

Minutes for a meeting of Truro Diocesan Synod 21 June 2025 at St Martin's Church, Liskeard

**Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Synod:
Chaired by The Rt Revd David Williams, Bishop of Truro**

Welcome and Housekeeping

Bishop David welcomed members to a meeting of Truro Diocesan Synod. Bishop David thanked the team at St Martin's, Liskeard. He gave apologies on behalf of Roger Smith, Chair of the House of Laity. He gave thanks to Mike Sturgess (MJS), Vice Chair of the House of Laity, for standing in. Bishop David thanked The Revd Laura Bushell Hawke, the Vice Chair of the House of Clergy, for standing in. Bishop David introduced Douglas Wren (DW), newly elected Chair of the House of Clergy.

Bishop David handed over to The Revd Helen Davies, Associate Priest of the Benefice of Launceston St Mary with Boyton, to lead worship.

Opening Worship led by Revd Helen Davies, James Wonnacott, Christine Stone, and Heather Taylor (organist)

The Revd Helen Davies (HD) gave thanks to James Wonnacott (JW), and Christine Stone (CS). HD, JW, and CS led members in Morning Prayer.

Presidential Address - The Rt Revd David Williams, Bishop of Truro

Bishop David gave his Presidential Address, a copy of which can be found on the Diocesan website [\[HERE\]](#).

Growing Younger - The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans, and Isaac McNish, Head of Ministry

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans began by clarifying why they are *not* doing this work; explaining that this work is *not* born out of "anxiety of children and young people not coming to church". Bishop Hugh outlined three reasons why they *are* doing this work:

1. Children and young people are not hearing the good news of Jesus Christ.
2. God doesn't only work for those who go to church. To be a Church in the fullest sense, children and young people are needed. "We need to see where God is in their culture and without this, we are not whole."
3. Jesus said: "*Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom.*"

Bishop Hugh handed over to Isaac McNish (IM), Head of Ministry.

IM said he will share the headlines and provide an overview. Up to now, he says, much thinking, prayer and reflection has gone on at all levels so we can take the next steps together. IM emphasised that if there is one thing members should take away from today, they should take away this: "2-3-5".

- 2 Objectives
- 3 Levels
- 5 Foundations

And, he continued, if that is too much, take away the 5 Foundations, which is "the bedrock of everything we do".

2 Objectives:

1. Every child and young person to have access to a worshipping community in which they can find a home to grow and flourish.
2. A 10-fold increase of young disciples in the next decade.

3 Levels:

IM spoke of the three levels: many, some, few, saying that every church is invited to join in regardless of size. It's about real communities, parishes, and deaneries.

1. Many - Training, resourcing, networking, joining people up, and growing existing initiatives. IM said he would like it to be "all", but not all are ready to jump in, so for now it remains as "many". "Many" means many, many churches, of all sizes and shapes.
2. Some - Focused work. We want to equip 50 lay leaders to work with children, schools and families.
3. Few - To make a "significant investment" in six deanery-based projects which are co-created and co-designed with local leaders. Work will be with those already "on the ground" not dropped in from above. IM said that this is a shared effort with focused intervention and support. In other words, it's a partnership.

5 Foundations:

IM referred to Deuteronomy 6:4-9, which focuses on what it means to be God's people, following His commandments, and faithfully passing this on to the next generation:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorsteps of your houses and on your gates."

IM spoke of some of the 5 Foundations:

1. **Intergenerational communities** where each age group is called to participate together. He said that churches can be vibrant where every stage of life is included, and span generations. "It's taught and caught", IM said.
2. **Children and young people's voices.** Children and young people have a voice; they're not *passive* recipients, but *active* participants. The story [above] anticipates children asking questions such as "what is the meaning of these laws", and, as such, invites us to think of how their voices and questions are valued in church communities.
3. **Linking Church - Home - School** - Home is the primary setting for discipleship for many. It is a wide community (school for example) and Deuteronomy runs through every sphere of life. Faith should be visible in the seams between church, home, and school. The third foundation is a partnership between church, home, and school.
4. **Intentional Faith Formation** - It cannot be passive or left to chance. It's woven into the fabric of daily life. It happens when you go on journeys, holidays, when you're doing the school run, and when you're celebrating or comforting those in times of loss.
5. **Collaborative Leadership** - We need to be a Church where all work together. There needs to be leadership that isn't threatened by what others have to offer. It should be bound in mutuality and love.

IM said that his hope and prayer is that many more churches with vibrant intergenerational life, schools and families have fresh encounters with faith and children and young people are welcomed, discipled, and empowered.

COMMENTS

Janet Prescott, Pydar

I completely support the 'Growing Younger' document and have used the Appendices to

conduct an audit of the work being done at St Petroc's in Padstow. I have found 'Growing Younger' to be both encouraging and directional.

END OF COMMENTS

IM introduced Robert Pearce, Martha Rain, and The Revd Graham Adamson.

Robert Pearce (RP), Churchwarden, Bradoc

RP explained that ten years ago, the church was locked, cold, damp and water ridden. RP said they needed a plan that looks at where they are (including the whole parish), identifies what they can do with their current resources and what additional support and resources they need.

Last entry from their visitor's book: "What a super church, so informative and full of news and showing people's love for the church. A cup of tea is a wonderful idea. We donated twice."

There are 118 children at the village school and 117 people living in the parish... So, children *are* important. Currently, the school children are their Creation Care champions. Their church, RP continued, is now "teched up" with air play and internet connectivity etc. By doing this, it has created what they hope is an "all-age community voice". The plans have looked with their PCC at every 10-year age group. In other words, it's thoughtful and thorough.

In school, Junior Leaders are representatives of the school and report to Headteacher. The Headteacher is also a Churchwarden and the Lay Chair of their PCC. They run afterschool clubs on Tuesday's and Thursday's, and 35 children come to the "Kids Club" every Thursday. In addition, there are 35 further children on the waiting list for this club. On Tuesday's, they plan to hold a "Junior Film Club" (from next year). On Thursday's they also have an "Open the Book" session which is an ecumenical venture.

