

Minutes for a meeting of Truro Diocesan Synod 23 November 2024 at St Erme Community Centre, Trispen.

Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Synod:

Chaired by Mr. Roger Smith, Chair of the House Of Clergy

09:30 Welcome, housekeeping

Revd Canon Simon Cade (SC), Diocesan Secretary, welcomed everyone to St Erme Community Centre and handed over to Mr. Roger Smith (RS), Chair of the House of Clergy who introduced himself and said we are meeting as Truro Diocesan Synod. RS gave apologies on behalf of Revd Paul Zaphiriou (PZ), Chair of the House of Laity, as he is unwell and cannot attend. RS explained that Revd Laura Bushell Hawke (LBH), Vice Chair of the House of Clergy, will be standing in on his behalf. Curates from the Diocese have been leading regular Wednesday morning prayers online. RS introduced Revd David Baylor, Revd Steve Guffick, and Revd Sophie Troczynska and invited them to lead worship.

09:35 Opening Worship lead by Assistant Curates from the Diocese of Truro, Revd David Baylor, Revd Sophie Troczynska, and Revd Steve Guffick

The curates lead worship based on John 1:1-14 : *“In the beginning was the Word,”* Using the format from Wednesday morning prayers.

10:05 Presidential Address

RS thanked the team for leading our worship.

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 [\[HERE\]](#)

The Address was followed by reflection in groups. Bishop Hugh brought everyone’s attention to the *Loud Fence*, courtesy of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, at the back of the room.

10:55 Introducing ‘With and for those in need’

RS said that for the rest of the morning we will be hearing about some of the important work that is undertaken ‘With and For Those in Need’. This work responds to Our Lord’s commandment to love one another, and it is a Diocesan priority. RS explained that Ruth Marriott (RM), Director of Change and Renewal, would have led this session, but she is recovering from an operation and can’t attend today, so instead, Bishop Hugh will introduce this area of work.

Bishop Hugh pointed out the connection between safeguarding and “With and For Those in Need”. It’s not about us doing kind things for those who we feel are ‘needy’, but about being a Church for those in need. We are for them, we protect them, we speak for them, and we put them to the front. It’s one of our three priorities which are: changing patterns of mission, children and young people, and to be with and for those in need.

Bishop Hugh referred to ‘Lowest Income Community Funding (LICF)’ which is national funding that the DBF now allocates directly to deaneries. He noted that in Cornwall “need” does not always follow an easily recognized urban pattern, much of Cornwall is rural, and need can be found in rural areas as well as urban.

Because we need to understand what that local need is and how it is experienced, we have commissioned academic research focusing on local experience of poverty. Bishop Hugh introduced Dr. Tanya Ovenden-Hope (TOH), Professor of Education at Plymouth Marjon University and Dean of Place and Social Purpose, and the 'Rurality Matters' work. Plymouth Marjon is a partner to the Diocese. Bishop Hugh explained that TOH developed and now leads 'Marjon University Cornwall' based in Truro.

11:00 Shared Space - Cornwall Rurality Matters lead by Dr. Tanya Ovenden-Hope, Plymouth Marjon University

A copy of Dr Tanya Ovenden-Hope's presentation can be found on our Diocesan website [\[HERE\]](#)

Dr Tanya Ovenden-Hope (TOH) introduced herself and her research: The research has been conducted on place and social purpose, with a focus on education. There are seven factors used by the government to measure deprivation. TOH said that the data can be skewed towards an urban experience. This project identified the very real and lived experiences of those in Cornwall. TOH detailed the 6 communities which are in the top 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and served by educationally isolated rural schools.

TOH introduced five phases to the research which leads to a report that shows how in Cornwall rurality really does matter. TOH said that they struggled to get participants at first, and getting into these communities proved difficult.

TOH said that the media have been in touch regarding the report and are interested in showing that Cornwall isn't just about "sandcastles and beaches", but that rurality really does matter when it comes to deprivation in Cornwall. All of this is really positive for change. TOH invited questions.

Questions:

Lay Canon, Mr. Robert Perry (RP), Truro

RP asked if TOH is confident in the data. Other communities would consider themselves as deprived, if not more deprived than those listed in the report. What about those communities?

Answer

TOH said that they use data provided by the Government on deprivation, but they then had to look at Rurality. Data is triangulated to ensure geographical deprivation, socio-economic deprivation, and cultural isolation. TOH confirmed that they are very confident based on the criteria in their rationale, noting that the research is undertaken in locations that are among the most deprived 30% nationally, not the "top five" for deprivation in Cornwall, and where the deprivation intersects with educational isolation.

Mrs. Janet Prescott (JP), Pydar

JP asked if they have taken into account free school meals as this is an indicator of the finances of the people.

