

DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Minutes of the 132nd meeting of the Synod held on Saturday 9 November 2013

PRESENT : The President and 150 Members

The Synod began with a time of worship led by the Bishop of Chelmsford. During the opening worship the Rt Revd Trevor Mwamba was licenced as an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese.

1. NOTICES

It was noted that Lodge & Sons had sponsored the refreshments for the meeting. The Chair thanked them for this generosity.

The Barking & Dagenham Deanery Synod motion was being displayed for signatures for the second time.

The Chair introduced the new CMD Adviser for the Colchester Area, Revd Geoff Read.

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD MEETING HELD 15 JUNE 2013

The minutes were approved.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Presidential address can be found on this webpage:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/stephen-cottrell-no-point-in-church-if-we-dont-share-the-gospel>

4. INNOVATIVE USES OF CHURCH BUILDINGS

The Chair suspended standing orders and invited the Very Revd Richard Giles to speak to this item.

Richard Giles presented Synod with a number of examples of how church buildings had been adapted for innovative uses and reordered to better accommodate services and worship. He made the following points in his presentation:

- Church buildings are a reminder of the presence of God in each community, however, too often our churches stand aloof and not much else.

- We come dangerously near worshipping the apostolic life in bricks and mortar. We need to shake the foundations to make our buildings fit for purpose, making the buildings serve us, not us serving them. Many generations have adapted their buildings to make them work for them.
- The buildings provide shelter for us – they are tents not temples. We are people of the journey and our buildings need to enable this.
- When we invite people to church to come and see who we are, is there something to show? Welcome and hospitality are vital, as is the Church being at the service of the community.
- When thinking of the font, we should make it a living symbol with water, not a dead thing hidden away in the corner. As soon as the person enters the building, are they welcomed into a Baptismal space?
- We gather around the Word, not to hear a lecture. It is in this intimate worship that we discover who we are.

Richard Giles then asked Synod members to consider the following questions in small groups:

- Does our church building proclaim or mumble good news?
- What alterations would ‘release the tongue’ of the building to speak more clearly?
- What might we do? – Next Sunday? – Over the next 3 years?

Members were invited make brief comments in response to the presentation and the questions they have discussed. The contributions were as follows:

- Some members highlighted constraints, such as Faculties and the Amenities Societies (e.g. English Heritage and the Victorian Society).
- We need to use opportunities, such as Baptisms, to help people understand what the faith is all about.
- Today’s dream can become tomorrow’s constraint.
- Any adaptations should be part of a strategy.
- One member spoke of his Church’s decision to sell their pews and that this had re-energised the Church.
- Going for quick wins is a good first step to encourage people.
- Church buildings are to be treated as homes; they are the home of the community of faith.
- We need to value the continuity of witness whilst valuing the conformity of proclamation.
- Reordering into a circle could suggest a holy huddle, sideways seating could lead to a crick in the neck.
- We could close off the back pews and bring the congregation to the front.
- We need to cater for the Zacchaeus’s, who want to see, but do not want to be seen yet.
- How can we ask people to contribute to changes during this time of financial constraint?
- We need to bear in mind those with disabilities and hearing difficulties.

- Take the Church to the coffee shop.

Richard Giles responded to some of the main themes emerging from the contributions. Permissions are a constraint on our freedom but the Diocesan Advisory Committee is often clear on the role of educating and opening minds to dream bigger dreams. It is more difficult with national bodies as they see buildings as centres of heritage. We should enter into a dialogue with them. If the building no longer fulfils the purpose then we may need to abandon it. In respect of strategic decisions, this should always be so as we are investing in the future and encouraging the saints. On the comment about disabilities, the first thing to do should be to level the worship space to make it accessible. Finally, we do need to leave some back seats, but the back row should be 6 rows back, not 60.

The Bishop of Chelmsford thanked Richard for his presentation.

The Chair reinstated standing orders and moved the motion that:

‘This Synod commend innovative uses of church buildings for the furtherance of mission’

The motion was carried unanimously.

5. GOOD NEWS STORY: INTRODUCING THE NEW ARCHDEACONS

The new Archdeacons, Ven John Perumbalath, Ven Robin King and Ven Mina Smallman, were introduced to the Synod and shared brief reflections with the Synod.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE AND 2014 BUDGET

The Bishop of Chelmsford began this item by paying tribute to Canon John Spence, who would be standing down as Chair of the DBF at this meeting.