RP said their best volunteers are at their "Mini Hand Bells" group. Children come with their parents or grandparents and eventually the parents/grandparents start staying with the children.

RP said that they started the work with £5,000 and ended the year with £5,000. During that time, they have had a new kitchen, toilet, new electricity, and lychgate. There's a range of things that they haven't paid for because the community has done it. They see 135 children every week and they celebrate 185 years of their school being founded by their church. RP handed over to Martha Rain.

Martha Rain (MR), Flourish Programme Lead and History Teacher at Camborne Science and International Academy

MR explained that Camborne Science and International Academy (CSIA) is not a church school but is a secondary school surrounded by a cluster of five CofE churches. There are two Flourish Leads, and they are responsible for organising the entire Flourish Programme.

The programme has been in development over the last two terms and launched at Christmas last year. They hold a weekly Thursday "Flourish Club", which has been adapted to meet the needs of the students and is attended by 8-15 students. They began by exploring key Christian festivals and over Easter, went into the school's outdoor area and collected natural items to make an "Easter Garden". After Easter, they held an entire week of assemblies which were delivered by the Flourish Leads and a Youth Worker from the local cluster. The club is attended by a mix of practicing Christians and those still exploring their faith.

The sessions encourage children to engage with scripture and explore Christianity and their faith in a way that suits them. It supports students as a social space, and it helps build a community. At the local church, the Youth Worker runs "Holy Hotdogs", which lots of their students attend. The Youth Workers are becoming well known in their school and are forming a good link. The club has built confidence and leadership and people who have never engaged with church or opened a bible, are now studying the Bible actively.

MR continued: To take this further, they are taking some students to the “Birmingham National Flourish Conference” in July. The hope is that they will see a greater student voice come through in their Flourish Programme next year.

One student said: “I like that we explore faith, and I have enjoyed learning how to use the Bible.”

MR said that a significant moment for them was seeing students who don’t worship outside school, writing their own prayers at “Flourish Club”.

MR handed over to The Revd Graham Adamson.

The Revd Graham Adamson (GA), Strategic Rural Dean, Carnmarth North

GA works across the deanery to do things that are replicable and exciting to see, and it doesn’t take much he said. GA said that they start with what they have and start where they currently are.

GA told a short story of when he knocked on a window of a parked car where a parent was waiting for their child after school. This then led to a monthly tea party.

In September, GA continued, a Deanery Youth Worker was appointed. Every village has a school and a church and it’s about strengthening those links.

GA handed over to Bishop Hugh.

Bishop Hugh invited members to discuss the following on their tables for five minutes:

1. What would help you explain this work well in your church, school or deanery?
2. Where and how can you see your church, school or deanery?

BREAK

Living in Love and Faith* - The Revd Will Harwood and The Revd Jeffrey Terry, General Synod

A consultation to feedback to General Synod.

Members continued to meet as members of Truro Diocesan Synod. Bishop David introduced two General Synod Representatives, The Revd Will Harwood (WH), and The Revd Jeffrey Terry (JT). Bishop David led us in prayer and handed over to JT.

JT clarified that this session is so they can give feedback to General Synod and referred to the LLF and PLF feedback sheet, which has been circulated to all members.

WH asked members to bear in mind that this is an *informal consultation*. WH reminded members of the need to hold each other in prayer, and to treat each other with kindness and compassion as this can be a very sensitive and triggering topic for many and they recognise that.

Nationally, the debate continues at General Synod WH began, but progress has been made. The Programme Board are leading nationally. The Bishop of Leicester decided he could no longer lead this at national level, but no reason was given. As such, they’re in a state of flux. WH informed members that the video they are about to see, was *before* they knew the Bishop of Leicester was stepping back as lead. WH handed back to JT.

JT provided some explanations of the questions from the feedback sheet and said that they are looking to get feedback on the *principles* and *workability* of the draft proposals. JT referenced the *draft* Code of Practice (included in Synod papers pack). This feedback should be based on the materials supplied in the Synod papers pack which have been considered by you and the video that members are about to see.

Members viewed the LLF and PLF update video, a copy of which can be viewed [\[HERE\]](#).

JT said that members can complete the feedback form later if they are feeling under pressure. If completed later or completed digitally, members should email their feedback sheet to April Bullard april.bullard@truro.anglican.org and mark **FAO of Kate Cortez**.

JT spoke about “Canon B5 and the PLF”. The PLF material is available for use in private prayer and regular worship on a Sunday pursuant to Canon B5 which provides: “The minister who is to conduct the service may in his discretion make and use variations which are not of substantial importance in any form of service authorized by Canon B 1 according to particular circumstances.” Thus, the minister in his / her discretion may use the PLF in private prayer or as part of a regular service.

The current proposals go beyond using Canon B5 as an add-on to regular worship. JT referred to the proposal elements (all in draft):

1. Pastoral reassurance through a form of delegated episcopal ministry.
2. PLF opt-in going beyond Canon B5 permission for private use regular worship, and to provide bespoke, standalone services to celebrate the union of a committed same sex couple on an experimental basis with a view to possibly seeking to introduce such services on a permanent basis pursuant to Canon B2.
3. Clarity on timeline and process for consideration of removing restrictions on clergy in a same sex marriage.
4. Three-year period of discernment monitoring and reflecting on use of the PLF in bespoke, standalone services and take up of pastoral reassurance.

JT spoke of the process of deciding to opt-in to the use of PLF, focussing on the three-year discernment period if that becomes a reality:

1. A minister may decide to consider using the prayers (in bespoke services). This can be prompted by pastoral need or an active request.
2. Ministers and PCC have a conversation about the use of the prayers, consulting the wider church community if desired.
3. Depending on the outcome of the conversation, a minister can decide to go ahead with bespoke use of the prayers and registers this with the Diocesan Bishop.
4. Optional: The church adds a ‘PLF’ tag to its account on AChurchNearYou.com. Alternatively, the minister does not opt-in to the use of the Prayers and no further action is needed.

