

Diocesan Synod Report

15 October 2022

This report has been published for diocesan representatives to disseminate to their deaneries. These are not the minutes of the meeting but a brief overview which offer discussion points that can be looked at by deanery synods and PCC's.

Diocesan Synod met on Saturday 15 October 2022 at St Alkmunds, Duffield, where the meeting opened with eucharist with the support of the Peak Deanery representatives.

Bishop's Presidential Address

Bishop Libby wished to reflect on the bishops' recent attendance of the Lambeth Conference. A two-week event that takes place once every ten years, drawing together all the Anglican Bishops across the globe. This was the fifteenth conference of its kind and this year's theme was inspired by the book of 1 Peter, 'God's Church for God's World', with the aim to consider some of the big issue facing the world today and discuss church and world affairs with the intention of looking a decade ahead to see how the Anglican Communion can be responsive to the needs of our 21st Century world.

With over 1000 bishops and spouses in attendance, Bishop Libby and Bishop Malcolm enjoyed sharing in bible study, fellowship and conversation with fellow peers from around the world, making and re-establishing friendships and taking the opportunity to gather and explore themes and share ministry streams.

Bishop Libby felt God was clearly among them as they engaged in worship in hundreds of languages, becoming family as they did so. Gratitude was expressed for the staff and volunteers looking after attendees and special thanks was given to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his wife Caroline, for hosting the event to bring the Anglican community together.

Lambeth Calls were shared and committed on the following themes:

- Mission and Evangelism
- Reconciliation
- Safe Church
- Environment and Sustainable Development
- Christian Unity
- Inter-faith Relations
- Anglican Identity
- Human Dignity
- Discipleship

Details of which can be found here: [Lambeth-Calls-July-2022.pdf \(lambethconference.org\)](#). Synod member will be invited to consider the calls at a future meeting.

The conference was overtaken by the human sexuality debate around marriage and there was real disagreement which Bishop Libby felt was important to acknowledge and name. But she reflected on the fact that this was a graced filled opportunity taken to continue to engage and learn to work together with our brothers and sisters.

Bishop Libby then reflected on the urgency we face across the globe of the climate crisis. Having attended a meal for 1500 people held in a marquee on the dried-out lawn of the Lambeth Palace, the surroundings made it all more poignant our call to action and focus given to the five marks of mission, encouraging us to live out our lives as children of Christ.

During the conference a moving video was shared of an interview with The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Nasoore Ole Sapit, Archbishop of Kenya. He spoke of the scars he bared from being mauled by a lion as a young man and powerfully brought Peter 1:8 to life as he reflected on the roar of the lion as an expression of the threat and fear inducing realities that surround us.

Bishop Libby called Diocesan Synod to consider what are the 'roars of the lion' that threaten us and how might we walk with faith as we face global, national, and Church threats. We are needing to make what seem impossible decisions; financial, demands on lay and ordained leaders, questions wrestling in doctrine. There is diploma and division, personal threats, griefs, and losses we carry and our own burdens. How we respond is vital. Anxiety may lead us into fear, effecting our ability to respond well or at all. Bishop Libby encouraged Synod to not be afraid, speaking of Christ centred hope and explaining that faith gives us perspective. As people of faith, we know we are fallen, and the world is in need and that we are not given a free pass from trouble. Faith gives us permission. Not pretending things are other than they are. Psalms give us permission. Faith, if it is faithful is honest. It offers us hope. Hope looks in every direction and enables us to see God present in everything. We are not alone. The one who calls us is with us. Concluding on the helpful liturgical punctuation of the prayer 'God is Good'. Hope is in the God our Glory.

Synod were encouraged to access the resources from the conference and shared this news with their deaneries. [The Lambeth Conference – God's church for God's world](#)

[The work of Synod](#)

Synod Secretary, Martyn Marples discussed the role of synod and encouraged members to look at the Synod Members Guide provided for reference. Attention was directed at the link between national and diocesan governance functions, and Synods ability to raise motions and questions. It is hope this narrative will be developed over time.

[Archdeacons Office update](#)

Bishop Libby gave a brief update expressing her delight of the archdeacon's team now being in place, enjoying the support of her new colleagues and the encouragement of already seeing the impact they are having across the diocese.

Following a question raised at the last Diocesan Synod regarding Area Dean and Assistant Area Dean appointments, bishop Libby wished to give some reassurance that now the archidiaconal team is securely in place she and the team have done the work to review the leadership of the deaneries and conversations have been going on across the deaneries with the hope that offer letters to Area Deans, Assistant Area Deans posts can be released following the clergy conference. Work around the deanery leadership team will then follow.

[Vision in Action](#)

[Growing Younger](#)

Bishop Malcolm explained the diocesan aspiration to 'grow younger', reflecting the national priority of doubling the number of young people in the Church of England by 2030.

Youth Council members, Rosie and Jacob were then invited to speak of their experience of being members of youth council. Synod were encouraged to hear their positive experience of feeling their voices being heard within the Church of England and the Council offering them a space to be with like-minded people of the same age. Members of the Youth council feel they are part of the future Church and wish to have a physical presence in these types of forums to ensure assumptions aren't made on behalf of the youth of our churches but contributions coming direct from younger members of the church.

A plea was made that Diocesan Synod fill the gap in the missing generations of Church, by listening to the younger members of Church through youth council representation. They wish to feel involved and appreciated and be part of genuine conversations that have long-term goals.

