

Diocesan Synod Report

25 June 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 25 June 2022 for its first gathering in person since before the Covid pandemic. It was good to all be together again at St Barnabus, Danesmoor, albeit fewer members than usual (over 50 with lay majority). The meeting began with the official swearing in of the Diocesan Deputy Registrar Susan Newell. Diocesan Synod welcomed the Diocesan Chancellor Tim Clarke and other new members joining for the first time.

Annual General Meeting of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd (DDBF AGM)

(Including the Annual Reports and Financial Statements 2021)

The agenda included the annual general meeting of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd (DDBF) where Canon Mark Titterton was once again appointed by the Bishop of Derby as the Executive Chair of the DDBF. There was also the election of the Vice Chair to Business committee where Canon Julian Hollywell was once again duly elected and the election of Mr Peter Kelsey as the additional member appointed by Synod to Business Committee to serve for another one-year term. The annual accounts were adopted for presentation to Synod and subsequently approved (available in full on the diocesan website). Head of Finance, Martyn Marples provided an update on common fund, which highlighted the clear benefits of Churches engaging in the parish giving scheme, with it being a key contributor nationally to Church finances during the pandemic. Canon Mark Titterton delivered encouraging news of national funding being granted to the diocese for mission and welcomed ideas on how best that could be used to deliver our mission locally. The AGM closed following the approval to some minor changes to the Memorandum and Articles (Synods governing document).

Bishop's Presentation

Bishop Libby gave a presentation where she took time to recognise and reflect on the past two extraordinary years and the resilience shown by the diocese and what has been achieved across the diocese. This included: around 30 clergy incumbent status appointments, we ordained about 20 curates, licenced more than 15 Readers, continued to support people through discernment for those vocations, trained scores of 'people in the pews' for roles, and tasks and ministries in their local contexts. We appointed a new Dean, a new Suffragan Bishop, a new Director of Discipleship, Mission and Ministry, a new Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, a new Registrar, a new Chancellor, a new Director of Education, and a new Diocesan Secretary. New colleagues have been appointed into the Parish Support Office and we created three new archdeaconries and appointed three new Archdeacons.

The diocese has discerned God's call to a Vision of the 'Kingdom of God: Good News for All' seen in 'Transformed lives: growing Church and building community'. We navigated unprecedented financial pressures and have been able to sustain our budget planning, with renewed commitment to supporting parish financial sustainability and resilience and consider transformational ways to release and invest resources for mission.

Bishop Libby recognises the restraints caused over the past two years has meant that she needs to 're-introduce' herself and build trust in this new place we are now in. She shared an insight into her ministry with thematic detail of her very full weekly diary.

Derby Cathedral's strategic development plan

The Dean of Derby, The Very Revd Dr Peter Robinson presented the Cathedral's strategic development plan. Peter explained the Cathedral's purpose is to be a place for all to explore faith, life and heritage; a place of light, beauty, and innovation offering sanctuary, grounded in God's unconditional love revealed in Jesus Christ. Peter asked members to complete group work to discuss the plan and provide feedback to reflection. Conversations will now continue through the diocese on the Cathedral's plan which all are welcome to contribute to.

Education

Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) Measure

Diocesan Board of Education presented Synod with the DBE Measure (legal framework) and asked them to reflect on what this work enables the diocese to achieve in relation to its mission. The DBE's work with schools supports them to be distinctively Christian communities; where they can partner with our churches in building God's Kingdom and where children, staff and families can be invited to draw near to God through worship, word and sacrament.

The DBE Measure 2021 requires every Diocesan Synod to make a scheme for its DBE. Having consulted with key partners, the DBE wished Diocesan Synod to make a scheme which retained DBE's incorporated status and current composition, noting minor amendments will be required to the DBE's Articles of Association. The measure was proposed by Bishop Libby and approved by Synod.

Registry Update

Elections

There was an update from the Deputy Diocesan Registrar, Susan Newell, on current elections. There was a strong push for members to consider standing or putting colleagues forward for the following seats:

Bishop's Council (as elected by Diocesan Synod)

- East Derbyshire archdeaconry = 3 lay members and 1 clergy member
- Derby City and South Derbyshire archdeaconry = 2 clergy members

Deadline for nomination closed on 26 June 2022. Since then, a further two lay members have been appointed.

Vacancy in See (as elected by Diocesan Synod)

Vacancy in See is required to be always in existence in every diocese. The Committee only meets when there is a vacancy in the See. In other words, in the case of the Diocese of Derby, when the post of Bishop of Derby has become vacant. They discuss the needs of the diocese and prepare a statement of those needs which they then give to the Crown Nomination Commission to help discern a new appointment.

Election vacancies in June 2022:

- Three additional clergy (of whom, if possible, one from East Derbyshire archdeaconry and two from Derbyshire Peak and Dales archdeaconry)
- Seven additional lay people (of whom, if possible, two from East Derbyshire archdeaconry, two from Derbyshire Peak and Dales archdeaconry and three should be from Derby City and South Derbyshire archdeaconry)

Deadline for nomination closed on 8 July 2022. Posts on Vacancy in See has since been filled.

Business Committee (as elected by Bishop's Council)

- East Derbyshire archdeaconry = 1 lay member and 1 clergy member
- Derby City and South Derbyshire archdeaconry = 1 lay member and 1 clergy member
- Derbyshire Peak and Dales archdeaconry = 1 lay member and 1 clergy member

Deadline for nominations closed 3 August 2022. All lay member posts have since been filled.

Any other Business – Synodical Governance

The Deputy Diocesan Registrar (Susan Newell) wished to conclude her update by drawing members attention to Synods functions and the responsibilities of members. A paper was subsequently shared which gave further detail, including the Synodical Government Measure 1969 and Synod Standing Orders. Susan explained Synods remit is both wide ranging and critical, but also noted that these roles are of a strategic or 'big picture' nature. More detailed decisions fall under the responsibility of the Bishop's Council and other Diocesan committees, in particular the Business Committee. Members were encouraged to read papers in advance, consult with colleagues, come with an open mind and pray. Questions from members are welcomed and encouraged but a request to be mindful of Standing Order 69 when submitting questions to ensure they are clear and succinct to be deemed valid. Should topics need a broader space to be considered they can be submitted as a motion to debate.

Safeguarding

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors report provided an overview of the Safeguarding teams priorities and workload, which included:

- Past Case Review 2 (PCR2),
- survivor engagement,
- safeguarding data,
- training,
- safer recruitment,
- parish dashboard,
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP),
- engagement with parishes,
- Information sharing,
- National Church update.

The report identified the following priorities and next steps:

- Launching our improved PSO support
- Focussing on our PCR2 review, particularly working on our quality improvement and communications plans
- Developing our survivor engagement to ensure we can meet the requirements of the new Responding Well guidance.

The report was noted, and no questions raised.

Questions

The meeting then turned to offering space for supplementary questions to already submitted [synod questions and answers](#). This was an engaging and encouraging section of the meeting, where synod members, both lay and clergy, utilised the opportunity to engage with diocesan priorities and challenge and encourage conversations for consideration and development. Themes included:

- 2030 Net Zero carbon targets,
- Laity skills audit,
- simplification of Church processes,
- DMPC processes,
- Archdeacon and Area Dean responsibilities,

- Diocesan Communications and response rates,
- Diocesan Vision targets and timescales,
- Cost of living crisis and Clergy Hardship Fund,
- Stipend increases,
- Diocesan website,
- Clergy Discipline Measure.

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