Answer

TOH confirmed that free school meals is an indicator of sustained deprivation, but parents do not have to declare their requirement so it can skew the data. Instead, TOH confirmed that the government uses the 'pupil premium' status instead as this shows deprivation over a *sustained period* and is a truer, more accurate, representation.

Mr. Mike Rowe (MR), St Austell

MR asked TOH for the deprivation data for their Deanery. MR said that some parishes don't meet their criteria and don't appear in the research even though they're in the top percent

in the country. He asked why that was.

Answer

TOH said that whilst more urban parts of Cornwall meet the criteria, the research connects that to rurality linked to schools. There is a difference between the criteria to measure need and the perception from the public of where there is most need.

SC added that the research will help with understanding what being *in need* means, but he hopes that it might also influence Government policy to rebalance funding in rural areas.

TOH agreed, saying that this is fair, but wondered how they leverage the Government and show that there is a need for targeted support, particularly for those areas in Cornwall. TOH asked what “levelling up” really means.

[End of questions].

RS thanked TOH for her presentation and for her time in answering questions. RS handed over to LBH.

11:25 Hearing from the Diocese - working With and For Those in Need

The Bodmin Way

LBH said we continue to meet as Truro Diocesan Synod. LBH introduced Revd Paul Holley (PH).

PH introduced ‘The Bodmin Way’. PH recalled a past event when Desmond Tutu set out “*what needed to be done*” and said that “*we are all God’s collaborators*”. PH said that we are sisters and brothers; one family; human family; God’s family. The room applauded.

PH continued and said we are collaborators with politicians, scientists, and activists - we are all with and there for those in need.

PH recalled a second event when the Anglican Health & Community Network (AHCN) was launched in 2021. The AHCN is a faith-based health programme and is “*Connecting, preparing and equipping Anglicans to provide health care, accompany the sick and advocate for equitable health-care based on both trust in science and hope in God*”. PH said that the way they have structured The Bodmin Way draws from this methodology. It focuses on *who* and *what* is already around. He added that they have built on that to be with and for those in need.

PH went on to talk about many people that have been taken on over the years, and many projects have taken place. Elaine, Pioneer Minister, has lived on a Bodmin council estate for years. Roland, the Events Manager, struggling to find employment, Bodmin Way took him on. Roland went on to do an Events Management Degree and passed with a First.

PH made reference to other people who have been involved or are currently involved in The Bodmin Way, including Revd Geraldine Ashton, a Parish Nurse. PH described her as a “*power house of creativity*”, putting health and wellbeing front and centre. PH said that staff are the foundation of our approach. PH encouraged everyone to reflect on Desmond Tutu’s words: “*collaborators in God’s mission*”.

PH handed over to Revd Geraldine Ashton (GA), Parish Nurse.

GA Introduced herself and explained what a Parish Nurse is: “*Christian Nurses; holistic health and wellbeing; and spiritual care for all people of faith and non-faith.*” They work in parishes alongside those who have a heart and a vision for wellbeing in the

communities. It is missional. They are community based and involved in health education and disease prevention. They are collaborative.

GA shared that the programme has been running for two years in Bodmin, and one year in Camelford. They see patients in a variety of ways (phone and face-to-face). GA referred to the number of contacts they have had across the years - Parish Nurse Impact Audit. One Nurse and one Nurse Assistant have had approximately 1500 contacts across the two years and groups are growing all the time. GA spoke of the positive feedback from members of the community.

Case study, J

J and GA spent a couple of months working together. They discussed purpose. J said she likes baking and so J did some baking and brought it to the Nurses. J went on to volunteer, doing her Safeguarding training and DBS checks. J came alongside people in the community space and undertook a nutrition course. In January next year, J will be running a 'Calorie Crushers' course.

Case study, R

R did not go to church, but shadowed the team and completed the Parish Nurse Assistant course.

Case study, A

A had lots of mental health and addiction issues. GA asked if he wanted anything. A didn't want prayer, but kept coming in to chat anyway. A explained that his landlord was about to throw him out. Again, GA asked what he needed - a prayer for example. A agreed and GA asked if he wanted her to pray for an annex that A explained was coming up on the council list. He agreed. GA said she hadn't seen A for several weeks when one day, he came bursting through the doors shouting at the top of his voice "*I only went and got the ***** annex!*"

GA continued: She said that it's about being out there and seeing what God does; it's about being in the right place at the right time. They work with other communities, including St Petroc's Health for the Homeless; the Community Cancer Café; and Health Inequalities Multi-Disciplinary Team just to name a few.

GA explained that Community Health and Wellbeing Workers is an NHS initiative which came from a method used in Brazil where they put workers in the community. Volunteer Cornwall manage funding and collect data.

GA said that faith is infectious, that's the impact we have. We inspire faith. GA emphasised how great the job is and showcased some of her colleagues in her presentation. GA discussed how people can get involved.

