

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Saturday 14 November 2020



DIOCESE OF TRURO
DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM
GROWING THE CHURCH

MINUTES

Meetings of the members of the Truro Diocesan Synod and The Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Limited held by Zoom on 14 November 2020

Meeting as Members of the Truro Diocesan Synod

The Bishop of Truro welcomed everyone to the meeting. He specifically welcomed Revds Rosheen Browning, Teresa Folland and Alex Sharp to their first meeting as new members; Revd Canon Perran Gay, Chaplain of the Isles of Scilly, who would be leading worship; and Nabil Shehadi, a Church Mission Society Partner in Beirut, joining the meeting live from Cyprus.

Apologies were received from 3 Clergy and 2 Laity.

Opening Worship led from the Isles of Scilly

Revd Canon Perran Gay introduced himself and shared some background information about the Isles of Scilly and about life in the parish. He then led the meeting in a time of worship, including music, pictures, scripture readings and prayers.

The Bishop of Truro thanked Canon Gay and asked him to pass the greetings of this Synod on to his parishioners on the Isles of Scilly.

The Presidential Address was given by the Bishop of Truro, a copy of which can be found on the Diocesan Website [here](#)

Breakout Groups

Synod Members met in small groups to reflect on the words just spoken by the Bishop of Truro and to pray about the future of the diocese, particularly that it will be sustainable and fruitful in mission and ministry.

Greetings from The Revd Nabil Shehadi, CMS Mission Partner in Beirut

The Bishop of Truro introduced Nabil Shehadi. He explained that his own time spent in Lebanon, where he had met Nabil, had been inspirational in its work for the Kingdom of God. The Lebanese are our ancient partners in the tin trade and it is therefore good to re-establish this new partnership in the Kingdom. He asked Nabil to tell members about his role in Lebanon and the wider Levant.

Nabil expressed his pleasure in being at this meeting. He gave some background information about his role, which has developed since his return to Lebanon in 2005 to be Vicar of Beirut. He supports local churches in the Middle East in order to help them grow in their lifetime mission. The Middle East has ancient churches that go back to the first century and there is an enthusiastic remnant that needs support. Due to the Covid lockdown and the chaos that is currently in Lebanon, Nabil is serving Lebanon from the outside rather than inside, with technology facilitating this.

The recent explosion in Beirut has caused wide ranging political, economic and social collapse. It was the third largest urban explosion in the world after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the amount of suffering and despair at the bad management of the country is too great to express. However, the

churches and others are rising to the challenge; feeding the hungry on the streets, caring, and rebuilding homes after the explosion. This has given the church an opportunity to show its presence.

The Bishop of Truro asked Nabil how he thought the churches in Lebanon would react to having a link with Cornwall. Nabil believes this would be an amazing connection. Global church is needed in this time; it demonstrates the incarnational principal of being alongside others. The support of the world church is what Lebanon currently needs.

The Bishop of Truro stressed that this support and encouragement is mutual. We have a lot to learn from the church in Lebanon as well as hopefully having things to share and give.

Nabil explained that technology has provided opportunities for worship, meetings and teaching during the pandemic, often reaching more people than would be usual for a physical meeting. He encouraged everyone to make the most of this opportunity, which he described as a gift of this great tragedy.

He asked for prayer for on-line working and developing resources, and prayer specifically for Lebanon, it's government, and for its preservation as a provision for the Middle East.

The Bishop of Truro prayed for Nabil and his wife Sarah and for their work in Lebanon.

Nabil thanked everyone for this opportunity to be with us.

“Setting God’s People Free” a report

The Bishop of St Germans introduced the report and explained that this concerns our everyday lives as followers of Jesus. He quoted from the communion service, which refers to believers sharing in the body of Christ and which asks God to “Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory”. Bishop Hugh asked how many of us really notice these words when we say them? We are asking for the power of the Spirit to be with us in our everyday life at all times, in every circumstance and to help us live to his glory. Do we leave our faith at the door when we leave church? This prayer tells us that God is just as interested in our ordinary, everyday life, in everything we do. Meeting as church is to encourage and strengthen us so that we can ‘be church’ from Monday to Saturday.

He asked whether we will just let change happen to us, or whether we will imagine a future to walk into.

