

DIOCESAN SYNOD DIGEST

This digest is produced to support the communication of information between Diocesan Synod, Deanery Synod and PCCs. Should you have any questions, please contact Cathy Laird 01962 737307 or email cathy.laird@winchester.anglican.org

St Mary's Andover generously hosted Diocesan Synod on 17 November 2022, offering their newly refurbished church building which provided a wonderful space to enjoy a time of food and fellowship together before the main discussion. The St Mary's team also led us in a time of worship and prayer, inviting us to join together as the body of Christ, setting the tone for a positive and fruitful meeting.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Bishop Debbie opened the formal part of the meeting with a Presidential Address, making the following key points:

- Bishop Debbie spoke of lessons gleaned from a book *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You Are Going: Leading in a Liminal Season* by Susan Beaumont, reflecting that as a diocese we were, and still are, in a season of liminality – between something that has ended but before something that has yet to begin. When we are in one of these seasons, she reflected, it is important how we live as we are being moulded. Bishop Debbie encouraged us that there are truths we can hold to in this time:
- **God is good.** His work continues no matter what. There is beauty in the brokenness we have experienced – a picture represented in the Cathedral West window. Despite challenges there is so much to celebrate in this diocese.
- **Prayer is powerful.** Bishop Debbie reflected that it's tough to know what to pray for when everything is upside down, as we have experienced in our diocese. But despite her own personal struggles in prayer during some of the hardest times, she felt sustained by the prayers and messages of support from those around the diocese.
- **Community is crucial.** We recognise our differences and rejoice in our diversity.
- **Flexibility is freeing.** One example of us discovering this as a diocese was through the arrangements following the death of Her Majesty the Queen when parishes 'coloured in' the outline of the protocol according to what worked for them. We found a freedom to do things differently and this broke down barriers in our practise and between us and our communities.
- **Trust is transformational.** Bishop Debbie reflected on the recent consultations that have taken place as part of the Vacancy in See process – it's required lot of time

spent listening to the perspectives of others. Breakthrough happens only when we are able to have honest conversations like this.

- Bishop Debbie concluded by encouraging us that we have a foundation for God to do so much more in our diocese - we are being shaped for what is to come.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

ITEM 1: DIOCESAN GIVING STRATEGY 2022-2025

The Stewardship and Resources Advisor, Luke Maundrell, presented the Diocesan Giving Strategy 2022-2025 to the members.

Key points:

The new strategy has three main aims:

- Encouraging a stronger culture of generosity across our diocese at all levels
- Increasing clergy competence and confidence in leading on giving
- Increasing the amount of people giving and the amount that people give

Further tools and resources will be given to support parishes over the next three years, with the following focus areas:

- More dedicated time supporting individual parishes
- Establish better lines of two-way communication to promote good practice
- Increase direct support through Clergy Training (IME, CMD) and Lay Training (BCM)
- Installing a Bishop Led Study Day on giving and finance
- Creating more high quality programmes and resources

The overarching purpose of this strategy is to highlight that the responsibility in this area lies with us all, as we all contribute to diocesan culture and to supporting our parish leaders. As we look to grow in this area, a call to action is laid before us all in encouraging and challenging one another.

- There was a discussion about how to envision parishes with concrete reasons for giving. Each parish needs to identify and understand their own specific goals and each will be different: some will be motivated by the building, others by community engagements, others by how are we showing the impact of our church. Identifying these different motivators is key.

ITEM 2: ARCHIDIACONAL PROVISION

The Diocesan Secretary, Colin Harbidge, presented the following proposal that has been recommended to Diocesan Synod by the Bishop's Council: *"This Synod endorses the proposed reinstatement of the post of the Archdeacon of Bournemouth and requests the Bishop's Council to work with the Diocesan Team to implement this"*.

Key points:

- Colin Harbidge explained that he is currently going out to deanery chapters and hearing many asking for the post to be reinstated. The Archbishop of Canterbury has given permission for the diocese to do this and there is no necessity to wait until the new Bishop of Winchester arrives.
- Questions were raised about the costing of this and the members were assured that this is being worked through with Bishop's Council and there are conversations taking place with national funding bodies to see if there is funding for this post.
- In response to questions around considering an interim Archdeacon post, it was explained that when a new Bishop of Winchester comes they will be encountering a lot of 'interims' and many people to recruit – recruiting this as a permanent role will offer stability. Interim posts for roles such as this are tricky to recruit to and limit the field of candidates you might get.
- There was overwhelming support from Synod for the post to be reinstated.

ITEM 3: REVIEW OF MEM & ARTS

The Joint Registrar, Gavin Foster, briefed members on the ongoing review of the Mem and Arts of the WDBF.

As part of the wider review of diocesan governance, the governing documents (the Memorandum of Understanding and Articles of Association) of the WDBF are being reviewed and revised. It's the first major revision since 2012.

The Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance is a charitable private company limited by guarantee. The Mem & Arts set out the Purposes of the company and its structures. The Purposes of the company are straightforward, as these are largely laid out in legislation. It is important to note that the WDBF is not "the Diocese" – it is a support company, owning and managing money and assets for the benefit of the Church of England, particularly in Winchester Diocese.

The way in which the WDBF is structured is still being discussed. All companies must have Members and Directors (the Directors are also charity Trustees). There are 3 main options:

1. Make the Diocesan Synod the Members and the Bishop's Council the Directors.
2. Retain the current model of the Bishop's Council being both the Members and the Directors.

3. Make the Bishop's Council both the Members and the Directors, and (because this creates quite a large Bishop's Council) establish a smaller Steering Committee to offer more agile leadership.

The options are still being discussed. Legal advice is being taken from both the Registry and specialist company law solicitors. Diocesan Synod will be asked to consider proposals on a future date.

ITEM 5: OFFICE REVIEW

The Bishops' Council consulted Synod members on the future location of the diocesan office. Representatives of a Small Review group drawn from members of Synod presented the various options, including remaining at Wolvesey (dependent on the purposes of the new Bishop of Winchester and Church Commissioners), refurbishing Old Alresford Place to make it fit for purpose, or finding other office premises. The recommendation of moving to Old Alresford Place has been agreed by the Bishop's council subject to the discussion at Synod for sense-checking.

Key points:

- None of the options considered were without compromise or challenges.
- The costs of renting or buying a new office were prohibitive and could not be considered.
- Remaining at Wolvesey was difficult due to limited space and the fact that the building was primarily the home of the Bishop of Winchester.
- As OAP is owned by the diocese it is financially the best option for us right now.
- Feedback from discussion groups included approval for the space at OAP and the potential provision of a prayer space and an 'away-day' space.
- Several people commented on the lack of transport links. A minibus service was suggested by one member.
- The Committee had decided not to consider a hybrid solution as one of the main aims is to bring the whole staff team together in one place.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:

16th March 2023

22nd June 2023

16th November 2023