Parish Nurses Website: www.parishnursing.org.uk

Email Address: parishnurse@bodminway.org

GA thanked everyone for listening - a round of applause ensued.

Christians Against Poverty - Deanery Partnership

LBH said that Hannah Dunn (HD), who coordinated Christians Against Poverty (CAP) UK, can't be with us today so there is a video interview instead. The minutes of the video are below:

HD said that CAP UK was born out of experience of debt. There are 300 centres across the UK. HD joined CAP UK in March 2022 but the project started in 2018. Churches put funds together to recruit a Centre Manager. They employ Debt Coaches through St

Martin's Liskeard. They cover the whole of the South East of Cornwall. LICF provides funding for those roles.

Impact of CAP UK so far:

- 148 families/single people since starting.
- 45 families/single people this year.
- 8 debt free.
- Written off £124,000 of debt this year alone.

HD continued, saying that numbers can only give you so much. They also work with Baby Basics for example. They helped someone get a fridge freezer recently. They helped another family to carpet their son's room. They make lots of food bank referrals and provide gas and electricity vouchers.

Case Study, X

X came to Church as he had lost his partner and was very distraught with five children. X turned to the Church for support. He became a Christian and was baptised along with his five children. Unfortunately, his debts caught up, but X found a CAP UK flyer and met with them to go through his debts. In February 2023, he became debt free. X, along with HD's husband, leads a men's group called Soar. They meet weekly and offer support to other men.

Men's Soar Group Website: <https://cornwall-link.co.uk/activity/soar-a-group-for-men>
Churches Together in Cornwall Info Hub Website: <https://www.ctcinfohub.org/>

HD said that a women's Soar group exists too. HD explained that it is an open space for both questions and support.

HD encouraged other places to set up a CAP centre in their area, as there isn't provision across Cornwall fully yet. HD highlighted that there are still gaps and communities that need support. HD reminded people that it is challenging and it's not always easy, but it is worthwhile, life changing even.

CAP UK Website: <https://capuk.org/>

LBH thanked Kate Cortez for facilitating the interview. LBH introduced Revd Graham Adamson (RGA) and Revd Rosheen Browning (RB).

Camborne Transforming Mission

RB introduced Camborne Cluster of Churches and its work, noting that being in need doesn't just mean a lack of money, it's a poverty of other things: aspiration; access; education; what is possible. The cluster is five churches working together, two urban, three rural.

Most of the TM resources go to staffing: Children and Families Worker, Project Manager, and Youth Workers for example. RB said that it has been important to listen to the local culture and the Holy Spirit; the original plan was for a high street presence. Camborne doesn't have a coffee culture like other areas - Falmouth for example. Then Covid happened. During this time, a Youth Worker started handing out hot dogs to people coming out of school, which became *Tea Time on Tuesdays*. The young people started calling it "*holy hotdogs*". The young people have made it their own Church.

It has evolved over time. From nurturing and trying things out over time, rather than imposing things. It's better to provide food that people will eat rather than what we consider "*healthy*". 80-100 teenagers come through the doors each week. 146 came last week to get "*holy hotdogs*". They come back again and again, so something is working.

RB handed over to RGA.

RGA spoke of the Children and Babies Clothes Bank, which was founded by Hayley and Lisa - *“powerhouses, legends in their community”*. They gave space to the bank for the events to take place. The bank started in a Church Hall alongside *“holy hotdogs”*, but grew to such an extent, because of the level of need, but also they saw and responded to the need. Once a month, at the back of the Church, they put planks on the pews and turn the place over to the clothes bank. RGA said that they are doing God’s work.

Unfortunately, the Bank struggle to find funding because they’re not a charity as such. RGA said that they have given them support in other ways. The National Literacy Trust come, Healthy Cornwall come, Parish Nurses come. They have a wide range of community support. They are the community serving the community.

RB said that they still have lots to learn. It’s painful when things don’t work. Why are they not coming on a Sunday? Because becoming a Christian is not a straight path. What does faith and worship look like to each person?

LBH thanked RB and RGA for their talks and asked tables to discuss what they’ve heard for 5-minutes.

LBH brought people back together and introduced Rhys Wynne-Jones. LBH spoke about the Night Church at St Mary’s Church, which began in 2023. RWJ first attended Night Church and asked if they had a piano. From there, RWJ has raised thousands for those in need. LBH Handed over to RWJ.

12:15 Performance by Rhys Wynne-Jones [\[see link\]](#)

LBH introduced NightChurch Penzance, and Rhys Wynne-Jones. Since it first opened its doors in November 2023, NightChurch at St Mary’s Church, Penzance, has grown. The unique community is a mix of people including those living on the streets, people dependent on substances, some who have a travelling or transient lifestyle, older people, people suffering with mental ill health, holiday makers, and most recently, young families. Visitors come from all walks of life and the church is fully inclusive and proud of it.

