

Minutes for a meeting of Truro Diocesan Synod 23rd September 2023 at Bishop Bronescombe School, Boscoppa, St Austell PL25 3DT and online by Zoom

“A Church that conspicuously celebrates children and young people at its heart”

Meeting as Truro Diocesan Synod

Attendance:

1 Bishop
16 Clergy [14 in person (-1 from 1pm), 2 by Zoom]
25 Laity [17 in person, 8 by Zoom]
15 apologies [9 clergy, 6 laity]

Mr Robert Perry, Chair of the House of Laity, and Revd Canon Simon Cade, Diocesan Secretary, welcomed members and visitors to the meeting. Simon commended the work of Bishop Bronescombe school to members.

Robert welcomed The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans, in his capacity as Acting Diocesan Bishop following the resignation of the Bishop of Truro, the Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen.

He also welcomed Lee Moscato, recently appointed as Interim Director of Education, having come from his role as headteacher of King Charles C of E School in Falmouth.

Also welcomed and introduced were:

- Catherine Coles - Assistant Head at The Bishops' Newquay and Kernow Learning Trust Lead for RE
- Beth Horwell - Christian Distinctiveness Lead for Bishop Bronscombe School and part of the Programme for Church School Flourishing
- Nicola Bonell - RE lead for St Mary's School, Penzance and a lead for Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE)

Children from Bishop Bronescombe School led members in a time of interactive worship.

Revd Canon Simon Cade thanked the children and led members in prayer for them and for their school.

Presidential Address

The Bishop of St Germans and Acting Bishop of Truro, The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, gave his presidential address a copy of which can be found on the Diocesan Website [here](#):

Members then broke into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- Where do you see signs of faithfulness, curiosity and mutuality in your context?
- Which one of them do you feel called to focus on over the next few months?

Back to School - how we teach RE

Synod members divided into three groups, and teachers Beth Horwell, Nicola Bonell and Catherine Coles, using slides and various resources, led each group in turn through three separate examples of RE primary school teaching in Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.

Hearing from children and young people

Lee Moscato introduced himself to members and said that he is honoured to have been appointed as Interim Diocesan Director of Education. He aims to continue the good work of the previous Director, Katie Fitzsimmons, as well as adding his own views and perspective. He wishes to shine a light on our own schools so that they, in turn, can shine their light on all schools in Cornwall. Lee stressed that the vision for education is for all schools not just church schools, and that there are future plans for school trusts to include a trained person from the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) who will share and influence.

He thanked teachers Beth, Catherine and Nicola for their contribution today and stressed that their work touches on more than just our Church of England schools.

Members expressed their thanks with a round of applause.

Lee then shared a video of school pupils responding to questions they were asked about what it means to be at a Church of England school, their worries, dreams and hopes. Listening to the voices of young people will help shape 'the plan'. The video can be found on YouTube using the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0WEdgX2F3Q>

Lee commented that the video sends a clear message of what it means to be in a Church Of England School, as well as what it means to be a person. If we form good people, then we have done a good job.

The responses the children gave made it clear that action needs to be taken to make a better world. The diocese needs to continue to provide good teachers and people who can listen and care. A recent National Survey showed that one third of 10 - 17 year olds are unhappy with at least one of the ten themes they were questioned about. 74% were positive about their own futures, but less (around 40%) were not positive about the future of the world.

Other issues highlighted included money worries, mental health, and environment. Feeling safe was a concern for many - who they can connect to, and how they can be safe in the real and on-line world.

Mental health was also a big issue, highlighting the need for strategies for self-help, and where and who families can turn to for help. Some people are finding it hard to connect, particularly following the pandemic. All these things need to be borne in mind for our own plan.

Many children say they are worried about their parents and part of Lee's plan is to provide help for schools in providing support for families and communities where there is real need. Other headlines of his plan include:

- Creation Care
- People in schools supporting with transition, worshipping life of schools and with a trauma informed approach
- Worship in schools
- Close work with trusts and schools.

