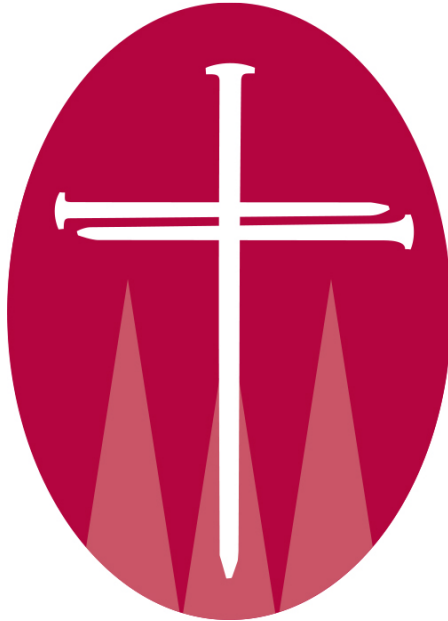


Coventry Diocesan Synod

Guide for members



Worshipping God

Making New Disciples

Transforming Communities

August 2021

Introduction

This booklet aims to bring together essential information which members of Synod will need, to understand what the Diocesan Synod is, what it does and how it works.

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Foreword by the Bishop of Coventry



I am very pleased that you will be a member of Diocesan Synod for the coming triennium. Thank you for taking on this important role.

Synods in the life of the Church are there to bring people together from different parts (north, south, east, west; rural, urban, suburban, inner city) of the Diocese and different dimensions (bishops, clergy, lay) of the Church so that, in being together, we can carry the Diocese forward together into the next phase of its life.

As I hope is already familiar to you, the Diocese of Coventry is committed to enabling our parishes to ‘worship God, make new disciples and transform communities’. We seek to do this by helping each Church community to be healthy and strong so that the capacities for life and growth inherent in the Church as the Body of Christ can be released. Synod will have much to do over the next three years to ensure that all the parishes, officers and systems of the Diocese are structured and supported for this end.

Synod will also need to keep a close eye on the evolving cultural situation in which we find ourselves in modern Britain, with all the challenges and opportunities that it brings for serious Christian engagement. Whether we look to areas of economics, ethics, education, business, politics (and the list could go on), there a vital need for the Christian voice to be heard and for the Church of England to fulfil its particular responsibility to serve the nation and to shape its life.

I look forward to our time together in Diocesan Synod over the next three years.

+ Christopher Coventry

Whole Diocese Strategy



'All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.'

2 Corinthians 5:18, NRSV

A strategy for spiritual and numerical growth

Our parishes have long been united by our three-fold purpose:

- **Worshipping God** – *"All this is from God"*
- **Making new disciples** – *"who reconciled us to himself through Christ"*
- **Transforming communities** – *"and has given us the ministry of reconciliation"*

Our primary means of helping to deliver this purpose is the application of the healthy church principles identified by NCD, known locally as the 8EQs (8 Essential Qualities).

In seeking a truly integrated strategy, we need to include cathedral, schools and chaplaincies as well as churches. The **'Whole Diocese'** therefore includes:

- Parish church and other church communities
- Schools
- Cathedral
- Chaplaincies

All of these **together** gather around the Diocesan Bishop to share in the apostolic ministry and mission given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ - which, for the Diocese of

Coventry, includes a historical and international emphasis on Reconciliation. A working understanding of reconciliation is that used by the Dean of Coventry: 'Journeying from a fractured past towards a shared future.'

Through this we are all:

'Partners together in the message and ministry of reconciliation'.

To deliver our strategy we have identified six shared objectives, all of which we seek to view through a lens that ensures we are focused on engaging with people from Global Majority Heritage/UK minority ethnic (GMH/UKME) communities and work developing children's and young people's spirituality.

Whole-diocese shared objectives

Our whole-diocese shared objectives are:

- Making the gospel known throughout the Whole Diocese so that people become followers of Christ.
- Strengthening the health of churches and organisations across the Whole Diocese in the 8 Essential Qualities (8EQs) identified by NCD.
- Enabling the wellbeing, development and flourishing of clergy and lay people across the Whole Diocese.
- Equipping the Whole Diocese for the work of reconciliation.
- Promoting life-long Christian learning and education across the Whole Diocese.
- Delivering positive community transformation.

The intention of this approach is to enable resources to be more effectively aligned to support our whole-diocese objectives, which are considered to have the greatest impact on health and growth.