While it started as a monthly Saturday night venture, the church soon evolved to include NightChurch Wednesdays following the arrival of one particular visitor. Rhys Jones first came to NightChurch in January and immediately impressed those present with his piano playing skills. Learning that Rhys was homeless, NightChurch Coordinator Alice Phoenix felt Rhys should have access to a piano and so NightChurch Wednesdays were born.

Since then, Rhys has been performing in public regularly, most recently at Truro Cathedral this week, and has raised thousands for Night Church and other homeless charities. Rhys has been asked to perform today, firstly because Sophie and Kate saw him perform at the Hall for Cornwall and were blown away by his musical skills and willingness to share his story; and to highlight the work of NightChurch. Another way people are working with and for those in need in The Diocese of Truro. LBH handed over to Rhys.

Rhys performed, followed by a round of applause and a standing ovation.

SC thanked Rhys for his commendable performance, highlighting that everyone was in awe.

SC thanked Lesley Fusher, Information and Governance Officer, and Sue Thorold, DAC

Secretary, for their service to Synod over the years, and shared that this would be their last Synod. SC gave apologies on behalf of LF as she is unwell. KC presented ST with flowers. LF's husband picked up flowers on LF's behalf.

12:35 LUNCH WITH PASTY PROVIDED

**Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Synod:
Chaired by Revd Laura Bushell Hawke, East Wivelshire**

13:05 Test vote

SC introduced the vote and "how to vote". A test vote took place. LBH handed over to Revd Andy Earl (AE), Director of Safeguarding.

13:10 Safeguarding update

Andy Earl (AE), Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, began by introducing the Safeguarding Team: YOU, everyone.

AE discussed the caseload/workload from 2021 - 2023 and highlighted that cases are going up. Below shows the number of statutory cases across the three years:

- 2021: 7 child (current), 0 (non-current), 17 adult
- 2022: 23 child (current), 5 child (non-current), 24 adult
- 2023: 9 child (current), 5 child (non-current), 26 adult

The Safeguarding Team are seeing higher referral levels as they increase their presence in local communities. AE reminded people that they can call even if they are not sure, even if it's just to run something by the team. AE clarified how to get in touch depending on the query:

For safeguarding **CONCERNS**, email: safeguardingconcerns@truro.anglican.org

For safeguarding **TRAINING**, email: safeguardingqueries@truro.anglican.org

Report a concern on the Diocesan website:

<https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/safeguarding/report-concern/>

For non-urgent queries and concerns, they will get back to you in 7-14 days. AE said that they have to make sure that someone who is at immediate harm/risk, is not missed.

For anything urgent and/or if anyone is at immediate risk of harm and/or injury, please call the emergency services.

AE said that training and development has always been challenging. AE went through the statistics of what has been delivered so far and reminded people of the trade-off between zoom training and in-person. In person is more expensive and time consuming, which means they cannot offer as much training as they could if training were online.

AE said that there are plans and discussions are underway for future types of courses.

AE moved on to talk about compliance and said that we have worked hard to facilitate increasing compliance, but one of the tools for changing culture is we call out when we're not getting it right. AE referred to the 2024 Safeguarding Audit. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) needs to hold us to account because everyone is busy. It's a challenge as a Diocese.

Risks:

- Workload
- Local / National Tensions
- Failure to identify risk
- Failure to report
- Blind parishes
- Shadow Roles

Currently:

- The team are well-resourced
- They are a multi-disciplinary team
- There is a good rapport with parishes
- There is a good training uptake

AE highlighted that blind parishes are those that haven't engaged with the hub, or have no Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). AE says that if they aren't engaging or if they don't have a presence, then the Safeguarding Team don't know what is happening. That in itself, is problematic.

2024 Highlights:

- Annual Victim and Survivors Focusses Conference. The 2025 Conference will focus on domestic abuse.
- INEQE Audit.
- We are the first Diocese to be certified by the Archbishops' Council for implementing key recommendations from the IICSA Inquiry.
- Parish Safeguarding Officer Recognition Event (5th December 2024).

AE recognises the work that the PSO's do. They do so much, and we ask so much of them. AE played a video showcasing the *Loud Fence* at Truro Cathedral. AE referred to the *Loud Fence* that is in Truro Cathedral.

"Silence is heard very loudly by those that are hurting". AE urged people to add a message to the *Loud Fence*.

LBH thanked AE and introduced the next item, and Diocesan Director of Education, Mr. Lee Moscato (LM).

13:30 Update from the Diocesan Board of Education

Mr. Lee Moscato (LM), Director of Education, introduced himself - a Redruth man. LM introduced members to the new Chair of the DBE, Ms. Karen Bond.

