

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

There will be a meeting of the Diocesan Synod at Chelmsford Cathedral
starting at 10 am Saturday 21 March 2026

AGENDA

Timings

09:30

WELCOME, REGISTRATION AND COFFEE

10:00

OPENING WORSHIP led by Canon Caroline Harding

1. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2025
Minutes of the previous meeting attached

2. NOTICES

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

4. CATHEDRAL VISION
Paper DS(2026)01 attached

5. 2025 DRAFT OUTTURN AND OUTLINE OF 2027 BUDGET & SHARE SCHEME
Paper DS(2026)02 attached

That this Synod

- a) *Note the draft financial outturn for 2025, the update on 2026 finances and the proposed approach for setting the budget for 2027, which will be presented for approval to Synod in June.*
- b) *Approve the amendment to the Parish Share formula by adopting proposal 2 as set out in paper DS(2026)02.*

11.25

COFFEE BREAK

6. OFFICIAL WARNING BY CHARITY COMMISSION: UPDATE

7. QUESTIONS see notes for details

8. DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL: ANNUAL REPORT
Paper DS(2026)03 attached

9. SCHEMES FOR DEANERY SYNOD LAY REPRESENTATION OF BMOS

Paper DS(2026)04 attached

'That this Synod approve the draft Schemes to provide lay representation on a Deanery Synod for the Bishop's Mission Orders known as:

- a) Christchurch Three Mills, and*
- b) Crossway.'*

10. GENERAL SYNOD REPORT

Paper DS(2026)05 attached

11. BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Paper DS(2026)06 attached

12. AMENDING CANON NO 44

Paper DS(2026)07 attached

13:20

CLOSE AND LUNCH

NOTES

Questions: In accordance with Standing Order 29 five days prior notice is required. Questions must be received no later than 9am on Monday 16 March 2026 either in hard copy at the Diocesan Office or by email to nwhitehead@chelmsford.anglican.org

Here are some points to remember if you want to submit a question:

- Questions are an opportunity to seek information from;
 - any officer of the Synod
 - senior member of Diocesan staff
 - the President of Synod
 - the Chair of any body constituted by the Synod or on which it is represented.
- Questions must relate to the duties assigned to those listed above.
- Questions must not ask for an expression of opinion or for the solution of an abstract legal question or a hypothetical problem.
- A member may ask up to **two** original questions at one meeting.
- Any member may ask a supplementary question in relation to the original question and the Chair may allow up to three supplementary questions, giving the member who tabled the original question preference.
- Questions for written answer are possible. Answers will be given to the questioner within 24 days of the Synod and will be reported in the Minutes.

Speeches – members are requested to announce their name and deanery before they address Synod.

Please forward apologies to Nathan Whitehead tel. no. 01245 294412 or
nwhitehead@chelmsford.anglican.org

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of the 165th meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 22 November 2025 at Chelmsford Cathedral.**

PRESENT : The President and 92 Members

Opening worship was led by the Bradwell Area Team.

1. MEETING OF HOUSE OF LAITY

See separate minutes.

2. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD HELD ON 21 JUNE 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. NOTICES

The Chair highlighted the notices on the day paper. He highlighted the formal amendment which had been put forward to the motion under item 6. There was also an extended note from the Diocesan Environment Officer.

4. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Bishop of Chelmsford delivered her Presidential Address. The text and video of the Address can be found here:

[Diocesan Synod, November 2025 - Presidential Address | The Diocese of Chelmsford](#)

5. SUSTAINING MINISTRY

The Chair invited the Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education, the Archdeacons of Colchester and Stansted and the Dean of Chelmsford to lead this item.

The Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education began by thanking the President for touching upon this in the presidential address. He explained to members that he and a small group of others had been working on this since the initial presentation of the paper at the previous Synod meeting. He went on to make the following points:

- Sustaining Ministry is to be rooted in Travelling Well Together. In this complex diocese we have committed not to tell people how things should be, but to listen and to engage in complexity. We need to think about who God is calling us to be in the communities we serve?
- We face a number of challenges but prayerfully seek assurance in what we do not see in terms of answers. There are various strands of conversation ongoing such as parish share, building support and missional investment.

- We need to also root Sustaining Ministry in a life of change, one which brings about change in our lives and one which is also a process of shared discernment where we can see changes taking on around us and in us, looking to our future together.
- 100 days of prayer, 100 days of listening, who God is calling us to be. Not a whole new consultation process, build on work already done. Many people as possible opportunity to comment.

The Archdeacon of Stansted then shared some reflections about change and the encounter on the road to Emmaus. It is a story about two people who chose their journey and their destination. They talked about deep things like the Crucifixion and we hope we will ponder, talk, discuss and challenge. Another reason why the reading is pertinent is because there are only two people and this fits with the valuing of the small. We hope for honest engagement and mature conversation. We need to be open to God in intentional and deeply surprising ways.

Members were asked to reflect on the following question in small groups:

How do you in your parish and deanery context understand change from the perspective of scripture?

After some time for discussion members were given the opportunity to feedback. The following comments were captured:

- We need an openness to transformation. Any encounter does this and it is the Gospel way forward.
- How do we understand change, there is a difference between the church and secular world. The Church has been here a long time, long before others. We must be conscious that people are with us and that God is with us.
- Scripture was not written in English and when we read in translation, we are reading someone's interpretation.
- There is a difference between listening and hearing. God's word is formative and transformative and we need to be hearing what God is saying.
- Change brings instance suspicion. What is a Godly change and what is a human change? In the context of sustaining ministry, we need sacrifice. Sustaining, in the sense of keeping where we are, might not be the most helpful phrase to use.
- Change is not always positive and moving away from what God wants is not always good.

The Archdeacon of Colchester and the Dean of Chelmsford then offered some thoughts around resourcing this conversation, in particular asking what resources may be helpful to provide for Lent 2026. Going back to the Emmaus Road, the theme on Sunday reflection has both wilderness and reflection. The people are lost and think Jesus is dead.

We all testify to the power of prayer in our lives. We name our greatest fears and deepest hopes. We will need a lot of discernment. We also know that corporately prayer brings us together in shared focus. Together we can give thanks and voice for the hope we have. On visits to link dioceses in Kenya, the Archdeacon of Colchester explained she had been struck by the connection they have with us through prayer. Prayer deepens connections and

prepares us for ongoing change. We learnt through the parish support conversation is that there are plenty of resource around but we have to make the connections work well.

Members were asked what resources they would find helpful to receive to participate in 100 Days of Prayer as an act of prayerful discernment, and where from as well as what resources they could share?

After a time of small group discussion, the following pieces of feedback were received:

- Coventry Cathedral pray a reconciliatory prayer every day and perhaps one simple prayer which we can all commit to every day will assist.
- There should be a flexibility in approaches so as to fit into existing patterns of prayer. Deanery wide prayer was one idea which could involve online elements and quiet days etc.
- Specificity in prayer can be helpful. In 2 Chronicles people pray as they have no power to face a vast army. An idea offered would be to list things which are problematic.
- There is potential for networking, but whatever it is, it needs to come out fast because planning for Lent is already happening.
- Something similar to the Thy Kingdom Come resources.
- Video based resources could be offered to connect with people who don't necessarily access written resources.
- Recognising there are different ways to pray a variety of resources should be offered. We also need to consider what ministry is for? We need some direction on this and what the issue is as this makes a difference.

The Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education thanked members for their contributions throughout the item. The purpose of Sustaining Ministry is to resource a conversation. We will encourage people to take up the invitation to pray in the contexts they serve. This is a process of discerning who God is calling us to be and how. Members were encouraged to keep an eye on social media and emails for more information.

6. HARWICH DEANERY SYNOD MOTION

The Chair explained that there was a typographical error in the amendment which had been submitted. The word 'this' in section 1 of the text should be 'their'.

With that point clarified the chair invited the Revd John Saxon, Area Dean of Harwich, to speak to the motion. He explained the following points:

- The motion had been brought to Harwich Deanery Synod in 2024 out of concern of increasing financial pressure and the subsequent impact on clergy numbers. The same motion has been passed in many deaneries and dioceses. It was considered by General Synod and was passed in a substantially amended form which did not call for a direct redistribution but for a fairer distribution, particularly in deprived parts of the county.
- Harwich Deanery Synod had considered whether they wished to carry on and they overwhelmingly supported continuing. It was recognised that it may not be considered by General Synod in that form again, but the deanery do want to emphasise the need.
- In the spirit of that which was agreed by General Synod we agreed a better process and improved stakeholder engagement.

- The Deanery were glad for the amendment proposed by Canon Robert Hammond.
- It is hoped that members will canvas their deaneries so that we can all best represent the needs of our parishes.

The Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary was then invited to continue the presentation and covered the following additional points:

- The link to the youtube video of the proceedings at General Synod was in the paper it was recommended that members watch it if they had not already.
- The diocesan finance review showed that the collective diocesan deficit is expect to be £60m and will increase.
- The increase in stipends was welcomed, but it does increase financial demand.
- There is more combining of parishes and impact on morale and vocations.
- Fundamentally this is about how the growth in the endowment is spent.
- As a diocese we are grateful for the support we are given on LInC, as well as from the Diocesan Investment Programme for the Barking Area as well as, hopefully for Bradwell and Colchester.
- The main point of disagreement is whether we have the balance right between the inherited church and new initiatives. There is also a difference of opinion around who decides.
- The motion expresses our views and the formal amendment will assist us in not being procedurally embarrassed.

The Revd John Saxon moved the motion:

That this Synod:

(i) call upon the Church Commissioners and Archbishops Council to undertake everything necessary to effect a redistribution of financial resources directly to Diocesan Stipend Funds to reflect the value of contributions made by Diocesan Boards of Finance to the Church of England Funded Pension Scheme since it was established by the settlement of 1997 (£2.6 billion); and

(ii) call upon Diocesan Boards of Finance to manage the funds redistributed as a result of the above to support parish ministry in the ways discerned locally to be most effective in enabling growth and sustaining the Church of England's commitment to be a Christian presence in every community

The Chair then invited Canon Robert Hammond to speak to his proposed amendment. He began by expressing his gratitude to Harwich Deanery for pursuing this debate. He then made the following comments:

- He chairs the Business Committee of General Synod which decides what is on the General Synod agenda. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since the Deanery first passed the motion.
- The debate at General Synod not felt satisfactory enough by some and the Bishop of Sheffield moved an amendment to the motion early in the debate.
- Where does this leave us? There won't be any action following this debate and General Synod won't need to take notice of us.
- The amendment offered is a procedural one. It asks officers and current and future General Synod representatives to represent our views nationally. It gives us some agency and will encourage other motions to come forward in the future.

- It is hoped that this is seen as a friendly amendment and it was encouraging to hear Harwich Deanery supported of it.
- People may be happy with the current distribution, but there are a number of questions about it. It is a debate we need to have and we need to take an informed view in doing that.

Canon Robert Hammond moved the altered amendment:

Delete everything after 'That this Synod' and replace with:

1. *Thank Harwich Deanery for bringing their motion to Chelmsford Diocesan Synod;*
2. *Note that a motion was passed in identical terms by a number of Diocesan Synods (Hereford, Gloucester, Coventry, Bath & Wells, Blackburn, Chichester and Lincoln);*
3. *Note that Hereford Diocese brought the motion to the July 2025 group of General Synod sessions for debate and that following an amendment by the Bishop of Sheffield, an amended motion (set out below) was passed by 361 in favour and 7 against;*
4. *Request Chelmsford Diocesan Officers and General Synod representatives to play a full part in the stakeholder engagement called for under paragraph (c) of the General Synod motion for future Funding Frameworks, reflecting the views of this Synod on National Funding Issues;*
5. *Requests the Chelmsford General Synod members to be elected in the Autumn of 2026 to engage fully with the General Synod debates requested by paragraph (d) early in the next funding triennium and to represent the continued views of this Synod.*

Text of Hereford Redistribution of Funds motion, as amended by Bishop of Sheffield, which was passed by General Synod on Saturday 12 July 2025.

'That this Synod, noting the precarious financial position of many dioceses, concerns about the approach to national funding, and the challenges of sustaining stipendiary ministry in dioceses:

- a) recognise the successful management of the Church's historic endowment over many years by the Church Commissioners, and the resulting significant uplift in recent triennia in distributions, and calls upon the Church Commissioners to continue to make available the maximum sustainable level of distributions in support of parishes and the work of clergy and other ministers;*
- b) welcome the greater level of stakeholder engagement which informed the spending plans for 2026-28, including the commitment to address concerns about clergy welfare through increasing clergy stipends and a range of other measures, and the commitment to increase funding for ministry in the most deprived communities;*
- c) call upon the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners to continue that engagement from now on, including ensuring Synod has a more formal role in the development of the future Funding Framework at a formative stage, as proposed in the draft National Church Governance Measure; and*
- d) call upon the Business Committee of the General Synod to schedule early in the next triennium a full debate that will enable Synod to express its view on the approach to disbursing funding, including support for local stipendiary ministry. This should be based on robust financial modelling to avoid unintended consequences and to inform the development of the Funding Framework.'*

The Chair then opened the debate on the amendment. The following members spoke in the debate:

Revd Canon Nick Rowan (Rochford)
Richard Brown (General Synod and Southend)
Bishop of Chelmsford
Archdeacon of Southend
William Lees (Hinckford)
Mary Durlacher (General Synod and Colchester)
Jeffrey Mushens (Bishop's Nomination and Chair of CDBF)

The points made in the debate were as follows:

- The motion may cause a stress for some and may not behave within structures, but we do need to send a warning sign. We need money to support parishes and parish priests. Many are trying as hard as they can, but we are nowhere near where we need to be. Even larger parishes have a demographic timebomb which will hit them. The parish share scheme in this diocese is fair and there is no hidden pot of money in the diocese which can save us. There are no sensible central cuts that can be made. The only conclusion must be that we need national support. Despite the motion General Synod passed, parishes continue to have less with the national church having more. If we do pass this amendment, we will just be talking to ourselves.
- It was felt that clause 5 of the amendment mandates General Synod members to represent the views of Diocesan Synod. General Synod members are not elected by the Diocesan Synod, so there is a conflict here and the amendment introduces aspects which are beyond the power of Synod.
- A letter had been sent to the Chair of the Business Committee to express dissatisfaction about the debate at General Synod. It will not do us any favours to vote for the original motion and it is best to engage with stakeholders. Approving this does not mean we cannot come back again and return to the original motion. Regardless of finances it doesn't matter how much money we have, unless we increase vocations it will make little difference to the numbers of stipendiary clergy numbers.
- The debate going through General Synod is about balance and it is at the diocesan level where the pinch is felt and this in turn is impacting on parishes. We risk the motion not being heard if not amended. The debate at General Synod was indeed flawed as there were not enough options considered but we are where we are and this is our best option.
- We need a clear debate so that we can share our views upward.
- The last part of the amendment creates difficulty. We are accountable to God and the Gospel. Those who have elected expect us to do that. The voice of Chelmsford will never not be heard. We need to take away the negative connotation that people who don't sign up to diocesan initiatives are penalised and parishes who do not pay share will not receive curates. We do not want to withhold.
- General Synod and the Church Commissioners are too remote from the parishes and power needs to be devolved.

