

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

There will be a meeting of the Diocesan Synod on 6 June 2026 at 10:00am at
Chelmsford Cathedral

AGENDA

REGISTRATION AND COFFEE from 9:30am

OPENING WORSHIP at 10:00am

1. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD HELD ON 21 MARCH 2026

Minutes of the previous meeting attached

2. NOTICES

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

4. SUSTAINING MINISTRY

Paper DS(2026)08 attached

5. 2027 BUDGET AND SHARE SCHEME

Paper DS(2026)09 attached

The Chair of the CDBF to move that:

That this Synod:

- a) approve the Diocesan Budget for 2027 and the total Share of £16,602m.*
- b) note the forecast budget for years 2028 to 2031.*
- c) approves the apportionment of total Share according to the approved Share scheme, based on the number of posts and houses at the time of apportionment.*

COFFEE at approx. 11:40

6. QUESTIONS see notes for details

7. DBF AGM

See separate agenda

8. CARBON NET ZERO ACTION PLAN REPORT

Paper DS(2026)10 attached

9. RACIAL JUSTICE UPDATE

Paper DS(2026)11 attached

10. AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

Paper DS(2026)12 attached

The Chair to move that:

This Synod approve the amendment to Standing Order 41 iii) as set out in paper DS(2026)12.

11. BISHOP'S COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE AND DMPC REPORTS

Paper DS(2026)13 attached

CLOSE at approx. 13:35

NOTES

Questions: Five days prior notice is required. Questions for this meeting must therefore be received no later than 9am on Monday 1 June 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 166th meeting of the Synod held on
Saturday 21 March 2026 at Chelmsford Cathedral.**

PRESENT : The President and 94 Members

Opening worship was led by Canon Caroline Harding.

1. MINUTES OF DIOCESAN SYNOD HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. NOTICES

The Chair highlighted the notices on the day paper.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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

[Diocesan Synod, March 2026 - Presidential Address | The Diocese of Chelmsford](#)

4. CATHEDRAL VISION

The Chair invited the Dean of Chelmsford to address the Synod about the ongoing development of the Cathedral's vision.

The Dean spoke of the following points:

- Early on in her tenure the Cathedral Chapter, Wardens and staff had been called together to think through priorities.
- This had been spoken about in a number of different forums.
- The Honorary Canons and other groups had observed that there is no explicit reference to Jesus within the working drafts.
- The process includes reflecting upon the Cathedral statutes, recognising that the Cathedral is a charity. The need for care for fabric and the historic place of community is also acknowledged.
- There are mutual values which the Chapter want to convey, openness, generosity and inclusivity, so as to ensure that the Cathedral is a 'place of belonging'. A 'place of welcome' had been considered but as that involves a power imbalance that was less preferable.
- There is a desire to ensure that the Cathedral is also a place of creativity which mirrors the creativity of God, through art, music, liturgy and words.
- Another value which had come through was excellence in justice and compassion.
- The three areas of focus for the next four years are; theology and arts, learning and nature and sustainability.

The Dean then invited members of Synod to consider two questions in small groups. These were:

- How can the Cathedral, within its constraints, serve the diocese?
- How might the Cathedral's vision incorporate that?

Following the group discussions members were offered a chance to comment. If they were not able to do so verbally they were invited to email the Dean.

The following comments were captured:

- The vision as presented is great, but Jesus and mission are not present. The Dean responded that they are seeking the strapline for the vision and that is what sits in the centre.
- Is there an opportunity to match up excellence to cover gaps and restrictions in parishes. There are a decreasing number of Churches in the choral tradition, so perhaps that is one area where the Cathedral can offer leadership.
- What the Cathedral does really well is being a warm and accessible place. Perhaps there are opportunities for knitting together with diocesan office?
- It is easy to feel the Cathedral is distant. If we want to find a place of belonging, we have to want to belong. The Dean pointed out that the Cathedral pray for all the parishes through the cycle and handwritten letter should be arriving asking for specific matters that the parish would like be offered in prayer.
- There are two vibrant congregations that meet in the Cathedral.
- The diocesan deaf community always feel really welcome at the Cathedral.

5. 2025 DRAFT OUTTURN AND OUTLINE OF 2027 BUDGET & SHARE SCHEME

The Chair congratulated the Chief Operating Officer on their new enhanced role and invited him to address the Synod.

The Chief Operating Officer spoke to the paper circulated to synod members, drawing out the following key points:

- The audit of the 2025 accounts is not yet finalised but overall things are in a positive position. The projected deficit on the general fund is just under £500k, so not as serious as it was thought it might be.
- Income was in line with the budgeted expectations.
- Parish share payment was 84%, which was an improvement on 2024. The actual amount of improvement was £320k. The hard work PCCs are putting in so as to ensuring share payment was acknowledged. In spite of that, though, there remained a significant shortfall.
- On expenditure we were £500k below budget, primarily due to savings on costs of ministry arising from fewer curates, clergy vacancies etc. Obviously, this was detrimental in other ways, but it did improve the budget position.
- Work is being done in anticipation of a diocesan clergy conference and some money has been set aside for that.

- The nationally proposed stipends increase translates in Chelmsford as an 8% increase for incumbents and a 10.7% increase for curates. These are considerably higher than had been budgeted and will have a knock-on effect from this year onward.
- Other significant changes to national finances have been made such as the end of the Votes system and the significant decrease in LinC funding that the diocese will receive. The latter point is due to the diocese being assessed as more prosperous on average. Potentially we will not get any funding support from 2029. We will be receiving time limited support to alleviate the impact of the increases, but these will be tapered off and we will be financially worse off in the longer term. The current focus is on mitigation strategies in the medium term.
- Sustaining Ministry means only one of the changes to the parish share formula is being brought forward for consideration. This was in relation to how costs for future training are shared and would mean that parishes in benefices with non-stipendiary posts are not making a disproportionately higher contribution. The paper modelled the change and showed that there would be an increase of around 2% on parishes with a stipendiary post if the change was implemented.

The Chair of the CDBF moved 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.

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

Revd Neil Taylor (Epping Forest & Ongar)
 Revd Neil Dalley (Southend)
 Revd James Gilder (Redbridge)
 Revd John Dunnett (General Synod)
 Robert Andrews (Chelmsford)
 Andrew Holt (Witham)
 Mary Durlacher (Colchester and General Synod)

The comments and questions from members, as well as responses from the Chief Operating Officer, were:

- One member spoke from their experience as a House for Duty priest. In total it had costs £11k to train and over the last 9 years the parishes they are responsible for have contributed £140k toward training a successor. This is out of kilter. We will need further discussion on parish share for sustainability as the current scheme will not enable us to become financially sustainable. We also need to be very careful on the 93% messaging as some parishes who can pay more are taking that literally.
- The allocation is decided partly by the number of people in the parish. Why can't training costs also be allocated in accordance with that. The proposed change will hurt parishes that are smaller but growing and larger parishes who will paying the same. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the split of the PM3 cost is on the

basis of congregation size. Making a change to shift clergy training costs to being based on the size of congregation doesn't feel right. The point on the potential impact upon growing churches was noted.

- Noting the figures in the deficit and shortfall do they mean that we have been asking parishes for more than we need to? The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that this was not the case. As the figures are set out in a profit and loss format the costs are split out in an effort to balance the budget and ensure we ask the right amount for the anticipated shortfall.
- Is the average share ask of a stipendiary priest the amount which is stated in the paper? It was confirmed that £71k is the average cost of an incumbent taking into account mutual support. Without mutual support the actual cost is around £90k.
- Would the change mean parishes who have 0.5 posts will be paying less?
- Where there are clergy shared across multiple benefices will we be paying extra for a full time priest and less for a part time priest? It was confirmed that in the context of a multi-parish benefice the costs will remain the same. Where a priest is serving on a part time basis there will be a reduction. This won't affect where priests are shared across multiple benefices.
- Should further work be done the proposed amendment given the level of confusion?

The Chair proposed that the motion be split into two parts, a) and b). The mover of the motion provided their consent to proceed in that way.

Part a) of the motion passed unanimously.

Part b) was carried with a clear majority.

6. OFFICIAL WARNING BY CHARITY COMMISSION: UPDATE

The Chair invited the Chief Executive, Michaela Southworth, to speak to the item. In her verbal presentation the following points were explained:

- This updated was being given to members of the Synod as they were members of the charitable company.
- As members may have heard in the press the Charity Commission had served an Official Warning upon the CDBF on 9 January 2026.
- This followed a 12 month process of interaction in respect of a Serious Incident Report raised with Charity Commission.
- The five actions given by the Charity Commission were read out and it was confirmed that a lengthy response had been sent within the 2 month period.
- It was noted that members should be mindful of the increasing attention from the Charity Commission. PCCs are charities whether they are registered or not. Members were encouraged to be particularly aware of serious incidents and raise reports accordingly.
- The CDBF had introduced a 'near miss' reporting system which would be reported to CDBF trustees so they can make decisions and have oversight.

