

Leeds Diocesan Synod

DRAFT minutes of the Twenty first meeting of the Synod of the diocese held at 9.30 am on Saturday, 12 March 2022 via Zoom.

Chair: The Bishop of Leeds

1. Opening worship

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

Prayers were said for The Revd Debbie Nouwen, a training curate at Gipton, who had died of cancer recently. Synod members were asked to pray also for her training incumbent, The Revd Kathryn Fitzsimons.

Mr Jonathan Wood, Secretary to the Diocesan Synod, confirmed the Zoom meeting procedure.

The Bishop of Leeds confirmed that the Diocesan Communications Team would be using social media to provide a live general commentary on Synod and that the executive summary of the Synod would be emailed to Synod members the following week.

Synod members were asked to pray for Archdeacon Andy Jolley whose father had died the previous week.

2. Welcome

All were welcomed and the Chair's permission to speak under Standing Order 3:

Items 11 Presentation: Church Schools and Education – Canon Richard Noake, Diocesan Director of Education and Simone Bennett, Deputy Diocesan Director of Education.

Item 15 Presentation and Discussion: Living in Love and Faith in our diocese update, LLF Advocates - Sarah Hobbs and Marilyn Banister.

The Ven Bill Braviner, the new Archdeacon of Halifax, was welcomed to his first Leeds Diocesan Synod.

David Whitaker was welcomed. David was the Joint Diocesan Registrar and would become the Diocesan Registrar from 1 April 2022.

Peter Foskett, Joint Diocesan Registrar and legal adviser to the Synod was thanked for his guidance and legal advice throughout the formation and early years of the new diocese. Peter was also thanked for his advice to the Synod and wished God's blessing on his retirement.

3. Apologies

10 apologies have been received.

It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

4. Declarations of interest – members are reminded of the need to declare any conflict of interest on matters on this agenda.

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

Chair: Canon Matthew Ambler

Canon Ambler reported to the Synod that The Revd Canon Rachel Firth, Chair of the House of Clergy, was ill and so not able to also chair the Synod.

5. Proclamation of Act of Synod.

The Chair proclaimed the Act of Synod using the wording provided by General Synod:

“At the Group of Sessions of the General Synod held at Westminster in November 2021 the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 1993 in the form it takes following its amendment in July 2021 was formally affirmed and proclaimed as an Act of Synod.

An Act of Synod is the embodiment of the will or opinion of the Church of England as expressed by the whole body of the General Synod. Copies of the Instrument proclaiming and affirming the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation as an Act of Synod have been sent to members of this Synod.”

6. Presidential Address

The Bishop of Leeds gave his Presidential Address to the Synod. The address included the following matters:

- Ukraine, refugees and the government response to the migration crisis.
- The value of the BBC in responding to the Ukraine crisis.
- The Church of England was working on specific advice to parishes about housing refugees.
- The Government was going to publish its guidance on sponsorship of refugees on Monday 14 March 2022. There were particular issues to be addressed (eg safeguarding). Individuals and parishes could pre-register at sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk The national church was also preparing a toolkit.
- The Leeds DBF had carefully reviewed the 2022 stipends/salary increase and, due to the current inflation pressures, decided that the increase should move from 1% to 2%. There were a couple of charitable funds which may be able to assist further with hardship support and details would be circulated soon.

The Bishop reminded Synod that the purpose of a Synod was to bring clergy and laity together to reflect, grapple and decide together. It was an opportunity to bring different perspectives. He encouraged Synod members to be involved in the discussions and ask questions. The current agenda before the Synod covered some key topics: Church Schools; LLF, church finances and clergy deployment.

7. Emergency Motion – Ukraine conflict

Instead of Agenda Item 7, Synod considered an emergency motion under Standing Order 26 (1) – which permits motions to be brought with permission of the Chair.

The Chair permitted the motion to be brought and invited Mark Johnston (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery) who had submitted the motion, to speak to the motion. The motion was displayed on the screen:

“That this synod condemns the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. It condemns the attacks on civilian targets and calls on all Christian people to act to overthrow the Putin regime and to seize the stolen assets of the Russian people.”

Mark Johnston (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery) spoke to the motion.

One of his nephews was in Kyiv when the conflict began. He fled with his Ukrainian girlfriend to Slovakia where they set up a reception centre with some friends. His niece had set up a GoFundMe page and raised c. £15k for this work. Mark also has a friend whose brother in law was a soldier in the Ukrainian army at Mariupol and whose family were fearful for his life. For these reasons Mark felt it would be appropriate for the Synod to make a statement, condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

He commended the motion displayed on the screen to the Synod. He had included the latter part of the motion, that “...all Christian people to act to overthrow the Putin regime” because he knew that the effect of the Church in South Africa finally abandoning its racist theology had had a massive impact on the Afrikaners. He believed if something similar happened within the Orthodox Church, it would have a similar effect on people like Putin who claim to be Orthodox Christians.