The Chair invited members to vote on the amendment. The amendment was carried.

The Chair then invited members to speak in a debate on the amended motion.

There were no one member who wanted to speak in the debate and therefore the Chair invited the Revd John Saxon to respond. He expressed sympathy for views that the motion

should not have been amended and pointed out that in teaching we are always challenging people. It is hoped that the amendment means we can take this forward and keep the matter at the forefront of our thinking. He also stated his hope that members will engage with their deaneries and parishes to bring collective wisdom.

The Chair invited people to vote on the amended motion. The motion was carried.

7. QUESTIONS

Before answers to formal questions were delivered the Chair announced that she was limiting supplementary questions to two per question with the first one being offered to original questioner. Members were also reminded that supplementary questions must be relevant to the original.

Q1. Revd Neil Dalley (Southend Deanery) to ask the Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education:

Please can the figures for new ordinands in the Diocese of Chelmsford (i.e. those who are accepted during that year to go forward for training) for each year for the past ten years be shared with Diocesan Synod as these figures by diocese are not released by the national Ministry Development Team?

A.

Figures for new ordinands in the Diocese of Chelmsford entering training from 2015 to 2025:

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total	35	38	22	28	22	33	13	18	27	12	11

Supplementary question

Q. Could Synod receive an annual report on vocations?

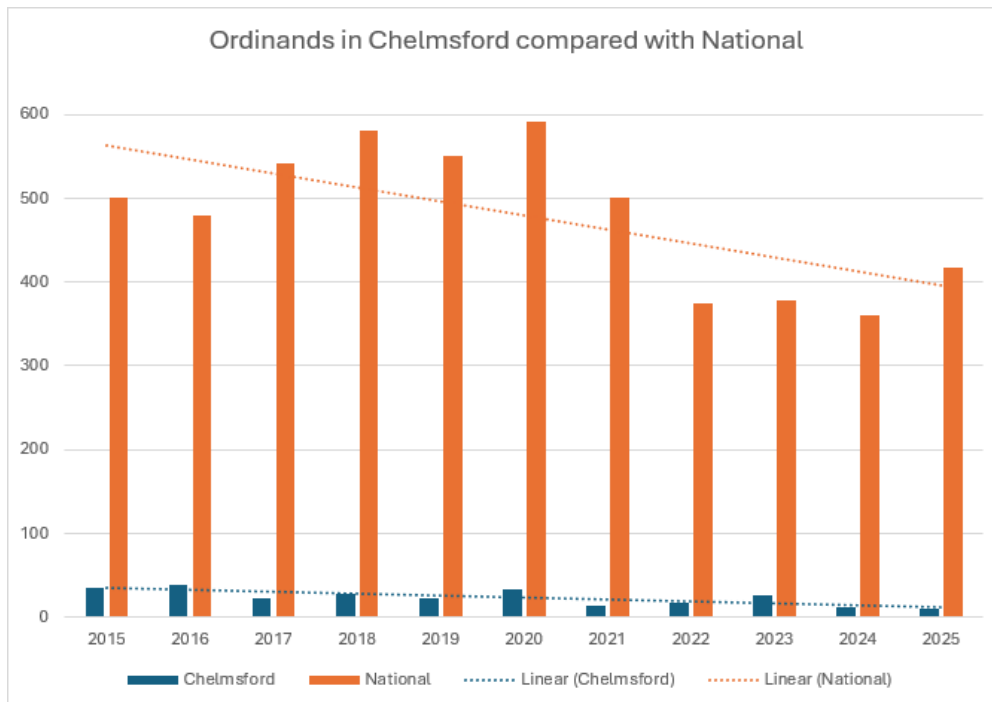
A. The Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education confirmed that this could happen and he would consider when the most appropriate time to present it would be.

Q2. Revd Neil Dalley (Southend Deanery) to ask the Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education:

How do the figures for new ordinands in the Diocese for the past ten years compare with the trends in national figures for each year as evidenced by the annual figures released by the Ministry Development Team?

A.

The following graph compares the number of new ordinands for the Diocese of Chelmsford with the national figure for the Church of England by year from 2015-2025. Over the ten-year period 2015-2025 the trend lines show the national rate of decline for the Church of England is steeper than the Diocese of Chelmsford.



Q3. Revd Brenda Wallace (General Synod) to ask the Diocesan Registrar:

Following the move out of the diocese of the Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale in July, when will the election to fill the vacancy for a General Synod House of Clergy member to take place?

A.

Under paragraph 9 of Canon H2, the default position is that, where a casual vacancy occurs less than twelve months before an ordinary (i.e. quinquennial) General Synod election, the vacancy is not to be filled. However, it is open to the clerical members of the Bishop’s Council to direct that the vacancy should be filled, and so to require an election.

The clerical members of the Bishop’s Council have been invited to express their views on the matter, and a decision will be made within the next week.

If an election were to be required, it would normally be expected to take 3½ - 4 months for the entire process to be fully completed and might be expected to run between January and April. The precise dates would be set by the Presiding Officer (the Registrar) in consultation with the Diocesan Electoral Registration Officer (the Head of Service Delivery) and Civica (who are responsible for the online elections portal).

Supplementary question

Q. It was understood that the vacancy fell outside of the 12-month period, is that not correct?

A. It was confirmed that that understanding was not correct.

Q4. Revd Brenda Wallace (General Synod) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Given the hurt that has been caused by the effective halting of the LLF process by the House of Bishops, has the Bishop's Council considered how greater support for, and inclusion of, LGBTQIA+ people be achieved in the life of the Diocese?

A.

Bishop's Council has not specifically discussed how we might offer greater support for, and inclusion of, LGBTQIA+ people, though I'm happy to invite the Standing Committee to consider whether or not this might be brought as a future agenda item. More widely in the Diocese, since being Bishop of Chelmsford, I've met personally, on several occasions, with a number of LGBT+ clergy and lay people and will do so again next month, to listen carefully and to gauge what further support might be helpful and possible. We also have a Bishop's Advisor for Relationships, Identity and Sexuality, Revd Piers Northam, with whom I meet a couple of times a year and who attends the Bishop's Leadership Team once a year. During these meetings we have open conversations and seek appropriate advice from Piers. I'm also pleased to say that we have a number of LGBT+ clergy and lay leaders in the Diocese who contribute to our shared life, who are greatly valued and for whom I'm very grateful.

Q5. Revd Jude Bullock (Waltham Forest) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Given Canon B5.2 &3, can the Bishop clarify that, while as yet there is no authorised standalone service of prayers of love and faith, no minister would be breaking their vow of obedience by celebrating a standalone service of Prayers of love and faith?

A.

The framework within which ministry is exercised, including the liturgical life of the church, is broader than the Oath of Canonical Obedience. Whilst Canon B5 affords clergy a limited degree of discretion in the use of forms of service, that discretion is subject to the relevant Canonical requirements. As the question notes, no 'standalone' or 'bespoke' forms of service incorporating the Prayers of Love and Faith have yet been authorized or, indeed, commended by the House of Bishops.

It is anticipated that in December the House of Bishops will, following further reflection on the theological and legal advice received, (a) confirm that the Prayers of Love and Faith, for use in regularly scheduled services, remain commended by the House of Bishops as being suitable for use by ministers in exercise of their discretion under Canon B5; and (b) agree that bespoke services require maximum communal authorisation through the Canon B2 process of approval prior to their use.

Q6. Katia D'Arcy Cumber (General Synod and Thurrock) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

When conservative church ministers across the Church of England are writing to their congregations indicating that they fear pressure from inclusive bishops and need protection,

despite clearly stated pastoral assurance being included at every stage of the LLF process, what is being done to reassure those progressives who are actually those facing restrictions imposed under the current rules?

A.

Can I refer you to the answer given to Q4 in terms of support for LGBT+ people. In addition, let me repeat what I have already said on a number of occasions - that the assurances offered by the House of Bishops go both to those clergy and PCCs who choose to use the Prayers of Love and Faith within the context of scheduled services, and to those who choose not to. As a Bishop's Leadership Team, regardless of our own individual views, we are committed to supporting churches whatever their views on this matter.

Q7. Katia D'Arcy Cumber (General Synod and Thurrock) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

Prior to the House of Bishops' meeting in October, the Church of England Evangelical Council had planned a stepped up 'national day of action' concerning LLF on December 1st. Has the CEEC indicated to the Diocese whether this will go ahead?

A.

Before answering I would just like to correct a point of fact in Kat's question. This is that the day of action was called by The Alliance, not the CEEC as suggested. I have not received any communication from any organisation regarding this event in recent weeks and months.

Q8. Gill Ball (General Synod and Chelmsford) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

The House of Bishops' press release on Living in Love and Faith in October stated that legislation to permit clergy to be in a same sex civil marriage would require a formal legislative process. Is the Bishop able to outline the likely timescale for such legislation beginning?

A.

I have no information about likely time scale in relation to this matter. Indeed, the decisions made at the October House of Bishops meeting still need to be finalised at the December meeting and then ratified by General Synod in February 2026.

Q9. Gill Ball (General Synod and Chelmsford) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

With the rise in anti-immigrant feeling and wider racial intolerance of recent months, including right wing rhetoric around Christianity, would the diocese consider issuing advice and/or producing resources for how to deal with this within local parish churches?

A.

Following the Unite the Kingdom march in central London and heightened community tensions, the Church has formed a steering group to guide a national response. Bishop Lynne is a member of this group which will present to the College of Bishops in January 2026 and which hopes to issue a public statement and some suggested resources for parishes in early February.

At a diocesan level, the Barking Area has submitted, on behalf of the Diocese, a joint bid with Together Liverpool – itself a joint venture between the Diocese of Liverpool and the Church Urban Fund – to draw down funding from the Racial Justice Unit with the aim of promoting community cohesion and better understanding the factors which draw people into radicalisation. The Barking Area Team has also shared resources which have been disseminated by the Diocese of Leeds and which include some resources that might help parishes. These include bible studies, courses embracing difference, liturgies and prayers, a cupcake campaign and short films. Links to these resources will be included in the next issue of The View.

8. DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair invited the Diocesan Director of Education, Carrie Prior, to speak to the annual report of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE). In her presentation she made the following points:

- The work of the DBE impacts on thousands of children and families across dioceses.
- There are 139 Church Schools and 3 affiliated schools in the diocese. Currently half of those Church Schools are part of a Multi Academy Trust. 99% of Church Schools have signed a partnership agreement with the DBE.
- The goal of the DBE is to respond to real needs in real time. This is underpinned by the DBE vision of giving everyone life in all its fullness. The DBE are also proactively working to tie into the values in Travelling Well Together. The annual strategic plan had been developed with the DBE. There is an ongoing focus on wellbeing, inclusion and Christian distinctiveness. There is also an emphasis on collaboration.
- The team provided joined up support including working with the Diocesan Mustard Seed Team, including the launch of the Growing Faith Hub. They also worked more closely with Area Teams, Mission and Ministry (through curate training) and hosted a Ministers in Schools Conference for clergy and lay people who work in schools. This will be repeated next year.
- There was also a joined-up approach in matters most which present great challenge. The team offer grief and trauma support. Training and resources for wellbeing of staff were also offered on a termly basis. This can be a lifeline during difficult times.
- In terms of outcomes 26 SIAMs inspections had been held with 100% receiving judgment 1. 24 OFSTED inspections had been held with most being rated as 'Good' and three rated as 'Outstanding'. These show a strength in Christian vision, worship and community. The outcomes are encouraging, but not accidental.
- Collective worship is a real strength and has been praised in schools. The team have expanded online resources, making it easier to embed prayer in all schools do.
- The team encourage children as courageous advocates. This includes advocacy for global issues such as Windrush and other migration stories. There had also been five new school partnerships in Kenya launched in the year.

- The work of the team starts in early years and provides an exposure to faith. There is support provided for toddler groups and nurseries and again the team work closely with the Mustard Seed team in this area of work.
- School buildings are not just bricks and mortar but places of welcome and community. £1.6m had been secured 15 projects throughout the year. These ensure upgrades to improve fire safety compliance, heating and water system upgrades. There was also a successful launch of the solar panel pilot project at St Lukes Canning Town.
- In terms of the future there is a list of priorities to focus on but specifically highlighted was work around SEND inclusion. There would also be developments in the RE curriculum. Work will continue in strengthening partnerships and the School Leaders Conference will be relaunched.

Carrie Prior closed her presentation by thanking members for their prayers and partnership. The work is only possible through collaboration.

The Chair invited questions or comments

Bishop of Chelmsford
 Revd Neil Dalley (Southend)
 Mary Durlacher (GS and Colchester)

The Bishop of Chelmsford put on record her thanks to Carrie and the team for their extraordinary work. Everyone should be encouraged by the opportunity we have to directly impact on people which we should be using and building upon. We get to teach the Christian story and help children to be comfortable with it.

There was a question around whether the education team support opportunities for engaging with community schools. It was confirmed that they do and in most cases the resources can be applied to other contexts. The Mustard Seed team can also support in this area.

There was also a question as to how the teachers understand the Christian message and how the education team strengthen this understanding. Carrie Prior acknowledged that this is a challenge as teachers receive minimal input. The main strategy is to target the RE lead within the school to use them to disseminate resources. The team upskill teachers to feel confident in delivery and there is on demand training resources available.

The Chair of the DBE, the Bishop of Colchester thanked the team, as well as all who are engaged in the governance of church schools. The work they do ensures that schools are places where people flourish.

9. DEANERY SYNOD ELECTION FORMULA

The Chair invited the Head of Service Delivery to speak to the proposed motion. It was explained that 2026 will see the triennial elections of lay members to deanery synods. It is Diocesan Synod's responsibility to agree the method by which numbers of lay reps from parishes are calculated. A consultation had been carried out and the response back affirmed that the existing formula should be retained. There was an attempt to amend the recommendation at Bishop's Council, but this had been voted against.

