

## Leeds Diocesan Synod

Draft Minutes of the twenty ninth meeting of the Synod of the diocese held at 9.30 am on Saturday, 19 October 2024 at Holy Trinity Boar Lane, Boar Lane, Leeds LS1 6HW.

### 1. Opening Eucharist Service

The Bishop of Leeds presided at a Eucharist service for the opening of the Synod Triennium.

**Chair:** The Bishop of Leeds

### 2. Welcome, apologies and notices

#### 2.1 Notice

Jonathan Wood gave the Health & Safety, Social Media and Report Summary notices.

#### 2.2 Welcomes

##### Visitors

Diocesan Mission Apprentices who assisted with the stewarding of the Synod: Emily Bell, Aubrey Nkolimbo, Kate Ilegbedion-Kyoon and Carl Firth.

Bailey Wilcock who was observing the Synod.

##### Presenters

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

For Item 7 (Barnabas update) The Revd Jude Smith, Director of Church Revitalisation.

For Item 12 (Presentation and Discussion: Budget) and for Item 13 (Motion: Budget 2025 – money resolution) Geoff Park, Chief Finance Officer.

#### 2.3 Apologies

28 Apologies had been received.

### 3. Motion: Draft Minutes of the last Meeting on 15 June 2024. DS24 10 01

There were no notified amendments.

The Chair moved:

*"That the draft minutes contained in DS24 10 01 be accepted as a true record of the Diocesan Synod meeting held on 15 June 2024".*

**All approved.**

**Chair:** Canon Matthew Ambler (Chair of the House of Laity)

### 4. Presidential Address.

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

## 5. Pontefract Deanery motion – CNZ funding DS24 10 02

Paper: DS24 10 02      Background paper Pontefract Deanery – CNZ funding motion

*“... to move on behalf of Leeds Diocesan Synod:*

*“Recognising that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God’s creation and a fundamental injustice, and the need for the Church of England to urgently meet General Synod’s commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2030, it is requested that the Church Commissioners release sufficient funds in the next triennium beginning in 2026 to support all parishes to install their own zero-carbon energy infrastructure, where they are unable to meet the costs themselves. It is also requested that progress on this project is reported annually to General Synod.”*”

Proposer: The Revd Robert Hart (Pontefract deanery)

The Revd Robert Hart (RH) gave a presentation on the circulated report. There was a need to invest resources to reap the benefits of net zero carbon (NZC). The poorest parishes didn’t have the resources to make this type of investment. The motion from Pontefract deanery was about economic justice as well as the climate crisis. Wealthier parishes could invest in NZC projects but there was a recognition that less wealthy parishes wouldn’t be able to do this. The circulated report set out the arguments for the proposed motion. The current decade was critical for action on climate emergency. Natural disasters were affecting many across the World. General Synod had voted in 2020 for the Net Zero Carbon target of 2030 reflecting the urgency of the climate crisis. Examples of local engagement with NZC across the country were included in the circulated report. There was that funding was available for NZC. However, the funding criteria required match-funding which disadvantaged the poorest parishes. The proposed motion asked for sufficient funds to be released in the next national triennium funding to ensure that the poorest parishes would not be left without money and time to meet the NZC targets.

There were no questions of clarification.

The motion was read out.

### *Debate*

The Revd Pete Gunstone (Inner Bradford deanery)

Asked what sufficient funds would be for Pontefract deanery.

The Revd Jeff Payne (Wensley deanery)

There were similar issues in rural areas. There was a lot of funding for community activity but not for other activities. Rather than a competition for the NZC monies it would be better to implement a different funding model ie that the Church Commissioners chose the churches it would fund for NZC.

Stephen Hogg (General Synod)

Was concerned what “sufficient” and “unable” to afford meant. The wording needed tightening up so that the Church Commissioners had a quantum.

The Revd Catherine Shelley (General Synod)

Had served on the Environment Working Committee in another diocese. Catherine agreed in principle with the proposed motion but cautioned that the situation was more sophisticated: a large council estate in London which was one of the top ten deprived also had more grants than other parishes because of its urban deprivation indices. Perhaps the Leeds Diocese’s metrics could be scaled up and used rather than asking for a blank cheque.

The Revd Suzy McCarter (Harrogate deanery)

Agreed with Net Zero Carbon but there was an issue with the motion covering churches which were unsustainable. There needed to be recognition of which churches to take into the future and which had achieved their purpose. It was foolish to agree to a motion for churches with few attendees.

The Ven Paul Ayers (Archdeacon of Leeds and General Synod)

Recognised the motion was proposed with good intention but he opposed the motion. This was because it didn't address what actions would be needed to achieve NZC and (as Stephen Hogg had commented) how much funding was being asked for. It also didn't address what the Church Commissioners were to stop funding to fund the proposal in the motion. A financial statement was required for General Synod motions and so costings would be required.

