

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 137th meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 14 November 2015 at Chelmsford Cathedral**

PRESENT : The President and 131 Members

The Synod began with a Eucharist to mark the first meeting of the new triennium.

1. NOTICES

The Chair, Revd Canon Martin Wood, announced that the meetings of the Houses of Laity and Clergy, prior to the Synod, had elected new Chairs. Canon Robert Hammond had been elected as Chair of the House of Laity and Revd Louise Williams had been elected as Chair of the House of Clergy.

The Chair also drew attention to the day paper and the bookstall, which was selling copies of the 2016 Directory.

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 6 JUNE 2015

The minutes were approved.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Presidential Address can be found on this webpage:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/bishop-our-agenda-is-to-be-transformed#.VlxY9Msnx9A>

4. TRANSFORMING PRESENCE AND DISCIPLESHIP

Members had received the updated *Transforming Presence* document. The Chair asked members to discuss their impressions of the new document in small groups.

Having allowed time for small group discussion the President moved the motion that:

“This Synod celebrate the progress of Churches throughout the diocese on Transforming Presence, commit to developing discipleship in the way it is outlined in the General Synod paper GS1977, and continue to affirm the four strategic priorities set out in Transforming Presence”

The following members spoke in the debate:

- Rosalind Tatum (Waltham Forest)
- Revd Jo Delfgou (Basildon)
- Revd James Rodley (Harlow)

- Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
- Revd Helen Gheorghiu Gould (Harlow)
- Roger Ennals (Colchester)
- Revd Canon Philip Ritchie (Chelmsford South)
- Anthony Nicolle (Vice Chair DBF)
- Mac Leonard (Redbridge)
- Ian Tinton (Hinckford)

The following points were made during the debate:

- It would be good to have references to the new Share Scheme omitted before circulation across the Diocese. This prejudices the decision of the Synod to be taken in March and there is much resistance at trying to bring finance into the early discussions on units. It would also be good to address the issue of giving more sensitively given the inequality in our society.
- The motion is a 'no-brainer' however it is not easy and makes us anxious. There is a risk of the Church being in disorder and being uneasy. Also do we have the energy to maintain structures, communications and other things we will need to do with units.
- In Ecclesiastes it tells us there is a time for everything. Whilst we should rejoice at all the good news stories that are in the document it could give the wrong impression as there are many who are struggling. The document fails to mention fundamental problems such as the demands of legal duties. The document needs to be more realistic.
- The document talks about 'mixed economy' Church however there are few references to the inherited Church. It would be good to see the Diocese stating what the distributions of share within a unit would be. We should look at mission and ministry and then focus on finances and generosity.
- The change is going to take a huge amount of time to afford care and great respect. There is huge opportunity for conflict and it is better to invest time now than to rush to get things into place. There is a concern over the loss of identity. We need to be more imaginative and need more route maps. We can look at other parts of the country where people are putting some of this thinking in place. Administrative support is not a secondary support it needs to be given primary status.
- We have a sense of responsibility here and if it takes twenty times for people to understand the message then we need to go back twenty times. This will fail if the Holy Spirit is not in it. Leave the legislative questions to one side, we need more Church for more impact.
- Missionary Discipleship reminds us of what we are about.
- We can't decide everything, but we can set the scene.
- We are not just Churches, we are not just ministry, we are mission and ministry. We need greater emphasis on mission and Churches need to ask what they can do to help as a starting point.
- In the end units will fit the needs of the particular locations. The timescale is tight.

The Bishop of Chelmsford responded to the comments. Talk about legal structures closes down discussion on unit formation. He assured members that he will look at

the references to the Share Scheme. He acknowledged that people are struggling however we need to promote the good news stories, these are our stories as the Church of Jesus Christ. Administrative support is being looked at and advice about 'Practice Managers has been issued.

Members voted on the above motion. The motion was carried with two abstentions.