The Chair moved the motion:

That this Synod

- a) *note the feedback from the consultation on the formula for use in the 2026 Deanery Synod election formula and*
- b) *approve the formula, as set out in paper DS(2025)16 for use in the 2026 Deanery Synod elections.*

The following members spoke in the debate:

Revd Canon John Dunnett (General Synod)

Gill Ball (General Synod)

The comments made and responses were as follows:

- The proposed formula could be viewed as an undemocratic method. The value of a lay vote is five times less in a smaller church. Should we be considering another kind of formula for representatives for every 30, 40 or 50 names on the electoral roll? The Head of Service Delivery pointed out that a decision needed to be made in this calendar year, which meant this meeting. He did not feel it was undemocratic but alternative ratios could be considered next time.
- Deanery Synods have a very delicate balance and the opportunity for increased representation might disturb that balance. It also may also have a knock-on effect on PCC compositions.

The Chair asked members to vote on the motion. The motion was carried.

10. GENERAL SYNOD REPORT

The Chair invited Canon Robert Hammond to speak to his report. He highlighted that since he had written his report the approved changes to the National Church governance structures had been queried by the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament and the issues raised would require further deliberation to resolve.

11. BISHOP'S COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE AND DMPC REPORTS

The Chair highlighted the report. Members noted the report.

The Chair invited the President to close the Synod. The President led the Synod in the Grace. The President then closed the Synod.

Chelmsford Cathedral Vision

A people and a place, now and for the future

Presented by the Dean of Chelmsford, The Very Revd Dr Jessica Martin

We would like to share with the Diocesan Synod the emerging vision for Chelmsford Cathedral - a vision that is still developing and which we continue to describe as a 'work in progress'.

During my first year as Dean of Chelmsford, we have been leading collaborative conversations with the Bishop Leadership Team (BLT), Chapter, the Senior Leadership Team, staff, the Cathedral Forum, Area Deans, and now with Diocesan Synod, as we reflect on who we are and who we are called to be, as both a place and a people. Further conversations are also underway, including through our Cathedral APCM, and with civic partners and other key stakeholders across our community.

The Cathedral is at heart a community of worship, learning and fellowship. We are a charity that exists to promote and live out the Christian faith within the Church of England context. As the Mother Church of the Diocese, we also seek to serve as a civic, cultural and spiritual centre for celebration, reflection and remembrance, and to remain a sacred and safe space for all.

Our values shape how we live and work. We seek to be open, generous and inclusive, nurturing spirituality and faith exploration in ways that embrace both depth and diversity. We aim to connect communities, inspiring conversation, creativity, learning and engagement with the arts, while promoting excellence, justice and compassion.

Over the next four years, our work will focus on three areas: Theology & the Arts; Learning & Nurture; and Sustainability.

Through Theology and the Arts, we will explore the missional potential of the Cathedral as a cultural centre - through art, literature and music, and through developing our choral tradition and its outreach and educational potential.

Through Learning and Nurture, we will strengthen our capacity to serve as a centre for spiritual, theological and missional learning for adults and children, including our work with schools, interpretation of the Cathedral, ministerial training, and providing safe spaces for learning, conversation and reconciliation.

Sustainability remains a priority. We will continue to work to maintain our Gold Eco status, deepen our engagement with environmental responsibility and climate justice, and explore pathways towards net zero emissions, including sustainable building systems, worship and prayer around creation, and supporting agricultural and fishing communities across the Diocese.

This vision presents a challenge to all of us. How does the vision of the Cathedral guide our plans and priorities? How do the values we nurture shape our character and growth? And how

can we live this vision every day - in both large projects and small, ordinary moments of life and ministry? We invite the Synod to join us in this ongoing exploration and discernment.

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **2025 DRAFT OUTTURN AND OUTLINE OF 2027 BUDGET & SHARE SCHEME**

Author: **FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Date: **21 MARCH 2026**

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper summarises the draft financial results for the 2025 year (subject to audit), and provides an update on budget considerations for 2027, and outlines the process for setting our 2027 Budget and Parish Share scheme.

2. 2025 DRAFT FINANCIAL OUTTURN

The table below gives a summary of the draft financial results of the General Fund for the 2025 year. The figures are subject to year-end audit and may still change. Final figures will be presented to Synod in June when the full Statutory Accounts will be presented.

Income

Overall, general fund income was £17,239k which was £116k higher than budget.

Parish Share is the largest portion of our income. £13,528k was received in Parish Share during the year, which is 84% of budget share assessment, compared to our 86% budget target. Share assessment was also higher than budget by £233k due to higher numbers of stipendiary clergy in post than budgeted for. As a result, share shortfall was a total of £2,809k, £571k higher than budget. The amount of Parish Share paid in 2025 was 2.5% higher (£320k) than the amount paid in 2024 which is a positive move in the right direction.

National Church funding received was £903k which was broadly in line with budget expectations, but was down by around £400k on 2024. Most of this funding related to the Lower Income Communities (LInC) grant, in addition to a small amount of transitional grant funding, and was added to our mutual support fund and allocated out to parishes to reduce their parish share requests.

Parochial fee income and other income such as rent from vacant clergy houses was higher than expected at £2,809k, or £440k higher than budget. The main reason for this was higher clergy vacancies leading to a higher number of vicarage rentals (although higher costs offset some of this income), as well as higher than expected income from the Becton Community Centre which we are now running directly. This was offset by lower than expected Parochial Fee income, which was £111k down on budget mainly because of lower income from funeral fees compared to expectation.

CDBF DRAFT results for the 2025 financial year				
General Fund Only				
	Actual	Budget	Difference	
	£000	£000	£000	%
Parish Share Assessment	16,356	16,123	233	1.3
Parish Share Shortfall	-2,828	-2,257	-571	25.3
Parish Share subtotal	13,528	13,866	-338	-2.4
National Church Funding	903	888	15	1.7
Fees, Rent and Other Income	2,809	2,368	440	18.6
Total Income	17,239	17,123	116	0.7
Clergy, Curates & Archdeacons Stipends	9,529	9,542	13	0.1
Other Costs of Ministry	1,241	1,907	666	34.9
Clergy Housing Costs	4,268	4,417	149	3.4
National Church	1,353	1,362	9	0.7
Staff Salaries	3,413	3,302	-111	-3.4
Administration & Other Costs	843	741	-102	-13.8
Professional & Finance Costs	847	701	-146	-20.8
Total Expenditure	21,494	21,973	478	2.2
(Deficit)/Surplus before transfers	-4,255	-4,850	595	-12.3
Transfers between Funds	259	318	-59	-18.6
Total Return Transfers	3,427	3,528	-101	-2.9
Gains/Losses on revaluation of Investment	75	-	75	100.0
(Deficit)/Surplus after transfers	-494	-1,004	510	-50.8

Expenditure

Overall, general fund expenditure was £21,494k, which was £478k lower than budget.

Clergy Stipend costs were £13k more than budget. Higher clergy vacancies helped to offset increases in Employers National Insurance, meaning that the overall variance was very close to budget. Other costs of Ministry were £666k lower than budget, this was mainly due to lower than budgeted spending on clergy training and grants.

Clergy Housing costs were £149k or 3% higher than budget. The overspend was due to cost inflation, and higher than forecast costs for new boilers and electrical improvements to vicarages. Some of this additional expenditure was offset by grant income for energy efficiency works on vicarages as well as interest savings on the cost of mortgages on curate houses due to us repaying debt during the year.

Salaries were £111k or 3% higher than budget. The higher spending is as a result of the increase in Employers National Insurance which was announced after the budget was set, as well as higher than budgeted recruitment costs.

Transfers

The TRA Transfer for the year totalled £3,427k, which was £101k lower than budget, this was due to lower than anticipated investment fund balances due to poorer than expected investment returns in 2024. Other transfers include the Section 554 fund draw down to support our Education work, and funds set aside to cover the costs of a future clergy conference.

Net Deficit

The total general fund deficit after transfers was **£(494)k**. This is £510k better than the budget of a deficit of £(1,004)k. Overall, this is a positive result, but it is still a deficit, and due to the increased costs of clergy stipends from April 2026, and the additional time limited support from National Church tapering off over the next few years, there is concern over budgetary impact and financial sustainability in the medium to long term unless the Parish Share shortfall reduces significantly.

Looking ahead to the 2026 year

In February 2026, following recommendations made as part of the Diocesan Finance Review (DFR), Finance Committee agreed increases to clergy stipends of 8% for Incumbent status posts, and 10.7% for Curates, and to increase Archdeacons salaries by the amount recommended by the Central Stipends Authority (TBC). These increases are made to bring stipends in line with the new National Stipend Benchmark (NSB) which all dioceses have been asked to adopt so that stipends are equalised across the country, and are above the 4% increase allowed for in the 2026 budget. This will have a significant impact on the General Fund budget, with projected increased costs of £283k in 2026 and £391k in 2027. As the 2026 Share has already been set there will not be any increase in share in 2026, but these increases will need to be reflected in the 2027 budget and Share request.

Other significant budget impacts resulting from the DFR are as follows:

- Removal of Votes 2-5, reducing costs by around £684k compared to budget
- Removal of Vote 1 and replace with new Mission Training Fund, increasing costs by around £268k
- Recalculation of LInC grant – LInC grant reduction of £380k compared to expectation.

Overall, these changes negatively impact on the budget by around £250k in 2025, and an estimated £500k in 2027 and future years.

To help dioceses cover these additional costs, there is a new Time Limited Funding Grant, Chelmsford will receive around £5m over the next 9 years which will taper down over that time period. This will mean that from a bottom line perspective our General Fund will be better off in the short term (up until 2029) but worse off in the longer term.

The other key factor to consider is that we budgeted for Parish Share shortfall to fall to 13%. As the shortfall in 2025 was 16%, this is a challenge, and whilst we hope and pray that the shortfall will reduce in 2026, there is a real risk that Parish Share income will not reach budget expectations and the shortfall will be higher than budget.

3. 2027 BUDGET AND PARISH SHARE SCHEME

2027 Budget

The 2027 Budget will be worked on and prepared in April and May. It will be scrutinised by the Finance Executive and the Finance Committee before being presented to Synod for approval in June.

The budget will be prepared in line with existing plans and building on the 2026 budget and 5 year forecast agreed by Synod in June 2025, and will take into account the impact of the changes listed above relating to the outcome of the DFR review.

Due to the increase in stipends, it is likely that Parish Share will need to increase by a higher amount than previously forecast. In our last 5 year forecast presented alongside the 2026 budget, the average share allocation in 2027 was forecast to increase by 4%. The impact of the stipend increases and other changes listed above would result in an average increase of around 7%, unless other savings can be identified during the budget setting process. As well as savings from within the wider budget, we will also be looking at ways in which we can mitigate the loss of LInC grant funding within the mutual support fund, possibly by allocating additional income from TRA investment drawdowns in the short term, which would help limit increases in Parish Share, particularly for our low income community parishes.

Parish Share Formula Change Proposal

Following feedback on the Parish Share scheme since its introduction in January 2023, four possible adjustments were reviewed by the Bishops' Leadership Team (BLT) in January 2026 and by the Finance Committee in February. The aim was to assess whether technical or fairness-related refinements should be brought to Diocesan Synod for decision.

Four options were considered:

1. **Adjusting the weighting of Deprivation vs Geography**
BLT noted strong and divergent parish views on this issue. It advised that this matter should form part of the wider *Sustaining Ministry* conversation rather than a standalone Synod decision at this stage.
2. **Introducing proportional clergy training costs (PM3)**
This proposal would link PM3 training contributions to the actual cost of ministry provided—full-time clergy attracting a full PM3 slice and part-time, SSM, and House-for-Duty roles attracting proportional slices.
BLT supported this option, recognising it as a clear, fair, and long-requested improvement.
3. **Introducing a discount for parishes with Heritage at Risk (HaR) buildings**
BLT advised that HaR-related support raises wider strategic questions better addressed through the *Sustaining Ministry* process rather than through a formula change now.
4. **Revising MSF discount mechanics from a £-based to a percentage-based model**
Although the proposal is sound in principle, BLT judged that the required

technical changes could not be implemented easily within current time constraints.

Recommendation to Synod

In line with BLT guidance and the Finance Committee's review, **only one proposal is recommended for decision by Diocesan Synod:**

- **Proposal 2: Introduce proportional PM3 training cost contributions**

This option is:

- Straightforward to implement
- Considered to be fairer in how training costs are allocated
- Responsive to long-standing parish feedback
- Supported by both BLT and officers

The other three proposals are not recommended for Synod decision at this time and will instead be taken forward through the *Sustaining Ministry* strategic work or revisited when technical capacity allows.

Impact of Proposal 2

	Budget Average share ask 2026 £	Option2 Average share ask 2026 £	Option2 Change £	Option2 Change %
Full Stipendiary	66,454	68,164	1,710	2.6%
0.5 Stipendiary	30,716	27,308	(3,408)	-11.1%
House for Duty	27,561	20,884	(6,677)	-24.2%
SSM In Charge	13,400	895	(12,505)	-93.3%

Calculations based upon 2026 Parish Share figures show that if this option were adopted it would mean a £1,710 (2.6%) increase to parishes with a full stipendiary priest, a reduction of £3,408 (11.1%) for a 0.5 Stipendiary post, £6,667 (24.2%) for a parish with a House for Duty priest and a £12,505 (93.3%) reduction for a parish with an SSM In Charge.

Proposal for Decision

Synod is asked to decide whether to adopt the change proposed in Proposal 2, to introduce proportional PM3 training cost contributions, the alternative being to retain the existing formula where costs are allocated based upon headcount.

4. MOTION

That this Synod

- a) note the draft financial outturn for 2025, the update on 2026 finances and the proposed approach for setting the budget for 2027, which will be presented for approval to Synod in June.
- b) approve the amendment to the Parish Share formula by adopting proposal 2 as set out in paper DS(2026)02.

Diocesan Synod, March 2026

TITLE: ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT FOR 2025

AUTHOR: HEAD OF SAFEGUARDING

DATE: MARCH 2026

1. HEADLINES

- Continued increase in volume of contacts with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team with **454** contacts with the team across 2025.
- **6244** individuals completed safeguarding e-learning modules during 2025.
- **59** training sessions were offered in 2025.
- **13** DBS Certificates required risk assessment during 2025.
- **93%** of parishes have a Parish Safeguarding Officer in post (year end 2025).
- **Excellent** parish sign up to the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard.

2. THE YEAR AHEAD

- **INEQE AUDIT PREPARATION**
 - o <https://ineqe.com/churchofengland/>
- **FUTURE OF NATIONAL CHURCH SAFEGUARDING**
- **SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS** – the David Tudor case.
- **LAUNCH OF NEW LEADERSHIP TRAINING MATERIALS**

3. CASELOAD

The information included in the reporting about safeguarding concerns and allegations entered onto the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS).

The information included is recorded using the Guiding Principles for the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS).