WH said this is how pastoral reassurance (PR) *might* take place:

1. A PCC may request Pastoral Reassurance. The PCC must first speak to their Diocesan Bishop to understand different perspectives, ministerial needs, and concerns.
2. A PCC may request PR based on the Bishop’s action taken or statements made, not on what a Bishop is alleged to think. If a PCC wishes to proceed after step 1, they decide by simple majority, following consultation with the wider worshipping community.
3. A PCC may then write to their Diocesan Bishop requesting PR, detailing their grounds for the request. The Diocesan Bishop responds within 4-6 weeks.
4. PR may be granted, and the PCC’s request may be made public alongside the Bishop’s agreement.

WH referred to FAQs on the draft proposal. WH said that the reality is these take a lot of time, and there is still a large amount of theology left to do.

JT introduced an open session indicating that to allow as many people as possible to speak there would be a time limit of 2 minutes per speech.

Bishop David chaired this session.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Lucie Rogers, Carnmarth North

We are often trained to observe the voices of those not in the room. The CoE is very good at filling rooms with people, but those with voices are not in the room. One of the things that has fallen off the table is *trans people*. I’d like to seek reassurance that they are still being considered and that their time will come because I understand that today this discussion isn’t about trans people, but this is important.

Bishop David

I hear you, that transgendered men and women need to be at the heart of what we're talking about, thank you.

Martin Saunders, Pydar

This diocese has only once before discussed LLF at an informal meeting in June 2022. I refer to page 6 of notes on GS2386 which says: "we believe that good feedback could be gained in a 60-90-minute session. However, longer might be needed if the make-up of Diocesan Synod is new and there's not been previous conversations of LLF." I am certain this applies here. I had wanted to share part of correspondence which I had in January 2024 with a clergy friend. But I sense my two minutes will be up so I cannot see the point in starting it if I'm going to be cut off. I think this subject is far too serious for just one hour, three years after session in June 2022.

JT said the time was up, but MS continued: To discuss this properly, we need to have far longer than one hour, and I haven't started yet. I am exceedingly disappointed because we have not, as a Diocese, discussed this topic since the informal meeting in June 2022. Bishop, I apologise, but I cannot continue.

[Bishop David asked Martin Saunders for a copy of his speech].

Bishop David

I am under no illusion, because I have been working on LLF since 2015 and spent probably thousands of hours, so I understand where we are today, and I will consult with my colleagues about whether we need an alternative forum. I am respectful that we want to hear as many voices as we can, so I invite you, Martin, to write to me personally.

The Revd Andrew Yates, General Synod

The current proposals are already a compromise. Many in the CofE believe that we should offer equal marriage now. Same sex marriage is allowed in churches in UK - in Wales and Scotland. There are people campaigning for equal marriage, that are prepared to step back from that to offer a compromise with those that find this difficult. We must recognise that even though we are where we are now, there are people who are being quite gracious in saying this is something we are giving up for the sake of other people. I say we needn't look any further than Bishop David's address this morning. Acts 16 surely was about the "church being inclusive".

I also want to talk about clergy in same sex marriages. What would be the issue for you if a man/women/priest in a loving same sex marriage was to be in the pulpit, at the altar, or at the service you are at. What would be difficult about that? You would have had treatment from a doctor or a nurse in a same sex marriage. Your children and grandchildren would have been taught in schools by people in a same sex marriage. Are you not going to go to that surgery because the doctor or nurse is in a same sex marriage? Are you going to take your children away? Please look at that, thank you.

Hayley Preston, Pydar

I spoke with a long-term friend who was distraught. They said that the Church will accept all that I do, but they don't want me and that was because of what we're talking about today. We need to be alert to the needs of those that this impacts the most and to be aware pastorally of the support that they need. Especially as we begin these discussions.

Jeremy Stuart, Pydar

In terms of Pastoral Reassurance, I'm not sure it's a motion I am happy with at all. I think this delegated diocesan authority, I question its workability, its complexity and its necessity. From my understanding from the proposals is whether the Diocesan Bishop doesn't have to sign off with his or her Diocese. So, if an incumbent can take this on, this should be the end to it. If there is someone who feels very strongly, then they bring it to the incumbent, or worse case, go to another church. I don't think there is a diocesan role for an issue like this. What occurs to me is our use of language. We wouldn't dream of condescending or patronise a heterosexual couple by using the word "loving". Why are we using that discourse here? It's none of our business.

The Revd Li Selman, West Wivelshire

I would be broken-hearted by Pastoral Reassurance. I find it sad that, as brothers and sisters in Christ, we can't disagree well. It breaks my heart to think of people needing another Bishop because we seem to have a very loving Bishop here.

END OF OPEN DISCUSSION

WH spoke of the next steps and asked that people give their feedback sheets to Kate Cortez. WH said that this feedback will be sent to the Programme Board where data will be gathered, stored, and fed back. In February 2026, there will be further discussion at General Synod. WH noted that people may be very divided on this topic but also emphasised that this was okay.

JT invited members to discuss LLF and PLF on their tables for fifteen minutes, focusing on the questions which need to be answered on the consultation feedback sheets.

LUNCH**Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd
Chaired by Mike Sturgess****The Annual General Meeting of the Company - Sophie Eddy, Director of Finance and Assets**

Presentation of the Strategic Report, the auditor's report, and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st December.

Mike Sturgess (MJS) noted that members were meeting as Members of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, to first deal with the Annual Reports and Accounts, and then consider the MMF formula proposals. He drew members' attention to the papers that went out this week, saying that an amendment to the MMF motion has been proposed. MJS said he is inclined to accept the amendment should it be brought, and so is the proposer of the original motion. MJS outlined the new procedure.

Sophie Eddy (SE) said that on June 5th, 2025 (prior to Diocesan Synod), they held an online session that covered detailed figures and answered questions to free up time for discussion, comment, and debate at Synod. SE said she will be focussing on the headlines, less on figures.

