

DIOCESAN SYNOD ACTS

24 March 2022



Acts of the Diocesan Synod held on 24th March 2022 at St Paul's Church, Bursledon. 68 members were present.

Welcome and Worship

Winchester Deanery led members in opening worship.

The Chair of the House of Clergy welcomed members and congratulated the Interim Diocesan Secretary and Chief Operating Officer on his appointment.

Presidential Address

The Bishop of Southampton gave the presidential address, she noted the Archbishop's Charge for the period of the vacancy in see. She highlighted the importance of reconciliation and healing to recover confidence and joy in the service of Christ and that Bishop Richard continued to help us with healing our wounds.

Questions Under Standing Orders

Questions had been received from Gwilym Stone, Andrew Orange and Michael Minton. Written responses were issued at the meeting.

Andrew Orange asked the following supplementary question-

1. The report from Andy Brookes highlighted a lack of trust, an antidote to this is openness. Are we able to publish the details of future expected property sales on the website?

The Director of Operations responded that we would want to look carefully at any commercial and local sensitivities around the information published. We will consider what information it would be appropriate to make widely available. We are actively writing to and consulting with any affected PCCs in advance of putting up a property for sale.

Michael Minton asked the following:

1. Can we share examples of successful initiatives within parishes with other parishes in the diocese?

The Director of Operations responded that we could, any parish wishing to share a positive idea or good news story is encouraged to contact Jess Littlewood.

2. November 2022 is not soon enough to look at Stewardship, is there anything that can be done earlier?

The Director of Operations responded that in the current economic climate there is a potential negative impact of rolling out the Diocesan Stewardship Campaign too early. However parishes who wish to engage with the material and feel it would be appropriate in their context are encouraged to contact the diocesan Stewardship team.

Review of the role of the Chief Executive

The Chair of the House of Clergy thanked Andy Brookes for his report and handed over to the Bishop of Southampton who echoed the Chair's thanks. She explained that, after thorough consideration of Andy's report and the proposed options, the Bishop's Council felt concern for loss of momentum through a drawn out recruitment and that the Director of Operations had the gifts and skills required. Bishop's Council were delighted that the Director of Operations had agreed to step up into the interim role of Diocesan Secretary and Chief Operating Officer from the 1st April 2022.

Applause was given by all.

The Chair of the DBF noted how important it had been to reach out to external influence for assistance and hoped this demonstrated that Synod were challenging themselves.

The Director of Operations gave thanks to Bishops' Council and the DBF for placing their trust in him and noted his areas of focus to be prioritising time spent in parishes and rebuilding moral within the Diocesan team itself.

Andy Brookes introduced his report and invited members to work in groups of eight to give feedback on three areas relating to the report. A discussion then took place regarding the responses.

Members then discussed the best method of more widely communicating the result of the review. The following points were raised:

- The desire to continue in the spirit of transparency, openness and honesty.
- The need to respect the privacy of those interviewed for the report.
- The value and risk of publishing the report in full versus publishing the executive summary.

The Bishop of Southampton thanked everyone for their differing views. It was felt that it would be most appropriate to publish the executive summary along with a covering letter.

Clergy Wellbeing Update DS22/02

The Archdeacon of Winchester updated Synod on the Clergy Wellbeing workstream and results of the recent clergy wellbeing survey.

He highlighted the following:

- Compared with 2020 the number of clergy who said their wellbeing had improved has fallen significantly whilst those who say it has deteriorated has risen.
- When asked to pick words to describe how they currently feel many clergy picked 'Weary', 'Uncertain' and 'Frustrated'. It was also noted that a number of people also chose descriptors such as 'Positive', 'Energised' and 'Joyful'.
- A large percentage of clergy listed their relationship with churchwardens, lay colleagues and the local community as having a positive influence on their wellbeing.
- A large percentage of clergy listed their workload as having an adverse influence on their wellbeing.
- Deanery Chapter gatherings had a high rating as a source of support for clergy.

He confirmed that this work would feed into the emphasis on 'promoting clergy morale and wellbeing' from the Archbishop of Canterbury in his letter of the 10th January. In addition a variety of CMD days and events were being planned to support wellbeing.

Climate Emergency.

The Chair introduced the Chair of the Diocesan Environment Group (David Morgan) and the BST Environmental Lead (Archdeacon of Winchester).

The Chair of the DEG gave a brief update to Synod on the Winchester Diocesan Eco Journey along with the Parish Template, a document for parishes to use as a starting point on their Eco Journey. He spoke to the paper (DS22/03) and explained that two friendly amendments had been received.

The first amendment, proposed by Justin Hooper.

"This synod, recognises that there is an ecological and climate emergency and calls upon parishes, worshipping communities and individual Christians to respond by reviewing their practices and policies in the light of their responsibility to set an example in caring for creation."

The amendment was approved by majority with 3 against and 6 abstentions.

The second amendment, proposed by Richard Wise.

"This synod, recognises that there is a climate emergency and calls upon parishes, worshipping communities and individual Christians to respond to their responsibility to care for creation and requests the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance to commit to no future investment in fossil fuels."

This amendment was approved by majority with 20 against and 9 abstentions.

The final motion including both amendments was proposed by the Chair of the Diocesan Environment Group and seconded by The Archdeacon of Winchester.

"This synod, recognises that there is an ecological and climate emergency and calls upon parishes, worshipping communities and individual Christians to respond by reviewing their practices and policies in the light of their responsibility to set an example in caring for creation, and requests the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance to commit to no future investment in fossil fuels."

The amended motion was approved by majority with 2 against and 6 abstentions.

Update from Bishop's Council DS 22/04

As the meeting was running over time Ben Sargent proposed that the final items on the agenda be adjourned. It was suggested the update from Bishop's Council be covered in the informal meetings of the houses taking place in May.

The proposal was approved by majority with 3 against.

The Bishop of Basingstoke closed the meeting with prayer.

DEEMED BUSINESS

Approved nem con.

- Acts of Synod November 2020

Feedback from discussion groups

Diocesan Synod March 2022

At Diocesan Synod held on the 24th March 2022 breakout groups were invited to discuss Andy Brookes report on the review of the role of Chief Executive. Groups were asked to discuss the three following areas:

- What surprises you about the report?
- What encourages you?
- What questions do you have?

Each group was then asked to feedback the following:

- One comment
- One question
- One issue for Bishop's Council to pay particular attention to

The comments below have been recorded verbatim.

Comment

1. Joyfully surprised breadth/depth/honesty
2. Surprised and encouraged by openness of report
3. Encouraged by openness and happy it was done by someone outside
4. Couldn't see much participation from rural parishes
5. Encouraged by openness
6. Encouraged by tone, breadth and depth
7. Encouraged and impressed that people spoke their minds without fear or consequence and hope it continues
8. Positively surprised and delighted by openness of report
9. Encouraged by openness and breadth. There is now a whole Vacancy in See process – use it.
10. How beautiful that the report is so messy! Reflects how people are feeling.

Question

1. How quickly can we get to an ability to have consultation?
2. What is primary – diocese or parish?
3. God works through mess – how do we open ourselves up to this work of the spirit?
4. Bishops' Council and Diocesan Synod have seen the report – where does it go next?
5. Who can the report be shared with?
6. 85 % - where does this figure come from?
7. How do we keep openness going?
8. Given in public context – implications in wider community? Eg Press.
9. How can Synod draw on the skills we have?
10. Are we sure we have heard all of the voices, particularly laity?
11. What do we do with it now?

Issue for Bishop's Council to pay particular attention to

1. To work out how more voices are heard in consultation, including Synod.
2. Limited resources, how to have wider discussion that resources are going where needed, ie. The 85%
3. Direction of travel the next two years. Need clarity.
4. Same as comment above
5. Clergy need to be heard
6. How to increase engagement with everyone spiritually and more.
7. How quickly create reports for Synod to debate so all feel involved.
8. What do we value about local church ministry?
9. How to connect with parishes, the "diocese" then a positive comment.
10. How can we be confident to maintain momentum, stamina etc.