

**Coventry Diocesan Synod
Minutes – 23 June 2020**

Minutes of a meeting of Diocesan Synod, held via Zoom conference facility on
Tuesday 23 June 2020 commencing at 5:30pm

The Bishop of Coventry took the chair.

1. Welcome, notices and apologies

The Bishop of Coventry welcomed members and acknowledged the digital format of the meeting, which was the first Coventry Diocesan Synod to be conducted via Zoom. A specific welcome was given to Simon Danks, as the new chair of the Coventry Diocesan Board of Finance. Thanks were expressed to Simon for taking on the role and also to Peter Rogers, who had been interim chair for the first part of the year. Tributes was paid to Ian Francis for his work over many years as Chair of the CDBF, as he now enjoys retirement. Bishop Christopher also welcomed Canon John Spence, the Chair of the Church of England Investment Board, as a guest speaker at the meeting.

- 2.** Bishop Christopher led the Synod in prayer, noting that it was the the Feast Day of Saint Etheldreda, the 7th century Abbess of Ely. He read Psalm 34 and prayed the collect of the St Ethelreda's day. He also prayed for the guidance of the Lord's spirit to guide the Synod in the meeting.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (DS 20/05)

The minutes of the Synod held on 19 November 2019 were approved as accurate, and signed. It was noted by Sam Margrave on item 7) that his motion on Christian entrepreneurship which, due to time constraints, was not covered in the November meeting, should have been brought back to the next Diocesan Synod (rather than the next appropriate convening of the Diocesan Synod). The Bishop agreed for this to be noted, rather than a motion to amend the minutes be made.

4. Presidential address

Bishop Christopher opened his address with a greeting from Bishop Paul, Bishop of Kapsabet, and made Bishop's Paul's words his own as he paid tribute to the whole diocese – parishes, schools, chaplaincies and our cathedral – for rising to the challenges of the times. He spoke of the difficulties of lockdown and how for many of us lockdown was a Good Friday experience. Bishop Christopher spoke of the need to recover, but that we are called to do more than recover. We are called to renewal, to resurrection, to keep moving with the purposes of God fulfilled in Jesus who died, was buried and rose again for us and for our salvation. He spoke of the focus in the diocese will need to be both realistic about the need for recovery, and the resources that are necessary for that, and also the need to be ambitious for everything that God wants to continue doing among us and for us. He stressed that we want to see healthy church communities, so that we can be a growing church that becomes a self-propagating church. The full address is archived on the website:

http://www.dioceseofcoventry.org/images/document_library/UDR03255.pdf

5. Achieving Growth in the Church of England

Bishop Christopher introduced Canon John Spence. John addressed the Diocesan Synod with a short verbal presentation on the growth of the Church of England and how he has worked with dioceses across the country to support their growth strategies. He talked about funding which is available, mission and new worshipping communities which have been successful across the country. He also stressed that there is more work to do, and especially in the current crisis, where the development of the church will look different. He noted the need to measure attendance in a different way, the

growth of digital and the need to unlock digital generosity. He also noted the potential change in shape and number of stipendiary posts and the stream of ordinands coming through the system in the coming months to fulfil growth strategies.

(The full transcript of Canon Spence's talk is available in Appendix 1).

Bishop Christopher thanked John for his moving talk and opened to the Synod for questions.

- **Sam Margrave | General Synod member | Nuneaton**

In the new era of online, in the same way support was given for the procurement offering for digital payment for parishes to pay, will there be the same support for online technology and streaming service?

Canon Spence replied: Church House has developed so far through the digital team, devices that inspire generosity. Sam is asking is there a provision where people can give straightaway. Canon Spence said he would check the development of this and acknowledged that if the church is going to offer virtual worship online, then it needs to facilitate virtual giving.

- **Simon Danks | Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance | Nuneaton**

Which dioceses are doing really well in the way they are measuring activity to make good decisions?

