

Minutes for a meeting of Truro Diocesan Synod 13 September 2025 at St Paul's Church and St Paul's Church Hall, Charlestown. Numbering of items is as the final published Agenda.

1. Opening Worship with Eucharist at St Paul's Church, Charlestown
Presidential Address - The Rt Revd. David Williams, Bishop of Truro
The Rt Revd. David Williams, Bishop of Truro, gave his Presidential Address, a copy of which can be found on the Diocesan website [HERE]
Meeting as Members of Truro Diocesan Synod, St Paul's Church Hall, Charlestown: Chaired by Revd. Douglas Wren, Chair of the House of Clergy
3. Welcome, housekeeping
Revd. Douglas Wren (DW), Chair of the House of Clergy.
DW welcomed all to Diocesan Synod and welcomed new members: Revd. Paul Salaman of St Austell, Revd. Joanna Thomas of Penwith, Revd. Adam Thomas of Penwith, Revd. Christopher Butler of Penwith, Mr. Michael Griffiths of Carnmarth South, and Mr. Roger Hygate of Carnmarth South.
DW expressed gratitude to the PCC of St Paul's for their hospitality. He also shared an update on Sue Dickenson (Stratton), who was recently involved in a serious car accident. DW invited all present to join in offering prayers and blessings for both Sue and her husband, Rob.
4. Introduction to the newly elected Chair of the House of Laity, Merisa MacInnes
DW introduced Merisa McInnes, the newly elected Chair of the House of Laity. He noted that Merisa also serves as Churchwarden at Fowey (St Austell Deanery) and is already a member of the Bishop's Diocesan Council.
Attention was drawn to The Ven Kelly Betteridge, Archdeacon of Bodmin, who will soon be leaving the diocese following her appointment as Bishop of Basingstoke. Her farewell service will take place at St Petroc's Church, Bodmin on Sunday 21st September at 16:00. DW invited Bishop David to speak.
Bishop David reflected on the nature of God's calling and equipping, expressing confidence in the Diocese's leadership and the calibre of its senior team. He spoke warmly of Archdeacon Kelly's dedication and pastoral heart, acknowledging the bittersweet nature of her departure. He noted the symbolic resonance of her move, likening it to the missionary journeys of early saints such as St Wenna and Endelienta, who were sent from Cornwall to Wessex. He encouraged Synod members to attend Kelly's farewell service and concluded with prayers and blessings for her future ministry. Bishop David handed over to Revd. Ben Morgan Lundie (BML).
BML offered heartfelt words of appreciation for Archdeacon Kelly's ministry. He recalled their first encounter during the vacancy in Looe, when she confidently told him, "The job is yours." From that moment, he came to know her as a gifted, wise, and inspirational leader – and a valued friend. He acknowledged the challenging journey ahead for Archdeacon Kelly and expressed prayers for wisdom, courage, and kindness to guide her.
ML spoke of the significant impact Archdeacon Kelly has had on the archdeaconry,

particularly in her ability to nurture talent – a true gift to the Church. He commended her courage in championing intergenerational church life and making difficult decisions, including her strong support for women in ministry. Her kindness, he said, has shone through in many moments, especially during times of grief, such as the loss of Archdeacon Paul. He also highlighted her sense of fun and gentle irreverence for “pomp”, which brought joy and memorability to many occasions. BML shared a reflection from Saltash, where Archdeacon Kelly once said, “The church is not a bunch of volunteers, but a family.” He felt this truth perfectly captured what she has modelled: a deep sense of community, belonging, and shared calling.

He concluded by affirming that there will always be a place for Archdeacon Kelly and her husband Simon in the diocese. On behalf of all present and the wider diocesan community, he gave thanks for her ministry and sent her off with love, gratitude, and prayers as she embarks on the next stage of her journey.

5. Dioceses Commission proposal for the See of St Germans

DW referred to the paper number TDS25(34) and invited Bishop David to introduce the proposal that is going to the Diocese Commission for discussion and feedback.

Bishop David shared his intention to urge the Commission to authorise the appointment of a new Bishop of St Germans.

Bishop David spoke passionately about the unique nature of Cornwall: its geography, history, and the importance of advocating for the region. He described Cornwall as resilient, strong, creative, and imaginative, while also noting the region’s significant challenges, including high levels of deprivation - among the highest in Northern Europe.

He stressed the importance of maintaining leadership in the area and committed to making a strong case for the appointment. While the diocese aims to avoid disruption in the development of ministry, Bishop David emphasised the need for prayer and imagination in navigating this transition. He affirmed that having a second bishop would be helpful.

To support the process, Bishop David has invited individuals to serve on an advisory group. Notably, this group does not include senior clergy colleagues. Instead, he has selected five members of the Vacancy-in-See group who were involved in his own appointment, citing their recent engagement with an episcopal appointment and their familiarity with his leadership. He has also included Grace Kanungha to ensure attention to unconscious bias and representation of global majority heritage and ethnic minority groups. Additionally, he has invited the Rt Revd Esther Prior, Bishop of Aston, and The Very Revd Christine Wilson, whose depth of wisdom he greatly values.

While the final decision rests with the bishop, Bishop David stated that he would not make an appointment that was not supported by the Advisory Group.

He concluded by announcing that an advertisement for Archdeacon Kelly’s replacement will appear in the press soon. He invited all present to pray for the discernment and appointment of both Archdeacon Kelly’s and Bishop Hugh’s successors.

6. Small group discussion on proposal to the Dioceses Commission - Chaired by Revd. Douglas Wren, Chair of the House of Clergy

Questions to consider in groups:

- What sort of person(s) are we looking for?
- Do you agree with the proposal in the papers prepared for the Commission?

FEEDBACK FROM GROUPS:

Mrs. Kerstin Lewis, Bishop's Nominee, Mother's Union Representative

Supported the appointment of a suffragan bishop.

Mr. Mike Sturgess, West Wivelshire

Noting the work of Bishop Hugh to support Creation Care over the past few years, suggested that anyone who is a candidate needs to support the national and diocesan commitment to Creation Care.

Revd. Ben Morgan-Lundie, West Wivelshire

We support the proposal. We've been praying, and we're praying that the Commissioners' ears will be open on Tuesday, and their hearts will be warmed to Cornwall. Noted the need for gender balance with more women in senior leadership.

Mr. Justin Day, Chair of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance

We very much support the idea that we have a new Bishop of St Germans. The word *inclusive* dominated our conversation. *Inclusive* of different generations. *Inclusive* of the gender issues we're facing. *Inclusive* of different types of churchmanship and types of worship. We need someone who's transformational, and above all, someone who's *human*.

Revd. Heidi Huntley, Kerrier

We too support the proposal and wish you every blessing on Tuesday in Westminster. The thoughts that came from our table were that a new Bishop would represent, or at least be empathetic to, all church traditions. And someone who, like Bishop Hugh, has really encouraged lay ministry as we move forward in oversight and local ministry.