During 2025 **454** new concerns were recorded by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

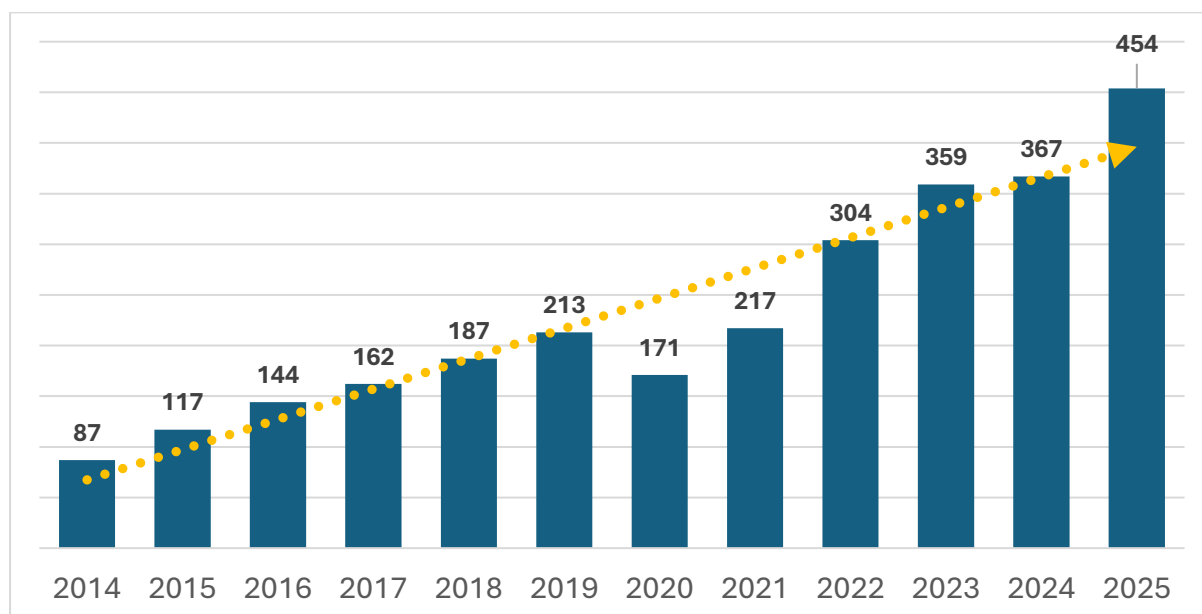
INITIAL CONTACTS

Across each week a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team is allocated to respond to new incoming safeguarding concerns and allegations, whether these arise via email or phone.

The chart below shows the number of new contacts received each year since 2014, representing 12 years of data. The number of contacts with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team has risen year on year (with the exception of the two pandemic years).

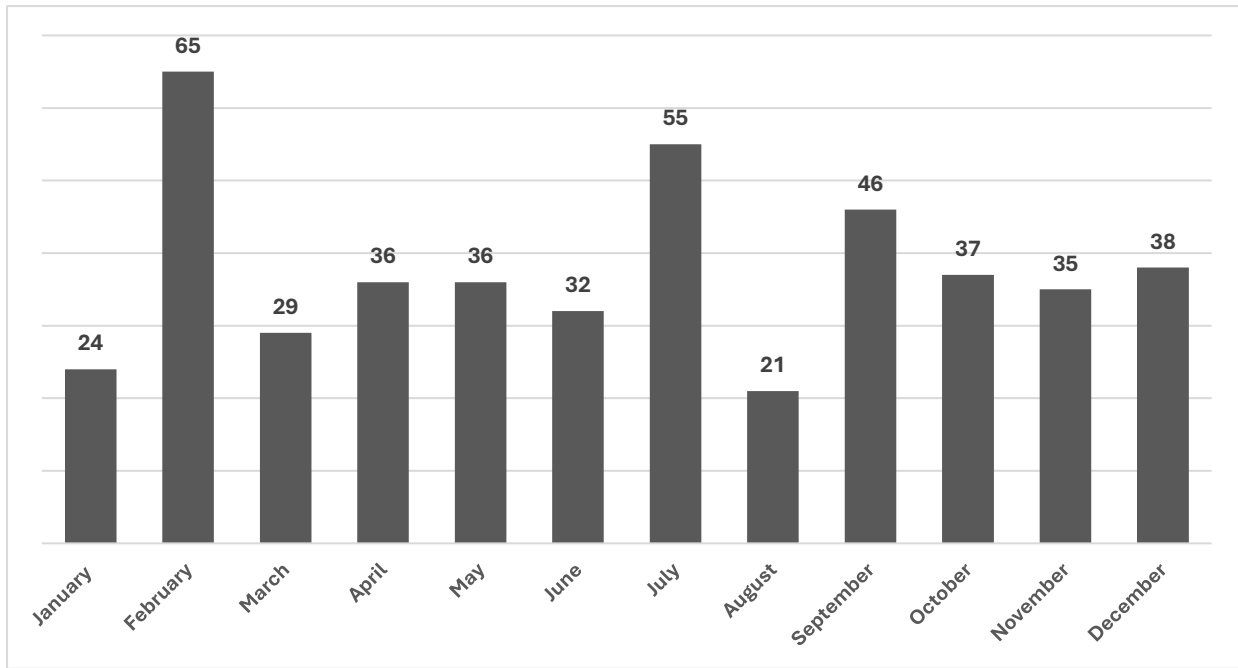
The numbers represented below represent only those contacts where the Diocesan Safeguarding Team caseworker provides advice, guidance, signposting or ongoing support in respect of the concern, therefore each contact noted represents a member of the team interacting with an individual or individuals connected to our worshipping communities across the Diocese or with a link to the Diocese and then recording the concern on the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS).

TOTAL CALLS/YEAR – 2014 - 2025



Across 2025 the contact volume has been varied. The chart below illustrates contacts in 2025 for each month of the year where a concern was raised in the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS).

TOTAL CALLS/MONTH - 2025



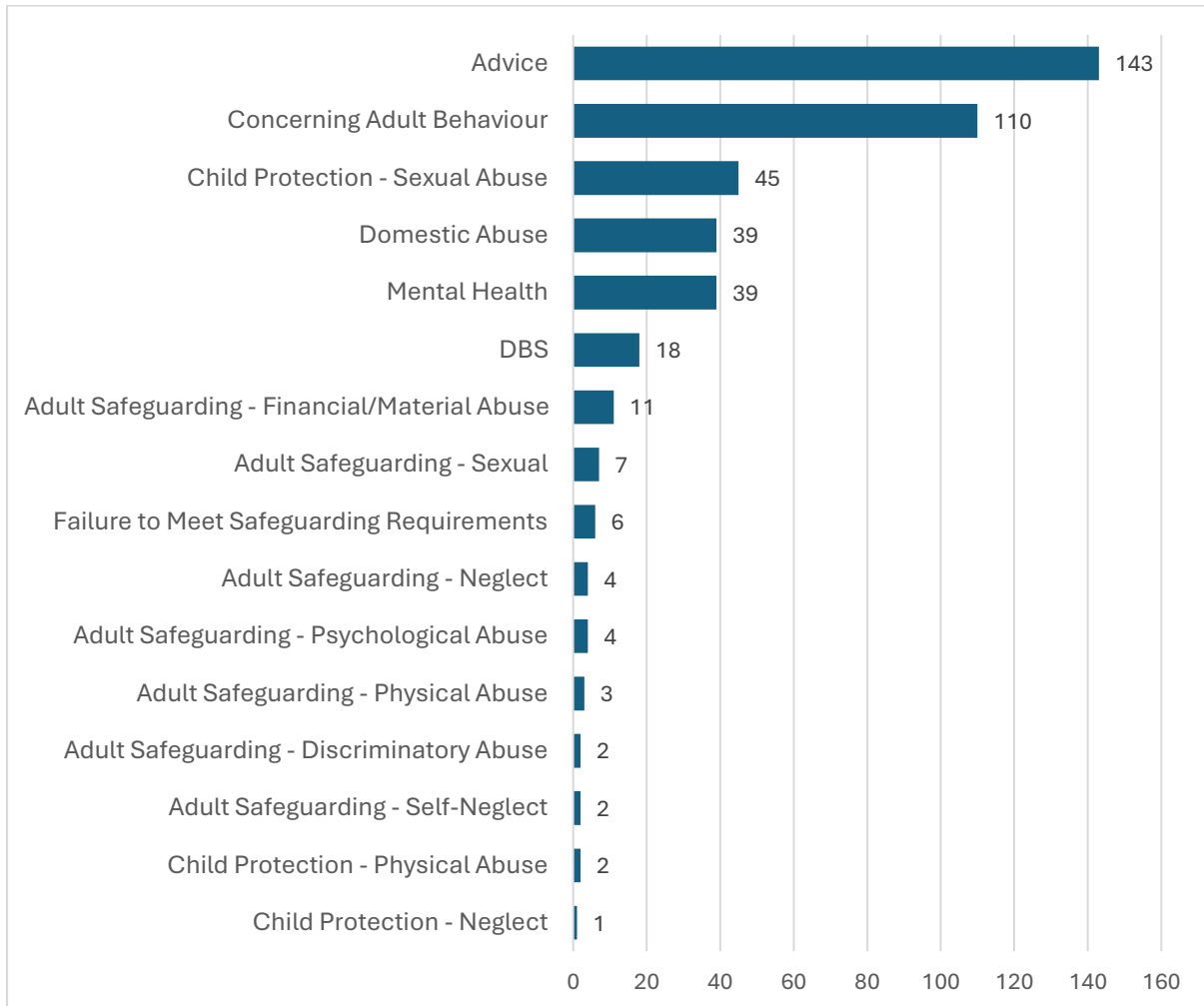
CONCERN CATEGORIES

In accordance with the Guiding Principles each concern recorded on the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS) can be allocated multiple concern categories but must have only one primary category.

The primary categories are set nationally and cannot be altered locally. For this reason there are a significant number of cases recorded as 'Child Protection – Sexual Abuse' in respect of those individuals formerly or currently included on the Sex Offenders Register and currently subject to Church Safety Plans (see below).

The chart below represents the primary category selected for all cases open during 2025.

PRIMARY CATEGORIES – CONCERNS ACTIVE DURING 2025



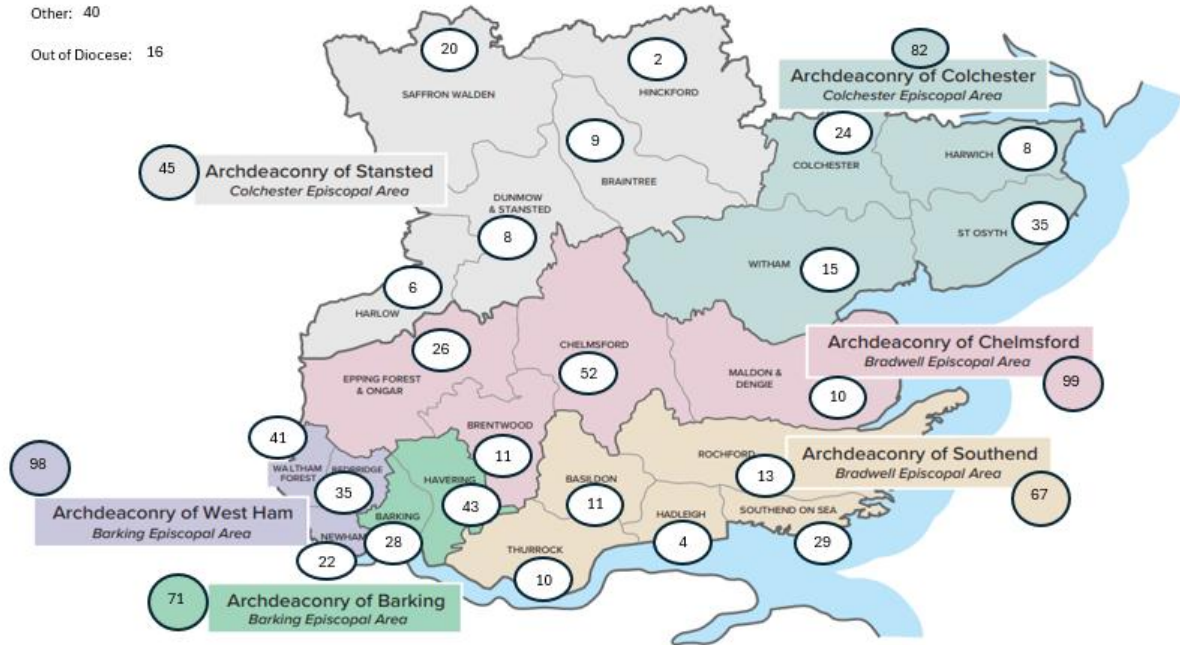
Concerns active at any point during 2025 are represented geographically on the map of the Diocese of Chelmsford as below:



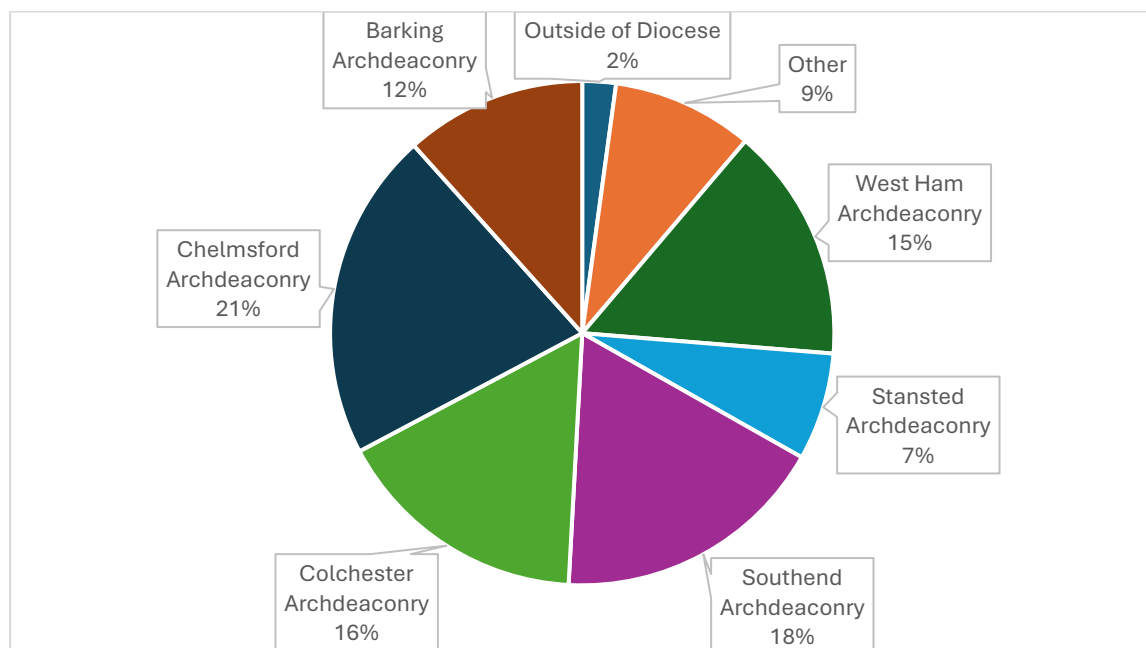
All Active Concerns during 2025 Episcopal Areas, Archdeaconries and Deaneries

Other: 40

Out of Diocese: 16



The geographical spread is also illustrated below for concerns active during 2025. Please note 'other' is used for instances which do not directly relate to a parish – for example a concern raised about an individual who previously held a role in the Diocese of Chelmsford, but where the concern has arisen elsewhere may be recorded in this way.