The Revd Erik Peeters (Dewsbury and Birstall deanery)

Said it was a question of solidarity with all churches. Erik asked what funds were available centrally for the adaptation of churches to become energy efficient. Some PCCs will only agree to NZC project funding if the funding is from the diocese. People didn't want to give because they felt the Centre should do more. The motion will pass the responsibility to the central church fund.

The Rt Revd Arun Arora (Bishop of Kirkstall)

Highlighted that the Church of England had published a report on NZC and included the figures members has asked for: the first tranche of funding from the National Church was £30m, followed by £100m in 2025-2028 and then £60m in 2029-2031. The total was nearly £200m.

RH confirmed that this report was included in the background papers to the circulated report (ie the third one listed in the References section).

Michael Laycock (Harrogate deanery)

Thought the issue was wider than helping local churches but included the wider issue of climate change. Was it really the issue people think? Industrialisation didn't cause the historic warming periods. Natural causes also contributed. Michael cautioned that not all figures were reliable for example, weather stations previously in the countryside were now in towns. There should be concern about human activities on the environment eg forest clearance. However, zero carbon was a delusion and Synod shouldn't vote for the motion.

The Very Revd John Dobson (Dean of Ripon)

Supported the intention which led to the motion and for the work on it. It was good for Synod to engage with a complex issue. Dean John said he was intrigued by the General Synod members' concern they may look foolish if an uncostered motion was put forward. Wasn't that what General Synod's motion regarding the 2030 deadline was? The majority of the Synod was likely to want to move to NZC but what was the strategy for this – more investment from a national level would be useful. Dean John thought more work was required for the motion which was on an important issue to raise but was complex.

The Rt Revd Anna Eltringham (Bishop of Ripon)

Thanked RH for bringing the motion but asked if it was practical or wise. The motion did look at the disparity between richer and poorer. However, we needed to be both wise and pragmatic by supporting the national church in what it was doing regarding churches, schools and vicarages but also support poorer churches as a diocese in conversation with the national church. Bishop Anna couldn't support the motion in its current form.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (General Synod)

Told synod she was a priest in the Huddersfield episcopal area. Her church had switched from gas to

electricity. It was important to have funding for NZC but churches also needed proper advice on this so that the works are good and effective.

The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright (General Synod)

The Pontefract deanery didn't have the resources to cost the motion. There were 23 parishes in the deanery and each would need a different amount. Canon Paul was Vice Chair of the General Synod Business Committee and confirmed that a paper would be submitted with the motion at General Synod, however didn't think the diocese could work out the cost. Canon Paul asked the Synod whether it should put forward the motion in the hope of getting funding or withdraw the motion though this could be a negative move. Costs change as time moves on. The original time scale was a deadline of 2045. The motion asked Synod to do its best for parishes.

Jonathan Wood

Secretary to the Synod and Diocesan Secretary

Outlined that it was difficult to cost the motion as each church's requirements would be different. As an estimate, the diocese thought it would need £50m to enable all churches in the diocese to be NZC. The national church had set aside £200m. It was clear that more money would be needed to meet the 2030 target.

*Reply to the debate*

RH replied that Pontefract was a small deanery and it would be difficult for it to produce the figures to demonstrate the poverty trap issue outlined in the motion. The figures Jonathan Wood had outlined were helpful in that they showed that the monies available from the Church Commissioners would not be at the pace or the amount needed. RH didn't feel he could withdraw the motion without consultation with the deanery as the motion had begun in the deanery.

The Revd Ian Bullock (Pontefract deanery)

Sought the consent of the Chair to proposed that the motion be referred back to the Pontefract deanery synod.

With the Chair's consent, The Revd Ian Bullock proposed and Roger Lazenby (North West Leeds deanery) seconded "That the motion before the Synod be referred back to the Pontefract deanery synod."

*Voting*

For – majority

Abstain – 01

Against – 01.

**The referral back of the motion to Pontefract deanery synod was approved.**

## **6. Report from July 2024 General Synod DS24 10 03**

*Paper:* DS24 10 03 General Synod report.

*Speaker:* Canon Mrs Jane Evans (General Synod).

Canon Mrs Jane Evans spoke to the circulated report. Canon Jane highlighted that there were many different forms of debate at the General Synod. There were the ones which involved debating differences of opinion but also there were technical motions. There were also discussions. Where there was no debate and all members agreed this showed what the view of the General Synod was quite clearly.

At the summer General Synod the members had discussed trust ie what could be done to strengthen trust.

There were areas that General Synod members didn't agree on and matters which involved difficult debates. Canon Jane asked Diocesan Synod members to look at the online information about General Synod.

There were no questions.

*Members took a refreshment break*

**Chair:** Canon Matthew Ambler (Chair of the House of Laity)

## 7. Barnabas update

*Paper:* None

*Presenter:* The Revd Jude Smith, Director of Church Revitalisation.

