



**DRAFT**

**CANTERBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Diocesan Synod held 9.00am on Saturday 16 March 2024 at The John Wallis Academy, Millbank Road, Kingsnorth, Ashford TN24 3HG**

**AN OPEN SESSION ON EVANGELISM: SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S LOVE IN JESUS CHRIST**

Revd Canon Steve Coneys lead worship and was later joined by Peter Rouch, Chief Executive of the Church Army and Neville Barnes, Envoy Team Leader of the Church Army who ran interactive sessions on Evangelism.

**SYNOD CLOSED SESSION**

1. Revd Andy Bawtree, Chair for the closed session welcomed The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury to Synod. The Archbishop then gave his presidential address, this can be found here: [Archbishop Justin gives thanks during March 2024 Diocesan Synod](#) [Archbishop Justin's closing points at March 2024 Diocesan Synod](#)

The Chair welcomed and introduced Iain Blythe, the new Diocesan Secretary and Natalia Olszewska, the new Director of Finance.

2. **Apologies and Notices**

The chair reported that 7 apologies had been received from the House of Clergy and 11 for the House of Laity.

3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2023**

Revd Rachel Webbley, General Synod (Reculver) clarified her comments for the minutes that her confusion was around the discussion on the Bishop of Maidstone and it not being an agenda item, not the matter itself. ***The minutes were duly approved and signed.***

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2023**

(a) The Chair reported that the matter on lay joint chair elections will be covered under item 6 on the agenda.

(b) Tony Richter, Interim Chair of the Board of Finance (Vineyard) updated Synod on the significant changes to staffing in the Finance Team since the last Synod meeting in November. At that meeting the following motion was passed "*Archbishop's Council would bring to the Synod meeting in July 2024 credible proposals for ensuring that the CDBF account achieves a sustainable balance of income and expenditure by 2027*". Tony

explained that we have not lost sight of financial projections agreed to 2027 and are going to extend to 2030 to align with the 3 bold outcomes and as requested will report to Diocesan Synod in July.

David Kemp, General Synod (Reculver) commented that he was concerned that the Archbishop's Council had changed the motion agreed by Synod without their agreement, moving the date from 2027 to 2030. +Rose clarified that Archbishop's Council had not agreed to move the dates and motion remained as agreed by Synod.

## **5. Election of a Lay Joint Chair Rules**

Miranda Ford, Chair of the House of Laity, (Ospringe) put forward a motion to include the following wording "*However, in circumstances where no new candidate is willing or available to stand for election, an outgoing lay joint chair or co-lay joint chair may stand for re-election despite having served for two or more consecutive trienniums (or parts thereof)*".

Amanda Boucherat, (Reculver) spoke in favour of this motion as we don't always have the people to take on these roles but that we need to be mindful of looking for a successor.

Harry Macdonald, (Canterbury) commented that the reason he raised the issue at November Synod was that the rules are entirely silent on what happens if there is no lay chair, would Deanery Mission & Ministry Committee and Deanery Synod still take place. Ven. Will Adam, Archdeacon of Canterbury responded that Deanery Synod would still exist, there would be a vacancy but we would endeavour to fill this at the earliest opportunity.

The motion was proposed from the Chair.

Majority in favour, ***the motion was passed.***

## **6. To Receive the Notes from Facilitated LLF Conversations**

The Chair reported that these were very comprehensive notes taken from the conversations which took place at Diocesan Synod on 18 November 2023.

## **7. Minutes of the Archbishop's Council held on 16 January and 3 February 2024**

Revd Rachel Webbley, (Reculver) – thanked the Archbishop's Council for starting the conversation about the racial justice. Rachel indicated that she would be very happy to work alongside those on anti racism and engage with this issue.

## **8. Strategy Update**

Colin Evans, Strategic Programme Manager, provided a recap on our first funding request to the Diocesan Investment Programme Board submitted last year. The first request was to fund the Strategic Programme function and Colin together with Simon Marsh, Project Manager, Strategic Media Engagement Orla Garratt and Charlie Gurr are doing good work in the deaneries. We have not managed to fill a data management measured role, we are stuck in a recruitment queue and hope to go out on advert soon.

The second part of the funding request focussed on Children & Young People with the recruitment of 7 youth ministers, 4 have been recruited so far, 1 is still out for advert. Two churches on that list have been withdrawn so we are looking for other churches who want to

have a youth minister. Youthscape Launchpad launched in September. The funding request submitted in January set out a resourcing church and funding programme which asked us to include a Church Planting Adviser to work through that programme and will also have a capacity to work with the new Christian communities in Margate and Maidstone.

