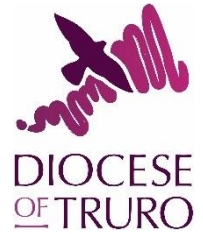


# Report from the Bishops Diocesan Council to Diocesan Synod

October 2024



This report is produced by officers on behalf of the Bishops Diocesan Council (BDC) and is addressed to members of Diocesan Synod. Because of timing issues the paper has not been specifically approved by the Board, but it can be shared by members of Synod as you see fit.

## 1. Fruitfulness and Sustainability - Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal

Having approved the Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal in 2023 the BDC receive regular reports on progress towards its implementation. Direct oversight of the plan is through the Board for Change and Renewal, which meets regularly and reports to BDC.

### a) People Planning

As part of a suite of papers to support implementation of the Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal, BDC have adopted a “People Plan”. The plan focuses on four groups; ‘*Local Leaders*’, those who work with *children and young people*, *stipendiary clergy* and *deanery leaders*. These four priority groups are identified because if we don’t populate and resource these roles, we know that our plans are unlikely to be achieved. The next step is for individual action plans to be developed to implement the work needed to engage, develop, recruit and sustain people for these and other roles.

Clergy recruitment continues to be a key focus and one where we have been able to improve our performance; seventeen clergy appointments will have been made by the end of this year. More than double a usual pre-Covid year. Significant efforts will be needed to sustain and increase clergy numbers, as nationally the number of ordinations falls, and retirements increase.

In this diocese we are “bucking some trends” with near record numbers entering training for ordained ministry, and increasing numbers coming forward for some parish roles and more people signing up to training courses for lay roles.

### b) Working with and for those in need

The BDC received the report ‘With and for those in need’, a document intended to renew the diocesan understanding of social action and make recommendations for how more can be done to help those in need. It is to support deaneries in their use of Lowest Income Communities Funding.

### c) Strategic Rural Deans

The BDC approved a proposal for each deanery to have a commissioned Strategic Rural Dean, replacing the previous proposal for Area Deans. This will usually be a stipendiary (or possibly self-supporting) clergy person.

Each Strategic Rural Dean will be responsible for:

- a. leading and enabling the changes described in deanery plans, practically and culturally;
- b. leading and enabling, at deanery level, the objectives of the Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal;

c. fulfilling the traditional responsibilities of a Rural Dean.

The proposal included additional support including money to enable administrative support to be provided; some assistance from a House for Duty colleague to support ministry; and ongoing training and development.

Implementation will involve working very closely with existing Rural Deans.

To note: The Deanery plans in Kerrier and East Wivelshire include the appointment of a full time Rural Dean or Deanery Lead, both of whom have been appointed. To honour the integrity of local planning, these posts will remain.

#### **d) Impact of deanery plans**

The BDC received an interim report on some headline progress in the deaneries 18 months into the implementation of the Deanery Plans. Key areas reported including:

- £840k shared with deaneries from Lowest Income Communities Fund to pay for specific ministry amongst those in most need, with detail on how it has been spent locally.
- Deanery Implementation Teams and how they are working.
- Recruitment of lay roles in deaneries.
- Successful funding bid to become a FLOURISH pilot area, working with 3 schools.
- Progress in each deanery towards achieving their plans.

We plan to bring further feedback on the implementation of the Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal to Diocesan Synod during 2025.

#### **e) Other areas of work**

The strategy for work with children, young people and families will be launched in the Spring of 2025.

Bishop Graham continues his work looking at small churches.

A proposal for how best to approach understanding how we can best resource church buildings (using £2 million allocated in the Assets Strategy) will go to BDC in late 2024 or early 2025.

The environment strategy and action plan are currently being reviewed, to reflect progress to date and the changing landscape the diocese is operating in. This will come to June Diocesan Synod.

## **2. Finances**

### **a) 2024 expenditure**

Sophie Eddy, Director of Finance and Assets, reported that the budget reforecast shows that the projected budget deficit at the end of 2024 is likely to be closer to £5 million, significantly higher than the £3 million budgeted for. This is almost entirely due to the significant increase in major works on parsonages to get them ready for the increased number of new clergy.

## b) MMF

Sophie also reported that following positive signs earlier in the year there has been a dip in the level of MMF payment rates, which dipped to 95% of budget in September. She reminded members of the importance of achieving 100% rate to enable to delivery of the Deanery Plans.

## c) The budget

The BDC spent considerable time reviewing the budget.

The members had previously approved a 3.75% increase in the 'unit cost' for the MMF toolkit, based on the expected cost of living increase to be awarded to clergy in 2025.

The members voted to recommend the budget to the Diocesan Synod.

## 3. Governance

### a) Election to the BDC

Following a round of elections and some nominations by Bishop Hugh this is the new membership of the BDC - these are the members of the charity and at the same time the directors of the company (the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd):

Hugh Nelson	acting Bishop of Truro		
Simon Robinson	Dean of Truro	Jeremy Stuart	Laity - Cornwall
Clive Hogger	AD of Cornwall	Simon Taurins	Laity - Cornwall
Kelly Betteridge	AD of Bodmin	Merisa Macinnes	Laity - Bodmin
Justin Day	Chair of TDBF	Karen Bond	Bishop's nominee
Paul Zaphiriou	Chair House of Clergy (Bodmin Clergy)	Charlotte Irwin	Bishop's nominee
Roger Smith	Chair House of Laity (Bodmin Laity)	Andy Thompson	Bishop's nominee
Elizabeth Burke	Clergy - Cornwall	Anna Corbett	Bishop's nominee
Jeff Risbridger	Clergy - Cornwall	Teresa Folland	Bishop's nominee
Jeffrey Terry	Clergy - Bodmin	Vacant	Bishop's nominee

### b) Elections to the Diocesan Board of Education (DEB)

Kerstin Lewis, Andrew Beasley, Victoria Hatten and Neil Caddy were nominated and then elected by Diocesan Synod (elections not held as there were four nominees for up to 4 places).

Karen Bond has been nominated by Bishop Hugh to be the Chair of the DBE.

### **c) Vacancy in See**

The interviews for the new Bishop of Truro took place in October. The likely date for an announcement is January 2025. The BDC thanks the members of the Crown Nominations Committee, particularly our six diocesan representatives for all their work in this. We hope to welcome the new Bishop to Diocesan Synod in the spring.

### **d) Plans for Diocesan synod in 2025**

You are hopefully already aware that there will be four meetings of Diocesan Synod in 2025. This is both to adjust the cycle moving forward and to give space to the new Bishop. These are the dates:

1 February - St Erme Community Centre and on Zoom

21 June - TBC

13 September TBC

22 November TBC

### **f) Note re electoral roll revision**

Every 6<sup>th</sup> year a parish must prepare a new electoral roll (rather than just updating it). This needs to be done in 2025. These numbers directly affect how many representatives the parish has on Deanery Synod and then how many representatives a Deanery has on Diocesan Synod, so we encourage a proactive approach to engaging people with this process - it is in the interest of the parishes and democracy in general! If you can help make sure this is a PCC priority as they prepare for their APCM.

## **4. Safeguarding**

We were pleased to receive a note from the Archbishops Council indicating that we are the first diocese to be certified as complying with Amending Canon 42 (Safeguarding). These rather opaque code words mean that we are the first diocese to comply with two of the key recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) relating to independent audit and the change to a diocesan safeguarding team that is able to make key safeguarding decisions independently of bishops, archdeacons and the diocesan secretary. We are proud of this achievement and the work that parishes are doing to keep children and vulnerable adults safe, and we know that there is much still to do.