At the online session, a few technical matters were raised which have been referred to the auditors. SE said that she had already amended the master for 2025 year-end to correct the points raised in the online session. SE clarified that the matters were not fundamental or significant to the accuracy of the accounts.

The 2024 budget was "mission and ministry led" (as is the 2025 budget). Until 2023, the budgets had been "finance led", "which in my opinion is not the correct thing to be doing." SE said that budgets should be strategy led.

During the year that the budget is reforecast at the end of each quarter so that any changes can be incorporated since it was last approved. The reforecast budget goes to the Finance, Assets, and Risk Committee (FAR) for scrutiny who recommend it to BDC for approval, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod. The budget figures are compared to actuals each month when management accounts are prepared and these go to FAR for scrutiny. The latest management accounts are also reported to BDC each time they meet. The management accounts are then, in effect, converted into the document that is presented at Diocesan Synod. There are some figures that are not in the management accounts as they are annual movements, such as revaluation of properties, investments and Glebe. The movement between the management accounts and the annual accounts are reported to FAR so they can see how the two reports link. They scrutinise the annual accounts before recommending to BDC for approval and then they come to Diocesan Synod to be reported and received.

Breakdown of 2024 budget:

- Deficit of £3.27m (£7.0m income, £10.27m spend).
- The £7.1m income was £98k more than the budget.
- £1.1m overspend (just over 11%), giving an overall deficit of £4.3m which was £1.05m

higher than budgeted.

The actual figures on page 19 of the Annual Report and Accounts document are *before* the profit/loss on sale of assets and unrealised gains/losses, which are not budgeted for.

Noting that the detailed figures were presented at the online session on 5th June, SE highlighted the headlines that make up the income variance of £98k:

- MMF income - £187k lower than budgeted. The total amount received was £71k more than in 2023, but this is only a 2.5% increase, which is below the DBFs cost inflation thus meaning a real terms reduction in value.
- The Change and Renewal team are reviewing deanery plans with the DITs to ensure they are fruitful and sustainable, which includes finances.
- Received £226k more in interest - similar to 2023. The Investment Management Committee decided not to invest proceeds from property sales because higher returns could be achieved with interest rates remaining higher than expected.
- This meant a lower dividend income for 2024, but the dividend income lost is a much lower figure than the higher interest received.
- When the budget is prepared, we don't include grant income unless they have been awarded. During 2024 four new grants were awarded: two for Buildings for Mission, one for Net Zero Quick Wins. and one for Flourish, bringing in an additional £96k in funding.
- Strong rental income in 2024 - 20% higher than budgeted.
- There was a higher turnover of clergy, hence more vacant properties to rent out, this added to the increase.

Breakdown of the 11% increase in expenditure (£1.1m):

- Clergy stipends and clergy pension contributions both had underspends in 2024, £373k and £151k.
- There was an unprecedented level of movements in clergy with more appointments made than in any recent year.
- 20 clergy, with 10 internal moves and 10 from outside the diocese.
- Five more appointments were made by year end, but weren't in post until early 2025.
- Further increasing and sustaining the stipendiary clergy headcount will be challenging in 2025 in the context of falling numbers of clergy available nationally.
- The underspend was due to the vacancy rate being higher than budgeted so we spent less on clergy stipends and pension contributions.
- The main reason for the higher level of spend in 2024 was an overspend on property maintenance and major works in excess of £1.6m, 150%.
- SE said that the DBF continued to conduct maintenance (including net zero) on properties when they became vacant. Because there was an increase in the level of clergy vacancies, more properties were subsequently vacant. A strategic decision was taken by BDC to increase the budget during the year (which was spent) to enable the increased level of maintenance to take place.
- SE said previously that the budget was "mission and ministry led" (i.e. based on the deanery plans). In those deanery plans is "mission funding" which the DBF made available from reserves (part of the Assets Strategy) for those 7 deaneries that do not have Transforming Mission funding.
- When the budget was prepared, most of the plans didn't have the detail about how this funding was going to be spent, so they made a best estimate of how it would be used, but ended up being £360k out, which is the underspend on what we thought would be paid to deaneries for mission work in their plans.
- None of this funding will be lost for the deaneries. Instead, it will be spent in a different year. In other words, the work is deanery led, not finance led.

SE spoke of the £4.3m deficit in 2024:

- £2m net gain in investment assets which is made up of:
 - Increases in the value of the Glebe estate and the listed/unlisted investments at year end; and
 - Profits from the sales of some listed investments and some Glebe.
- One of the technical questions asked at the online session was about this figure and in next year's accounts, it is likely there will be a note for this figure for clarity which should aid the reader of the accounts.

SE continued: The value of the listed/unlisted investments has fallen since year end due to the impact on share prices with the current political and economic situation. These values continue to fluctuate but as of 18th June they were just over £1m lower than the year end value. As such, the 2024 increase in value of £800k+ has been wiped out.

The Investment Management Committee are acutely aware of volatility and regularly review the portfolio to minimise the exposure to unfavourable conditions wherever possible.

- There are unrealised gains on the revaluation of the properties owned i.e. the Board houses and Parsonages, of £2.4m.
- Once calculated, they are left with an overall surplus for the year of £126,868, which is almost break-even. The Balance Sheet is still £120m (when rounded), which is the same as 2023 year end.

SE said that they now have the deanery plans, Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal and Assets Strategy in place which inform key decisions around the use of these assets over time.

SE showed a pie chart of the assets held at year end - £120m. It showed that over 76% of the value of the DBF is in two funds which are both endowments, with a further two making up another 20%. The remaining 3% includes the General Fund which was below the Reserves Policy level at year end at £1.17m.

Annual Report (2024) Headlines:

- “Supporting strategic change” is the commitment by the trustees through the Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal which is based on the plans made locally in each deanery. Diocesan Strategies and planning, and the budget, are focussed on this work, led by deanery planning.
- “Continuing direct support for parish ministry” remained the focus during 2024, and in 2025. This is principally through the allocation of the TDBF income and reserves and through operational priorities.
- “Income from investments, including the Glebe estate, remained strong overall”. This enables the continuation of the previous headlines i.e. supporting strategic change and direct support to parish ministry.
- “Contributions by the parishes to the Mission and Ministry Fund (MMF)” performed well.