In Margate there are 4 parishes who have simultaneously been in vacancy and keen to work with one another and they will be working in partnership with the Church Revitalisation Trust. Holy Trinity Margate will be the Resourcing Church and Revd Mark Nelson has appointed Priest in Charge, they will become a resourcing church for St Paul's, Cliftonville. Support for St John's and All Saint's Westbrook, major building works are required to St John's and we will be looking for funding to do that.

Maidstone, St Luke's and St Faith's are already working in partnership. St Luke's will become the resourcing church and will be looking at opportunities to support other churches in Maidstone. St Faith's is a new church plant on an estate with a community centre, there is a Minister and Children's and Families Minister. An Associate Minister is going into St Luke's to help with the growth with a congregation of 150+ as they are looking at to continue to grow that congregation. Refurbishment work is required to bring the building up to scratch. All the funding has been granted. A national press release is being worked on and that will be released soon with a local press release being issued after that.

The next steps are to recruit unfilled youth minister posts, we need to fill 20-30 Children & Young People's posts over the next few years. We need to get the projects up and running, key tasks are focussing on deanery planning, real gamechangers to drive the bold outcomes across our deaneries, there will be different answers for different deaneries. Resourcing churches have been successful in achieving growth. We may have to devise our own strategies, invigorate mission action plans, we must plan for mission, all of our churches, parishes, benefices will need support. Colin refer the Lead your Church into Growth conference taking place in July.

Our strategy is all about growth, our 3 bold outcomes, looking for signs of growth in every parish, benefice, to be thinking about mission, to be engaged in mission.

David Kemp, General Synod (Reculver) asked if we could we this presentation at every Synod so that we can keep up to date with the strategy. He also asked if it would be possible to have the slides in advance of the meeting.

Gareth Dickinson (Maidstone) acknowledged the tremendous amount of work that has gone into this funding request and thanked Colin. He also mentioned that we need to acknowledge a lot of work needs to go on in our deaneries in seeking to be the diocese we long to be which is thriving.

## **9. Carbon Net Zero Update**

Colin commented that there was not a great deal to report. The joint capacity funding request with Rochester was awarded in November and agreed until December 2025. We will have a shared Programme Manager and 2 Advisors. Job descriptions have been prepared and agreed by the National Church and a Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed with Rochester on how we will work on this together. Colin stated that we need to mind the gap as we currently don't have capacity to support Net Zero, we are hoping to recruit by May/June. There are grants available from National Church but we are not able to publicise these as we are not able to provide support at present.

Revd Joyce Addison, Diocesan Environmental Adviser thanked Colin for all his hard work. Joyce referred to the gap and encouraged churches to fill that gap by putting the environment on the agenda for their PCC meetings, registering with the energy footprint tool, the Eco Champions can help with this. Please actively fill that gap and help us achieve our target by 2030.

Amanda Boucherat (Reculver) asked about the demonstrator projects in the diocese and was advised that the DAC Secretary is looking at churches for possible for demonstrator projects, but there is nothing to report on as yet.

Revd Rachel Webbley, General Synod (Reculver) stated that schools form a large part of the carbon footprint but there is not much sharing of knowledge, not much joined up thinking about helping busy school leaders with this and asked if the Board of Education is leading on this. Information seems to be piecemeal there is not a way to gather a range of information, some sort of joined up thinking would be very much appreciated. Quentin Roper, Director of Education noted the comments made and reported that one of the bigger projects that are currently being looked at are air sourced heat pumps.

## **10. Reculver Deanery Synod Motion**

The Chair reported that there had been a change to the motion from the original wording that appeared on the agenda, we had been advised by the Diocesan Registry that the wording was not legal and provided revised wording. Reculver Deanery had been advised of this and are happy with the amendments.

The Chair invited David Kemp, General Synod (Reculver) to talk to the motion. David explained why the Reculver deanery wants to put forward this motion. It is matter of principal, cooperation, collaboration and trust, where are not working to seek improvement. All strategic planning is now down to deaneries, they don't have any say on the employment clergy. this is the Bishop and Senior Staff Teams decision.

Revd Paul Worledge (Thanet) asked as a matter of clarification if they are wanting to make the decision about the kind of person appointed, about the form of the appointment? David responded that it relates to the form of the ministry eg whether full or part-time.

Revd Paulette Stubbings (Reculver) spoke in support of the motion explaining that this motion helps deaneries work with their partners at the Diocesan hub before key decisions made.