The Revd Jude Smith (JS) gave a presentation using a PowerPoint presentation. JS outlined how parishes across the diocese were engaging with Barnabas and offered to send the data to any members. 46% of parishes had engaged with Barnabas. Engagement included participation in courses and learning communities, engaging in coaching and mission accompaniment, receiving church buildings support, applying for an receiving a new congregation grant, participating in work towards an area strategic bid and using the Compass diagnostic tool with a facilitator.

Looking at the five episcopal areas' engagement with Barnabas, an assessment of engagement with Barnabas in any form by parishes against total parishes in the episcopal area the results were: Bradford 70%; Huddersfield 29%; Leeds 49%; Ripon 50% and Wakefield 44%.

JS showed pie charts outlining the different types of engagement with Barnabas in each episcopal area and the number of parishes involved in each type of engagement. Among those engagements highlighted were:

- Confident Leadership in Missional Churches (CLMC)
- Parish Growth and Leadership (PGL) a six months clergy and laity course
- Re-weave a five year journey for clergy and laity to look at their church and how they engage with their community to partner with the community in mission,
- Engagement with the Church Buildings Support officer
- Formation of a Maintenance Collective for churches to work together
- the Compass diagnostic tool
- Every Good Work youth work with young people who are not linked with a church. This was funded from a specific bid to the national church.

JS said that Barnabas was all about providing support which would help parishes. The Barnabas Team was looking at the data it was collecting to assess where to invest in the future. Engagement feedback forms ask if the engagement was helping to build confidence. The data was also used to see if engagement increased mission and sustainability and to better advise parishes what would be most likely to work for

them.

#### *Questions*

The Revd Ian Bullock (Pontefract deanery)

Asked for the PPT slides to be sent to the Diocesan Synod members.

James Meredith (North West Leeds deanery)

Asked about the pie chart colours.

JS confirmed that the colours were consistent across the pie charts.

Robert Haskins (Harrogate deanery)

£69k was for net zero carbon and Barnabas had been allocated much more than this. For the £4m allocated by the national church, is the diocese accountable and what is the business case?

Jonathan Wood (JW) confirmed that the national church required a lot of work from dioceses when they made bids for funding. Dioceses needed to be able to demonstrate objectives and outcomes. The diocese reported quarterly on the outcomes matching them against the bid document. The diocese could bid for more monies and the national church will review these outcomes against the original bid to see if they had been satisfied. The diocese sets its own internal targets too and also provides regular Barnabas updates to the Synod. There was a business case and JW invited Synod members to speak with him about this.

## **8. Questions to the Synod**

Two Questions have been received from Graham Foster (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

**Paper:** The Questions and replies had been emailed to members.

#### *Supplementary question*

Graham Foster (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

Asked if it was known what the assumed losses were. Graham thought that this should be disclosed.

Jonathan Wood – replied that it was not known what known what the total losses were. There were £623,342.44 known losses. It was known that the number was higher but a precise figure couldn't be given. To litigate with the insurer an estimate was needed and a figure was given. However, the insurer challenged the DBF that it couldn't prove this estimate was correct and the DBF said that the insurer couldn't prove it was incorrect. This led to the mediated settlement and it was judged by those delegated decision making power by the Bishop of Leeds and the Leeds Board that the settlement was a fair reflection of the loss.

The Bishop of Leeds emphasised that the claim could only go back over 6 years and was a complex case.

## **9. Leeds Board 2024 nominee members' ratification DS24 10 04**

*"That this Synod ratifies the appointment of the Leeds Board nominee trustees whose details are contained in DS24 10 04"*

Proposer: The Bishop of Leeds, Chair of the Leeds Board

*Paper:* DS24 10 04 Leeds Board Nominee trustees' ratification.

The Bishop of Leeds firstly congratulated Canon Matthew Ambler and The Revd Canon Rachel Firth on their re-election as Chairs of the House of Laity and House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod respectively.

The Bishop of Leeds referred to the circulated report. The elections mentioned in paragraph 6 of the report had been held.

The Bishop of Leeds outlined what the Leeds Board was (The Leeds DBF, Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee and Bishop's Council) and its structure in the context of the formation of the diocese.

The Bishop of Leeds proposed the motion in his name:

*"That this Synod ratifies the appointment of the Leeds Board nominee trustees whose details are contained in DS24 10 04"*

There were no questions of clarification.

The Synod members did not wish to debate the motion.

#### *Voting*

For: All agreed

Against: None.

Abstention: None.