He stressed that:

- 1 We are *all* called to be church and to serve God every day.
- 2 The roll of the Vicar or Minister is not just to run a church but to equip the church to live and work to God’s praise and glory
- 3 This may mean that we need to look at what we do when we meet so that it helps us to live out our everyday faith and to take risks in our everyday life. God wants the world to be restored and he has chosen us to work with him.

Members watched a video of Revd Jules Williams talking to parishioner Joy Ternouth about her everyday faith. This video, and several others, can be accessed on the diocesan website [here](#)

Four questions are asked in each video:

1. Who are you & what do you do in your everyday life?
2. What will you be doing this time tomorrow?

3. In a normal day, what difference does faith make to your life?
4. How could your church support you in your everyday faith?

Members met in small groups to ask each other these questions.



Diocesan Synod elections & membership 2021 - 2024

The Diocesan Secretary, Revd Canon Simon Cade, explained that in 2017 Diocesan Synod agreed the calculation that determines how many diocesan synod members can be elected from each deanery. He further explained that there are no current proposals to change this calculation, so the numbers presented to Diocesan Synod today have resulted from using this calculation. However, the calculations for the next triennium have resulted in a slight change in the balance of membership, with fewer lay members because of falling electoral rolls. A future synod may wish to reconsider the formula used to calculate membership numbers. Diocesan Synod members are being asked to approve these numbers today.

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

Q: Mr Andrew Hicks, Penwith Deanery, asked if it is right to increase clergy members and not laity?

A: Revd Canon Simon Cade explained that the reduction in the lay figure has occurred due to the fall in Electoral Roll numbers and that, with the current calculation, it is not possible to change this. If this situation continues then we will need to change the calculation.

Q: Mrs Caroline Attwood, Penwith Deanery, pointed out that currently in the House of Clergy very few places are filled, so to grant more clergy spaces seems to be incongruous.

A: Revd Canon Simon Cade pointed out that there are vacancies in both Houses. At the present time we are simply seeking to apply the calculation that was agreed in 2017. Next time, we need to make sure that the balance is redressed. The Diocesan Registrar, Mr Jos Moule, explained that we have acted according to the rules; these are complex and can only be changed by General Synod.

Q: Mr Nicholas Herian, Penwith Deanery, asked what numbers could result if changes were made. He expressed concern that the Electoral Roll numbers had reduced fairly rapidly.

A: Revd Canon Simon Cade explained that this was not for discussion today; members were only being asked to approve the current document so that the elections in 2021 can take place. However, the diocese does have some discretion so, in the future, will be able to consider making a slightly different scheme.

It was pointed out that CRR 47(5)(b) states that the formula should assure that the numbers of clergy and laity are approximately equal. Revd Canon Simon Cade agreed that this was the case.

The Chair of House Laity moved that Synod note the calculation for the number of representatives by deanery, for the diocesan synod triennium of 2021-24.

Seconded by Peter Holman, Carnmarth North Deanery.

63 in favour, none against, 2 abstentions.

Adoption of a Diocesan Scheme for the Inspection of Churches

Revd Canon Simon Cade explained that the national church has made slight but significant changes to its regulations. There are now different requirements for dioceses in relation to Quinquennial inspectors, the proposal is that we adopt a scheme which aligns with the new national expectations.

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

Q: Revd Elly Sheard, Powder Deanery, asked if it would be possible to confirm whether these changes would contribute to the environmental viability of churches. She had understood that there were changes in the pipeline to ensure there were inspectors who could direct questions about such matters as flood resilience.

A: Post meeting note: this question was referred to Mrs Sue Thorold, DAC Secretary, who advised that under the guidance the survey carried out by the QQ Inspector will include:

- environmental sustainability (eg lighting, heating, rainwater goods, suitability for renewables, opportunities to reduce heat loss through steps such as draught-proofing and insulation)
- risk of impact of a changing climate on flood-risk, rainwater goods, and stonework.

Q: Mrs Jessica Fergusson, Pydar Deanery, expressed concern that the requirement to have tenders from three different inspectors could involve extra expense for parishes, particularly if inspectors come from further afield and need to claim overnight and travelling costs.

A: Post meeting note: this question was referred to Mrs Sue Thorold, DAC Secretary, who advised that the DAC secretary is required to maintain a list of those architects, surveyors, and suitably experienced people who are currently working in the diocese. All of these are based in Cornwall.

Questions raised in Zoom chat with answers provided by Mrs Sue Thorold, DAC Secretary after the meeting:

Q: Could there be scope for churches to share the tendering process and therefore the costs?

