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## MINUTES

### A Meeting of the members of the Truro Diocesan Synod and The Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Limited was held in the Council Chamber County Hall, Truro on Saturday 16 November, 2019

- 1 **The Opening Worship** was led by Local Worship Leaders, Pat Walton and Pauline Turner, and Revd Jane Horton.
- 2 **Apologies** were received from 8 Clergy and 8 Laity.
- 3 The Bishop of Truro welcomed the Ven Paul Bryer, recently appointed as Archdeacon of Cornwall. Archdeacon Paul gave a brief summary of his background and experience and the Bishop of Truro led members in praying for his blessing during his time and ministry in the diocese.
- 4 **The Presidential Address** was given by the Bishop of Truro, a copy of which can be found on the Diocesan Website at: <https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/policy-governance/diocesan-synod/presidential-address/>
- 5 **'God for Cornwall' a report from the Church Army**

Revd Canon Simon Cade introduced Dr Tim Ling, Director of Learning and Development for the Church Army. He explained that funding from the Church Commissioners had been used by the diocese to finance information gathering and the preparation of a report by the Church Army Research Unit. The aim of this exercise is to help inform the diocese about its work with children and young people, as well as the work of commissioned lay ministers (Local Worship Leaders and Local Pastoral Ministers).

Dr Tim Ling has now produced the final report, God for Cornwall, and a leaflet summarising its contents was made available to members. Anyone wishing to receive a full copy of the report is welcome to request a copy.

Dr Tim Ling introduced himself and gave some background information about the history and work of the Church Army. He explained that over a 12-month period, the Church Army research team looked at information held at Church House, and at other published data. They also listened to people in the parishes, who were asked three questions:

- What is your situation?
- What is God doing?
- How could the diocese join in?

The overall question for the diocese is "How are we seeking renewal of hearts and minds in the diocese so that all things are influenced by this?"

The report contains five questions for the diocese:

- How and where is the diocese most engaged with children?
- Why don't children and families come to our church services?
- What place does social action have?
- Who are largely absent from the picture?
- What might this mean for lay ministry?

Dr Ling quoted Matthew 6 vs 34 - "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today". He asked members to consider question "What is 'today's trouble' for this Synod?"

He then spoke on various areas of the report, with breaks in his talk for members to discuss the points made, using the following question - how does this impact on you personally and what does it mean for this Synod?

The areas covered were:

1. Where is the diocese most engaged with children? This is not in the churches - across the majority of the diocese, less than 1% of children attend church. However, we are unambiguously engaged with schools, primarily through Open the Book, which is run mostly by lay volunteers. Truro Diocese has the highest rate of Open the Book than any other diocese. What could be done with this great opportunity?
2. Infant baptisms are higher than in other dioceses, although the services are usually detached from the rest of the worshipping community. This means that the possibility of wider relationships with the church are limited. However, Baptisms could be used as an opportunity to build stronger connections with families and we need to work out how to make the most of this opportunity.
3. People who are on holiday in Cornwall do come to church and this often means more children in church. Deaneries are collaborating and sharing resources in order to make the most of this opportunity.
4. If people do go to church, it is probably to lay-led Fresh Expressions such as Messy Church and Open the Book churches and they tend not to go at other times, seeing these meetings as their church. This means that Mission Statistics may not be telling the whole picture. Churches need to take a step into the unknown and step out in faith - perhaps try a one-off event or perhaps doing something for a limited time and to see how it goes.
5. Deprivation is an issue. Churches can be too far away from the centre of population to get to and the cultural wealth of the church and the building itself can be a barrier. Social action is about hope and transforms lives and communities. When we engage with social action, we are captivating the minds of the young. This can also involve working ecumenically and alongside non-Christians. We need to think differently and consider the church moving out to the margins with perhaps others taking the lead.
6. Attempts to hear the voice of secondary age children for the purposes of this report were, for various reasons, unsuccessful. Secondary age children are largely absent from our churches. The local churches are not forming relationships with them and are expecting them to attend services rather than going out to them. Worship is perceived as adult focused and teenagers do not feel part of it.

The Missional Youth Church (MYC) Network gives 4 key lessons on mission from a national perspective

- I. This is most effective when done relationally i.e. involvement with individuals. Time and patience are needed.
- II. It is easier to engage initially with people where they are already e.g. in schools, at the park.
- III. Care needs to be taken to integrate this work with local parishes and clergy.
- IV. Success does not necessarily mean increased attendance at traditional church services. Fruition may only be seen in years to come.