John Spence then introduced the item and handed over to the Chief Executive for a financial update. In his presentation, the Chief Executive covered the following points:

- 2013 had seen a reduction in the stipendiary clergy vacancy rate, which is a good thing, but adds extra pressure on the Diocesan Budget.
- There was a better return on rental incomes and savings on various other costs, including a net saving from Transforming Leadership.
- We were starting to see new income sources, but the parish share shortfall continued to grow.
- On parish share, the vast majority of parishes faithfully meet their requests year on year and the headline figure hides some inspiring stories. There have been no ‘nil paid’ parishes for two years. Work to support parishes which are struggling with their payments continues.

- Parish Share requested (£14m) is less than money spent on ministry (£17m).
- Some highlights from the Budget consultation were that 70% of respondents agree that a 2% increase in budget is reasonable, 60% indicated their finances were more fragile than last year and 80% reported their PCC was engaging with Transforming Presence.
- Concerns around (i) parish share increases beyond 2%, (ii) small and elderly congregations and (iii) dependency on a few large givers were also shared.
- Giving – our giving per member is quite good - £368 per member (national average £323). The Budget Consultation highlighted that giving programmes were working in parishes. Shortfall equivalent was equal to 50p per member per week.
- A deficit budget had been prepared for 2014, which allowed time for 're-imagining ministry' to develop.
- A selection of graphs were shown that projected the state of the Church if recent trends continue. At present the congregations were disproportionately older than the general population and 70% of funding comes from the over 55s age group.

The Chair of the Budget Committee was then introduced to take members through the Budget for 2014. The Budget was based on the same amount of stipendiary numbers as in 2013. Gross expenditure had been increased by 2.1% and Deanery Share contributions were increased by 1.42%. It was a deficit budget where expenditure exceeds income by £300,000, which would be drawn from reserves. This was being proposed to help parishes and in the full confidence that parishes would maintain their share payments.

During his presentation Don Cardy also addressed the question submitted by Jackie Bliss (Southend). The question and answer can be found in the schedule to these minutes.

Members were then invited to ask questions and make comments on the presentations they had heard. The following members spoke and the responses from Don Cardy are included where relevant:

Revd Vernon Ross (Epping Forest and Ongar)
 Revd Tim Goodbody (Dunmow & Stansted)
 Revd Brian Surtees (Harlow)
 Bishop of Bradwell

- Would you ever consider presenting an alternative during the consultation? The consultation is not about alternatives, but seeing how people are coping and providing an opportunity for feedback.
- Given that many members have not seen a salary increase, can we really ask for more? The National Church increase of stipends was 2% and if we are not careful we may fall out of step with other Dioceses.
- Could you express the consultation in the form of a percentage and how can this be improved? As a percentage, the response was about

20% of the total sent out and would cover between 30% - 40% of parishes. The level of response has been much improved in recent years.

- We need to value understanding each other and communications, when the rubber hits the road we should maintain our dignity.
- We are well served by the Diocesan Office and the Finance Committee. However, there is a danger when being confident we can obviate our responsibilities. What we've seen is challenging, how can we share in this responsibility which sometimes is only shared by the few?

Canon Dr John Spence moved the motion:

'This Synod:

- a) approve the Diocesan Budget for 2014 and the Deanery Share of £15,855,111; and
- b) approve the apportionment of the total Deanery Share to deaneries in accordance with the Deanery Share Scheme subject to a ceiling of 1.58% in rises over the average 1.42%, compared with 2013.'

The motion was carried with an overwhelming majority. There were two abstentions.

7. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE DBF See separate minutes.

8. ST MARKS' COLLEGE (<http://www.stmarkscollege.co.uk/>)

The Director of St Marks' College, Revd Pete Hillman, gave a presentation on the progress at the youth residential centre. Much work had been done over the last few years to refurbish and to expand the provision at the centre. 2014 marked the 20th anniversary of St Marks' being a youth residential centre and an appeal was being launched for further works. Many events were planned over the course of the year to help with this. Ways in which people could support this work included joining the 'Fellowship of the Lion', sharing expertise and an opportunity to adopt a room.

9. 2014 DEANERY SYNOD ELECTION FORMULA

The next Deanery Synod elections are due to take place in 2014 and the Synod was asked to approve the formula which determines the number of lay representatives each parish has on their Deanery Synod.

