

## DIOCESAN SYNOD

Saturday 29 September, 2018

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### MINUTES

**A Meeting of the members of the Truro Diocesan Synod and The Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Limited was held in the Council Chamber County Hall, Truro on 29 September 2018**

- 1 **The Opening Worship** was led by pupils from Five Islands Academy & Mounts Bay Academy.
- 2 **Apologies** were received from 7 Clergy and 5 Laity.
- 3 **The Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Colonel Edward Bolitho** welcomed the Bishop Elect, The Revd Canon Philip Mounstephen and his wife Ruth, and all synod members, to the first meeting of the new Triennium. He remarked that his being at Synod emphasises the link between Church and state and he looks forward to working with the new Bishop. He thanked the Bishop of St Germans, the Rt Revd Chris Goldsmith, for all his hard work during the Vacancy in See.

The county of Cornwall has many positive aspects including its coastline and landscape, its spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, its cultural heritage and its extraordinary sense of community. However, Cornwall also faces many challenges and issues, and many of the poorest areas in the UK are here. Problems include low productivity, housing issues, a big divide between the poor and the wealthy, transport problems in rural areas and a lack of qualifications amongst the working age population.

How can the church help Cornwall?

- By offering spiritual support. There is a strong element of spirituality in Cornwall which the church can take advantage of. There is a desire for spiritual support and guidance and people are open, even if church attendance is low.
- By being at the centre of their communities. This is becoming more achievable now that churches are receiving grants to help improve their facilities.
- By giving financial support to areas of need.

The Lord Lieutenant can help the diocese via his deputies and with support from Buckingham Palace. Synod members are welcome to contact the Lord Lieutenant (or his office at County Hall) with details of any person or organisation who stands out in their community and who they would like to nominate for:

- Honours and awards - for individuals.
- Queen's Garden Party - for individuals.
- Queen's Awards for Voluntary Service - for voluntary organisations.

These give pleasure to those who receive an award and give an opportunity for communities to celebrate.

Royal Family visits can also be organised. If churches feel they have a good reason for a royal visit then they are welcome to contact the Lord Lieutenant who will be pleased to consider it. It is advisable to plan a good year in advance.

The Lord Lieutenant is also the President of the Cornwall Historic Churches Trust which gives financial support to churches.

Finally, Colonel Bolitho thanked everyone for all they do in so many areas of life.

The Bishop of St Germans thanked Colonel Bolitho for all he does as Lord Lieutenant.

- 4 **The Revd Canon Philip Mounstephen**, Bishop elect, thanked the Lord Lieutenant for his kind words, and also thanked the Bishop of St Germans, the Rt Revd Chris Goldsmith, the senior staff team and all the people at Synod, for all they are doing to keep the church alive during the transition period. He then addressed Synod and his talk can be heard here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKwnN2UQ78E&feature=youtu.be>
- 5 **The Presidential Address** was given by the Bishop of St Germans, a copy of which can be found on the Diocesan Website at: <https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/policy-governance/diocesan-synod/presidential-address/>
- 6 **Briefing on Synod procedures & what to expect.**  
Dr Mike Todd introduced himself as the new Chair of the House of Laity and thanked the former Chairs of Houses, Revd Canon Alan Bashforth and Mrs Sheri Sturgess, for their contribution during the previous triennium. He asked the Dean of Truro to convey Synod's best wishes to Revd Canon Alan Bashforth who had not been well earlier in the year.

The Diocesan Registrar, Mr Jos Moule, and the Diocesan Secretary, Mrs Esther Pollard, then spoke to Synod concerning procedural matters. The Diocesan Secretary drew attention to the Diocesan Synod Reference Guide that is available on the diocesan website: <https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Diocesan-Synod-reference-guide.pdf>.

The Bishop of St Germans stressed the importance of conveying to people not at Synod how we reach various outcomes. Also the importance of conveying to diocesan synod members matters discussed at General Synod. As far as is possible we should aim to make parishes aware of the wider picture.

A question and answer session followed during which the following points were raised:

Q: It was queried how matters are brought before General Synod and how our reps are chosen.

A: The Diocesan Registrar explained that there is a formal election process for the appointment of members of General Synod. It can be difficult to effect change in a particular area through just a few representatives, but if a matter raised captures the imagination of General Synod then it can be successful.

Q: It was commented that some people find the Council Chamber intimidating as a synod venue and that it is larger than we need. It is also a long distance for some to travel. However, there are many plus points, including good parking, it is reasonably central and the external features, such as the gallery, are good.