Mr. Robin West, East Wivelshire

We also fully supported the motion. One of the main points is that whoever is chosen should be what one would call a *critical friend* to Bishop David; someone who can challenge him and work alongside him.

Revd. Laura Bushell-Hawke, East Wivelshire

We would like to see a person of prayer. We feel that it's a proportionate request that we have a suffragan bishop since Exeter have two suffragan bishops. If we're going to use geography as an argument for having a bishop, then the location of where that bishop is based should be reviewed and should be in the East of the Diocese. We would be very open to a woman bishop and we would also appreciate somebody who supports children, young people, families and our 'Growing Younger' futures. As well as somebody with a head for business, appreciating all the policies that the Incumbents are now required to have in place and all the work that we have to do.

Revd. Penny Leach, Powder

We too supported the suggestion of a second bishop. We felt very strongly, having discussed a little bit of all the work that Bishop Hugh has done, that there's very great importance for the continuity of the way in which, should we ever have only one Bishop, that operates. We asked whether Bishop David had addressed the issue of the examples of other dioceses which do only have one bishop and what distinguishing characteristics they have which might make justification for their position and thus not for ours.

Mr. Andrew Prince, Powder

In the diocese that one of our members came from, there were five bishops. So, it was thought to be totally appropriate to have two.

Revd. Gary Swinton, West Wivelshire

It's a no-brainer that the question of them reflecting the diversity of the diocese and all the issues that are around in the Church today. Someone who understands multi parish ministry is important.

Revd. Theresa Folland, Stratton

We were very much in favour and echoed how irreplaceable Bishop Hugh will be. We agreed with the importance of gender balance. The word that came out for us was *humility* and *servant-hearted leadership*.

Bishop David

I'm very grateful that I hear almost unanimous support for this. I do take note of the fact that Bishop Hugh's brought exceptional gifts to the role. But, as the feedback went on, I felt although it would be a gift from heaven if we had a clone of Bishop Hugh, you've asked us to think deeply. I think I gave a hint that the gender balance would be addressed, and I certainly think the Diocese Commission will ask me that. And there are quite a few advisory group members in the room, so you hold my feet to the fire.

So, pray for wisdom, pray for an appropriate amount of political skill on the part of this bishop. But above all else, that if this is of the Lord, the doors will open.

END OF FEEDBACK.

DW said the feedback will be collated and will be used by Bishop David and the Advisory Group to shape work with the Commission, and the ongoing process.

13. Report from General Synod - Revd Will Harwood, General Synod

[this item was taken out of the order given on the published agenda]

General Synod met in York from 11th to 15th July 2025. Money matters loomed large on the agenda, but there were other important areas of business summarised briefly below.

Church Finances

A key focus of this group of sessions was finance. The following items were discussed:

1. The Church's '*triennium*' *spending plans* for 2026-28, which included an increase in Church Commissioners' funding from £1.2bn to £1.6bn over the three years, and proposals for a significant (10%+) uplift in clergy stipends from April 2026. The *2026 budget of the Archbishops' Council* was also debated;
2. A private members' motion urging the Archbishops' Council to improve *clergy pension provision and retirement housing* was unanimously approved; and
3. Final approval was given to an *Abuse (Redress) Measure* and associated rules which established in law a £150m redress scheme for survivors of Church-related abuse.

There was also a debate on a radical '*redistribution*' *proposal* from the Diocese of Hereford to oblige the Church Commissioners to disburse 1% of their assets each year (c £100m) to support struggling dioceses and in particular to subsidise stipendiary clergy. This gave rise to a lively debate which highlighted the increasing tension and lack of trust between hard-pressed dioceses, many of which are facing large structural deficits and demoralised and overworked parish clergy, and the national Church, with its emphasis on targeted 'strategic' funding of growth projects through something called the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB). It was pointed out that the Church Commissioners would have to ring-fence at least £3.5bn of their £11bn of assets to support such an annual inflation-linked disbursement in perpetuity, which risked simply 'subsidising decline', and which would have the effect of severely curtailing spending on other priorities. In the end the motion was neutered by an amendment which kicked discussions about 'support for local stipendiary ministry' into the long grass of the next 'triennium' spending review (2029-31).

Living in Love and Faith

The LLF project did not figure very large in this group of sessions, as the House of Bishops is still trying to agree, ahead of the next Synod meeting in February 2026, a package of proposals on 'bespoke' (standalone) services of blessing for same-sex couples in church and clergy and ordinands entering into same-sex marriages, and some form of 'pastoral

reassurance' for those who are unhappy with the proposed changes. The Archbishop of York did however admit in his opening presidential address that 'we seem no nearer a settlement that can hold us together'. At a fringe meeting it was confirmed that the national LLF team are considering contingency plans if there is no agreement in February. A particular problem is what form of 'pastoral reassurance' would be acceptable to bishops: an initial proposal for 'delegated episcopal ministry' for traditionalists has not found favour with many bishops, who see it as undermining episcopacy.

On the final morning there was a debate on a motion calling on the House of Bishops to remove a requirement for ordination candidates to conform their lives to a 1991 teaching document, *Issues in Human Sexuality*, which affirms a traditional doctrine of marriage and sexual ethics. Progressives have argued that the document is outdated in its terminology and deters LGBTQ+ candidates from putting themselves forward for ordination. Traditionalists contend that while *Issues* does indeed need to be replaced, there must be new guidance to replace it, consistent with the Church's teaching on marriage.

Other Business

Final approval was given to a *National Church Governance Measure* which restructures national church institutions so that most functions are centralised into a new trustee-led charity, Church of England National Services (CENS). Other items included a discussion about the governance and culture of *the House of Bishops*, a debate about *church growth and revitalisation*, and a discussion of the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer and evangelism initiative. Synod also approved plans to amend the *Common Worship liturgical calendar*, introducing a new Festival of God the Creator (first Sunday after 1 September) and a new Commemoration of the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya. In an unusual display of legislative speed, the *Armed Forces Chaplains (Licensing) Measure* was agreed in just five days. This facilitates the movement of chaplains around the country by providing for their licensing by the Archbishop of Canterbury, rather than diocesan bishops. The debate was an opportunity for Synod to affirm the valuable role that chaplains play in HM Armed Forces. Finally, Synod agreed on *revised election rules* for the next quinquennium (2026-31), with voting due in Autumn 2026.

Turning to national and global issues, there was a moving address from *the Archbishop of Jerusalem* in which he compared the 'horrifying' system of food distribution in Gaza to the 'The Hunger Games' TV series. Many in Synod were however disappointed that the Business Committee did not make time for a 2021 diocesan motion from Carlisle, supported by several other dioceses, calling on the Church's investment bodies to review their policies in relation to Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory. Synod also reaffirmed its opposition to the *Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill* and called on government to improve funding for palliative care services.