2025 SO FAR:

Contribution is lower than the amount received in the same period in 2024, by approximately £8k. The collection rate against the budget is 94.7%, which is higher than the collection rate for 2024 overall - 94%.

There is a concern that MMF has “flattened”, SE said they have not passed on the full cost of ministry to the parishes in 2024 or 2025. This is not sustainable for the DBF so they need to see an upturn in contributions from the parishes. SE said they know that some places are using Mission Funding to help fund the MMF call and work is underway to analyse the data to understand if parishes are going to be able to increase their contributions when the Mission Funding is no longer available.

SE expressed her gratitude for all contributions and said that she is very aware of the challenges that parishes are experiencing. As such, ongoing support to parishes is a key strategic priority.

The cash flow statement (on page 24 of the accounts) shows that we spent £6.0m in 2024, double the amount in 2023. This is to be expected as we are starting to use reserves in quite a significant way as per the Assets Strategy and Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal, the key strategic documents.

It was previously mentioned that they were below the Reserves Policy level for the General Fund at year end, but the trustees and auditors were both satisfied that the DBF is a going concern at the time of signing the accounts on 29th April.

One of the significant issues that the new auditors, Francis Clark, raised was the extended time it took to resolve income recognition. SE said that they are reviewing the current policy, and the likelihood is that this will change.

SUMMARY

- The 2024 financial statements report a surplus of £126,868 (almost break-even).
- The Balance Sheet has therefore remained at £120m when rounded.
- The property market in Cornwall was stronger in 2024 so there was an increase in the value of properties held.
- There was a further increase in value due to the significant level of work being carried out on their portfolio which translated into the reported unrealised gain of £2.4m.
- Investment values also increased - Glebe by £860k and the managed investment funds by £800k.
- Reserves are being used in a significant way as per the Assets Strategy and Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal, and the key strategic documents.

QUESTIONS

The Revd Will Harwood, Powder

You mentioned that we are not being asked to cover the full cost, but can you say a little but more about that?

Sophie Eddy

For the current budget, we are not passing on the £1.8m of costs onto the parishes. Instead we're using our reserves to make up the difference. That will vary from deanery to deanery. The deanery specific figures are available to request.

Simon Cade

Sophie said £1.8m. The DBF assumes that we will get this down to an average of about £1m being drawn from reserves for the medium to long term. We don't need to draw back or meet the whole £1.8m; that level isn't affordable but around £1m per year will be.

Patrick Newberry, East Wivelshire

In reference to the £1.6m overspend on properties: That is 14% of our total outgoings. What's your projection about the future? And with that kind of overspend, shouldn't that come to Diocesan Synod earlier?

Sophie Eddy

When the budget was approved last November, we reduced the major works down from where it had been for 2024, hearing the message of prioritizing where we spend. The message we have relayed from Synod is that the budget for 2024 is the budget for 2024. The Message has been heard clearly. The Property Management Committee look at the budget very closely. We are halfway through the year, so difficult decisions will have to be made of where to do work.

The BDC approve the reprofile of the budget each quarter, as the standing committee of Diocesan Synod, so it does not come to full Synod

Patrick Newberry, East Wivelshire

I would argue that good governance would say that's right, but if you're talking about figures of that percentage, it should be reported.

Simon Cade

We mentioned the overspend on properties in November Synod when we looked at the budget, but I will ensure that if there are any significant overspends in future, they are included as part of the BDC report to members.

There were no further questions at this point

MJS asked members to consider the following for several minutes on their tables:

1. One thing that jumps out.
2. One thing you want clarity on and/or are unsure about.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

The Ven Clive Hogger, Archdeacon of Cornwall

Can you confirm if the overspend on housing was related to the amazing progress made in recruiting twenty stipendiary ministers? Is there a correlation?

Sophie Eddy

Because we had more clergy turnover, we had more vacant properties. The BDC decided to make more budget available at the time rather than waiting.

Simon Cade

We spend more per house on average than other Dioceses. We are improving offer to clergy (i.e. decorating, carpets, floors etc.) as part of trying to retain and attract clergy and treat clergy well.

Abigail Kirby-Harris, Bodmin and Trigg Minor

We hear constantly about how we cannot recruit clergy. We needed to replace Rector and thanks to generosity, we placed an advertisement in Church Times. We invited two applicants to visit. So, I would say that there are clergy who want to come to Cornwall, but I suggest we need to think further on how we can recruit more clergy.

The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans

I agree. The national church needs 650 ordinands per year to maintain the number of stipendiary clergy that we have nationally. This year, there are currently 350 in training, which is just over half of what we need. There will, therefore, be a significant drop in the number of stipendiary clergy for the Church of England, including Cornwall, for at least the next five years, irrespective of what we do.

Lay Canon Robert Perry, Powder

If we replace a parsonage house for the new, we have to pay more than what the old one sells for so it isn't all good news. It costs the Diocese real money to make an exchange.

The Revd Nicki Farr, Trigg Minor and Bodmin

Thank you for the maintenance provided to clergy housing.

END OF QUESTIONS

VOTING

MJS invited Justin Day (JD), Chair of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance.

1. Receive the Annual Report:
 - In favour: 49 (including 2 proxy votes)
 - Against: 0
 - Abstention: 0

The motion was **carried**.

2. Re-appoint Francis Clark LLP as the company auditors:
 - In favour: 49 (including 2 proxy votes)
 - Against: 0
 - Abstention: 0

The motion was **carried**.

3. Re-appoint VWV LLP as the company solicitors:
 - In favour: 49 (including 2 proxy votes)
 - Against: 0
 - Abstention: 0

The motion was **carried**.

MMF Formula Proposals (for approval) - Justin Day (JD), Chair of Truro Diocesan Board of Finance

MJS said: “We continue to meet as the members of Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd”.

