

Leeds Diocesan Synod

DRAFT Minutes of the sixteenth meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Leeds held via Zoom conferencing at 10 am on Saturday, 26 September 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bishop of Leeds had signed a Bishop's Instrument, which permitted the Synod to meet via electronic conferencing. This was the first time the Synod had met with full electronic presence.

Chair: The Bishop of Leeds

Ecumenical observers, Honorary Assistant Bishops, visitors and those in attendance were reminded that they were not entitled to vote and that they must seek the Chair's permission to speak. The voting period for electronic polling would be thirty seconds from the launch of the poll. Any technical issues were to be emailed to Jonathan Wood, Diocesan Secretary or Richard Earnshaw, Digital Media Officer. Members were invited to send feedback to Jonathan Wood on the electronic presence Synod.

1. Opening worship

The opening worship was led by The Ven Peter Townley, Archdeacon of Pontefract.

2. Welcome

The following were welcomed and given the Chair's permission to speak:

Item 14 Annual Reports from Boards and Committees - Jemima Parker, Diocesan Environment Officer.

Item 15 Diocesan Budget 2021 - Geoff Park, Chief Finance Officer.

Item 19 Presentation on Strategy Goal 3 Nurturing Lay Discipleship: The Rhythm of Life - The Revd Canon Andrew Norman.

Announcement: Canon Mr Irving Warnett had been nominated by the Bishop of Leeds as one of his nominees on the Diocesan Synod. Irving was welcomed as a member of the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod.

3. Apologies.

28 apologies had been received and the Synod being quorate was confirmed.

4. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded of the need to declare any conflict of interest on matters on this agenda.

None were declared.

5. Motion: Appointment of Secretary to the Diocesan Synod.

The Chair moved:

"That this Synod appoints Jonathan Wood to be the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod with effect from 26 September 2020."

Members had no questions and offered no comments of debate.

Approved unanimously. There was no dissent or abstention.

Chair: Matthew Ambler, Chair of the House of Laity

The Chair thanked Debbie Child for her work as Secretary to the Synod and welcomed Jonathan Wood as the new Secretary to the Synod.

6 Minutes of the last Meeting on 19 October 2019.

The Chair moved:

"That the draft minutes of the last meeting held on 19 October 2019 contained in DS 20 09 01 be approved as a correct record."

Voting

For: 82

Abstain: 10

The minutes were approved.

7 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda (if any).

There were no matters arising.

8 Proclamation of Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing Act of Synod 2020.

Peter Foskett, Diocesan Registrar, proclaimed the Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing Act of Synod 2020 as follows:

"THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE CLERGY COVENANT FOR WELLBEING ACT OF SYNOD 2020

WHEREAS the Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the General Synod of the Church of England assembled at their Synod in Westminster did on the tenth day of February in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty solemnly affirm and proclaim as an Act of Synod the Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing set out at paragraph 20 of GS 2133 being word for word annexed hereto

NOW THEREFORE WE JUSTIN PORTAL by Divine Providence Archbishop of Canterbury and JOHN TUCKER MUGABI SENTAMU by Divine Providence Archbishop of York do hereby RATIFY AND CONFIRM the said Act of Synod for Our respective Provinces and do hereby PROCLAIM to each and every of Our dioceses THE CLERGY COVENANT FOR WELLBEING as an ACT OF SYNOD and do instruct the Clerk to the General Synod to transmit a copy of the said Act of Synod to the secretary of each Diocesan Synod requiring that it be formally proclaimed in the Diocesan Synod at the next session.

DATED this tenth day of February in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty.

+Justin Cantuar:
Archbishop of Canterbury

+Sentamu Ebor:
Archbishop of York

A.S. McGregor Registrar

THE CLERGY COVENANT FOR WELLBEING

as set out at paragraph 20 of GS 2133

The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scripture and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in every generation.

In its formularies, the Church of England recognises that God calls men and women to serve as deacons, priests and bishops to build up and equip the whole People of God.

Conscious that such a calling is both a privilege and a demand, we as the Church of England commit together to promote the welfare of our clergy and their households in terms expressed in the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing.

We undertake to work together to seek to coordinate and improve our approach to clergy care and wellbeing that ordained ministers flourish in their service of the mission of God within and beyond the Church.”

9. **Presidential Address.**

The Bishop of Leeds gave his Presidential Address to the Synod, a copy is attached to these minutes.

10. **Covid-19 Discussion**

Mr Jonathan Wood, Secretary to the Synod and Diocesan Secretary, gave a presentation on Covid-19 this was followed by a time for discussion.

Jonathan outlined that throughout the Covid-19 lockdown period the senior staff and diocesan office staff had sought to support parishes. An emergence group had been formed chaired by the Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven which had met regularly to look at the impact of Covid. People with expertise around the practicalities of emergence had been designated emergence

consultants. A Covid bulletin provided updates to parishes, a Covid emergence toolkit had been created including about running meetings, webinars had been held and surgeries on current guidance and finance and £50k grant support for churches had been put in place as they seek to do mission. Jonathan acknowledged the huge amount of hard and creative work in parishes by both the laity and clergy. He also acknowledged it had been very challenging and tiring for everyone.

Church House had opened during July and August a few days a week for staff only. Measures had been put in place to ensure it was a Covid safe environment for staff. During September it was planned that Church House would be open every day for staff. However, with the recent government announcement, Church House would be returning to being open for three days a week.

The Leeds DBF had used the furlough scheme and thirty five percent of staff had been furloughed each month. However, the scheme would be ending shortly. Synod was invited to ask questions and provide feedback.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones, General Synod

Thanked everyone in the diocese for the support during the Covid pandemic. The support had been good and helpful.

Canon Mrs Jane Evans, Halifax and Calder Valley

Also thanked everyone for everything they had done. She particularly complimented the online seminars and was aware of feedback on these and particularly that they were easy to join and did not require travel. She noted that there were one hundred and seven participants on the Synod zoom meeting and that this was positive response.

John Beal, Allerton Deanery

Leeds had become an area subject to Covid special regulations the day before. People were advised not to socialize in a list of places, one being places of worship. Does this mean people are not to hang around after the service or does it mean not to have a service?