The Chair opened the item up to questions from members and pointed out that there are issues relating to confidentiality and therefore it may not be possible to answer all questions. The following questions were recorded:

- In the event of a serious incident trustees and officers are often aware of different aspects, how should this be handled? The Chief Executive responded that there is a need to ensure trustees have suitable briefing. Handling confidentiality is really difficult especially where victims and survivors are involved. Therefore, reporting needs to be suitably anonymised. Trustees can also delegate decision making to a small group of trustees. There is a national conversation taking place about how this works in practice.
- Is there a chance of a one sider to explain this to PCCs? The Chief Executive referred members to the Charity Commission website as extensive guidance is available there. The Chair also noted that General Synod had recently agreed to issue more guidance on the legal obligations of PCC members. Progress is being made and it is hoped something will be sent out after Easter to tie in with post APCM actions.
- Is it possible to clarify what, if any, liability exists for Synod members? It was confirmed that the liability sits with the trustees as a corporate body. CDBF members are akin to shareholders and hold no liability. However, it is important to note that they will hold liability if a serious incident arises in a PCC context.
- Anticipating the INEQE audit and the different expectations about safeguarding, do we have full and complete confidence in INEQE's understanding of what has happened? The Chief Executive confirmed that we do have confidence, we will not be the first audit INEQE will have carried out. This matter will be covered in a later item and the Director of Safeguarding will speak to this as part of her presentation.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive, the Director of Safeguarding, the Diocesan Registrar, the Director of Communications and Media and the Diocesan Bishop for all their work on this matter.

7. QUESTIONS

Q1. Sandie Turner (Saffron Walden and General Synod) to ask the Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education:

In June 2022 Diocesan Synod unanimously adopted the Covenant for the Care and Well-being of Clergy. Given that our pastors and teachers are to “equip the saints (God’s people) for the work of ministry”, Eph 4: 11b-12, and given that most of our churches could not thrive without the committed sacrificial work of lay men and women (from cleaning the loos, to leading prayers; from safeguarding to running children’s work; from leading home groups to paying Parish Share etc), what consideration has been given to extend the online resources available for Clergy well-being to our lay people?

A.

Our parishes thrive through the committed and sacrificial ministry of lay people. Seeking ways to establish healthy rhythms together and valuing the gift of each other’s service is vital.

Since January 2026 the Diocese of Chelmsford has provided the Licenced Ministers Assistance Programme, via the organisation Health Assured, to all Licenced Lay Ministers licenced by an Area Bishop. The Licenced Ministers Assistance Programme includes access to counselling, and health and wellbeing support. Details of this provision are available on the diocesan website under ministerial wellbeing. Licenced Lay Ministers are encouraged to access their annual Continuing Ministerial Development grant for training and retreats to support their wellbeing. Additionally, Deanery

Wellbeing Champions, who comprise both lay and ordained ministers, provide valued support and advocacy for those they serve alongside.

As the diocese engages in discerning - through prayer, listening and discussion - ways in which we might sustain ministry into the future, we hope that our desire to offer more to support the wellbeing of our lay ministers, might be realised through careful stewardship and the generosity of response of parishes across our diocese.

Supplementary

Q. Could we make some resources available to lay people who are not in authorised ministries?

A. There was no reason why this could not be done. PCCs should also look for opportunities for parishes to support lay people. A conference on this area had been held fairly recently.

Q2. Revd Mark Wallace (Colchester and General Synod) to ask the Chief Operating Officer:

What assessment has the DBF made of the VAT risk identified at General Synod (Q197, Feb 2026) if Parish Share is presented as directly linked to clergy provision, and what guidance is in place to ensure diocesan policy and communications avoid implying such conditionality?

A.

It is important to reassure Synod that Parish Share is, in law, a gift from PCCs to the DBF, not a payment for services. Parish Share assessments are not an invoice, nor do they create any enforceable debt—both of which would normally be required for a VAT-able supply. In addition, the DBF does not itself “supply” ministry. Clergy are licensed by the Bishop, not provided as a service by the DBF, and the DBF has no ability to withhold ministry in exchange for Parish Share contributions. These facts are central to why Parish Share is not regarded as a VAT-able supply.

Our Parish Share calculation seeks only to share the costs that we, as a diocesan family, have collectively agreed to bear. If Parish Share shortfall remains high, the Diocese will be unable to meet its statutory obligations to pay stipends, pensions and housing costs. National Church funding for this purpose is limited, so these costs are financed almost entirely by the goodwill and contribution of parishes. Without those contributions, the Diocese would quickly reach a point at which stipends could not be paid.

Supplementary

Q. What guidance may be in place in case we accidentally imply that VAT applies?

A. The NCIs have committed to providing advice on this point. We believe the position is clear and once have the national advice we will then consider our next steps.

Q3. Katia D'Arcy Cumber (General Synod and Thurrock) to ask the Head of Service Delivery:

General Synod paper GS 2431 - General Synod Elections 2026: Seat Allocation - indicated that the number of clergy eligible to vote in the 2026 election (almost exclusively clergy licensed to parishes) highlighted a reduction of 25% (from 481 to 362) over a period of six years. Of this number, how many of the 119 were posts that were vacant, awaiting new appointments, rather than closed posts?

A.

Regrettably it is not possible to provide the information sought by the questioner. The numbers certified to the national Synod Office prior to an election to the General Synod are based upon a report which is not retained. Even if the reports were to hand, it would have been impractical to provide an accurate answer. To do so we would have needed to compare positions on a specific date in 2019 with those on a specific date in 2025, working out midterm changes and establishing whether or not posts had been closed or changed during that time window. Needless to say, this would be a significant undertaking requiring a substantial time input from Bishops, Archdeacons and several staff at the diocesan office.

Q. Could the number of current vacancies be confirmed?

A. The number was not available to hand, but it will be supplied to the questioner after the meeting.

Q4. Revd Andrew Bellis (Havering) to ask the Diocesan Bishop:

At the time of the last episcopal vacancy, the Diocesan Statement of Needs stated that this diverse diocese expressed a warm acceptance of women in all three orders of ministry and also of the contribution of the Bishops of Richborough and Maidstone (since continued by +Ebbsfleet) to our shared diocesan life within our clear commitment to the principle of Mutual Flourishing. How is our Diocesan senior leadership actively reassuring and facilitating Resolution Parishes and complementarian clergy to continue and flourish in the present and future exercise of their ordained ministry according to their theological convictions and integrity, including through proper access to ministry of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet, appointed for this provision?

A.

As Diocesan Bishop I have been keen repeatedly to assure all our parishes that they have a valued place within the life of the Diocese regardless of different views on a number of issues, including the ordained ministry of women. At my invitation, both the Bishops of Richborough and Ebbsfleet are Assistant Bishops in the Diocese and I and the Area Bishops meet with them in person once or twice a year as well as ensuring lines of communication are open between us as needed for the remainder of the time. The Archdeacons also work with both bishops when opportunities arise, including in appointment processes and pastoral matters as appropriate.

At the request of parishes which have passed a Resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests, and according to the Five Guiding Principles, I have always been happy to give my blessing for the Provincial Episcopal Visitors to conduct Confirmation and Ordination services. Myself and other members of the Bishop's Leadership Team try to be present, especially for Ordination services, to demonstrate mutual respect and reciprocity, and to indicate that we are all part of one diocesan family. We have also actively encouraged vocations and supported training opportunities for Resolution parishes.

Supplementary

Q. The Bishop of Ebbsfleet has been graciously given permission to lead Ordinations, what plans are there to maintain this?

A. There are no plans to change the current arrangement, and it will be maintained. We will do our best to act according to the five guiding principles and ensure there continue to be processes for appropriate provision in place

Q. Would it be possible for the Chrism Mass to be promoted in Diocesan communications?

A. The Chrism Mass is a regional event and the Communications team would be open to promoting it but, would need to be made aware of the details. The Diocesan Bishop and other members of BLT will be in attendance. The lack of notification of the service in previous years has been raised with the Bishop of Richborough.

Q5. Tim Valder-Hogg (Epping Forest and Ongar) to ask the Chief Operating Officer:

Is it a current aim of the Diocesan Property Committee to sell clergy housing not currently used by clergy to boost the diocesan finances?

A.

The Diocesan Property Committee does not hold an aim of selling clergy housing to “boost” diocesan finances. However, as part of the Budget, approved each year by Diocesan Synod, DBF trustees have agreed that properties not required for foreseeable ministry needs may be sold, with proceeds reinvested. This ensures capital is protected and grown to support stipends in the long term.

This means that houses are not being sold to fund day-to-day running costs; instead they are sold to re-endow the diocese for the future. Growing the endowment will generate higher investment income which will be used to subsidise the costs of stipends through the mutual support fund, which will makes Parish Share more affordable and will sustain a higher number of stipendiary posts than could otherwise be maintained.

Supplementary

Q. When houses are sold is it policy to reinvest the proceeds into other properties so they are maintained, or are housing numbers permanently reduced?

A. If the house is a designated parsonage and there is potential need for a replacement the money is set aside. If reorganisation means the parsonage house is no longer needed the money is transferred to the Diocesan Pastoral Account. Proceeds from sales of non-parsonage houses are put into a designated capital fund.

Q. Are the proceeds of clergy housing restricted and if so, how?

A. The proceeds are only restricted when a parsonage house is sold and there is an ongoing need to provide. Otherwise, the proceeds are not generally restricted and are placed into a designated fund.

Q6. Mary Durlacher (Colchester and General Synod) to ask the Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education:

Given the reports of renewed interest amongst young people in learning more about the Christian faith, will the Diocese join in welcoming this new national initiative Oak Hill College has announced in partnership with the Church of England to equip incumbent ministers to develop thriving children's and youth ministry in their parishes as described below, and confirm its support for any incumbents wishing to take this up in their parishes?

A.

In 2025 the Church of England Leadership Development Team, together with a group of Theological Education Institutions (TEIs), Cuddesdon, Trinity, and Ridley in the southern province, launched the Incumbents Leadership Programme to support work with children and young people for parishes who already had established work in this area. Parishes were identified by the Development Team through Statistics for Mission returns and Dioceses were asked to invite the incumbents of those parishes to join the Leadership Programme. Oak Hill has joined the group of TEIs providing the Leadership Programme in 2026.