The Chair moved the motion that:

'This Synod approve the election formula, as set out in paper DS(13)9, for use in the 2014 Deanery Synod Elections'

The motion was carried with an overwhelming majority. There were two abstentions.

The item also asked members to approve the principle of initiatives which had been granted Bishop's Mission Orders having lay representation on Deanery Synods. The Chair moved the motion that:

'This Synod:

- a) approve, in principle, the lay representation of initiatives with Bishop's Mission Orders on Deanery Synods, and
- b) request that the Deanery Synods of Colchester and Havering co-opt lay representatives of the Bishop's Mission Orders in their respective Deaneries until such time as the formal schemes are approved under Church Representation Rule 27A.'

Diana Bengé Abbott (Colchester) requested that some thought be given to how Diocesan wide BMOs would be provided for.

The motion was carried with an overwhelming majority. There were two abstentions.

10. INTRODUCTION OF HARASSMENT ADVISERS

The President reminded members that in November 2012 they had approved the Bullying and Harassment Policy, Getting On Together. He thanked Revd Canon Jenny Tomlinson for her work in coordinating the policy and the establishment of the Harassment Advisers.

The Harassment Advisers were Revd Canon Hugh Beavan, Revd Canon Carla Hampton, Judith Hasler, Heather Housden, Revd Tim Coleman, Roger Ennals and Revd Canon David Tomlinson

Five of the Advisers were present. The President commissioned them and led Synod in prayer for their work.

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

The reports were received.

12. CHURCH SCHOOLS

The Chair suspended standing orders and invited the Director of Education, Revd Tim Elbourne, to speak to this item. In his presentation, he made the following points:

- Ministry in all schools is important, but this item is focused on church schools, for which the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) has a particular responsibility.
- Church schools provide a context where we can talk about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. 30% (28,000) of children in the Diocese are entrusted to church schools. These are replenishing communities.

- The landscape is always changing and we have a stake in it for only as long as we can justify it. If our name is above the school we will be held to account for it.
- Local Authorities had shifted from providers, to commissioners.
- The DBE is introducing a programme called 'What is Learning?' and improving resources for teaching RE.
- Two Multi Academy Trusts had been set up, The Sower and The Vine, and we are establishing credibility as sponsors of schools. Our role is to encourage the strong to support the weak.
- We cannot be satisfied until all church schools are considered at least 'good'.
- There was a call for action for the DBE to work with others to focus on vocations.
- Church schools belong to the parishes and therefore a dedicated e-bulletin and mini-website have been established to resource people in the parishes.
- Parochial clergy spend considerable time in church schools and therefore training for clergy is important. We are seeking to strengthen this training.
- When they leave school, each child will have engaged in around a 1000 acts of worships, isn't this just as valuable as Sunday worship.
- We need to be successful not only in OFSTED, but also in kingdom values. Serving with accountability is not easy.

Members were given the opportunity to comment and ask questions on the presentation and the paper which had been circulated with the agenda. The following members spoke and their contributions, along with any responses, are listed below:

Revd Quintin Peppiatt (Newham)
 Archdeacon of West Ham
 Colin Setchfield (Waltham Forest)
 Bishop of Barking
 Revd Vernon Ross (Epping Forest & Ongar)
 Revd Ian Jorysz (Brentwood)

- How do church schools serve the whole community? The Director responded by pointing out that church schools were established with the specific aim of serving the poor. In many areas where there is a church school there are no people who could be considered poor. We have a large number of schools in rural, affluent areas and very few in the London Boroughs. This is mainly a product of history.
- We are in an era of rapid change and a lot of work has been done by a lot of people. Have we really grasped the change?
- Work in parish churches is very important, but so is work done by school teachers, youth workers, chaplains and others.
- Wouldn't the DBE be better served by a new name? The Director welcomed the call to look at the public face of the DBE.

- There are critics of church schools within the Church and there appear to be two things missing. Firstly, that there are large numbers of schools beyond the scope of this discussion and, secondly, why church schools?
- One member welcomed the work done by youth advisers and youth workers and welcomed seeing schools as part of the wider vision of the Church.
- At the heart of this proposal is mission. Church schools were set up to serve the whole community and we must keep remembering this.
- We have so much to gain from schools. A member shared an example of where a school in their parish has achieved 'outstanding' from OFSTED and a major part of this has been its worship.