**The motion was approved.**

## **10. DBE 2024 election timetable and provisions DS24 10 05**

*"That this Synod approves the timetable and date of the Diocesan Board of Education election, manner for conducting the election, and period to be served by elected members as contained in DS24 10 05".*

**Proposed by: Bishop Anna Eltringham (Bishop of Ripon)**

*Paper:* DS24 10 05 DBE 2024 election timetable and provisions

Bishop Anna Eltringham (AE) outlined that the motion was seeking approval of the timetable for the DBE elections. The election requirement was in the 2022 DBE Scheme which provided for two members of the DBE to be elected by the Diocesan Synod. The Diocesan Synod approves the timetable for the election.

AE proposed the motion in AE's name:

*"That this Synod approves the timetable and date of the Diocesan Board of Education election, manner for conducting the election, and period to be served by elected members as contained in DS24 10 05".*

#### *Questions of clarification*

The Revd Tim Thomas (Inner Bradford deanery)

The circulated document DS24 10 05 had a number LB24 10 05 on the pages.

JW confirmed the number on the pages should be the same as the document number ie Diocesan Synod number DS24 10 05.

James Meredith (North West Leeds deanery)

In appendix 1 of DS24 10 05, the reference in paragraph 1.1 to “DBE members elected in 2022” should be to “DBE members elected in 2024”?

JW confirmed it should be members elected in 2024.

The Synod members did not wish to debate the motion.

*Voting*

For: All agreed

Against: None.

Abstention: None.

**The motion was approved.**

*The Synod next considered Item 14 on the circulated agenda: Bishop’s Instruments of Delegation to suffragan bishops DS24 10 08.*

#### **14. Bishop’s Instruments of Delegation to suffragan bishops DS24 10 08**

*“That, pursuant to section 13 (8) of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007, this Synod approves the proposed Instrument of Delegation to Area Bishops contained in DS24 10 08 01.”*

Proposer: The Bishop of Leeds.

<i>Papers:</i>	DS24 10 08	Note on proposed Instrument of Delegation to Area Bishops
	DS24 10 08 01	Proposed Instrument of Delegation to Area Bishops

The Bishop of Leeds highlighted matters in the circulated papers. The delegations were framed to make them more workable and reflect what actually happened. The papers outlined what functions were reserved to the diocesan bishop and which were delegated to the area bishops. The instrument would have effect for five years and continued for 18 months after the bishop of the diocese ceased to hold office.

There were no questions of clarification.

The motion was moved:

*“That, pursuant to section 13 (8) of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007, this Synod approves the proposed Instrument of Delegation to Area Bishops contained in DS24 10 08 01.”*

The Synod members did not wish to debate the motion.

*Voting*

For: All agreed

Against: None.

Abstention: None.



**The motion was approved.**

*The Synod members took a break for lunch.*

**Chair:** The Bishop of Leeds

### **11. Wakefield deanery motion – Fairtrade diocese DS24 10 06**

*“That this Synod calls on the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Secretary to take the necessary steps to ensure that all deaneries, parishes and schools are encouraged in sourcing Fairtrade products, promoting Fairtrade principles and participating in Fair trade campaigns. This would include ensuring that diocesan events use fair-trade products where possible, disseminating information to all parishes, encouraging active participation in Fairtrade fortnight and incorporating Fairtrade into Diocesan purchasing policies where possible.”*

Proposer: The Revd David Gerrard (Wakefield deanery)

*Paper:* DS24 10 06 Supporting paper Fairtrade diocese motion

The Revd David Gerrard spoke to the motion and referred to the circulated report. The motion had arisen in Wakefield deanery following a presentation on Fairtrade from David Greenwood-Haigh. Most people were familiar with Fairtrade. Farmers’ lives were changed by Fairtrade ie fair pay for growing and transporting food. The issue was fatigue. Fairtrade was “old news” and there were a lot of demands on compassion. As a church though we should fight for justice and integrity in what we buy. Leeds Diocesan Synod had previously approved working towards moving to being a Fairtrade diocese. Commitment to this has slowed eg the diocesan website page includes some out of date information. The proposed motion sought to refresh and renew the diocesan commitment it had already made. This would be a recommitment in parishes and schools too. It was understood that budgets were tight but it was unlikely they were tighter than those growing food for us. Loving our neighbour was not just for when it was easy but when it was hard too.

There were no questions of clarification.

The Revd David Gerrard moved the motion:

*“That this Synod calls on the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Secretary to take the necessary steps to ensure that all deaneries, parishes and schools are encouraged in sourcing Fairtrade products, promoting Fairtrade principles and participating in Fair trade campaigns. This would include ensuring that diocesan events use fair-trade products where possible, disseminating information to all parishes, encouraging active participation in Fairtrade fortnight and incorporating Fairtrade into Diocesan purchasing policies where possible.”*

Debate

The Ven Cat Thatcher (Archdeacon of Pontefract)

Cat had found in a previous parish and school that they had been Fairtrade but then Tradecraft had closed down and it had been impossible to find products to sell. What were the alternatives?

Judith Osborne (General Synod)

It was excellent to have a motion to refresh the commitment. Judith asked the Synod to vote for the

motion as this would help others trying to recommit in various contexts.