NO QUESTIONS.

7. Report on Ministry* - The Rt Revd. Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans and Mr. Isaac McNish, Head of Ministry

Bishop Hugh wanted to make the connection between the sermon that Bishop David gave earlier in the day and highlighted how theologically rich the sermon was. He recommended that members read it again. Bishop Hugh said that Isaac McNish (IM), Head of Ministry, would talk about the practical unpacking of what Bishop David had said in his sermon in terms of the local churches that are here to serve the whole people of Cornwall. Bishop Hugh handed over to IM.

The Ministry Report was presented by IM in three distinct sections. The first offered a brief framing of the current context. The second provided an update on clergy recruitment. The third, and most substantial part, focused on patterns of ministry, with an invitation for open discussion and engagement from attendees.

IM expressed his gratitude to those who completed the Microsoft Forms survey ahead of synod. Responses significantly influenced the direction of the report and led to several concrete actions. Key themes that emerged included the need for:

- Clear role descriptions
- Simple, accessible resource packs
- Training tailored to local parish contexts

Respondents highlighted the importance of *collaborative* ministry, emphasising the need for clergy and laity to work together as part of the ministry of the whole people of God. This principle will be embedded throughout all ministry initiatives. Additionally, the centrality of sacraments and pastoral care in the Church's life was affirmed, reflecting the shared life and spiritual depth of the synod gathering.

IM spoke of the two key priorities: *fruitfulness* and *sustainability*, which underpin all ministry efforts and are pursued in partnership with others across the Diocese of Truro. It was noted that these priorities require theological grounding, as they ultimately depend on God's work. The ministry team's role was defined as one of encouraging, enabling, and equipping the saints for Ministry, in alignment with the biblical call to build up the Body of Christ.

Among the diocesan priorities, "Growing Younger" was identified as the foremost concern. However, the focus of this report was on the second priority: *Patterns of Ministry*.

IM provided an update on clergy recruitment noting its close connection with patterns of ministry. The key target for the DBF team is to maintain or increase the number of incumbents.

[The updates included some numbers which were likely to have been misleading for members of synod so by way of formal clarification and correction we have added a note to these minutes which gives accurate figures for stipendiary clergy in post at the end of August, the number of those who are incumbent status parish clergy, those who are curates in training, and the current total of incumbent status parish clergy roles in deanery plans.]

Three areas of work to support clergy recruitment were outlined:

1. External Recruitment

This includes events such as the upcoming clergy recruitment day, personal outreach, and storytelling to share testimonies of God's work across the diocese. Practical considerations like housing and stipends are also being addressed within the diocesan vision.

2. Internal Recruitment

Focus is placed on developing the vocations pathway and forming individuals for the ministry model being adopted. Mentoring, placements, and support for first-time incumbents are prioritised, recognising their foundational impact.

3. Retention

Efforts in this area include promoting clergy well-being, clarifying roles, creating spaces for honest dialogue, and offering pastoral supervision and spiritual direction. Accompanied Ministry Development was highlighted as a particularly rewarding aspect, involving immersive retreats with worship, food, and shared experiences.

IM concluded with a reflection on the relational nature of ministry. It was hoped that those considering ministry in the Diocese of Truro would see a community marked by genuine love and care for one another, lived out in practice.

IM invited members to consider the following questions

- What resonates most?
- What's missing?

FEEDBACK:

Mrs. Sarah Vinson, Trigg Major

We offer excellent training and development programmes for both clergy and laity, but they rarely come together to learn or work collaboratively. In my 30-plus years in industry, it was common to have training sessions or problem-solving workshops where multiple layers of management - three or four levels - would sit together as equals. Everyone brought their experience to the table to tackle challenges or generate ideas for the future. In contrast, the Church seems to operate on the assumption that clergy are trained for one set of responsibilities and Laity for another, without much understanding of each other's roles. Often, half of us don't even know what the other half has been trained to do. Yet we're expected to function as a coherent, effective team. That can be incredibly difficult at times.

Revd. Laura Bushell-Hawke, East Wivelshire

Laura Bushell-Hawke spoke as an Oversight Minister, about the primary importance of knowing that God has called me to stay. That's a gift. We listen, we pray, we discern. Secondly, I've leaned into what the diocese offers. The AMD cohort, starting from the 'Curious Seeding' course, moving into the 'First Responsibility' course, and then progressing into the 'Oversight Ministry' course, has provided me with a supportive peer group. That cohort has been invaluable. Pastoral supervision, which is offered, but sadly underutilised, has been critical for me. It's enabled me to carry out my ministry safely and effectively. I truly believe pastoral supervision should be made compulsory for clergy. In addition, I've been blessed with a superb mentor, also provided by the diocese, whom I meet every six weeks. Their support has been instrumental. Yes, these things take time. I really want you to hear that these supports are working. The issue is that not all clergy are engaging with them, and we need to encourage more to do so.

Mrs. Abigail Kirby-Harris, Trigg Minor and Bodmin

We had a comment or question about oversight ministry. It does come across as quite onerous. Is expecting an incumbent to take on wider oversight responsibilities a significant deterrent to potential applicants?

Mr. Isaac McNish, Head of Ministry

Ministry is challenging. We need to be accommodating and support laity and clergy. It's a collaborative ministry where we need to work alongside one another. We're currently looking for a new group of people to join the next cohort of Sens Kernewek, which begins in January. I hesitate to call it "training" because it's much more than that. It's an investment in people. It's about forming a community, nurturing discipleship, and developing local leaders. If you know someone who might be a good fit, or if you yourself are considering it, even if that sense of calling isn't fully formed yet, I strongly encourage you to speak to someone here today. Oversight is only possible when you have people to work with and alongside. Without that team, effective oversight becomes much harder. The programme is led by myself, Bishop David, and others, and it promises to be a fantastic experience.

END OF FEEDBACK.

IM continued by moving to the third area of the report, **patterns of ministry**.

Embedding the Oversight-Local model of ministry isn't new. People have laid the groundwork already and it goes back 15 to 20 years.

IM asked why is this model of 'Oversight-Local' important and relevant? IM highlighted the importance of considering what Cornwall is and its context. Some, for example, the sea and sand is what they see. But there is another side that is *rich*, full of life and story, but also *challenge*. There is a story of *real* people. The landscape of Cornwall is a landscape of industry and community. There has been profound change and people often say how

Cornwall is behind. But sometimes Cornwall is at the beginning and it's ahead.

Changes in Society:

- AI
- Conflict
- Climate change
- Economic challenges
- Questions about what is it to be human?
- Greater openness to faith and spirituality

Changes in the Church:

- Safeguarding failings
- Numbers
- Authority and power
- Distrust of institutions
- Significant cultural change
- Many called into lay ministry

Oversight and Local Ministry is both *practical* and *missional*. It holds on to the reality and believes in and trusts in what God is doing.