Questions of clarification

There were no questions of clarification.

Mark Johnston moved the motion which stood in his name:

“That this synod condemns the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. It condemns the attacks on civilian targets and calls on all Christian people to act to overthrow the Putin regime and to seize the stolen assets of the Russian people.”

Synod debated the motion

The Bishop of Leeds

Clarified that Vladimir Putin doesn't claim to be Orthodox but he is an Orthodox Christian. The Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate had a theology about the establishment of the holy Russe, which would include Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. So there was a theology, ecclesiology and history behind the politics too. This was part of what was driving Putin.

The Ven Jonathan Gough (Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven)

He wholeheartedly condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He had spent some years as an army chaplain, where the Forces were working consistently to maintain the peace of Europe and so it was a matter of great sadness that at this stage the peace had been so brutally shattered. He had also worked with ecumenical relations and Christians in other countries. He thought the second half of the motion was unfortunate and didn't think it was sensible for the Synod to call on Christian peoples to act in peaceful ways to overthrow the Putin regime. Firstly, what was meant by "the Putin regime" and asked Synod to consider that such a call would put at risk the Anglican chaplaincy in Moscow and the presence of other Christians in other chaplaincies in Russia. It was an idealistic rather than a realistic call – it wasn't going to happen and would just put other people at risk for no effect. He felt that the Synod would be more effective to say that it condemned the attacks on civilian targets and call on all governments to work together to reestablish peace in these countries.

Canon Ann Nicholl (Allerton deanery)

She was against the invasion of Ukraine and cautioned Synod to ask where it would go and where it would be seen. The motion needed the best wording possible so it had the best effect.

Irving Warnett (Bishop's Nominee)

Wanted to mirror Archdeacon Jonathan Gough's comments. He would prefer the latter part of the motion said something like "peaceful ways to bring aggression to an end" rather than seeking regime change, heartless and nasty as the regime was.

The Revd Ian Jamieson (Huddersfield deanery)

Archdeacon Jonathan Gough had covered almost everything he was going to say. He too felt that the final sentence was inappropriate. He certainly felt that the Synod should be calling on all Christian people to pray for peace and he would support such a motion.

Hywel Rees-Jones (South Craven & Wharfedale deanery)

He endorsed what other Synod members had said – he would be happy "to pray for all Christian people work for peace" but not for the wording about regime change as who would know what would follow it.

Graham Foster (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

Echoing what the Bishop of Leeds had said, he would like to know what the history was of the Synod ie condemning the actions in Yemen, Syria or anywhere else before.

Canon Mrs Jane Evans (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery and General Synod)

She wholeheartedly supported Mark's remarks and the principles of the motion but as others had said, she also had a concern about the last few words. Archdeacon Jonathan had said some words which to her made a good amendment to the motion. She had a concern about the overall prayer for peace which was not so nuanced. Peace could be achieved by Russia winning and that wasn't

what Synod was aiming for. So wording which was more nuanced eg “...working together to seek a diplomatic solution” would be better. So there needed to be a middle way: the overthrow of the Putin regime wording was inappropriate, the prayer for peace wasn’t enough, there needed to be something in the middle.

The Revd Ruth Newton (General Synod)

Expressed concern that in the middle of the motion, that the Synod was asking people to shoulder a much greater burden than we ourselves were prepared to take. To ask “all Christian peoples to act in peaceful ways to overthrow the Putin regime” but that was asking more of Russian Christians than it was asking of ourselves. She found this uncomfortable. Secondly, noting what Canon Mrs Jane Evans had said, perhaps the motion could be tied in with the marks of mission: “justice, peace and reconciliation” might be a better way to phrase what Synod was seeking from all Christian peoples.

The Chair asked the proposer to respond to the debate.

Mark Johnston (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

Confirmed he would be willing to amend the motion to:

“That this synod condemns the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. It condemns the attacks on civilian targets and calls on all governments involved to work for justice and peace for all people involved.”

He didn’t agree it was idealistic.

The Chair confirmed that an amendment to the motion could be done in the usual way.

Diana Tremayne (General Synod)

Given the risk to Russian people bearing in mind the legislation which had been brought in about protest it was asking a huge amount to say everyone should equally act in that way. So whilst she agreed with the motion in principle it was a challenge. So the proposed amendments were more helpful in meeting the aims.

Synod moved to the amendment of the motion.

The Chair confirmed that the wording was:

“That this synod condemns the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. It condemns the attacks on civilian targets and calls on governments to work for justice and peace for all involved.”

Mark Johnston moved the amendment to the motion.

Canon Mrs Jane Evans (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery and General Synod)

Commented that she wished the word “reconciliation to be included”.

Jenny Wohlmann (Almondbury & Kirkburton deanery)

Liked the wording which asked for an end to aggression. This wouldn’t lay a burden on the Christians it would lay a burden on the people carrying out the aggression.