The Revd Jeff Payne (Wensley deanery)

Supported the motion. Although events going on in the World were out of our control, what we buy is within our control. The quality of Fairtrade goods has improved over time.

The Very Revd John Dobson (Dean of Ripon)

Supported the motion for farmers and buying local. With regard to the motion itself, he emphasized that the encouragement to parishes should be from the area bishops, archdeacons and deanery officers (clergy and laity) rather than the DBF or Diocesan Secretary. There were others who shared the responsibility too.

James Meredith (North West Leeds deanery)

The original motion was proposed a number of years ago. Since then many companies had launched Fairtrade good. Was Fairtrade always the best option eg Rainforest Alliance?

Roger Lazenby (North West Leeds deanery)

Taking the motion forward will be for the deanery synods and parishes who are encouraged to do so. The Synod members are to go back to their deaneries and take the motion forward. Roger cautioned that the words "...where possible..." in the second paragraph were a get out clause and felt if the words weren't included in the motion it wouldn't alter the meaning.

The Revd Oliver Preston (Aire and Worth deanery)

Was concerned that there were other justice issues eg the fabric industries which were greater issues than eg coffee. If we focus on coffee, we may feel we are acting with justice when in fact we're not acting on other issues.

The Rt Revd Anna Eltringham (Bishop of Ripon)

Asked if the Diocese achieved Fairtrade status.

Canon Mrs Jane Evans (General Synod)

Tradecraft disappeared mainly because mainstream stores stock Fairtrade products. With regard to the DBF/Diocesan Secretary taking action, all the Diocesan Synod members were from deaneries and parishes and could take away the charge of the motion and seek to ensure that parishes and deaneries action the motion.

The Revd Catherine Shelley (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

Highlighted that banking should also be considered with regard to justice.

#### *Reply to the debate*

The Revd David Gerrard (DG)

Fairtrade product links could be made available if members ask DG.

Although some alternatives to Fairtrade may have a level of scrutiny but Fairtrade definitely does.

DG acknowledged that ecological concerns may mean we buy locally as a better option.

With regard to wider justice issues, DG would argue we should do both.

JW confirmed that the diocese hadn't reached Fairtrade status.

#### *Voting*

For - Majority

Against - 0

Abstain - 1

**The motion was approved.**

## **12. Presentation and Discussion: Budget 2025 DS24 10 07, DS24 10 07 01**

### *Papers:*

DS24 10 07	2025 Budget and Medium term plan v1.2
DS24 10 07 01	Appx 1-2025 Budget and Sustainability Plan v1.2

Proposer of the motion - Canon Mr Irving Warnett (Bishop's Nominee had sent apologies for the Synod and so Richard Pattinson (Bowland and Ewecross deanery) Richard Pattinson had indicated he was content to the move the motion (In accordance with Standing Order 37(b)) and Richard had been duly authorised by the Leeds Board to propose the motion as required by Standing Order 112).

Richard Pattinson gave an introductory presentation to the Synod. The largest part of diocesan income was parish share. The parish share payments were flagging the inflation rate and the forecast was for a deficit. For parish share to keep pace, £17m would need to be paid. For the current year it was likely to be £12.5m and this contrasted with 2019 when the payments had been £14m.

The deficit was managed through the transfer of reserves, monies from the national church, the sale of properties and in this year, the receipt of monies from the Linda Box matter. This was not sustainable. The deficit was huge and members should be aware that the national church was reviewing its funding support for dioceses.

Geoff Park (GP) spoke to the PowerPoint presentation which had been circulated to the Synod members prior to the meeting. Next year there would be a projected deficit of £1.5m and the deficits were expected to increase over the next five years. Of the previous six years, all but one had been in deficit. The reserves range was being maintained, mainly from selling properties, transfers from reserves and one-off matters eg the receipt of the Linda Box legal case monies, payments linked to Covid and donations. The deficit in 2024 was likely to be £1.1m. There had been strong property rental income during the year and savings in clergy and staff costs.

### Budget assumptions

The draft Budget assumptions were for assumed an increase of 3% in parish share, stipends and staff salaries. The stipends and salaries assumptions would be reviewed in February 2025. Synod should note that the Archbishops' Council had increased the national minimum stipend by 5%. Although the parish share increase was 3%, Synod members should note that due to the parish share model, each individual parish share request may vary from this. The number of parish clergy assumes a reduction in numbers each year. The cumulative deficit would be £1.5m for 2025. An assumption had been made previously that parish share payments would increase by 3% year on year. In reality this wasn't happening and parish share payments were now flat. A survey had been carried out asking the diocesan parishes what they expected to pay for 2024. This had revealed that the result was likely to be flat.

