

BISHOP'S COUNCIL & STANDING COMMITTEE

Update for Diocesan Synod May 2023

This note summarises the recent work and decisions of the Bishop's Council & Standing Committee (BCSC) since March 2023 and is shared with the Diocesan Synod for information. **This update does not include Council business that will be covered elsewhere on the Synod agenda.**

Synod will be invited to raise questions at the meeting.

The Council has met twice since their last update, in April and June.

Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee Business

We have been delighted to see a number of long term and complex pastoral schemes come into effect in recent months. We remain acutely aware of the emotional and logistical challenges pastoral schemes place on local parishes but hope these new structures will provide a clear and fruitful framework for future mission.

Diocesan Team

Working with the Interim Diocesan Secretary we have continued to review management structures, roles and responsibilities across the diocesan team initiating a range of internal and external reviews.

In April, we received the interim report from an external consultant into the joint Winchester & Portsmouth Diocesan Finance Team. This report was commissioned following the departure of the last Director of Finance, seeking to assess whether the role should be replaced on a like for like basis, and whether the joint working should continue. The initial conclusions show there is a strong desire in both dioceses and clear value to continue with the joint team albeit with designated finance leads in each diocese. A further 6 month period of reflection and testing is required before a final decision is made. In the meantime, we would like to record our sincere gratitude to Mark Teahan (Finance Controller - Winchester) and Elaine Aplin (Finance Controller – Portsmouth) for all their work in the last 7 months, going above and beyond their duties to lead the team through year end.

Safeguarding Panel

In June we received our annual report from David Pryde, Chair of the Independent Safeguarding Panel. Safeguarding continues to be a huge priority for all of us. The Independent Panel is made up of experts and practitioners from our key partner agencies across Dorset and Hampshire, providing strategic oversight and challenge to our Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

We were pleased to be able to add to skills and capacity of the Safeguarding Panel, when in April we approved the proposed appointment of Judith Cole to fill one of the vacant places. Judith comes with a wealth of specialist background, including having previously been the Chair of the Methodist Church National Safeguarding Panel.

Interim Diocesan Secretary

In April, we chose to extend the current contract for the Interim Diocesan Secretary by a further 6 months. Synod will recall that in 2021 we agreed to appoint an Interim Diocesan Secretary on an event limited contract, concluding 6 months after the appointment of the next Bishop of Winchester. It was our hope that this would give the new Bishop time to work with the BCSC to agree on what type of leadership role was needed for the Diocesan Team in the long term. On reflection, we agreed that extending this period to 12 months, would give all involved more time to reflect and consider.

Parsonages Board Business

In June, in their capacity as the Diocesan Parsonages Board, we considered/approved a request to change the designated benefice house in a multi-parish benefice. We weighed up the practical, logistical, financial and missional aspects of this request and ultimately agreed to support the proposal, pending the necessary full consultation with the 4 PCCS.

May 2023