Synod took a break for 10 minutes to allow the proposer, Chair and officers of the Synod to review the wording of the motion in a break out room to then be inputted in to a poll for the Synod members to vote.

Synod reconvened.

Wording for the amended motion:

“That this synod condemns the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. It condemns the attacks on civilian targets and calls on governments to work for justice, peace and reconciliation for all involved.”

The Chair accepted this amendment.

The Revd Ruth Newton (General Synod)

Asked if the proposal was going to go to the General Synod or not and if this had to be agreed before it was voted on or not.

The Secretary to the Synod said the motion had been brought to the Diocesan Synod not as a proposed motion to General Synod ie it was a diocesan motion.

Peter Foskett (Joint Diocesan Registrar)

Said he had not been able to join the break out room to discuss the wording. He advised that the Chair needed to give permission for the wording.

The Chair confirmed that there was now wording for the motion and confirmed the wording to the Registrar and that he had given his permission for the amended wording.

Peter Foskett (Joint Diocesan Registrar)

Confirmed the procedure.

The Bishop of Leeds.

Commented, if the Registrar advised, the Chair’s agreement was needed for the amended motion to be put and then the motion could be put to Synod. It would stand as a statement from this Synod ie it wasn’t asking for anything from anyone else.

Peter Foskett (Joint Diocesan Registrar)

Confirmed this procedure.

The Chair put the motion to the Synod:

“That this synod condemns the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. It condemns the attacks on civilian targets and calls on governments to work for justice, peace and reconciliation for all involved.”

The Synod voted on the motion via a poll.

There was an error in the poll which asked for voting, “For, Approve or Abstain” rather than “For

Against or Abstain”.

The poll was run again with the correct wording for voting, “For, Against or Abstain”:

For: 87

Against: 0

Abstain: 2

The motion was approved.

8. Minutes of the last meeting on 16 October 2021. DS 22 03 02

The Chair proposed:

“That the draft minutes contained in DS 22 03 02 be accepted as a true record of the Diocesan Synod meeting held on 16 October 2021”.

The Synod members voted via a poll.

For: 74

Against: 0

Abstain: 17

The motion was approved.

9. Questions to the Synod.

No questions had been received.

Chair reminded Synod reminded members how to raise questions at the Synod.

10. General Synod reports (November 2021 and February 2022)

Synod members had been circulated with reports from The Revd Ruth Newton (November 2021 General Synod) and The Revd Gary Waddington (February 2022 General Synod). Both were happy to let their reports stand without further comment.

There were no questions on the reports.

11. Presentation and Discussion: Church Schools and Education.

Canon Richard Noake, Diocesan Director of Education and Simone Bennett, Deputy Diocesan Director of Education gave a presentation on Church Schools and Education using a PowerPoint

presentation.

Richard Noake thanked the Synod for the opportunity to present on the work of the Diocesan Board of Education. He highlighted that with regard to Ukraine, the Education Team had distributed collective worship materials to all the diocesan schools on this at the beginning of the conflict.

The history of church schools went back to 1811 when the first schools were founded and now there were over 5000 church schools across England with over 1 million pupils. In the diocese of Leeds church schools there were 65,000 children engaging every week day in Christian worship and receiving a quality education underpinned by a strong Christian vision. The work of the Diocesan Board of Education is regulated by the Diocesan Board of Education measure and the new formal scheme for the Leeds DBE was an item on the Synod agenda. Under the new scheme the DBE would become a subcommittee of the DBF. The DBE operates a five year strategy aligned to the Diocesan Strategy and the 2016 Church of England vision for Education.

In the diocese there are 240 church schools. Eighty were academies sitting in the 11 church multi academy trusts. The diocese also partners with the Roman Catholic diocese of Middlesbrough and Hallam where there are two joint Anglican and Catholic schools. In rural areas the DBE works with federations of schools where two to four schools for example might operate under one governing body and one head teacher. The MATs are also able to accommodate non-church schools and there are 25 “associate” schools which the DBE works with through the DBE’s Service Level Agreement. The DBE works with various partners including the DFE, three regional schools commissioners and nine local authorities, HM Inspectorate and Ofsted and the Church of England Education Office. There is a formal partnership with York and Sheffield dioceses working in collaboration across four MATS.

The work of the DBE Team is advice, support and challenging the CofE schools in the diocese for the good and flourishing of the children and those who work in the schools. They support worship, RE lessons, governors of schools and the church MATs.

Simone Bennett spoke about the work of the DBE team on a day to day basis. The support for SIAMs is key to the support given by the Team. SIAMs looks at the vision of the school and how it impact on leadership, community, curriculum, how school members treat each other and collective worship and RE. Schools engaged with various initiatives including the diocesan Rhythm of Life initiative and the Saving Creation resources. The teaching of RE was a statutory requirement in schools and was taught as an academic subject in the same way as all other subjects.