Canon Spence replied: Leicester diocese is a good example, for the work they have done in capturing measurement, and for Liverpool in what they have done with 'Transforming Wigan', which was a complex project. Manchester is also doing well. Canon Spence said he would check with the statistics department for further insights. He commented that it is so right that dioceses learn from each other, noting that the 'learning communities' of 5 diocese together have been working to bring that learning on. He noted that with online, dioceses need to get much better at measuring the *whole* act of worship, not just those who stay for 5 minutes and measure those who come back (which are warm leads to be progressed).

An additional question was asked in the 'chat function' which will be answered outside the meeting by Canon Spence.

The Chair of the House of Laity took the Chair

6. The Chair of the House of Laity Helen Simmonds (HS) introduced Simon Danks (SD) as the new Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance and asked him some questions about himself.

Simon is from Nuneaton and currently resides in Bedworth, where he works as a Consultant. He decided to take on the role as Chair, to have a mix within his professional life. He is giving his time as a tithe from his business.

The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Simon Danks, took the Chair

7. **The Annual General Meeting of the Coventry Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd (DS 20/06)**

SD welcomed the Synod to the AGM and moved to vote on the minutes of the AGM.

He explained the poll function in Zoom and how to vote on the motion.

The Synod voted majority in favour of approving the minutes of the AGM on 18 June 2019.

8. Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 (DS 20/07)

SD introduced Peter Rogers (PR) who acted as interim Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance from the start of 2020 until mid-May, to present a summary of the Annual Report and Finance Statement of 2019 and to invite any comments and questions.

PR addressed the Synod and noted the excellent presentation of the report, particularly “our year in numbers”. He believed that if the report is shared with parishes it will help them gain a better perspective of the work that is happening across diocesan family. He noted his thanks to Julie, Jo and the finance team for producing the report under difficult circumstances due to the closure of the diocesan offices due to Covid-19 and lack of on-line access to the financial system.

He thanked the parishes for their generosity, as during the year, 97% of the allocations were received. Though slightly less than the previous year, it is still a good return, especially as we are aware that many deaneries are struggling to meet their allocations. PR noted the diocese is keen to provide both advice and support to those parishes who want to further develop the culture of generosity in their parishes and encouraged engagement with The Parish Giving Scheme.

PR spoke of a number of the achievements, as outlined in the annual report and noted the strong financial performance of 2019. He noted the innovation of the Church Improvements Fund which helps to provide grants to parishes wanting to improve their facilities such as the provision of toilets and catering facilities, which was new for 2019. The equity investment performance was noted as having realised a £5m gain at the end of the year, and that CCLA and the Glebe Committee continue to manage the funds and assets effectively.

The Chair of the Board of Finance, asked for any questions on the budget paper:-

- **Sam Margrave | General Synod member | Nuneaton**

- 1) *How many of the 14 people came through the vocation process were from the BAME community?*
- 2) *Would you consider consulting parishes on the future priorities, in terms of preparation for the budget of 2021?*

Bishop John answered that the number of BAME vocations, were highlighted in the response to the question from Dwayne Engh (under SO69).

Julie Bellamy answered that in relation to consulting parishes, that consultation happens through Bishop’s Council and Diocesan Synod and encouraged member to bring parish concerns through those channels. The priorities will be discussed at the Bishop’s Council in July.

The Chair of the DBF formally proposed:

- a) *“that the Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 be received”; and*
- b) *“that the appointment of Crowe UK LLP, Auditor of the Company, shall be renewed until the next Annual General Meeting and that the Directors be authorised to fix the remuneration of the Auditor”.*

Motions a) and b) were approved by the Diocesan Synod, with a majority vote.

The Chair of the House of Laity took the Chair and welcomed the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education, Elaine Scrivens and the Diocesan Director of Education, Linda Wainscot

9. Diocesan Board of Education Annual Report and Financial Statements (DS 20/08)

The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education, Elaine Scrivens (ES) spoke of the work of Linda Wainscot, in the constant changing environment of the education system. She reflected on Linda's leadership over the past 20 years in the diocese of Coventry, and how this is respected nationally, as Linda is at the forefront of Christian educational development. Elaine welcomed Linda who introduced the DBE Annual Report and Accounts for 2019.