Practical

- Fewer Stipendiary Priests: nationally 300 ordinations out of 650 needed in 2024.
- Model of leadership needs to change: more than 3-5 churches break the model.
- Growing churches have identifiable local leaders: Focal Ministry Network.

Between 2023-24, the average weekly attendance in the Diocese of Truro increased by 4.5% in churches with identified local leaders. As a whole diocese, weekly attendance during this period, dropped by 4.7%.

Missional

- Whole people of God for the whole mission of God: Growing lay leadership in the Diocese of Truro.
- Distinctly Anglican ordering: A Christian presence in every community.
- A Church of missional disciples: Embracing a mixed ecology of the time-honoured and newly emerging.

The Story so Far

IM referred to many 'Single Parish Benefices' as a point in our history, but, he added, we are not here now.

Leading Many Communities at Once with a *Team*

Single parish benefices became 'Multi-Parish Benefices' led by an Incumbent Minister with oversight responsibility, for example...

- St Porth in the Mizzle led by a Local Leader who is also Reader.
- St Major in the Minor led by a Local Leader who is also a Local Pastoral Minister.
- St Rural in the Drizzle led by a Self-Supporting Ordained Minister.
- St Village on the Moor led by a Local Lay Leader.

IM noted that the incumbent might be feeling overwhelmed and stretched if required to lead multiple communities simultaneously.

Profile Summary (2024)

IM noted that the descriptions given were reductive, a large benefice now might include

- Seven parish churches
- 13 church buildings
- 10 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, and 1 tertiary institution

These roles require an oversight minister who can identify and nurture the gifts and graces of emerging leaders. The role involves building a collaborative team and discerning how best to deploy ministry across the cluster, ensuring the church maintains a presence in each parish. The aim is to foster a culture of mutual support and shared mission.

As is common in many rural contexts, challenges include numerical and financial fragility, resistance to change, and governance issues due to fewer individuals being available to take on key roles. Despite this, there is a growing sense that these parishes are ready to embrace a new season. The role involves overseeing and enabling ministry across diverse contexts and locations.

We seek clergy who are faithful in prayer and worship, missional in imagination and heart, and passionate about the pastoral care and flourishing of people and communities. We are looking for joyful and hopeful disciples—ambassadors of Christ—who share the Gospel with energy, commitment, and love, both in word and deed. We also value those who acknowledge their imperfections, learn from their mistakes, and actively seek reconciliation.

Headline Actions:

What now?

- Accompanied Ministerial Development Programme, investing in Oversight Ministers.
- Sens Kernewek, investing in Local Leaders.

What next?

- Ministry Accompaniment for clergy and deaneries.
- Continuing Ministerial Development for Local Leaders.

IM invited Synod to:

1. Pray, encourage, and advocate.
2. Help identify and support new Local Leaders in your communities.
3. Share what will make this easier.

FEEDBACK:

Mrs. Kerstin Lewis, Bishop's Nominee, Mother's Union

I do recognise this model. It's a pattern we had adopted many years ago. Our current pattern doesn't look like that because what we've now got is groups of 7, 12 and even 23 proposed.

The Ven Clive Hogger, Archdeacon of Cornwall

We consider the fact that the numbers may be changing as well. But we also just wanted to point out that local leaders are likely to have other roles in the church as well, they may be tired and pick up each other's roles which keep getting bigger. The idea of just having one role seems to be inaccurate in the present stage.

The Ven Kelly Betteridge, Archdeacon of Bodmin

The Pioneering Project in the example given - the ministry in schools - has always existed. Perhaps we just haven't recognised it fully. When I was a Parish Priest, I was officially responsible for three churches meeting in traditional buildings. But I also had congregations gathering in a community centre and in a school. So even then, I was functioning as an oversight minister. Maybe the limitation is in our imagination, thinking that "church" only refers to what happens in traditional buildings. But I would argue that Ministry has always taken place outside of those spaces as well. That's why oversight ministry has always been necessary.

Revd. Laura Bushell-Hawke, East Wivelshire

The title 'Oversight Minister' is no different to 'Rector'. It's the next evolution of rector and rector has been the title that we've used for many years, and it has changed a great

deal in the Ministry. I think we're very hung up on this, and I think that's detracting from the work that we're doing. It's not that oversight ministry doesn't exist. We just don't need to call it 'Oversight Minister'.

Revd. Jonothan Huff, St Austell

How is this model of being a priest different from episcopal ministry?

Mr. Isaac McNish, Head of Ministry

The word *oversight* is essentially *episcopate*. It's not about creating mini-bishops, but rather recognising that oversight isn't a fixed category, it's more of a spectrum. For example, as a lay leader for children and families, I might have oversight of the Sunday School and the relationships with parents. That's one level. But there's another level of oversight involved in caring for the Church community that meets in a particular place. And yet another level when you're the incumbent of a benefice. Oversight is a shared responsibility and something we do together. Yes, there is structure and order, but there's also a gift in exploring the theology of oversight more deeply. It's an area we haven't fully explored yet.

Mr. Martin Saunders, Pydar

Using a commercial analogy: we're going through a Jaguar Land Rover-style crisis. Back in January, they changed their entire advertising strategy and branding. Similarly, the role of the parish priest has always been central - leading their parish or parishes. That's why I believe we should drop the term 'Oversight Minister'. It's meaningless to most people, especially in our communities. We should return to traditional titles like 'Parish Priest', 'Rector', or 'Vicar'. These are familiar and understood. People say, "I've seen the Rector" or "I've seen the Vicar." No one says, "I've seen the Oversight Minister." Let's take a cue from Jaguar and go back to language that resonates with people and reflects the clarity of our roles.

Bishop Hugh

If we had been parishioners in an Anglican Church 150 years ago, our rector might have lived 150 miles away. We may never have seen him and it would almost certainly have been a 'him'. So I think Laura's point is well made: the Anglican Church has never had a single, fixed model of ministry. It has always evolved. Now, in a rapidly changing world that needs a responsive and adaptable church, the question we must ask is: 'what pattern of ministry best serves the people of Cornwall today?' In my view—clear and considered—it's the model we're currently describing. The specific terminology may not matter, but the structure itself is what enables the Church to fulfil its calling: to be a Christian presence in every community across Cornwall, for the good of the people, for the flourishing of the land, and to the glory of God.

Ms. Jane Howells, Penwith

The title 'Rector' would attract more applicants.

END OF FEEDBACK.

Bishop David commended Kerstin Lewis on her recent 'Kilminster Award' which was given by the Prayer Book Society.

Bishop David introduced Revd. Nicki Farr, Trigg Minor and Bodmin, to lead us in midday prayers.

The Mother's Union prayer for September is 'The Power of Reconciliation' with the focus being on 'Justice and Peace'.

