

BISHOP'S COUNCIL & STANDING COMMITTEE

Update for Diocesan Synod November 2024

This note summarises the recent work and decisions of the Bishop's Council & Standing Committee (BCSC) since June 2024 and is shared with the Diocesan Synod for information.

Many items that the BCSC have discussed since June have then proceeded to Diocesan Synod as well. This includes the CMF Review, the Annual Report & Accounts, Racial Justice Strategy, and the review of our Financial Context. **These items are therefore not covered in this report as well.**

Synod will be invited to raise questions at the meeting.

Report from the Chair of the Independent Safeguarding Panel

In September, Mr David Pryde attended the Council meeting for his annual update and report on the work of the Independent Safeguarding Panel. The Panel exists to provide external oversight and challenge of our safeguarding function and strategy. The membership is drawn from a range of partner agencies (Police, Children's Services, Adult Social Care etc.) and meets four times a year. The Council are deeply grateful for all those professionals who offer their time and expertise to help scrutinise and assess this vital area of our ministry.

Mr Pryde updated the Council on progress in the last 12 months. This included:

- The highly positive response and update from PCCs to the Parish Safeguarding Dashboards with only 9 PCC who have not yet joined.
- The ongoing move to the national Safeguarding Case Management system.
- 3,442 people had completed online Church of England Safeguarding in the year.
- A further 4,402 people had completed Diocesan 'in house' training.
- A 25% increase in referrals to statutory agencies.

Mr Pryde noted that the increase in referrals was generally welcomed as it indicated a far greater awareness and engagement with safeguarding concerns across our parishes. More people are taking part in training sessions and being aware of safeguarding matters, and generally more people in need are being identified. Referrals are being received from churches across the diocese, most concerns are about incidents that have occurred in the community but reported at church. Very few concerns are raised about church officers and more referrals are concerns about adults rather than children.

Diocesan Advisor for Women's Ministry

In September and October, the Bishop's Council spent time looking at the principle and then the detail of creating a new role of Diocesan Advisor for Women's Ministry (DAWM). The number of female incumbents has been declining across our diocese over the last 5 years or so and is now at around 25% - below the national average. Winchester is one of only 6 dioceses not to have a DAWM.

This will be a part-time post to help support, champion and raise awareness of Women's Ministry across our diocese. The Council were very grateful to the Working Party that has been supporting Archdeacon Jean in reviewing this area of our ministry and preparing recommendations.

Routine Business

Routine business of the Bishop's Council has continued. Members continue to meet their responsibilities as Chairty Trustees in reviewing our strategic risk assessment and financial outlook.

As the Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee, the Council have continued to scrutinise pastoral schemes and proposals as they arise.

Instrument of Delegation for the Bishop of Southampton and Bishop of Basingstoke

At our October meeting, we considered and approved the updated instrument of delegation for the Bishop of Southampton and Bishop of Basingstoke. Due to the date of the consecration of the Bishop of Southampton this was urgent and therefore approved by the Bishop's Council in their capacity as Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod.

End of Triennium

As we come to the end of the Triennium, the Council would like to record their sincere thanks to some of their number who will not be standing for re-election. Revd Tim Matthews has decided to stand down after 3 years. Dr Esther Clift has resigned to focus more time on her other charitable commitments, and Mr Ian Newman has decided that after over 20 years serving on a range of diocesan committees not to stand again.

The Council and Executive Team are deeply grateful to them all for the huge commitment and contribution they have made. Their ability to support, challenge, lead and inspire has had an incredible impact on our diocesan community.

CH
October 2024