

## CARLISLE DIOCESAN SYNOD

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Carlisle Diocesan Synod held on Tuesday, 15th October 2022 at Newbiggin Village Hall Penrith.**

Bishop James welcomed the new Bishop of Penrith, the Rt Revd Rob Saner-Haigh, to his first meeting of Diocesan Synod.

Prayers and Biblical Reflection were led by the Bishop of Penrith.

**1. Membership:** Members of the House of Clergy approved the co-option of Revd Canon Benjamin Carter, Cathedral Canon Warden, and Revd Shanthi Thompson.

Revd Shanthi Thompson assumed the Chair and invited Chris Angus to formally welcome the Bishop of Penrith to Synod on behalf of the House of Laity. Shanthi then welcomed him on behalf of the House of Clergy.

**2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022:** the minutes were approved.

**Matters Arising:** there were no matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

**3. Bishop's Council Report:** Synod received the report of the Bishop's Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

#### **4. Diocesan Board of Education (DBE):**

I) **DBE Draft Terms of Reference (ToR):** Charlotte Tudway, the Diocesan Director of Education, introduced the Terms of Reference (ToR). The new Diocesan Board of Education measure which came into effect in April 2021 required each diocese to make a scheme setting out the governance arrangements for the Board of Education. Of the various options available in the measure we had chosen to become a statutory subcommittee of the Diocesan Board of Finance. We had chosen this option because it most closely reflected the current working relationships with the Board of Finance and also enabled the DBE to continue to draw on the expertise of colleagues within the Board of Finance staff team. The scheme, which had been approved by Synod at its meeting in March of this year, had now been certified by the Archbishop's Council and would come into effect on the 1st of January 2023. Synod received the ToR.

II) **DBE Elections:** Derek Hurton explained that due to the DBE being reconstituted with the new scheme the current elected members' term had been extended by a year. Elections had therefore not taken place at the same time as the elections in 2021 to other boards and committees. As the scheme was now in place the election process could now be completed. Derek encouraged Synod members to make nominations.

#### **5. Deanery Synod Elections formula:**

Ali Ng, Head of HR and Governance, introduced this item. The triennial deanery synod elections were due to take place next year. Since the last elections we had carried 175 vacancies and many deaneries were struggling to fill their Synods. We had therefore taken the opportunity to review the formula that calculated membership numbers. The proposal was to reduce the numbers from the current total of 528 places to 391. Rural Deans and Lay Chairs had been consulted and all but 1 were in favour of the reduction. Synod approved the new formula.

## **6. General Synod Report:**

Chris Angus introduced the General Synod (GS) Report. Chris informed Synod members that all General Synod papers and transcripts were on the Church of England website should they be interested in accessing them.

Individual GS members reported on different aspects of the latest GS Group of Sessions. Val Hallard highlighted that fringe meetings were organised by members of General Synod to enable people to learn more about topics in which they might be interested. One of these had been an environment group which looked at the routemap to carbon zero. The Church of England website provided a host of resources to help churches with that journey and Val encouraged members to sign up to it. There had also been a fringe meeting about the situation in Palestine. This meeting had been supported by Christian Aid. Our Diocese motion had been discussed and we hoped it might come to General Synod in 2 to 3 years time once it had moved up the queue of outstanding motions.

Jane Maycock had attended a fringe meeting on the launch of a book titled 'How Village Churches Thrive'. She informed members that she had copies of the book and that they should get in touch if they wanted a copy.

## **7. Lambeth Conference:**

Bishop James introduced this item. The Lambeth Conference had taken place at the University of Kent in the summer. It usually took place every 10 years but due to covid it had been postponed from 2020. There were about 1200 delegates at the conference, including 650 bishops from all over the world, their spouses, church officials and interpreters. The theme of the conference was God's church for God's world, and the idea was that we should walk, listen and witness together in an extraordinary and very rich diversity of contexts and backgrounds. The programme was put together by an international design team and a working group which included Emma Ineson, the former Bishop of Penrith. There was a Eucharist, morning prayer, evening prayer, and Compline every day, led by the different provinces with very different styles. There were bible expositions on 1 Peter. As at the last Lambeth conference, there had been an opportunity really to get to know a handful of bishops from other parts of the world during the study groups. There were plenary sessions with keynote addresses by the Archbishop of Canterbury and a day at Lambeth Palace with an environmental theme.