A positive item to report were the sale of properties which were assisting with supporting the deficit. Without the property sales, there would be negative reserves by 2028. However, it wouldn't be possible to sell properties forever. There would be a national funding review addressing how all dioceses are funded. This would be considered by the July 2025 General Synod. An additional factor for Synod to be aware of was that the Government could increase employer contributions.

*Questions and comments*

Hywell Rees-Jones (South Craven & Wharfedale deanery)

Thanked RP and GP for making the current situation clear. We always seem to be saying we are running a deficit and want change. Isn't now a time to look at a more radical approach ie what do we do about churches who are not paying their parish share? Is salami-slicing clergy deployment what is wanted? If lay leadership is built up there would be less reliance on ordained clergy. Churches which are redundant could be sold off and there could be more help for lay people in smaller church settings. With regard to giving, what can be learned from churches? What do we spend at the centre? Does the diocese push legacies?

Graham Foster (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

The 75% parish share is still an issue under the current parish share model. Are parishes still in transition and what of rural churches under the system? Some parishes think there is an option not to pay share. Graham suggested that this is raised at the Treasurers' Forum and that deanery synods tell parishes to pay parish share. Please include education when the parish share requests are sent out on why parishes should pay.

Helen Eskriett (Inner Bradford deanery)

With regard to renting properties, does the diocese carry out a costing of the property and assess whether there is a loss or profit?

Reply to comments and questions

GP – with regard to radical change, mission and strategy are important. Radical financial change would be to cut expenditure suddenly. To avoid this the diocese is using national church funding to grow churches so parish share grows. There weren't many alternatives to adopt instead. There are places where change is happening. Review of keeping churches open was a local decision by PCCs.

Giving by individuals was strong but the challenge was in the number of givers and whether givers were being replaced. Parishes were experiencing other pressures too for example increased insurance, lighting and heating costs. This may result in little left for parish share payments. GP thanked those who do give and those who support the Parish Giving Scheme and asked them to keep up with inflation if possible.

Legacies were not pushed centrally as there was concern this may take funds from the local church.

The parish share system was complex. Some parishes were in transition from what they should have had as a parish share request from 2017. The rural parish and deprivation increase still exists. The parish share guidance has a question-and-answer section. Where a parish is in vacancy the parish share system doesn't assume a drop for parish share.

The cost benefit of renting includes a review of which properties are yielding the least. There is also an assumption that there will be capital appreciation over time.

JW commented that £600k had been taken out of the annual cost of the central team. Additional roles being added were generally those with national funding. The Leeds Board and Finance, Assets and Investments Committee held the diocesan team to account on this.

With regards to closed churches sales, most of these were not an attractive proposition to buyers. Where they are sold the Church Commissioners are involved and some of the monies go to the Church

Commissioners. Where a church is closed, the Leeds DBF holds an expensive insurance bill for quite some time.

The Bishop of Leeds outlined that the diocese couldn't close churches the proposal had to come from the parish. If it did, then the diocese had a statutory responsibility regarding the process for closure.

RP commented that in the short term the diocesan finances were supported by transfers from reserves but there was hope for financial benefits from Barnabas. FAIC did hold diocesan teams to account with regard to costs. FAIC had also asked for discussions with the archdeacons concerning parish share payments to gain an understanding of share across the diocese.

**13. Motion: Budget 2025 – money resolution DS24 10 07, DS24 10 07 01**

*“That the Diocesan Synod authorise (or direct) the diocesan board of finance to raise and expend a sum not exceeding £22,140,794 for the calendar year 2025.”*

**Proposer: Canon Mr Irving Warnett (Bishop’s Nominee)**

**Proposer of the motion:** The proposer of the motion, Canon Mr Irving Warnett (Bishop’s Nominee) had sent apologies for the Synod as he was not able to attend. Richard Pattinson (Bowland and Ewecross deanery) indicated he was content to the move the motion (In accordance with Standing Order 37(b)) and Richard had been duly authorised by the Leeds Board to propose the motion as required by Standing Order 112.

Richard Pattinson proposed the motion:

*“That the Diocesan Synod authorise (or direct) the diocesan board of finance to raise and expend a sum not exceeding £22,140,794 for the calendar year 2025.”*

There were no questions of clarification.

The Synod members did not wish to debate the motion.

*Voting*

For: Majority

Against: 01

Abstain: None.

**The motion was approved.**

**15. Bishop of Leeds Blessing and Close.**

The Bishop of Leeds closed the Synod meeting.

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Signed: .....

Date: .....

**Diocese of Leeds**

**Twenty Ninth Diocesan Synod, Saturday 19 October 2024**

**Presidential Address**

We began this synod with the Eucharist. Not with business or ‘issues’ that preoccupy both church and world. Not with opinions and debating points. Not even with a theological paper or a small-group discussion of doctrinal principle. We began with a Eucharist.