CONCERN LEVEL

Each concern is allocated a concern level, as in Guiding Principle Eight, this is based on the initial triage of the concern but can be altered as new information is received.

The concern levels are as follows:

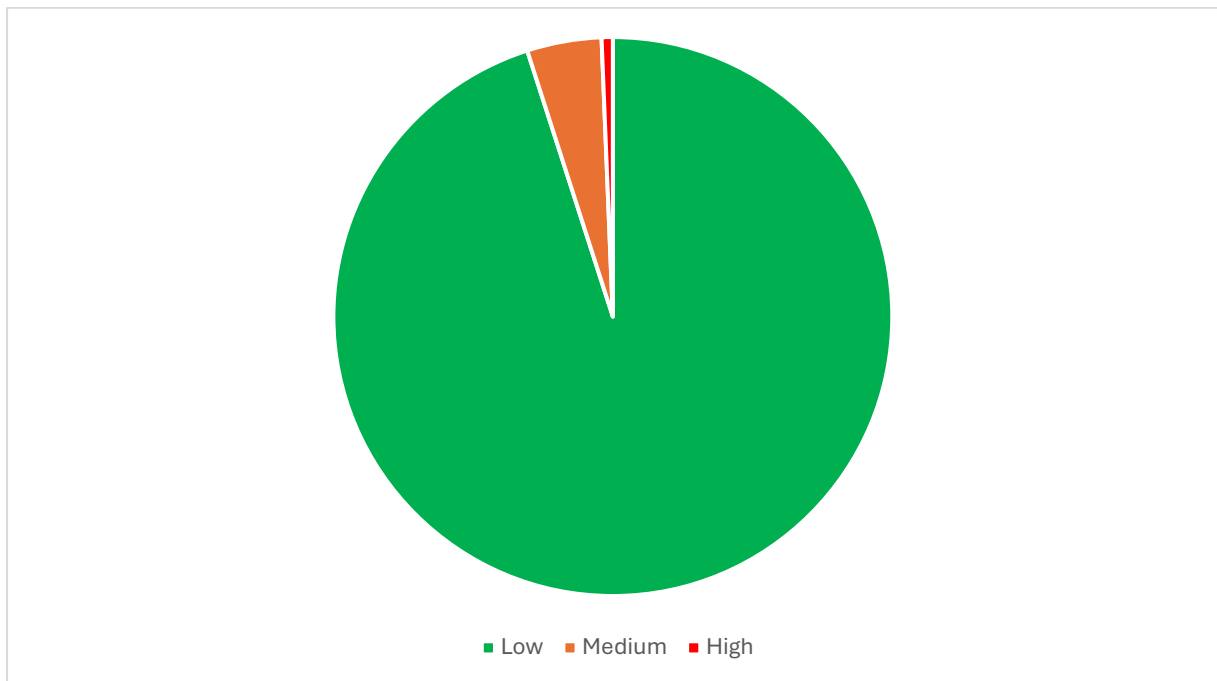
8: *During Triage, all concerns must be allocated one of the below Concern Levels:*

L – *Advice, Information and Triage Only*

M – *Safeguarding Matter, Assessment Required, Risk Management*

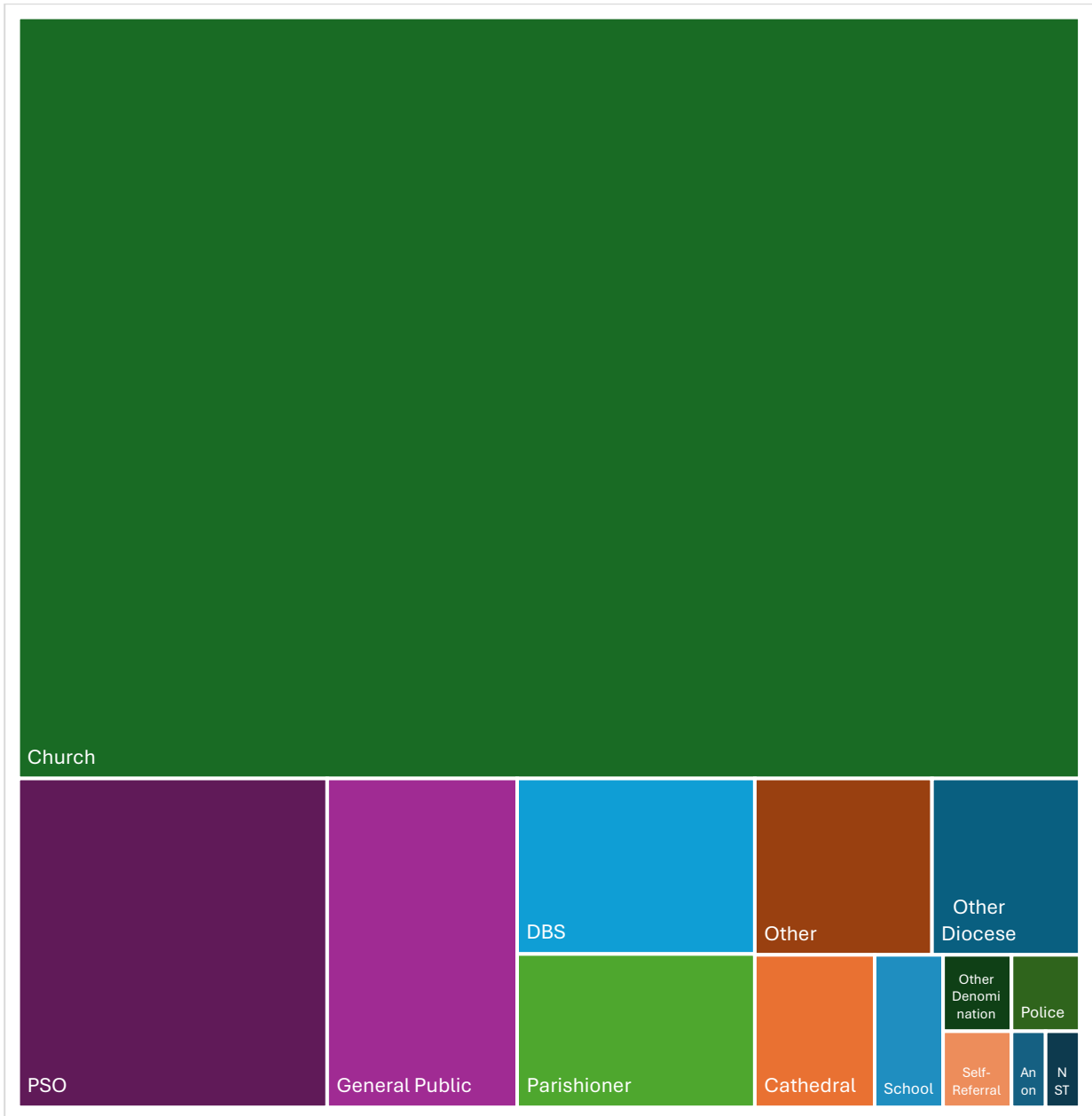
H – *Core Group Cases, Immediate/High Risk*

PRIMARY CATEGORIES – CONCERNS ACTIVE DURING 2025



ORIGINATORS

Each concern recorded on the National Safeguarding Case Management System is allocated an origin. For 2025 the majority of concerns are recorded as originating from within the church. The chart below indicates the recording of originator for cases active during 2025.

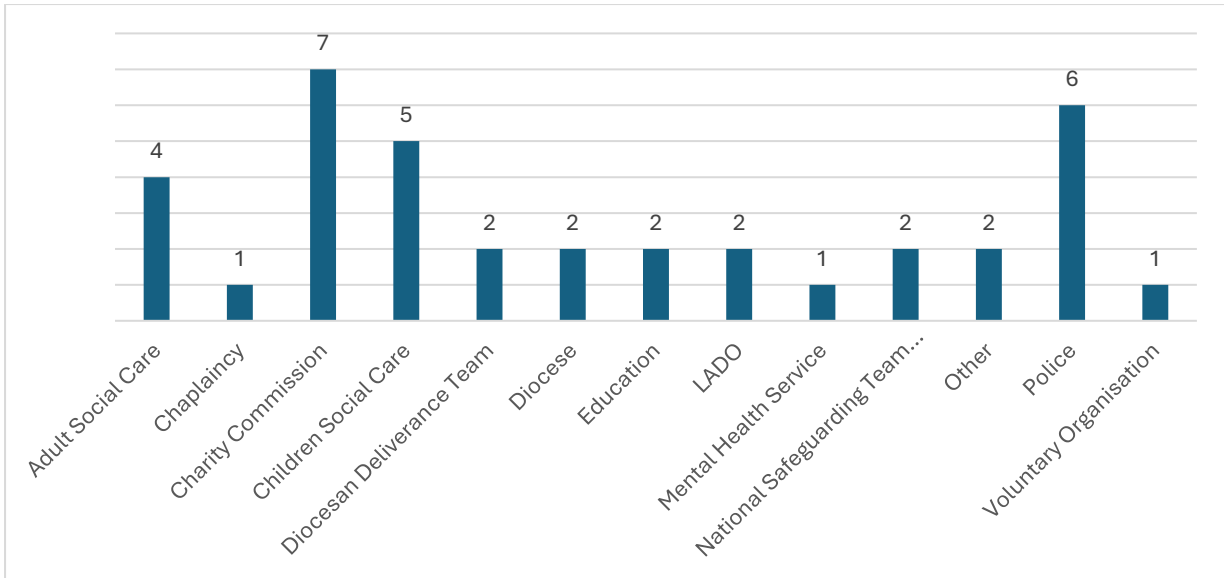


REFERRALS

Referrals made by church officers in respect of concerns are captured within the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS). During 2025 there were 37 referrals recorded in the system – these are illustrated in the chart below.

Charity Commission

During 2025 there are seven recorded referrals to the Charity Commission, of these five were made under delegated authority and on behalf of Parochial Church Council (PCC) Trustees. The remainder (2) were made in respect of the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance. This does not include updates made to previous Serious Incident Reports made to the Charity Commission.

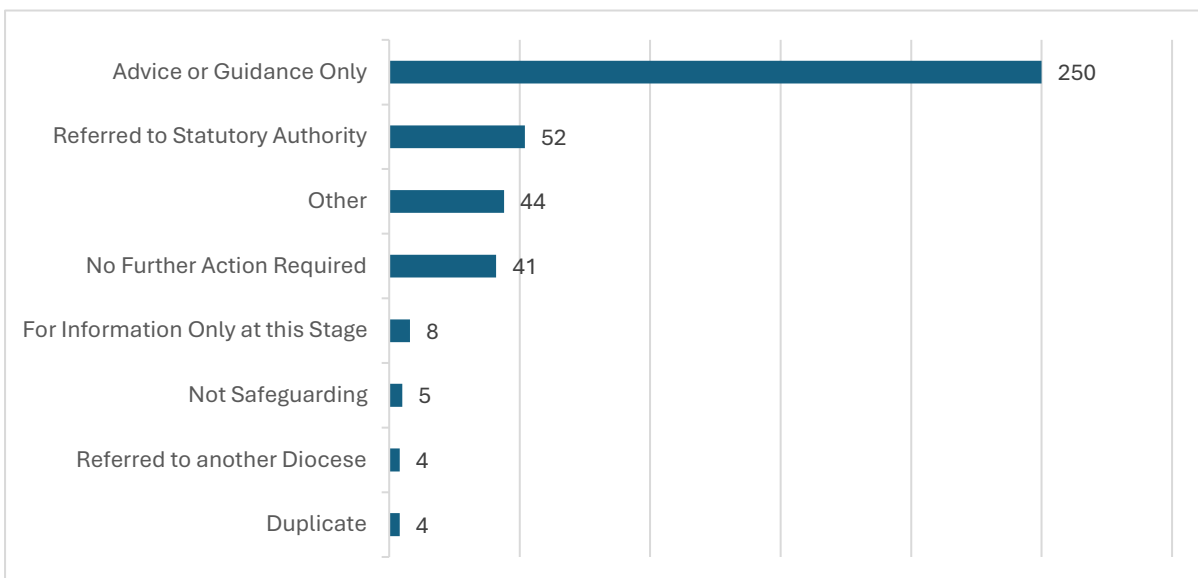


CHURCH SAFETY PLANS

At the end of 2025 there were **31** Church Safety Plans recorded as active for those assessed as posing a risk in our churches. Of these **17** individuals are recorded as current registered sex offenders.

CONCERN FILING/CLOSURE

The reasons below are as recorded for concern filing on the National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS).



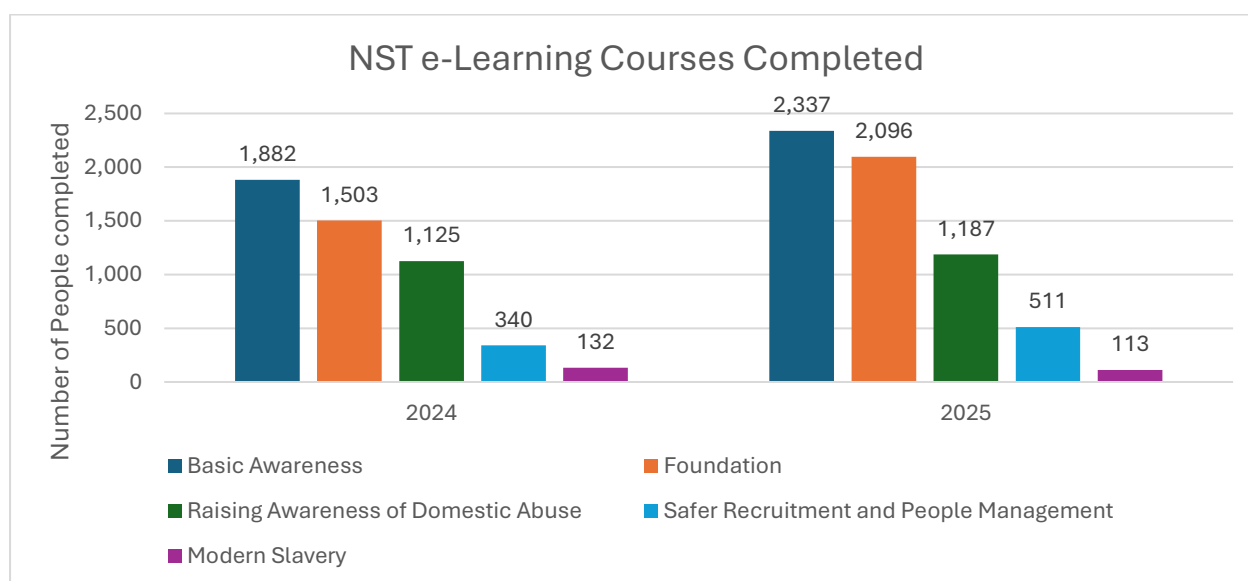
4. TRAINING

Training in the Diocese is delivered in line with the Church of England Safeguarding Learning and Development Practice Guidance.