Jonathan Wood replied it was quite complicated. There was guidance from the government and guidance from local authorities. There was no legal definition of socializing. The government guidance refers to “mingling”. The view on this throughout has been to ensure that everyone socially distances in churches. There is nothing from the Church of England that suggests local authority guidance changes this and so churches should continue until the government says otherwise.

The Bishop of Leeds added that the fundamental principal was that worship is work. We are to continue as we have been with regard to the work of God in our worship. However, people were not to stay after services in groups. We must all follow the Covid rules.

The Revd Sarah Hancox, Whitkirk deanery

Thanked the Bishop of Leeds for his reassuring, supportive and calm Ad Clerums. Clergy had been dealing with some challenging funeral situations during Covid. She asked if the diocese could provide therapy or counselling for the clergy next year.

The Revd Ruth Newton, General Synod and Ripon deanery

Thanked the Bishop of Leeds and the diocesan team for all they had done. She emphasised that another benefit of Zoom meetings was inclusivity for those with mobility difficulties. In addition,

there were environmental benefits and she hoped that, to some extent, Zoom could be embedded in future Synods.

The Revd Paul Harford, Ripon deanery

With regard to the thirty-five percent of diocesan staff who had been on furlough, when the furlough scheme ended, would the cost be in terms of finance or personnel? Would people be lost or would the full cost of the staff be met?

Jonathan Wood responded that during furlough, staff had been rotated based on the demand for their work. Synod could reflect on costs in the Budget discussion. However, he emphasised that the diocesan team's work continued and everyone in his team was busy. However, it had to be recognised that either that cost was borne going forward or if no, that would affect what the diocesan team were able to do. The intent was to find a way to make the maths work but that was not something that could be done instantly. It would have to be after a broader discussion.

Ian Grange, Dewsbury & Birstall deanery

Wished to return to the issue of "socializing". He asked what clergy and churchwardens could do to encourage people not to stay at church after services and to understand the two metres distance rules. He felt some people saw returning to church as an opportunity to meet up and behave as usual. During worship social distancing was observed but once out of the church door, what could be said?

Jonathan Wood responded that probably a good steer would be the Archbishop of Canterbury's tweet from the day before, about loving your neighbour. This was the message to keep reiterating. It was about those around us, our community and about the impact our actions have on them. Sometimes we have to not do things we would like to do and make sacrifices.

The Revd Rosy Fairhurst, Inner Bradford deanery

Echoed the thanks given by others said for all the help. Struggled with lack of fora for discussion of things which can come out of emergence, especially for example where churches have huge building issues and the need for adaptive ways forward. It would be really helpful if there could be these at grass roots level.

Synod took a short 15 minutes break.

Chair: Matthew Ambler, Chair of the House of Laity

Confirmed that one hundred and seven participants remained present at the meeting.

11. Questions for Synod.

There were no questions.

12. Presentation: Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance Report and Accounts 2019 for noting.

Synod member had been circulated with a copy of the Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance Annual Report and Financial Statements 2019 (for noting) and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to be given on this item.

Geoff Park, Chief Finance Officer, spoke to the PowerPoint presentation. He commented that after all that had happened so far during 2020, the 2019 Accounts seemed particularly historic in nature. He highlighted that there had been a significant improvement in 2019 due mainly to lower costs, principally lower staff and property costs. In addition, there had been the three yearly revaluation of the clergy pension scheme. The deficit in the scheme had decreased from £250m to £50m nationally. This means that the Leeds DBF received a £3.6m credit, which means that schedule was to pay off the deficit by the end of 2022, subject to market movements.

There had been a reclassification of some properties from benefice and glebe to unrestricted following a review with the Mission and Pastoral team and diocesan Property team. The diocesan reserves policy had been reviewed with the auditors during the year. The policy now had a range within which the Leeds DBF wants its reserves to sit. (Historically the reserves target was three months of expenditure). The accounts for 2019 closed above the top of the range at £5m plus. This is unrestricted reserves.

Parish share receipts had made a small improvement and improved by 0.5% when compared with 2019. He thanked everyone who had contributed to making this increase. National church income fell as expected. However, other income (housing, retreat centre and schools income) had improved during the year by 20%.

Costs reduced by £5m plus but a lot of this is the pension reduction. Once this is removed from the calculations, underlying costs reduced by £2m. A significant part of this was the reduction in staff costs following redundancies in 2018. There were no reorganisation costs in the year but there was an increase in parish ministry costs to a level similar to 2017.

The cash had increased and a number of properties had been sold which means that there are cash balances to fall back on. The Accounts had been circulated to the Synod members and had been approved by the Leeds Board in July 2020.

Questions

The Revd Graham Potter, Aire & Worth deanery

[Was called to speak but was unable to make himself heard. It was suggested he pass on this question to Geoff.]

The Revd Nick Clews, Inner Bradford deanery

Asked about the ten percent decline in statutory fees. Did this represent a loss of funeral fees and wedding fees and was this part of an ongoing trend?

Geoff responded that there was a high number of funeral fees in 2018 compared with those in 2019. There was a trend of reduction but it was difficult to know if the decrease was a trend which would continue in to 2020.

Robert Haskins, Harrogate deanery

Commented that it was a remarkably good report and the diocesan team had done well to turn round the finances. However, when Synod looked at the Budget later in the meeting it might be more challenging but well done so far.

13. Motions: BMO Deanery Representation Scheme (Church Representation Rules 2020 Rule 24)

Synod members had been circulated with a copy of four schemes for approval concerning the proposed representation on their respective deanery synods of Sorted Church, the Eldwick Church, the Fountains church and the Kairos Network church.

Peter Foskett, Diocesan Registrar, spoke to this item. He outlined that the BMOs had been in place for some time with the oldest being Sorted. When a BMO is made the bishop authorises or endorses a mission initiative to (among other things) promote the mission of the church and foster a distinct Christian community.

He had put a note with each proposed scheme setting out the relevant information which Synod needed when considering the Scheme. Each mission initiative was different. A specific amendment had been made to the Church Representation Rules in order to bring BMOs within the deanery structure. The CRR now provide that the bishop can review the BMOs and make a direction to the Synod to make a scheme. The Bishop of Leeds has done this in August last year. The CRR provide that the Synod shall make a scheme.