LM explained that the purpose of this update is for some people to introduce, update, and give reassurance of the work and mission that we're doing. LM gave an overview of our schools And how work in Mult Academy Trusts (MATs) helps church schools to have influence beyond themselves.

The team have done a lot of work in the last twelve months, including revising the structure of the DBE and how we work. LM referred to the six functions of the DBE:

1. Promotion of education
2. Religious education and worship
3. Support for Church schools
4. Cooperation
5. Advice and consent
6. Safeguarding

LM spoke of what makes a strong MAT and the strategy for those schools that are yet to join a trust - LM said that they are sure that those yet to join will be joining a strong trust. Recently, the DBE have published a Governance Handbook. LM explained the purpose is to show what they are expecting when their Governors come to your schools.

LM moved on to talk about strategic commitments. When LM first joined, there was (and still is) a focus on education at Synod. LM brought members attention to the organisations and groups of people that inform their work and champion education, and

their wider strategic work. This includes Cornwall Council, Multi-Academy Trusts, The Diocese of Truro, and Schools across the county, just to name a few.

LM said that he wants to form powerful partnerships, including between parishes and schools. This year, the *Flourishing Schools Programme has been introduced*. This strengthens the partnership between DBE and Trusts and ensures improved outcomes and providing provision of the highest quality for pupils, adults, and school communities. LM spoke of the organisations they work with to strengthen these partnerships and support offering. This is to ensure a meaningful connection of Church schools within Trusts, and to schools across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (CIOS), as well as to wider teams to ensure that schools are integral in *all* of the work of the Diocese of Truro.

LM said they help schools understand what spirituality is and that's reflected in their work. They are providing opportunities for families, adults, and young people to connect with each other and converse and have a relationship with each other and God. They are always looking at how they can better engage young people in schools with worship. They have worked with a couple of non-church schools too, purposefully, to increase learning. Prayer looks different for different people. LM said they are looking at creating a guide on worship for different age groups and people.

LM moved on to talk about Creation Care. Clare Green (CG) Education Governance Lead, and Rory Quinn (RQ) are undertaking the 'Cutting Carbon' work. 60% of the young people involved are from non-church schools. CG has set up after school clubs for Creation Care. Twenty-six are on the pathway to becoming accredited eco-schools. We've supported nine MATs in their 'Cut Carbon' journey. This work has also served to create and grow links between church and school.

[Power outage - went to questions].

Questions:

Mr. Patrick Newbury (PN), East Wivelshire

PN said that LM mentioned liaison with Church schools, but didn't mention colleges and asked if the DBE are working with colleges?

Answer

LM said they've made time to make links with Truro College and that they are looking at how to continue and build those relationships, and show what they offer.

Revd Elizabeth Burke (EB), Isles of Scilly

EB asked for the resources LM spoke of.

Answer

LM said they're creating an online space for these resources and that he will share these resources when they are available.

[End of questions].

LBH thanked LM for his presentation and handed over to Bishop Hugh.

Bishop Hugh continued, saying that there is another important thing for them to do today - to note that this is the last Diocesan Synod that Sally Piper will attend as Head of Ministry. Sally's contribution to the life of the Church in Cornwall is remarkable, many tributes have already been paid. When the Church House staff were wondering how to say thank-you in an appropriate way they chose to ask for two things-

- firstly Sally is leading them in some management training at her last staff meeting, to share her wisdom;
- and the whole team will be joining in a Bible study on women in the Bible - sharing God's wisdom.

Bishop Hugh said that Reflecting God's wisdom, and seeing and developing God's gifts in others are important themes in Sally's ministry and will continue to be.

SC presented SP with flowers.

**Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd:
Chaired by Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans and Acting Bishop of Truro**

14:00 Presentation of the 2025 Diocesan Board of Finance Budget

To include a motion as described below

Bishop Hugh said we are now meeting as Members of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, this is a General Meeting of the Company. Bishop Hugh introduced Mrs. Sophie Eddy (SE), Director of Finance and Assets.

SE presented the Diocesan Board of Finance Budget. Links to a copy of the presentation and accompanying speech can be found below:

[TDBF 2025 Budget Speech by Sophie Eddy](#)

[TDBF 2025 Budget Presentation by Sophie Eddy](#)

SE handed over to Bishop Hugh, who went through voting rules. Bishop Hugh invited questions.

Questions:

Mr. Patrick Newbury (PN), East Wivelshire

PN said that the papers refer to the reason why the deficit is going to be £1.8m worse than budgeted and a large part of that goes on environmental work in our estate. PN asked who signed that off because he felt a bit surprised that the first he'd heard about it is when he opened up the budget papers and read it. He said that this is a very significant shift in the deficit for the year.