E-LEARNING COURSES

The table below illustrates the online (e-Learning) Safeguarding Courses completed on the NST portal by those registered with a profile linked to the Diocese of Chelmsford.

NST e-Learning Courses on Portal	2024	2025
Basic Awareness	1,882	2,337
Foundation	1,503	2,096
Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse	1,125	1,187
Safer Recruitment and People Management	340	511
Modern Slavery	132	113
TOTAL	4,982	6,244



This does not include:

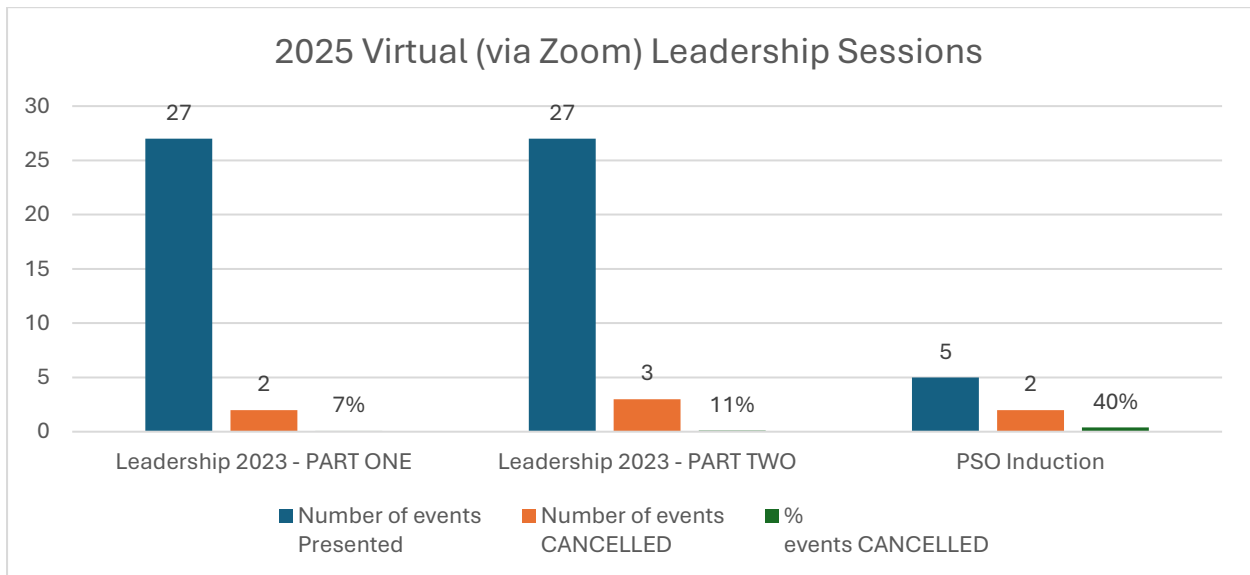
- *Those that have attended these courses face-to-face at their own parishes, presented by their own workforce*
- *Those that have moved to a different Diocese and amended their online learning portal profile*

SAFEGUARDING LEADERSHIP PATHWAY & PSO INDUCTION SESSIONS

The table below illustrates the training sessions provided and delivered by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Number of Virtual (via Zoom) sessions presented in 2025:

Virtual (via Zoom) Safeguarding Course	Number of events Presented
Leadership 2023 - PART ONE	27
Leadership 2023 - PART TWO	27
PSO Induction	5
TOTAL	59



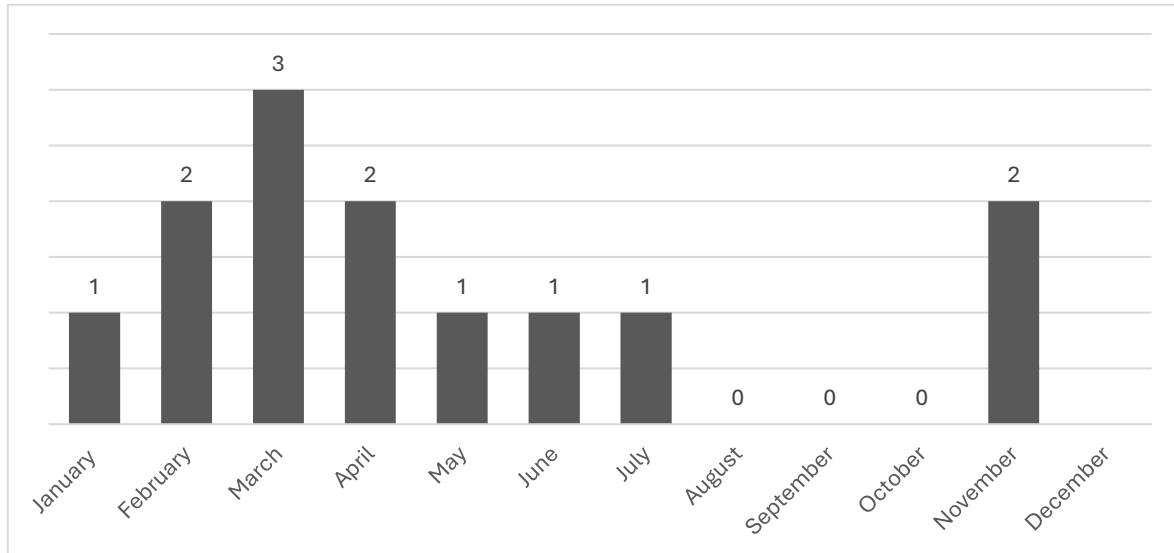
Attendees:

Safeguarding Course	2024	2025
Leadership - Virtual (via Zoom)	530	502
Leadership - Face-to-Face	43	126
PSO Induction	56	62
TOTAL	629	690

5. DBS & SAFER RECRUITMENT

DBS DISCLOSURES

During 2025 **13** DBS certificates containing disclosures were issued (as illustrated in the chart below). These needed the DST to assess the risk of parishes going forward with the recruitment of the individuals.

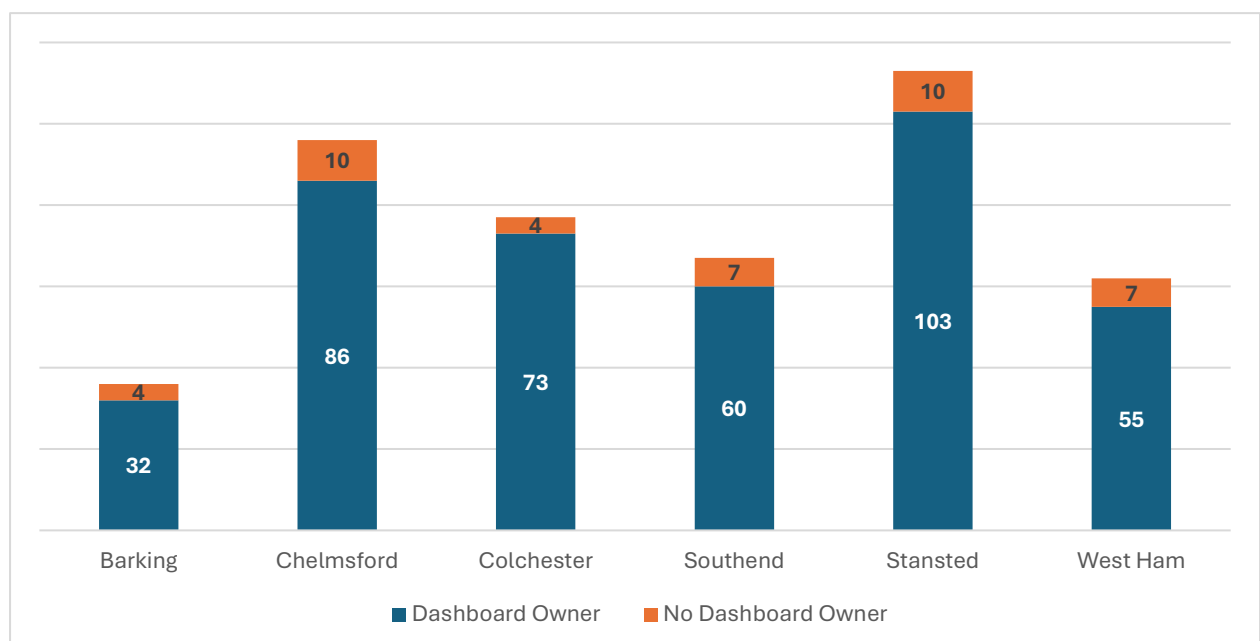


6. PARISH SAFEGUARDING

PARISH SAFEGUARDING DASHBOARD

Dashboard invitations were emailed to PSO's in all parishes between 6th June 2025 and 11th July 2025 as a rolling process per Archdeaconry.

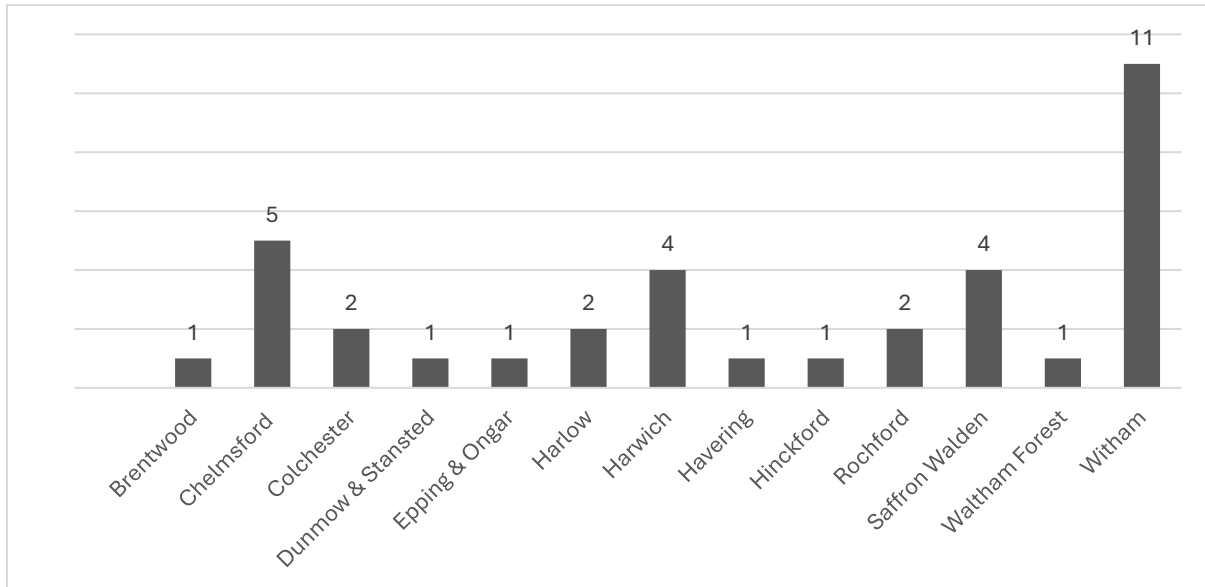
The chart below illustrates the take up showing where an 'owner' has been registered for a parish.



PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

The Diocese of Chelmsford has a total of **473** parishes all of whom should have a PSO, a person registered with the Dashboard, and a person to arrange DBS checks. (*One person can hold all 3 roles*).

The table below illustrates the **36** known vacant PSO roles across the Diocese.



Amanda Knight

Head of Safeguarding & Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

09/03/2026

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **SCHEME FOR DEANERY SYNOD LAY REPRESENTATION OF BMOs**

Author: **HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

Date: **21 MARCH 2026**

I. INTRODUCTION

Church Representation Rule 24 provides the opportunity for recipients of Bishop's Mission Orders (BMOs) to be granted lay representation on a Deanery Synod, through a Scheme passed by the Diocesan Synod. Following requests from two current BMOs in this diocese work has taken place to produce schemes. My gratitude to London Diocese, from whom inspiration has been taken in the production of these schemes.

2. DRAFT 24 SCHEMES

Attached are draft schemes for Christchurch, Three Mills and Crossway. Both BMOs have matured to the point they feel formal provision for lay representatives is the right way forward and would enable them to both play full part in the Church's synodical structures. If agreed, the schemes would enable both of these initiatives to have lay representatives on Newham Deanery Synod. The leaders of both BMOs agree with the content of the drafts. The numbers of representatives each BMO would have on the Deanery Synod would be calculated in the same way as parish representatives are, with a specific number depending on the size of the equivalent Roll.

The schemes provide for each BMO to have a Mission Initiative Church Council, which in both instances would be conterminous with the charitable body created for each BMO, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in the case of Christchurch Three Mills and a Charitable Company in the case of Crossway.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That this Synod approve the draft Schemes to provide lay representation on a Deanery Synod for the Bishop's Mission Orders known as:

- a) Christchurch Three Mills, and
- b) Crossway.

DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
CHURCH REPRESENTATION AND MINISTERS MEASURE 2019
CHURCH REPRESENTATION RULES 2025, RULE 24

A SCHEME for the Representation of the Christchurch Three Mills Mission Initiative
on the Newham Deanery Synod
Within the Archdeaconry of West Ham

WHEREAS

(1) In accordance with Rule 24 of the Church Representation Rules 2025 made pursuant to the Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019, a Diocesan Synod must, at the direction of the bishop or bishops who made the Bishop's Mission Order, make a scheme to provide for the representation on a deanery synod of such of the persons to whom the Order relates as are specified in or under the scheme

(2) The Bishop of Chelmsford has directed that the Diocesan Synod make provision for the representation of the Christchurch Three Mills Mission Initiative on the Newham Deanery Synod.

(3) The direction of the Bishop that the Diocesan Synod make provision for the representation of this Mission Initiative on the Deanery Synod has been brought to the attention of the Bishop's Council.

(4) The Bishop of Chelmsford made a Bishop's Mission Order on 24th October 2021 under Section 80 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 to provide for the Christchurch Three Mills Mission Initiative.