The eight essential qualities

Our primary means of helping to deliver this purpose has been the application of the healthy church principles identified by National Church Development (NCD), known locally as the 8EQs (8 Essential Qualities).

They are:

Empowering leadership	Gift-orientated ministry
Passionate spirituality	Inspiring worship
Holistic small groups	Need orientated outreach
Loving relationships	Functional structures

The handbook can be found via the following link:

<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f3ffda5728e0/content/pages/documents/1597835832.pdf>

The Diocesan Growth Strategy

In November 2020 the Diocesan Synod approved a growth strategy for the Diocese of Coventry to further support spiritual and numerical growth in the diocese. The aim is to launch 150 new worshipping communities before the end of this decade.

Bishop Christopher said: “In recent years we have concentrated on church health, using the eight essential qualities of healthy churches. It has given us our own evidence that healthy churches become growing churches.

“With our sight remaining on the importance of church health, as the foundation of our diocesan strategy, now is the time to expand our vision for church growth – numerical and spiritual.”

The Reverend Sally Buddle was appointed as the Director of Healthy Churches and New Worshipping Communities in June 2021 in order to help the Diocese to deliver its ambitions for a culture change in making and growing new disciples. It involves developing a more mission-focused approach to the planning and deployment of resources in order to launch and grow 150 new worshipping communities by 2030.

Vision

This autumn a new vision statement will be released, drawing together the different aspects of diocesan life which include a hope to see in five years’ time:

- healthier churches
- greater cultural diversity
- more younger clergy and lay leaders
- new worshipping communities.

Diocesan Synod - Aims and essential facts

The Synodical Government Measure 1969 gives Diocesan Synods the following functions:

- To consider matters concerning the Church of England, and to make provision for such matters in this Diocese
- To consider and express opinion on any matter of religious or public interest
- To advise the Bishop when consulted by him
- To consider matters referred to it by the General Synod
- To consider and approve the DBF's annual budget
- To receive and adopt the DBF's annual Report and Accounts

The aims of the Diocesan Synod are to take part in fulfilling this purpose and enabling the whole diocese to do the same, by:

- Testing and approving the strategy and direction of the Diocese to ensure that all parts of the Diocese are supported and enabled to achieve the Mission Purpose
- Bringing people together from across the diocese to share ideas and experience
- Representing the people and churches of the Diocese on subjects affecting Diocesan life.

Chairs

Meetings of the Diocesan Synod are normally chaired (led) by three people:

- the Bishop of Coventry, who is President of the Synod
- the Chair of the House of Clergy
- the Chair of the House of Laity

Members

The Chairs are joined by the members which can number up to 160. The members of the Synod are also the members of the Diocesan Board of Finance and act as advisors to the Bishop of Coventry.

The members, most of whom are elected by the Deanery Synods, comprise of:

- The Bishops, Archdeacons, the six General Synod representatives and the Chair of the DBF and are automatically members (they are known as *ex-officio* members)
- Lay and ordained members from the parishes which form the Houses of Laity and Clergy, as well as some which can be Bishop's nominees and co-

opted members. The Houses of Laity, Clergy and the Bishops will occasionally vote separately, and can also meet separately if necessary.

- Membership of the Diocesan Synod lasts for three years (or a Triennium). The current term of office started on 1 August 2021, and will end on 31 July 2024.

Meetings

The Diocesan Synod normally meets three times each year, in November, March and June. The meetings follow a cyclical pattern in that key items are presented and voted upon at the same time every year.

In November the annual budget for the Coventry Diocesan Board of Finance (CDBF) is approved, while at the March meeting the Safeguarding report is presented and at the June meeting the minutes of the AGM of the CDBF and the report and financial statements of the CDBF are approved as well as the report and financial statements of the Coventry Diocesan Board of Education (CDBE).

Meetings have been largely on Zoom during the Pandemic. However it is the intention to return to in person meetings during the new triennium, where possible, with some meetings being on Zoom or a hybrid of the two if possible. Members are, therefore, encouraged to familiarise themselves with Zoom if they have not already done so. If you need help with this please contact the Governance & Grants Office, Sue Dawson, at sue.dawson@coventry.anglican.org who will be happy to assist.

The dates of the meetings for the following year as follows:

- 20 November 2021
- 19 March 2022
- 21 June 2022

The venues will be confirmed nearer the time.

How does it work?