In 2025 nine incumbents from the Diocese of Chelmsford joined the programme through Ridley, with six incumbents expressing interest for 2026. Diocesan and Area teams are currently working to invite identified incumbents to join the Leadership Programme during 2026.

In addition, to support our parishes that do not have established work with children and young people, in 2025-26 our Mustard Seed Team have delivered Youthscape's Launchpad programme in the Colchester and Bradwell episcopal areas, with delivery in Barking planned for later this year.

8. DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY PANEL: ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair invited the Director of Safeguarding to present to Synod. In her presentation the following points were made:

- A graph showing duty calls to the team had been included in the paper, which shows a significant year on year increase. Most of these calls are from members of Churches in the diocese.
- The amount of advice and guidance given by the team is huge.

- The team also now have to deliver national safeguarding training and have fidelity to that model. We can add to it, but mustn't undermine it. Training sessions are limited to 20 people at a time, so this is a resource heavy piece of work. 59 different sessions were delivered in 2025.
- In respect of the earlier question on INEQE they are already having conversations with the Charity Commission. INEQE are coming to look at statutory safeguarding, and we are trying to get a good grip on their expectations. The process is not dissimilar to an OFSTED inspection; save for the fact it is an audit not an inspection.
- The focus of the INEQE audit is this diocese as a whole, not limited to the safeguarding team, office staff or senior clergy. We therefore need to think collectively.
- It is expected that the auditors will find things and we need to accept the findings graciously.
- We have done really well in past audits, in one case being one of a few dioceses that did not have a case which needed to be reopened.
- The areas of focus are:
 - National Safeguarding Standards
 - Healthy Church Culture
 - Progress since Past Case Review (PCR) 2
 - Progress since SCIE Audit
- The auditors will seek to identify strengths.
- The timeline for the audit was shared. The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) is to be appointed, but it is intended that this will be Danielle Law. There will be a need to backfill their role though and fortunately CDBF trustees have approved the addition of two posts to the team.
- The process includes 360 audits and members of Synod may be asked to be part of that. November 2026 is the deadline for submission of written evidence. This would then be followed by an on-site audit.
- In terms of progress so far, the following steps have been carried out:
 - A National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS) 'Health Check' has been completed – this identified that the Diocesan Safeguarding Team is using the NSCMS to a very high standard.
 - Work with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) has begun to complete detailed self-assessments using the National Safeguarding Standards and form a working plan.
 - Communication about the audit has now started and will continue now for all those across the Diocese through updates and briefings moving forward.
 - Staffing changes, including recruitment within the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

The Chair invited questions from members. The following questions were asked:

- Given recent changes to the MDR process on safe and healthy cultures would the Director of Safeguarding encourage people to make full use of that? The Director of Safeguarding confirmed that they would and that the MDR process can be part of the supporting resource for the audit process.
- What is the experience of parishes going to be? Some parishes will be visited and others will be involved in forums. More information will be provided as the year progresses.
- Given the amount of calls the team receive would it be possible to confirm areas of calls which they should not be getting? It was confirmed that this would be difficult as it is not

always possible to know how things may develop. The team will signpost. It could be counterproductive to set out what should not be submitted as a safeguarding call.

- The report focuses on some things, but less on voices of survivors and how they are incorporated. How does this inform the work of the team? It was confirmed that the team follow the guidance on survivor participation. We are fortunate to have a survivor of clergy abuse on DSAP. Engaging survivors can be a challenge as they differ in what they seek and some don't want anything to do with Church. The team also seek involvement from other charities and organisations.

9. SCHEMES FOR DEANERY SYNOD LAY REPRESENTATION OF BMOS

The Chair invited the Head of Service Delivery to speak to the paper. In his short presentation he explained that the Church Representation Rules allow for mission initiatives with Bishop's Mission Orders to be given formal lay representation on a Deanery Synod in the same way a parish does. Members had been sent two draft schemes which, if approved, would do that for both Christchurch Three Mills and Crossway.

The Chair moved 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.

There being no members who wanted to speak in the debate the Chair went straight to the vote on the motion.

The motion was carried.

10. GENERAL SYNOD REPORT

The Chair explained that due to issues with public transport Glynne Williams was unfortunately not able to attend the meeting to speak to her report. Members were encouraged to forward any questions they may have by email.

The Chair invited members to note the written report. Members noted the report.

11. BISHOP'S COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE AND DMPC REPORTS

The Chair highlighted the report. Members noted the report.

12. AMENDING CANON NO 44

The Chair explained that this Amending Canon had come about as a result of an anomaly in respect of the licensing of Armed Forces Chaplains. Given the speed of redeployment this can give rise to complications with diocesan processes. Therefore General Synod have made provision for this with an Amending Canon.

The Chair then 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.

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

DRAFT

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **Travelling Well Together: Sustaining Ministry Update**
Author: **Dean of Mission, Ministry, & Education.**
Date: **6 June 2026**

I. INTRODUCTION

At Diocesan Synod 22 March 2025 Paper DS(2025)01 “Sustaining Ministry” was presented to Synod by the Diocesan Secretary and Dean of Mission, Ministry, & Education. DS(2025)01 reflected on the March 2013 paper DS(13) titled “Reimagining Ministry” and identified the challenge in 2025: How can we be an enduring missional presence in Essex and East London in the times and within the context in which God has placed us?

Outlining the challenges of reducing congregations, falling ordinand numbers, clergy wellbeing, church buildings and our parochial system, and Parish Share shortfall and resulting financial deficit, Paper DS(2025)01 proposed a process of shared discernment, giving local agency in decision making and discernment, to discern how we will sustain ministry beyond 2026.

At Diocesan Synod on 22 November 2025 Paper DS(2025)13 updated Synod with details of the planned 100 Days of Prayer to be followed by 100 Days of Listening, shaping Sustaining Ministry as an act of shared discernment, based on prayer, reflection, and listening.

- 18 Feb 2026 to 29 May 2026: 100 Days of Prayer
- 20 May 2026 to 05 Sept 2026: Pause for reflection
- 06 Sept to 15 Dec 2026: 100 Days of Listening

2. SUSTAINING MINISTRY 100 DAYS OF PRAYER: UPDATE

Following discussion at Synod in November 2025, the Archdeacon of Colchester, Dean of Chelmsford, and Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education, developed a series of resources to support the 100 Days of Prayer, which were made available via the diocesan website and various communication channels.

The Director of Communication has provided the following analysis of engagement with 100 Days of Prayer:

Activity to encourage engagement with 100 Days of Prayer

- Web page containing:
 - Video invitation to 100 Days of Prayer from Bishop Guli
 - Introduction to Travelling Well Together Sustaining Ministry
 - Travelling Well Together - Sustaining Ministry prayer by Bishop Guli
 - Weekly 100 Days of Prayer Calendar with themes, prayers and liturgy
 - Lent Course with associated series of 6 videos (for use during Lent or at any other time during the 100 Days of Prayer)
 - Series of bible study sessions
 - Posters and flyers to help churches and worshipping communities promote the 100 Days of Prayer and resources
- Weekly item in the View focused on the Weekly theme and prayers
- Integration of weekly prayer themes into March – May edition of We Pray and Weekly Sermon Video contributors invited to incorporate 100 Days of Prayer into their sermons
- Regular posting of prayers, resources and video introduction across Diocesan Social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X, Bluesky).

Engagement with 100 Days of Prayer – 1 January to 15 May 2026

- 6,321 visits to the webpage*
- 848 active users of the web page (people visiting and spending time exploring the content of the webpage) *
- 3rd most visited web page on the website.
- Most visits to the web page were a result of search or people already on the website navigating to the page. The View was the most popular proactive communication people clicked through from.*
- 100 Days of Prayer Lent Course Video Wk1 was the 4th most watched video on Diocesan YouTube Channel (331 views). Bishop Guli's invitation video was 6th most watched (301 views). Most watched video during the period was a speech by Bishop Guli on Iran in the House of Lords (1,011 views). 34 videos published during the period.
- Bishop Guli's invitation video on Facebook is the 3rd most watched Facebook video, watched 1,347 times by 723 people. Rev Will Rose Moore's video for the Young Vocations campaign is the most watched 1589 views by 1039 people). (34 videos have been published on Facebook in this period).

*Stats exclude visits on devices where certain privacy settings have been applied, so total numbers of visits and visitors will be higher.

Over the next few weeks, the 100 Days of Prayer resources will be edited for use beyond the 100 Days of Prayer period. This is to encourage communities who have not yet heard of the 100 Days of Prayer, or have not had the opportunity to engage, to access the resources to support their local prayerful discernment about sustaining ministry in their context.

During the 100 Days of Prayer the Bishops Leadership Team (BLT) have met online weekly to pray together, utilising the weekly prayer themes and Sustaining Ministry prayer resources. This journey of shared prayer has been fruitful for us as a BLT, and we will continue to meet in this way beyond the 100 Days of Prayer. On the Sustaining Ministry webpage people can share their prayer with others through a clickable link. Please do encourage your parish communities to continue in prayer and share their prayers for our shared future.

3. SUSTAINING MINISTRY 100 DAYS OF LISTENING: PLANNING

Introducing Sustaining Ministry on the diocesan website, Bishop Guli writes;

“Since the early days of the Church, Christians have lived with change. Indeed, without change the life of the Church would likely stagnate. So in every generation, the people of God are called prayerfully to discern how we are to respond to new challenges and opportunities; how we are to be God’s people in our own particular time and place and how we are to use the resources God has generously provided, so that we might be a missional presence in the communities we serve.”

The 100 Days of Listening are scheduled to take place between 06 Sept to 15 Dec 2026. The aim during this time is to enable parish and deanery communities to prayerfully reflect on God’s calling to them to be his people in this time and place through shared discussion and listening to one another. The aim of this act of listening is to help us discern how we need to change to be an enduring missional presence in Essex and East London in the times and context in which God has placed us.