Answer from SE with input from SC

Those numbers link directly to the Asset Strategy. Within that, there are certain categories we're going to spend money on. TDBF make £3m available for Net Zero works. The majority of which is on clergy housing. There is also a few hundred thousand pounds for other works - works in schools and out in the Parishes as well. TDBF have a programme of which properties are going to have which work done. SC said that the Bishop's Diocesan Council (BDC) sign off overall on the changes to the budget through the course of the year and they do that both in their own right as trustees and as the Standing Committee to Synod. That will be scrutinised by the Finance Assets and Risk Committee (FAR), and that will be based on proposals that come from the Property Management Committee (PMC). At a granular level, clergy will be moving into houses, the TDBF has got to decide whether or not to do the work on those houses. The PMC will put to FAR what that will cost, and this is what it will cost over the course of the year. That goes to BDC who sign that off.

Bishop Hugh opened the floor for points to the proposal that they approve this budget.

Mr. Chris Beckett (CB), East Wivelshire

CB noted that the £1.8m difference between what's been called from the MMF and total unit cost, is big. He said that a large part seems to be down to the housing cost (£2.1m). CB asked if that cost because of one-off costs or is that going to be ongoing.

Answer from SE

Property costs have seen inflation generally, and in 2024 we have seen more clergy appointments, so there are a mixture of ongoing costs and "one-offs" and to some extent this extends into the 2025 budget. SE noted that £2.1m is likely to be close to a realistic number for the immediate future but would fluctuate depending on clergy moves. Costs are monitored, and a tighter budget in 2025 will mean that hard decisions are likely.

SC commented that historically the DBF chose some years ago to spend less on parsonages, which meant we developed a backlog of maintenance, which they are consciously trying to improve the standard of clergy housings now.

Mr. Patrick Newbury (PN), East Wivelshire

PN thanked SE for her budget presentation. He said he was greatly assured that it is a “*bottom up*” budget. However, he confirmed that he won’t be voting in favour as he felt that more work needs to be done. He said that the budget shows a deficit position, and there’s nothing wrong with that. He said he hasn’t seen enough about that path back to break even to feel confident enough to approve a deficit budget. PN voiced his concern about the MMF. PN said that on a parish level, they have far fewer clergy hours and therefore felt they ought to pay less MMF. Secondly, he said they hear a lot about Transforming Mission, but nothing about things that contribute to our financial position. It doesn’t give them comfort of a better financial position, i.e. more people coming to church and paying regular contributions or contributing in some way. He said he’s concerned of the risk to the revenue behind this budget. PN said that that Church House and the churches are in a position where they’ve got one person in main office for every one ordained minister or curate. He emphasised that the Diocese have to consider if they get to that position what that does for them as a Church. PN referred to the Diocese of Exeter, saying that it has twice as many Churches as they do, and roughly the same number of people in the centre. PN said he is sure there’s a lot of worthy work done by those in Church House, but feels the figures and the budget puts into question whether the Diocese can afford this plan.

Mrs. Abbigail Kirby Harris (AKH), Trigg Minor and Bodmin

AKH couldn’t find anywhere the figures or budgeting for getting back up to their Clergy numbers. AKH feels that there seems to be a policy of “*scaling down*”. AKH said they have all heard of two vicars in charge of 27 parishes, and one of them is never going to be in a pulpit. AKH feels that people have finally accepted that having local ordained representatives to do all the good stuff that they do is money worth spending, but she said she couldn’t find it and she’d be happy to be reassured.

Mr. Clive Dixon (CD), West Wivelshire

CD said he’d like to speak in support of what PN had said. CD feels that the case for rural parishes has not come across strongly other than from an academic point of view. CD said that love starts at the altar with the priest at the sacrifice of the Communion, the Eucharist. That spreads out from the work that the priest can do at that point and then the places they appear in the local community - in the cricket club, in the pub, supporting the academics, institutions and schools. For the local farmer’s wife who is concerned about the mental wellbeing of her husband and their tendency to have suicidal thoughts. CD asked how they reach the vulnerable in the community. CD said that he knows there are lay roles, but it starts at the altar and the priest there to be the focal point and spread that out as much as possible. He’d love to see a bigger commitment and get this love out there through the Priest.

Bishop Hugh suggested that Mr. Justin Day (JD), Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, addresses Patrick’s points, and Revd Simon Cade (SC) addresses the others.

Answer from JD, SC, SE, and Bishop Hugh

JD addressed the points about income stream and Transforming Mission. JD feels that the figures for TM are heavily scrutinized, even more so than individual parishes. TM is being incorporated into deanery plans, some more forward than others. Most of TM are parish-led and mission based. JD referred to the strain on income and revenue lines and said that when he thinks back to the TM objective, it was to “*reach lost generations*”. But when he read what the lost generations are (the young people and economically deprived people), by definition they don’t have funds. JD said he doesn’t know families with children under five that have much spare cash. He doesn’t know homeless people with any spare cash. JD said that if you go to somewhere where the TM meeting place is a Church, those are the places that are bringing in people new to faith.