The Bishop addresses the Synod, talking about the work in the diocese or the wider world and the Synod's role in it. Items on the agenda will then be discussed, where appropriate, and any motions voted upon. Items which have been discussed recently include the Diocesan Growth and Mission Strategy, the Whole Diocese Strategy and updates on the Living in Love and Faith and Synodical Ladder working groups. Papers on the agenda are circulated to Synod members to be read in advance of the meeting.

Motions

- A motion is a formal statement presented to the Synod for debate and to be put to a vote. They are shown on Synod agendas in italics.
- Motions can come from individual members, Bishop's Council, Deanery Synods, or the General Synod.
- Motions from Deanery Synods or individual members should be sent to the Bishop's Council via the Diocesan Secretary (ruth.marlow@coventry.anglican.org).

Asking questions

- Members can ask questions in advance under Standing Order no. 69, which allows for a prepared answer.
- Questions can be addressed to Officers of the Synod and to the Chair of any body established by the Synod.

Standing Orders

The rules which govern the Synod are its '[Standing Orders](#)'. They cover many things, including:

- How the Chairs of the two Houses are elected
- How debates and votes should happen in Synod meetings
- The membership of the Bishop's Council
- How the agenda for Diocesan Synod meetings is set
- How the Synod handles financial business

The agenda and minutes of previous meetings can be found on the Diocesan website via the following link: <https://www.coventry.anglican.org/about/more-about-us/governance/diocesan-synod/>.

The Coventry Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd ("the DBF")

- The DBF was formed in 1936 to manage the financial affairs and hold the assets of the Diocese.
- It is a charitable company limited by membership guarantees and is also a registered charity.
- Every member of Diocesan Synod is a member of the DBF for company law purposes and has a personal liability limited to £1 under their guarantee as company members in the event of its being wound up.
- The main expense of the DBF is the cost of ongoing ministry. The DBF also finances training for ministry which is overseen by the Director of Ministry and Leadership and his team.
- The DBF's main income is from Parish Share. This is the money the Parishes give to the DBF each year after discussions with their Deaneries who understand the local context of their parishes. Since 2012, a Deanery's Share is based on its 'cost of ministers', with a central Support Fund to assist deaneries that need it. The Share also includes a contribution to the Support Fund, and any surplus helps new initiatives for mission.
- In 2021 contributions into the support fund have fallen dramatically as parishes have struggled with the impact of COVID-19. Parish share relief has been offered to those parishes who apply for it. This has been funded by the release of £1.3m of historic assets held by the DBF. The Chair of the Board of Finance is currently carrying out a review of the Parish Share system, the outcome of this review will come before Diocesan Synod in this triennium.
- Unapplied Total Return and The Diocesan Stipends Fund. The historic assets of the CDBF are held in a permanent endowment fund called the Diocesan Stipends Fund Capital Account. This fund can be used to meet the cost of clergy housing and stipends only. The fund has grown in size over the years, and in 2017 the Bishops Council started to look at how they might release some of this fund to further the mission of the CDBF. Following professional advice and consultation with other dioceses, Bishops Council voted for these funds to move to a total return basis thus enabling it to use some of the

capital value of this fund subject to certain restrictions. The Governance around the use and the release of assets from this fund into the CDBF income and expenditure account is managed by the Investment Subcommittee. Note 18 of the annual report and accounts shows a breakdown of the fund, the unapplied total return which is available to use, and documents the movement of assets in and out of the endowment during the year.

Diocesan Training

The training of ordained and lay leaders in the diocese is led by Richard Cooke, Director of Ministry and Leadership, under the auspices of the Mission and Discipleship team and offers the following support:

- lay training and development, including delivery of a comprehensive programme of short accessible courses which, if taken in full, comprise the Bishop's Certificate in Discipleship and Mission (BCDM)
- Vocation and discernment – the team supports those exploring a vocation to authorised lay or ordained ministry within the Church of England, through a combination of open-access vocations evenings, and a more formal discernment process.
- the formation and training of ordinands and curates through the Initial Ministerial Development (IMD)
- Clergy continuing ministerial development (CMD) – the team offers a suite of courses to support clergy at key moments in their ministry from their first posts of primary responsibility through to retirement, and with particular presenting issues. Many of these courses are delivered in collaboration with other dioceses in the West Midlands.
- Grants – Licensed clergy and readers are eligible for annual CMD grants for courses and events which offer training and development. Licensed clergy may also apply for an additional discretionary grant for ongoing academic study. Both grants are administered via the Mission and Discipleship team.
- Sabbaticals.