THE SCHEME

Structure

I. The Mission Initiative shall have:

(i) an Equivalent to a Church Electoral Roll;

(ii) a Mission Initiative Church Council; and

(iii) a Mission Initiative Annual Church Meeting and Elections;

as if the Mission Initiative were a parish acting under the Church Representation Rules provisions.

The Church Electoral Roll equivalent

2. The Electoral Roll equivalent for the Mission Initiative is to be made up of the names of those qualified for membership as if the Mission Initiative were a parish under Part I of the Church Representation Rules.

3. A person whose name is entered on the Electoral Roll of a parish (or Electoral Rolls of more than one parish) as well as the Electoral Roll equivalent of the Mission Initiative must choose only one of those entries for the purpose of qualification (a) to stand for elections to deanery or

diocesan synods or to the General Synod and (b) to be an ex-officio member of a deanery synod or a PCC (or the equivalent in the case of a BMO) by virtue of membership of a diocesan synod or the General Synod.

Mission Initiative Church Council

4. The Mission Initiative Church Council, unless otherwise legally structured, shall be formed as if the Mission Initiative were a parish operating under the Church Representation Rules provisions and in accordance with the provisions of Part 9 of the Church Representation Rules.

Mission Initiative Annual Church Meeting and Elections

5. In the year of the deanery synod elections following the coming into operation of this Scheme and thereafter for subsequent triennia, the Annual Church Meeting of the Mission Initiative shall elect in accordance with the Church Representation Rules provisions, having particular regard to provisions M1(2), M6(1)(a) and M9, such number of lay representatives to the Newham Deanery Synod as the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod shall certify in accordance with the provisions of Rule 21.

Coming into operation of this Scheme

6. This Scheme shall come into operation upon the date of the session of the Diocesan Synod at which it received assent.

The Scheme received assent at the Diocesan Synod session held on the 21st day of March 2026.

DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
CHURCH REPRESENTATION AND MINISTERS MEASURE 2019
CHURCH REPRESENTATION RULES 2025, RULE 24

A SCHEME for the Representation of the Crossway Mission Initiative
on the Newham Deanery Synod
Within the Archdeaconry of West Ham

WHEREAS

(1) In accordance with Rule 24 of the Church Representation Rules 2025 made pursuant to the Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019, a Diocesan Synod must, at the direction of the bishop or bishops who made the Bishop's Mission Order, make a scheme to provide for the representation on a deanery synod of such of the persons to whom the Order relates as are specified in or under the scheme

(2) The Bishop of Chelmsford has directed that the Diocesan Synod make provision for the representation of the Crossway Mission Initiative on the Newham Deanery Synod.

(3) The direction of the Bishop that the Diocesan Synod make provision for the representation of this Mission Initiative on the Deanery Synod has been brought to the attention of the Bishop's Council.

(4) The Bishop of Chelmsford made a Bishop's Mission Order on 1st September 2022 under Section 80 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 to provide for the Crossway Mission Initiative.

THE SCHEME

Structure

I. The Mission Initiative shall have:

(i) an Equivalent to a Church Electoral Roll;

(ii) a Mission Initiative Church Council; and

(iii) a Mission Initiative Annual Church Meeting and Elections;

as if the Mission Initiative were a parish acting under the Church Representation Rules provisions.

The Church Electoral Roll equivalent

2. The Electoral Roll equivalent for the Mission Initiative is to be made up of the names of those qualified for membership as if the Mission Initiative were a parish under Part I of the Church Representation Rules.

3. A person whose name is entered on the Electoral Roll of a parish (or Electoral Rolls of more than one parish) as well as the Electoral Roll equivalent of the Mission Initiative must chose only one of those entries for the purpose of qualification (a) to stand for elections to deanery or diocesan synods or to the General Synod and (b) to be an ex-officio member of a deanery synod

or a PCC (or the equivalent in the case of a BMO) by virtue of membership of a diocesan synod or the General Synod.

Mission Initiative Church Council

4. The Mission Initiative Church Council, unless otherwise legally structured, shall be formed as if the Mission Initiative were a parish operating under the Church Representation Rules provisions and in accordance with the provisions of Part 9 of the Church Representation Rules.

Mission Initiative Annual Church Meeting and Elections

5. In the year of the deanery synod elections following the coming into operation of this Scheme and thereafter for subsequent triennia, the Annual Church Meeting of the Mission Initiative shall elect in accordance with the Church Representation Rules provisions, having particular regard to provisions M1(2), M6(1)(a) and M9, such number of lay representatives to the Newham Deanery Synod as the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod shall certify in accordance with the provisions of Rule 21.

Coming into operation of this Scheme

6. This Scheme shall come into operation upon the date of the session of the Diocesan Synod at which it received assent.

The Scheme received assent at the Diocesan Synod session held on the 21st day of March 2026.

Report on Meeting of General Synod 9-13 February 2026**MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2026 2.30 p.m.****House of Laity meeting**

Prior to the start of the Synod proper, there was a meeting of the House of Laity to amend standing orders in the light of the elections in the autumn of 2026. The aim was to simplify the procedures to elect Chair and Vice-Chair into a single standing order, and apply the procedures for elections to the General Synod, with nominations and voting by means of the on-line elections portal. A further aim was, following elections, to simplify the calling and chairing of the first meeting of the House, thus allowing the first meeting of the House of Laity after the elections to be called by the Dean of Arches and Auditor and to be chaired by the Dean of Arches. These proposals were agreed, and it was further agreed that wherever the terms 'Chairman' and 'Vice-Chairman' were employed, the terms 'Chair' and 'Vice-Chair' should be used.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UPPER HOUSE OF THE CONVOCATIONS HL(26)02 and HL(26)03

A lively discussion on the proposal to permit acting diocesan bishops during a vacancy to sit and vote in the House of Bishops ensued (this would require an amending Canon to Canon H3); it would allow them to sit only from the date of the outgoing bishop's resignation until the confirmation of election of the incoming diocesan. Concern was expressed that such a proposal was anti-democratic, but it was agreed by a very close vote to support this proposal which will be taken forward to the July 2026 session.

At 4.30 p.m. the first Session of the General Synod chaired by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell commenced with opening worship, followed by the proposal that the temporary order for distance attendance via Zoom be made permanent (GS 2177), with the proviso that it can be revisited at any time in the future. The proposal was passed almost unanimously.

A change from 3 youth representatives to 5 permitted to attend GS meetings but not to vote (SO 122 - representative of Church of England Youth Council and Deaf Anglicans Together) with participation extended to all dioceses was passed unanimously.

Topics covered during the session for questions included LinC funding and poorer parishes, Project Spire, the problem with figures about the actual amount being sent to parishes by the Church Commissioners, payments to pensioners (including clergy) and clarity of communication by the Archbishop's Council.

TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY

Following opening worship, the Archbishop of Canterbury gave her presidential address to a standing ovation.

Amending Canon no. 44 (GS 2404) allowing Armed Forces chaplains to practise wherever their role within the armed forces takes them without having to obtain PTO in every single area they practise, approved by General Synod in July 2025 was made, promulgated and executed. NB this does not permit them to work within specific parishes. If they do so, they must obtain PTO in the specific dioceses of those parishes.

The ***Clergy Conduct Measure (GS 2311B)*** was reintroduced into the Synod with an amendment from the Bishop of Chichester, that the tribunal or court should sit in public unless there were strong reasons for it not to, e.g. child or vulnerable witness. Debate focused on the dual role of mediator and 'prosecutor'. It

was confirmed by the Bishop of Chichester that further work was being done on independent oversight of the process. It was passed in all three houses. As a result the Clergy Conduct measure was finally approved.

In the afternoon a presentation was made on **Living in Love and Faith (GS 2426)** by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell with an opportunity for questions.

Reimagining Care (GS 2419)

The Archbishop of Canterbury moved to endorse the report by the Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care and spoke eloquently about the relationship between people to achieve the common goal. Various examples were given of successful interactions with those who needed care, e.g. the *Hymns we Love* initiative, *Silver Hope Trust*, *Lunch Club*. Abigail Ogier of Methodist Homes Association spoke about the need for an increase in the work force and how immigration policy had affected this. All voted in favour.

LINC Funding (GS 2441A and 2441B)

Revd Christopher Blunt spoke about the disparity in LINC (Lowest Income Communities) funding in his and 11 other dioceses and called on the Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council to review the formula and processes used to distribute lowest income funding. The motion was amended by Carl Hughes (Church Commissioners) to ask the Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council to review the funding formulas as part of a wider review of funding framework for ministry. Concern was expressed at the perceived lack of uniformity of LINC funding by various Synod members. The motion as amended was carried.

WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY

A service of Holy Communion was celebrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Assembly Hall at 9.00 a.m.

Mental Health and the Church (GS2420)

Dr Jamie Harrison moved that the Synod should review IME and CME courses to include training on mental health and request the National Society to develop training materials for clergy to respond to mental health challenges in schools and children's groups. Revd Will Harwood and Mrs Rebecca Chapman moved amendments (all carried) to include specific content, focus on people living with others who have mental health challenges and call upon all dioceses to ensure accessibility, independence and clarity in their mental health support offering. Motion as amended was carried.

Appointment of External Auditors (GS 2428)

Buzzacott LLP were unanimously agreed as external auditors for 5 years from 31 December 2026.

Church Safeguarding Structures: Next steps on implementation (GS 2429)

The steps on implementation of the safeguarding structures as contained in GS2429 and unamended were agreed overwhelmingly. Amendments to establish an entirely independent safeguarding authority, transfer the employment of diocesan and cathedral safeguarding staff to that authority and develop detailed options and costings for entirely independent employment of those staff were all lost.

Festival of God the Creator and Commemoration of the 21 Martyrs of Libya (GS 2408)

A report on the liturgies proposed for the two festivals had been circulated in the report by the Bishop of Norwich, and the Synod took note of it.

Mission Initiatives Code of Practice under Part 7 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 (GS 2430)

Following the Scolding Review into Mike Pilavachi and Soul Survivor, a working group had been set up by Bp Robert Springett to respond to the recommendations of the report. The working group presented a paper (GS Misc 1402) to Synod in 2025 and the Code of Practice was the result of their deliberations. During the debate, amendments were moved, including a requirement for trustees of Mission Initiatives to adhere to the Charity Governance Code or equivalent. The Code of Practice was approved.

THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY

Future dates: February 2027 (GS 2432)

It was agreed that the Synod meet between Monday 22 February and Friday 26 February 2027.

Amendments to Standing Orders (GS 2424)

Various amendments were proposed to tidy up standing orders on membership of Crown Nominations Commission, including vacancies in elected pairs, duration of membership, the functions of the Chair of each house of Synod, and the need for debate of the annual reports of the Archbishops' Council or its Audit Committee. All amendments were carried.

Diocesan Synod motion: Sustainable Church Flowers (GS 2433A and GS2433B)

The Bishop of Dudley spoke to the motion that Synod should embrace the principles of the Sustainable Church Flowers movement, by promoting the use of local seasonal and fully biodegradable/compostable flowers and foliage. Cathedrals and churches were called upon to eliminate the use of floral foam and similar non-biodegradable products. A video of ways to achieve sustainability was shown. A motion to move to next business was lost. The motion was carried.

2026 Seat Allocation (GS 2431)

It was proposed that total number of proctors in convocation elected from the dioceses in each Province should be 129 for Canterbury and 56 for York. It was further proposed that the total number of members of the House of Laity to be elected should be as close as possible to a proportion of 70 (Province of Canterbury) to 30 (Province of York).

Poverty and the Church: 40 years after Faith in the City (GS 2417) Resumed debate)

During the debate on a motion brought by Mark Sheard of the Archbishops' Council celebrating the impact of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, affirming the Church's commitment to end poverty in all its forms, concern was expressed again by members of Synod about the perceived lack of uniformity in LINC funding (see GS 2441A and 2441B). An amendment affirming the need to recognise that poverty in England disproportionately affects some Black and minority ethnic communities was carried, as was a further amendment to recognise the fact that in many highly deprived areas the communities are multi-faith and encourage the Church to work ecumenically and in partnership with other faith groups. The motion as amended was carried.

Living in Love and Faith (GS2426)

The Archbishop of York's motion recognised the distress and pain many have experienced during the LLF process, affirmed that the LLF Programme and all work initiated by the February 2023 and other LLF motions would conclude by July 2026, thanked the LLF Working Groups for their work which will also conclude, and commended the House of Bishops in establishing Relations, Sexuality and Gender Working Group and a Gender Pastoral Consultative Group for continuing work. After a long and impassioned debate, the motion was carried unamended.

FRIDAY 13 FEBRUARY

Guest Speaker from the Anglican Communion

At the invitation of the Presidents, the Most Revd Marinez Rosa Dos Santos Bassotto, Primate of Brazil and Bishop of Amazônia addressed the Synod under Standing Order 120. The main subject of her talk was climate change, how it affects the region and the country as a whole. She described how during COP 30 groups from 60 Christian denominations and other faiths, got together to demonstrate their commitment to confronting the climate crisis which seriously affects civil society.

Legislative Business: Parochial Fees Order 2026 (GS 2434)

GS2434 proposed that parochial fees for funerals and burials be increased by £1000. The overwhelming view of Synod was that such a large increase would make it even more unlikely that people would want a funeral in church, whilst exercising the right of individual incumbents to waive such funeral fees might be perceived as a 'hand-out' and thus offensive. The comparison with local authority fees was questioned. Revd Jonathan Macy moved amendments to the Parochial Fees Order such that wherever the £1000 increase had been applied in that document, the increase was removed. These amendments were all carried, and the motion as amended was passed.

Working Class Vocation and Ministry Next Steps (GS 2435)

The Bishop of Barking, Rt Revd Lynne Cullens, gave a presentation on working class vocations including a film with some powerful testimonies. She described her own struggles as a single mother, and the obstacles, such as residential, which she had to overcome in order to complete her training. The motion (by the Bishop of Chester) followed Revd Alex Frost's private member's motion of February 2025 which had called for a national strategy for working-class vocations and ministry. As a result, the Bishop of Chester's motion proposed that Synod should note the support given to Revd Frost's PMM, welcome consultation, call on the House of Bishops to address structural and cultural barriers, encourage the national church and institutions of all kinds to adopt the use of SEB data questions (Socio-Economic Background) in order to monitor progress, and endorse engagement with working class ministers with a new advisory group which would report to the Ministry Development Board. The motion was carried.