A: A good idea but from experience I do not think this would work for many and various reasons.

Q: Is it only if appointing a *new* inspector that one needs three quotes?

A: Yes, this is for the appointment of new inspectors only.

The chair of the House of Laity moved that “Synod adopt the published Scheme for the Inspection of Churches”

Seconded by Revd Ben Morgan-Lundie, Carnmarth South Deanery.

60 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions

Adoption of a Diocesan Safeguarding Strategy

Sue Day, Diocesan Safeguarding Governance Manager explained that, following a recommendation by the SCIE audit in 2018, a substantial amount of background work had taken place to inform the development of a strategic diocesan safeguarding strategy. This has resulted in a safeguarding plan which has four priorities:

- Safeguarding Training
- Safer Recruitment
- Parish Safeguarding Handbook
- Case Management

An operational action plan has also been developed. Although the resulting actions and time scales have been delayed due to the pandemic, work will start on this now and go through into 2021.

Other points of interest:

- The Safeguarding Team will ask parishes how the diocese can best support them.
- The second Past Cases Review has been delayed and a report will be due in January 2021.
- National reports have been published which will impact on the way we move forward; the diocese is aware that we need to do a lot more work on safer recruitment.

Revd Canon Jem Thorold, Chair of the House of Clergy, thanked Sarah and the team for the intensive work that had been done in the last few months.

A question and answer time followed during which the following point was raised:

Q: Revd Jeff Risbridger, Penwith deanery, asked whether the use of the word survivor instead of victim was a local or national choice.

A: Sue Day explained that this is a national decision and was agreed on because people do not like to be considered as victims.

The Chair of the House of Clergy proposed that this Synod adopt the safeguarding strategy and strategic plan as tabled.

This was seconded by Mrs Anna Corbett, Chair of the House of Laity.

65 in favour
None against
No abstentions

Greetings and Bible reflection from Bishop Johan Dalman of Strängnäs

Members watched a video of Bishop Johan sending greetings from the Diocese of Strängnäs to our diocese. The video can be accessed on the Diocesan website [here](#)

Mrs Anna Corbett, Chair of the House of Laity, asked the Diocesan Secretary, Revd Canon Simon Cade and Bishop Philip to pass on our thanks and greetings.

Meeting as Members of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd

Diocesan Budget for 2021

Sophie Eddy, Director of Finance and Assets, and Mike Sturgess, Chair of the Board of Finance presented the budget document.

Sophie highlighted the following points:

- Diocesan Synod members are being asked to approve a budget with an operating fund deficit of £1.3m and an overall deficit of £2.1m.
- The gap i.e. the difference between Mission and Ministry Fund (MMF) contributions and the authorised cost of ministry, is budgeted at £1.4m for 2021, compared to an actual gap in 2019 of £1m. This increase is mainly due to the budgeted reduction in MMF contributions in 2021.
- Deanery plans do not currently exist so this budget is finance led. However, it is hoped that future ones will be increasingly ministry, and not finance, led.
- The overall plan this year is to use assets and reserves to make space for change.
- The budget document includes nine year projections for 2022-2030 which show a scenario based on certain assumptions, this shows potential changes in funds over time.
- This budget, which has been reviewed by the Episcopal College, Bishop's Diocesan Council, and the Rejoicing in the Generosity of God working group, is believed to be realistic and the right one for approval. It cannot, however, be the long-term solution.

Members were shown various pie charts illustrating in detail various aspects of the income and expenditure of the diocese in 2020.

Income:

- The largest decrease in income is that derived from MMF contributions, with the impact of the pandemic being felt across the diocese. In 2018 it was agreed that the MMF call would cover the cost of ministry and that 'today's giving should resource today's church'. This budget has not changed that policy. Deanery conversations held during the year have made it clear that changes to how the call is calculated are not being asked for now, but that change is needed and this will be necessary in the future.
- Glebe Investment income has decreased due to affect the pandemic has had on the commercial property aspect of the portfolio held.
- A new Strategic Ministry Fund has been made available by the Church Commissioners. This has been set up to assist funding additional curate numbers in some dioceses.
- It is hoped that income will increase in 2021.
- LICF (Lowest Income Communities Fund) - we want to start using this in a different way to ensure it reaches the communities that most need it. Any changes must be linked to the deanery plans and decisions will be reached by working together, not by being imposed by Church House.

