

Minutes for a meeting of Truro Diocesan Synod 14 September 2024 at St Petroc's Church, Bodmin

Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Synod

Welcome, housekeeping

Revd Canon Simon Cade welcomed everyone to St Petroc's church and to the synod meeting. He introduced himself and explained that he is the Secretary to Diocesan Synod.

Simon gave a particular welcome to new members, and to Dan Haylett, Methodist Chair, who has been appointed as the Methodist Observer on this synod. He also welcomed Mrs Kerstin Lewis, who will be the Mothers' Union (MU) Observer on Synod, when she takes on the role of MU President in the new year.

Opening Worship with Holy Communion

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans and Acting Bishop of Truro reminded members that today was Holy Cross Day, which reminds us that we are called, saved and sent by Jesus Christ and his resurrection.

Bishop Hugh and The Very Revd Simon Robinson, Dean of Truro, then led a communion service to celebrate the new diocesan synod.

Presidential Address

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans and Acting Bishop of Truro gave his Presidential Address, a copy of which can be found on the diocesan website [here](#)

Members then broke into groups to discuss how their churches are currently working in relation to the three points mentioned in the Presidential Address i.e. working together with faithfulness, curiosity and mutuality. Also to discuss what else they could do if activity in these areas increased.

Feedback from the groups took place during which the following points were raised:

Mr Mike Sturgess, West Wivelshire, reported that their group was struck by the fact that, however big a church's membership is, they are always short of people to take on things.

Revd Laura Bushell Hawke, East Wivelshire, referencing Mike's comment, mentioned an article she had read in the Church Times which stated that "we are not looking for volunteers, but looking for disciples."

Mrs Mary Heydon, Trigg Minor & Bodmin, commented that attendance at her Church's services dropped when their services changed in regard to Holy Communion and the modern service. She commented that giving people the services they wanted saw a return to previous numbers.

Bishop Hugh referenced Evelyn Underhill, a religious writer in the first half of the 20th century, who, in a letter she wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, included the comment that "God is the interesting thing about religion and people are hungry for God".

Mrs Charlotte Irwin, Pydar deanery, reflected on mutuality and valuing our differences. Her group observed that different churches can do different things well, and that it is good to realise that we can share that knowledge with others and do not have to do everything ourselves. We should not be in competition but working together.

Bishop Hugh commented that this is a reminder that the cultural trend of competitiveness should not, and does not need to be, the case in the church.

Mrs Abigail Kirby Harris, Trigg Minor & Bodmin, commented that the benefice she is involved with has seven churches and that they already do all the things mentioned and have a healthy congregation. Their parish priest runs a monthly moorland church service which is attended by many who do not attend the usual meetings in church, and which recently included a baptism undertaken in a local river. She said she heard what others were saying, but that these things do not apply to their benefice. She suggested that places experiencing problems should look to themselves, as clearly something is not right.

Bishop Hugh thanked Abigail for her comments. He mentioned that on the following day, Sunday 15th, there would be an item on the Today radio programme about river baptisms and how these fit with Canon Law.

Revd Helen Davies, Trigg Major, commented that it is within small village communities that areas of need are picked up on by church members and are acted on in practical ways. e.g. loneliness & loss, mental health issues etc. Her hope was for more of this in the future.

Briefing for members on the new triennium

Introduction to diocesan structures

Revd Canon Simon Cade, Diocesan Secretary, spoke to the Diocesan Synod Members Guide 2024 - 27.

Simon's presentation can be found on the website [here](#) and the guide can be found [here](#).

A question and answer session followed:

Q: Mrs Abigail Kirby Harris, Trigg Minor & Bodmin, asked if all PCC members are required to undertake the diocesan safeguarding training course, even if they have already received training from elsewhere. She commented that many people have problems accessing the training as it appears to be available only on-line. This can be a problem for many, either due to poor internet connection or lack of IT skills.

She also asked how many people are on the Safeguarding committee and how are they chosen.

A: Revd Canon Simon Cade replied. He acknowledged that providing training on-line only can exclude people. He said that this is being thought through and that in certain circumstances, and where possible, in-person training is offered.

He explained that PCCs are charities and that for any charity that does the kind of work that PCCs do (i.e. a public body with public activities) there is an expected level of training for the trustees of that charity. The expectation of the church for PCCs, as charity trustees, is that they should be in line with other charities doing similar work in the community.