"Sometimes it seems that our troubled world is immersed in the pain and suffering of conflict and broken relationships, yet Jesus reminds us that even though we are all less than perfect, every one of us is worthy of being redeemed, loved, and forgiven. As

members of the MU, there is hope and desire to continue building a future of reconciliation, justice, and peace.

Amos 5:24

But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream”

Compassionate God, be with us all as we hold out hands of blessing to our MU family wherever they may be, and hands of reconciliation and peace to those in need whatever their circumstances, Amen.

We pray for church communities of all denominations as they work to bring God’s kingdom here on Earth. Bless them to be vehicles of hope and bringers of peace in their communities, Amen.

We pray today for justice and peace in the countries of our link Diocese in the MU:

- *Makamba in Burundi*
- *North Karamoja in Uganda*
- *Lokoja and Sepele in Nigeria*
- *Tirunelveli in India*
- *Truro in the UK*

MU blessing prayer as we break for lunch:

Be kind and compassionate, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you, and may God’s blessing be with you as you journey on in faith and trust, Amen.”

8. LUNCH

9. Report from the Diocesan Board of Education - Mr. Lee Moscato, Diocesan Director of Education

Bishop David introduced the next item. He said that DBE is a statutory committee of Truro Diocesan Board of Finance (TDBF), which reports to BDC and to Diocesan Synod. The work focusses on, but is not limited to, church schools. “All the children in the Diocese of Truro are children in the Diocese of Truro, and so the DBE has a wider calling, including to support churches in your work with whatever sort of local school you have in your parish.”

Bishop David handed over to Mr. Lee Moscato, Director of Education.

Lee Moscato (LM) opened the session by welcoming attendees and introducing Ms. Karen Bond (Chair of the DBE) and Mrs. Kerstin Lewis (DBE member). LM expressed gratitude to the DBE and his team for their dedication and achievements over the past 2 years.

The session aimed to:

- Update, reassure, and inform synod members about the DBE’s work.
- Provide a strategic overview of the education landscape in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- Highlight school standards, governance structures, and strategic commitments.

LM clarified that the presentation would focus on strategic direction rather than operational details, though operational accountability would be referenced.

Strategic Aim and Impact

The DBE’s strategic aim is to be a significant partner in improving educational, societal, spiritual, and life-affecting outcomes for children. LM noted that this aim has led to visible flourishing among pupils, aligning with the CofE’s vision of enabling children to live life in all its fullness.

Academisation Strategy

LM reviewed the academisation strategy initiated in 2010, which intentionally placed church schools within multi-academy trusts (MATs). This approach has created diverse partnerships and enabled collaboration with Cornwall Council and other trusts. Of the 44 church schools, many are now part of 10 MATs, enhancing partnership opportunities.

Reach and Collaboration

The DBE's formal influence extends to nearly 200 of the 300 schools in Cornwall. LM encouraged synod members to engage with local schools through simple acts of connection. Examples of successful partnerships include CELT Trust's adoption of DBE articles and the reopening of Cury School as a Special Provision school.

Inspection Outcomes

LM presented Ofsted data showing that 42 of 43 inspected schools were rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. He attributed this success to great local leadership supported by the DBE's strategic approach, strong MAT partnerships, and collaboration with the local authority. He emphasised that synod's decisions over the past decade have positively impacted thousands of pupils.

DBE Measure and Flourishing Schools Programme

The DBE's work is guided by the DBE Measure, which outlines six core responsibilities. These are delivered through the Flourishing Schools Programme, which trains and supports key leaders in each MAT or school. This model extends support beyond CofE schools and strengthens collective worship, safeguarding, and educational quality.

Governance and Accountability

LM explained the DBE's portfolio holder approach, which ensures governance and accountability. DBE members oversee specific areas such as education quality, safeguarding, finance, and risk. This structure mirrors diocesan governance and enables strategic oversight of the DBE's work.

Portfolio Holder Reporting

The DBE's annual cycle includes termly meetings where portfolio holders receive reports, meet with the Director of Education and Governance Officer, and report outcomes to the DBE. These reports are compiled and presented to the BDC to confirm that responsibilities are being met.

Strategic Commitments

LM outlined the DBE's five strategic commitments:

- Powerful partnerships
- Joining the Diocese of Truro schools (Joining the DoTs)
- Community, care and connectedness
- Worshipping life of schools
- Creation Care

These commitments were established two years ago and align with diocesan, national, and local strategies.

Commitment Highlights

LM provided examples of progress in each area:

- **Partnerships:** All trusts are enrolled in the Flourishing Schools Programme.
- **DoTs:** Church schools are connected across trusts and diocesan teams.
- **Community Care:** Initiatives include spirituality training, bereavement support, and youth voice projects.
- **Worshipping Life:** Resources and training have been developed to support worship in schools.
- **Creation Care:** Over 900 pupils have participated in workshops, and 29 schools are

enrolled in the Eco-Schools award.

Strategy 2025-28

The next phase of strategy will focus on working “through, for, and with” churches, schools, education partners, families, and communities. Worshipping life will evolve to strengthen partnerships between ministry and education, linking to the Growing Younger initiative.

LM invited synod members to provide feedback on the Worshipping Life of Children and Young People. Attendees were asked to reflect on what is working well, what can be shared, challenges faced, and support needed. Feedback will inform future planning and resource development.

LM concluded by emphasising the importance of Synod’s continued input. He encouraged members to share their experiences and ideas, which have previously shaped DBE initiatives. Contact details were provided for follow-up.

Lee Moscato, Director of Education: lee.moscato@truodiocese.org.uk

FEEDBACK:

Revd. Adam Thomas, Penwith

If a church doesn’t have children, you’re unlikely to attract children. But if there are no children attending, how do you attract them in the first place? It’s a bit of a cycle that needs breaking. One way to do that is by finding volunteers who may not currently be involved in schools or children’s work but are open to helping. For those who have taken that first step, they often find that once something like ‘Messy Church’ is up and running, parents begin to engage and some even become volunteers themselves. The key challenge is getting past that initial hesitation. Many people want to help but feel nervous about getting involved. One successful approach has been running ‘Messy Church’ sessions in schools. In our case, we sent out a Doodle Poll to three schools to co-ordinate sessions, including ‘Open the Book’ and other community-based styles of engagement. These initiatives can happen either in the church or in community spaces. Another idea is to create café-style church environments for young people. In other words, spaces that feel more relaxed and familiar, especially for those who wouldn’t typically attend a traditional church service. The question then becomes: how do we resource these efforts effectively, ensuring that the style of delivery matches the venue and the needs of the young people?

