

QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDERS

Diocesan Synod June 2022

Each questioner is entitled to ask two supplementary questions at the meeting. These will all be record and shared with Synod members.

Sarah Yetman, Bournemouth Deanery

1. To the Bishop of Southampton:

"I've been the only full-time female incumbent in Bournemouth Deanery for the last five years and sitting around the table as one of the only women is starting to feel frustrating. Looking at the ministry statistics for the Diocese of Winchester, where only 25% of our primary leaders (Incumbents, Priests in Charge, Team Rectors and Vicars) are female I'd like to ask what the Diocesan Synod can do to support and encourage the leadership and ministry of women in the Diocese of Winchester?"

What percentage of appointments of primary leaders in the Diocese in the past 3 years have been female? What is being done to help attract women into posts of responsibility, both from within our Diocese and from further afield? Are there any examples of good practice and helpful models of recruitment and retention from other dioceses which we might be able to learn from?

Currently, we do not have a Dean for Women or equivalent post. Would this be a possibility to have in place going forwards? (Other Dioceses appear to have Wellbeing Officers in addition – would this also be something we could consider?)"

I am grateful to Sarah for raising this question, which is one that +David, Dean Catherine and I have had discussions about over the last 18 months. Unfortunately we have not moved forward in our deliberations as swiftly as we might, and I am sorry about that.

Over the last three years we have appointed 45 primary leaders (defined here as stipendiary incumbents and incumbent status posts): 28 men and 17 women (38%). This is still short of the equal proportion we would hope for, but it means the efforts which many of you have made, with us, to improve representation are bearing fruit.

To put this in longer term perspective we can also use the statistics in the excellent WATCH (Women and the Church) group reports. For the 2021 year:

In terms of total women clergy Winchester remains in the middle of the 'middle group' of dioceses who have 30-39% female clergy with 36%

In terms of total stipendiary parish clergy in post we are below the median with 24% - however we expect this to improve if we can continue to make primary leader appointments at approaching, and we hope soon exceeding, 40%

In terms of senior appointments, we show somewhat better, with 1 of 2 Suffragan Bishops and the Cathedral Dean.

To broaden the discussion beyond clergy to General Synod, there is Alison Coulter's important role as Vice Chair of the House of Laity. On the other hand as WATCH note it was disappointing that no ordained women were elected from our Diocese.

I am inviting female clergy to a lunch in September so that we can listen to a wider range of concerns and suggestions. I am grateful to Rev Angie Smith, who recently attended a conference for Deans of Women's Ministry, in order to hear what other dioceses are doing. With feedback from

the conference, alongside the suggestions of our own clergy, we aim to design a role for this diocese.

Supplementary question from Sarah Yetman at Diocesan Synod 23/06/2022

“Is it possible to form a working party group so that this can come back to the agenda on synod?”

Response from the Bishop of Southampton

I would be very happy to do that. My intention is to invite female clergy to come together in September and at this event we can see who would be interested in being on this working group. I would also like to hear from anyone that is unable to attend this event on how best to move this forward and invite them to email me directly. (bishop.debbie@winchester.anglican.org).

Liz Stuart, Winchester Deanery

2. To the Bishop of Southampton:

“How many self-supporting clergy are current deployed in the Diocese? Would the bishops like to reflect on what more could be done to honour, support and develop the ministry of self-supporting clergy?”

Thank you, Liz, for this question. We currently 48 priests licensed to Benefices as SSMs, as well as many others exercising a much-valued ministry with Permission to Officiate having been previously licensed SSM. Our Vocations team continue the work of actively discerning with potential SSM ordinands, we do encourage you to pray for those who have vocation for this ministry to offer themselves for it.

As bishops, we are very aware of the huge amount of ministry carried out by SSMs in a variety of roles across our diocese. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to them all, and are aware that we could do much more to honour, support and develop their ministry. A couple of small actions have already begun:

- **We are adjusting the IME programme for SSMs in full-time employment, so that they have more opportunities to meet and to receive a richer formational training experience**
- **We are encouraging SSM curates to consider their own deployability and are having vocational conversations with them to ensure that they have creative opportunities to pursue God’s call on their lives. This has begun with the current final year curates but will develop across all the year groups**
- **We are delighted that some SSM clergy have taken incumbent-level posts, pursuing God’s call, and hope to see this continue**

The important aspect in all this, is a vocational one rather than a financial one and we wish to offer all our clergy the same opportunities for training, ministry review, opportunity to take on diocesan-wide roles. If SSM clergy have particular comments or wisdom on how we can pursue this, it would be wonderful to hear from them.

Supplementary question from Liz Stuart at Diocesan Synod 23/06/2022

“Many SSMs are grateful that they can train through the Winchester Training Course. In view of the fact that Oxford Diocese has just decided to close its training course can you confirm that Winchester’s is secure?”

Response from the Bishop of Southampton

Training is very important. We are engaged in wider conversations with Guildford Diocese around how we offer and deliver the training but the provision of training itself is not under review.

Richard Wise, Eastleigh Deanery

3. To the Bishop of Southampton:

“Notwithstanding Revd Canon Gary Philbrick’s excellent work as Assistant Archdeacon, a full-time Archdeacon of Bournemouth is seen as absolutely vital by various people I have spoken to. When will the Diocese be able to make an appointment to this role, and are there any reasons why this might need further to be delayed?”

My thanks to Richard for raising this question which we know is a view shared by others. I recently asked the Diocesan Secretary and my Chaplain to look at this very issue, preparing options and proposals for further consideration. Reintroducing a second archdeacon will require us to weigh up the additional financial costs against the potential benefits to parish ministry, clergy wellbeing and diocesan leadership capacity.

It will also be vital for us to consult the Archdeacon of Winchester on his return from sabbatical.