Safeguarding

The Diocese of Coventry is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our church community.

Making our churches safe for all is everyone's responsibility and members of Synod have an important role to play in setting an example by helping to communicate the importance of excellent standards in safeguarding across the church.

More information can be found on the safeguarding pages of the Diocesan website by clicking on the link below:

<https://coventry.anglican.org/info-for-parishes/safeguarding/safeguarding.php>

The Church of England issued a safeguarding policy statement in 2017 which was approved and adopted by the Diocesan Synod in March 2018 called '[Promoting a Safer Church](#)'.

The diocesan safeguarding team provides professional advice and training to support the parishes and the Cathedral in making the church safe for all. It also supports those who may have suffered abuse both within and outside of the church environment.

Members of the Synod are encouraged to complete the basic awareness safeguarding training course which can be accessed online via the following link:

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

Anyone can create an account on this website and access both basic and foundation safeguarding training at any point in time, at their own convenience. If they already have an account on this website they can just log back in to retake the training.

The link below shows you who to contact if you need to report a concern:

<https://coventry.anglican.org/info-for-parishes/safeguarding/safeguarding-concerns-or-allegations.php>

Bishop's Council and Other Committees

Committees are a key element of how the Diocese operates, with responsibilities ranging from oversight of the DBF to managing its property and investments to working with applicants to the Diocesan Mission Fund.

Bishop's Council

The Bishop's Council is the senior Committee of the Diocese and acts in various capacities. It is the Standing Committee and Executive of the Diocesan Synod, the Directors and Trustees of the DBF and also the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC).

As the Standing Committee it:

- Advises the Bishop in Council
- Prepares the Synod's agenda (delegated to the Business Committee)
- Develops policy for the Synod to consider
- Receives tasks from the Synod

As the Directors and Trustees of the DBF it:

- Is responsible for central diocesan finances
- Sets the DBF budget and the annual report and accounts before recommendation to Synod
- Is responsible for complying with legislation

As the DMPC it:

- Has oversight of Diocesan Deployment
- Considers and authorises pastoral schemes
- Interacts with the Deanery Pastoral Committees

The Bishop's Council also makes appointments to several other bodies, including the Diocesan Finance Group, the Diocesan Mission Fund Committee, the DAC and the Glebe Committee.

Other Committees

The Diocesan Synod is the primary source of members for other committees, as it elects the members of several different groups, including:

The Coventry Diocesan Board of Education (DBE)

The DBE has a particular role in promoting Christian education and Church Schools within the Diocese. It is also a separate charity and limited company, and its

members are the directors of the company and the trustees of the Charity. For more information, please see the DBE's website, www.coventrydbe.org.

The Diocesan Mission Fund Committee (DMFC)

The Diocesan Mission Fund was created to give grants to parishes, benefices and deaneries for new forms of mission which are pioneering, sustainable, and have an emphasis on making new Christians and disciples. Applications for funding for new mission projects are sent to the DMFC via the Diocesan Office.

The Vacancy in See Committee

The "See of Coventry" is the post held by the Bishop of Coventry. This Committee only meets when the post of the Bishop of Coventry is (or is about to be) vacant. Its duties are to prepare a statement and provide information about the Diocese and to elect some of its members to the Crown Nominations Commission.

The Parsonages Committee

This Committee is responsible for the improvement and repair of the houses occupied by most of the clergy in the Diocese.

Synod also elects members to the Board of Patronage and the Diocesan Trustees.

Other committees which feed into Synod are:

Audit & Risk Committee

The Audit & Risk Committee's duties include considering the appointment of Auditors and making a recommendation for their appointment to the Bishop's Council, reviewing the Coventry Diocesan Board of Finance's annual report and accounts and monitoring the Board of Finance's internal control systems and risk management processes.

Business Committee

The Business Committee's functions are to be the agenda and appointments committee on behalf of the Bishop's Council and to review the overall structure of Diocesan bodies.

Conditions of Employment Group

The main task of the Conditions of Employment Group is setting the terms and conditions of employment of all staff employed by the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd.

Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC)

The DAC's role is to give advice to PCCs and to the Diocesan Chancellor when changes or repairs to church buildings are being considered.