Each Church of England school in the diocese had a named member of the DBE Team as an adviser to the leadership in the school. The role of Governors in schools has expanded over recent years and now carries a lot of responsibility. The Education team work to encourage, support and equip governors through training and bespoke support in schools. There were challenges around recruitment of governors for schools.

Richard Noake outlined to Synod that the Education Team also managed c£2m of capital funding each year and work with schools to ensure they are wind and watertight and healthy and safe

places to learn. There were c75 applications each year for monies from the £2m. This meant the Team were keeping an eye on c£9m of capital works each year. In addition the diocese had attracted funds from the government's schools rebuilding fund and was looking at three schools in need of refurbishment/rebuild.

Simone Bennett highlighted there were many different expressions of church within schools eg Messy Church and the team offered training to incumbents and new curates.

Richard Noake summarised that the Team also worked with other diocesan teams eg Families, Children and Young People and schools concerning their carbon footprint. The DBE also concerns itself with Further and Higher Education.

Simone Bennett said that the Education Team was also available to support parishes as they reached out to non-church schools and that the Team's training was also available to members.

Richard Noake outlined that the challenges facing the Education Team in the coming months was the implementation of the new Board of Education measure and it was expected that the Government's anticipated white paper would have proposals for all schools to be part of a Multi Academy Trust and for church schools to be part of a diocesan MAT. A new diocesan MAT had been created to accommodate this. He reminded Synod of the unique nature of the relationship between church schools and their local parish.

Questions

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (General Synod)

Why in the new Scheme will the DBE be a sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance rather than a separate incorporated charity? When the measure was being considered at General Synod, some concern was expressed about this, in particular the Dean of Arches expressed concern about potential conflicts of interest. So she was quite surprised as the Leeds DBE is one of the biggest in the country that it wasn't set up as a separate incorporated charity.

The Chair, who was to propose the draft Scheme in the next item, said this issue would be covered in that item.

The Revd Pete Gunstone (Inner Bradford deanery)

Thanked Richard and Simone for their presentation. He highlighted that the fifth diocese goal was Growing Young People as Christians and notwithstanding all the caveats which had been outlined in the presentation, it was said that weekly 65,000 children were "engaged" in Christian worship. He was struck that this was twice the number on the combined electoral rolls. Was the Education Team able to do any qualitative work to see how many of these children might be growing as disciples of Jesus Christ, given that is the primary *raison d'être* of the Church?

John Hanson (Wakefield deanery)

He was Chair of Governors at three church schools. He expressed his gratitude to the DBE, Education Team and those who work as advisers. There were 1,500 children in the school he was involved with and the Education Team supported them immaculately. They support the head teachers who have a very difficult and lonely job, a chaplain they employ in one of the MAT

schools and their support allowed one of the schools to get an Outstanding SIAMs inspection outcome. He asked if the new arrangement would permit the Education Team to continue with the same level of support.

The Revd Canon Dr Hayley Matthews (Headingley deanery)

Thanked the Education Team for the work they had contributed to enabling the Rhythm of Life to the church schools and the children. It was integral to the wider ministry and mission of the church so that young people were given the opportunity not only to have religious literacy but also an embedded spirituality which would enable them, whether within or beyond the church, to grow as people of faith.

Barbara Smith (Brighouse and Elland deanery)

Please could the acronyms be explained to make the information more accessible?

Reply to questions.

Richard Noake thanked the Synod for the positive feedback about the work of the Education Team. Echoing what Hayley Matthews had said about Rhythm of Life, quite a significant number of schools had picked up the Rhythm of Life resources sent to them by the Team. These resource were very much focussed on individual discipleship at whatever level and however this was understood. It was important to be clear that church schools were not about proselytising but are about working from a deeply Christian vision. The work around the Rhythm of Life resources has been about challenging. With regard to worship the narrative is about taking children to the threshold of worship, not forcing them to worship and then supporting them in their understanding the potential of a relationship with God. In addition however, the Education Team needed to be sensitive to the fact that in some of the church schools the overwhelming majority of children were practising Muslim. There was huge support for the work of the education team from the parents of the Muslim children, particularly the fact that church schools understand faith.

Though there wasn't qualitative work done on how many children had become Christians, the Team were aware that in some of the secondary schools there was work through the chaplains with those who wished to come to faith and some schools had Confirmation services.

With regard to acronyms, absolutely, the team will ensure there is a glossary.

Simone Bennett confirmed that the Education Team did share good practice they became aware of between schools and parishes. It should also be noted that the work being done now in schools was an investment for the future ie a foundation which could be a resource to the future adults.

Chair: Bishop of Leeds.

12. Motion: DBE scheme.

A copy of the proposed DBE Scheme had been circulated to the Synod members.