Ven Darren Miller, Archdeacon of Ashford and General Synod responded that he welcomes any proposal that helps our partnership but does not support this motion and wondered if process had gone wrong and we are trying to legislate on this. We don't need to legislate further. We have delegated responsibility with the deaneries, working with the deanery planning. In terms of the Synod motion as put it could land us in difficult waters. The motion is too restrictive. When we are notified of a vacancy the Archdeacons get in touch with the Area Dean and Lay Chair and look at the bigger picture in relation to the deanery plan and if looks like we go ahead with filling that vacancy we have a pre vacancy meeting with the DMMC. It might be that after a discussion with the deanery that a full time appointment is deemed not appropriate. There are subsequent meetings with the parish, due diligence is undertaken regarding finance. The consultation proposed in the motion already exists. Darren stated we will ensure that the process will run smoothly in future.

Revd Andrew Sweeney (Opsringe) commented that he was very much in favour of anything that enables the intent of this motion to be embedded in our processes.

Revd Jeremy Worthen (Ashford) commented that this would be committing deaneries to a lot of work, introducing a layer of bureaucracy.

David Kemp thanked members for their comments and Archdeacon Darren's thoughtful response. Speaking on behalf of the deanery David commented that we don't want to stick to every word in this motion and invited the Archbishop Council to look at this and come back with a proposal. This should be flexible enough to get the patron on board also. It was therefore suggested that this would go before the Archbishop's Council who would report back in July.

The motion was proposed by David Kemp.

Majority against, ***the motion was not carried.***

## **11. Diocesan Synod Elections**

The Chair reminded Synod that 2024-2027 Diocesan Synod elections will be taking place in the summer and for members to speak to their deanery synods and PCCs.

The Chair announced that Catherine Richardson had been elected as the Lay Representative for General Synod following the recent by-election.

## **12. General Synod Report**

The Chair reported that the report from the February General Synod meeting had been sent out to the Diocesan Secretaries and copies of that report had been handed out before the open session.

## **13. Members Questions and Answers**

**Q:**David Kemp (General Synod, Reculver Deanery) asks the following question to the Bishop of Dover:

The report by Dr Bev Botting and the Venerable Bob Jackson shows that Average Weekly Attendance in Canterbury Diocese fell by 2% in 2023, in contrast to the national average of all other dioceses. Bearing in mind that this seems to call into question the effectiveness of a diocesan strategy will you and the Archbishop's Council arrange a substantive debate on the report at the next meeting of this Synod?

**A:**The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover responds:

We are, of course, disappointed in the results. However, the strategy that Synod has put in place by adopting our Three Bold Outcomes for 2030 is all about growth – growth in the number of children and young disciples, growth in the number of new Christian communities and growth in every parish, benefice and deanery. The results should serve as an important reminder to us all that we need to seek to make an urgent personal, proactive contribution. This is why we have put evangelism as the topic for the Open Synod.

We have been encouraging and supporting deaneries to work with their parishes and benefices to develop plans that will lead to growth. As common themes emerge we seek to find ways to resource these. With limited investment capability in the diocese, we are working hard to draw

investment from the national Diocesan Investment Programme. If successful, our latest request will fund two resourcing churches in Margate and Maidstone to help bring revitalisation across those areas, and this will be followed by a programme of further resourcing churches in other locations.

Growth is not all about national investment though. I was a little disappointed to hear that only a half of our larger churches have Mission Action Plans! If we fail to plan, we are planning to fail. We will be holding a “Leading Your Church into Growth” conference in July which will help to remind us of the things that can make a difference.

Strategies take time to make a difference and they only work where there is local buy-in and take-up. This is why deanery, benefice and parish growth is at the heart of our approach. Through deanery planning we have opportunities for all to contribute to local strategy and to discuss new ideas. I would encourage Chapters, Mission & Ministry Committees and Deanery Synods to keep growth at centre of all that they do. Where new ideas emerge, Archbishop’s Council will of course consider if they have wider diocesan potential and work out how best to support them. My team will always remain open to new ideas and are always ready to discuss them.

At the end of the day, growth comes from faithful living out of the gospel by every baptised Christian being on fire for the Lord! It also means having inspired leaders (lay and ordained) in every parish and benefice full of the joy of the Spirit of God! Growth is also about confident Christians who are not afraid to tell the story of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**Q:**Neil Logan-Green (General Synod Canterbury Deanery) asks the following question to the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance:  
will the Chair of the DBF please produce a detailed update report with initial recommendations for material savings to deliver the agreed objective of a balanced budget

**A:**Tony Richter, Interim Chair of the Board of Finance responds

There are two known savings at this point:

- 1) On Clergy pension – we will be saving on the reduction of % contributions from 28% to 25% from April. These will amount to £67k saving this year.
- 2) On DL staff pension – we had been notified that there is a surplus of £205k which will cover the cost of pension contributions in 2024.