Finally, Dr Ling posed the question “What does this mean for local lay ministry?”

Lay ministers in our diocese are well dispersed across the area with the current paradigm being oriented to congregational life, and this works very well; the absence of young people is not the primary concern of these particular ministries. If the diocese wishes to engage with young people, then it will need to go to them and this is not the role of Local Worship Leaders. We therefore need to develop more lay ministers to grow this particular ministry. It will need to be different and will need to look out to where the children and families are. It will also mean considering working collaboratively with those who do not necessarily go to church. The church could finance the work and act as facilitator.

Pioneer ministry could be something for this diocese to consider. We need to watch and see where God is active.

A question and answer session followed during which the following points were raised:

- It was pointed out that the Truro College chaplaincy, which was established in 2017, is an example of engagement with young people in further education in the diocese. Dr Ling acknowledged this work and agreed that it was an excellent example of chaplaincy. The wider context is how the churches engages with and supports this.
- The current observed pattern of weekly worship, usually on a Sunday, does not work for everyone. This pattern has changed over the years and many who consider themselves Christians do not necessarily worship Sunday by Sunday. Dr Ling agreed with this observation, and said that it would be good if people could belong together in community, and that this does not necessarily need to be on a Sunday morning. However, the challenge is that Statistics for Mission looks mainly at Sunday attendance.
- Young people can tell our motives - they know when we are really interested in them. Relationship is key.
- In Trigg Major Deanery, a local secondary school hosts a day of visitors coming to the school to answer questions. This year the pupils wanted to find out what the Church does in their community and invited various people, including from the local church, to come to the school for a question and answer session. This was a great opportunity and it was evident that the young people were searching.

Revd Canon Simon Cade thanked Dr Ling and members expressed their gratitude with a round of applause.

The Bishop of Truro thanked both Simon and Dr Ling and summarised by saying that we should not be afraid to experiment, even if things fail, and should not be afraid to do things differently. We should not be Sunday obsessed and should not bury our treasure. It is not a question of size - a big church is not needed for effective children's and youth ministry. However, hope and imagination are critical - poverty of these is crippling - and change is possible if we allow ourselves to dream in the Spirit.

### **Governance matters**

Dr Mike Todd, Chair of the House of Laity, reported that there had been an election to fill the casual vacancy of Vice Chair of the House of Laity following the resignation of Dr Andre Hicks. He congratulated Mrs Anna Corbett, who had been duly elected, and members welcomed her to the role with a round of applause.

**A report from the Diocesan Board of Education** was noted and the following points were raised:

- This report links with what we have been hearing and we need to regard our schools as mission fields.

- It was pointed out that our relationships with Cornwall Council, the Education Department, and the various academic trusts around Cornwall were not mentioned in this report.

Revd Canon Simon Cade responded. Resources from Cornwall Council for religious education have been greatly reduced. The Diocesan Board of Education is therefore investing more and doing its best to support community schools, but is trying to decide if this is the best way forward and whether or not it would be better to direct these resources elsewhere e.g. into Academy Trusts. This would mean involvement in far more schools although we would need to make sure that it is meaningful.

**A report from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel** was noted.

Revd Canon Lynda Barley, in her role as a Residentiary Canon of Truro Cathedral, explained that the Cathedral had recently undertaken a safeguarding national audit, the results of which can be found on the Cathedral's website. She reassured members that, as a result of this report, the Cathedral is working closely with the diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Mrs Sarah Acraman, to provide training through the Cathedral and to embed a safeguarding culture.

**Deanery Election: Membership of Deanery Synods from 2020-2023** was noted and approved.

### **General Synod Elections 2020 and conversation about hustings**

Dr Mike Todd, Chair of the House of Laity, explained that, due to changes to the Church Representation Rules, the General Synod Elections due to take place next year would be permitted to happen electronically. He also explained that there are no rules requiring the diocese to arrange hustings but he invited members to discuss whether these should take place.

Discussion followed with some favouring hustings being held so that candidates could be questioned face to face. Revd Caspar Bush suggested that hustings covering several deaneries could be held in one church. He offered the facilities at Redruth Church for this purpose. However, it was also acknowledged that this approach could be potentially time consuming and costly. An alternative could be for candidates to be asked set questions that would be posted onto the website, possibly in a video interview format.