Canon Matthew Ambler (Huddersfield deanery) said he was proposing the motion because he was a current member of the Diocesan Board of Education, a member of the DBE Measure sub-group, a member of the Synod and as Chair of the House of Laity was a member of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

There was a new Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021, the first new measure since 1991. Since the original Measure there had been a lot of changes in the education sector, in particular the academisation programme and significant decrease in the involvement of local authority involvement in schools and education institutions. The new Measure addressed these issues in the context of Church of England schools.

The motion was quite specific in its wording. It should be noted that the draft Scheme was the Bishop of Leeds scheme. The draft Scheme had the support of the existing Diocesan Board of Education and was in a format which the Archbishops' Council and the Church of England Education Office also supported but the Synod's agreement was needed to the Scheme. All of this was required by the new Measure. None of this made implementation of the Measure a smooth process.

A copy of the DBE Scheme was shared on the screen with Synod members. Three options were available to dioceses to set up: a charitable incorporated company, an unincorporated charity or a statutory board of the Diocesan Board of Finance. As most dioceses have done, the choice made by the Diocese of Leeds DBE was for a statutory board of the Diocesan Board of Finance. The reason why most diocese had chosen this route was that unless there was a significant asset base, the charitable option wasn't particularly appealing. Whilst some dioceses did have the assets base, most of the other DBEs are reliant to a greater or lesser extent on monies from the wider Board of Finance and so adopting the statutory board of the DBF is the most appropriate route.

With regard to the Scheme document, the main points to highlight were Article 2 was the designation, Article 3 shows the delegation of the DBE functions. There was a very clear provision that although the DBF is the designated statutory body, it is limited in what it can do because it has delegated certain functions to the DBE. The DBF couldn't intervene in the DBE functions and processes unless it believed that the DBE was significantly derogating from the Measure and the Scheme. So for practical purposes the DBE would act reasonably independently so long as it complies with the Measure and the Scheme. Article 4 sets out the various duties. Article 5 outlines the membership. This includes up to two members elected by Diocesan Synod. The following item on the Synod agenda relates to this provision.

He thanked those who had contributed to the draft Scheme reaching this stage: the Bishop of Leeds, Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley, Tony Hesselwood, Richard Noake, Peter Foskett and Helen Shelley, the existing Board of Education members and Jonathan Wood and Heather Burge.

The Chair invited Synod to ask Questions of clarification
There were no questions of clarification.

Canon Matthew Ambler proposed the motion:

“A draft Scheme being proposed by the Bishop of Leeds with the consent of the existing Board of Education for the Diocese of Leeds this Synod resolves that it is ready to make a Scheme and approves the draft Diocesan Board of Education Scheme contained in DS 22 03 04 (“the Scheme”) as the Diocesan Board of Education Scheme for the Diocese of Leeds conditional upon the certification of the Scheme by the Archbishops’ Council, the date of which certificate shall be the date the Scheme is made but with the Scheme coming into operation on the date specified in the certificate.”

Debate

Canon Ann Nicholl (Allerton deanery)

Commented that on the new DBE it would be important to get diversity from across the whole of the diocese (ie both rural and urban) and she hoped this would be taken in to consideration when members were appointed.

Robert Haskins (Harrogate deanery)

Asked why there were only two members elected by the Diocesan Synod and quite a lot of co-opted people.

Reply to the debate

Matthew Ambler replied that there were only two elected members for the reason Canon Ann Nicholl had identified ie to ensure that diversity was reflected not only of the diocese but also of the skills and expertise needed by the DBE.

Synod voted on the motion

For: 81

Against: 0

Abstain: 4

The motion was approved by the Synod.

13. Motion: DBE elections.

A copy of a proposed timetable for the DBE elections (For once the DBE Scheme was made) had been circulated to the Synod members.

Canon Matthew Ambler (Huddersfield deanery) spoke to this item. A copy of the draft timetable was shared on the screen. This related to the DBE Scheme considered by Synod in the previous item. It referred to the process for electing the two DBE members who would be elected by the Synod. The approval of the timetable would mean that once the certification of the Scheme by the Archbishops’ Council was in place, the election process could be arranged. The election was not dissimilar to other elections held in the diocese save that this involved all three houses of the Synod

and that candidates could be non-Synod members.

The Chair invited questions of clarification from the Synod members.

Barbara Smith (Brighouse and Elland deanery)

Asked if the full term of service would usually be three years and that the current proposed term was because the elections would be held part way through a triennium.

Canon Matthew Ambler confirmed that this was the reason for the shorter term. Usually the term would be three years beginning on the 1st January following the elections to Diocesan Synod.

Canon Matthew Ambler proposed the motion:

“Subject to the Diocesan Board of Education Scheme being certified by the Archbishops’ Council and upon the Diocesan Board of Education Scheme having been made, this Synod approves the timetable and date of the election, manner for conducting the election, and period to be served by elected members as contained in DS 22 03 05”.

Debate

No debate was offered by the Synod.

Voting

For: 85

Against: 0

Abstain: 3

The motion was approved by the Synod.