Lee shared his initial ideas of how he sees his role moving forward, and stressed that there will be a published Strategic Plan.

The DBE will be teaming up with Creation Care strategy to shape how this may look in our schools and how we support schools economically with that, including accessing funding e.g. council support for green schools.

The worshipping life of schools will also be included. All schools have worship but not all schools have worship such as that provided by the children from Bishop Bronescombe school this morning. We need

to ensure it is the heartbeat of the school, as well as providing support for non-church schools for the statutory part of worship they are required to provide.

Lee concluded by stressing that these key plans for the future are still in process of taking shape and will all be discussed with his team as well as with our senior leadership. King Charles school in Falmouth, where Lee was formerly Headteacher, is a Trauma Informed School (TIS) so Lee is aware of the problems that pupils can bring with them. He is also aware of the support pupils need for the onward journey once they leave primary school and move into secondary education and this is something that will be looked into.

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

Dr Andrew Hicks, Penwith deanery, asked whether the diocese was developing specific policies and ensuring the provision of skills and people with those skills, in the area of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and specifically the area of bullying in primary schools.

Lee replied to say that his work with the Local Authority involves partnering with CEOs who are responsible for the school trusts. This gives him an opportunity to raise such issues with a particular trust within which a school experiencing such problems sits, to look at these questions, and ask if these things are being considered, and then to ensure this is delivered. We can hold our own Church of England schools to account concerning such issues, but not the other trust schools.

Mr Martin Saunders, Pydar deanery, commented that the role of, and relationship with, schools to their local clergy/parish priests had not been mentioned. He suggested parish priest should play an important part in the plan, and asked whether they would be consulted.

Lee replied to assure Martin that this is part of the plan. He confirmed that he is working closely with the Ministry Team and with the Board of Change and Renewal, to ensure that the DBE is working in partnership with those who are working with and have influence in our schools.

Revd Canon Simon Cade commented that the whole focus will be on how the work described to Synod connects with our local churches, something that would be covered in a session of this meeting later today.

Revd Laura Bushell Hawke, East Wivelshire deanery, commented that the East Wivelshire Deanery Plan includes mention of chaplains and faith schools. She asked what the time frame is for establishing this.

Lee explained that he is in consultation with Cornwall Association of Primary Heads (CAPH). They will then identify potential pilot areas via conversations with other team members and aim to have a pilot scheme in place by the end of this academic year. Revd Canon Simon Cade added that we are talking to national funders within the Church of England concerning support.

Revd Rosheen Browning, Carnmarth North deanery, thanked Lee for mentioning secondary schools. As a former secondary school teacher, she has met many Year 7 pupils who detach from faith at that stage. She observed that the energy of many secondary pupils at the schools in the area she now lives in is being crushed, and it would be wonderful to follow pupils into secondary school, to give support and tend to their wholeness.

Revd Paul Zaphiriou, St Austell deanery, asked whether there is a forum connecting the education side with the deanery plan side so that they can collaborate.

Lee replied to say that yes, by default he is able to make those connections e.g. via Episcopal College. He has dates in his diary to meet with people and talk this through.

Lee concluded this session, leading members in a prayer which was used at a recent meeting of the DBE.

Members expressed their thanks to Lee with a round of applause.

Members then broke into small groups to discuss the general question of “What can we do where we are?” and to give specific answers to the following questions:

1. What can we offer schools
2. What have you seen work well
3. What do you want to know more about?
4. What do churches need to make meaningful links with children, young people, schools and families?

The groups’ answers were written on post-it notes, which will be used by Lee and the team to inform their work.

Feedback followed during which following comments were made.

Feedback on question 1 - What can we offer schools?

- Space in church as additional learning space
- Range of people to offer gifts
- Resources that are already in church
- Pastoral support for staff

Feedback on question 2 - What have you seen work well?