MJS referred to the amendment which had been published, advised synod that he intended to proceed as follows, with the agreement of those who had tabled the amendment.

1. Present the proposal.
2. Debate.
3. If the motion be made, then move to the motion depending on the outcome of the debate.

MJS handed over to JD.

JD showed the slides that were taken to the consultations with the deaneries. JD said he attended a selection of consultations to get a feel of the mood in the deaneries and how proposals were going to be received. JD said he would summarise so that there can be as much time for questions and debate.

Stability, affordability and *transparency* in Mission Funding.

Stability is prioritised to support the implementation of existing deanery plans.

Affordability is ensured by capping increases at 5.5.% in the first year.

Transparency is enhanced by clearly outlining the shared costs and how the MMF is made. The consultation received over 100 responses with a strong majority in support of the proposed changes, whilst highlighting areas for improvement. Most respondents recognised the need for stability and the proposed cap on increases.

A consistent theme was better communication on how the MMF call is allocated within deaneries. Some of the responses challenge the focus on stability, in favour of more radical changes which may be necessary for certain deaneries.

The MMF is a “voluntary contribution” from parishes that supports the *mission and ministry* of the Church. MMF contributes £3m to the diocesan total income of £7.5m.

JD continued: The current formula is based on the cost of ministry: stipends, pensions, and other direct costs for clergy. The proposed changes aim to gradually increase the share of ministry costs supported by MMF rather than relying on the diocesan reserves.

The Diocese also received funding from the LICF to support ministry in low-income areas.

If approved, the new formula will be incorporated into the 2026 budget, with further discussions planned for future revisions. Synod will have a chance to suggest adjustments and amendments before the final budget is presented to Synod in November.

SUMMARY

In summary, the new formula is based on *stability*, *affordability*, and *transparency*. The old benefice charge will be abolished and replaced with a figure based on what it costs to provide ministry for those who serve their deaneries. There will be a cap to prevent the sudden rise in the MMF call and adjustments when there is an interregnum or vacancy.

JD opened the room for questions and comments. JD asked Mike Sturgess (MJS) to chair.

No comments or questions indicated.

MJS asked Patrick Newberry (PN) if he still wanted to move the motion. PN withdrew the motion. Martin Saunders (MS), as the seconder, also withdrew, but wanted to comment: “*I am disappointed there is no more discussion on something that is key to how we run the Diocese. I pick up on the comment that was made by the Chairman of the company that there could well be further discussion in the not-too-distant future about whether we need to move further*”

with the formula of MMF.

MJS asked for an informal show of hands as to whether a radical review would be helpful. The majority were in favour of *stability*.

VOTING

JD proposed (seconded by Jeremy Stuart) that members of Diocesan Synod approve the MMF:

- In favour: 41 (including 2 proxy votes)
- Against: 1
- Abstention: 4

The motion was **carried**.

BREAK

Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Synod Chaired by Douglas Wren, Chair of House of Clergy

Hereford motion* by Lay Canon Robert Perry

Presented on behalf of Powder Deanery Synod (for approval)

Douglas Wren (DW), Chair of the House of Clergy, thanked Revd Laura Bushell Hawke for standing in as Vice Chair. DW said: "We are meeting at Members of Truro Diocesan Synod". DW introduced the Hereford motion which came from Powder deanery and called Robert Perry (RP) to the podium to speak.

RP said that he was presenting on behalf of The Revd Elizabeth Burke. The proposed motion at General Synod is already subject to two amendments, RP began. If passed, it will be in a different format. Paper GS2396A refers to the number of dioceses in deficit. Paper GS2396B was prepared by Church House Westminster and sets out points they feel members need to bear in mind when voting. The facts aren't as clear cut as the motion suggests. Many dioceses find it difficult to avoid financial deficit and it isn't a credible long-term strategy for any diocese to rely on its balance sheet and its reserves without exploring all ways to raise income and reduce costs. RP suggested that this should be reviewed with this context in mind.

RP put forward the motion:

"This synod supports the motion passed by the Hereford Diocesan Synod and to be debated at the forthcoming meeting of the General Synod."

RP said he moved the motion in his name. DW asked if anyone wants to comment/speak by a show of hands.

QUESTIONS

Name not given

A member of Synod asked for the motion to be clarified so that members can vote on it in full knowledge.

Simon Cade read the motion to Synod members as it appears on the agenda for the meeting.

Jonny Alford, Powder

What's this motion about? We're inviting General Synod to direct assets that sit with Church Commissioners to be redistributed to the diocesan boards of finance so we can "rebalance the Churches finances to reverse the widespread degradation currently being experienced by our parishes and the dioceses that support them". That's what this is about. We go back to 1997, Church Commissioners were struggling with their finances, the diocesan boards of finance stepped in taking responsibility for future clergy stipends, carried responsibility, and enabled the Church Commissioners to rebuild their financial position. The Commissioners carry £10b+ worth of assets. It's a redistribution of that. There's no *more* money; we're just asking for replacement from a different place so that diocesan boards of finance can do local things with local money to drive local parish activity. We can't direct the Church Commissioners to do anything, but we can press them

to act generously in a way that diocesan boards of finance acted in 1997 to address the CoE problems back then. It's about parish ministry (not money) sitting at the heart of everything that the Church does, thank you.

Martin Saunders, Pydar

I am asking us, as Synod, to vote against the short motion we have because I think that the substantive motion that is going to be put to General Synod is *wrong* for two reasons.

1. It is premature.
2. Cannot achieve what it appears to want to achieve.

1. Prematurity

The Church Commissioners are already committed to continue their annual grants, which, for the current triennium, is £1.2b in total. For the triennium of 2026-29, that will be £1.6b.

2. Cannot achieve what it appears to want to achieve

The Church Commissioners will be recommending to General Synod, to increase clergy pensions to two thirds of stipend, after 40 years at the cost of £900m, so that a person now retiring will get a stipend of about £32,000, which they hope to increase to nearly £35,000 next year. If that priest retiring has done 40 full years, he or she will get two thirds of that, which gives them a pension of £24,000. If you then add in the full state pension it does mean that our clergy retiring on a pension of about £35,000, which incidentally happens to be the cap for the Winter Fuel Payment next year.