Expenditure

- The cost of parochial ministry is the diocese's largest item of expenditure. It has been agreed that we will continue to support the current pattern of ministry.
- Stipendiary FTE numbers are slightly lower; these are the numbers given by the Archdeacons and they take into account deanery planning.
- Stipendiary curate numbers have been increased and will be partly funded by the new Strategic Ministry Fund as mentioned.
- No cost of living rise is planned for next year for clergy and lay posts & appointments.
- Cost of Church House: one new resource will be added to the Safeguarding Team in 2021
- Governance has been reduced although the full impact will not be felt fully in 2021 but in future years.
- Impact of Covid has meant a fall in income of £630k (frin MMF, investment and parochial fees). Some savings have been made, but these do not compare to the reduction in income.
- The Budget has been prepared in the hope that we will return to a pre-Covid level of support. It is impossible to say what the impact of Covid will be in 2021.
- Reserves policy: £1.7m needs to be kept in the General Fund and this currently stands at £1.8m so is within bounds.

Sophie concluded by saying that this £2.1m deficit budget needs to be approved by Synod. It is finance led, but it is hoped that a budget that is increasingly led by mission and ministry will be produced for 2022 and beyond. It is also hoped that income from our churches will start to recover, thus enabling the work of the church to continue and grow. We need to recognise that our current ways of working are unaffordable and that we need to make changes, changes based on the deanery plans which are yet to emerge.

Mike Sturgess, Chair of the Board of Finance, explained that detailed discussions took place during the preparation of the budget concerning whether we could accept the levels of deficit proposed. Questions were asked, including:

- Why is MMF collection so low?
There is no single answer to this. A survey of PCC Treasurers shows that the average loss per for the year for each church is £1,300. Churches are working hard to raise money via on-line giving, fundraising etc but we need to encourage parishioners to give. Giving patterns are varied. Some churches are using their unrestricted reserves to pay MMF, whilst others have

chosen not to. Some parishes do not have unrestricted reserves, others have 5 years' worth. The cash giving of some parishes is less than 5%, whilst for others is more than 90%. Average giving ranges from £3 per head to £20 per head. There are parishes that could give but do not.

MMF has created a consumer culture: 'we will pay for what we get'. We need to move away from this idea.

- Why aren't we cutting costs faster to reach a sustainable budget?
Some dioceses are making clergy redundant, but this involves giving 12 months of housing, stipend & pension so even if we did do this, it would not make a difference in 2021. The only way would be to put a freeze on recruitment, but this would penalize those deaneries who have a large number of benefices currently in transition. We have the time to deal with this before having to make such decisions.
- What about Church House costs?
We will be looking at the shape of Church House. It should be noted that if we make reductions in this area then the level of support we give is also reduced. Church House needs to follow rather than lead and the results of the ministry review need to be taken into consideration so that Church House can fit in to this.
- If clergy numbers are being predicted, why does Church House continue to grow?
The only growth that has taken place, apart from appointments in the Safeguarding Department, has been financed by Transforming Mission.
- What are we doing about LICF?
This is currently being used to prop up stipendiary ministry and maintain the status quo. If MMF covered this expenditure then we would not need to use the fund in this way, which means that we cannot currently spend it as we would like to. However, we are committed to changing the way we use this source of income and want to do so in conjunction with consulting with deaneries.
- When will we run out of reserves?
This is hard to predict. In 2014 we were told we had 2 years. Since then we have changed the way we deal with our assets; our decisions have been more strategic and we have made notable gains. However, these are in an endowment fund so Total Return was set up to allow us to release some of this money. This can only be used to pay stipends, but that enables us to release money elsewhere. We have taken the decision that Total Return will not be used for operational funding, but if we find ourselves in a position where we could not pay stipends or salaries then we would need to break that rule. This would put us in dangerous position, but our reserves give us time to change although do not give us permission to stay the same. A deficit of £273,000 is predicted by 2030 but that is a prediction based on a finance led budget. If we do absolutely nothing then we probably have 3 - 5 years but this is not an option; we need to start in 2022 with a ministry led budget.

Anna Corbett, Chair of the House of Laity, thanked Sophie and Mike for their detailed and informative presentations.