Over the next two months, resources are being developed to enable communities to talk and listen to one another as they discuss the challenges we share across the life of the Diocese of Chelmsford, as outlined in Paper DS(2025)01, which include, reducing congregations (bringing increasing demands on fewer people), declining numbers of ordained vocations (potentially leading to longer vacancies), supporting clergy wellbeing (serving smaller congregations but larger populations), church buildings and our parochial system (fewer people maintaining more buildings), and parish share shortfall (impacting the provision and support of parish ministry).

The purpose of the 100 Days of Listening, as with the 100 Days of Prayer, is to help us prayerfully recognise the challenges we face in our particular contexts and begin to discern together how we might begin to change in the light of those challenges and the resources God has given us to be an enduring missional presence.

4. SYNOD DISCUSSION

In order to support the preparation of resources to support the 100 Days of Prayer of Travelling Well Together: Sustaining Ministry, Synod is asked to discuss two key questions.

Q1. Are there lessons we can learn from the 100 Days of Prayer to support our preparation for the 100 Days of Listening?

Q2. Parishes, worshipping communities, and deaneries, are encouraged to weave the 100 Days of Listening into their day-to-day life, whether through small groups, youth groups, PCCs, and Deanery Synods. What other points of meeting would you identify that could be resourced?

Feedback will be sought from Synod during this discussion to inform the continuing development of Travelling Well Together: Sustaining Ministry.

5. RECOMMENDATION

Synod is asked to NOTE this report.

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **2027 BUDGET AND SHARE SCHEME**

Author: **CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

Date: **20 JUNE 2026**

1. INTRODUCTION

This report proposes a General Fund budget for 2027 for Synod approval, together with an indicative budget for years 2028 to 2031 (these are for information and not approval).

2. CURRENT FINANCIAL CONTEXT

In 2025, the General Fund recorded a deficit of c.£0.5m, which represents a £0.5m improvement against the original budget.

However, this continues a pattern of successive annual deficits, with cumulative losses of c.£1.35m over recent years, reducing General Fund reserves to £4.5m. This is below the Board's target reserves level of £5.3m, and therefore remains a matter of concern.

The principal driver of the 2025 deficit continues to be Parish Share income, which was received at approximately 83% of the amount requested. Alongside this, the Diocese has been managing a reduction in national church funding, with 2025 representing the final year of transition funding following the removal of the Darlow formula.

Despite continued pressure on the cost base—particularly from above-budget stipend increases, wider inflationary pressures, and reduced LInC funding—early indications suggest an improved General Fund position in 2026 relative to budget. This improvement is largely attributable to the introduction of the new time limited Transition Funding grant from the Archbishops' Council, alongside the removal of diocesan apportionment (Votes 2–5).

Whilst this short-term improvement is welcome, the medium- to long-term financial outlook remains challenging. The underlying cost base has increased, and Transition Funding will taper over time. As such, a sustained improvement in Parish Share contributions over the next 5–7 years will be required if the Diocese is to maintain ministry at broadly current levels.

The 2025 budget had assumed a General Fund deficit of £1.0m, including a Parish Share shortfall of £2.3m. Actual outturn was £0.5m, £0.5m better than budget. This favourable variance reflects a combination of:

- Lower than planned expenditure, primarily due to clergy vacancy savings and reduced interest costs; and

- Higher than expected income, including rental income from surplus housing and stronger investment returns.

Further detail is provided in the Summarised Financial Statements.

3. 2027 BUDGET SUMMARY

A deficit budget of £144k is proposed. A summary of the budget is given below. A more detailed breakdown is included at the end of this paper.

	2027 Budget £'000	2026 Budget £'000	Change %
Income			
Parish Share Allocation	16,602	15,622	
less share shortfall	(2,490)	(2,031)	
	14,112	13,591	3.8%
Mutual Support Fund	5,636	5,607	
Archbishops Council Time Limited funding	1,086	0	
Income mitigating shortfall	1,260	1,162	
Total Income	22,095	20,360	8.5%
Expenditure			
Current Ministry Costs	10,405	9,322	
Current Parish Housing Costs	4,318	4,161	
Future Ministry Costs	3,182	3,286	
Parish Support	2,790	2,611	
Other costs	1,544	1,848	
Total expenditure	22,238	21,229	4.8%
Surplus / (deficit)	(144)	(869)	(83.5)%

4. INCOME AND THE MUTUAL SUPPORT FUND

Parish Share

The main source of income remains the generosity of individuals and parishes through Share. It is proposed that the budgeted Share income for 2027 is set at £16.6m. This is 6% higher than in 2026.

The average share request per stipendiary post is budgeted at £74,687, which is a 2.8% increase on 2026, and is lower than the inflationary increase built into the budget for stipends, housing and other costs. However, it should be noted that due to the change in the way that PM3 (Future Training) costs are allocated, as agreed at March Synod, the average increase for a Parish with a full time stipendiary priest will be around 5.3%, whereas parishes with part time or House for Duty priests will in general see a decrease in parish share requested.

Share Shortfall

Share shortfall was around 9% before the Covid19 pandemic, but grew to 18% during the pandemic. Despite an improvement in Share payment % in 2025 Share Shortfall was still at around 17%, and this remains the key factor as to why there is a General Fund deficit.

Parish Share shortfall has been budgeted at £2.49m for 2027, or 15% of the share assessment. This is 2 percentage points higher than the assumption built into the 2026 budget and reflects a more realistic and achievable target, particularly in the context of an overall increase in the amount of Parish Share requested.

Beyond 2027, Parish Share contribution rates are budgeted to increase gradually to 91% by 2031. Over the longer term, a contribution rate of 93% remains the objective as the time-limited grant funding winds down during 2032 and 2033. It is anticipated that this smoother, more gradual trajectory of improving contribution rates will be more achievable, particularly as deaneries increasingly develop and implement affordable deanery plans.

Mutual Support Fund

The main sources of income for the Mutual Support Fund (MSF) are National Church support and Diocesan Investment income. The MSF reduces the amount of Share requested from parishes.

For 2027, £5.6m of funds are budgeted to be available to reduce the request made to parishes. This is a 0.5% increase on 2026. Points to note include:

- Following the funding review LInC funding for Chelmsford has sadly been reduced by 59% with £262k allocated for 2027.
- Investment income available to the MSF has been increased by 9.1% to £2.838m. The Total Return Accounting policy continues to allow a good level of support to be drawn from the Stipends Endowment fund whilst ensuring the capital value of the fund remains protected from inflation. The increase has helped to offset the loss of LInC funding
- £0.79m has been allocated from the City Churches Fund grant to support stipend costs in the relevant 5 London boroughs, an increase of 3.5% on 2026.
- The amount of grant set aside for the Mission Opportunity Fund (MOF) has been increased by 3.5% to £0.411m. The use of these funds will be determined by deaneries.
- Parochial fees have been reduced by 12.1% reflecting a general downward trend in fees received
- Vacant posts - A vacancy rate of 17% has been assumed. This reflects the expectation that recruitment challenges will persist, meaning vacancy levels are likely to remain higher than desired over the next few years.

	2027 Budget £'000	2026 Budget £'000	Change %
National Church Support Deprived Communities (LInC)	262	632	(58.6)%
CCF Support for Stipends in 5 borough's	786	759	3.5%
MOF funding from MSF share contributions	(411)	(397)	3.5%
Investment Income (supporting Parish Share)	2,838	2,600	9.1%
Income from Statutory Fees	700	833	(16.0)%
Less Parochial Fees Paid	(150)	(171)	(12.1)%
Vacant Posts	1,611	1,350	19.4%
Total Mutual Support Fund	5,636	5,607	0.5%

Income mitigating shortfall

Within the 2027 budget, a proportion of the additional investment income generated through Total Return Accounting has been set aside to mitigate the anticipated Parish Share shortfall.

In recognition of the ongoing financial pressure facing parishes, the majority of investment income (£2.84m) continues to be allocated to the Mutual Support Fund, with a smaller proportion (£0.89m) retained centrally to offset Share shortfall. In addition, net rental income from surplus housing (£0.43m) is also applied towards mitigating the shortfall.

The Diocese will also receive £1.086m of time-limited Transition Funding from the Archbishops' Council in 2027, which is a significant factor in reducing the overall budgeted deficit.

The anticipated Parish Share shortfall for 2027 is £2.490m. After applying £2.346m of income set aside to mitigate this, the residual gap of £0.144m represents the budgeted General Fund deficit.

5. EXPENDITURE

The 2026 budget includes expenditure of £22.2m, 4.8% higher than the 2026 budget.

The majority of expenditure continues to be the direct costs of parochial ministry and future ministry training (ordinands and curates). A total of £17.9m is included in the budget towards these costs, which is £1.3m more than the Parish Share allocation.

Inflation:

- Cost inflation is included at 3.5% increase compared to 2026 budgets reflecting CPI forecasts

Stipends, salaries and pensions:

- Stipends and salary costs represent the dominant portion of expenditure. These costs are allocated across all sections of the budget according to the role of the person.
- For 2027, stipends and salaries are budgeted to increase by 3.5%, from April. The 2027 budget also includes the full costs of the 8% 2026 stipend increase which was only budgeted at 4% in the 2026 budget.
- There is still considerable uncertainty about inflation, so the budget figures are estimates at this stage.
- Actual stipend and salary increases for 2027 will be agreed by Finance Committee based on the National Stipend benchmark level National Church.