SE addressed the question/point about stress testing and MMF. MMF contributions from parishes seem to have plateaued, following years of decline, and to some extent this reflects parish finances, noting that MMF is a voluntary contribution from parishes. SE noted that a new MMF formula would be in place from January 2026.

SC addressed the point about Church House staffing numbers and lower clergy numbers. Referring back to what Patrick said about “*breaking even*”. SC said that TDBF probably won’t aim for a break-even budget for eight or nine years, TDBF don’t need to because of the strength of our balance sheet to support what otherwise would end up on MMF. In the long term, the TDBF ought to be able to use at least £1m a year in broad terms (this is still eight years away) in its resources to keep MMF costs down, so that by definition would be a deficit budget, not a break-even budget.

SC moved on to talk about “*Head Office*” (Church House). SC said that he agrees as a small diocese the ratio of lay DBF staff to clergy would not be in line with larger dioceses, the core staff to “run a DBF” is roughly 30 FTE and that is close to our core establishment, the real ratio of staff to clergy is currently 1:2 not 1:1. SC agreed that we need more Stipendiary Clergy in the Diocese. Benchmarking our staffing and costs against other dioceses shows that we are relatively “light” on staff and low cost.

SC said that to help the Parishes implement their plans, the Diocese have to decide if they leave them to it or help to resource that.

Bishop Hugh said that he doesn’t agree that “*love starts with the priest at the altar*”, but instead with God, in scripture, in prayer and worship and also in our GP surgeries and schools and other places. Bishop Hugh said that they do need clergy to stand at the altar to encounter love there, and also to enable people, to train people, to send and bless people out to encounter God’s love elsewhere. Bishop Hugh said he wants more stipendiary clergy and they have plans for that. If Churches grow and everyone chooses in their Deaneries to invest that in stipendiary clergy, Bishop Hugh suggests they do that. Bishop Hugh repeated that he doesn’t think love starts with the priest at the altar.

He continued and said that he wanted to refer to the comment “*two priests in a deanery, one of whom will never be seen in a pulpit*”. Bishop Hugh said he disagrees with that statement and said not only will the person be seen in an actual pulpit, but they will also be seen in pulpits in schools, beaches, fields, and in the places where the Church simply is not connecting at the moment. The deanery in question is also served by House for Duty and other clergy.

Questions

Mr. Mike Sturgess (MS), West Wivelshire

MS said that they have been using our reserves and we’re going to have an operating budget that is deficit this year. He suspects when we go to do the statutory accounts, we’ll have a surplus. MS said that he respects that they’ve got a vicar back in Liskeard, but most people would say that that’s not how the growth comes. MS said that growth comes from having your families working; your children working; the pioneer leaders. MS referred to the men’s group *Soar* saying that not many contribute to the finances, but they’re there with and for those in need. They’re getting so much growth in Liskeard. These are the families that need most help. MS reiterated that people in need still need the support even if they aren’t contributing financially.

Mr. Vivien Hall (VH), Trigg Major

VH said they were concerned of the head-long drive towards Net Zero. VH referred to Exeter Diocese as an example and said there may be other ways to spend £0.5m. Could you squeeze the Net Zero agenda for the next year?

Mrs. Jo Heydon (JH), Trigg Minor and Bodmin

JH said that she relinquishes her right to ask a supplementary question (in response to JD’s answer in Standing Order XB21 - see below) because she wishes to raise those points now. JH said she found JD’s response unsatisfactory and feels they are being kept in the dark,

particularly about the finances of TM. JH asked “how can we vote if we don’t have all the information? Money needs to be openly accounted for, and I don’t feel it is. We need the figures.” JH asked:

1. Why the secrecy and concealment?
2. Why the refusal of any open assessment?
3. Why pursue a strategy (TM) when it is not just failing, but preventing funds being used where they are needed in the Parishes?

Mrs. Janet Prescott (JP), Pydar

JP thanked SE for her detailed budget and thanked the “brains” for what they have delivered. JP also thanked Bishop Hugh for saying that it is “Love” that we have heard this afternoon and today, and that’s what we need to take home. JP said that as a complete math phobic, she will be taking home this information and voting in favour.

Answers from Bishop Hugh

Synods have consistently voted in favour of a national commitment to getting to net zero and cutting carbon, including other work such in cherishing creation. The money you all see is the Diocese making that commitment real. Synod is within its right to change its mind of course, but it has consistently voted in favour.

Bishop Hugh disagreed with JH and reassured everyone that there is no secrecy. He said that DBF and national funding comes to every single deanery. We’re asking every deanery to account for how that money is used and not singling out TM parishes or deaneries. All TM money is going into parishes. Bishop Hugh reiterated that there is no secrecy.