I would argue that the Church Commissioners are doing all they should be doing in the right way. If the Hereford motion is passed, then monies need to be distributed. But if you read paper GS2396B, these funds are restrictive funds, and could not be used for the general use of church. There would be refund of the Church Commissioners central pension fund. If they did come back here, they would come back to this diocese as a restricted fund and should be added to the stipends capital account which could only be used for clergy stipends and other incidentals. So, the motion doesn't achieve what it wants to. It is better to leave the money with the Church Commissioners and reject the motion. I did ask our Diocesan Secretary, Simon Cade, whether clergy were conflicted out of this discussion or whether this was a discussion for laity only, but I didn't get a response.

Simon Cade

Clergy may take part in the debate because it doesn't directly relate to their stipend or their pensions at this point, but also they have general interest, not specific interest that I'm sure Martin's aware from company law, means that they would be able to participate.

Mike Sturgess, West Wivelshire

In a previous role I used to attend the Diocesan Finance Forum where we heard the report of the investment performance of the Church Commissioners and most of the people said: "would you like to take our investments as well please?" To which they said "no" because that would change the regulatory regime and they wouldn't be able to do some of the investments they're currently able to make because they're just doing it on their behalf. If you're looking at the Church as a *whole*, do we think the Church will gain from funds being moved around - I think it's unlikely - I think it's unlikely the Church Commissioners could agree even if Synod suggested it to them. This money would be going to the stipend's capital account, which is an endowment fund (we can't touch the capital, we can only use the income), which is a very restricted purpose. We are getting mission funding coming through from the Church Commissioners, to help us with CAP, with mission and parish Nurses etc. I don't think I am in favour. I wonder if it would be a better approach to say "Church Commissioners, we want you to take back the pensions liabilities rather than can you dish out some money".

The Ven Clive Hogger, Archdeacon of Cornwall

Paper GS2396B was suggesting "if we do have to give it back, then we'll take it with the other". My question is about how restricted the funds are and how many hoops we have to jump through because I hear in the parishes that the "Church Commissioners money we are given, we can't use it in the way we want because it feels like it's restricted." We've gone chasing funding if we tick certain boxes, but it's not necessarily doing the things we want

to do - not just here, but nationally. My understanding is this would allow money to be given to DBF to just spend in the parishes, yes only on stipends, but stipends in parishes without the need to jump through hoops or show various outcomes.

Lay Canon Robert Perry, Powder

The motion is as set out in Paper A and the accompanying text, whilst lengthy, goes into what can and can't happen. Paper B explains the reservations that staff at Church House Westminster have. It's a limited pot of money. Whether it's restricted, I cannot answer.

Justin Day, Chair of the TDBF

There are a lot of unknowns in this motion. The concern is that when Robert was outlining the proposal, he said it is likely to be amended anyway. So, I am apprehensive about voting for a motion that will change anyway.

Bishop Hugh

I too have concerns about the way dioceses are required to apply for money to do what we believe and are called to do. There has been some learning, but I am not sure it's gone far enough yet. The concern I have is that somehow this motion tries to persuade us that the issue to grapple with is about money, but it is about mission. We aren't going to be closing doors because of having no money. We would close the doors because we have run out of people.

The Revd Andrew Yates, General Synod

On the topic of clergy pensions and if you've done 40 years' service. Many clergy are coming into the ministry at a later age, but the figure is based on 40 years' service. Clergy live in accommodation and their stipend is not enough to put towards a mortgage. It's not quite as rosey as it seems. The number of those coming forward to be ordained is dropping. One reason could be the conditions of service (pay and wellbeing for example). These factors are important to consider because they're significant.

Nicolas Herian, General Synod

I wish to abstain and make up my mind at General Synod.

END OF QUESTIONS

RP moved to the motion.

VOTING

On behalf of Powder Deanery, Robert Perry proposed (seconded by Jonny Alford) that "this Synod supports the motion passed by the Hereford Diocesan Synod and to be debated at the forthcoming meeting of the General Synod":

- In favour: 7
- Against: 19
- Abstention: 21

The motion was **NOT** carried.

Report from General Synod* - for information

DW asked those of General Synod to identify themselves for clarity.

Questions under Standing Order XB21, see the note below

Abigail Kirby-Harris, Trigg Minor and Bodmin

1. Number and frequency of Diocesan Synod meetings

Can I please be assured that in future there will be four full synod meetings per year at roughly three-month intervals?

Simon Cade

The current plan for 2026 is for three meetings of diocesan synod, this will be reviewed by the Standing Committee with regard to any changes in the business that is to be done.

Martin Saunders, Pydar

2. Wedding fees

The basic 2025 charge for wedding fees is £585, to which about £250 for verger, bells etc needs to be added, making a total of over £800. If we want to encourage young people to marry in church, should we not be considering ways in which these fees can be reduced substantially? Could the BDC please consider this request and report back as appropriate?

Simon Cade

Statutory fees for the pastoral offices of the Church of England are set nationally by General Synod and Parliament. Local fees are set by the PCC not by the Diocesan Synod or the Board of Finance. However, we do intend to bring a report to Diocesan Synod concerning the pastoral offices and will give thought to the question of fees.

Martin Saunders, Pydar

3. Diocesan Synod minutes

Why does it take three months for the draft minutes of synod meetings to be circulated to members?

Simon Cade

Circulation of the last synod minutes needed to wait until the Standing Committee had agreed the agenda for this meeting and in particular how the minutes were to be dealt with. If the Standing Committee were asking the full synod to review and approve the minutes we would either have needed to allocate 20 minutes on the agenda for that work, or provided brief action points. As already indicated to members in the pre-synod notes in May, the intention henceforth is to provide full draft minutes shortly after the meeting of synod, following any comments by members these will be approved by the Standing Committee, and then noted by synod.