Clergy posts and Direct costs of Ministry:

- The average number of parochial stipendiary posts for 2027 have been set at 222.3. This reflects a move away from the previous target of 215 clergy posts and is now set at the expected level of posts, based upon existing deanery plans, for 2027.
- The number of houses provided to stipendiary and House for Duty clergy is budgeted at 252.

- The budget also includes an average of 27 House for duty posts, 90 self-supporting ministers, and 90 Licensed Lay workers.
- Direct costs of Ministry (PM1 & PM2) are budgeted to increase significantly to £14.723m (£13.483m in 2026). This reflects the increase in stipends as well as the increase in the total number of clergy.

Future Ministry Training and Curates:

- Investment in vocations continues, with a budgeted average of 24.0 stipendiary curates during 2027. This represents a reduction from the 2026 budget and reflects lower than expected curate intake in 2025 and 2026.
- The Diocese continues to aim to appoint up to 12 curates each year; however, the budget has been based on more realistic assumptions to avoid including provision for posts that are unlikely to be filled.
- Future Ministry Training and Curates costs have decreased 3% to £3.182m, mainly as a result of savings on stipends linked to fewer curates overall.

Services to Parishes and Other Costs:

- The total cost of Parish Services has decreased by (3%) to £4.333m (£4.459m in 2026), this is a significant saving considering that level of inflation built into the budget and reflects our focus to reduce parish support costs charged through Parish Share wherever possible.

6. 2025 PARISH SHARE ALLOCATION

Parish share allocation is the total of the amounts parishes, through deaneries, are initially asked to contribute. Share allocation is typically higher than the budgeted parish share income. This is because the number of parochial posts at the time of apportionment (in July 2026), is higher than the number of posts anticipated by the budget (which is the average across the 2027 year).

The Parish Share scheme initially apportions share amounts based on the number of posts currently in place. This has the effect of increasing the total share allocated by the fraction of current posts divided by 2027 budgeted posts.

2027 total allocation cannot yet be confirmed, but will be as follows:

- For stipend costs: allocation will be higher than budget by the number of stipends paid at the time of allocation, divided by the number of stipends in the budget (which is 215.0 stipendiary posts, the average expected throughout 2027).
- For housing costs: allocation will be higher than budget by the number of houses occupied by clergy at the time of allocation, divided by the number of houses in the budget (which is 253, the average expected throughout 2027).

Parishes which have a change in parochial ministry provision after the Share amounts are calculated will receive a changed Share amount once the new ministry provision has been agreed by the parish, Area Dean and Archdeacon has been confirmed in writing to the diocesan office.

7. 5 YEAR BUDGET FORECAST

A five year budget forecast has been prepared. A high level summary is included at the end of this paper.

The forecast was prepared to consider whether the deficit position might get better or worse, and so whether we are becoming sustainable or not. This is important to check that we are not heading for insolvency. Without a longer term forecast it might be difficult to have confidence to approve a deficit budget for 2027.

Overall the General Fund budget moves from a projected deficit of £(144)k in 2027 to a surplus of £160k in 2031.

The deficit in 2027 is lower than previously anticipated in the forward projections from last year's budget, primarily due to the receipt of a time-limited transition grant from the Archbishops' Council (£1.086m). This grant helps to offset increases in expenditure, particularly those arising from higher stipend costs. Improvements to the bottom line in subsequent years are driven by the following three main factors:

- a. **Focussed reductions in costs**, with FTE clergy numbers forecast to drop from 222.3 in 2027 to 218.3 in 2030. It should be noted that this represents a move away from the previous 'target' of 215, reflecting a more measured and achievable approach.
- b. **Total return** accounting, combined with the ongoing sale of surplus housing. The contribution from total return is expected to be £3,673k in the 2027 budget, rising to a forecast £4,625k per annum by 2031.
- c. **Parish Share payments are assumed to increase from a budgeted 85% in 2027 to 91% by 2031**. This represents a significant but more realistic improvement and provides a smoother trajectory for reducing the funding shortfall. By contrast, the 2026 budget assumed an increase from 87% to 93% by 2030; the revised profile is therefore challenging but feels more achievable.

8. MOTION

Synod is invited to consider the following motion:

That this Synod:

- a) *approve the Diocesan Budget for 2027 and the total Share of £16,602m.*
- b) *note the forecast budget for years 2028 to 2031.*
- c) *approves the apportionment of total Share according to the approved Share scheme, based on the number of posts and houses at the time of apportionment.*

(Continued from last page)

	2027 Budget		2026 Budget	
Mutual Support Fund				
National Church Support Transition	-		-	
National Church Support Deprived Communities	(262)		(632)	
CCF Support for Stipends in 5 borough's	(786)		(759)	
MOF funding from MSF share contributions	411		397	
Investment Income (supporting Parish Share)	(2,838)		(2,600)	
Income from Statutory Fees	(700)		(833)	
Less Parochial Fees Paid	150		171	
Less Fee Credits to Parishes	-		-	
Vacant Posts	(33.6)	(1,611)	(22.0)	(1,350)
		<u>(5,636)</u>		<u>(5,607)</u>
		-33.9%	0.5%	
Net Expenditure		16,602		15,622
Stipendiary posts (Inc + 27% Hfd + StipCur)	188.7		193.1	
Net Share apportionment		(16,602)		(15,622)
		-100.0%	6.3%	
Surplus / (deficit) belonging to Parish Share		<u>-</u>		<u>-</u>
General Funds - excluded from Parish Share				
Investment Income (not supporting Parish Share)	886		911	
Rental of Houses DBF Net surplus/(deficit)	425		332	
Trading & Income from other Sources	(50)		(80)	
AC Time Limited Funding	1,086		-	
Share Shortfall Forecast	(2,490)		(2,031)	
Surplus / (deficit) outside Parish Share scheme		<u>(144)</u>		<u>(869)</u>
General Fund Surplus/(Deficit)		<u>(144)</u>		<u>(869)</u>
		-0.9%	(83.5)%	
Notes:				
Full costs per stipendiary £	100,041	1%	98,729	
Direct costs per stipendiary £	66,233	6%	62,708	
Average Share request per stipendiary £	74,687	2.80%	72,654	

High level summary - 5 year budget forecast	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Stipendiary + 20% House for Duty Posts	220.4	219.4	218.4	217.4	216.4
Stipendiary Curates	24.0	24.0	25.0	26.0	26.0
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
PM1 Parish Ministry	10,405	10,625	10,792	10,962	11,129
PM2 Parish Housing	4,318	4,384	4,453	4,522	4,592
PM3 Future Ministry Training & Curates	3,182	3,253	3,366	3,482	3,558
PS1 Parish Support	2,790	2,846	2,902	2,960	3,020
PS2 Other Expenditure	1,544	1,575	1,606	1,638	1,671
Parish Support Subtotal	<u>22,238</u>	<u>22,682</u>	<u>23,119</u>	<u>23,565</u>	<u>23,970</u>
Mutual Support Fund	(5,636)	(5,640)	(5,587)	(5,690)	(5,795)
Net Share apportionment	(16,602)	(17,042)	(17,532)	(17,875)	(18,175)
Surplus / (deficit) outside the Parish Share scheme	<u>(144)</u>	<u>(88)</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>160</u>
Net Deficit for year	<u>(144)</u>	<u>(88)</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>160</u>

Being the change – Chelmsford Diocese’s Net Zero Carbon Action Plan 2025 Achievements & Ambitions

Executive Summary

This document reports on the final year of the first Diocesan Net Zero Carbon Action Plan (NZCAP) 2023-25 celebrating achievements of 2025 operating year and outlining NZC ambitions for the new Triennium 2026-28, as the Diocese plays its part in working in partnership to support the climate goal of limiting the man-made global temperature increase, caused by the greenhouse effect, to 1.5°C on a 20-year average to 2045.

The 2025 reporting period, and the first 6 months of 2026, which presage the rollout of the new Triennium’s grant programmes, has shown good progress with two Demonstrator Clergy Houses delivered to budget; an impressive three Demonstrator Churches achieving approval and funding by the National NZC team and an £150k major schools partnership with E.ON Next to deliver the UK’s first Solar Circle, generating power for both St Lukes Church and School, as well as 70 local houses, demonstrating that discounted local energy can help reinforce churches as the beating heart of a community.

The 2026-28 Triennium National NZC programme budget settlement of £40M, is a welcome £10M more than the previous Triennium but falls well short of the anticipated £100M allocation needed to support the 2030 target. This change places a key emphasis for the next three years to find more schemes like the E,ON project to draw additional external funding into NZC projects. Work is also needed to give churches better data on the many nascent heating technologies, alongside more supporting data and guidance in areas such as boiler maintenance, heating contingency and electrification transition planning. The breakdown in cross-political party consensus on the risks posed by climate change has the potential to delay much needed action and the next three years will also focus on marshalling work around both theology and the ways we communicate with those who need clearer information about the climate and biodiversity crises.

Responding to the climate crisis is an essential part of our mission to safeguard God’s creation and achieve a more just world for everyone. We can already see the devastating impact of climate change across the world, often hitting hardest the poorest countries and poorest people of the world. Working in concert with others the NZCAP seeks to reduce our carbon emissions which drive damaging climate change.

Introduction

The Diocesan NZC Action Plan v1.0 (NZCAP) 2023-26 was approved by the Diocesan Synod in June 2023 and mirrors the NZC Route map adopted by the General Synod in July 2022, following the prophetic call from the Synod in February 2020 for all parts of the Church to be Net Zero Carbon (NZC) by 2030.

[NZC action plan version 1.0 .pdf](#)

The purpose of NZCAP was to set out the actions required to the climate emergency by reducing the direct ‘Scope 1’ emissions and indirect ‘Scope 2’ emissions in the Chelmsford Diocese in line with the National NZC route map. The scope of NZCAP includes energy use in buildings owned by the Diocese, or for which the Diocese has a significant amount of influence, together with work-related travel.