It was also pointed out that much work needs to be done to promote the relevance of General Synod. We need to do more collectively to spread the message of its importance.

Revd Andrew Yates recommended the website [www.churchselection.org.uk](http://www.churchselection.org.uk) which provides information and advice on how to organise elections.

Dr Mike Todd welcomed members to pass on to Esther Pollard any further thoughts they may have following this discussion.

### **Feedback /Reaction to September Diocesan Synod on budget challenges; trends and the actions we are taking.**

Esther Pollard, Diocesan Secretary, gave a summary of the feedback from the group discussions held at the September meeting of Diocesan Synod. The feedback included thoughts from a number of parishes who had contacted her since the discussions were held.

The main themes emerging were:

1. Root causes: we are all responsible for re-education to address these.

2. Solutions: no great surprises or new answers. This is a collective responsibility and greater transparency is needed.
3. Deficit budget: generally supported as a necessity and as long as there is a plan to balance the books and break even within a given time limit.
4. Difficult questions that need to be considered: Why are we at the same financial point now as 5 years ago? Is stipendiary ministry at parish level the best way to meet our aims? Should we require parish groups to be self-sufficient?
5. Alternative models of ministry - there is a wide range of views on this, but what is really evident is that there needs to be change.
6. What next? The budget will be presented to this Synod and Episcopal College will be looking at the feedback and information. Members were invited to let Esther Pollard know if they have any ideas as to how we can get the message across. Are we all ready for change and willing to change?

A question and answer time followed during which the following points were raised:

- It is difficult to balance hope with responsibility - we cannot give what we do not have. Transforming Mission should encourage parishes to be part of the process.
- The Archdeacon of Bodmin recommended working through last year's Lent course, which reminds us how God's grace is a gift of love and not a business transaction. We do not have any hope if we simply rely on ourselves - our only hope is in God. Copies of the course were available for those who wanted to take a copy.

### **Diocesan Budget for 2020 to 2022**

**Report by the Chairman of The Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, Mr Mike Sturgess.**

The Bishop of Truro drew members' attention to the fact that they were being asked to approve the budget for 2020 (not up to and including 2022 as stated on the agenda). He also stressed that if the budget was *not* approved today then an extraordinary meeting of Synod would need to be held, perhaps in January, in order to do so.

He emphasised that it was important to set the context of discussions within the theme of hope. We must be responsible stewards and aware of what we lack, but we must also ask ourselves if we are being generous with what we do have. The priority of this diocese is 'Discovering God's Kingdom, Growing the Church'; money is not an end in itself and we should not be afraid of our finances leading us into a different future.

Mr Mike Sturgess, Chair of the Board of Finance, thanked Bishop Philip.

He quoted Isaiah 43 vs 19 - "Behold, I am doing a new thing" - and emphasised that we are doing many new things in our diocese, including a new approach to MMF. The budget proposed is for 3 years, with an initial deficit on general fund that will be back to balance by 2022, based on certain assumptions. He drew attention to the following:

- Total Return has released £4.3m. This will be used to fund intergenerational activities.
- MMF - we are budgeting for a 78% collection rate, which is higher than the prediction of the second quarter of 73.5%.
- Stipendiary clergy numbers are budgeted to fall, based on latest expected deanery plans.
- Ministry accounts for 72% of expenditure but MMF, which should fund ministry, stands at 49% of our income. This deficit is largely covered by reserves and sales of Glebe, but this income is not limitless, with only one large piece of Glebe left to sell.
- Income. MMF is the biggest issue and the only area that we can influence for increase. The MMF budget for 2019 is £3,986 but is forecasting as £3,535. MMF

contributions have consistently decreased since 2015 and, if this continues, we will be very close to where we were in 2014.

- Expenditure. The key figure is the cost of ministry, which includes a 2% increase in stipend. Stipendiary numbers are falling in line with plans.

The diocese has invested heavily in its parsonages in the last 2-3 years and this can now return to normal budgeted expenditure.

Lay staff costs include Transforming Mission posts, which are funded by the Strategic Development Fund grant received from the Church Commissioners.

Total reserves are currently £20.28m, the amount needed to cover our policy of making provision for an unexpected deficit. The total reserves balance for 1 January 2020 is expected to be £25.25m, an increase that will give some leeway. Reserves are also used to make loans to PCCs.