The debate was drawn to a close. The Chair reinstated standing orders and the Chair of the DBE, the Bishop of Bradwell, moved that:

'This Synod:

- a) instruct the DBE to work closely with other bodies in the Diocese, including the Board for Mission and Ministry and Youth Advisory Group in order further to integrate our mission alongside schools, children and young people into our common life of 'transforming presence'.
- b) affirm the work of the DBE in responding to these challenges and its programme for all Church schools to be involved in a special Centenary programme around the theme of 'Belonging together in Christ'
- c) note the recent publication of 'The DBE of the Future' by the National Society and other national initiatives following the publication of the 'Church School of the Future' in 2012. It commends them for action by the Diocesan Boards of Education and Finance and other bodies.'

The motion was overwhelmingly carried. There was one abstention.

13. EPISCOPAL MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD

The President spoke to this item. He began by thanking members for their contributions to the debate at the last Synod. He also thanked the Rt Revd David Hawkins for his service as Bishop of Barking.

We had arrived at the point where we can appoint new Bishops of Colchester and Barking in 2014 and this required the support, in principle, of the Synod. We have made the Archdeaconry a crucial level for ministry, but this needs to bed down and allow time for reflection. The President added that section d of the first motion proposed, as shown on the agenda, should be deleted. He then moved the amended motion that:

‘This Synod wish to:

- a) thank the Rt Revd David Hawkins for his faithful service to the Diocese of Chelmsford and wish him and Carole well in their retirement;
- b) support in principle the appointment of a new Bishop of Barking;
- c) ask the Bishop of Chelmsford to appoint an Advisory Group to work with him and the Bishop’s Council in taking the appointment forward.’

and that:

‘This Synod note the draft statement of case on Episcopal Ministry and the role specification for the Area Bishops in the Diocese of Chelmsford and ask the Bishop of Chelmsford to commence the appointment processes.’

There was no debate on either motion. Both motions were put to a vote. Both motions were passed unanimously.

14. QUESTIONS

The text of the Questions asked and the responses are included in a Schedule attached to the Minutes. This is for ease of reference only and the Questions still form part of the official Minutes of the Synod meeting.

CLOSE The Bishop of Chelmsford dismissed Synod with his blessing.

SCHEDULE

Q.1 Jackie Bliss (Southend) to ask the Chair of the Budget Committee:

Paragraph 13 of Synod Paper DS(13)8, on the agenda for the meeting on 9th November (Budget Report 2014), states: "Whilst the average increase [in deanery share] will be 1.42% we recognise that most deaneries will have increases different from this. Some will be larger and some smaller...". If we look at the actual proposed apportionment to deaneries for 2014 that has been circulated to deanery treasurers, the average of the deanery increases showing on that sheet is actually 1.9%, and the median increase to deaneries works out at 3.0%. IE: 16 of the 25 deaneries are showing increases above the 1.42% quoted in the Synod paper, with 13 of these being 3.0% and another being 2.8%. (The average is so much lower than this due to four deaneries being given decreases rather than increases in their shares.) Given that deanery representatives on diocesan synod are accountable to our parishes on the decisions we make on their behalf, it may come as a surprise to synod members who think they are approving a 1.42% rise in deanery share to subsequently find (and have to explain to their deanery synods) that for the majority of deaneries, their increase will be more than double this figure. Would it not be more transparent to provide diocesan synod representatives with the schedule that has been circulated to deanery treasurers, which shows the actual proposed increase for each deanery rather than the theoretical average, so that synod can vote on a more informed basis?

A.

With a weighted average increase of 1.42% for 2014, the graph shows the pattern across the 25 Deaneries which existed last month. Those Deaneries with a capped increase of 3.0% are those where there has been no change in stipendiary post in the last couple of year, maybe even an increase. Thus with an increase of 1.6% in the direct cost of providing an incumbent in 2014, and with a larger proportion of posts being filled, actual ministry costs increase by around 3%. Those Deaneries with small share increases, or even decreases, are those where the number of stipendiary posts has reduced in the last couple of years.

