the Parish Buying Scheme. This is a scheme involving shared buying with an energy basket now comprised of 100% renewable electricity.
- There is guidance and support for parishes doing capital projects, the online version will be available later this year.

- The Parish Resources website provides more advice on other areas associated with stewardship, including governance.

The Chair reinstated standing orders.

The Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson moved the motion that:

'This Synod welcome innovations such as the Parish Giving Scheme and encourage Parochial Church Councils and Bishop's Mission Orders to explore how these opportunities can support them in their mission and ministry.'

The following members spoke in the debate:

Robin Stevens (co-opted)
 Revd James Rodley (Harlow)
 Larry Morris (Havering)
 Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod)
 Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
 Gordon Simmonds (Rochford)
 Canon Roger Ennals (Colchester)
 Revd Canon Philip Ritchie (Chelmsford South)
 Canon Christine Horton (Chelmsford South)
 Sheila Bradley (Hadleigh)

The points raised during the debate were as follows:

- Some parishes find this sort of talk a bit vulgar. It is not, we need to remember the Parable of the Talents. God gives different gifts in different amounts to use to the benefit of His mission. We need to use those gifts for God's glory.
- The Parish Giving Scheme is beneficial, but there are much deeper issues which require addressing, mainly cultural issues. Given the large parish share deficit we need to challenge that culture.
- It would be helpful to have a teaching resource to challenge people's hearts, giving is a heart response.
- If we get the mission and vision right money will follow. The means which have been shared with us today are important, but they are secondary. We need to go for growth.
- We need to remember that we communicate with those outside of our structures and take that in to account when deciding how to communicate.
- Giving by card can incur a cost that cannot be recovered and this extra pressure may mean parishes decide not to use it.
- We need to discover energy in our giving.
- What we measure controls us, so we should look to include other measurements, not just money.
- This can be a particular challenge in small and vulnerable rural Churches.
- A member affirmed the effectiveness of the PGS and reminded members of the importance of thanking people for their contributions.

The Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson thanked those who spoke in the debate. She reminded members that through the visitation process the Archdeacons asked parishes to focus on some questions through the 'serving with accountability' process. This is a useful tool to address some of the issues raised. There is central support available to think through project.

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

4. STANDING ORDERS OF DIOCESAN SYNOD

The Chair moved the motion that:

'This Synod approve the proposed changes to its Standing Orders as set out in paper DS(2018)05'

The following members spoke in the debate:

Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
Derek Smith (Epping Forest and Ongar)

The points made, along with responses, were:

- The amendments mean there will be less time to submit questions. Why, when the meeting schedule has been decided in advance, will these changes help? *The Chief Executive responded to the point clarifying that whilst the Synod schedule is set in advance, it is part of a larger meeting schedule, which means that opportunities for when the Synod can be held are very limited. Questions can be submitted in advance of the agendas being sent, members do not need to wait for the agenda and papers to devise and submit a question.*
- Why do we need to amend the standing orders to pick up on disqualification of trustees, surely this is covered by law? *The Chief Executive responded that there are clear cut cases where someone becomes disqualified by law and this is already covered, however there are some areas, for example incapacity, where the decision isn't straightforward. This fixes a gap in the standing orders.*

Members voted on the motion, which was clearly carried.

5. CDBF AGM See separate minutes.

6. 2019 BUDGET

The Vice Chair of the DBF moved the motion that:

'This Synod

- a) approve the Diocesan Budget for 2019 and the total Share of £17,103,968*
- b) note the outline plans for 2020 and 2021*
- c) approve the apportionment of the total Share according to the approved Share scheme; and*
- d) agree a cap of 2% in increases in gross share (before credits) for 2019 compared with 2018, for benefices operating under transitional Benefice Share (except where*

specific agreements are made or there is a material increase in ministry establishment).’

The following members spoke in the debate:

Gordon Simmonds (Rochford)
Revd James Rodley (Harlow)
Bishop of Chelmsford
Revd Canon Mark North (Maldon and Dengie)
Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson (General Synod)

The points raised in the debate and responses were as follows:

- The main driver on costs is the number of stipendiary clergy. The proposed decrease in stipendiary clergy is quite small, what is the current projection on stipendiary numbers for 2025? Have we seen an improvement in parish share through MMU formation?
- There is minimal debate on the budget, can we have other opportunities to have the debate? *It was noted that the paper for the day covered a wide amount of detail. There is a team looking in to issues relating to the budget who can be contacted. The budget is also debated by the Bishop’s Council in a good level of detail.*
- Interim Ministry is beginning to bear fruit in addressing challenges.
- We have increased numbers in training and believe this is best for our long term strategy.
- We need to bear in mind the national church funding reduction and the resulting pressure of that.
- It was suggested that the new share scheme process was going to implemented quickly, however it is taking longer than expected. Can we have a review of the process?
- Good stewardship is key to resolving the issues in the budget.
- Members were encouraged to invite Mission and Ministry Advisers and the Diocesan Director of Finance to come to a Deanery Synod or other such meeting to explain the parish share. This had been done in some places and it was time well spent.

7. BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Paper DS(2018)07 was received.

8. QUESTIONS

Q.1: Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Attending this 105-minute meeting today, requires a 135-minute journey by public transport each way for me, and at a greater distance from Colchester mainline station than to the venue of the last and very recent synod meeting in Colchester. At that meeting in November, synod was assured that meetings will usually be in the Cathedral. Please could we have some convincing argument of the strategic reasons why this synod meeting clashes with the Essex session of re:source, an important

event for the diocese (though not important enough to be included on the diocese events calendar on its website, at the date of posting this question)? Once again, I request that the answer references the stated Environmental policy of the diocese (which the reply to my similar question in November failed to do), and addresses the point that the clash means Essex members miss part of the resource event, and that London members are required to travel and register for an event not intended for them, as they have one more conveniently arranged for them later in the year.

A:

As we have previously stated, Synod meetings will usually be held at the Cathedral. Here we had an opportunity to combine the Synod date with one of the Resource conferences. As you can imagine there were limited dates available and combining with Synod we are 1) enabling Synod members to attend some of the workshops if they wish, 2) allowing Synod members to travel with others from their parish and split the workshops and Synod between them, and 3) avoiding diocesan events on two dates in the same month. All of which is firmly in line with our environmental aims of seeking to avoid unnecessary travel. The late start for Synod was particularly for those with longer journeys in mind.

Supplementary questions

- Q. Is there any way we can evaluate the impact of the decision? A request for a show of hands as to those who shared transport or who used public transport was made.
- A. The Chair asked members to raise their hand if they shared transport or used public transport to the Synod meeting. A significant number of members indicated that they did.
- Q. If we want to move Synod around, can we make later starts and good links to public transport the norm?
- A. We usually meet at the Cathedral, but regularly go elsewhere. Links to public transport are considered and the Synod meeting starts later when not held at the Cathedral. There are other benefits of moving around the Diocese.

Q.2: Rosalind Tatam (Waltham Forest) to ask the Director of Communications:

Bishop's Council in July 2017 agreed proposals to bring 'the month' to a close, and to establish a new printed publication ... alongside further investment in digital media.

Could we please have an update on (a) the proposal for the new printed publication, and (b) the extent to which digital publications/ media have been enhanced or expanded, and any assessment of their reach or impact in the parishes?

A:

(a) The Month's print run was 20,000. 10 people criticised its closure, some on social media. 40 local newspapers closed last year. The advertising platform for diocesan newspapers has gone. Parish magazines have closed. We place news in newspapers through releases without charge. We are improving services for parish magazine editors.

The Month preached environment stewardship and efficiency but was printed in Dorset, transported across Essex and East London and usually binned unread.

We long for a culture where our parishes pray for each other. So we are planning for an improved prayer publication as soon as practicable. The editor will be improving the Cycle of Prayer. Daily prayers are on twitter, and the online Cycle can be downloaded and printed. The new printed publication will make inter-parish praying the norm for those who not use the Cycle of Prayer but want to pray for other parishes.

This project will involve an efficient GDPR-compliant process, engagement with clergy, re-advertisement of the editor's post, a user-friendly format, cost-effective printing, a courier and a distribution network.

(b) Social media lets people receive the news they want when and how they want it. Through our parishes and many more the #GodWithUs campaign reached 6.8 million people last Christmas.

How effective social and digital media is for the Church can be seen in prayers and sermons, influence and community building, events and filled vacancies.

The Lent appeal raised £20-30k with The Month. This year the figure is already over £45k thanks to twitter, facebook and the web. John Perumbalath's announcement was viewed 25,000 times. The accompanying video clip went global.

Our facebook followers exceed 800. Over 4,500 follow the diocese on twitter. Our website earns over 30,000 views and twitter over 90,000 a month. The trends are rising. We follow our parishes, they follow us, and we share with one another as expected in line with 'Transforming Presence'.

Supplementary question

- Q. What thought has been given to including those who do not engage with social media and the internet and treating them as equals?
- A. Those who are aware of people in that situation can print off copies of the relevant articles for them. Print publications are possible, but the need should be demonstrated.

Q.3: Rosalind Tatam (Waltham Forest) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Bishop's Council Away Day in January 2018 considered potential next steps in respect of Transforming Presence. Could we please have a summary of the steps that are being taken forward?

A:

The Bishop's Council away day in January was very useful in thinking through how we might refresh the language we use to describe and promote Transforming Presence and to review its priorities. This part of the day produced three significant outcomes: first, the Bishop's Council confirmed our commitment to church planting as a significant element in our priority to evangelise effectively, that is to see church planting as both a challenge for every church to think about developing fresh expressions of worship and ministry, and as the most appropriate way of responding to the large new housing developments being built in the diocese. This latter ministry is already being supported by a strategic development fund grant and we intend to seek further grant funding later this year. It was strategically important that this important part of our strategy was included within the Transforming Presence priorities. But in terms of what has happened since January, we need to see that this was more a matter of catching up with what the Holy Spirit was already doing than making a new initiative ourselves.

The second element that came into focus on the day was stewardship. Although there is no reason to panic, the finances of the diocese remain a huge challenge and we need every individual Christian and Christian community to take greater responsibility in meeting this challenge. I spoke about this at our last Synod. Since then we have been considering what else needs to be done. In part, the Resource event happening around this Synod is part of that.

Finally, The Bishop's Council encouraged us to think about our ministry with children and young people. We agreed to set up a group to look into this at the Bishop's Council meeting last month.

9. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The text of the Presidential Address can be downloaded from here:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/bishop-church-is-like-a-great-orchestra>

The Bishop of Chelmsford licensed Revd Canon Ian Hilton as a Public Preacher in the Diocese, to support his work as CMD Adviser for the Colchester Area.

CLOSE The President closed Synod.