5. GOOD NEWS STORY: PROSPECTS AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND COMMISSION

The Chair suspended Standing Orders to allow the speaker for this item to address Synod.

Pete Winmill, Head of Ministry at Prospects, spoke of the work of Prospects and the Church of England Commission. Prospects had been working with several Dioceses, including the Diocese of Chelmsford, about equipping local Churches to welcome people with learning disabilities and fully integrate them as members of the Church. He made the following points in his presentation:

- Adults with learning disabilities are part of the Church, however so often they are not treated as such. For example many can't read, but we use a lot of words.
- He was thrilled when the Church of England came to Prospects to ask them to look at this.
- Challenges faced in Dioceses had led to a lot of waiting and exceptionally slow progress. Filtering down to parishes had been a particular challenge.
- However, the meetings held did show people engaging and this was encouraging.
- A questionnaire was issued. This did not get to many people. However the responses which did come back were interesting. People wanted to understand more, wanted to set up groups, wanted advice on funerals and confirmations, how to disciple and how to avoid making assumptions.
- A lot of these issues are nothing to do with disabilities, but are to do with individuals. The Church of England has a huge responsibility to look at this.
- Even though the Commission has ceased, Prospects remain able to help parishes. We can make a difference.
- Ability Sunday is being held next September and will become an annual thing. It emphasises that everyone has gifts.

The Chair thanked Pete Winmill for his presentation.

After lunch the Chair invited members to share any reflections. Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson drew attention to two training sessions being held in the Colchester Area and led by Autism Anglia. These were being held on 17 November at St John's Church in Colchester and on 26 November at Great Notley Church.

6. COMMITTEE FOR MINORITY ETHNIC ANGLICAN CONCERNS (CMEAC)

The Archdeacon of Southend introduced this item. She explained that CMEAC had been relaunched in September 2014. Many who had been previously involved had

not seen change and had become frustrated. Talented people had been co-opted and a paper 'Where do we go from here?' was prepared to set out the new way forward. This paper had been provided to Synod members on the day.

The main objective of CMEAC was to help to make the Church representative of the whole people of God. This is an issue for everyone. One of the specific proposals underway was the promotion of Unconscious Bias training. Everyone has an unconscious bias and this gives us something to work on. We also all need to reflect upon our practice, for example how we communicate. Diversity is a given, inclusion is a choice.

The video 'I too am CofE' was shown.

With Standing Orders still suspended, Revd Penny Sayer, Minority Ethnic Vocations Champion, was invited to share her experience. She had shared how she had been working to help the PCC of the parish she had oversight of was representative of the Church and this led to her being offered a role as Champion. As part of this role consultations had been held across the Diocese looking at joys and barriers. This work is heavily linked to Transforming Presence as it was about using gifts and talents.

Revd Dr Chigor Chike was invited to speak about leadership. In the parish in which he served he had two other colleagues. Each of the team is from a different continent and this is exciting to experience and gives rise to a variety of ideas and perspectives. The benefits of a diverse leadership team are that there is greater effectiveness; it is more representative and more just. The current picture of the Diocese is that the senior staff team has two minority ethnic clergy; however there is little representation among Area Deans and Lay Chairs. In order to bring about change we need courage among Senior Staff, robust and "wise" processes for selection and training on bias awareness. One example which may be of help would be the Baptist Union.

The Archdeacon of Southend then posed some questions for Synod members to consider.

The Archdeacon closed by saying that this was not about guilt or looking backward. CMEAC cannot do this on their own. The Bishop of Chelmsford affirmed that this was about rejoicing and celebrating diversity. He stated that he had just been invited to be a member of the national CMEAC group.