Simon highlighted the benefits of working alongside statutory partners in the area of safeguarding, particularly the recent suggestion that awareness training be undertaken by certain staff. It is notable that, since doing this training, the number of referrals made by the safeguarding team has increased significantly. These professional partners are working closely with some of the most vulnerable communities in Cornwall and it is beneficial for us to share their knowledge and experience.

Mrs Janet Prescott, Pydar deanery, commented that she has background in teaching, has undertaken safeguarding training available from the diocese, and believes it is the best safeguarding course she has undertaken. She is retired and has limited IT skills but even so found

that the safeguarding training available to her and those in her parish was excellent. She sees undertaking the training as all part of the equipping and releasing of the laity.

Simon Cade, Diocesan Secretary, thanked Janet for her comments and said that he would pass these on to the Safeguarding Team.

How diocesan synod works

Mrs Kate Cortez, Head of Operations and Governance (Deputy Diocesan Secretary) spoke to members about the workings of diocesan synod, including:

- The cycle of business, annual and triennial
- How the agenda gets organised
- How members contribute
- Pattern of future meetings
- Overview of the work ahead for Synod, including the budget

Kate's presentation can be found on the website [here](#).

A question and answer session followed:

Mr Mike Thomas, Kerrier deanery, thanked Kate for her presentation and asked if the accompanying slides would be available to members.

He noted the slide about education, and mentioned that he is the local Vice Chair of SACRE (the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) which acts as an interface between church and government. He suggested this is an area people may consider taking part in; anyone interested, is welcome to discuss this with Mike.

Q: Andrew Prince, Powder deanery, noted that the diocese has more church schools than most dioceses. He asked if there had been any research into how we bring people from those schools into the churches.

A: Mr Lee Moscato, Diocesan Director of Education, replied. He said that how schools can work more closely with churches is central to the Diocesan Board of Education's (DBE) strategic commitments. The diocese benefits greatly from the fact that its 43 schools sit within 11 - 12 academy trusts, thus creating partnerships with 50 other schools in the county. Working within the trusts allows the Diocese to make it clear what its role is and to be able to share what we can offer towards the curriculum and religious education. It is the law that an act of worship be held within all schools and the diocese is well placed to offer that. There is a real thirst and open door with many schools and we are looking at how we go through those doors but also show that our door is equally open. There is a working group which is undertaking research into our work with children and young people, and insight will also be gained through the Flourish networks.

Q: Martin Saunders, Pydar deanery noted that the slides indicated that the recent report from the education team would be on the diocesan synod agenda in November. He asked if members could be assured that this would be a full presentation and that there would be a full discussion following.

A: Revd Canon Simon Cade replied to say that he was fully in favour of this.

Mr Roger Smith, Chair of the House of Laity, thanked both Simon and Kate for their presentations.

He also gave particular thanks from himself and on behalf of all synod members for the support from Church House, particularly Kate and the team who support her.

Members showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

Introductions

The following officers of Diocesan Synod introduced themselves:

Mr Roger Smith, Chair of the House of Laity, was a teacher for many years and worked in admin in universities and secondary schools. He worships at Lostwithiel where he is the PCC Treasurer and 'IT guru'. He is also Secretary to Trigg Minor & Bodmin deanery synod.

Revd Paul Zaphiriou, Chair of the House of Clergy, is Rural Dean of St Austell, he is of Greek nationality, and he likes sea shanties.

Mr Jos Moule, Diocesan Registrar, is the general legal council to the diocese. He advises synod, clergy, churchwardens and PCCs. He is a qualified solicitor and works for VWV, a firm of solicitors located in Bristol. A team of colleagues, which include his deputy, Laura Chesham, and Oliver Poole, who is based in Truro, supports him. His role is wide ranging, including advising on marriage law, licensing documentation, clergy discipline, pastoral reorganization, patronage issues. He works closely with the Diocesan Chancellor, the Worshipful Timothy Briden, who is the legal judge of the diocese. Jos is a communicant of the Church of England, which Diocesan Registrars are required to be. He is also the son of an Anglican clergyman and his wife has recently been ordained.

Sophie Eddy, Director of Finance and Assets, heads up the finance team, processes all the finances and gives support to the wider diocesan family regarding finance and associated matters. Together with the finance team, she provides training and goes out to the deaneries to meet with treasurers. She always attends diocesan synod, and speaks twice a year, on the Annual Report, and on the Accounts & Budget.