National Ministry Register Regulations 2026 (GS 2436)

The motion to approve the regulations was carried unamended. The Register was established in 2019 and related to information on clergy with permission to officiate in a publicly accessible report. However, it did not include lay ministry. GS2436 recognised the need to include Deaconesses, Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers, Licensed Lay Workers and lay people specified as leaders in mission institutions or Bishops' Ministry Orders. It will include the full name of the lay minister, the form of authority held by the lay minister, the area or place to which the authority relates (i.e. diocese and parish) and whether the ministry is subject to a limit of time, in which case the date when it will come to an end. If ministry is suspended or

terminated, it is the registrar's responsibility to inform the Archbishops' Council of the fact (without underlying details) within 24 hours. For PTO which lasts 14 days or fewer, the registrar does not have to provide information.

Synod was prorogued at 4.15 p.m.

Questions

2 and a half hours were allocated to questions (there were 258 of them). Subjects included Project Spire, the environment and eco-church, Net Zero, clergy pension entitlement and calculations and retirement housing, LINC funding, bishops' and archbishops' funding, the application of VAT to church repairs, maintenance of closed churches, cuts in the Racial Justice budget amongst many others. For full details of questions and answers (not all of which were covered in the 2 and a half hours) please refer to the General Synod February 2026 papers on the following link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2026-02/questions-notice-paper-february-2026-final.pdf>

Glynne Williams
(Chelmsford 276)

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **BISHOP'S COUNCIL, DIOCESAN MISSION & PASTORAL COMMITTEE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Author: **HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

Date: **21 MARCH 2026**

This paper summarises the business of the Bishop's Council since the report circulated to the November 2025 Synod meeting. Appended to this report are the 2025 annual reports from the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) and the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

December 2025 Bishop's Council

- Approved the draft of the Armed Forces Covenant to be implemented in this diocese.

DMPC

- Approved the commencement of formal consultations relating to the creation of the Blackwater Team Ministry.
- Approved the revocation of the Bishop's Mission Order for Church E20, in principle and subject to consultation with interested parties.
- Approved a further period of interim ministry in the benefice of Chipping Ongar with Shelley, Greensted juxta Ongar and Stanford Rivers.

Finance Committee

- Received training on management and reporting of serious incidents.
- Received a verbal update on recent communications with the Charity Commission.
- Agreed a permanent increase in safeguarding resource by 2.6 FTE, subject to review.
- Agreed to provide an extension of an existing loan facility to the PCC of Great Baddow Meadgate and either a loan or purchase of land to assist the PCC of Mardyke (in relation to work at St Nicholas in South Ockendon).
- Received a verbal update on financial sustainability ahead of the 2027 budget.
- Approved the Revd Canon Nick Rowan as an alternate clergy representative on the Remuneration and Governance Committee. This was needed as the Revd Jane Richards is an employee of the CDBF and therefore not eligible to be a member of the committee.
- Approved the appointment of Canon Nathan Whitehead as Director of MCO Investments.

January 2026

The Bishop's Council met for their annual day meeting. A large part of the meeting was given over to work relating to the now published Official Warning from the

Charity Commission. However, members did also receive a poignant reflection from the Revd Dr Rachel Pennant on some of elements relating to the dual capacities which members have as trustees and directors of the Diocesan Board of Finance. Members also received a briefing from the Head of Safeguarding on the INEQE safeguarding audit of the diocese, scheduled to commence in February 2027, as well as an update on operations at the Retreat House in Pleshey from the Archdeacon of West Ham and the Retreat House Manager.

February 2026 Bishop's Council

- Approved the draft agenda for March 2026 Synod.

DMPC

- Approved three pieces of formal pastoral reorganisation including:
 - the commencement of the formal consultation of the closure of St John's North Woolwich as part of the potential redevelopment of the site and provision of a new church building, subject to the filling of the vacancy in the benefice of North Woolwich with Silvertown.
 - the commencement of the formal consultation on the creation of a plurality including the benefice of Great Hallingbury with Little Hallingbury, the benefice of Hatfield Broad Oak with Bush End and the benefice of Hatfield Heath and Sheering,
 - the commencement of the formal consultation on the creation of a plurality including the benefice of Clacton St Paul and the benefice of Holland on Sea.

Finance Committee

- Received an update on actions taken since the publication of the Official Warning from the Charity Commission and a draft outline of a response to the Commission's action points.
- Noted the annual safeguarding report from the Head of Safeguarding.
- Noted the 2025 year-end report.
- Approved the proposed applications to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board from Colchester and Bradwell Areas.
- Agreed to recommend a proposed change to the parish share scheme to Diocesan Synod.
- Agreed stipends increases from 1 April 2026 and a recommendation on salary increases to be agreed by the Remuneration and Governance Committee.
- Agreed to provide Birch InSpire with time to make an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support their proposals in respect of the closed church in Birch.
- Approved the submission of grant applications to the Net Carbon Zero Capacity Building and Church Building Support Officer national funding streams which will continue to fund the Net Zero Carbon Officer and the Church Building Support Officer respectively.

Synod is asked to NOTE this report.

DIOCESAN MISSION AND PASTORAL COMMITTEE – 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee is a representative body of clergy and laity, which is responsible for keeping the arrangements for pastoral care in the diocese under review and making recommendations to the Diocesan Bishop to change legal structures of benefices and parishes. It is assisted in this by three Area Committees who have delegated authority and are able to provide more detailed consideration to their respective Areas.

Alongside its statutory duties, the DMPC and AMPCs have considered a wide range of issues impacting on mission and ministry in the Dioceses such as, housing developments, fresh expressions of church, church planting and interim ministry.

Pastoral Schemes and Orders

Pastoral Schemes and Orders (inc Bishop's Pastoral Orders) are legal documents drawn up under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 to effect changes in the pastoral arrangements of benefices and parishes.

Pastoral Schemes and Orders were brought into effect in 2025 for the following cases:

- The union of the benefice and parish of Grays North with the benefice and parish of Stifford,
- The creation of a plurality comprising the benefice of Leigh-on-Sea, St Aidan and the benefice of Eastwood St Laurence and All Saints,
- The creation of a plurality comprising the benefice Stebbing with Lindsell & Great & Little Saling and the benefice of Broxted with Chickney & Tilty & Great & Little Easton,
- The creation of a plurality comprising the benefice Brentwood St George and the benefice of South Weald,
- The dissolution of the team ministry and benefice of Greenstead with Colchester, St Anne and the creation of a new benefice of St Andrew, St Anne and St Matthew, Colchester.

The DMPC also gave its agreement to commence formal consultations in the following cases:

- The union of the benefice of Roach Parishes and the benefice of Ashingdon with South Farnbridge, Canewdon and Paglesham and the creation of a new team ministry,
- The union of the benefice of Blackwater, the benefice of Kelvedon with Feering the benefice of Thurstable and Winstree and the benefice Wickham Bishops with Little Braxted and the creation of a new team ministry.

Closed Churches

The DMPC has oversight of consecrated church buildings no longer in use for public worship and finding suitable alternative uses. Work continued on finding potential new uses for a small, but significant, number of buildings in the process of use seeking and a couple of exploratory conversations were held with local church communities where they are considering their capacity to continue to maintain worship within the church building. St Mary the Virgin in Little Wakering (formerly a chapel of ease within the parish of Barling Magna with Little Wakering) formally closed for regular public worship on 1 January 2025 and a dialogue with a community group in relation to a potential new use for that building continues.

Bishop's Mission Orders

The DMPC must be consulted by the Diocesan Bishop before any decision is made which will create, amend or revoke Orders granted to specific mission initiatives within the diocese. In 2025 there were no decisions taken in respect of such Orders by the DMPC.

Suspension of the right of presentation

The Area sub-committees are responsible for monitoring suspensions and restrictions of presentation in their respective areas. Throughout the year the Area Committees endorsed proposals from the Deaneries for:

- 21 suspensions for a further period,
- 6 new suspensions,
- 7 suspensions lifted or allowed to lapse,

Full details on the benefices in the diocese can be found on the diocesan website at:

<https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/mission-pastoral-committee>

A full list of the Committee and Area sub-committee memberships can be found at:

<https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/directory/diocesan-synod-and-committee-members>

Canon Nathan Whitehead

Head of Service Delivery, Secretary to the DMPC and AMPCs

2025 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The DAC met on eight occasions last year in person in Chelmsford with attendance for some via Zoom. This has been working well since spring 2024 and will continue. The number of applications considered over the year was 169, broadly the same as last year. The number of List B applications dealt with by our archdeacons was 199, an increase of 27 over last year's total.

Fees for faculties have increased to £362.40 from £342.60.

Additional powers for the DAC under delegated authority have been established, with minor faculties now able to be processed without proceeding to full committee. This speeds up the process for many parishes and will also reduce the number of committee meetings to six per year, focusing committee time on complex applications.

We face the uncertain news that despite much campaigning, the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS) has ended as of February 2026. This will not be renewed but the Government have announced a new funding package for arts and culture, including places of worship. This is called the Places of Worship Renewal Fund, which will replace the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

Nineteen churches in the diocese were included in Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register for 2025. St Mary's Stebbing nears the end of its major project and is soon to be removed from the HAR (Restoration of St Mary's Church Stebbing - Way Forward), and we expect the same from the raft of projects due to start this year including Althorne St Andrew, Boreham St Andrew, Manuden St Mary, Blackmore St Laurence and Wanstead Christ Church. In terms of additions to the Register, Great Warley has been confirmed and the applications for Great Henny, Twinstead and St Catherine's Wickford's have been sent to Historic England; all are due to worsening structural movement connected to ground conditions and climate change.

The DAC continues to make its expertise available to parishes by offering site visits to discuss emerging proposals for works to church buildings or within their churchyards. Members attended 44 such site visits last year. The members of the committee, along with its honorary advisers, are able to offer specialist professional advice on many aspects of the care and repair of church buildings, both ancient and modern and are always keen to engage with parishes especially at an early stage of a project's development.

For the first time in 2025, we have held five Roadshows across the Diocese covering subjects such as insurance, fundraising and HLF applications, maintenance, heating solutions and the faculty process. Members of the Church Buildings Team have attended deanery synods and churchwardens' days, in order to meet parishes and give face-to-face support.

The DAC Secretary attended both the Church Buildings Council's annual conference for DAC Chairs and Secretaries in Sept 2025 (hosted by the Diocese of Derby) and Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors' Association (EASA) conference, held in Oxford in May 2025. Nathan Medhurst, the Diocesan Church Buildings Support Officer attended the CBSO conference in Hereford in July 2025.

In September, members of the committee and curates conducted their annual tour of churches, this time in the Archdeaconry of Stansted. Members visited St John Thaxted to look over their organ proposals, St Mary Henham where we saw their successful ordering project and new extension and finished the day at St Mary Great Dunmow where we discussed their future plans for reordering.

The Design Awards were not undertaken this year, the dwindling numbers of applicants in previous years having been noted. However, we hope to continue this on a triennial basis.

Development of the new Online Faculty System continues. Now called the Building Management Portal (BMP), a pilot rollout is planned for a group of smaller Dioceses, with a wider rollout for the remainder (including Chelmsford) planned for August 2026.

The committee was saddened to hear of the death of our longstanding and much-valued Registry Clerk, Melanie Tucker, who sadly died in April 2025. The committee also said farewell to retiring architect member Simon Marks and the Revd Colin Baldwin. Sarah Odell, our Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, will unfortunately leave us for pastures new in April 2025, but recruitment for her replacement has already begun.

In terms of new appointments, the committee also welcomed the appointment of our two new Vice Chairs – William Filmer-Sankey M.A. (Oxon), D.Phil., F.S.A., F.R.S.A., and archaeologist and Director of an engineering consultancy and Nigel Walter FRIBA, SCA, FRSA, an architect based in Cambridge. We have also appointed Anna Szot as Honorary Lighting adviser, a colleague of our former lighting adviser Bruce Kirk. Their firm has an impressive track record of lighting design in some of the most significant ecclesiastical buildings in the country.

Other personnel changes include the departure of Joanne Beaumont, our DAC Administrator for the last 16 years. In her stead, Jane Dellar has been appointed as Church Buildings Team Administrator and began work at the end of February 2026.

Malcolm Woods
Chair of the Chelmsford Diocesan Advisory Committee

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **AMENDING CANON NO 44**
Author: **HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY**
Date: **21 MARCH 2026**

I. INTRODUCTION

The General Synod approved Amending Canon No 44 at its February 2026 meeting. This is to be proclaimed at a meeting of each Diocesan Synod of every Diocese.

2. AMENDING CANON NO 44

The text of the Amending Canon and the Instrument of Enactment are attached and makes a couple of additional provisions to the Canons in relation to the inclusion of reference to Armed Forces Chaplains.

3. RECOMMENDATION

The Chair to read out the following text :

“I give notice that, at its February 2026 group of sessions, the General Synod resolved that Amending Canon No. 44 be made, promulgated and executed.

“Amending Canon No. 44 amends Canon C 8 to include provision for the exercise of ministry by Armed Forces chaplains.”

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

AMENDING CANON NO. 44 (MINISTERS' EXERCISE OF MINISTRY)

1. Canon C 8 (ministers exercising their ministry) is amended as set out in paragraphs 2 and 3.
2. In paragraph 2, after sub-paragraph (d) insert—
 - “(e) A minister who is licensed under section 2B of the Extra-Parochial Ministry Measure 1967 may perform, in the minister’s capacity as Armed Forces chaplain, the offices and services specified in the licence without any further authority from the bishop of the diocese in which those offices or services are performed.”
3. In paragraph 4, after “religious community” insert “, or as an Armed Forces chaplain,”.

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

CONSTITUTIONS AND CANONS ECCLESIASTICAL, maturely treated upon by the Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the General Synod of the Church of England in their Synod begun at Westminster in the Year of Our Lord Two thousand and twenty-one and in the seventieth year of the Reign of Our Late Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth the Second of Blessed and Glorious Memory and continued in being upon the Accession of Our Sovereign Lord King Charles the Third by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of His Other Realms and Territories King Head of the Commonwealth Defender of the Faith being a Canon entitled “Amending Canon No. 44 (Ministers’ Exercise of Ministry)” which received His Majesty’s Royal Assent and Licence on the second day of February Two thousand and twenty-six

WE, being the Presidents, the Prolocutor of the Convocation of Canterbury, the Prolocutor of the Convocation of York and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity of the said Synod do hereby declare and testify Our Consent to the said Canon entitled “Amending Canon No. 44 (Ministers’ Exercise of Ministry)” And in testimony of such Our Consent We have hereunto subscribed our names as hereafter follows:

DATED this tenth day of February in the Year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty-six and in the fourth year of the reign of Our Sovereign Lord King Charles the Third

+Sarah Cantuar:

PRESIDENT

+Stephen Ebor:

PRESIDENT

Luke Miller

PROLOCUTOR

Kate Wharton

PROLOCUTOR

Jamie Harrison

CHAIR, HOUSE OF LAITY

Alison Coulter

VICE-CHAIR, HOUSE OF LAITY

A.S. McGregor

REGISTRAR