Q.2 Christine Cox (Harlow) to ask the Bishop of Bradwell:

Periods of vacancy between parochial clergy appointments can and should be a rich time of evaluation and preparation for mission. Parishes in vacancy may need support in implementing the Transforming Presence agenda. Can synod be informed of any planned or existing provision of support such as self-completing material designed to help parishes evaluate their current strengths and engage with new opportunities for evangelism and mission? If provided across the Diocese such resources could aid the alignment of selection procedures to the Transforming Presence vision.

A.

Traditionally periods of vacancy were regarded as fallow times in the life of a parish with little able to change or develop until the incumbent was installed ready to lead his people forward in a new direction. 'Transforming Presence' challenges this model of ministry and relationship between incumbent and parish. Vacancies are often times of significant change with a growth in local ministry and lay leadership.

There is currently no Diocesan wide material as described, although in each Area support is given through people such as the Archdeacon and Mission and Ministry Adviser to help parishes in audits, self-evaluation and determining of priorities for mission. There are a variety of resources that can be drawn on to facilitate this process available nationally. With establishment of the new Archdeaconries we are better placed to support parishes in these processes.

Parishes often feel vulnerable and insecure in periods of vacancy. That hinders the ability to respond to change with creativity and energy. Much is therefore also to be gained in supporting parishes through transition in the period before a vacancy where this is known some time in advance. The greatest gift an incumbent may be offer to a parish is the manner of his or her leaving in preparing them not simply for a period of vacancy but in engaging with them in the reimagining of ministry to which we are challenged in 'Transforming Presence'.

Q.3 Revd Paul Wilkin (Dunmow & Stansted) to ask the Bishop of Chelmsford:

In view of the extreme difficulty that retiring clergy are enduring as they seek to find suitable housing for their retirement:

- Is the relationship between the Church Commissioners and Sanctuary known within the diocese, and are the forthcoming increases in rent understood?
- Surely the diocese cannot be content that after a lifetime of service our brothers and sisters are finding there is no communication or support at such a crucial time?

A.

It is fortuitous that this question has been asked as the Diocese shares the concern of those who have raised this issue.

There has been a consultation process taking place with regard to the CHARM scheme in which the diocese has given a response. At the same time the Archdeacon of Chelmsford, who has been supporting some clergy in that Archdeaconry, has initiated a meeting with the Pensions Board to discuss the process of the CHARM scheme and also the individual cases where there has been some concern. That meeting will take place shortly.

As one of the largest dioceses in the Church of England we are very keen to ensure that there is a good service provided and that clergy can retire with housing provision when they are ready.

As the CHARM scheme has to form a part of the Diocesan Budget we are very keen to ensure better value and will do all that we can to achieve this.

Supplementary question

Q. What is the CHARM Scheme?

A. This is the provision for equity housing for retired clergy operated by the Church Commissioners.

Q.4 Ruth Whitworth (General Synod) to ask the Chief Executive & Diocesan Secretary:

What independent checks have been put in place to ensure that the solar panel installations on parsonage houses and other diocesan properties have been, and will be, completed to industry (MCS) standards?

How will clergy and others, whose houses have not been deemed suitable for solar panels, be compensated for their lack of free electricity, so that the benefits of the diocesan solar programme are shared as equitably as possible?

A.

The diocesan contractor, Engenera, is an MCS installer. To achieve MCS accreditation for PV the person applying must be a certified electrician. The PV install is therefore self-regulatory similar to electrical and gas installs. Our project advisers are randomly sampling the installations. Additionally should any issue arise post install which is discovered to be non-compliant with MCS standards then this will be reported to MCS along with the individual's name which is available on the MCS certificate within each handover pack. To date, an issue has been found at only 1 of over a hundred completed installations, and this has been taken up with the contractor at the highest levels.

It is simply a fact that parsonages are different: different ages, different constructions, different sizes, different heating sources and now some are capable of taking solar panels and others do not.

The key benefit of the solar project however is the income stream it provides from the Stipends Fund. Stipends fund income is shared across the diocese as ministry grant within the share system.

A secondary benefit of the project is that it is giving us an enormous amount of data on the energy performance of the estate. This is data which can start to feed into the clergy housing improvement programme.

Supplementary question

- Q.** Is there a programme for those parsonages identified as not suitable for the installation of solar panels to get up to standard?
- A.** Where it is possible to improve the parsonage via the Clergy Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP) it would make good sense to do so. The data from the installation process will be analysed and considered as part of the next CHIP.