This is a particularly important question for informing decisions that lie ahead:

- Counselling for schools
- The Kids Matter programme
- Godly Play
- Visits to the Church
- Being in and exploring what it means to be in the church building
- Getting into schools
- Holiday Clubs

Feedback on question 3 - What do you want to know more about?

- How to provide Communion for schools
- Where is there creative and exciting stuff happening. Shine a light on that and use it to inspire.
- Secondary school chaplaincies, supporting secondary schools. Lee is making connections for this and is finding out what is available that can be offered.

Feedback on question 4 - What do churches need to make meaningful links with children, young people, schools and families?

- More, traditional, parish priests
- An understanding of today’s families
- Others sharing what is going really well
- Activities for young people and knowing what they like to attend
- Support for secondary schools

Concerning the point made about the provision of parish priests, Revd Canon Simon Cade stressed that the future proposal is to end the historic decline of stipendiary clergy and that Truro diocese is working towards increasing these numbers.

Revd Canon Simon Robinson, Interim Dean of Truro, observed that a question that has not been asked is ‘what can our schools offer us?’ He believes a mutual approach is extremely important, and commented that the level of skill and theological knowledge of teachers such as those who participated in today’s meeting, is not always evident in those who teach the children in our churches. This is something that schools can offer us. He also commented that, if the Church of England is committed to

radical inclusion, it will need to hear from schools on such things as disability and gender neutrality. Schools can inform in a way that churches cannot; when a school is a good school it impacts positively on, and nourishes, its community. Simon suggested that he felt that what had been shared so far today had been fairly one sided, and emphasised that we do not want to lose the opportunity of including this additional question in our considerations.

Simon Taurins, Powder deanery, asked the question ‘How great is our ambition, and how big should it be?’ Discussion had so far focussed on small steps that can be taken, and he suggested our approach could be professionalised, for example in areas such as Christian counselling, and that this would make a great difference on the level of our impact.

Lee thanked everyone for their time and questions, and Members expressed their thanks with a round of applause.

Bishop Hugh expressed his own thanks to Lee and the team and underlined his support for everything that had been said today.

He then led members in prayer for the Ven Paul Bryer, Archdeacon of Cornwall, who continued to be unwell, and for Paul’s wife Fiona during this difficult time.

Meeting as The Truro Diocesan Board of Finance

Promulgation of Amending Canon No.42

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Acting Bishop of Truro and Bishop of St Germans, gave notice that “at its July 2023 group of sessions, the General Synod resolved that Amending Canon No. 42 be made, promulgated and executed.

Amending Canon No. 42 amends Canon C 30 by replacing the requirement for the bishop of each diocese to appoint a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) with a requirement for the bishop to appoint a Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) with responsibility in the diocese, independent of the bishop, for professional leadership on and management of safeguarding matters. The Canon also provides for the professional supervision of DSOs and for the quality assurance of their work by the National Safeguarding Team. The changes will come into force diocese by diocese upon certification by the Archbishops’ Council.”

A full explanation can be found in item TDS23(11), available on the Diocesan Website [here](#).

Questions under Standing Orders

Question from Mr Simon Taurins, Powder Deanery to the interim Diocesan Director of Education

Noting the helpful spotlight thrown by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall on mental health in a rural environment, including a visit to a Forest School, and the report of the Vocations and Ministry Team (p10) that our work with children and young people is often reactive rather than proactive; what thinking and planning is taking place with regard to chaplaincy and pastoral support in church and community schools in the diocese?

Answer from Mr Lee Moscato, Interim Director of Education

Many thanks for your question relating to the plans that are in place to provide chaplaincy and pastoral support in church and community schools in the diocese.

Your question is perfectly timed as a plan to provide pastoral support coupled with chaplaincy in schools is part of the strategic plan that I am putting together working with colleagues from teams within the Diocese. I want to ensure, through a clear strategy, that our work with schools is closely aligned to the work of our Change & Renewal and Ministry Teams - teamwork is absolutely key to success here.