Otherwise, it is too early to say if there are any other material savings.

We are aware that there will be some overspends on property budget because of remedial work that got delayed during the pandemic and now will cost more to carry out. During the pandemic only the critical and necessary work was carried out and significant amount of our properties are in need of external uplift to include roof repairs.

In terms of parish share, if the amounts due were divided equally then we are not receiving the parish share that we should receive by the end of February. However, we do know that a lot of parishes pay at different times in the year and therefore it is difficult to judge whether we are on track or not.

**Q:**Neil Logan-Green (General Synod Canterbury Deanery) asks the following question to the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance:

Will the Chair of the DBF indicate how objective 1 can be assisted by joint services provision with Diocese of Rochester.

Please indicate the precise areas where this can be utilised

Please indicate a detailed timetable to approach Diocese of Rochester to seek to enquire if they would be willing to participate.

**A:**Tony Richter, Interim Chair of the Board of Finance responds:

We have been working with Rochester for a number of years on some shared provision including training for our curates (IME2).

Opportunities for further closer working have also been explored in recent years. We have recently successfully applied jointly for Net Zero Carbon capacity funding from national church which will see a joint Programme Manager and two Net Zero advisors working as a virtual team. We believe that there are benefits compared to having individual part time Programme Managers.

Other teams work together across the two dioceses where there is synergy such as Media & Engagement/Communications, particularly for covering holidays etc. and regular meetings where beneficial e.g. Strategic Programme Managers.

From the discussion that have taken place between the two dioceses to date, no particular further opportunities have been identified where savings could be made from joint provision. Learning the lessons from Local Government and the formation of the Diocese of Leeds, for example, real savings are generally substantially less than would be anticipated, and can end up costing more due to integration issues such as: different IT systems and infrastructure, different processes, policy and strategy mis-alignment, cultural differences etc.

The discussion remains open but there are no clear, tangible, feasible additional opportunities that have been identified at the present time.

**Q:**Barney de Berry (General Synod Canterbury Deanery) asks the following question to In the latest Church of England Statistics for Mission it shows average Sunday attendance for children and young people (under 16s) in Canterbury diocese for 2022 was 1400 down from 4800 in 2012. Has any strategic work been done to identify if there are specific deaneries, benefices or parishes that had significant under 16s Sunday attendance in 2012 but now do not? What the reasons might be as to why they have seen this decline? And how those 2012 numbers which might indicate potential for growth in the future might be regained?

**A:**Jen Tobin, Lead Officer for Children and Youth Ministry responds:

The Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) team continues to address the decline in average attendance for children and young people in our diocese. Since the appointment of the Diocese's Lead Officer for Children and Youth Ministry in September 2023, a great deal of strategic work has been, and continues to be undertaken to address the decline and understand the reasons for this, of which they are complex and many. Through analysis of the data from SfM (Statistics for Mission) 2022, parish and deanery visits and further research into understanding local demographics, including socio-economic divisions it is apparent that for many rural parishes and benefices there are far fewer families and therefore children and young people who reside in these areas. Additionally, those families, children and young people who do reside in rural areas, tend to travel into more urban settings for worship as well as children and youth activities. Therefore, town and city centre churches have typically seen an increase

whilst rural churches have seen decline. The CYPE team are addressing the issue of decline within rural settings and exploring potential strategies to address this. One of which is 'Flourish' which is in its initial planning stages and looks to bring about fresh and revived worshipping communities for our children, young people and their families through active partnerships between schools and parishes.

It has also been evident that churches go through cyclical phases, where often a group of children and young people are part of a church's worshipping community and then they grow up and move on. Although this is not the whole picture, it may partly explain how churches who were larger in 2012 dropped in children and young people's attendance and are now seeing their numbers rising with a new cohort of children and young people.

Many churches, both rural and urban are increasing their engagement with families, children and young people through outreach within their communities. These relational activities have enabled our churches to meet families where they are, and there has been evidence of families transitioning from attending relational/community groups to joining a worshipping community more frequently on a Sunday.