The Schemes before the Synod provide for each BMO to establish a mission initiative roll (like an electoral roll) and to provide for all the clergy licensed to a mission initiative to be on deanery synods.

In addition there was a mirror to the parochial structure provision for laity to be elected to the House of Laity of the deanery synod and this brings BMOs in line with the provisions with relate to parishes.

Professor Joyce Hill, Harrogate deanery

Commented that she had chaired the revision committee which had revised the Church Representation Rules. It had been recognised that under the previous CRR there was no access for BMOs to the governance of the Church of England. The committee felt that everyone should have that chance.

Peter Foskett outlined that each BMO has to have a visitor to report to the bishop. He had consulted on behalf of the bishop with the visitors and all consented to the need for a scheme.

The diocesan bishop and area bishops had an interest in this item in so far as the BMO may be in their episcopal area/archdeaconry. One archdeacon was the visitor for one of the BMOs. However, he advised there was no need for formal declarations of interest from them on these items.

12.1 The Chair to move that:

“That this Synod approve the deanery synod representation scheme annexed to DS 20 09 04 in respect of the Sorted Church Bishop Mission Order.”

Peter Foskett said that this was the oldest of the BMOs and had been renewed in 2015.

The Ven Andy Jolley, Archdeacon of Bradford

Confirmed that the BMO had been renewed early in 2020.

The motion was opened for debate.

There were no contributions to the debate.

Synod voted on the motion:

For: 97

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

The motion was approved.

12.2 The Chair to move that:

“That this Synod approve the deanery synod representation scheme annexed to DS 20 09 04 01 in respect of The Eldwick Church Bishops Mission Order.”

There were no additional comments on this proposed scheme.

The motion was opened for debate.

There were no contributions to the debate.

Synod voted on the motion:

For: 98

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

The motion was approved.

12.3 The Chair to move that:

“That this Synod approve the deanery synod representation scheme annexed to DS 20 09 04 02 in respect of The Fountains Church Bradford (“BMO”).”

Peter Foskett added that the most recent BMO.

The motion was opened for debate.

There were no contributions to the debate.

Synod voted on the motion:

For: 98

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

The motion was approved.

12.4 The Chair to move that:

“That this Synod approve the deanery synod representation scheme annexed to DS 20 09 04 03 in respect of The Kairos Network Church.”

Peter Foskett added that this was the second oldest BMO which had emerged from a parish which had been dissolved.

The motion was opened for debate.

There were no contributions to the debate.

Synod voted on the motion:

For: 98

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

The motion was approved

14. Motion and Presentation: Annual Reports from Boards and Committees for noting and a presentation to Synod from the Diocesan Environment Officer.

Copies of the annual reports from the diocesan boards and committees had been circulated to the Synod members (DS 20 09 05).

Motion: *“That the annual reports contained in DS 20 09 05 are received.”*

Proposer: The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley

Bishop Helen-Ann proposed the motion in her name.

Jemima Parker gave a PowerPoint presentation on her report. In March 2019, Synod approved a Diocesan Environment Policy to be a net zero carbon Diocese by 2050. In February 2020, General Synod called on the whole of the Church of England to strive to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Church of England Environmental Campaign has developed a clear and practical document that defines what will be in scope for this 2030 net zero target. The circulated Diocesan Carbon Emissions Reporting for 2019 draws on this new definition to give a much fuller picture of our carbon emissions. Jemima highlighted:

- The estimated 13,000 tonnes of carbon emissions from the diocesan estate should be a serious matter for concern in the current climate emergency
- Heating churches and schools is the primary source of diocesan emissions
- Switching to renewable electricity and carbon neutral gas is the quickest way to reduce diocesan emissions. The Green Journey scheme is available to facilitate this for churches who wish to join.
- There was not yet adequate data to calculate diocesan emissions definitively
- Comparisons with other dioceses are not yet possible as, no other diocese has published their carbon emissions calculations to date.

The Leeds Board has commissioned a cross-departmental Zero Carbon Diocese Working Group. This will i) examine how the Diocese can gather more data to get a full picture of diocesan emissions, ii) draw together existing carbon reduction initiatives and develop a strategy proposal on how the Diocese could reach net zero in the next 10 years. It was hoped that this proposal might be brought to Synod in March 2021.

The diocese received an Eco Diocese Bronze award from A Rocha, in April. Due to the Covid restrictions, it has not yet been able to formally celebrate this success. Jemima thanked all the parishes who achieved Eco Church awards and the diocesan staff who contributed to winning the award.

Questions

The Ven Anne Dawtry, Archdeacon of Halifax

Would there be a beneficial effect on carbon emissions in 2020 due to people working from home?

Jemima responded that with less travel around the diocese (for example to the current Synod) and churches being closed during Covid, she expected that there would be a cut in emissions. The challenge would be from 2021 going forward how to have warm welcoming buildings but with low carbon emissions.

The Revd Paul Harford, Ripon deanery

Commented that it was very difficult to get permission to make buildings more heating efficient. (For example lowering ceilings, adding cladding). Are there conversations with the DAC or Victorian Society so that this can be possible and buildings can be more efficient have lower carbon footprints?

Jemima responded that the DAC has a set of environmental principles in place and are one of the first DACs in the country to do so. She recommended the National Church's guidance "The Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon for Churches" for some simple and straight forward initial actions churches can take.

The Revd Rosy Fairhurst, Inner Bradford deanery

Asked if parsonages were included in the figures. She asked if the diocese was able to take advantage of the subsidies that were available to insulate homes. She also asked if there was any pressure from the National Church on the heritage bodies to enable funding for eco-projects involving churches.

Jemima responded that with regard to parsonage properties were included and made up about one quarter of the diocese's emissions. Energy Performance Certificates were available for these houses. She understood that funds were budgeted for next year for some improvements. Occupiers could also apply under the Green Homes Scheme which Rosy Fairhurst had mentioned.

The Revd Nick Clews, Inner Bradford deanery

Asked if the power supplier the clergy chose made any difference and if so, was this factored in to the calculations.

Jemima responded that it does make a difference. If clergy choose a supplier of renewable energy this can be discounted. However, the diocese does not have a means of collecting that data. The Environment team were also considering a green energy scheme that the clergy could use.