Revd. Laura Bushell-Hawke, East Wivelshire

First, we talked about commissioning local worship leaders in schools and by that, I mean the children themselves. One of my schools, for example, has two worship leaders in every class. But how do we formally commission them? How do we recognise their role beyond the school setting? Wouldn’t it be wonderful to see these children leading worship not just in school, but also in church? That leads me to the second point: where are the worship leader training opportunities for teenagers? How do we equip young people, like my own 16-year-old, to step into leadership roles, such as running ‘Youth Alpha’? Teenagers often respond better to their peers than to adults, so peer-led ministry can be incredibly powerful. The heart of our conversation was this: how do we identify and nurture young worship leaders in schools, and then build on that foundation as they grow into their teenage years?

Bishop Hugh

There can be a useful piece of work that teachers particularly can offer to churches, particularly like the ones that Adam described where there aren’t children. Such as simply helping the church community to know what it’s like to be a child today, which may not be the same as what it was like as a child when we were children, and giving insights into that culture, including its challenges.

END OF FEEDBACK.

Bishop David said he will pray for LM and all the work the DBE do. He said that he will be coming to church with LM on Thursday 18th September.

10. Bishop's Waiver motion - presented on behalf of East Wivelshire Deanery Synod - for approval

Mr. Robin West proposed the following motion, as it appeared on the Notice and Agenda;

This Synod:

1. Notes:

- the provisions of Church Representation Rule 68 (1) and (2) that disqualify those on a safeguarding barred list, or who have been convicted of certain offences, from serving as members of PCCs and other church bodies;
- the provisions under Rule 68 (4) that allow the diocesan bishop to waive disqualification for offences against Children/Young Persons under rule 68(2) ;
- the provisions of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 clauses 2(1A) and 2(2)(a) that disqualify those on a safeguarding barred list, or who have been convicted of certain offences, from serving as churchwardens; and
- the provisions under clause 2(3A) of the measure that allow the diocesan bishop to waive disqualification for offences against Children/Young Persons under clause 2(2)(a).

2. Asks General Synod members elected from this diocese to raise the question at General Synod of whether there should be an immediate bar on further use of the waivers by any Bishop.

3. Calls for the urgent repeal of Rules 68 (4-8) of the Church Representation Rules, and also clauses 2(3A-3D) of the Churchwardens Measure 2001, and to revoke all previously issued waivers.

Bishop David explained that there will be opportunity for open debate. Bishop David acknowledged that this discussion might be upsetting, difficult to hear, or challenging to engage with—and that's okay.

The order for the debate was explained to members.

Bishop David handed over to Robin West (RW) and Chris Beckett (CB)

CB explained that all PCC members must sign a declaration when they are appointed, which confirmed that they have not been on a barred list or have been convicted. The form also has a footnote that a Bishop has power to waive for prescribed offences but *cannot* waive a safeguarding bar. The waiver, CB clarified, is valid for unlimited time in *every* Diocese. The waiver had been challenged by members of Linkinhorne PCC who felt they couldn't endorse it and didn't continue in their role.

Following the Makin Report, Linkinhorne PCC raised their concerns again with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, and brought it to East Wivelshire Deanery Synod. The feeling was that it would take time to repair the Church's reputation and action was a no-brainer to help demonstrate the Church's commitment to safeguarding and taking action. Deanery Synod was unanimous in supporting a review and subsequent removal of the waiver. At July Deanery Synod, the PCC shared a response from Bishop Hugh: *"The clear legal and safeguarding advice that I received, was that the waiver is a reasonable clause with robust guardrails. Whilst I understand, I am under obligation to take on legal and safeguarding advice. Setting this aside would be a serious decision to take. I would only do so under exceptional circumstances. The waiver would only apply to a tiny number of exceptional*

circumstances.”

RW noted the case of Bishop Peter Ball, who would have had the opportunity to exercise the waiver notwithstanding his own failures in safeguarding.

RW admitted that he'd never noticed this waiver but that it's important to raise so that the Church can debate whether it is a *good* or *bad* rule. RW said that he tried to find a justification for this waiver but he felt there wasn't one.

Bishop David thanks RW and CB, and handed over to open debate.

DEBATE:

Mr. Mike Sturgess, West Wivelshire

This is such a difficult and sensitive subject, yet when I read it, I thought, This makes sense. It seems reasonable. So, then I asked myself: Why is it even in there? That question led me to reflect on why we might need this rule. We recently had a service focused on the power of the Cross, and in my church in Liskeard, I've witnessed real transformation in people's lives. One person in particular, whose story has even been featured in our diocesan newsletters, came from a background of crime and addiction. His life has been completely changed. The people who used to know him are asking, what happened to you? If we remove the waiver, people like him might never get the chance to step forward and serve. And that worries me. I say this from personal experience too. I became a Christian after setting out to prove that God didn't exist and I failed. Where I fell over was the story of 'The Road to Damascus'. Saul became Paul. And I can't help but wonder: if we take away this waiver, are we closing the door on future Sauls who could become Pauls?

Mr. Jeremy Stuart, Pydar

I know we're currently in debate, but I'd like to offer a point of information. The gentleman who proposed the motion stated that it doesn't call for any specific action. That it simply places the matter before synod. However, point 3 of the motion explicitly calls for the repeal of the waiver. I think it's important that we acknowledge that. Secondly, could we hear from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, the Safeguarding Adviser, and the Registrar to get their perspectives on this matter?

Mrs. Lucie Rogers, Carnmarth North

I work in and around Redruth North, which is one of the most deprived areas in Northern Europe. I'm a survivor of abuse, and I'm often amazed at the places God leads me. One of my roles involves walking alongside and supporting ex-offenders, helping them reintegrate into society. A crucial part of that rehabilitation process is helping them understand the full impact of their actions—the harm caused to others—and the consequences that follow. Part of that journey includes coming to terms with the limitations now placed on their lives, including the types of roles they can apply for. That awareness stays with them. I believe the bishop's waiver was introduced with the best of intentions, at a time very different from today. In my personal view, it's no longer fit for purpose. However, I also understand why people, especially those I work with, might feel hesitant about being part of a church that appears unforgiving. Ultimately, it's about finding appropriate roles for people within the framework of safer recruitment and recognising that while some roles may no longer be suitable, there are still meaningful ways for people to serve and belong.

Mr. Andrew Prince, Powder

If I heard correctly, this rule doesn't apply to a bishop to be able to use this in a safeguarding situation. And I wondered, therefore, if it'd be possible to ask the bishops if they've seen appropriate use of the bishop's waiver. In the context of prison ministry, are we in danger of limiting appropriate use of the waiver?

Bishop David

In my 11 years as Bishop, I have never exercised the waiver. We've had to help some individuals understand the roles that are still open to them within the life of the church

community. Roles that consider the consequences of their past behaviour and any registers they may be on. I don't believe Bishop Hugh has exercised the waiver either. That means at least two Bishops here have no experience of ever using it. I'm aware that we're beginning to ask for input from safeguarding and the registrar, which is understandable. However, I'm still inclined to hear the remaining speeches first before we move in that direction.