Bishop Hugh closed the debate to move on to the next item - voting.

Voting

Justin Day (JD), Chair of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, proposed that the budget be approved.

Voting took place to approve the budget:

For: 40 (including 1 proxy vote)

Referred back: 9 (including 1 proxy vote)

Abstain: 3

The motion to approve the budget was carried.

Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Synod:

15:10 Questions under Standing Order XB21, see the note below

Mrs. Jo Heydon (JH), Trigg Minor and Bodmin

The minutes of our September (Diocesan Synod) meeting record Simon Taurin’s request for more information about Transforming Mission. No further information has, as yet, been made public. This is a serious matter. Many hundreds of thousands of pounds of Diocesan reserves and Church Commissioners’ funds have already been spent on this controversial project which has apparently failed to bring in large numbers of new worshippers and expected increased donations. Before Synod approves any further substantial sums being laid out on Transforming Mission (c£560k is budgeted in 2025), can we see a thorough analysis of benefits delivered by TM to date and a comparison of targets reached vs the original objectives stated in funding bids for each of the five centres in Cornwall i.e. Falmouth, Camborne, Highertown, St Austell and Liskeard?

Response from Mr. Justin Day, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd

You are right to identify that significant resources continue to be committed to the five “Transforming Mission” (TM) projects. In the 2025 draft budget the total net cost of this work to the DBF is just under £200k with the balance of the funding coming from the National Church through “SDF” funding. This is grant funding for that work, the diocese can’t just spend it on something else.

We are asked, from time to time, to publish detailed analysis of TM outputs and we have always resisted doing so. It is important that you and members of Synod understand why we don't publish that sort of data about TM or about other parishes.

Almost every parish and benefice in the diocese is funded through a mixture of local, diocesan and national funding. Every deanery receives significant national and diocesan funds, this is always tied to clear and agreed expectations of what the money is for and what the outcomes are that we are looking to see for that spending. The same 2025 draft budget allocates £350k to the non-TM deaneries (including your deanery) to support mission, and almost £1million of national funding across all the deaneries to support mission specifically in communities experiencing deprivation.

We collect data from every deanery, and specifically from everywhere where TM funding, Mission Funding, and Lowest Income Communities Funding is used. We need to know what works and what does not, and we think that it is important to share best practice and particularly to celebrate work that might be mirrored elsewhere, you will see some of that at this Synod. We hold one another to account for how we allocate and use these resources, this happens locally in each deanery, and also at diocesan level. But we think that it would be a mistake to start publishing data on congregation size, numbers of children and young people, income, and other key indicators about any church, parish or benefice; doing so would expose the leaders and people of those places, most of them volunteers, to intolerable pressure and unfair expectations. That's not how we think a family works best together.

Generally speaking, the five TM projects together did not, and probably will not, meet most of the targets described in their original bid documents. This is obvious and not a secret. The targets were always ambitious and probably unrealistic. The shape of the work changed quickly in response to local conditions, and responding to challenges such as a global pandemic and difficulty in recruiting staff. The projects also changed because new opportunities arose; in one place we saw that new work with young, disaffected men became possible, in another there was an opportunity to work with schools in ways that had not been anticipated in the original bid. All of the TM projects continue to do good important work that would not have happened without the additional funding, the TM leads are accountable for their budgets, and they report through diocesan and national structures.

We have learnt from TM already, this learning includes:

- Realistic targets and outcomes are more likely to be shaped locally than from urban national modelling (we have changed how we relate to the national funding team, ensuring that targets and outcomes start local, and continue to make sense and are credible locally).
- Mission planning that is more bottom-up than top-down (local leaders are more likely to understand local need, this is now how we create plans).
- Growth and sustainability take longer than TM timeframes (we have shifted from a five-year horizon to a ten-year horizon)
- We need to resource all the churches in the diocese, not just a few (this is a strong theme of our planning around children and young people but is also reflected in our use of Mission and Lowest Income Communities Funding, and our training and development offer)

We are planning a more formal review of the commissioning process for TM to help us understand what went well and where we need to work differently when significant resources are devoted to particular projects.

15:30 Reports and Minutes

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

Mr. Patrick Newbury (PN), East Wivelshire

Referred to page seven of the minutes from September Synod, which say "*Synod needs to be a place where people share good news stories and encourage, but not a place for criticism*". He disagrees with the statement about criticism and says that Synod shouldn't

be a place for *unhelpful* criticism certainly, but a place for *helpful* criticism.

Voting

Voting took place to approve the minutes and BDC report:

For: 45 (including 1 proxy vote)

Against: 0

Abstain: 4

The minutes and report from the BDC were approved.

15:45 Thanks from Bishop Hugh

Bishop Hugh thanked everyone for their time, for attending today and closed the meeting at 15:45.

Dates of future meetings of Diocesan Synod

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