In other words, we began with what is left when you strip away everything else from our cluttered and anxious lives: God the Father sending Jesus the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit to call and empower his people to look, see, think and live differently in the world of God’s creation. So, we prayed and we listened; we read and we sang; we came with empty hands and received what is always gift; and we pledged to leave – later – with hearts and minds renewed, taking the bread of life out into the world. We began with Eucharist: simple, stripped back, grace-fuelled and love-filled remembrance of God’s self-giving for the sake of the world.

We began with gratitude. And we can now move onto our business in the same frame of mind: with gratitude, grace, mercy and love – never confusing the urgent or important business of our common life and mission with that essential Gospel stuff of making the space in which all of us can find that we have been found by God.

Now, this is important. Because when we lose our memory or forget what it is that bring us here – together – then we might as well save our train fares and breath and go home to watch the footie on the telly. (Liverpool vs Chelsea starts at 4.30pm tomorrow afternoon.)

I am not being naïve or spiritualising the business we need to do today; I am simply reminding myself and you of why we bother to do this in the first place. If our business – and the way we do it – takes us away from the heart of our faith and worship, then it has become futile, and we have little or nothing to offer the world around us other than angry assertion, random ideology, or competitive claims for attention.

You might feel that you do not need to be reminded of these priorities; but, I do. So, thank you for patiently listening in while I talk to myself. Although I suspect that I am not alone in getting easily distracted by the stuff of life and politics and media and the million things that annoy me. We come back to worship. And prayer. And listening for the Word of the Lord. And singing – because nothing can stop the Church singing its praises and laments and questions and wonderings.

I remember for the first time hearing Jim Wallis speak about his book ‘The Call to Conversion’ in the mid-1980s (before some of you were born). He described how the Sojourners Community he led in Washington DC was always getting arrested and led to the cells. A policeman once complained to Jim that he and his colleagues were missing them when no arrests had taken place for some time. They missed the singing. Jim Wallis observed that Christians cannot stop singing, regardless of what happens to them or wherever they find themselves.

So, today, at this synod, we have sung. And the echoes of our singing can resonate through our collective thinking and speaking and listening and debating of business.

I say all this having spent much time in recent weeks and months looking into matters of great import in our country and the wider world. You should know that I am conducting an inquiry into the future of

Europe, and that this involves meeting many excellent people to see what vision, what new narratives we can develop for helping our children and grandchildren shape their common future in a dangerous and conflicted world. In Brussels a few days ago we met people (including at the European Commission) who reminded us of Jacques Delors' 'The Soul of Europe' project in the 1980s – essentially a reminder that politics are about humanity and that human societies need more than strong economies. People are material, but are considerably more than material.

And this is why the move by one of our MPs, Kim Leadbeater, to introduce a Bill to legalise assisted dying – which some of us insist on calling 'assisted suicide' – matters so much. The evidence from other countries where such legislation is already in place is clear: what begins as restricted in scope soon expands. There are already too many examples in Canada, for example, where the slippery slope has clearly been greased.

But, the real problem with it is not primarily 'religious' – a word used by proponents to indicate that objections are merely the product of some private kooky dogma and therefore should be dismissed as irrational – but anthropological: is an individual human being totally autonomous, or are human beings fundamentally relational/societal beings whose individual autonomy is necessarily limited by wider obligations. Dr Nick Spencer, Senior Fellow at the Christian thinktank Theos, speaks about 'Kantian autonomy' and its inevitable destination in reducing people to material choices. (Obviously, it's more complicated than that, but you get the idea.)

Given some of the Church's other preoccupations at the moment, it is worth noting that this matter is far, far more important and urgent than others. So, if you agree with my take on this – and you might not – you might want to add to your MP's post box before the debate in the House of Commons takes place shortly. Ask them what constitutes their theological anthropology ... then hold your breath while you wait for an answer.

So, today we began with worship and gratitude and I have moved us on to matters of urgency in the wider world. And the truth is that the content and practice of the former should lead us to think deeply about the latter. Which then raises the question of the agenda before us today and why it is shaped the way it is.

A synod is simply a bringing together of Christians to confer, think, pray and deliberate together. We should be open to hearing things – views and perspectives – which take us beyond our own limited thinking and open our minds to what might not be comfortable. The Anglican polity sees what we are doing today as 'the bishop in synod', conferring and seeking common (or uncommon) wisdom. It assumes that the bishop is not the fount of all wisdom and needs to look through the eyes of others. It further assumes that clergy alone do not form the substance of the Church of God. It affirms that clergy need laity and laity need clergy, and the bishops need both if all of us are to face reality and make hard decisions together in faith and love.

So, if you are on the synod for the first time, or returning for another run at it, then you are welcome. You must gain the confidence to speak – but also to prioritise listening to others. Run the risk of sounding silly or asking the obvious question that everybody else has forgotten to ask. Look through the lens of your local parochial experience at the wider church and diocese, but allow the perspective of people from other contexts and backgrounds to challenge, encourage and shape your own growing understanding.