Chair: Canon Matthew Ambler

14. Motion: Ratification of appointment of Leeds Board nominee trustee.

Synod members had been circulated with a paper on this item.

Canon Mr Irving Warnett (Bishop’s Nominee) spoke to the item. The Leeds Board could nominate four lay trustees to serve a three years term on the Leeds Board. There was currently a vacancy for a lay nominated trustee. The proposal related to that vacancy and Jan Ali has said that she would be very willing and pleased to take up this appointment. Synod members had received a copy of Jan’s personal statement. Canon Irving highlighted that Jan had been a licensed Reader since 2013, on the Board of Patronage since 2019 and was a chartered accountant. Since 2020 she served on the diocese’s Finance Assets and Investments Committee and since 2021 she has chaired the new Property Committee. He recommended Jan to the Synod for her skills and expertise and also because he felt that it was right and proper for the Chair of the Property Committee to be on the Leeds Board.

The Chair invited any questions of clarification.
There were no questions of clarification.

Canon Mr Irving Warnett proposed the motion:

“That this Synod ratifies the appointment of the Leeds Board nominee trustee Jan Ali whose personal statement is contained in DS 22 03 06.”

Debate

Synod offered no debate.

Voting

For: 85

Against: 0

Abstain: 2

The motion was approved by the Synod.

There was a brief refreshment break.

Chair: Canon Matthew Ambler

15. Presentation and discussion: Living in Love and Faith in our diocese update.

Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley introduced this item and the LLF advocates: Sarah Hobbs, Archdeacon Andy Jolley and Marilyn Banister. A PowerPoint presentation was shared with the Synod members.

Bishop Helen-Ann outlined that LLF invited the whole church to journey together in learning, listening and discerning how and what questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage need to be addressed in the life of the Church. A period of engagement in learning listening and discerning began in November 2020 and would finish at the end of April 2022. There had been multiple ways of engagement: a questionnaire, focus groups and creative responses. These would be gathered and then published in September 2022. The bishops would then begin their process of prayerful discernment in the light of the LLF resources and of the findings of Church-wide engagement and listening. The journey would end at the General Synod in February 2023 or the beginning of a new phase of beginning of work, with clear proposals about questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage and any other matters which the Church-wide discernment has brought to light.

This period was an opportunity for Diocesan Synod to be reminded of the vision, process and purpose of the LLF journey. To reflect together on the extent and quality of engagement across the Diocese of Leeds and how it has impacted the life of the Church in the diocese and to consider what part diocesan synods can play in transforming the way the Church at all levels engages with

difference and diversity that is more relational and inclusive and reflects the love of God within the body of Christ for the world to which it is sent. Synod's role was to reflect on the characteristics of a better way of discernment and decision making as suggested in the hopes for the LLF discernment and decision making process and to consider how as a diocesan synod, synod might better embody these hopes in its ways of working together.

Synod watched a video "The LLF Journey".

Bishop Helen-Ann then outlined to Synod that the issues in the video are relevant for each Church community. We are each made in the image of God and we are created to be in relationship to God and to one another. Continuing with the PowerPoint presentation, Bishop Helen-Ann explained the hopes for the process:

- That there was the widest possible participation across the whole Church
- That we have engaged in deep learning together about God and about being human
- That we are kinder and more understanding of each other as we travel together
- That everyone can see that they have been listened to, heard, loved and taken seriously
- That the Spirit's work among us reveals something new unexpected and the love and understanding we have experienced will help us reach our destination in a better way.

The Diocese of Leeds had had fantastic engagement with LLF through church groups, PCCs and youth groups. Some of the feedback had emphasized that LLF had enabled people to express their views and find a way to live, work and worship together and so serve our communities in a more understanding way.

LLF was a learning process, not a one off session, it's about the journey as well as the destination. Bishop Helen-Ann invited the three LLF Advocates to share reflections on their involvement in LLF so far.

Sarah Hobbs, LLF Advocate

Sarah had joined being an LLF Advocate both as a Christian and as a member of the LGBT community. Initially there had been some trepidation in the LGBT community. Having attended three courses and now being an Advocate and having met and spoken at a number of churches across the diocese, Sarah realized that in the programme and process there had been a real openness and willingness to listen to other people's perspectives that had been really surprising and had been very respectful and people had been thoughtful and serious in how they had engaged. Sarah encouraged the Synod members to either go on a course or listen to a course particularly for the stories which are told in the resources. These seem to have resonated most with people as they heard people's life experiences which they may have never encountered before. People had also responded to the fact that the process was not just an intellectual exercise – though it did include what Scripture says and what the theological positions are – people seemed to have gone beyond this, realizing that what was being spoken of was important because it was about people's lives and how they can connect and be part of the Church. Sarah was thankful for how the Leeds Diocese had responded to the project.