Bishop Hugh

To be honest, I feel quite mixed about it. But I'm really grateful that we're having this conversation not just for the sake of the topic itself, but because it reflects a healthy safeguarding culture. A parish has identified a concern, raised it, and now we're having an open and public discussion. That's a good sign.

I'll admit, I didn't even know there was such a thing as a bishop's waiver until it was brought to my attention. And my initial reaction was, "Well, I'm never going to use that—what a terrible idea." As you mentioned, Robin, this all came to light around the time the Makin Report was released. But over time, I've changed my mind. That's why I'm speaking today in opposition to this motion. I now believe that, in a vanishingly small number of cases, using the waiver might not only be a kind and generous act.

As I wrote in the letter CB read earlier, I believe there's real danger when bishops receive legal and safeguarding advice and then decide they know better. That's not what I've done. I've sought legal advice from both our Diocesan Registrar and the national legal team, and safeguarding advice from our Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Head of National Safeguarding, with whom I've exchanged emails. It's also worth noting that the Church isn't alone in having a mechanism like this. The Charity Commission has a similar process—not a bishop's waiver, but an equivalent—for exceptional cases.

Let me give you two hypothetical examples where a waiver might be worth considering:

1. **A man convicted of manslaughter as a teenager in the 1960s**, after a tragic fight with his younger brother. It was a horrific accident, and he paid a real price. Since then, he's lived an exemplary life in the same community, where the story is well known. He's active in the parish, and the Vicar would like to appoint him as churchwarden. But because of the conviction, he's automatically disqualified.
2. **A young single mother in the 1970s**, convicted under the Children and Young Persons Act for leaving her children alone while working a night shift. It was a desperate decision in a difficult time. Since then, she's rebuilt her life, raised her children, come to faith, and is now a grandmother. Her vicar would like her to serve on the PCC.

These are fictional examples, but they're not unimaginable. And we know that Jesus told a story about the one sheep that was worth everything. I believe we should at least be willing to take such cases seriously. If a bishop were ever to consider using the waiver, it wouldn't be a casual or unilateral decision. We are required to seek professional safeguarding advice, and potentially input from the police, the local authority designated officer, and even the person harmed. This is not about bishops acting on a whim. It's a structured, accountable process. I completely understand the lack of trust in bishops and the concern about making exceptions to clear rules. So, with great respect and gratitude to those who brought this motion, I encourage you to vote against it. And just to clarify: the National Church is *not* aware of any instance where the waiver has been used.

The Ven Clive Hogger, Archdeacon of Cornwall

I knew that these waivers were there and my emotional response to the waivers was very similar to the reasons that we have heard for this motion. I could not understand why such a waiver would be there when there are clear guidelines about who is and is not eligible to stand. I did a bit of homework on it and discovered that Ofsted also has a right to waiver,

that teachers who would otherwise be disqualified can teach. I discovered that the use of waivers is common in many areas of professional practice, but that they are done so carefully and in exceptional circumstances. And without the use, without the possibility of a waiver, there is a very high likelihood of injustice. If the possibility of a waiver is not there, then injustice could prevail. It must be used justly, and it must be used right. As Bishop Hugh has just said, I could not find a single example of a bishop ever having used one, which goes, I think, to say that our processes are robust and that it is only there as exceptional. But I too am speaking against this motion because I believe that it could potentially lead to injustice if we no longer had that possibility.

Mr. Clive Dixon, West Wivelshire

I grew up in the London area and as a young man, I had the same priest from when I joined as a Sunday School child at 6 through to when I left at the age of about 22 to get married and move away. The priest at the time was a superb parish priest. But in my late teens, I was abused by him, as were one or two others I subsequently found out. I survived the experience and went on to love that priest as I did before. He eventually married me and baptised my children. With the others that were affected, the relationship carried on similarly. He would have had the book thrown at him had all of that come out. If I'd told my father, he would have killed him. But that priest did so much more good than he did harm. And I'd like to think that the bishop at the time might have been able, had that come to light, to have protected him in some way for all the good that he'd done, despite the negative side of my experiences and those others.

Bishop David

I think we will just sit quietly for a moment, Clive, just out of respect for you sharing your story. If I may, as the chief pastor of the diocese, say that huge respect for you sharing that story. It does take us into a different arena, which I'm not proposing we do in the public domain here. But you've given us a deeply costly personal account, which I'm very, very grateful.

I think everyone has felt what I feel. I'm proud of synod this afternoon. I think we're standing on Holy Ground. We're standing on quite painful ground. We are holding together. Justice and mercy and safeguarding all together.

Revd. Andy Earl, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

I'd like to begin by paying tribute to the courage we've witnessed in this room today. The pain expressed goes beyond anything words can fully capture. I also want to extend my sincere thanks to parish of Linkinhorne, and deanery synod for their bravery in raising a difficult but vital question about safeguarding in this diocese. You have my personal admiration and gratitude for taking the time to reflect and speak up on an issue that is far from easy. As an officer, I'm fortunate not to be required to express a formal opinion on this motion. However, I do want to share a few thoughts. Many of you have heard me say before: safeguarding isn't about making the Church completely safe—it's about making it safer. That distinction matters. It means that all who hold office are committed to recognising and managing risk. It's never absolute. Every time our team assesses a DBS blemish, we ask: does this blemish prevent the individual from safely fulfilling their role within the Church? It's a careful, case-by-case process.

I've investigated the use of the bishop's waiver in this Diocese and found no record of it ever being used. Not in the past 19 years, nor through the national DSO network. That said, as an ordained cleric, I believe there should be space for thoughtful consideration, risk management, and the possibility of renewal. Importantly, no bishop can grant a waiver without consulting both the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Registrar. And under our current policy, bishops must comply with safeguarding directives. I offer these reflections to support your debate. Please know that I remain committed to working alongside you to make this diocese a safer Church.

Mr. Jos Moule, Registrar

I believe the necessary safeguards are in place, for many of the reasons that have been discussed. One key point concerns the prohibitions on standing for roles such as member of the PCC, deanery synod, or general synod.

There are two main criteria involved:

1. The individual must not be on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) barred list.
2. They must not have committed an offence listed under Schedule 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

The waiver process applies only to the second criterion—offences under Schedule 1. Many individuals who pose a safeguarding risk will already be on the DBS barred list, and it's important to note that the bishop has no authority to waive that requirement.

So, when we talk about Schedule 1 offences, it's true that many are serious and egregious. However, as Bishop Hugh has pointed out, some offences fall into a more ambiguous category, particularly those of a historical nature. In such cases, if a waiver were ever to be considered, and I should note that in all my time as Registrar of this diocese, I've never known it to be debated, it would be essential to examine the context carefully.