Mrs Sally Piper, Head of Ministry, leads the ministry team. She is responsible for encouraging vocations, both lay and ordained; for training and equipping those who feel called to either ordained or lay ministry; for supporting all ministers, both lay and ordained. The ministry team also supports parishes through transition, gives advice on giving, runs deanery and parish development days to encourage growth. Sally attends diocesan synod and reports annually on the work of team.

Mrs Kate Cortez, Head of Operations and Governance (Deputy Diocesan Secretary). As well as being involved with the running of diocesan synod, Kate is responsible for many other tasks which broadly sit under the day to day running of the organisation. She is always happy to help with any queries that may arise.

Revd Canon Simon Cade, Diocesan Secretary, was a parish priest for 20 years, and then Diocesan Director of Education prior to being appointed as Diocesan Secretary. He lives near St Austell.

Mr Lee Moscato, Diocesan Director of Education, is a qualified teacher and taught for 25 years. He lives in Truro, grew up in Redruth and also taught there. Prior to being appointed as Diocesan Director of Education, he was Headteacher of King Charles school in Falmouth. His role is statutory, and he is part of a network of other DDE's across the country. He sees his role as to protect, promote and nurture education and those being educated in Cornwall.

A report on Change and Renewal including an update on Deanery Plan and Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal priority - children and young people.

Revd Canon Simon Cade, Diocesan Secretary, explained that he would give a brief update followed by an opportunity for members to ask questions. This will then come back as a substantive item to a future diocesan synod meeting. He therefore asked members to consider what it would be most useful to cover and debate at that meeting.

Simon explained that On the Way (OTW) led to the creation and development of the 12 deanery plans. He stressed that these plans are extremely important. Several years ago a similar initiative took place and deanery plans were developed, but there was no follow through. This time the senior staff, Bishops and Archdeacons, are committed to the plans, and will feed back to deaneries on their findings, and on areas where they think things need to be done differently. Simon has seen a change in culture and stressed that the intention is to honour the plans. If things are not right then they are committed to seeing them sorted out.

The deanery plans led to, and were followed by, the Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal, which came to diocesan synod in May 2023. This plan came from the realization that many deaneries were already hard-pressed which meant that ambitious plans could appear discouraging. The intention was to ensure there was enough finance and support for the plans.

The Diocesan plan identifies gaps in ministry not covered by the deanery plans. Thought now needs to be given as to how to resource those areas. Funds have now been allocated and the plans are being implemented. The deanery plans are not carved in stone, most need refining and growing.

More planning is needed in the following areas:

- Children and Young People. Mentioned in all deanery plans as needing time and resources. Many churches have no children.
- Buildings. Need to do more planning.
- Most churches in Cornwall have small congregations. What if we imagine that this is not a fault, but that they are faithful congregations with their own gifts to contribute to the flourishing of the church?

The national church assumes all churches are big and have people in all the roles. In many places those things are not true, so we need to work on how we encourage small churches to flourish e.g. more ways to be faithful.

Next steps include:

- Continue implementing, monitoring and refining.
- Small church work launched earlier this year. More to take place next year.
- Some buildings work supported by national funding launched.

Children and Young People

Research took place which made positive proposals on what we might do next. It also flagged challenges:

- How do we balance local leadership and planning with whole-diocese leadership and planning?
- How do we best attract and use national funding?
- How do we best sow seeds that honour the small local nature of most of the church in Cornwall, while still achieving our aims?

What will be happening at Diocesan Synod?

- In November 2024, the budget discussion will include updates on the use of our assets to support Change and Renewal.
- Time will be allocated for significant discussions at the February 2025 synod on Change and Renewal and about our plans for children and young people.

A question & comments session followed, particularly aimed at gathering suggestions for inclusion in February's diocesan synod meeting:

Mr Robert Perry, General Synod, commended the work of the diocese on small churches and said that the issue of churches struggling to find officers was discussed at General Synod, but despite that he felt there was a lack of understanding of the situation. He therefore believes that the diocese is on its own to some extent with dealing with this, so any support is welcome and he commends the initiative.

Mary Cooper Brown, Kerrier Deanery, referenced the idea of sharing across deaneries and observed that this is good practice. She feels that Kerrier deanery can feel a little isolated from what is going on and believes it is important that we learn from one another, and do not work in isolation.

Revd Canon Simon Cade thanked Mary and said that he will pass her comments back to Mrs Ruth Marriott, Director of Change of Renewal.