Ben Martin (youth council facilitator) wished to highlight the importance of good conversation. One deep conversation can potentially result in a life changing moment which may then help shape the future of our Church. Making young people feel they are being listened to creates trust and makes them feel they are a part of the Church not just the future of it. Diverse ages and experiences, voices that can learn from one another for the sake of the mission of God.

For the following months and years as the youth council grows, develops, reshapes and recruits, Ben hopes that Synod will encourage young people from their deaneries and parishes to join with them. And as Diocesan Synod, they continue to engage well with the youth council and youth of the diocese.

Reflecting on what his age and his children's ages will be in 2050. When 15 October 2050 hits people's calendars, Ben hopes for a thriving, flourishing diocese which is continuing to see lives transformed through the good news of Jesus.

Being moved by the speakers, Bishop Libby spontaneously requested and received Synods unanimous endorsement to co-opt a viable core of representatives from the Youth Council onto Diocesan Synod, to ensure they have a voice and opportunity to contribute to diocesan agendas. Bishop Libby also wished to ensure there was a mechanism in place to enable Youth Council to engage across whole of diocesan life as well as the legal formal Synod to ensure we are informed and transformed by the youth of our church.

Aiden Watson was then invited to speak as newly appointed strategic lead for youth ministry. He discussed recent research which looked at hundreds of young Christians. Results showed they were willing to share their faith, something that in previous studies hadn't been the case. A total 71% of those asked, confirmed they speak to their peers about their faith. Evangelisation is happening among young people who are able to share their faith in different ways to inspire a younger generation.

Time was then given for Synod to meet in groups to consider the following questions:

1. Does your church community recognise the need to grow younger?
2. How might we hear from young people in putting together a strategy for growing younger across the diocese?
3. How can your church community be good news to/with young people in your context?

Feedback from group work was taken to be collated. Aiden finished with a good news story from a Glossop church, where they opened the church at school closing time to offer pupils tea and toast. The event regularly saw over eighty secondary school children in attendance and out of these pupils were invited to the youth group at the neighbouring church which gained traction. The harvest is plenty! This is a generation who are spiritually open and often wanting to find out more.

[The Diocesan Board of Finance Budget for 2023](#)

Mark Titterton, Chair of the Board of Finance spoke to the paper provided to members before the meeting, explaining the work done by the governing groups (Business Committee and Bishop's Council) to reach this point. He explained that factors such as the lack of political stability, high inflation, uncertain financial markets, rising energy costs and reduction in congregation numbers have all been considered when setting this budget and wished to highlight that the common fund is a gift not a tax, which funds a good percentage of stipendiary ministry. Whether common fund will recover to pre-covid figures is yet to be established.

Martyn Marples then presented the current assumptions and gave assurance that analysis has been done and that as soon as the budget is approved, that will trigger how the DBF can make that budget

better. This budget is being set in the spirit of the vision to grow the Kingdom. Space was then given for questions and answers before Mark put the following motion to Synod for approval:

'That this Synod approves the Budget for 2023 as proposed by the Diocesan Board of Finance ('the DBF') and authorises the DBF to expend a sum not exceeding £9,118,165.'

Diocesan response to the cost-of-living crisis

Following the receipt and distribution of a £92k grant from national church to the Diocese of Derby to help the clergy tackle the cost of rising energy bills, additional resource of £9k is expected and debated on how best to use. A letter has been circulated to parishes which references the Energy Toolkit. The three key themes are:

1. Missional guidance
2. Energy use guidance
3. Financial support (£15m national fund £343k to diocese). This will go through the governance process in order to debate how to allocate.

Synod were asked to have conversations with their PCCs, contact their archdeacons and share stories of innovation. They were also encouraged to explore innovative ways to overcome the issue of heating large ancient church buildings, by considering using church halls, schools etc. The diocese wish to support PCCs be entrepreneurial in tackling this issue as much as is possible in Canon Law.

General Synod Report

General Synod Representative Sue Cavill presented the July Synod report and highlighted the following encouraging news:

- Changes to the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM) aim to modify the bishop's role. There was a good illustration of how Diocesan Synod can influence General Synod as representative Sian Kellogg raised a question on behalf of Synod member Peter Kelsey on the measure which encouraged care for all involved.
- UKME representation now increased considerably following a commitment from Synod to be more diverse and electing UKME reps to both the houses.
- Net Zero Roadmap now published which gives us a good starting point. Stella Collishaw (Community Action Officer) and Martyn Marples (Acting Diocesan Secretary) working together to put a plan in place for diocesan response. Sue Cavill has been elected as Secretary on the General Synod Environment Group and asks that this item has time given at a future Synod meeting.

Safeguarding

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors Safeguarding report was circulated before the meeting and noted as received. No questions were raised.

Education – DBE Trustee Nomination

The following motion was proposed by Bishop Malcolm and approved by Synod:

"To consider, and if thought fit, approve the election of Simon Morris to fill a vacancy among the elected Members of the Diocesan Board of Education."

Motion to Synod

Andrew King, Dove and Derwent Deanery Synod representative, proposed the following motion:

“That this Synod request Bishop’s Council to consider what additional financial contribution or additional resource to parishes requiring administrative support might be provided, with special attention for those parishes in vacancy or which are part of multi parish benefices.”

This motion was approved with the overwhelming majority in favour.

Bishop Libby was grateful to Andrew and the deanery for their encouraging engagement in synodical communication streams and their commitment bringing this motion forward. Bishop’s Council will now take this away to work on.

[AOB and Questions](#)

Please see Q&A paper [here](#) for details.

Author: Clerk to the Synod – Sian Kellogg