The Ven Andy Jolley (Archdeacon of Bradford)

There were amazingly brilliant resources: the books, course, videos and podcasts and also the pastoral principles. He thought this offered hope for the future for the Church. As part of Archdeacon Andy's own thinking on this, he had read Kathleen Stock's book "Material Girls". Kathleen was the former

professor at Sussex University who was subject of a campaign and resigned her post. Much of what happens in the country and in the Church risked being reduced to being ways in which we don't listen to what each other has to say and things can only be expressed in a Tweet. The Pastoral Principles offers the Church a much better way of engaging across difference and disagreement and if we can do that well the Church offers hope to our Society as well as to ourselves and the Church's future.

Archdeacon Andy had been encouraged by the way the deaneries had engaged with LLF. Notwithstanding the pandemic, the level of engagement had been great but was aware many people were grappling with the many issues following the pandemic and so the level of engagement may not have been what it might have been otherwise.

Archdeacon Andy said that one of the reasons to engage with LLF was that it offered a way to look for a better way forward when a decision making stage was reached ie finding more creative ways to live with one another. Also, it was good for how the Church engaged on this topic but also could be used in engagement with other topics – the LLF resources encouraged engagement with Scripture, tradition, creation, our culture and experience.

In addition it was also about how the Church proclaims the Gospel afresh in this generation. The Church needed to understand how it speaks and listens to our culture today. The Church seeks to proclaim a Gospel speaks of the love of God which meets us where we are but also seeks to transform us to be more like Christ. How can the Church seek to engage with a generation for whom questions of identity and sexuality are very much at the fore? Engaging with the LLF materials will make the Church much more equipped to engage with Society as well as each other.

Marilyn Banister, LLF Advocate

Marilyn is the Lay Chair of the South Craven & Wharfedale deanery and was asked to run a pilot course in the deanery with a colleague via Zoom. People were very open and willing to share their stories. It was a very positive experience. Everyone was good at listening to each other and respecting other people's opinions. Marilyn acknowledged that they may not have had a lot of diverse opinions. People found the story films very powerful. In addition, Marilyn had been involved in a LLF course and another LLF group. Marilyn said she came to realize that people really didn't understand about the Church's rules eg on marriage, relationships and what the barriers were for other people.

Marilyn thought one of the things which had been particularly valuable in the discussions she had been part of was about young people and coping in Society today and thinking about what was the Church saying to Young People on this issue?

In summary LLF had been a really humbling and powerful experience for Marilyn – particularly listening to other people's stories. The respect shown had been a gift given to each other. Marilyn encourage Synod to be involved in the LLF process.

Bishop Helen-Ann resumed the PowerPoint presentation to Synod. LLF was about a journey that was braver and safer and the Pastoral Principles had been used to enable this within LLF. Many of the questions are very personal and sensitive and so engagement needed to be with care, grace and love and this was why the Pastoral Principles embedded in each session recognized the potential roadblocks we put in the way of learning together well. LLF included commitments for participants, guidance for group leaders and national church training for facilitators.

Bishop Helen-Ann invited Synod members to join break out groups to consider one or more of the following questions:

- i) How do you respond to the HOPES for the LLF discernment and decision-making process?
- ii) What might Diocesan Synod do differently to better embody this way of working?
- iii) How might Diocesan Synod encourage embedding such a vision in the life of local churches and deaneries?
- iv) How might we help these hopes to be realised in General Synod's discernment and decision-making processes?

After the break out groups discussions, a plenary session was chaired by Marilyn Banister.

Marilyn invited Synod members to share the break out groups' answers to the four questions above.

Bishop Toby Howarth (Bishop of Bradford)

The process had been really good. It had been important for individuals to engage deeply in hearing one another's experiences but that at a certain point we would be moving into a slightly different mode ie the synodical process. For many people in the church the current situation isn't working and therefore there was a call for change of whatever kind. The challenge for the Church in synods, is to be able to move in to a potentially decision making process without losing all that had been learnt in the process up to now.

Archdeacon Bill Braviner (Archdeacon of Halifax)

It made a huge difference when issues became people and changed how we think about issues. It would be good if the church could keep the wide focus which was intended by LLF to the whole realm of Living in Love and Faith. Less prominent issues are lost and not addressed if there is a narrower focus on just some of the issues. The communal discernment process of LLF is richer than a more adversarial process. It would be good to see this not just in synods but in our culture generally.

The Revd John Bavington (Inner Bradford deanery)

It was frustrating that although there were really good resources, the process had happened during a pandemic and so there was little opportunity to focus on LLF with all the other issues being addressed in the pandemic. It was also frustrating for the same reasons that the deadline was the end of April 2022. He hoped that the conversation could be continued over a longer time as he believed that longer conversations led to more unanimity of thought. It had also been noted that the feedback online was heavily weighted towards feedback on doing the course, rather than on where the church should go with its doctrine and he thought this was tricky if doctrine was going to be formed as a result of the course.