A: It was agreed that the BDC would consider whether County Hall is the best venue for Diocesan Synod meetings and, if not, alternatives would be considered. The Bishop of St Germans suggested discussing this in the small groups later in the meeting. He observed that it can be difficult to have open discussions in the Chamber but that those compiling the agenda will continue to ensure that provision for informal discussion in groups outside of the actual chamber will be included. However, he is open to consider other venues if there is a consensus amongst members.

Q: Concern was expressed about the democracy of the system; that not all members have the chance to discuss the agenda with their deanery, and a feeling that our General Synod Representatives do not always carry a brief from this Synod. Can the system be made more democratic?

A: It was pointed out that General Synod Representatives are *representatives* and not delegates, and they are elected from amongst Church of England members, not just from Diocesan Synod members. Our representatives are always keen to hear from synod members although their desire is to make decisions based on the right thing and not just on a general consensus of opinion.

The question and answer session was followed by contributions from long term Diocesan Synod members, Mrs Sue Dickenson (read out by Mrs Micheline Smith in Sue Dickenson's absence) and Revd Steve Robinson, concerning their experience of Diocesan Synod membership.

- 7 Group discussions followed and the following questions were discussed:
- How do you want Synod to work for you and those you represent?
  - Ideas how we might use our time together
  - What subjects would you want Synod to consider?

Each group took notes which are available on our website:

<https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/policy-governance/diocesan-synod/diocesan-synod-minutes/>

8 **To approve amendments to Article 12 of the Articles of Association of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Limited relating to the election of the Chair of the TDBF.**

The Diocesan Registrar explained that 'Chair' in this context denotes an important function on the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF), including advising on financial matters, but that the person appointed is not really acting as a Chair.

The existing Articles of Association say that the person to be appointed should be a member of Synod so currently the candidate has to be co-opted to Diocesan Synod and then put into that role. The amendment to the Articles states that the Bishop can nominate someone who is not a member of Synod, thus giving synod the opportunity to appoint from a larger pool. This amendment regularises that position.

A question and answer time followed during which the Bishop's role as Chairman of the company was queried. It was commented that those outside the church could think that the Chair of the TDBF is the Chair of the company but that this is obviously not the case. Also that the Bishop is the father of the Diocese but that the Chair of the DBF should be a member of the laity and the financial adviser of the diocese. It was requested that the Bishop's Council and Standing Committee consider amending the Articles to say that the Chair of the Company should be a member of the laity.

The Diocesan Registrar responded by saying that Article 12.6 states that the Chair of the DBF is not the Chair of the Trustees etc. The amendment currently proposed does not change that, but simply changes the process around the pool of people from whom the Chair is drawn. This separate issue that had been raised was not for debate at this meeting but could be discussed at a future date. The Bishop of St Germans confirmed that this could be discussed at another time.

The Chair of the House of Clergy drew attention to the proposed amendments to Article 12 of the Articles of Association of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Limited relating to the election of the Chair of the TDBF. Voting took place.

2 against

1 abstention

Remainder in favour

9 **Election of the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Ltd.**

Voting took place.

1 x abstention.

Remainder in favour.

10 **Approval of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Budget for 2019-2021**

Report by the Chairman of The Truro Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, Mr Mike Sturgess.

The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Mr Mike Sturgess, emphasised that Synod members were being asked to approve the 2019 budget and that the figures for 2020-21 were for indicative purposes only. He drew attention to the following points:

- The Bishop's Diocesan Council approved Total Return so this has changed the way the budget looks. However, the money released by Total Return needs to be carefully managed over a period of time.
- Transforming Mission will continue.

- The Diocesan Assembly has been removed from the budget following its postponement.
- Funding set aside last year for 3 youth workers has not been used. If they are employed in the future then they will be funded elsewhere.
- 49% of money spent comes from the parishes.
- There is a difference between the MMF call and the amount received. The forecast collection rate is down compared to the comparable figure for 2017. The amount of MMF budgeted for 2019 is the 2017 actual +2%. It is hoped that the leaflet 'Resourcing Today's Church' which explains the cost of ministry will encourage an increase in MMF payments.
- Retirements have been factored into the amount budgeted for expenditure on ministry.
- 2020 will be the first year for a 'normal' budget for expenditure on parsonages as the maintenance back log has now been caught up with.
- Grants for mission increased to 100k from 50k.
- Church House five year rent review will be due in 2019 so we have budgeted for a 20% increase.
- Lay staff costs. A number of new appointments are actually funded by the Church Commissioners as they are connected with Transforming Mission. There has been a large investment in appointing staff to deal with Safeguarding matters.
- Reserves and capital are the same as last year. The Diocesan Pastoral Account will be used in 2019 to balance the budget but if the MMF collected in 2020 and 2021 matches the amounts budgeted, then we will not need to use the Diocesan Pastoral Account to balance the budget in those years.