Ms Kathy Pope, Observer, Churches Together in Cornwall, observed that the priorities and concerns raised, including the low numbers of children and young people, are shared across other traditions. The question is how can ministry be developed and enhanced by working ecumenically.

Revd Canon Simon Cade thanked Kathy for her comments which he said would be recorded and responded to.

Mr Simon Taurins, Powder deanery, commented that this is a significant and exciting development. He requested that a report be circulated well in advance of the final report coming to diocesan synod, and that a proper consultation be held, rather than being presented to synod as a fixed matter. He asked for the process to be consultative and an opportunity to engage everyone so that a way is found for the whole of the diocese to benefit.

Bishop Hugh thanked Simon and agreed that this is key. The goals for children and young people have deliberately been set narrow and bold i.e. for every child in Cornwall to have an opportunity to hear about God and attend a church, and to increase the number of child disciples by factor of ten. This could be achieved by investing money in the obviously large churches, but this is not the desired approach; the challenge is how to do it broadly. At the moment, there is a loose plan covering three areas and consideration is being given to how to spend the money across these areas: to offer something to every individual church in Cornwall; something at a middle level for churches that want to step towards this, with the sacrifice & money involved; and something at deanery level. There will be many conversations before February.

Mr Simon Taurins commented that when the stage of executing the plans is reached, it needs to be ensured that these are successful. He commented that it would be good to have a report and/or audit on Transforming Mission (TM) and the lessons learned from that, so that the pitfalls are avoided this time and we get value from the money we spend.

Revd Canon Simon Cade responded to Simon Taurins. He stated that TM was largely led by parish clergy and it would not be good to start a culture where synod manages parish clergy. The diocese does review TM and the other work taking place in parishes; synod needs to be a place where people

share good news stories and encourage, but not a place for criticism. TM has done some really good work in all of the places it has operated, and has reached people who would not have been reached otherwise. Although it has not achieved its original, unrealistically high targets, but it has been faithful, diligent, and courageous.

Meeting in Houses

- Election of Secretary and Vice Chair Meeting as the House of Clergy, and the House of Laity of Truro Diocesan Synod
- To discuss Co-options by house
- Other business relevant to the house

The minutes of the meetings of the Houses of Clergy and Laity can be found on the diocesan website [here](#).

Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd**Nomination and election of Chair of TDBF**

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Acting Bishop of Truro and Bishop of St Germans, thanked the outgoing Chair of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance, Mr Mike Sturgess, for all he had done during his nine years as Chair. He said that Mike had given generously with his time, love, faith and skills and that the diocese owed him an enormous debt of gratitude. He presented Mike with cards and gifts, which included solar panels for a church in Uganda in honour of Mike's interest in Creation Care.

Bishop Hugh then introduced Mr Justin Day, who he had nominated to be the next DBF Chair.

Justin introduced himself. He shared with members some of his background, experiences and skills, and explained how he hopes he will be able to use these to further God's Kingdom here in Cornwall. Members gave a round of applause.

Bishop Hugh commended Justin's faith, skills & commitment, and explained that Justin had been appointed by a formal and rigorous process.

The President of Diocesan Synod moved that the Members of the Company elect Justin Day as the Chair of Truro Diocesan Board of Finance.

Voting took place.

All were in favour and the motion was carried.

Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Synod**Questions under Standing Orders**

Revd Paul Zaphiriou, Chair of the House of Clergy, informed members that no questions had been received within the time limit. He flagged that if questions are submitted to diocesan synod that concern a particular department at Church House, then it would be helpful if they are included in the correspondence.

Revd Canon Simon Cade went through the process of asking questions at Diocesan Synod. He explained that questions received would be published in advance of the meeting and that members

would not be required to read the question out themselves. If received in good time, then senior staff would aim to reply to the person with the answer that is going to be given. The reason for this is that the person asking the question is permitted to ask a supplementary question, relating to the original question. Simon emphasised that this should be a question and is not the opportunity for a speech.

Promulgation of Amending Canon 43

Revd Paul Zaphiriou, Chair of the House of Clergy, promulgated Amending Canon no 43. He explained that members were simply required to listen to the promulgation, that this is part of the legal process for making rules in the Church of England, and a way of ensuring members are informed of updates and/or changes.

Members are welcome to raise any questions with the Diocesan Registrar, Mr Jos Moule.

General Synod report

Revd Will Harwood, General Synod member, introduced himself to members. He explained that he, and the diocese's other General Synod Reps, have been elected for five years, up to 2026, and that their role is to represent the diocese, not just their own views. He encouraged diocesan synod members to let them know of any issues or areas of concern they would like to raise.