It's something, as the head of a Church of England School, that I saw was very much needed in the community in which my school was located. I found, first hand, that pupils leaving my school moved to a local secondary where their on-going spiritual needs especially were no longer being met in the same way. Similarly, those pupils in those secondary schools who are beginning their own independent journeys of faith needed support and guidance as did the schools they came from.

I am pleased that at least one of our deanery plans include appointing school chaplains as well as the diocesan plan for change and renewal also prioritises work with children and young people and there is work taking place right now to take things forward in this area. This work includes the recruitment of a Project Leader for Children and Young People who will carry out research and formulate a development plan to enable a joined up approach to transform our ministry across the diocese with children and young people.

There is a space and a need for us to support the spiritual needs of pupils and their families as well as their wider well-being which I feel we can do more to help with. I know that in many places we are pushing on an open door and that schools and multi-academy trusts would welcome the support through chaplaincy as some might not feel confident to lead on this themselves. I agree that we need, as you say, to be proactive in this and seek to provide the right people, in the right places with the right purpose: a purpose of care, community and connectedness.

In a nutshell, my vision is this: To provide schools in areas of significant need, most likely with secondary schools or multi-academy trusts as 'hubs', with people who can serve in a chaplaincy role but with a wider role of being a connection for all pupils, staff and families. People who can support with transition into school from primary, make meaningful links with families and organisations that can support them, support with the worshipping life of the school (and its local primaries) and be trusted adults to pupils.

As you can imagine, after only nearly three weeks in this role, this is in its early stages of any plans but I want to assure you that this is something I see as an area of need and one where we can provide.

I welcome any further questions or useful insight into this as I work to shape the education aspect of the wider strategy moving forward.

Follow up question from Mr Simon Taurins:

When will you come back to this group and present your plan, your budget options, so that we can say yes.

Reply from Mr Lee Moscato

His plan will be in final draft form to present to Bishop Hugh within this school term. Following work with colleagues, it will then be shared publically, including with heads and leaders in schools, both church schools and those we are in wider partnership with.

Bishop Hugh stressed that it would not be this Synod that would formally sign off the plan, but the Bishop's Diocesan Council, although the budget allocated would be part of the next Synod when the budget is considered.

Bishop Hugh thanked Mr Simon Taurins for his question.

He then informed members that future meetings of Diocesan Synod would be based on aspects of the priorities of the Diocesan Plan, including the main priorities of Children and Young People, Ministry, and Poverty and Deprivation, as well as other items including, amongst others, environment issues and how we support small churches.

Items to note

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson informed members that, because the General Synod Report had been circulated after the deadline for questions, members were now invited to raise any questions they may have on the report.

There were no questions.

Bishop Hugh then mentioned to members that there are currently two vacancies on General Synod for ordained members and encouraged anyone interested in standing to complete and return a nomination form by the closing date for nominations on 5 October 2023.

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson then moved from the Chair that synod note the following reports:

- Minutes of the previous meeting of Diocesan Synod
- Report from the Bishops Diocesan Council
- Report from the Ministry Team

Mr Martin Saunders, Pydar Deanery, raised a point of order. He observed that, as the Report of the Ministry Team is an item on this agenda, it is therefore not subject to the previous item of Questions under Standing Orders. He therefore asked for permission to comment on the Report of the Ministry Team. The Chair gave consent.

Martin thanked the team for the report and stated that he felt it would not be right for this synod not to thank them formally. He said that he is personally sorry that the report would not be discussed today and he does not understand why such a report comes to synod but is not for discussion. He stated that he disagrees with some aspects of the report, but feels it is important that it be discussed at some point in the future. He would like assurance that this whole area of ministry, which is contentious, should be discussed soon by this diocesan synod.

Mr Martin Saunders, Pydar Deanery, then proposed the following amendment to this agenda item, 'that the Chair use the following wording; "that Synod approves the minutes of its meeting held on 20 May 2023 and notes..."'