The Revd Eve Ridgeway (Headingley deanery)

The course had enabled people to open up to one another and to slow down conversations to allow

people to hear different perspectives. In St Georges, it had enabled different age groups to listen to and learn from one another. When people were invited to engage with a course, the aim was to expand the voices that were listened to as well as that of Scripture and how we continue to do that. The course been done in different churches has opened up a line of communication for people eg for those who are LGBT but have not felt able to be open about that and to be able to communicate with those running the course and the clergy to say "I'm here". This has been useful. Not all people wish to be the mouthpiece for their church but it has been useful to open up the line of communication. It was helpful for those taking part to see that it was part of a larger discussion and that we belong to one another in a bigger way but it will have implications for how we relate to one another in the future, how we prepare for that. The Biblical study showed that people were prepared to go deeper and this was a key resource for us as the church to do this together.

Canon Ann Nicholl (Allerton deanery)

The difference between younger people and older people was noted in the group. The church was not keeping up with some of the ideas of younger people because of its rules and regulations eg about marriage and sexuality.

Mark Johnston (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

The group had discussed the courses they had attended. Those with children had felt they had been 'schooled' by them on current societal thinking on issues. It had also been noted that the feedback online was about the course rather than the issues.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (General Synod)

On the whole the experience of the course had been helpful but they were struggling to imagine what the bishops were going to do with it, what they could bring to General Synod and how that would work. Particularly as the feedback is more about how you found the course and how you got on with talking to each other.

The Revd Mark Umpleby (Dewsbury and Birstall deanery)

What would be the process of the bishops' discernment? Was there a timetable? Mark was keen for this issue to move forward without delay. It had been discussed by General Synod in various forms for many years. Had the bishops been involved in the course too ie had they also had that experience?

The Revd Canon Dr Hayley Matthews (Headingley Deanery)

Various issues were raised in the group. We needed to be aware that we were part of a global church and we needed to be aware of our relationships further afield. Also perhaps we could learn from other Episcopalian churches and denominations as much as we could share with them. It was also thought we needed to remain one and united and a broad church which allowed difference within it. The caveat was to address how people were supported by the church so that they did not experience negativity such as unconscious bias and micro aggressions.

Hywel Rees-Jones (South Craven and Wharfedale deanery)

The group had talked about the importance of the Pastoral Principles and it maintain this as the church moves forward. Particular the recognition that there can be different views and understandings. It was also noted that this could have an economic effect on the church.

Bishop Helen-Ann thanked Synod for its engagement and feedback and all the LLF advocates for all their work. Deadline for feedback for survey is end of April 2022.

16. Introductory presentation and update: Church Support and Deployment review and diocesan finances overview.

Jonathan Wood spoke on this item using a PowerPoint presentation.

The presentation was an introduction to an item which would be coming to the Synod in more detail in June: the Clergy Support and Deployment review (CSD). CSD was rooted in the diocesan Strategy. However the current context for the diocese was a recently difficult financial situation. The diocese had run a deficit over the last two years at around £2m each year. Before the pandemic, the diocese had agreed a Sustainability Plan. Due to the pandemic, a key income source, parish share payments, had dropped significantly during 2020 and 2021. In recognition of these challenges, the DBF undertook a costs review. The results of the review were shared with Synod in June 2021 and the immediate easily achieved savings being made were outlined. However that work highlighted a further review was needed of what the actual church support and deployment model for the diocese would be i.e. how could churches be supported and how would decisions be made about deployment. The Leeds Board commissioned this review. The objective was to create a diocesan wide plan for ministry deployment and support. The plan was to reflect missional priorities, to capture a realistic ministry and mission model for each parish which would be affordable and set out what the diocese could do to support those ministries. It was also intended that the plan would evolve and could be reviewed.

The work on the plan started with a review of each parish and benefice. This was a high level review looking at mission and discipleship and financial sustainability ie the levels of confidence in mission and discipleship and ability to pay for ministry in the parish. This categorization was to determine the support needed by the parish and not a "hit list". From this a support framework was developed. This set out what different models of ministry were and the different interventions which could be used - so that there was uniformity of understanding of these across the diocese.

The aim of all of this was a to achieve a balanced budget, sustainable share, a supportable stipendiary number, focus on leadership and intentional looking at how we grow and not shrink our presence eg how do we grow the number of young people we're engaging and how do we identify missional opportunities and resource them.

There was now a plan which would work if the outlook remained positive ie parish share returned to previous levels. This plan would be brought to the Synod in June for discussion and feedback.

In addition to the above plan, work was now being done on a second plan. This plan was for if things became more challenging ie if parish share payments did not recover. Work was also being carried out on costing the first plan.

Synod would be asked for feedback in June and source material would be brought to support the plan.

If Synod members wished to ask any questions before June, they were asked to contact Jonathan.

17. Bishop of Leeds Blessing and Close.

The Bishop of Leeds closed the Synod with a blessing.

DRAFT