Linda noted that this is her 20th report to the Synod and thanked them for the gift of flowers to mark her retirement, which were in view next to her. She reflected, like the report of the DBF, the DBE report and accounts is a document full of numbers. However, she noted that education is about far more than numbers, but provided the meeting with a few more statistics that summarise her 20 years.

There are more than 18,000 pupils in our CofE schools, rising from just under 17,000 in 2001. There have been 3 DBE offices, 2 diocesan Bishops, 2 suffragan Bishops, 4 DBE Chairs, 3 Church School Inspection Frameworks, 17 Acts of Parliament, 10 Secretaries of State for Education, 3 CEOs of the Church of England National Education Office, several school amalgamations and federations with 10 non-Church schools structurally linked with our DBE, zero CofE Academies in our diocese in 2013 whereas now we have 25 within 4 Academy Trusts; and 1 new school in St Gabriel's.

Linda noted that through all of this, the constant is the commitment to Christian education, with schools not only providing learning but huge worshipping communities that reach out and touch the lives of so many people. Also the professionalism, expertise, commitment and dedication of DBE members, staff and Associate Consultants and partners, noting her 'right hand people', April and Helen along with their predecessors.

Linda hands over the reins to April Gold, who she noted has imagination and a clear sense of calling to the role, who will be incredibly well supported by the DBE staff team, Bishop Christopher and his Core Staff team. She ended with the Church of England Vision for Education, which uses John 10:10 'I came that they may have life, and life in all its fullness'. Linda noted that her time as the DDE had been an adventure, a challenge, a privilege and a joy.

The Bishop of Coventry noted that this was also Elaine's last Diocesan Synod and expressed thanks for her work as chair of the DBE; and a bunch of 'virtual flowers' appeared on the screen for her representing the flowers that had been delivered earlier in the evening.

Bishop Christopher also added to the gratitude for Linda, as expressed by Elaine, noted that he has been the envy of the Bishops with a DDE like Linda. Then a surprise was delivered by the Bishop's staff to Linda's home, where a gift of a John Piper limited edition print was delivered to Linda. The Bishop prayed for and blessed Linda.

The Chair of the DBE formally proposed:

"That the Report and Financial Statements of Coventry Diocesan Board of Education for the year ended 31 December 2019 be noted.

The motion was noted by the Diocesan Synod, with a majority vote.

The Rev'd Charlotte Gale (CG), Chair of the House of Clergy, took the chair.

10. Diocesan Mission and Growth Strategy (DS 20/09a & b)

CG introduced the item noting that church planting had been an implicit part of the diocesan plan for a number of years, part of the Accerler8 project and the investment in the reopening of St Marks as a resource church. She expressed that the diocese is now looking at how to be more intentional and systematic in their approach to church planting.

CG explained that after the presentation, there would be a break-out session and that each group would take some notes and feedback after the meeting; rather than there being a plenary session.

Archdeacon Barry Dugmore (BD) presented the latest development in the strategy, which is in the processes of ongoing consultation and is a continuation of the journey, which had started some time ago, to be healthy churches, which grow and propagate. This evolution of the strategy is to release the missional energy across the diocese, over the next 10 year.

This is an aspirational vision of planting 150 new worshipping communities across the diocese by 2030, which will cover a variety of types of worship in different and diverse areas, with a focus on the urban areas. The strategy has been brought to the Diocesan Synod for information, following work with Area Deans and consultation with Bishop's Council. It was noted that at the meeting of the Bishop's Council on 2 June, the trustees indicated that they were content with the direction of travel of the strategy.

BD highlighted that church growth in city and urban areas is the focus, within the bigger picture of the strategy. This work flows from the strategic work already in place (following the 6 strategic objectives).

