

Yellow Paper B

BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Bishop of Carlisle
Secretary: Mr Derek Hurton

Report of the meeting held at Church House, Penrith on Monday 11th November 2019

Present:- The Bishop of Carlisle (in the Chair), the Bishop of Penrith, the Archdeacon of Carlisle, the Archdeacon of West Cumberland, the Archdeacon of Westmorland and Furness, the Revd R P Ham, the Revd J Maycock, the Revd A B Norman, the Revd S Thompson, the Revd A Towner, Dr C Angus, Mr A R H Cook, Mrs V Hallard, Mr C Howarth, Mr D Hurton, Mr J A E Johnson, Mr M Wilson.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Other than those on the agenda. Chris Angus reported that our Strategic Development Funding application had been submitted to the Church Commissioners and that we would hear in December whether we had been successful. Bishop James thanked all the people who had been involved in putting the application together.

Derek Hurton reported that we had submitted a bid for Strategic Ministry Funding for three additional curates in 2020. Our bid had been on the basis that, in the light of our financial position, we would need to receive 100% funding for the posts. We had been notified that we had been awarded funding for just over two thirds of the costs of three curates, which was very disappointing. The Bishop's Staff meeting had considered how to respond and had concluded that we should respond to the National Church and request the same amount of funding but for two additional curates. This would not require additional Strategic Ministry Funding or any contribution from the Diocese but would enable us to recruit additional curates and support the national drive for more vocations.

No suggestions had been received for co-options to the Vacancy in See Committee. The Committee's current composition did not reflect the Diocese in terms of gender and geography and the constitution required this to be addressed. Members were again encouraged to identify suitable women from the west of the Diocese who could be co-opted.

Steering Committee Report

The report of the meeting held on 6th November 2019 was received.

God for All: Strategy Beyond 2020 – Vision Refresh

Bishop Emma reminded the Council of the background and timetable for the Refresh of the God for All Vision. The Council considered what "The Stephens Question" would be for the Diocese. That question provided a test for all our activities and asked "If we do x will it lead to y?", where "y" was the desired outcome. Various suggestions were made, with a common theme being that of "growing disciples".

As part of the ongoing “100 Days of Listening” Bishop Emma led the Council through a workshop which prioritised potential revisions to the God for All Strategy. The responses were to be put alongside responses from a wide range of other groups and individuals across the county. At its residential meeting in January the Council would consider the responses and how the Vision needed to be adapted to reflect them. The question of “how” priorities were put into action would be as important as “what” the priorities were.

Feedback from October Synod

The afternoon session of Synod, at which local politicians had articulated their view on the place of faith in politics and had then responded to questions, had been very interesting and engaging. It could have been extended without losing its impact.

The debate about care for God’s creation prompted a number of comments. If we were serious about making significant reductions to the church’s environmental footprint then our buildings would be a burden as most of them were inherently difficult to insulate and heat effectively. Bishop James reported that the Archbishops were expected to write to all Dioceses shortly to ask them to promote the environmental issue. He hoped that more churches would adopt the Eco-Church award scheme (<https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/>). Lee Townend reported on the approach being taken by our partner diocese of Stavanger in Norway. There, every church member was being encouraged to take small actions that could collectively change mindsets. They were however concerned to ensure that the focus on the environment should not deflect from evangelism.

Items covered at recent meetings of the Bishop’s Leadership Team

A team of Diocesan trainers was being created to offer unconscious bias training to local audiences. The Leadership Team had received the training at their residential meeting in October.

The reported discussions about ARCIC (the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission) were welcomed. Bishop James reported that the new Roman Catholic Bishop of Lancaster was very supportive of the ecumenical county. Mission Communities planning to hold Moving Forwards workshops to promote the development of God for All were being encouraged to open the workshops to the wider group of Companion Churches.

Green Health

Bishop James reported on this initiative which involved the use of churchyards as green spaces for gardening projects to promote mental health and well-being. It was also proving to have evangelistic benefits as it helped churches to engage with their local communities. The Church Times had recently sponsored “Green Health Awards” and these had attracted some good entries, but the Bishop was now keen to see Cumbrian churches getting involved. Some working models and examples would be helpful. Rydal Hall had already used its gardens to offer opportunities for ex-service people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. The Bishop would contact the relevant national church officer to seek further information on models and examples which could be promoted within the Diocese.

Mission and Pastoral Committee matters

No matters were raised.

Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees

The draft minutes of the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees of West Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness were received, with one minor correction being suggested.