Ian Fletcher, Inner Bradford deanery

Wondered if some churches did not understand where their CO2 emissions were coming from. He asked if the diocese should be pointing these churches towards energy audits.

Jemima responded it was essential for churches to understand where their emissions were coming from and the Green Journey scheme offered a complimentary audit which she recommended.

The motion was opened for debate.

Ian Fletcher, Inner Bradford deanery

Property report which shows that we have an underspend. Is this good or bad? Seem to be an ongoing focussed disposal programme which seemed to be to fund the running of the diocese. Is this something we need to be asking about?

The Chair commented that this was probably something that could be answered in the next debate on the budget by Irving Warnett and Geoff Park who would have the information about this.

There were no further contributions to the debate.

Synod voted on the motion:

For: 97

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

The motion was approved.

15. Motion: Diocesan Budget 2021. DS 20 09 06

Motion: "That the Diocesan Synod authorise (or direct) the diocesan board of finance to raise and expend a sum not exceeding £21,394,431 for the calendar year 2021".

Proposer: The Revd Nigel Wright

Synod had been circulated with a copy of the draft budget for 2021, DS 20 09 06.

The Chair reported that The Revd Nigel Wright was currently on sick leave and so was unable to propose the motion. The Leeds Board had authorised Canon Mr Irving Warnett to propose the motion instead.

Irving gave an introduction to the budget. He reminded Synod that when he began as Chair of the Finance Assets and Investments committee (FAIC) the diocese had a deficit of c£2.2m and a real threat of running out of cash in six months. Difficult decisions had been taken with the result that by December 2019 reserves had recovered to £6m. Had this action not been taken the diocese would be facing a bleaker situation than it currently faced. For the current year, it was thought that the deficit at best would be £1.7m due to Covid. Parish share was the key and it was hoped that parish share contributions would hold up to the levels seen in the previous two to three months. It was on this assumption that the outturn deficit of £1.7m was based. There has been considerable discussion at FAIC to look at the difficult position and he thanked the diocesan Finance team for their work on this. 2021 had potential operating deficit of £1.2m. However, due to Covid it was difficult to forecast. In addition to the operating deficits, there were additional cash payments for the pension scheme catch up. FAIC is focussing on the cash

position of the diocese over the next four to five years. The assumptions being used for forecasting are that diocesan application to the national diocesan sustainability fund for £1m is successful, that 2022 is a year of coming out of Covid and parish share receipts remain pre-Covid. On this basis, it is believed that the diocese would fall below its £4m lower level by the end of 2022 and will be critically low by 2023 and fully eroded by 2025. However, it is proposed that action be taken not to allow this to happen. In 2019, there had been a number of houses to sell. In the future, more housing would be needed particularly for curates.

Therefore, this was a time to take the opportunity re-appraise all diocesan structures. Not a time for salami slicing of costs. This would be likely to result in just result in no capability and no delivery. There were some things which were not vital and not a priority in the new world. The Leeds Board had commissioned a review of diocesan wide costs. The initial report from this review would be given to the November Board meeting. Options would be taken to the Board in February with likely implementation in Spring 2021.

It was always thought this type of review and restructuring would be needed once the diocese had been established for a few years.

The current total costs of the diocese were c. £21m. The reduction target represents 5% of costs.

Geoff Park spoke to a PowerPoint presentation which had been circulated to the Synod members prior to the meeting. There was likely to be a deficit in 2020 of £1.7m. Income had decreased significantly and forecast that income would be reduced by c£3m and of much of this was a decrease in parish share payments.

Half of the reduction in income had been offset by reduced costs, much of this being reduction in staff costs.

Property and non-staff costs savings were largely due to not being able to go ahead with planned actions. To answer the question raised in the previous debate, there was not a policy to underspend on diocesan properties and there was a budget allocation of c£3.5m for them.

The national church have made available £35m for dioceses to support their deficits for 2020. An application for £1m had been made by the diocese and the result of this application would be known towards the end of October.

Setting budget for 2021 was difficult in the Covid environment. The Board had proposed that parish share requests be frozen and it was felt that similarly stipends and salaries should also be frozen.

This means going in to 2021 income was expected to be c £1m lower, mostly as a result of lower parish share. It was noted that parishes are working hard to pay what they can and encourage new ways of giving and sources of income. It is expected costs will be higher too. The diocesan contributions to the clergy pensions will continue at the same level. Property costs were likely to be higher too. All this contributed to a projected deficit of £1.7m. Free Reserves were estimated to close at £3.5m without the National Church grant and £4.5m if it is received. The diocesan target range is £4.1m to £5.8m.

Geoff summarised that as it was unclear when income may return to pre-Covid levels, the sustainability plan showed income being £600k lower in 2024. Costs of ministry in parishes would be higher as there would be more curates. Although the National Church would meet

90% of the cost of this, the diocese would need to fund the remaining ten percent. This would result in an operating deficit of £700k to £900k. This was not sustainable.

Action was to be taken. As Irving had outlined there would be a review of costs to identify £1m of savings.

Questions of clarification

The Revd Graeme Potter, Aire and Worth deanery

[Had audio difficulties during Item 12. The Secretary to the Synod had spoken to him and was asked to report to the Synod on that conversation].

Jonathan Wood, Secretary to the Synod

Graeme had tried to interrupt to raise a point of order in connection with the change to the reserves policy and the decision to re-categorise reserves. He said this should have been a matter for decision at Synod.

Graeme indicated that this was not the full point he was trying to raise. Jonathan would phone him and return to the Synod with more detail.

Robert Haskins, Harrogate deanery

Asked for more clarification on what the application to the National Church was for. Was it for example to put solar panels on church rooves?

Geoff responded that the fund was emergency fund set aside to assist dioceses with deficits in 2020. The diocese has other money set aside for sustainable projects. The Board had allocated some surplus 2019 funds to a Carbon Reduction Fund some of this could be used for solar panels on Vicarage roofs. It was hoped this work would go ahead in 2021.

The Ven Peter Townley, Archdeacon of Pontefract

Thanked Geoff for the clarity of his presentation.

Peter Foskett, Diocesan Registrar

Responding on the point of order raised by Graeme Potter that the Synod had to approve reserves policies.