Gill Shipsides, Stratton

4. Safeguarding

Noting the current very high number of safeguarding disclosures, what actions are now in place in Truro Diocese to respond to victims bringing forward claims and disclosures?

Simon Cade (on behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer)

The safeguarding team are managing a high number of disclosures; reporting can take place directly to the team via the diocesan website, by telephone, email, in person or by post. Concerns are also reported via parish clergy and lay leaders including parish safeguarding officers and churchwardens. All concerns or reports are logged on a national case management system which generates a case reference number. The concern or report is triaged and risk assessed.

Enquiries are victim focused, and are victim led except in some cases of immediate or ongoing risk.

Actions by the team may include:

- Advice may be offered. Even if this is “all” that happens, the case is still recorded.*
- A statutory referral may be made.*
- There may be signposting to other services or support.*
- An investigation, enquiry or other action may be initiated which may include a formal case management process, and in some cases an independent risk assessment.*

The case remains “open” until final outcomes are recorded on the system (i.e. it doesn’t close just because a statutory referral has been made - we seek updates through multi agency partnerships) - we continue to assess risk and the need for support for the victim or survivor.

Lessons learned are recorded and reported as appropriate.

Support offered will vary depending on need and the nature of the concern, but may include:

- *A referral to First Light, Safer Futures (support for Domestic/Sexual abuse)*
- *Safe Spaces (support for Church based abuse)*
- *Therapeutic counselling through the diocesan counselling service*
- *Confidential pastoral support*
- *A Support Person / Link Person (allegations against office holders)*
- *Support through a member of the diocesan safeguarding Team*
- *Support through a statutory agency e.g. MARU or Adult Social Care*

We already seek to offer a trauma informed response, but we are also working with victim and survivor groups to develop better and safer working practices.

The Revd Andrew Yates, General Synod

5. Ephesians Fund in the Diocese of Truro

How many churches in the diocese are placing limitations on how their parish share contributions can be used, by withholding parish share, donating through the Ephesian Fund or similar third party, or through a special arrangement with the diocese, such that their contributions cannot be used to support all churches and clergy in the diocese? How much money is affected by these arrangements?

Simon Cade

In the Diocese of Truro “parish share” is known as the Mission and Ministry Fund (MMF) and at this time no parishes are placing limitations on how MMF contributions can be used, and none are currently making use of special arrangements such as the Ephesians Fund.

Patrick Newberry, East Wivelshire

6. Transforming Mission

When are the outcomes of the Transforming Mission projects and the lessons learned going to be presented to Synod?”

Bishop Hugh

The BDC is currently in the process of commissioning an external independent review of the Transforming Mission projects. Our expectation is that the findings will be shared with Diocesan Synod in 2026.

Reports and Minutes

- To note the minutes of the previous meeting of Diocesan Synod
- To note the report from the Bishops Diocesan Council

VOTING

To ‘note’ *both* the Synod Minutes from 1st February 2025, and the BDC report.

- In Favour: 48
- Against: 0
- Abstention: 0

Both the minutes and BDC report were ‘noted’.

Bishop David ended the meeting at 14:55 with a closing prayer.

MOTIONS

Meeting as the Members of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Limited

11. The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd will move as follows:
“That the Members of the Company receive the Reports and Annual Statements of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd for the year ended 31st December 2024.”
12. The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd will move as follows:
“That Francis Clark LLP be re-appointed as auditors of the Company.”
13. The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd will move as follows:
“That Veale Wasbrough Vizards LLP be re-appointed to serve as the solicitors of the Company.”
14. The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd will move as follows:
“That the members of the company approve proposals relating to the Ministry and Ministry Fund (MMF).”

Meeting as Truro Diocesan Synod

15. Mr Robert Perry will propose:
“That this Synod supports the motion passed by the Hereford Diocesan Synod and to be debated at the forthcoming meeting of the General Synod.”
18. The Chair will propose;
“that Synod note:
 - the minutes of the meeting of Diocesan Synod on 1 February 2025
 - the report from the Bishops Diocesan Council

Enclosures

- TDS25(12) Proxy voting form
- Item 7 - TDS25(13) Growing Younger paper for Diocesan Synod
- Item 7 - TDS25(14) Growing Younger
- Item 7 - TDS25(14A) Detailed Growing Younger proposal
- Copies of the full Growing Younger report can be obtained from:
mel.pomery@truro.anglican.org
- Item 8 - TDS25(15) LLF Introduction (START HERE)
- Item 8 - TDS25(16) LLF Leaflet 1 introduction
- Item 8 - TDS25(17) LLF Prayers of Love and Faith
- Item 8 - TDS25(18) LLF Draft Code of Practice
- Item 8 - TDS25(15) LLF Leaflet - Theological update
- Item 10 - TDS25(20) TDBF Annual Report and Accounts (Financial Statements)
- Item 14 - TDS25(21) proposal for a revised MMF formula
- Item 14 - TDS25(22) proposal for a revised MMF formula
- Item 15 - TDS25(23) Hereford motion
- Item 15 - TDS25(24) Hereford motion supporting information
- Item 16 - TDS25(25) Report from General Synod
- Item 18 - TDS25(08) Minutes of the meeting of Diocesan Synod on 1 February 2025
- Item 18 - TDS25(26) Report from the BDC to Diocesan Synod

Dates of future meetings of Diocesan Synod

13 September 2025 St Paul's Church Hall (Charlestown) and on Zoom
22 November 2025 Chapter House (Truro Cathedral) and on Zoom

Note on expenses and accessibility

Remember that all members of Diocesan Synod can claim reasonable expenses to enable TDS25(28)

them to participate in the meetings. You are entitled to claim costs of reasonable adjustments to enable you to fully participate including travel; and other items such as childcare (your own arrangements).

Also, please let us know if you require any support such as access or hearing loop. We are committed to removing barriers to participation so that all those that wish to participate in Diocesan Synod are able to do so.

If you would like to receive any of the meeting documents in paper form or the expenses form please contact kate.cortez@truro.anglican.org