Diocesan Synod members then met in breakout groups for reflection and discussion on what they had heard. Following the breakout groups, a question and answer time took place during which the following points were raised:

Q: Revd Andrew Yates, Penwith Deanery, stressed that it is theologically important that we operate in a bottom up and not a top down way. He asked how much consultation had taken place with the deaneries. There is a great deal of deprivation in Penwith deanery and cuts have had to be made. How would our budget look if Penwith had been asked how the LICF income should be spent? This should be additional money; how are we going to make sure it becomes an investment in the areas that need it?

A: The Diocesan Secretary, Revd Canon Simon Cade, thanked Andrew for his question. He is passionate that we get to a position where we can use LICF as it is meant to be used. Deaneries have been asked and overall the response is that there should be an urgency to use it differently. Once that decision has been made, which hopefully will begin today when the budget is approved, we will be free to ask deaneries where it could be used, focussing on areas with the most need. We are happy to make a commitment to using the money as it should be used and there will be consultation at grass roots level once the money is available.

Q: Revd Elly Sheard, Powder Deanery - what is the difference between a deanery plan and a deanery mission plan?

A: The Archdeacon of Cornwall, the Ven Paul Bryer, explained that they are the same thing. They are at the top of our agenda and the aim is to invest in coherent mission plans for deaneries; sustainability and fruitfulness are key. A great amount of work is underway by the Bishop of St Germans, the Rt Revd Hugh Nelson and Revd Dr Jonathan Rowe, Director of Ministry, to look at how best to resource deaneries and help them produce plans if they have not done so already.

The Archdeacon of Bodmin, the Ven Audrey Elkington, acknowledged the work of those deaneries who already have plans in place.

Q: Revd Ian Gulland, St Austell Deanery - outcomes are needed, but how do we keep God in them?

A: The Bishop of St Germans, the Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, explained that, as mentioned by Archdeacon Paul, he is working with Jonathan Rowe on a complex piece of work that will support deaneries and help sustain them. Deaneries in most need will be given support first. A bottom up approach is critical, particular in regard to putting plans in place, but a top down approach is also needed.

Comment: Mr Martin Saunders, Pydar Deanery, and Mr Roger Kirkpatrick, Powder deanery, gave their personal thanks to Sophie Eddy, Director of Finance. and her team for all their work and support.

Q: Mr Jeremy Varcoe, Trigg Minor & Bodmin Deanery, asked if it really is feasible to approve a 2021 budget today bearing in mind the unpredictability of the COVID pandemic. Would it be possible to delay a decision?

A: Sophie Eddy replied that budget figures are continually moving and have to be fixed somewhere. If the budget is not approved today then we would need another synod before the end of the year as the budget has to be in place by 31 December 2021.

The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance moved that Synod approve the budget. Diocesan Synod members were asked to to vote either:

- that the budget be approved; or
- that the budget be referred back to the Bishop's Council and Standing Committee.

Seconded by Charlotte Irwin, Powder Deanery.

62 votes for the budget to be approved

1 vote to referred the budget back to the BDC

4 abstentions

Questions under Standing Orders XB 18 and XB21

From Mr Martin Saunders, Pydar Deanery: When will the Governance Report issued by Mr Andy Brookes be presented to Synod for debate and decisions?

The Diocesan Secretary, Revd Canon Simon Cade, explained that the Diocesan Secretary, on behalf of Bishop's Diocesan Council, originally commissioned the Governance Review. The resulting recommendations are now being put into action, with some being approved at the last Synod meeting. There are no plans for Synod to debate the whole review, but members are welcome to ask to see a copy as the contents are not confidential.

Supplementary question:

Martin Saunders expressed his disappointment. He considers the document to be very important and one that fits in with Saints Way. He therefore asked if the decision not to discuss the report at a future synod meeting could be re-considered. Not to do so could be seen as a slight on Synod.

Revd Canon Simon Cade replied that he would ask diocesan synod planning group for their thoughts on this request.

The Bishop of Truro, the Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen, thanked everyone for the helpful discussions and questions. He explained that the Archdeacon of Bodmin, the Ven Audrey Elkington, would close this Synod as it will be her last meeting before her retirement early next year. He thanked Audrey for her ministry in this diocese over nearly a decade; a ministry which has embodied in its leadership, authority, humility and wisdom. He thanked her for all she has brought to our ministry and vision.

Archdeacon Audrey thanked Bishop Philip for his kind words. She said that it had been a pleasure and privilege to serve here and that she has made many friends. She will pray for us all.

The meeting closed with prayer at 12.55pm.