This is how I approach any synod. I come to listen and learn – to have my vision deepened and widened. And I come to be advised and guided by the collective wisdom of my brothers and sisters in Christ in this diocese.



Today we will address a motion that urges the wider church to face the need for further financial provision in order to meet ambitious climate goals. This is not easy stuff. It is too easy to demand money from the national church at the same time as not considering what else has to be dropped in order for that money to be available. So, our pleas must be made with a commitment to do our bit at every level. Otherwise, this is just gesture rhetoric.

Later we will have a report from the last General Synod and hear how national debates are going on uncontroversial matters such as human sexuality. And that will be followed by an update on our own diocesan resource project – Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence. And the thread between Carbon Net Zero financing, the General Synod’s agenda and Barnabas? We all need encouragement as well as challenge because none of these issues is easy or straightforward. And they all call for what I call a confident humility as we tread carefully together on sacred territory.

I am very grateful to those willing to serve on our Diocesan Board – giving time, skill, experience and wisdom to the running of ‘the business’ of being a diocese. We will consider the Diocesan Board of Education elections and make decisions. Yet, we know that such bodies involve many people who give freely and sacrificially of their time in order to help us shape our service of thousands of children and families in our region. A debate on Fairtrade will lead us into a debate and decision on our diocesan budget for 2025 (which is not far away) – essential and detailed work that emphasises what someone once called ‘theology in numbers’. We will conclude with approval of the Instrument of Delegation from me to the area bishops – a necessary method for keeping us honest and legal and giving clarity of remit as we try to minister to our diocese at every level.

At some point this afternoon we will breathe a sigh of relief and receive the pronouncement of God’s blessing. We will leave with confidence, but with the humility that uncertainties lie ahead of us – that we cannot control the world or God. Our autonomy is limited. But, the God who gave himself to us in Christ is the God who empowers us to do our business with each other and the world around us, confident that this is God’s church, God’s mission and we are God’s people. Again, in the great words of Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, we enjoy the “solidarity of the shaken” and we hold onto our grateful response to a self-giving God as we seek to strip everything back to worship, love and service. May God bless us as we seek with integrity, diligence and humility to discern his will and his way.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines  
Bishop of Leeds

19 October 2024

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## Diocesan Synod 19 October 2024 – Item 8 Questions for Synod

### 1 Question received from Graham Foster (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

“To the Chair of the Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance

Question1

Regarding the Linda Box fraud case are you now in a position to advise Synod on the amount that has been received in settlement of the various cases, (being the settlement monies and money received through the proceeds of crime act less the costs incurred)? If you are, what are the known losses to the Diocese, Bishop’s fund and any other Trust funds i.e. what is the net position, being the totals lost to the fraud less the net amounts received?”

#### Answer

“The legal action in relation to the Linda Box case is now complete. A settlement was reached in July 2023 in relation to compensation for losses suffered and the costs element was finally agreed and paid in August 2024.

The net position for the Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance is shown below.

Settlement compensation	POCA* recovery	Total Recovery	Total Costs	Costs Settlement	Cost Recovery (pre settlement)	Net position
£792,400	£274,000	£1,066,400	£429,865	£263,913	£50,000	<b>£950,448</b>

\*POCA – Proceeds of Crime Act

The Bishop of Leeds has recovered in excess of £300,000 through settlement and POCA.

Neither the Bishop of Leeds or the Diocesan Board of Finance can provide an accurate figure for the loss it suffered. This is due to the nature of the fraud perpetrated by Linda Box. The thefts occurred over a long period of time and the cover up was sophisticated. This has meant that it has been difficult to prove exactly which transactions were fraudulent.

As part of the criminal conviction Linda Box was subject to a confiscation order of £2.5m for the totality of her fraud. The Bishop and DBF were deemed to be entitled to £623,342.44 of this (if it was recovered).

It is unlikely that the true loss will ever be known. There has been loss to the Bishop and the DBF and the amounts recovered are less than the assumed loss, not least because of the legal ruling that liability was limited to only 6 years before the claim date. However the overall settlement represents a more positive position than if legal action against the insurers had not been taken.”

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## 2 Question received from Graham Foster (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

“To the Chair of the Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance

Question 2

Are there any plans to carry out a Review of the Linda Box fraud to identify learning points and to avoid this happening again? If a Review is to take place, when do you anticipate that the findings will be presented to Diocesan Synod?”

### Answer

“A Review has always been planned to take place once all elements of the case were concluded. A presentation was given to the DBF Audit Committee on 15/10/24 on the lessons learned and it is planned a full paper will be provided to the Board in early 2025. It will then come to the Synod in either the 2025 Spring or Summer synod (to be determined by overall agenda space). Learning’s have already been identified and key controls put in place to ensure this type of fraud cannot occur.”

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