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders and moved the motion:

To move the motion:

'This Synod request that the Bishop's Council develop proposals to meet the following aims:

- 1. Developing a greater awareness by affirming the commitment of the Diocese to diversity and inclusion, and to support and promote this by putting in resources so that all people in positions of responsibility within the diocese receive Unconscious Bias training.*

2. *Encouraging and developing Minority Ethnic Vocations by ensuring that theological training is inclusive and accessible to all and promoting Minority Ethnic vocations to ordained ministry in the Diocese*
3. *Promoting a more inclusive approach across the Diocese so that all our communications, both outward and inward facing, truly reflect the diversity of the Diocese.*
4. *Recognising the vital importance that leadership in the Diocese reflect the diversity of the diocese and be more representative of the congregations they lead, and to encourage this by supporting the development and provision of a leadership course for Minority Ethnic clergy.'*

The following people spoke in the debate:

- Revd Lesley Goldsmith (Waltham Forest)
- Piers Northam (Epping Forest and Ongar)
- Revd James Rodley (Harlow)
- Les Brock (Thurrock)
- Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
- Bishop of Bradwell
- Vevet Deer (Waltham Forest)
- Revd Martin Howse (Havering)
- Bishop of Colchester
- Revd Vernon Ross (Epping Forest and Ongar)
- Revd James McCluskey (Southend)
- Revd Tim Goodbody (Dunmow & Stansted)
- Robert Hammond (General Synod)

The contributors made the following points in the debate:

- One member shared how they had recently been in Trinidad and Tobago and this was an illuminating insight into feeling like the 'only one'. In their Church in Waltham Forest there are 30 different languages spoken and are representative of the parish.
- The motion needs to go wider than the clergy, laity should be included.
- Training in other areas often lacks theological reflection, could this be considered for the Unconscious Bias training.
- One member gave an example of one Church where the congregation was diverse but the PCC did not reflect the congregation the PCC did not reflect the congregation. This is now changing, but it was ultimately because those in the congregation were not asked or encouraged to get in involved with the PCC.
- The recruiters need to be involved in the training.
- This is about mission. There is a huge resource of people who turn away because they do not see a place in the Church of England.
- Diversity is a gift from God. If we reject the gift, we reject the giver.
- The theological underpinning from any training should come from us.

- Another member shared how they had not been deterred when they were the 'only one'.
- The Synod is not representative, we have to build together.
- This is as much an issue for the northern part of the Diocese. There are a number of Minority Ethnic candidates considering their vocations and Essex University is incredibly diverse. There is a need to look at how we ensure that Minority Ethnic clergy feel confident to apply to posts in less ethnically diverse communities.
- You get your theology right when you get your eschatology right. Heaven will be multi-cultural. We need to break down barriers.
- The compositions of the parishes have an impact on how they respond to this issue.
- Historically a great number of Minority Ethnic Anglicans were turned away from the Church and from a spiritual perspective we may gain from reconciliation from this.
- Could the training be online so it is accessible and efficient?

The Archdeacon of Southend was invited to respond to the points made during the debate. She began by stating how humbled she was by the responses. The Unconscious Bias training has been prepared and there is theological input. It would be important to incorporate laity as all ordained ministry begins with lay ministry. All have gifts and we need to discern what they are.

Members voted on the above motion. It was carried with one abstention.

7. BISHOP'S COUNCIL, DIOCESAN MISSION & PASTORAL COMMITTEE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

The reports were noted.

8. MEETING OF THE DBF: See separate minutes

9. BUDGET FOR 2016

The Chair suspended Standing Orders to allow Canon Don Cardy to address the Synod.

Canon Don Cardy made the following points in his presentation:

- Since the 2016 Budget report was delivered to the June Synod it had been circulated across the Diocese. The consultation had focused on budgetary trends over the last ten years. It also highlighted the changes in national funding and the increased direct costs of a stipendiary Vicar (1.9% increase).
- We are grateful to the 36 who responded.
- Clergy members expected to be in post are key to a settled budget. Since the discontinuation of the Sheffield Formula we have been working to the stipendiary numbers plan under Re-imagining Ministry. The Annual vacancy rate is usually around 7% however this year it has been considerably higher. This had been

considered very carefully and it had been decided to propose the reduction of budgeted stipendiary posts next year by 8.