It was stressed the two core distinct share values which are to be expressed through the strategy:-

- 1) Mission & ministry of reconciliation
- 2) A realised vision of the diversity of life represented in our churches in worship, fellowship, mission and ministry that embraces and includes the breadth of social, ethnic and culture heritage of all who live in our diocese

In order to achieve the share values, there are three points which will be considered:-

- 1) A realised vision of the diversity of life represented in our churches
- 2) Developing and enabling the mission in a 'post Covid' church
- 3) The emphasis on mission to children and family groups and 18-30s.

BD highlighted the Strategy Implementation Teams which are to be set up to take the vision forwards and welcomed anyone to get involved in the teams, especially to lay leaders.

The strategy will include working with 60-70 core church communities (some have been identified as 'heathy' via NCD framework), to plant a new expression of church. There will be 5 key new plants in new housing developments and 5 key plants in an urban context.

St Mark's, Swanswell is the main city resource church and there will be six more resource hub churches, geographically spread across the diocese. The main investment will be in these churches in order to build capacity and growth. BD noted that people leadership, both lay and ordained, will be an important element of realising the ambitious strategy for growth. Also, there will be a re-alignment of the central diocesan support to resource the vision. The intention is that there will be many different expressions of worshipping communities, that will be

contextually sensitive, will look different from each other, but with the missional DNA that will invite people to explore the Christian faith.

BD outlined the criteria for the hub churches and what they do, as outlined in the presentation slides. These hubs will resource others around them to facilitate growth. BD stressed that this does not mean that those churches which are not hub churches are less important in the kingdom of God. These churches will support leadership and growth of faith, but helping each other. BD referred to this structure as part of the body of Christ.

The current ongoing work on the strategy was outlined and how that is supporting the development, through the Serving Christ team and a digital focus; as well as the BAME and diversity as key priorities.

BD then focused on the SDF bid for the city based work. He noted that the funding is available for transformation work in growing mission and communities in urban areas. He outlined the process of the SDF application and referenced the churches and (new) staff involved in the bid. It was noted that the revitalisation of worshipping communities is to be focused in the areas of high population, high deprivation and where there is a low level of population in that area currently worshipping in the Church of England.

The type and number of staff needed in each church plant was shared, which will be funded by the SDF grant. BD stressed that there is more work to be done on the SDF application and that there will be a series of Zoom consultation roadshows in the coming weeks for anyone to input and ask question of the strategy. He noted that the first stage of the SDF bid is needed to be submitted by September.

At the end of the presentation, CG stressed that this a period of consultation on the strategy, via groups or after the meeting. There was a technical issue with the Zoom, and therefore the groups did not happen. Therefore the members were asked to feedback back any comments to Jo Swain and then these would be circulated the following week.

At this point in the meeting, Sam Margrave wanted to clarify if this item on strategy would be coming back for future debate before it is ratified. As questions are not permitted, he then requested to move a point of order under Standing Order 50vii – *a motion to vary the order of business* – so that this item could be discussed and debated further as it is a very important item regarding the shift in the church.

The Chair thanked Sam Margrave and noted that this is a consultation phase of the strategy and that it is hoped that there will be other opportunities for this to be discussed. The Chair refused the request to move a motion, on the grounds that the current meeting was running over time and therefore there would not be sufficient time for a meaningful debate.

CG noted that the strategy would be discussed at the next meeting of the Bishop's Council on 7 July when the decision will be made on the first stage of the SDF bid. She therefore requested if members had any comments, to email them to Jo Swain as soon as possible, so that all comments could be heard.