Prior to the pandemic, Fresh Expressions proved to be where growth amongst children and young people's attendance was taking place. Fresh Expressions were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and therefore so too was the attendance amongst children and young people. The data also shows that churches which have planted and developed Fresh Expressions are more likely to see growth. The trauma of a global pandemic cannot be underestimated, and the impact (which was most keenly felt in the declining attendance of children and young people) will have a legacy which will hinder the attendance we see on a Sunday morning further into the future, but the figures we see from SfM 2022 is that there is a modest increase in attendance since 2021.

There is an increasing number of practical steps being taken to facilitate this growth. Our diocese has focused on recruiting and supporting the development of youth ministers. Working in partnership with Ridley Hall and Rochester Diocese, we have our first cohort for Catalyst who will be working on practical projects of engagement with children and young people. We have also developed a good working relationship with Youthscape and are utilising their expertise and training to advance next steps.

The CYPE team acknowledges that there are still more steps to be taken in addressing this ongoing concern and continue to hold this as a priority and look forward to working alongside our churches in creating growing opportunities for children and young people's discipleship.

**Q:**Barney de Berry (General Synod, Canterbury Deanery) ask the following question:

On 24th Jan 2024 – there was a seminar run by the diocese titled Faith at Home which had the brilliant vision of equipping leaders to help people and especially parents to grow the faith of children and young people in the home. It is a seminar that fits perfectly with our bold outcome to double the number of children and young people and yet was attended by only 4 people two of whom were leading the seminar. Similar 'Growing Faith' seminars have had to be cancelled because no one signed up. Where was this seminar advertised? Why when this resource is aligned so closely with our key bold outcome was it not pushed more in our communications and promoted by our leaders? How might we make sure these resources are not wasted in the future? How can we make sure that our bold outcome is not just wishful thinking but a vision we see to conclusion?



**A:** Quentin Roper Diocesan Director of Education responds:

The Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) team continues to appreciate and be encouraged by its Growing Faith partnership with St. Mary Bredin Church (SMB), which is focused on creative learning, signposting resources and hosting conversations to equip and develop other church communities within the Diocese. For the seminar in question, the arrangement was to advertise through the CYPE team's Ministry Dispatch newsletter, (subsequently entered in both the December and January editions), in addition to appropriate media channels available to SMB. From a diocesan perspective, it is acknowledged that more could have been done; for future training and development opportunities under the Growing Faith banner, the CYPE team will engage closely with Media and Engagement colleagues to ensure that different avenues are explored to reach the relevant audience. In addition, individual parishes are of course welcome and encouraged to share published information to widen coverage.

In terms of addressing the bold outcome highlighted, we trust that parishes and deaneries are prayerfully and courageously discerning how this vision might be achieved. Our CYPE team is keen to hear resulting ideas, projects and suggestions, to enhance the increasing number of practical steps already being taken. Harnessing the impact of young people's ministry on church revitalisation, we have employed an additional group of youth ministers across the Diocese. We have also established projects and partnerships such as Launchpad and Catalyst, helping to build local confidence in designing and implementing initiatives for youth ministry. Furthermore, plans are evolving to join a national pilot, 'FLOURISH', focused on systemic, missional change to establish a network of worshipping communities in schools; a strategic connection through our presence in education offers the opportunity to imagine thousands of new, younger and more diverse disciples.

**Q:** Barney de Berry (General Synod Canterbury Deanery) asks the following question:  
Can the complete Deanery stats for mission for the whole diocese be given to synod?

**A:** Stephen Taylor Diocesan Secretary responds

The Church of England Stats dept don't send out the 2023 stats until after Easter – However we commissioned some work to be done on the October count statistics to give us early access to the figures so we can react in a more timely way. This report was made available in the Equipping for Ministry newsletter <https://mailchi.mp/diocant/equipping-for-ministry-february-1452301> with an overview of the report from Steve Coneys.

554 people across the diocese receive this newsletter. If you wish to sign up to receive future editions, follow this link where details of all the diocesan newsletters are: Newsletters - Diocese of Canterbury ([canterburydiocese.org](http://canterburydiocese.org))

Individual parish stats are available to every parish through the parish returns section on the Church of England portal. The data administrator will have these details.

The Chair asked for supplementary questions:

David Kemp (Reculver) thanked the Bishop for her response but it did not answer the question that he asked. David requested a substantive report from Bob Jackson at the next meeting of Diocesan Synod in July.

#### **14. Dates of Next Meetings for Noting**

The dates of the next meeting are:

Wednesday 3 July

Saturday 16 November

The dates for the House of Clergy and House of Laity Zoom meetings are listed on the website.

+Rose closed Synod with a prayer.