He gave a summary of the main areas covered at the July Sessions of General Synod.

- Trust in leadership and the role of the House of Bishops in setting this agenda. There have been many challenges around trust with an independent advisor was brought in. Her views were that there have been breaches of trust amongst public figures generally & particularly around leakage of information. The House considered and discussed how trust can be built, particularly around the area of Living in Love and Faith (LLF) and how this was handled.
- LLF. This was the main issue of the day with working groups, feedback, and debates.
- The Safeguarding code of conduct, how this affects volunteers, parishes, training.
- Clergy rest & use of time off. Recommended amount of time off is currently 24 hours per week, and the point was made that this is not enough, with debate taking place on whether this should be increased to 36 hours. No decision was made but the discussion was helpful.
- Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM). The draft measure for revision was discussed and there was a great deal of support for the changes with an acknowledgement of how stressful CDMs can be for clergy. An amendment was tabled to increase the burden of proof for complaints made against clergy.
- The Chancel Repair draft measure was adopted and supported.
- Carl Hughes from the Archbishops' Council painted a stark picture about the Church's finance. He emphasised that this was primarily a crisis of mission and the financial aspect was a consequence of that.
- Theological Education Institutions (TEIs), their role and the crisis concerning numbers, and the numbers coming forward for training.
- The human dignity of disabled children.
- Soul Survivor - abuse allegations. Discussion and how we deal with this at a national level.
- Food banks and the Church's role as being vital in local communities was discussed, as well as the plight of the poor and disabled. The Government was called upon to work to remove the

cause of food banks especially regarding improvements to the benefit system.

- Discussion on the continued disunity on human sexuality. A motion for the work to continue was passed.
- Abuse redress measure. There was a strong sense of commitment to deliver justice for survivors of abuse. There is a challenge as to how PCCs can be held accountable and comply within charity law, but permitting survivors to report direct to someone other than the PCC was approved anyway.
- Church persecution.
- Young people on their experience in church.

A question and answer session followed:

Mr Mike Thomas, Kerrier deanery, thanked Will and asked if some more information could be given about the Code of conduct.

Revd Will Harwood explained that the CDM has outdated expectations of what is expected from clergy and that the new code aims to address the way culture has moved on in terms of language, compliance etc. It aims to make it fairer for clergy going through that process, but ensure all angles are covered in terms of current culture.

Mike then asked whether there is a code of conduct for the members of General Synod.

Will replied to say that there had been a discussion on this and that Revd Andrew Yates has more information. However, he agreed that this is a challenge, and that debate can become extremely heated and can be quite shocking. He noted that there had also been discussion about a Code of Conduct for PCC members.

Revd Paul Zaphiriou, Chair of the House of Clergy, thanked Will and asked everyone to keep the General Synod members in their prayers.

Reports and Minutes

Revd Laura Bushell Hawke, East Wivelshire, who is a member of the Crown Nominations Committee (CNC), gave an update on the work of the CNC. She reported that the diocese' CNC representatives recently went to Lambeth to join the other members. There was a wide range of beliefs and traditions on the committee, and the process of discerning the next Bishop of Truro continues. It was a very successful meeting and the committee will meet in Canterbury in a few weeks' time to continue the process, with the hope of an announcement being made towards the end of January.

Revd Paul Zaphiriou, Chair of the House of Clergy, asked everyone to keep this process in their prayers.

Mrs Sally Piper, Head of Ministry, informed members that she will soon be sending out information about opportunities for prayer via Zoom each Wednesday morning at 8.30am every week from 26 September through to end November. There will also be a Monday evening special choral evensong to pray for the appointment process.

Paul then introduced the Ven Clive Hogger Archdeacon of Cornwall, who was attending synod for the first time following his appointment in June. Clive introduced himself and explained what he does.

Revd Paul Zaphiriou, Chair of the House of Clergy asked if members had any questions about the minutes and reports.

There were no questions.

The Chair proposed that Synod note:

- the minutes of the meeting of Diocesan Synod on 18 May 2024
- the report from the Bishops Diocesan Council
- the reports from the Diocesan Director of Education

All were in favour.

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Acting Bishop of Truro and Bishop of St German, gave thanks to the outgoing Chairs of Houses and others who have served the previous synod.

The meeting closed with prayer at 2.39 pm.