The funding for the NZCAP comes primarily from grants made by the Church Commissioners rather than Parish Share, though NZCAP also examines how existing Diocesan spending can better align with NZC ambitions. The 2026-28 Triennium National NZC programme budget settlement of £40M, is a welcome £10M more than the previous Triennium but falls well short of the anticipated £100M allocation needed to support the 2030 target and NZCAP indicates how additional resources will be secured.

Being the change – Chelmsford Diocese’s Net Zero Carbon Action Plan 2025 Achievements & Ambitions

2025 Achievements

Three 20th Century Diocese Demonstrator Churches underway

Applications by three 20th Century churches in the Diocese - ‘Moderne’ 1935 St Marys, Becontree; Modernist 1965 St Peters, Westcliff; and St Stephens, Colchester – a combination of 1905 Arts & Crafts Church and post-modernist Church Centre - have been welcomed into the National Demonstrator Church family, supported by £86k of Stage 1 and II grant funding to convert gas boilers and oil-furnace blown heating systems to various new ‘state-of-the-art’ Heat Pump technologies.



St Lukes Church & Church School, Canning Town works with EON on UK’s first ‘Solar Circle’.

A major partnership with energy provider E.ON Next has seen a £150k investment in an 121 solar panel 120 kW array producing the majority of the school and church energy needs, while the ‘solar circle’ will see the school, selling discounted surplus electricity to 70 local homes on the low voltage grid transforming the economics of solar energy.

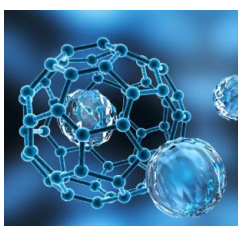
[St Luke’s solar sharing: green energy at the heart of the community | The Church of England](#)

Two vicarages get both a heating and generation boost.

Working with Solar Green of Ongar, St Augustine’s Vicarage, Chelmsford and The Rectory at Bradwell the Property team have fitted with Air Source Heat Pumps and 17kW solar arrays and 9.7kW battery storage by virtue of a £71k Clergy Building Demonstrators grant. Both houses are expected to generate over 17,000 kWhrs of power each year, together saving 7 tonnes of CO_{2e}/yr.



Nanoparticles increase the effectiveness of School heating.



Pleshey Retreat has joined 35 Church Schools across the Diocese whose heating systems have been upgraded with a heat transfer nanofluid that is providing energy efficiency savings of up to 30%. Nano-particles are suspended in a stable state to increase the speed of heat transfer, from boiler to radiator. Staff also enjoy enhanced levels of comfort from improved heating performance. [Diocese’s ‘bold and innovative’ eco approach for heritage site net zero project - Hydromx](#)

Footprints for Creation campaign for Energy Footprint Tool completions

As part of the 2025 ‘Footprints’ campaign, the Diocese’s team of dedicated Environmental Advocates encouraged 63% of Diocesan churches to submit Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) returns for 2024 during 2025 submission window. EFT returns helped us identify 32 High Emitting churches who have qualified for free detailed Energy Audits which help churches to begin their electrification transition.



Our ambitions for the new Triennium 2026-28

Being the change – Chelmsford Diocese’s Net Zero Carbon Action Plan 2025 Achievements & Ambitions



Growing external match funding

The 2026-28 Triennium programme settlement of £40M, is a welcome £10M more than the previous Triennium but falls short of the anticipated £100M allocation to support the 2030 target. To maintain momentum, our work over the next 3 years will focus on improving access to potential funders and finding new funding programmes such as Heat Networks, Pride in Place and s106 funds that can help support our NZC objectives.

Clearer guidance, advice and resources for parishes.

The 2022 Faculty Jurisdiction Rule changes require parishes to have 'due regard' to guidance on Net Zero Carbon when considering boiler replacements. Work is already underway on a DAC Sustainability Policy to underpin decision-making. In addition, further support will be developed to provide guidance on Boiler Replacement Guidance and Boiler Maintenance advice, together with planning guidance for Boiler Contingency arrangements and Electrification Transition works.



Improved Data on novel heating system performance.



Advances in novel heating and control technologies are moving apace. To help parishes make reliable long-term low carbon heating decisions work is underway to provide case study performance data on capital and operating costs alongside ecumenical contacts for new technologies so they can be viewed by other interested parishes.

Advice and Support for Church Communities

A Rocha’s Eco Church programme is a valuable resource available to Churches to help support their green journey. The Diocese will continue to support Eco Church as a learning community of churches providing a framework of support to take practical action on caring for God’s earth, through the Eco Church survey and progression through the bronze, silver and gold registration scheme, underpinned as a key criterion for future grant support.



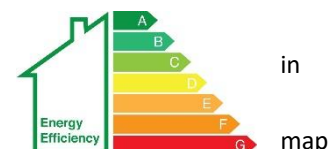
Speaking to those sceptical about Climate Change



The breakdown in cross-political party consensus on the risks posed by climate change has the potential to delay much needed action as annual temperatures start to exceed the COP target of 1.5°C. The next three years will also focus on marshalling work around both theology and the ways we communicate with those who need clearer information about the climate and biodiversity crises.

Implementing new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for Clergy Houses

The introduction of new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for landlords and the rollout of new Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) metrics 2026 offer opportunities to improve building performance. Using new DREAm Facilities software the Diocese, working regionally with other Dioceses, will the most effective routes to reducing emissions.



DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **RACIAL JUSTICE REPORT**
Author: **RACIAL JUSTICE OFFICER**
Date: **6 JUNE 2026**

This is the third racial justice report covering the period from 2025 to date with some introductory information for the benefit of new members. The first report was presented to Diocesan Synod in March 2024.

Introduction

Society was forced to pay greater attention to the sin of racism following the death of George Floyd in 2020, and the world-wide outcry of the heinous act that was his brutal murder. Many organisations including the Church of England responded by looking at their structures and operations to identify ways in which it might be systemically racist.

At the July 2020 meeting of Bishop's Council, the Rt Revd Peter Hill, then Acting Diocesan Bishop, proposed the setting up of a diocesan task group to prioritise actions on matters relating to racism. In September 2020 chaired by the Rt Revd Roger Morris, Bishop of Colchester, the Racial Justice Task and Finish Group started its work *'to consider the implications for the Diocese...address immediate and long-term concerns about racism and inequality and make recommendations for reform which will secure positive outcomes for individuals of BAME heritage and advance the agenda for equality, diversity and inclusion in the Diocese'* [extract from the Terms of Reference].

Membership of the task Group consisted of people from within and outside of the Diocese representing a wide range of skills, experiences and perspectives. In the course of its work, conducted in parallel with the national Anti-Racism Taskforce, the Task Group consulted many stakeholders in order to be as properly informed as possible. Full details are contained in the Task Group's report *'From Action to Real Change'*.

In November 2021, on presentation of the report to Diocesan Synod the following motion was unanimously passed:

'This Synod welcome the report 'From Action to Real Change' and approves the development of a plan, timescale, and budget to implement the recommendations contained therein, with the immediate appointment of a Racial Justice Officer and establishment of the Racial Justice Advisory Panel'.

1. Racial Justice Officer

The Revd Sharon Quilter has been in role as the Diocesan Racial Justice Officer (RJO) since September 2022. She is an employee of the DBF on a half-time basis (17.5 hrs/per week), in addition to her parochial role as an Associate Priest in the Halstead Area Team Ministry.

The RJO's reporting line is to the Bishop of Chelmsford with a dotted operational reporting line to the Director of Safeguarding. As such, the role sits within the wider Safeguarding team. The Racial Justice Officer is a member of the Bishop's Leadership Team, and a Bishop's nominee on both Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod.

2. Racial Justice Advisory Panel

The Diocesan Racial Justice Advisory Panel was formed in 2024,

The Panel had two independent Co-Chairs and members from across the Diocese made up of both lay and ordained, all with the approval and support of the Diocesan Bishop. In March 2026, one Co-Chair resigned as they no longer reside in the Diocese. The remaining Co-Chair has agreed, for the remainder of this initial three-year term, to assume full responsibility as Chair. The Advisory Panel terms of reference includes a scheduled review after three years, to take place during 2027.

The Panel met twice in 2025, the final meeting in October cancelled due to member availability in the week of school half term break. The key agenda items covered progress with the recommendations in the Diocesan racial justice report, From Action to Real Change, and particularly training and ways to address the lack of diversity data. Since taking on the role, the RJO has been progressing recommendations as far as time allows. Examples of this work can be found under section 5 Racial Justice Activity below.

3. Racial Justice Advocates

To assist the Racial Justice Officer in supporting the diocese, is a network of Advocates, both lay and ordained, whose details are available on the diocesan website. The original five advocates reduced to three during the year due to movements out of the diocese; one clergy person took up a post in Rochester Diocese, and one lay member started residential training for ordination in Cambridge. Work is underway to recruit other advocates, including a number to cover Estates ministry.

Working alongside the RJO, the Vocations team and the Lay Ministry Adviser, the Advocates aim to provide support for racial justice matters and seek to encourage vocations amongst those of UK Minority Ethnic / Global Majority Heritage backgrounds at all levels.

4. Racial Justice Project Support Officer

An application for funding from the Racial Justice Triennium Fund was approved by Bishop's Council in October 2023, to recruit a Project Officer. This 2-year fixed term contract role is to build resource capacity to move the diocesan racial justice high-level roadmap into a more detailed implementation plan. The funding application was successful, and there has been a drawdown of one tranche of funds. Following three rounds of advertising the post during 2024 and 2025, the position was offered to two candidates following interview. One, despite negotiating an uplift in the salary, later turned down our

offer, and the other failed the pre-employment screening. A further recruitment round was initiated in March 2026, with three candidates interviewed at the end of April. A conditional offer has been made with safer recruitment pre-employment checks underway.