Advised that to the extent the policy is embedded in the budget, the Synod does approve the policies. However, the policies themselves are a matter for the Board. So does not see the Reserves Policy as something which needed approval by the Synod. The motion is about the raising of funds and the approval of the reserves policy is not a specific statutory function of the Synod.

The Rt Revd Toby Howarth (on behalf of Graeme Potter)

Read an email sent by Graham Potter during the Synod with a contribution to the debate:

“Synod, the budget and sustainability plan contain a change to synod policy that we are being asked to 'note'. the freeze of parish share is a change to synod policy , I questioned the parish share allocation a few synods ago and had confirmed to me by our previous secretary and Geoff Park.

Given the turbulent year with COVID and the impact of lock-down on all parishes the plan to freeze share can be seen to make sense. However for disadvantaged urban parishes anticipating a 5% reduction this action of freezing share is actually increasing the income they have to find in

2021. And adversely the more prosperous parishes anticipating a 10% increase have been given a tangible reduction. What appears to be a fair application of a freeze for all parishes ends up with adverse impact on the most deprived parishes.

These are parishes where:

- the community impact of lockdown has been highest in terms of food poverty, unemployment, debt and DEATH
- the need for new ministry or expanded ministry is greatest eg food banks, debt centres etc
- the 5% reduction that would have applied now cannot be released into much needed mission and ministry

Can we remove the poorest 50 parishes from the freeze and continue the reduction in their parish share., this would equate to somewhere between £55k and £60k. this is a rounding error in a budget of £22 million. But would make a huge impact on our poorest communities.”

Ian Fletcher, Inner Bradford deanery

Agreed with Graham Potter. The emphasis on cash was correct and he welcomed the cash predictions given. It was difficult to forecast what 2021 would bring. Until there was a vaccine for Covid 19 it was difficult to predict. The freeze or delay in the parish share review will be of concern for parishes. Parishes have struggled to pay their share on the basis of the current policy which is a mish-mash of the three former dioceses' policies. The proposed freeze would be difficult for the parishes which were less able to pay. In addition, with regard to the pension scheme, as the assets at the national level had reduced the diocesan contribution had increased and this would catch up with the diocese at some point, as he did not think the market would recover very quickly. He was grateful for the work done and thought the direction was correct but was concerned about the share freeze and the pension.

The Revd Canon Vaughan Pollard, Outer Bradford deanery

He asked whether a radical look at diocesan use of property could contribute to the financial situation once the new normal was in place. For example, some clergy properties were too large for the actual needs of the current occupier and similarly, some churches too large for the needs of the congregations.

The Revd Brunel James, General Synod and Dewsbury and Birstall deanery

Commented that the future fees income looked overstated in light of the current collapse in weddings. In addition, fewer funerals seemed to be held in churches. The pay freeze could be extended in to future years for staff and clergy if the income was not forthcoming.

John Wright, Inner Bradford deanery

With regard to the comments made about the poorest fifty parishes. He did not think this was something the Synod should do on no notice. However, he hoped the finance specialists in the diocese would take notice of the comments that had been made.

Irving responded to the debate.

With regard to the comments about the fifty poorest parishes, there had been a long debate on this and because it was unclear what the situation was going to be, the freeze was proposed. There were support opportunities for parishes in need and they could approach the diocese about this. However, a change to the proposed freeze would be difficult to manage.

Geoff Park had been given the Chair's permission to assist in the reply to the debate.

Geoff commented that there were some urban priority areas in the decreasing share category. He was happy to look at this again. He was content to review this but some parishes who would receive decreases were in the more affluent band of parishes. Such a review would not prevent Synod voting on the motion before it as this was about authorising expenditure rather than income.

Geoff agreed that the pensions picture is constantly moving and this needed to be monitored. The parish share review is a priority but the costs review will impact on this, so this needed to be done first. There were a range of needs for clergy property. Clergy properties had been reducing in size following a previous review. However, the type of properties which were needed was under review. It would also be considered if properties could be rented so long as this was a wise use of funds. With regard to fees, in longer term perhaps the £1m level may not continue. Geoff confirmed he was happy to take this away and re-look at it.

The Ven Paul Ayers, Archdeacon of Leeds

Commented that Geoff had covered both the points he wishes to make in more detail: there would be share allocations which should be increasing in the lower categories and those which should be decreasing in the higher categories, so more work was needed here. Also the diocese purchases and sales of properties was within a global property market. So changing vicarages regularly would probably be expensive.

The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright, General Synod

Commented that Geoff and the team had done a tremendous job. With regard to parish share, he felt that it should freeze where it was. However, he wondered if there was something that could be done to encourage those who were able to pay more than their parish share allocations, to make voluntary donation to the diocese.

Geoff

He said this was something worth looking at with the Board. A similar request had been made in 2019 seeking £160k additional funds from parishes. £42k was received.

Irving moved the motion: *“That the Diocesan Synod authorise (or direct) the diocesan board of finance to raise and expend a sum not exceeding £21,394,431 for the calendar year 2021”*.

Synod voted on the motion:

For: 93

Against: 1

Abstain: 2

Approved motion.

16. General Synod Reports.

Synod members had been circulated with a report from the General Synod in February 2020 from the Archdeacon of Halifax and a report from the informal July 2020 Zoom Synod from The Revd Ruth Newton.

Archdeacon Anne Dawtry, spoke to her report on the February 2020 General Synod. She highlighted that the General Synod in its debate on the Response to the recommendations of IICSA May 2019 Investigation Report, heard from the National Safeguarding Steering Group of their commitment to ensure that words of apology were followed by concrete actions and the

commitment made by Bishop Jonathan Gibbs that there should be a more survivor-centric approach. The approval of the General Synod to a shorter time frame for zero emissions to 2030 had taken many by surprise. The debate on Children and Youth Ministry encouraged dioceses to support churches in this ministry and also proposed that there might be a sharing of good practice and support between churches. During the Windrush Commitment and Legacy motion, members were horrified to hear of the continuing conscious and unconscious racism experienced by BAME Anglicans. The Leeds diocesan synod motion: Through His Poverty was presented well by the Revd Canon Kathryn Fitzsimons and was approved with amendment. Of the legislative business a report from the Revision Committee on the 2019 first draft Cathedrals Measure was given. This draft measure was looking at the revision of the constitutions of cathedrals. Also affirmed and proclaimed as an Act of Synod was the Clergy Covenant for the Wellbeing.