Martin then spoke to the proposed amendment. He believes that at issue is an important principle. Other groups/organisations such as PCCs, Deanery Synods, secular clubs, have to approve their minutes. The fundamental principle is that the body or meeting to which the minutes relate, can only be approved by the body or meeting to which those minutes relate. He therefore suggested that the minutes that members have in front of them today are the minutes of this synod and are therefore for this synod to approve, not to note.

Bishop Hugh thanked Martin. He stressed to members that the suggestion that the word 'note' in relation to the minutes is changed to the word 'approve' is more than a technical change. In effect, it would give synod authority to approve or not approve, and therefore space for detailed discussion and questions about the contents of the minutes would need to be included, if synod chooses, as part of future synod meetings.

Mr Robert Perry, Chair of the House of Laity seconded the motion.

Revd Canon Simon Cade, Diocesan Secretary, observed that Martin is correct in saying that many other bodies approve their minutes. However, General Synod does not approve its minutes, and neither does parliament. He pointed out that, in the past, Diocesan Synod did approve its minutes, but the practice changed because synod was spending a lot of time on this and it was thought not to be a good use of its time and something their standing committee could do on their behalf, with synod just noting. Now, on occasion, if someone wants to raise a query or challenge, this has happened and has been brought to synod to make the amendment to the minutes. This is the current custom.

Simon also pointed out that many dioceses do as Martin has described, but in these cases their minutes are a brief note of what was decided and the actions so are far shorter, and therefore lengthy debate is unlikely. He suggested to synod that if this amendment were passed, they should expect the minutes to be shorter and the practice of producing minutes will change.

Bishop **Hugh** then asked Martin if he would like to respond to Simon's comments and speak in favour of his motion.

Mr Martin Saunders, Pydar deanery, spoke in favour of his motion.

He observed that this motion is about approval of the minutes, not their length, and said he believes that Synod would discipline itself. He said that suggesting the minutes would need to be shorter was the equivalent of holding a pistol to his head, and he asked Simon to withdraw that.

Members were asked if anyone wished to speak against the motion.

Revd Alison Hardy, Trigg Major, was given permission to ask a question.

She queried what synod was actually doing when it notes the minutes e.g. when considering the 10 year plan it has been reported that synod approved the plan. She asked whether noting is also approving.

Bishop Hugh replied to say that these are two different things. Approving is stronger than noting content.

Martin Saunders asked if the move to the current system of dealing with the minutes took place following a vote.

Simon Cade responded to say he did not know, but indicated that, if agreed, Martin's motion would apply as from today, and he would imagine the standing committee would take that as the mind of synod if agreed today.

Revd Canon Chris McQuillen-Wright, Chair of the House of Clergy, spoke against the motion. He said that the current system means that members can contribute effectively without getting bogged down in minutiae. The current system works and does not need to be changed, and there are more important things that synod needs to concentrate on.

Revd Canon Simon Cade, Diocesan Secretary, read out the amended wording of the motion:

The proposal is "that Synod approves the minutes of its meeting held on 20 May 2023 and notes the report from the BDC and the other reports that have been received and which you see before you."

Voting took place:

In room: 4 in favour, 19 against, 5 abstentions

Zoom: 1 in favour, 6 against, 1 abstention

The amendment was not passed.

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Acting Bishop of Truro, then moved the original motion, 'that that synod note the minutes of the previous meeting of Diocesan Synod and the other reports it had received'.

Voting took place:

In room: 29 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions

Zoom: 8 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions

The motion was passed.

Close of meeting

Bishop Hugh asked Lee, on behalf of Synod, to thank all those from the schools who were involved in today's meeting, both teachers and pupils.

He also thanked all those who had helped with the planning and preparation of today, and asked for thanks to be passed on to the Headteacher of Bishop Bronescombe School, Mr Stewart Gynn, for all his help and for permitting today's meeting to take place at the school.

The meeting finished with prayer at 2.40 pm.