- The reduction in stipendiary posts means that the Deanery Share request will be limited to 0.77%.
- Gross expenditure is budgeted to increase by 1.1%.
- The gap between income and expenditure would be met by reserves.
- Parish share income is critical. Shortfall is becoming less of a concern and this has meant that the shortfall provision can be reduced in the Budget.
- The provisional parish shares had been shared with Deanery Officers and generally had been well received with a few queries.

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders.

The Chair of the DBF moved that:

That this Synod

- a) approve the Diocesan Budget for 2016 and the Deanery Share of £16,227,340; and*
- b) approve the apportionment of the total Deanery Share to deaneries in accordance with the Deanery Share Scheme subject to a ceiling of 2.23% in rises over the average 0.77%, compared with 2015.'*

The following members spoke in the debate:

Revd Helen Gheorghiu Gould (Harlow)
Revd James Rodley (Harlow)

The questions asked were:

- What explains the difference in the figures for lay training in the two presentations in the budget paper? *In response it was noted that one was the net figure, the other was gross. The take up of lay training has had a significant underspend in the past, but if it increases the Budget will respond.*
- If money is taken from reserves what will the level of reserves be? *In response it was noted that the trustees of the Diocese had reviewed the reserves policy and given the stability in share receipts will be still operating within the agree policy. The exact levels would be recorded in the minutes. The exact levels are >>>>>>>*

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

10. PROMULGATION OF AMENDING CANON NO.35 AND ACT OF CONVOCATION GUIDELINES FOR THE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF THE CLERGY

The Chair proclaimed Amending Canons 35 and the Act of Convocation Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy.

11. QUESTIONS

Rosalind Tatum (Waltham Forest) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:

In the light of the 'Green Collar Campaign' on the agenda of the June Diocesan Synod, the July debate at General Synod which agreed the motion:

“this Synod, believing that God's creation is holy, that we are called to protect the earth now and for the future, and that climate change disproportionately affects the world's poorest, and welcoming the convergence of ecumenical partners and faith communities in demanding that the nations of the world urgently seek to limit the global rise in average temperatures to a maximum of 2 °C, as agreed by the United Nations in Cancun: (a) urge all governments at the COP 21 meeting in Paris to agree long term pathways to a low carbon future, supported by meaningful short to medium term national emissions pledges from all major carbon emitting nations”,

and the pilgrims now walking and cycling to Paris in advance of the environmental World Summit, would the Bishop invite Synod to renew its resolve to pray for the COP21 meeting, and to show its support for the leaders and campaigners as they gather?

A

Since the June Synod agreement of endorsing the Green Collar Campaign much has happened.

Archbishop Justin along with senior leaders of the Christian denominations in our country has urged the government and all governments to support and indeed go beyond the commitments sought at the UN Conference on Climate Change in Paris (COP21). Subsequently, Pope Francis has published 'Laudato Si' where he challenges all peoples to live differently for the sake of the gospel and the environment, this had a major impact on world awareness. More recently, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I called for a 'Metanoia', a total change of the heart in regard to how we use and abuse the world we live in.

We know that many parishes in the Diocese have already responded and used the Green Collar campaign at events in their parish to raise awareness of the Christian concerns for the environment, and that many more parishes are planning to do so in the next few days but particularly focusing on Advent Sunday.

It is encouraging to know that the Lead Bishop for the Church of England, Nicholas Holtham Bishop of Salisbury, when canvassing all the dioceses about their response to the Climate Change agenda was really heartened to hear of our Campaign. So much so that he invited me to speak at a Bishops Breakfast at the General Synod on the Campaign.

This and other efforts by the Diocesan Environment Group has meant that Christian Aid South East , the ecumenical partnership in South London, the dioceses of Leicester and Peterborough (and possibly more) have adopted and adapted our

Green Collar campaign to focus on generating support for the Pilgrims and partners making their way to Paris to COP21.