11. A Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing (DS 20/10a, b & c)

The Chair stated that this item would start with a short film from the Rev'd Ali Hogger and will take the form of a debate, and then the questions will be responded to by Bishop John. Bishop John introduced the item by referring to the papers which were sent out on the covenant,

covering a contextual summary which put the National clergy covenant in context with this diocese, and also by referring to a paper from Archdeacon Sue which refers to clergy who live alone, which is not reflected so much in the covenant, which deals with clergy and their households. However, Bishop John noted that this was something which would be taken into account by the diocese. He noted that this is a journey and the framing of the national clergy covenant is to draw it into the whole life of the diocese and deanery synods and PCC.

Bishop John moved the motion as per the paper and the film was shown. In the film Ali Hogger spoke of the need for well-being amongst clergy and advocated the covenant. She stressed the importance of protecting clergy rather than mending the fractures. The video address can be found on the Diocesan Website. http://www.dioceseofcoventry.org/index.php?page_ref=1696

Following the video address, there was a comment:

- **Sam Margrave | General Synod member | Nuneaton**

Has there been a consideration on clergy well-being especially on employment terms and condition and how they would be affected if we to change to the model of worshipping communities and how this fits within the vision of Bishop's Council. As priests and readers at the moment have the parish structure and that autonomy; and we have seen with team ministries in the past, real difficulties in people working together, or with different theologies being merged together and not having independence and security. So I just wondered what consideration has been given to the role of parish ministry in the well-being of our clergy.

- **John Witcombe | Dean of the Cathedral**

I note the moving video from Ali and the importance of the awareness of the load that is on the clergy and the level of responsibility. Having a covenant is great but it does need to result into some strategic action. What we were reminded of in the paper was immensely important, not least allowing proper time off and not just having one day off a week. I am in support of the covenant and note that this should lead to strategy change and action.

Bishop John responded to the questions, noting that parish ministry has been at the heart of the clergy consultations. There was an observation from those in chaplaincy that the diocese was too parish focused. Bishop John noted the parish ministry is central to the Church of England and that he did not see the strategy proposal as undermining parish ministry. He also mentioned that mixed teams do work and are a benefit and he does not see that any church is being coerced into changing or compromising on their style of worship.

In terms of the observation made by Dean John, days off are very much on the agenda and Bishop John encourages clergy to take off the time they need. He mentioned that they should be taking at least 2 consecutive days off in a month. He noted that this is the beginning of 'the Big Conversation' which should happen at deanery and PCC level. That it is not just about clergy, it's about the well-being of the laity too. Bishop John stressed that if the diocese says yes to this, then we will grow in the quality and depth of the church and in the fellowship and support of one another.

After the debate, CG put the motion to a vote on the covenant; in 2 parts.

- a) That this Synod adopt the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing as outline in the recommendation*
- b) Invites PCCs and Deanery Synods to consider and adopt the Covenant themselves within a year of the Diocesan Synod debate and to subsequently engage in the Big Conversation.*

**The Diocesan Synod voted unanimously in favour of a) and a majority in favour of b).
The motion was carried.**

12. Questions received under S069

The questions had been received and replied to before the meeting. There have also been 2 supplementary questions and responses.
(See Appendix 2 for the questions and responses).

13. Date of next meeting to note

The final meeting for 2020 was noted as Saturday 14 November am, to be held at St Andrew's Shottery, all being well with the pandemic.

The Bishop of Coventry took the Chair

11. Closing

The Bishop of Coventry thanked CG for navigating the Synod through the latter part of the difficult meeting and apologised for some of the disruptions during it. He referred to item 7, which was part of the consultation process and whilst the time for break-out discussion did not happen, there is still an opportunity to feedback comments to Jo, ahead of the Bishop's Council meeting on 7 July. Thanks were expressed to the team and to the guest speaker, John Spence and also to Linda and Elaine noting their last meeting, to whom the Bishop raised a glass, and to the whole of the Diocesan Synod for doing well in trying circumstances and noted that they had conducted important work together. He ended the meeting in prayer, referring to St Etheldreda and blessed the Synod. The meeting concluded at 7:40pm

Attendance: Bishops: 2; Clergy: 40; Laity: 39; Attendees and guests 12:

Signed: Date: