



THE DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH
DIOCESAN SYNOD

DRAFT Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Synod held on Saturday 3 October 2020 over Zoom conference call.

Present:

- House of Bishops: Bishop Martin Seeley, Bishop Mike Harrison
Archdeacons: Archdeacon David Jenkins (Sudbury), Archdeacon Jeannette Gosney (Suffolk), Archdeacon Rhiannon King (Ipswich)
House of Clergy: 39 Members of the House (8 apologies)
House of Laity: 48 Members of the House (7 apologies)
Ex-officio: 13 Ex-officio Members (3 apologies)

In Attendance:

The Diocesan Registrar, the Diocesan Secretary, 9 members of staff and 2 visitors.

Tony Allwood, Chair of House of Laity, in the Chair

Table with 2 columns: Item Number and Description. Rows include: WELCOME (Tony Allwood welcomed members...), 20.01 PRAYER (+Mike opened in prayer.), 20.02 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS (The church is facing three pandemics...), 20.03 DISCERNING OUR FUTURE (Members were put into breakout rooms to discuss six different questions: 1. How do we identify local/focal ministers... 2. What's the future role of church buildings...)

	<p>3. How do we strengthen congregations and deepen faith?  4. How do we strengthen our response to our environmental crisis?  5. What creative ideas do we have for developing new sources of income?  6. How do we extend our community engagement and partnerships for the benefit of the people of Suffolk?</p> <p>These headings fit under deepening faith and deepening service and build on the firm foundation that God provides.</p>
<p><b>Revd Sharon Potter, Chair of House of Clergy, in the Chair</b></p>	
<p><b>20.04</b></p>	<p><b>FEEDBACK AND POLLS</b></p> <p>The feedback from the 12 groups were shared with the main meeting. This feedback was collated on to a number of slides and these will be circulated with the minutes.</p>
<p><b>20.05</b></p>	<p><b>FINANCIAL ITEMS</b></p>
<p><b>20.05.1</b></p>	<p><b>DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF 2021 BUDGET</b></p> <p>Mark Pendlington, Chair of the DBF, set the context of the budget paper, reminding Synod that at the last meeting, in October 2019, the DBF's budget was planned to break even, paving the way for future growth. COVID-19 has been a severe blow. Mark thanked those involved, specifically Gary and the members of the Finance Committee for the numerous meetings that have been held, enabling the team to react and act quickly. Mark also thanked everyone in parishes and deaneries, for all that they are doing - he is aware of how hard and overwhelming the situation is. The diocese needs to work hard together to survive, recover and to thrive, growing throughout the diocese and beyond.</p> <p>There is an awareness that the finance sometimes gets in the way of the church's mission but the goal is to get the finances back to where they need to be and ensure those finances support the work the parishes do and that they are able to meet the demands of the ambitions held across the county.</p> <p>Gary Peverley, Finance Director, provided a summary of the budget paper, DS(20)05.1, highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 2012-19, the DBF made cumulative deficits of around £3.5m but in 2018/19 it made small operational surpluses, positive progress. However, 2020 has been transformed into an expected £2m forecast loss</li> <li>• Taking into account the £600k grant from the national church and savings made of c £0.7m cost savings, the forecast is now £1.3m deficit for 2020, ie there is still an expected financial gap</li> <li>• Most of the anticipated gap is parish share - around £1m short on receipts</li> <li>• The 2021 budget is set in the context of the events of 2020 ie with considerable uncertainty and unpredictability, which remains.</li> </ul> <p>Key assumptions made for the 2021 budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net parish share £6.4m (slight reduction to 2020 budget)</li> <li>• Average clergy and curates to be 110 full time equivalents (FTE), achieved by increasing the number of clergy vacancies (FTEs increase to 117 FTE if national church Strategic Development Funded roles are included)</li> <li>• No DBF staff salary or clergy stipend increases</li> <li>• Slight reduction in costs of supporting clergy and parishes</li> </ul>

On this basis, the outcome is a deficit of £0.5m in the unrestricted fund.

Gary also highlighted the impact of COVID-19 and future deficits on liquidity and the effect on the unrestricted and restricted funds.

In conclusion, it is an ambitious budget but it has been thoroughly thought through and discussed and trustees believe it to be the best outcome to work towards.

The meeting was opened up to questions.

Justin Rabett (Clare deanery), asked if everyone paid their parish share would we meet the budget. Gary confirmed this would be the case.

Revd Mark Woodrow (Hadleigh deanery), explained how his deanery has been encouraging parishes to use their reserves to pay parish share. Has the diocese taken into account that many parishes may not have further reserves to fall back on in 2021, having done this for 2020. Gary confirmed he is keeping in close contact with parishes. The broader picture is very mixed across the diocese and individual conversations are continuing. He is very aware 2021 is going to be a difficult year. Gary encouraged those parishes with reserves to acknowledge that the rainy day has arrived.

David Lamming (Sudbury deanery & General Synod member), referring to the Suffolk Show, at a cost of £15k, commented that as the decision to cancel the show in 2021 has been made, there is a saving of this amount for 2021.

Sally Wainman (Colneys deanery) asked if the finance team saw a more prominent role for Local Giving Advisers (LGAs) and encourage closer working? Mark responded to say that the pandemic has enabled on-line ways of working. The diocese will continue to use this method to assist with closer working and the sharing of ideas, certainly including the LGAs.

Mark Pendlington, Chair of the DBF moved that:

"This Synod authorises the Diocesan Board of Finance to expend a sum not exceeding £9,940,028 in the financial year beginning 1 January 2021 in accordance with paper DS(20)P05.1."

The motion was then debated.

Revd Jonathan Ford (Thingoe deanery) encouraged members to support the budget, it is going to be difficult but commended the work that has been done on the budget. He believes that God will see us through the crisis and come through stronger and more faithful to a God who provides.

Revd Robin Spittle (Colneys deanery) asked if there had been plans put in place for a back up budget, if the full parish share were not to come in. Sharon Potter confirmed that the Finance Committee regularly review, analyse and plan all elements of the budget.

The motion was proposed by Mark Pendlington, seconded by Ian Wigston (Sudbury Deanery). Members voted by a poll over Zoom. The results were:

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>For</td> <td>94</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Against</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abstained</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> <p>Mark Pendlington, Chair of the DBF moved that:</p> <p>“The sum of £7,000,000 required from parishes to fund such expenditure be allocated to parishes in accordance with the current diocesan parish share allocation formula.”</p> <p>The motion was then debated.</p> <p>Dean Joe Hawes asked what resources does the diocese have to help parishes think creatively about the additional fundraising required? Mark Pendlington responded to say that the original plan for this synod was to focus on fundraising and hold a large information sharing ideas across the diocese. This remains the plan, whether that be in person or on zoom. It is obvious that there is a wealth of experience and knowledge within our diocese and we need to capture it, share it and use it to help and support each other.</p> <p>The motion was proposed by Mark Pendlington, seconded by Ian Wigston (Sudbury deanery). Members voted by a poll over Zoom. The results were:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>For</td> <td>93</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Against</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abstained</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	For	94	Against	0	Abstained	2	For	93	Against	1	Abstained	2
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<p><b>20.05.2</b></p>	<p><b>PRESENTATION OF THE 2019 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</b></p> <p>Gary Peverley gave a high level summary of the 2019 financial statements, paper ref DS(20)P05.2. Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small operating surplus</li> <li>• An overall surplus, resulting from significant gains from investments and adjustments in relation to the clergy pension scheme</li> <li>• A strong balance sheet, noting that most funds are restricted for clergy housing or to support clergy stipends. The unrestricted fund, which supports the operations had just under £4m at the year end</li> <li>• A good result with challenges ahead</li> <li>• Auditors approved the accounts although there is an ongoing issue (as with many organisations) around going concern – our ability to pay our bills in the future.</li> </ul> <p>The 2019 financial statements, as outlined in paper DS(20)P05.2 were received by an overwhelming majority.</p>												
<p><b>20.06</b></p>	<p><b>THE CLERGY COVENANT FOR WELLBEING ACT OF SYNOD</b></p> <p>Revd Sharon Potter formally proclaimed the Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing Act of General Synod 2020. It is anticipated that this will be a topic for debate at a future Diocesan Synod and enable the diocese to take the covenant forward.</p>												
<p><b>20.07</b></p>	<p><b>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAC) FOR THE CARE OF CHURCHES</b></p> <p>The paper ref DS(20)P07 provides the annual report for the DAC. A poll was taken. The report was received with an overwhelming majority.</p>												

<p><b>20.08</b></p>	<p><b>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION (DBE)</b></p> <p>The paper, ref DS(20)P08 provides the annual report for the DBE. A poll was taken. The report was received unanimously.</p> <p>David Lamming (Sudbury and General Synod rep) asked a question to Jane Sheat (Director of the DBE). Since the Diocesan Synod last met, General Synod have debated and considered a revision of a new DBE Measure. The final approval of this measure will be an agenda item at the next General Synod in November 2020. A controversial issue raised in February 2020 was whether a DBE should be only a Charitable Incorporated Body, an Unincorporated body or a committee of the DBF. David asked what the constitution is for this diocese and what would be the preferred constitution. Jane responded to say that our diocese has an unincorporated DBE. The debate has not happened yet locally as to the preferred option but is working closely with partners.</p>
<p><b>20.09</b></p>	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b></p> <p>One amendment was proposed to the previous minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2019, DS(19)M3.</p> <p>The first sentence of minute 19.38.3 (on page 8) should be amended to read:  "James Hall advised that various Canons, including Canons B11, B14, B14A, C5, C8 and E2, had been amended by General Synod by Amending Canon 39, and the Amending Canon was duly promulgated."</p> <p>A poll was taken whether members approved the minutes with the suggested amendment as outlined above. They were approved unanimously.</p>
<p><b>20.10</b></p>	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA</b></p> <p>No matters arising were raised.</p>
<p><b>20.11</b></p>	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL</b></p> <p>The minutes of the following Bishop's Council meetings were received unanimously:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 February 2020, ref P11.1_BC(20)M1</li> <li>• 14 May 2020, ref P11.2_BC(20)M2</li> <li>• 9 July 2020, ref P11.3_BC(20)M3</li> <li>• 7 September 2020, ref P11.4_BC(20)M4 (draft minutes) (plus explanatory note on Total Return, ref P11.4.1)</li> </ul>
<p><b>20.12</b></p>	<p><b>QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>No questions were received by the deadline.</p>
<p><b>20.13</b></p>	<p><b>NOTICES</b></p>
<p><b>20.13.1</b></p>	<p><b>DEANERY – GIPPING VALLEY</b></p> <p>As at 1 October 2020, a new deanery has been established. The Gipping Valley deanery has combined Stowmarket and Bosmere deaneries, with Revd Diane Williams as the Rural Dean.</p>

<b>20.13.2</b>	<p><b>LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH</b></p> <p>On 9 November, the national church will be launching a toolkit of resources that addresses the church's view on the Christian teaching and learns about identity, sexuality and marriage.</p> <p>As part of the toolkit there are 16 video stories as well as the launch of an online learning hub and many other resources. It is likely to be a point of discussion at a future Diocesan Synod.</p>
<b>20.13.3</b>	<p><b>IICSA</b></p> <p>The full investigation report regarding the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) will be published on Tuesday 6 October. It includes an open letter written by the Archbishops.</p>
<b>20.13.4</b>	<p><b>CHRISTMAS – COMFORT AND JOY</b></p> <p>This year's Christmas campaign has been launched by national church and is called "Comfort and Joy. There are various resources available for online services and social media. Parishes are encouraged to provide all the Christmas services on there "A Church Near You" website page.</p>
	<p>Bishop Martin closed the meeting with a blessing.</p>

**The next meeting of the Diocesan Synod will be held at 9.30am, on Saturday 20 March 2021, location tbc or over Zoom.**