In conclusion attempts are being made to narrow the gap between call and expenditure so that the budget will balance. The budget has assumed a neutral Brexit although this of course may have an impact.

A question and answer session followed during which the following points were raised:

- It was observed that it can take time for new church members to realise that mission initiatives need to be funded. Could a statement be made setting out tithing as the norm? The Chair responded by saying that it would be good to organise a session at Diocesan Synod to discuss giving and discipleship.
- The fall in the budgeted number of stipendiary clergy compared to an increase in the numbers of lay staff was queried. The Chair of the DBF explained that the form of mission and the concept of the parish priest are changing and many more lay people are now involved. The situation is not black and white. He would like to see more money spent on stipendiary clergy but this is now up to the deaneries to make the best decisions for their areas.
- It was queried when parishes would be receiving their 2019 MMF figures. These will be sent out on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October, two weeks will be allowed for any comments and then the final figures will be sent out by the end of October.

The Chair of the House of Clergy thanked the Chair of the DBF for his presentation.

The Bishop of St Germans moved: "That this Synod approves the budget of the Board for 2019 and indicative numbers for 2020-2021". Voting took place.

1 abstention

Remainder in favour

**11 General Synod update - Q&A session led by Mr Richard Best, Communications Adviser.**

General Synod lay members Mrs Susie Leafe from St Austell deanery, Mrs Sheri Sturgess from West Wivelshire deanery, and Dr Mike Todd from Trigg Minor & Bodmin deanery were available to answer questions.

Synod members had been contacted by Richard Best prior to the meeting to ask if they had any questions concerning the business covered at the last General Synod meeting. The following questions had been received and were now put before the General Synod members for their comments:

Q: Has there been any further action on the paper "Setting God's People Free"?

A: Dr Mike Todd reported that major activity has been going on to resource this. It will be quite difficult and painful but is going ahead and is a necessary process. Mrs Sheri Sturgess reported that she attended a fringe meeting concerning this and that Bishop Rachel Treweek is supportive. Volunteers have come forward to join the Diocesan Learning Community so we are working with Westminster on this.

Q: Why was the safeguarding motion that was carried at the last General Synod meeting worded to say that the church should be made a 'safer' place and not a 'safe' place?

A: Mrs Sheri Sturgess explained that safeguarding is a major area of concern and that the church has been criticised for its past attitude to safeguarding. This is what is behind the choice of the word 'safer'. We might like to think we are 'safe' but we are not and still need to work on this. We need to consider how we support victims of abuse and need to drive safeguarding in our parishes via training etc. The responsibility for safeguarding lies both locally and nationally.

**12 Contribution from Church Engagement Manager of the Children's Society the Revd M Todd and the Regional Relationships Manager for the South and South West, Ms Gill Ford.**

The diocese of Truro has raised £179,530 for the Children's Society over the years and at Christingles in 2017 the diocese raised £9,996. However, it is not just about the money but about support, relationship and care. Revd Mike Todd outlined the background of the Society and explained that the church has always been an integral part of what they do. They are backed by the Church of England, all Bishops are invited to be vice chairs and many other clergy are involved.

Their connection with the Church of England is really important. The society's DNA is similar to that of the Church of England in that they work with all faiths and none and people come to them at their point of need. They share with us points 3 & 4 of the 5 Marks of Mission and are involved with 75% of parishes.

Statistics show that young people today face many challenges including abuse, criminal gangs, slavery, poverty, living with the effects of alcohol abuse, and the Children's Society pioneers new ways to meet these needs. They work to protect children from exploitation, find and help children who have been through bad experiences and give children the opportunity to be in a caring environment.

Campaigning and lobbying are very important. The Society is developing its theological resources to help parishes consider matters concerning young people.

The Children's Society has been involved in Christingle since 1968 when the first service took place in Lincoln. There are now services in many places and churches in this diocese are encouraged to hold a Christingle.

The society wishes to work with parishes for the common good and would be happy to talk with anyone who wants to get in touch to discuss ways they can help and support children in their

area as well as the work of the society. They would also be happy to come and speak to deanery chapters and synods.

A question and answer session followed:

Q: How might we see the Children's Society at work in Cornwall?

A: The Society does not have any one-to-one work with children in Cornwall but does hold large events which many attend to share experience and information.

Q: It was queried whether the statistics for Cornwall were available covering a longer period of time.

A: Revd Mike Todd explained that the reports are produced each year and he encouraged people to lobby their politicians to consider the data. The Bishop of St Germans said that he would discuss with Revd Mike Todd as to how the reports can be made more widely available.

The Bishop of St Germans thanked Revd Mike Todd and Ms Gill Ford for their presentation.

**The meeting closed with prayers at 2.15 pm.**