The Revd Ruth Newton, General Synod and Ripon deanery outlined that the July session of General Synod was an informal Zoom meeting, which could not attend to any formal business. However, the General Synod had met again on 24 September 2020 and had now formally agreed that business could be dealt with at an in person meeting or an electronic meeting.

She reflected that the July meeting was rather “tetchy”. Since then a House of Clergy meeting had been held and it had been agreed that they would meet more regularly via Zoom. She hoped that this would eliminate the tetchiness and prove a means by which the clergy could feel they were being heard and discuss their joys, frustrations and ideas.

Questions

Canon Mrs Jane Evans, Halifax and Calder Valley deanery
If the House of Clergy are meeting more often, where does that leave the House of Laity?

Ruth responded that this depended on the House of Laity.

Professor Joyce Hill, General Synod
House of Laity had its own meeting via Zoom prior to the meeting of the General Synod the previous week to Diocesan Synod, to pass the measure which still had to go through Parliament.

Synod took a lunch break.

Chair: The Revd Canon Sam Corley, Chair of the House of Clergy

17. Motion: Property Committee Scheme DS 20 09 08

Motion: “That the Synod approve the amended Scheme of Designation of the Diocesan Parsonages Board contained in DS 20 09 08 Appendix 4.”

Proposed by The Ven Andy Jolley

Synod members had been circulated with a Property Committee review report, document DS 20 09 08.

Archdeacon Andy Jolley spoke to the motion he had proposed. He emphasized that this item also touched on matters discussed earlier. Parsonages and the well-being of clergy and property within the diocesan finances. He outlined that one of the areas the Bishop of Leeds had commissioned by reviewed in the Governance Review was the diocesan Property Committee. Although Diocesan Synod had approved the setting up of a Property Committee in 2015, the diocese was not currently compliant as there was not a functioning property committee. The proposals brought to the Synod were to address this. The Board as Parsonages Board was about policy and governance. The Property Committee was about expertise and action. In formulating the proposals before the Synod, many people had been consulted. The rationale was to make the best use of diocesan property, particularly over the next five years bearing in mind the challenges, which the Synod had been considering earlier. This would include the environmental impact of properties and parsonages. The composition of the new committee was set out in the papers.

The proposed Property Committee will give better visibility, transparency and process and better expertise.

There were no questions of clarification.

Synod debated the motion.

The Revd Rosy Fairhurst, Inner Bradford deanery
 Asked if there was any scope in the composition of the committee to reflect different constituencies of clergy eg single women, single men and families and to ensure all these can be looked at?

There were no other contributions to the debate.

Archdeacon Andy Jolley responded that the committee would be able to co-opt two members. However, apart from this it was in the gift of Synod who it elects or the Board who it appoints. The proposed composition tried to ensure that the committee was small enough to be effective but large enough to have sufficient expertise.

Archdeacon Andy Jolley proposed the motion:

“That the Synod approve the amended Scheme of Designation of the Diocesan Parsonages Board contained in DS 20 09 08 Appendix 4.”

Synod voted on the motion:

For: 81

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

Synod approved the motion.

18. Motion: Area Mission and Pastoral Committees’ Constitution DS 20 09 09

Motion: “That the Synod approve the amended Area Mission and Pastoral Committees’ Constitution contained in DS 20 09 09 Appendix 4.”

Proposer: The Ven Paul Ayers

Synod members had been circulated with a Mission and Pastoral review report, document DS 20 09 09.

Archdeacon Paul Ayers spoke to the motion he read out. This item was also a response to the Governance Review report. Such a review was needed after a certain period of time after the creation of the diocese as the diocese has a distinctive area system. Up to now the Board and DMPC had met at the same time. This meant that all the bishops and the archdeacons were present. This had proved unwieldy. With the large group meeting the DMPC report became one report among many. So the proposal is that AMPC do the work through the year and meet once a year to share mutual good practice, training and support. The DMPC meets once in full each year to oversee strategy. This would also mean that the Leeds Board would meet without the archdeacons and so the elected members would have more voice. There would be the elected archdeacon on the Board to represent the five archdeacons.

Mission and Pastoral committees now need to look at strategic matters well beyond parish boundaries and the proposals would provide a framework to support the AMPCs as they do that work.

Archdeacon Paul Ayers proposed the motion in his name:

“That the Synod approve the amended Area Mission and Pastoral Committees’ Constitution contained in DS 20 09 09 Appendix 4.”

Synod debated the motion.

Questions of clarification

Ian Fletcher, Inner Bradford deanery

He wondered where the outward looking strategy was. In the former Bradford diocese this was called “Church in the World”. He asked if transforming communities meant to be in this committee or another committee.

The Revd Mark Harlow, Headingley deanery

What is a super parish?

Archdeacon Paul responded that super parish was a name for the working of deployed clergy over a wider area. The AMPCs were not specifically tasked with “church in the world” matters but all the matters it is tasked with are about that. The proposals before the Synod were to make sure that all the five AMPCs were accountable for their decisions being in accordance with the Synod approved diocesan Strategy.

Synod debated the motion.

Ian Fletcher, Inner Bradford deanery

This document is inward looking and not outward looking. The document and the constitution failed to look outward. We have to relate to the outside world. Would like something specific which involved people who had an outward focus.

Bishop of Bradford

At next Synod we will be talking about Wellsprings which is the primary vehicle for the outward looking direction of the diocesan Strategy. This is part of the response from the diocese to the concerns Ian raised.

Archdeacon Paul Ayers proposed the motion standing in his name.

Synod voted on the motion:

For: 84

Against: 2

Abstain: 5

Synod approved the motion.