- Capital Expenditure. The budget makes provision for enhancement to diocesan properties and to Glebe assets.

Mike Sturgess concluded by saying that the choice before us is to either increase our income or to cut costs. If we *have* to cut costs then consideration will be given to how this will be done; Episcopal College is currently looking at this and will act if necessary. He emphasised that, despite concerns, “With God we can”.

The Bishop of Truro thanked Mike Sturgess, and members showed their appreciation with a round of applause. The Bishop also thanked Mrs Sophie Eddy, Director of Finance and Assets, Mrs Esther Pollard, Diocesan Secretary, and members of the Executive who were all involved in producing this budget.

An opportunity for members to ask questions concerning points of clarification followed during which the following points were raised:

- The Chair of the DBF confirmed that the money gained by the sale of Glebe is added to our reserves. The interest from this addition generates income.
- It was queried why Total Return has still not been moved of the Stipends Capital Account. The Chair of the DBF explained that our previous auditors advised that this money should be left in the Capital Account, and only be drawn upon as and when the money was spent. However, the Chair of the DBF would prefer to transfer the money and will consult our new auditors for their advice. He stressed that, in the meantime, the money is still available to spend, with the majority starting to be used in 2020.
- The Chair of the DBF confirmed that the MMF call in 2020 would decrease overall by 1.6%.

Discussion took place after which the following points were made:

- Serious misgivings were expressed by some concerning publicising a 78% MMF call, bearing in mind that many parishes pay 100%, and many of those who do not, cannot pay 100%. We need to be clear and careful as to how the budget will be presented to the parishes
- In Pydar deanery, the proposed net cost of a stipendiary priest has been calculated as between 73k and 75k per stipendiary priest, an unrealistic amount.

The Chair of the DBF explained that the cost of a stipendiary priest is £50,000 (£60,000 brought down to £50,000 by rebates). The £73k - £75k quoted in Pydar deanery includes costs for Readers, NSMs, Archdeacons and a contribution to central costs.

- We need to increase, not decrease, parish stipendiary priests, if we are to grow the church; they are essentially the sales force of the diocese. Where is the fund to increase the priestly ministry?

The Chair of the Board of Finance responded. The diocese is recruiting different forms of ministry i.e. youth leaders, families workers etc. He does not agree that the only people growing the church are the clergy who are there to enhance lay people becoming the people of God.

- Church House staff numbers in 2011 were 20, clergy numbers 120 - a ratio of 5:1. Staff numbers are now 35 and clergy 85, a ratio of 2:5.

The Chair of the Board of Finance explained that the Church House staff numbers include Transforming Mission roles and that these are financed using the Strategic Development Fund grant. He also pointed out that these people are part of the 'sales force' of the diocese.

The Chair of the House of Laity responded to this point by paying tribute to the work done by everyone at Church House. He stressed that they effectively serve the diocese and that the diocese can only achieve what it does because they go the extra mile. They should be seen as a positive contribution.

- Some members expressed concern about agreeing a deficit budget. Most members would support this but some members stressed the need to consider how we would manage any further reductions in income. The Bishop of Truro and the Chair of the DBF confirmed that senior staff are already looking into this, including a zero based budget exercise.
- We need to look at funding for lower income communities (LiNC) and justify the way that money is being spent. Philip North, who is the lead for these matters on General Synod, believes we should ask people what they want us to do for them.

The Chair of the DBF agreed that we could potentially identify many ways of spending our money differently, but that would then leave a gap in the budget. We need to fund the clergy that we have. If we move money in a different direction that will cause problems.

- There is a real issue with the division between clergy and laity. We need to be a radical church and need radical change. Church history shows that the church has been most effective in the past when it has been at its most radical.
- We need to consider establishing partnerships with other organisations.
- We need to think about communities; our reference point is usually parishes, but the communities around us are not necessarily geographical. We need to look at how we deal with the whole of our communities, including on-line, rather than expecting to do everything from our parishes. We need to be more radical, and consider the communities that we are trying to reach.

The Bishop moved "That this Synod approves the budget of the Board for 2020-2022. It was confirmed that to propose to amend the budget was not an option. Voting took place.

For = majority

No = 4

Absentions = None

The Bishop of Truro closed the meeting with liturgy & prayers at 2.30 pm.