Once the Project Officer is in place and the detailed implementation plan developed, we will be in a position to assess what further funding we will require to deliver the plan. A crucial concern is the ongoing availability of funds for racial justice work given the reduction in the overall pot approved for the 2026-2029 triennium.

5. Racial Justice Activity

a. Case work:

- Concluded the investigation of a reported racist incident with a satisfactory outcome.
- Three complaints of racist behaviour from one parish currently in progress.
- One 'accusation' of racism at a parish level that has not progressed due to lack of engagement.
- Actioned (at the request of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser) a National Safeguarding Team recommendation relating to a clergy person with previous links to the diocese,
- Participated in an investigation concerning an ordinand

b. Racial Justice Unit/RJO Network:

- Regular liaison with RJO counterparts from other dioceses, especially with new RJOs, and monthly network meetings with the Racial Justice Unit continue.
- The Eastern Region Racial Justice collaboration led by the Bishop of Lynn is still progressing with training remaining a key focus.
- In June 2025, the RJO along with other invited clergy attended the RJO's Truth Telling Conference held in Liverpool.
- Clergy, ordinands and lay representatives from across the diocese in October 2025 participated in the Church of England GMH/UKME Gathering hosted by the Archbishop of York, and the Diocese of Southwark Truth Telling in Sacred Spaces conference in February 2026.

c. Advisory

- Regularly responding to questions (many on an ad hoc basis) from colleagues on a range of related matters.
- Member of the National Minority Ethnic Vocations Advisory Group, as well as working in tandem with the DDO and LMA to champion GHM/UKME vocations in the diocese

d. Raising Awareness

- The RJO continues to contribute to the diocesan sermon podcast series:
 - ◆ Black History Month 2025
 - ◆ Racial Justice Sunday 2026,
- The Racial Justice Advocates also contribute to the sermon podcast series
- The We Pray article for Windrush Sunday 2025 was written by a member of the Diocesan Racial Justice Advisory Panel who is also a member of Bishop's Council.
- Preaching engagements over the period of reporting has included
 - ◆ St John's Moulsham Street where the RJO led the service for Black History Month 2025;

- ◆ Chelmsford Cathedral, two services for Racial Justice Sunday 2026
 - Black History Month 2025 was marked with a special edition of the Racial Justice Newsletter.
 - Bishop's Council member and Co-Chair of the Diocesan Racial Justice Advisory Panel spoke about Black History Month on Phoenix FM local radio.
 - In October 2025, the RJO was one of the key speakers at the Churches Together in Essex & East London's Annual Gathering on Racial Justice.
 - In November 2025 the RJO and Bishop of Barking participated in a thanksgiving service held at All Saints Forest Gate, organised by the Barbados High Commission to celebrate Barbados' 59th anniversary of Independence and 4th anniversary of being a Republic.
- e. Training
- Three sessions of the day long Racial Justice Awareness course was delivered across the diocese with a total of 34 participants.
 - Truncated Racial Justice Awareness sessions delivered to four Deane Synods (as of April 2026) with a further three booked for 2026.
 - RJO again delivered a session at the 2026 IME2 'All are Welcome' training day for first year curates and Licenced Lay Ministers.
 - The RJO and the Diocesan Lead for Training were part of the Content Advisory Group for the RJO's training and development initiative to develop an Antiracism E-learning package. Following a change of RJO personnel, this initiative is on hold.

6. Status update on FLTA and FA2RC recommendations

The RJO is tracking 25 recommendations from the national racial justice report 'From Lament to Action' directly relevant to the diocese, including one relevant to the Cathedral. The diocesan report 'From Action to Real Change' contains 43 recommendations and commends the FLTA recommendation on Monuments, Memorials and Artifacts connected to slavery.

The current status of progress against these recommendations is as follows, noting the FLTA recommendations are incorporated within the FA2RC recommendations with the delivery of some FLTA recommendation dependant on national Church initiatives.

- From Action to Real Change
 - 7 considered complete
 - 21 work in progress with some action taken but not complete
 - 15 no action to date –
 - two of these relate to the immediate referral to the Racial Justice Advisory Panel of complaints of racial discrimination or racially motivated behaviour. These actions are no longer considered appropriate with the Panel agreeing to receive consolidated and suitably anonymised reports of such complaints.
- From Lament to Action
 - 4 considered complete
 - 7 work in progress with some action taken but not complete
 - 14 no action to date

- Countering Hate, Cultivating Hope Project

In September 2025, Together Liverpool invited the diocese to partner in a project seeking to tackle far right extremism. The project, into which the Diocese of Liverpool has also been invited, is being funded through a grant via the Racial Justice Unit. Following the initial invitation, numerous conversations have taken place resulting in an agreement for Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance to participate in the project, working with The Centre for Theology and Community (CTC) as its delivery partner. To secure funding, the project is aligned to the From Lament to Action (FLTA) priorities and directly to eight of its recommendations. These are outlined in Together Liverpool's funding application and overlaps with seven of the recommendations in our own From Action to Real Change (FA2RC) report. The hope is therefore that the successful delivery of the project should also contribute to the delivery of some of the FA2RC recommendations.

There is no direct financial implication for the CDBF as the CTC will be the direct recipient of funds from Together Liverpool as grant holders. The CTC will run the project on behalf of the CDBF, including the recruitment of project personnel, and undertaking all project reporting. The details of the approach the CTC plan to take is outlined in their presentation 'Organising for Hope'- attached.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared by Together Liverpool for the three parties involved and is currently under review for signing. The project timeline is 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2029. Project plans and a breakdown of the funding for the entire project and the Chelmsford element are available. As is a mapping of the expected outcomes against the FLTA/FA2RC recommendations.

7. Participation and Representation

One of the recommendations in From Lament to Action (Participation - including appointments - #12) pertains specifically to membership of Bishop's Council, as follows;

"15% of members of Bishops' Councils should be UKME/GMH, in all areas where the UKME/GMH proportion of the population is average or above, with Bishops' Councils to use co-opting powers where necessary. Every Bishops Council, whatever the local population data, to include a minimum of three UKME/GMH members of clergy/laity"

The corresponding recommendation in From Action to Real Change under Governance, (that mirrors the recommendation of Structure and Governance #5 in From Lament to Action) is;

"Draw up a plan, noting process, procedures, and policies, to increase representation and participation of UKME/GMH people to at least 15% at all levels of governance structures across the Diocese by 2030 (from Diocesan Synod to PCCs)"

There are no plans currently drawn up, though encouragement to participate at all levels continues. UKME/GMH representation at Bishop's Council currently exceeds the 15% mark. As there are no processes in place to obtain, record and track ethnicity at any level in the diocese, this will make assessing participation at Parish and PCC level challenging.

However, a small working group is looking at possible ways to overcome this starting with a proposed pilot exercise in the Barking Episcopal Area.

8. Funding

In February 2025, a Racial Justice Unit small grant enabled a 24-hour retreat at Pleshey for clergy of Global Majority Heritage led by Dean Shelley-Ann Tenia of Trinidad & Tobago. Members of the group have met three times since continuing to offer support and encouragement to each other. It is hoped that this group will continue to meet and be the catalyst for another similar small group retreat in 2027.

9. Recommendation

The Diocesan Synod is invited to NOTE the 2025 Racial Justice report.



THE CENTRE FOR
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Organising for Hope

Countering Hate, Cultivating Hope
through faith-filled
community organising

Introduction

CTC has been asked by the Diocese of Chelmsford to be the local delivery partner for ***Countering Hate, Cultivating Hope***. Overseen by Together Liverpool, with funding from the Church of England's Racial Justice Unit, the project responds to the growth of divisive narratives and social fragmentation - particularly in communities where people may feel disconnected or left behind.

It seeks to strengthen the Church's role as a credible and hopeful presence in public life, rooted in listening well, building trust, and supporting stronger connections across difference. This includes speaking out against extremist narratives and supporting vulnerable communities that are experiencing high levels of deprivation.

Introduction

The project is rooted in the legacy of ***Faith in the City*** and aligned with the Church of England's framework for responding to racial injustice, ***From Lament to Action***. It is designed as a direct challenge to the rise of far-right extremism, the weaponising of Christian faith, and the vulnerability of communities to radicalisation. We see synergies between the project and CTC's approach, so we can both contribute and learn as we collaborate with Together Liverpool

- Beginning with **listening**, rooted in **prayer**
- Placing **racial justice at the heart of our walk with Jesus Christ**
- **Hyper-local**, but **networked** for replication
- Developing **agency**, not just meeting needs
- Addressing both **theological narratives** and **systemic injustices**

Distinctive features of Chelmsford Diocese

- **A wide variety of contexts:** The Diocese offers a range of contexts at pilot stage, which enable extra learning before roll out
- **Deanery scale:** As deaneries have populations of up to 380,000, the project needs hyper-local as well as deanery-level engagement.
- **Diocesan approach:** The Diocese has *Travelling Well Together* values - starting small, with local learning and mutual sharing - expressed in the Barking Area's "genesis church" approach to mission
- **Diocesan partnership with CTC & CUK:** Harnessing the potential of community organising for congregational renewal (*Organising for Growth*), social cohesion (*Near Neighbours*) and inclusive approaches to church life and leadership development (*Faith in Migrants*).