19. Presentation: Strategy Goal 3 “Nurturing Lay Discipleship”: The Rhythm of Life.

Members had been circulated with:

DS 20 09 10 Rhythm of Life Invitation Leaflet

DS 20 09 10 01 Rhythm of Life Quick Start Guide

DS 20 09 10 02 Rhythm of Life Practical Commitment Card

The Revd Canon Andrew Norman, Director of Ministry and Mission gave a PowerPoint presentation on this item. This was an update for Synod members on the Rhythm of Life initiative. There had been a soft launch in July 2020. The Bishop of Leeds had written to all clergy, DLP subscribers and those who had attended the Lay Conference in 2018. The Rhythm of Life was partly inspired by Matthew 11 v 29 and is a named Strategy initiative and sits in Goal 3 Nurturing Lay Disciples. Though it was also for clergy and could be a way of promoting clergy wellbeing.

There were four steps to being involved in the Rhythm of Life:

- Taking Stock
- One or more practical steps
- Sharing with others
- Periodically reviewing our commitments

There would be help to get started, areas to consider, resources and opportunities for mutual support. All the circulated documents “get started” documents. There would also be some “get started” sessions. There were seven key areas for special attention: praying, encouraging, reflecting, celebrating, resting, sharing and creating. Once resource for those using the Rhythm of Life was a dedicated page on the Digital Learning Platform, which included details of many resources. Andrew shared a view of these pages with the Synod. There were various contexts for mutual support. These could be created by existing groups or via planned Zoom meetings to be held by the area bishops. There would also be future resources for groups such as schools, young people and households. A Lent course and advent resources for children and young people were being developed.

Synod members were encouraged to be involved in the development and if they had ideas to contact the team at rol@leeds.anglican.org

Jane Evans, Synod a lay Synod member for Halifax and Calder Valley deanery shared her thoughts on attending a Rhythm of Life taster session. Jane commented that it was interesting and enjoyable. This included an overview and break out groups on Zoom. These were divided in

to the seven areas of focus. This provided a good insight in to what being involved in the initiative would be like. She recommended the DLP resources. She highlighted that the initiative could be tailored to what each person needed. She wondered if the diocesan cathedrals could take a lead on this initiative.

Questions and comments

The Chair confirmed that the rol@leeds.anglian.org email address would be circulated to members after the meeting.

Kay Brown, Allerton deanery

Commented that she felt in a time of great uncertainty we all needed to develop resilience in our faith and the timing of this initiative would feed in to that. She was pleased to see this initiative at this time.

Jane Wardman, Almondbury and Kirkburton deanery

Asked what the dates of the "Get Started" sessions.

The Revd Paul Harford, Ripon deanery

Thought this was a brilliant and fabulous idea which people should get involved in. However, he wondered when there was already Cursillo in the diocese and there may be other similar movements, why we were starting another. Were people expected to move from one to the other?

The Revd Canon James Allison, General Synod

Applauded the initiative but wondered if there was a digital acknowledgement in what was being planned?

Canon Ann Nicoll, Allerton deanery

Communities, which had rules of life, had a groups which supported one another. She felt this was important and helpful. She felt the diocese needed to encourage its schools to be involved as there were a lot of young people needing support at this time.

The Revd Canon Vaughan Pollard, Outer Bradford deanery

As a leader of a beacon church, he was aware that beacon church leaders had not met to discuss the Rhythm of Life for over six months. Had the strategy moved away from beacon churches and instead the lead was from the diocese. Could his church stop being a beacon church?

The Revd Jonathan Bish, Wakefield deanery

Would encouraging more Anglicans to be involved with the daily office and using resources which were already available could be part of Rhythm of Life too?

Andrew thanked everyone for their comments. The steering group was keen for people to include Rhythm of Life within what they were already doing. Not to stop those. People should look to see if there are things in Rhythm of Life that fit with what they are doing already or compliment them. Where there are natural ways of connecting with natural points of contact then this was to be encouraged. However, the steering group had shied away from random allocation of strangers. There could be sessions hosted by Area Bishops in the short term with break out groups.

The Education team are excited about Rhythm of Life but they needed to get the timing right for other things which were going on in schools.

Beacon parishes could not stop being beacon parishes it was useful to have the feedback from those parishes. Beacon parishes would be convened in next six weeks.

Digital resources were included as was daily prayer. A Rhythm of Life app may be developed in the future.

20. Presentation: Introductory Item - Size of Synod review

A document DS 20 09 11 had been circulated to Synod members.

Jonathan Wood spoke to the paper. The brief presentation was an appetiser to the debate, which would be held at the next Synod meeting in November. Three proposals would be brought to the Synod for the size of Synod for the next Synod term: 60, 70 or 100 elected members per house. Now, there could be up to 100 elected members but each House was only around fifty percent filled. The survey of Synod members circulated earlier in the year asking which of the three proposed sizes should be adopted chose 60 as the preference. This was from a low response rate.

The feedback suggested that a smaller synod would encourage a better involvement but some were of the opposite view.

There were those who made a comment instead of choosing one of the three choices and this was helpful narrative about general feeling.

Questions of Clarification

John Wright, Inner Bradford deanery

Asked why bearing in mind the potential number of people on the Synod, so relatively few attend.

The Chair responded that although someone may be able to give the answer to that, the people attending the Synod were the least qualified to answer.

The Bishop of Leeds

At the beginning of the diocese, Synod was offered three sizes and it was expected and the result was, that the larger size would be chosen. The first business of the Synod was to ensure the diocese was legal viable and operational. The working together on the vision and strategy had changed the dynamic.

There was no synod in the country which got a full turnout. The Synod needed to be realistic about turn out. The matter will be debated in November. However, Synod members could look back and measure where Synod has come from where it is.

The Revd John Bavington,

Asked if the Synod would continue to meet on Zoom and if this made any difference to the numbers.

The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright, General Synod
Could a mixed mode of meetings be kept for better attendance?

The Chair asked members to bring their comments to the debate in November.

The Chair thanked Jonathan and the diocesan team for all their work in preparing for and running the Synod in the new format. He also thanked the Synod members for their engagement and patience. He asked that Synod feedback to the diocesan team on their experience.

Bishop of Leeds

Also thanked the diocesan team. He mentioned however that meeting via Zoom liberated some but inhibited others. For example, in the Dales there are places where internet access is pretty grim. He highlighted that if the Synod meets physically these people also have a long way to travel. So this all needed to be considered very carefully. He asked that Synod feedback.

