

## QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDERS

Diocesan Synod June 2023

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

### Michael Minton, Christchurch Deanery

#### 1. To the Diocesan Secretary

At the Synod in November there was a presentation on Memorandum and Articles of Association regarding the WDBF. I understood a report on the decision to change the status from a company limited by Guarantee to a charity with trustees and voting members would go to the Synod for approval. In the papers the annual report and accounts is tabled for information only as the Directors of the WDBF have adopted it. The budget and CMF it seems are there for approval by Synod. Last year the budget was for information only. What is the status of the WDBF? Will Synod have voting rights both for finance and the annual report? Will Synod revert to the arrangement in 2010 when it would be meeting separately as an AGM to approve the report? What is the position with the DBE; has Synod approved the new trustees? How will it report to Synod?

**I am grateful to Michael for this opportunity to update Synod on the progress (or lack thereof) of possible changes to our corporate structures.**

**To clarify, the proposals discussed in November were around the possibility of amending the Mem & Arts of the WDBF to make the Diocesan Synod the Members of the Company. The WDBF would remain a Charitable Company limited by guarantee.**

**The Bishop's Council are currently both the Trustees (Directors) of the Company as well as being the Members of the Company. It is our intention to bring proposals to Synod that would make the Diocesan Synod the Members of the Company. This would result in Synod meetings needing to accommodate the AGM of the WDBF, formerly approving and adopting the Annual Accounts.**

**This work has not progressed much since November due to my workload and the need to address other more urgent priorities. It is my hope to have proposals in time for the November meeting of the Synod but I am not able to guarantee this.**

**The Diocesan Synod is required (under the Synodical Government Act) to accept or reject the WDBF budget's each year. To be clear, the 2023 Budget was presented to Diocesan Synod for approval (not information) in June 2022 (DS 22/07) and approved unanimously.**

**The 2024 budget will be presented in September. A critical element of this is the Common Mission Fund request, but as per paper DS 23/09, we are bringing the decision on the total CMF request to Synod in June due to the need to ensure PCCs can start finalising their local budgets sooner.**

**The elections for the 3 final Winchester Trustees of the new DBE were completed last month:**

Candidates for Trustee Position	No. of Votes
Alastair Barron (Lay) (Synod)	15
Jana Murray (Lay)	8

Gemma Elsworthy (Lay)	17
Andrew Micklefield (Clergy) (Synod)	19

**We are grateful to all four candidates for standing, and congratulate Alastair, Gemma and Andrew on their election. The DBE will report to both Diocesan Synods at least annually on their work and priorities.**

## Rachel Noel, Bournemouth Deanery

### 2. To the Bishops:

The latest statement from the Archbishop of Uganda <https://anglican.ink/2023/05/29/27921/> includes this text:

“I also want to remind you of a few things I shared in my Easter message in April. Homosexuality is currently a challenge in Uganda because it is being forced on us by outside, foreign actors against our will, against our culture, and against our religious beliefs. They disguise themselves as “human rights activists,” but are corrupting real human rights by adding LGBTQ to their agenda.

“There have always been a few people in our communities who were known as homosexuals and the communities knew how to relate with them. The fact that very few of our local languages even have a word for homosexuality shows how it is not a part of our cultures and our communities. This is one of the areas where our culture is aligned with the Bible, which never speaks positively about homosexual relationships.”

Regardless of western society / human rights activists, or of whether there are words for this in local languages in Uganda, homosexuality is part of the breadth of ways that people are human. Although in his statement this time, he's indicating that he doesn't support the death penalty, he still very clearly supports the imprisonment / isolation from society of LGBT.

As a diocese, we are still stating our support for this diocese and relationship, with no public challenge to the narrative that they are promoting.

Regardless of where people in this diocese sit on their approach to LLF and LGBT, how do we acknowledge this, and where is our care / concern / responsibility for the LGBT people of Uganda?

How do we support and protect LGBT people within our own communities, invited to participate in our support for our link dioceses in Uganda? What does this mean for LGBT people from our Diocese who may participate in link Deanery visits to Uganda? (This is the current foreign office info re Uganda: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/uganda/local-laws-and-customs>)

### **Bishop Debbie on behalf of the Bishops**

**I am grateful to you, Rachel, for this question and the opportunity to update Synod on this.**

**In response to a statement from the Primate of Uganda, Archbishop Stephen Kaziimba, on May 29<sup>th</sup>, the Archbishop of Canterbury responded on June 9<sup>th</sup>, explaining that he had written to Archbishop Stephen, as his brother in Christ, but with grief and dismay at the Church of Uganda's support for the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act.**

**Archbishop Justin pointed out that, while, as you say in your question, we continue within the Anglican Communion to disagree over some matters of sexuality, in our commitment to God-given**

human dignity we must be united, and that Anglicans around the world have long been united in our opposition to the criminalisation of homosexuality and LGBTQ people. “Supporting such legislation is a fundamental departure from our commitment to uphold the freedom and dignity of all people,” he said. “There is no justification for any province of the Anglican Communion to support such laws: not in our resolutions, not in our teachings, and not in the Gospel we share.”

He called on Archbishop Kaziimba and the Church of Uganda to reconsider their support for that legislation and reject the criminalisation of LGBTQ people. Archbishop Kaziimba responded later on June 9<sup>th</sup>, stating that in his view it is the Church of England which “has chosen to impair her relationship with the orthodox provinces in the Communion”. While at present there are clearly significant challenges in relationships, there remains a hope and heartfelt prayer, as Archbishop Justin also said, for reconciliation between our churches and across the Anglican Communion. We are also aware that there is a range of views within the Church of Uganda.

As you also say, Winchester is one of a number of Church of England dioceses with an historic link between some of our deaneries and certain dioceses in Uganda - other Winchester deaneries and groups being linked with Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar.

We are working with each deanery which is currently linked with a Ugandan diocese to support them in discerning how to move forward. In this we recognise that much good has come from the links between Ugandan and English Christians, and that local relationships could form a basis for the future reconciliation which is our hope and prayer; but also that some deaneries may decide to make changes to their plans in the light of the current situation.

We remain in touch with the Archbishop of Canterbury, who leads the Church of England in its relationship with the Church of Uganda, as the situation evolves, and will update Synod further at a forthcoming meeting.