Proposed areas of operation

- **Barking Area:** Using IMD data, we have identified **Barking & Dagenham** and **Newham** Deaneries as the key areas to work - and we are building on strong foundations. In Phase 1 we will build deanery-level partnerships and agree the hyper-local areas of focus (where there is both need and capacity)
- **Bradwell Area:** Using IMD data, we have identified **Thurrock** or **Southend** Deaneries as the key areas to work. We will build a deanery-level partnerships and agree the hyper-local area of focus (where there is both need and capacity)

Proposed approach

- This project is fully aligned with CTC's wider mission, grounded in *Organising for Growth*. We will call this work *Organising for Hope* to emphasise that it is part of **a single, coherent approach**.
- In phase one, we will use our **"faith-filled organising" methodology** to identify both the challenges (far-right narratives, racial injustice, socio-economic exclusion and alienation) and gifts (the faith, grassroots leadership and leadership) present in the neighbourhoods
- This will ensure the theological training materials we produce - as well as the social action which is undertaken - are **co-created with, and genuinely owned by, local communities**

CTC's methodology

In its **neighbourhood organising**, CTC combines the asset-based approach of Near Neighbours with the principles of broad-based community organising:

- It is **rooted in place** and in people's daily experience - acknowledging the **central place of faith** in animating action for justice
- It is **honest about inequalities of power**, naming and challenging injustices
- Churches act as **anchor institutions** and catalysts for training and social action and a hub for clusters of neighbouring institutions working together
- Listening identifies leaders as well as actions ("**People before programme**")
- The action itself is designed to **develop grassroots agency and cross-community solidarity**, while meeting needs and challenging injustices.

Strand One - Speaking Out

Using this methodology we will bring together people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, including more established community members and newcomers to:

1. **Co-create theological resources** and engage lay and ordained leaders in training and critical conversations to challenge divisive narratives and promote a Christian vision of racial justice, dignity, and welcome.
2. **Build clusters of churches and neighbouring institutions** using the neighbourhood organising model to foster relationships of trust and cross-community solidarity.
3. **Develop the agency of grassroots leaders** experiencing injustice to apply the organising cycle of research, action, and evaluation to tackle shared neighbourhood concerns and join **campaigns for systemic change with Citizens UK** and other partner organisations.

Strand Two - Combating Vulnerability

Through our neighbourhood organising we will

1. **Enable community-led solutions** engaging grassroots leaders in decision-making, harnessing and strengthening broad-based alliances, and building partnerships with local authorities, public-sector bodies, and third-sector organisations.
2. **Model a “roots down, walls down” approach** so people can draw deeply on their own faith while building trust and solidarity with those of different religions and beliefs
3. Use the grants programme to **support collaboration** between organisations and the **development of grassroots leadership**
4. **Strengthen the resilience, agency and solidarity of local communities** through the patient application of the organising method - to reduce vulnerability to radicalisation, while fostering hope, opportunity and local relationships.

Phase One - April to September 2026

By September 2026 we will have

- Agreed **MoUs** with first two Deaneries, identifying the contexts for hyper-local work
- Drawn up **parish-level partnership agreements** for this work
- Agreed the methods for **sharing learning** across the wider Deaneries
- Begin forming **Deanery-level Forums** including parishes, partner organisations (mosques, schools, other civic institutions engaged in community organising - and the borough-level broad based alliance) and establish channels of engagement with **local authorities**
- Finalised **staffing arrangements** (employment and/or consultancy in each context for Phase Two)

Phase Two - October 2026 onwards

By March 2027 we will have

- Co-created **theological training resources** with local people, and held at least two **training events** with a total of at least 50 participants
- Co-produced at least **two case studies** and **theological reflections**
- Built **a team of local people** from clusters of institutions in each context who conduct a **listening process** to assess community needs
- Accompanied each team to identify at least one “**winnable action**” and develop a plan to win meaningful change
- Awarded **grants** to assist teams in implementing their plan

We will also assist Together Liverpool in developing **digital tool**, and using it to capture impact - as well as engaging in community-led evaluation process with local leaders

Staff team - Phase One

- Marzena Cichon-Balcerowicz 0.4 FTE (with focus on neighbourhood-level organising)
- Angus Ritchie 0.3 FTE and Richard Springer 0.2 FTE (with focus on theological engagement and training)
- Rhiannon Winstanley-Sharples 0.1 FTE to lead work with Together Liverpool on harnessing faith-filled organising method in their context
- The remaining staff costs will enable other CTC and Citizens UK staff to engage in listening and relationship building

Staff team - Phase Two

- Marzena Cichon-Balcerowicz 0.4 FTE (with focus on neighbourhood-level organising)
- Angus Ritchie 0.3 FTE and Richard Springer 0.2 FTE (with focus on theological engagement and training)
- Rhiannon Winstanley-Sharples 0.1 FTE to work with Together Liverpool on harnessing faith-filled organising method in their context
- We plan to appoint/second a 0.2 FTE worker in each of Barking & Dagenham and in Thurrock or Southend, with the work in Newham delivered by existing CTC staff. In Thurrock/Southend this may be part of a wider post working in Bradwell Area.

Collaboration, learning and growing impact

- CTC will work closely with the **Diocese of Chelmsford** and **Together Liverpool** to share learning and experience of working in different contexts across dioceses
- CTC will participate in **regular meetings with partner organisations** and a **delivery group** to support shared learning, coordination, and accountability
- In line with the ***From Lament to Action framework***, and reflecting CTC's ecumenical and geographical reach, learning from the project will inform wider practice across other dioceses and Christian denominations, with grassroots leaders involved in shaping strategy, evaluating impact, and **developing scalable models** adaptable to similar contexts



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Appendix

From Lament to Action priorities
and CTC methodology

From Lament to Action priorities and CTC

- **Participation** - we help churches examine how power is distributed, addressing systemic injustices which exclude people from decision making and action
- **Education** - we develop contextual theological resources for Christians across denominations and from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Training and Mentoring** - we support grassroots leaders through training, mentoring, and inclusive learning communities that build confidence and capacity.
- **Young People** - we grow participation among young people and families through *Organising for Growth* the *School of Faith & Organising* and apprenticeships.
- **Structures and Governance** - CTC enables clergy and lay leaders from diverse ethnic backgrounds to take on new roles within their churches and other decision-making structures.

A “faith-filled” approach

- **A just and inclusive alternative to the far right flows from the heart of the Christian faith.** It is vital to contest far right narratives spiritually and theologically as well as economically - placing the struggle for racial justice at the heart of what it means to follow Jesus Christ
- **With a renewed interest in Christian identity, we need to accompany those who come through our doors** to encounter who Jesus really is, and to discover who their neighbours really are
- **Faith-filled community organising** is a methodology which enables both of these encounters to grow and flourish

Inclusive populism

CTC has undertaken two action-research projects

- A study of faith-filled community organising in east London which led to the publication of ***Inclusive Populism*** in 2019
- A 2025 conference for practitioners from across Europe on ***Faith-filled community organising: reweaving trust in an era of populism***

The “fake populism” of the far right harnesses popular anger, but does not offer either agency or solutions. What is needed is need an “inclusive populism” which helps people grow in agency and solidarity.

Inclusive populism

- **Strengthening institutions:** The rise of populism is fuelled by a decline in the institutions of civil society, in which people build a common life. We need congregations which are thriving, relational and open.
- **Addressing the hunger for meaning:** A purely socio-economic analysis of the rise of the far right is not adequate - an effective response needs to address issues of spirituality, identity and meaning
- **Building organised power:** Community organising develops grassroots leaders in local congregations whose action flows from the heart of their faith (“roots down”) and builds solidarity and agency across the groups the far right is seeking to divide (“walls down”).

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS**
Author: **HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY**
Date: **6 JUNE 2026**

I. INTRODUCTION

At one of our recent meetings, it was brought to our attention that Standing Orders expressly prohibit a member who has moved an amendment to a motion from replying during the formal debate on the proposed amendment.

Following a discussion at Standing Committee it was agreed to propose an amendment to Standing Orders to resolve this.

The relevant Standing Order is SO41 iii) which currently reads:

‘the mover of a motion (but not an amendment) may reply, such reply shall not introduce any new matter and shall close the debate;’

It is proposed that this is amended by deleting ‘(but not an amendment)’ and adding ‘or an amendment’ in place of that text. If approved that part of the Standing Orders would read:

‘the mover of a motion *or an amendment* may reply, such reply shall not introduce any new matter and shall close the debate;’

2. RECOMMENDATION

This Synod approve the amendment to Standing Order 41 iii) as set out in paper DS(2026)12.

DIOCESAN SYNOD

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

Author: **HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

Date: **6 JUNE 2026**

This paper summarises the business of the Bishop's Council since the report circulated to the March 2026 Synod meeting.

May 2026**Bishop's Council**

- Approved the draft agendas for the Diocesan Synod and CDBF AGM.
- Noted the racial justice update.
- Noted the update on the Cuddesdon Chelmsford Centre.

DMPC

No meeting

Finance Committee

- Approved the CDBF Annual Report and Accounts for 2025.
- Agreed to recommend the draft budget for 2027 to Diocesan Synod.
- Received a verbal update on correspondence with the Charity Commission.
- Received the quarterly safeguarding report and a presentation on the Safeguarding Standard relating to Risk.
- Agreed amendments to the terms of reference for the Diocesan Board of Education.
- Reviewed and agreed updates to the CDBF Risk Register.
- Noted the quarterly financial report.
- Agreed a proposal relating to the conversion of CDBF CBF funds.
- Agreed to applications being submitted to the National Church for both the Minor Repair and Improvements and NZC Quick Wins funding streams.
- Approved CDBF registration with the fundraising regulator.
- Agreed to appoint Antony Timmins as the chair of Audit and Risk Committee.

Synod is asked to NOTE this report.