21. Bishop of Leeds Blessing and Close.

The Bishop of Leeds closed the Synod with a blessing.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Diocese of Leeds

Eleventh Diocesan Synod, Saturday 26 September 2020

Presidential Address

We meet today in the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We always do. But, today we meet in what is for us unprecedented circumstances. I don't need to rehearse the pandemic-induced challenges and realities now upon us. I don't need to draw attention to how this has been handled and communicated or the frustrations evident in both church and society with this situation. What I do want to say right at the outset is that feelings of frustration, regret, disappointment, incompetence to face the challenges, fear for the future, and so on are all perfectly natural, appropriate and understandable. No one should feel alone in this; no one should feel ashamed.

But, that is not the whole story. The current pandemic confronts us - individuals and society - with reality, a reality we can easily discount in what we have come to regard (perhaps somewhat nostalgically) as normal times. This reality provokes fear, but compels Christians to face up to what we really believe about life, death, mortality, morality and meaning. We speak about death and resurrection; now we are faced with questions about these that should not be ducked. There is nothing about COVID-19 that can be called good or a gift; but the phenomenon itself invites us to think deeply about what Christian hope is all about.

I remember doing some bishops' leadership training in Cambridge and asking our guide in the lunch queue how working with bishops compares with the school's usual clients - CEOs, chairmen of major companies, business leaders. He said: "There are two things they won't talk about: failure and death." "That's funny," I replied: "that's where we start." The beginning of Christian theology is to be found in coming to terms with what it means to be a mortal human being, made in the image of God, who will be subject to all the contingencies of temporal life and who will one day die.

When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome two thousand years ago he wasn't offering spiritualised musings to people living in some mystical nirvana, dissociated from the real world. The Roman Empire was brutal and life was cheap - power was everything. These Christians knew that merely being Christian was tantamount to signing their own death warrant. Saying that Jesus is Lord was saying that Caesar is not - and they knew what this sort of political sedition would lead to. No romance - just brute reality. What would we do?

And as we now head towards Advent and Christmas we have a glorious opportunity to reflect deeply on what it meant for God to opt into just this sort of world in Jesus of Nazareth: no game-playing, no illusions, no wishful thinking, no feeble optimism (that all would turn out well). For Christian theology is clear: those who bear the name of this Christ are called to live in the world as he did - loving, living, learning; committed to the world as it is, but drawn by the hope for what it might become - the Kingdom of God.

Brothers and sisters, this is what our Scriptures teach us, but which we now read through a different - more urgent and pressing - lens. Life is inherently uncertain; that is what we are called to be faithful in. To return to Paul: when he writes to these persecuted Christians that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ, he is staring our reality in the eyes. Do we believe it.

Now, this is not a sermon. It is, however, important to locate our work today in a context and a theology. Clergy and lay people together, we are called to work out what it is to be faithfully Christian in these times and not simply to regret that things are changing. Faith, hope and love are to be the colours of our complexion. And love, we read, overcomes fear.

The Church of England is looking seriously at how we should re-shape for a different future. The Archbishop of York chairs a 'Vision and Strategy Group'; I chair a Governance Review Group; the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich chairs a 'Transforming Effectiveness Group; the Bishop of London chairs the 'Emergence Group'; and now the Bishop of Ely is to chair a group looking at the future of dioceses and the role of bishops in a changed church. This is not a case of avoidance therapy by setting up committees in the long grass. Rather, they are bold, determined and radical in their intent. We also face the challenge of complexity in it all, and need to keep our work as thorough and simple as possible in order to navigate this unknown territory which we now traverse - knowing where we have come from, but unsure where we are heading towards or what the future might look like. But, we are shaping it anyway and not just sitting waiting for circumstances to do their best or worst.

The question is: when the world has taken a challenging turn and past certainties or assumptions have begun to die, how are we to be the church God calls us to be for the future? And I am not worried. We will face the hard questions with faith, hope and love. We will love, live and learn. We will mess some of it up and get some things wrong. But, we will attend to the challenge anyway.

The Diocese of Leeds is well set to do this with confidence. We will face hard questions about finance, resourcing, church buildings, people, places and how we set our priorities. But, if this sounds familiar, it should do. This is what we have been doing for the last decade when we were given a scheme to dissolve three dioceses and create a new one. Those of us who went through the experience have no illusions about some of the challenges and obstacles we faced, especially during the last six and a half years since we began. And we have shown a resilience and determination in doing so that demonstrates that we have the gifts God has given us already - and we can approach the future with uncertainty, confidence, adventure, curiosity, hope, faith and courage. That, in fact, has always been the vocation of God's people. This territory might be new and immediate for us, but it is not new for humanity or the Christian Church.

So, we need to come to our agenda today with a sense of realistic imagination and hopeful vision. As I have said to colleagues in the last few months, you can't argue with reality. So, let's embrace it and see where we get to. It will be rocky, but it will still be a road.

Our new Diocesan Secretary has joined us in the most extraordinary and challenging circumstances, and we welcome him to his first Synod today. We will be looking at finance, deanery representation, annual reports and the budget – all in the light of the pandemic and its impact on our churches as well wider society. Although budgets are currently works of the imagination, we need to plan and do our work with seriousness and generosity, not least to those having to grapple with detail on our behalf ... even when the ground never stands still under our feet. We will do some reordering of committees in order to respond to experience of the governance we set up six years ago. And we will look at lay discipleship and the Rhythm of Life.

Now, someone will ask if this is not all a bit inward looking at a point when the outside world is in a bit of a crisis. It isn't, if it is seen as a means rather than an end. Having missed two synods in 2020, we have some housekeeping work we have to do. But, it is all done in order to set us free to fulfil our vocation and promote our agreed strategy as a diocese. We need to keep that perspective clear as we move through our agenda.

This address is shorter than normal as our meeting on screen is harder to manage than usual. I am sure you won't complain about relative brevity. So, I want to conclude by taking us back to the point of it all. We are called in the name of Christ to love, live and learn together in order that across our communities we can reach out with faith, humility and boldness ... in order that the love and mercy of God can be seen and heard and felt and embraced by those we are called to serve. That is why we do

today what we will do. Given the constraints of the technology, please be patient, forbearing of one another, generous of spirit and hopeful in all we say and do together.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines
Bishop of Leeds

26 September 2020