A copy of the latest report can be found via the following link:

<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f3ffda5728e0/content/pages/documents/ds-21-15-annual-report-2020-from-dac.pdf>

Diocesan Board of Patronage

The Board of Patronage is the patron for a small number of benefices in the Diocese. Its only work is to play a part in the appointment of new clergy to those parishes. Currently the Bishop of Coventry is the only member.

Diocesan Environment Group

The role of the Diocesan Environment Group is to take seriously and responsibly our God-given vocation to care for the earth and to demonstrate that care to others and inspire churches to do the same.

Diocesan Finance Group

The main purposes of the Diocesan Finance Group ("DFG") are to monitor the central finances of the Diocese on behalf of the Bishop's Council and to advise the Bishop's Council in its role as the Directors of the Diocesan Board of Finance on matters of finance. The DFG also considers applications for Church Fabric Fund grants.

Investment Sub-Committee

This sub-committee of the DFG has particular responsibility for overseeing the DBF's investments.

Diocesan Trustees

The Coventry Diocesan Trustees (Registered) is a registered charity, separate from the DBF, normally known as "The Diocesan Trustees." Its main role is to hold property and trusts on behalf of PCCs, and to administer some charitable funds. It is the Diocesan Authority for the purposes of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, and the Incumbents and Churchwardens (Trusts) Measure 1964.

Glebe Committee

The Glebe Committee is responsible to the Diocesan Board of Finance for the management of the Diocesan glebe, for the benefit of the Diocesan Stipends Fund.

Glossary of Terms

8 EQ – 8 Essential Qualities

BCST – Bishop’s Core Staff Team

BSIG – Bishop’s Strategy Integration Group

DAC – Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches

DBF – Diocesan Board of Finance

DBE - Diocesan Board of Education

DFG – Diocesan Finance Group

DMF – Diocesan Mission Fund

ISC – Investment Sub-committee

NCD – Natural Church Development

SDF – Strategic Development Fund

WDIP - Whole Diocese Implementation Plan

Total Return

When measuring investment performance this is the actual rate of return over a given evaluation period. It measures both the interest capital gains, dividends and distributions realised over a period. It is expressed as a percentage of the amount invested.

Unapplied Total Return

This is the amount of funds in the permanent endowment that are available for use when needed. It can be carried forward or allocated to be spent as income in a year or reinvested if not needed. There can be negative unapplied total returns, but currently this is unlikely to be the case because of the current size of the fund.

Trust for Investment

The amount of the permanent endowment which cannot be released or used. This amount is increased in line with inflation each year to ensure this does not lose value over time.

Further information

Please visit the Diocesan website (coventry.anglican.org) for further information about the following or click on the link provided:

Diocesan Synod (<https://coventry.anglican.org/about/more-about-us/governance/diocesan-synod/diocesan-synod.php>)

Whole Diocese Strategy (<https://www.coventry.anglican.org/whole-diocese-strategy.php>)

Diocesan Growth Strategy (<https://www.coventry.anglican.org/growth-strategy/>)

The 8 Essential Qualities (<https://coventry.anglican.org/about/more-about-us/growing-healthy-churches/defining-the-8eqs/defining-the-8eqs.php>)

Standing Orders (<https://coventry.anglican.org/about/more-about-us/governance/diocesan-synod/diocesan-synod.php>)

Grants (<https://coventry.anglican.org/info-for-parishes/finance/grant-funding/grant-funding.php>)

CDBF Annual Report and Accounts 2020
(<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f3ffda5728e0/content/pages/documents/cdbf-annual-report-and-financial-statements-2020-final-17062179648724494.pdf>)

Total Return
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/353957/Total_return_investment_for_permanently_endowed_charities.pdf)

West Midlands CMD website (<https://www.westmidlandscmd.org/>)

Net Zero Strategy
(<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f3ffda5728e0/content/pages/documents/bc-21-51-diocesan-net-zero-strategy.pdf>)

Online training courses

Basic Awareness Safeguarding Training:
(<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>)

Difference course (<https://coventry.anglican.org/your-faith/difference-course/difference-course.php>)

Living in Love and Faith (<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith>)

Contacts:

Ruth Marlow: Diocesan Secretary
ruth.marlow@coventry.anglican.org

Julie Bellamy: Director of Finance
julie.bellamy@coventry.anglican.org

Sue Dawson: Governance & Grants Officer
sue.dawson@coventry.anglican.org