If I were asked to contribute to such a discussion, I would want to be persuaded that the offence was situational rather than exploitative, and that the individual has demonstrated genuine rehabilitation and maintained a clean record since. Safeguarding checks would need to confirm that the person poses no current risk, and that granting a waiver would not undermine confidence in safeguarding within the parish. These are the conditions I would need to see met. And if I felt the bishop had overstepped in granting a waiver, I would not hesitate to raise that concern. It's also worth noting that a Bishop who disregards such advice could potentially face allegations of misconduct under the Clergy Discipline Measure.

Ultimately, while we are talking about exceptional circumstances, justice is a core value of our Christian identity—as Bishop David reminded us earlier. Preserving the ability to grant a waiver in rare and appropriate cases is, I believe, essential to ensuring that justice can be done.

END OF DEBATE.

Bishop David thanked both Andy and Jos for their contribution and comments and moved to the vote.

VOTING on the motion on the Bishop's waiver as published:

- In Favour: 2
- Against: 33
- Abstention: 4

The motion was **not carried**.

Bishop David gave thanks to Robin, Chris, the East Wivelshire Deanery Synod and the PCC at Linkinhorne, and all those who took part in the debate.

Bishop David handed over to Merisa McInnes, the newly elected Chair of the House of Laity.

14. Questions under Standing Orders

No Questions under Standing Orders were received.

15. Reports and Minutes

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

Mr. Martin Saunders, Pydar

I have four brief questions relating to the report from BDC. First, the term ‘Strategic Rural Dean’ seems to be used increasingly often. Could we please have a clear explanation of how this role differs from that of a standard ‘Rural Dean’? Additionally, how does this apply in a deanery where there are four stipendiary clergy, four benefices, one curate, and otherwise only priests with PTO (Permission to Officiate)? Second, I’m pleased to see mention of a meeting scheduled for February 2026—it’s briefly noted in one line of the report, which is excellent. However, could we please be informed of the exact date as soon as possible? Third, the report states that the quarterly budget has been re-forecast. Could I please be sent a copy of that revised forecast? Finally, regarding the Mission Statistics for 2024, I’d like to suggest that increased contact between parish priests and their communities tends to lead to larger congregations. Strengthening those relationships could be key to growth.

Revd. Simon Cade, Diocesan Secretary

We’ll be happily asking the Archdeacons and the Ministry Team to respond in the next report regarding the distinction between the traditional rural dean role and that of strategic rural dean, how each role operates and what expectations are associated with them. I believe this is best addressed in a thoughtful and measured way, rather than discussed immediately. Regarding the quarterly budget re-forecast, I’ll need to check with FAR, as that falls under their remit, not mine. Finally, we’ve noted your comment on the Mission Statistics for 2024. Your suggestion has been noted.

VOTING to note the minutes of the previous meeting of Diocesan Synod and to note the report from the Bishops Diocesan Council:

- In Favour: 34
- Against: 0
- Abstention: 2

The minutes and BDC report were both ‘noted’.

Thanks from Merisa McInnes, Chair of the House of Laity

MM called the meeting of Diocesan Synod to a close and clarified that the next meeting is at Chapter House, Truro Cathedral on Saturday 22nd November.

MM gave thanks to the team at St Paul’s and to the Church House and IT teams.

MM invited Archdeacon Kelly Betteridge to have the last word and to bless us as we go on our way.

The Ven Kelly Betteridge, Archdeacon of Bodmin

Today I imagine that there is even more that God might have for us. I think that's the experience that we see in a lot of people in scripture and I've been travelling with Abraham over the last few weeks and months and that notion of being called out from a place that you love with your whole heart and a place in which you have found yourself to be at home into something new and unimagined and unknown. And so I say that partly to encourage you, not to try and shortcut the promises of God, but also to be ready to move when God says move, and to believe that the future might be brighter than the past, and to hold the past with an open hand, because God has more to give. And I say that because when I've said to you in conversation that I've never wanted to leave Cornwall, it is true. And I go now because of a sense of God's call into something that is unknown and recognising my own need to trust that God's call is full of promise and

bright things for the future as well, that can be as good and glorious, if not quite the same, as Cornwall. So my friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May God look kindly on you and give you peace. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

The meeting closed at 15:00.

Dates of future meetings of Diocesan Synod

22 November 2025 Truro Cathedral Chapter House and on Zoom

CLARIFICATION and CORRECTION regarding item 7: Clergy numbers

Note on Clergy numbers - clarification following Synod, September 2025

At Diocesan Synod we spoke about clergy numbers in a way that was not as clear as it should have been. To ensure the record is accurate, we are sharing this note so that everyone has the same information as we continue to pray and work together.

The deanery plans describe an establishment of 60 incumbent-status stipendiary clergy. Within this establishment, 8 posts are currently in transition, either vacant or in the process of being filled.

Curates-in-training are part of the picture, though their numbers naturally fluctuate as training posts conclude and new ones begin. Our aim is to maintain an average of 12 stipendiary curates at any one time, so that a steady flow of new clergy are being formed for future ministry.

As clergy numbers can change from month to month, it is not helpful to focus on running totals. Instead, we will report the stipendiary headcount twice each year - at the end of January and the end of August - alongside the establishment figures. This should give Synod and deaneries a consistent and transparent picture over time.

The table below sets out both the establishment described in the deanery plans and the actual numbers at the end of August. The comparison highlights the gap between posts planned and posts currently filled, as well as the contribution of curates, House for Duty, and self-supporting ordained ministers to the overall picture.

Licensed Clergy numbers as of 31 August 2025

Category	Establishment (as described in current deanery plans)	Actual (as of 31 Aug 2025)
Incumbent-status stipendiary clergy	60 ¹	52
Curates-in-training	12 (average)	9
Archdeacons	2	2
		Total stipendiary clergy = 63
House for Duty	5	4
Self-Supporting Ordained Ministers	17	18

The overall licensed clergy headcount across all categories as of 31 August is **85**. In addition, it should be noted that there are also 144 clergy with Permission to Officiate (PtO) who offer ministry within the Diocese of Truro.

As was discussed at Synod, this local picture sits within a much wider challenge. Across the Church of England, there is a significant shortfall in ordained vocations. Nationally, the number of people recommended for training each year is well below what is required to sustain current stipendiary clergy numbers over the next decade, at the same time as many clergy are approaching retirement. Without more people discerning and offering themselves for ordination, we will face increasing pressure on stipendiary clergy numbers in the years ahead.

¹ Deanery Plans describe 60 clergy composed of 59 FTE stipends.

This is not primarily a financial issue. It is about discerning, encouraging, and nurturing those whom God is calling into ordained ministry, and giving them the training and support they need. The diocese does not delay making appointments or extend periods of clergy vacancy for budget reasons.

That means we must work very hard to sustain what we have, to make wise and creative use of the gifts already among us, and to pray for God to call more people into ordained ministry. Our commitment is to keep reporting these numbers with clarity, so that Synod and deaneries can pray and plan together in full awareness of the scale of the task before us.

Isaac McNish
Head of Ministry