Therefore I am delighted to invite the Synod to pray for the COP21 meeting, and to urge the Diocese to continue its efforts in the next few days but into the year beyond to show the world the love of Christ through its care and concern for each other, especially those on the margins of life, and for the environment in which we live.

Supplementary

Q: Do clergy have the permission from the Bishop to wear the green collar?

A: The Bishop does not need to give permission for clergy to wear the green collar, but the Bishop did give his encouragement to wear it.

Revd Canon David Banting (General Synod) to ask the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary

What lay behind the decision to exclude parish population figures from the Diocesan Directory, and would the Diocesan Office consider plans to re-introduce them in future editions?

A

The population information previously published in the directory was not particularly complete and labour-intensive to include. This data was dropped from the 2015 edition in favour of providing much more comprehensive information on the website through the parish spotlights. These can be found under the parishes tab. The spotlights include population breakdowns by gender, age, religious affiliation, ethnicity, and other data drawn from the census and other sources and are a really useful resource. The spotlights are updated annually by the national church statistics team. The new 2016 directory refers to the parish spotlights on the opening page.

Ron McLernon (Hadleigh Deanery) to ask the Diocesan Bishop

Given the poor return of voting papers in the General Synod and Bishop's Council ballots, is there any way more can be done to encourage a higher return by voters and how is it possible to ensure that electioneering by candidates is on a level playing field?

A

Thank you for highlighting the voter turnout in these recent ballots. The turnouts in the General Synod ballots were 40% and 55% for the laity and clergy respectively and for the ballot for Bishop's Council lay representatives from the Bradwell Area the turnout was 58%. Although these may be viewed as disappointing they are still higher turnouts than other elections such as the local council elections and the London Mayoral elections. Ultimately the decision to vote is that of the voter, however encouraging the electorate to exercise their vote is something which we

would want shared at all levels in the Church of England. At diocesan level great effort was put in to promoting the General Synod elections at various stages. The elections were highlighted numerous times through the diocesan website, twitter, the e-bulletin and the Month. Flyers were prepared nationally and were circulated to Deaneries so that they could be distributed to members of the Deanery Synod. The process for the General Synod elections is on the business agenda of the new General Synod and I'm sure voter participation will be taken into consideration.

In respect of the electioneering by candidates there a very strict rules governing the conduct of the election and these were followed. The presiding officer is required to ensure that, between the issue of nomination papers and the last date for the return of voting papers, no papers or other literature (other than the election addresses despatched to electors by the presiding officer) which, in the opinion of the presiding officer, are likely to prejudice the election, are circulated to electors by the presiding officer or by or under authority of the diocesan synod or any deanery synod, or are distributed at any synod meeting. The area dean, the lay chair and the secretary of the deanery synod are under a similar duty to ensure that during the election period no papers or other literature are circulated or distributed at any synod meeting which, in the opinion of any of them, are likely to prejudice the election. Thus in respect of official communications a level playing field is ensured. However, there is no provision for the activities of a candidate, such as election canvassing or direct mailings to the electorate, to be restricted.

Supplementary

Q. Where are the General Synod results published?

A. The results are published on the Diocesan Website, in the Diocesan Office and in the Diocesan Directory.

Q. Is it possible to introduce electronic voting?

A. This may be considered by General Synod when they come to review the election process.

12. BISHOP'S COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the election to the Bishop's Council were recorded in the day paper and noted by members. There were a number of vacancies. A second round of nominations would soon be sought and members were encouraged to consider standing for election.

The President thanked Revd Canon Martin Wood for his service as Chair of the House of Clergy. The President also paid tribute to Canon Don Cardy, as former Chair of the Budget Committee, and Anthony Nicolle, as former Vice Chair of the DBF.

CLOSE The President closed Synod with his blessing.