The 'Lambeth Calls' were on science and faith, the environment and sustainable development, discipleship, Christian unity, mission and evangelism, safe church, Anglican identity, reconciliation and human dignity. Human dignity was the theme which had attracted most press attention because there was a reference to Lambeth Resolution 110

from 1998 about sexuality. This attention was disproportionate given the long list of Calls and the breadth of the human dignity Call, which had also covered colonialism, slavery and poverty, and which emphasised very strongly the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings. The Archbishop of Canterbury had provided a strong introduction to the Call which was instrumental in it receiving near unanimous acceptance.

The Conference demonstrated how the Church of England is a small but significant part of a huge global communion of brothers and sisters who call themselves Anglicans. Some would now describe this global communion as a coalition who live together in reconciled diversity. The Church could expect to be talking much more about reconciled diversity as discussions continued about Living in Love and Faith in the coming months.

### **8. God for All:**

Bishop James introduced the God for All item. This was in essence the presentation that would be given at the roadshows around the county over the coming months. The refreshed God for All Vision & Strategy had emerged from a huge amount of feedback received in 2019 from all the churches and chapels in the county along with the Salvation Army citadels.

It provided an opportunity to consider what a flourishing church in Cumbria could look like while not shying away from addressing the very considerable challenges of which we were all aware and that we faced week by week in our churches: the continued financial fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, the effect that the pandemic had had on church attendance, and the fatigue that so many church leaders locally, lay and ordained, continued to feel. For this reason, we had approached this renewed strategy with principles of “realism and hope”. If we could begin with a realistic assessment of the challenge we could perhaps devise a strategy that gives us hope.

For the last few years we had been following an approach of ‘adaptive change’, beginning by involving as many people as possible across the Church in Cumbria in refreshing our God for All vision and strategy. The process had begun in 2019 with the 100 Days of Prayer that started on Pentecost Sunday and had finished on 17<sup>th</sup> September. At that time we prayed for guidance for a refreshed vision. 25,000 vision refresh prayer cards were distributed across the county and 1,500 people gave feedback. Then we went on to 100 days of listening, during which time various resources were offered to help people contribute their thoughts, especially to consider what our priorities should be as we moved forward. There had been an online tool and a survey which helped us to think about our top 4 priorities for the coming years and a chance for people to feedback what they felt God had been saying during the praying time.

From that process had emerged the four themes of Follow Daily, Care Deeply, Speak Boldly and Tread Gently, which were now placed at the very core of our refreshed God for All Vision & Strategy.

Follow Daily was about discipleship and represented our commitment to help each other to follow Jesus more closely, growing as His disciples in every aspect of our lives, corporately and as individuals.

Caring Deeply was about listening to our local communities, trying to discern what the particular needs were for people around us, responding in loving service, trying to transform injustice where we found it, challenging oppression and pursuing peace and reconciliation. This was very much about our pastoral care and concern for other people.

Speak Boldly reflected a pledge to share our faith in Jesus in everyday ways, trying to connect with everybody, especially the people who were least represented in our churches, and approaching this in both time-honoured and pioneering ways.

Tread Gently was about striving to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and sustaining and renewing the life of the earth. This was about the environment and our calling to be good stewards of God's earth.

These four themes were the central tenets of our ecumenical commitment and it had been hoped that they would be launched in the autumn of 2020. Work had been completed on new branding in readiness for the launch, but then the COVID pandemic had hit, causing various lockdowns and impacting all of our lives hugely. Not surprisingly, the vision and strategy had to take a backseat as we began to explore what church looked like under all these new circumstances, first in the short term, and then in the medium and longer term. It had therefore been agreed there should be a time for prayerful reflection, a time to pause and see what God might be saying to us through the pandemic, and how the refreshed vision would play out in the new world in which we were all now living.

Key to the refreshed vision and strategy was our absolute commitment to the Mission Communities that had been created. These were groupings of mutually supportive and mission-centred churches. As resources became ever tighter, the need for effective Mission Communities became even more imperative if we were to maintain a Christian presence in every community and keep church local. They remained the basic building blocks from which our refreshed God for All Vision could be delivered. They should be collaborative in their approach and collaborative between denominations. They should be prayerful, praying together regularly as a priority. They should be ecumenical, being Christian first and foremost and presenting a united common purpose in witness in Christ's name, with a shared strategy in each Mission Community. They should be resourceful, sharing their gifts and resources, with local leadership in each church. Finally they should be mutually accountable, recognising the impact their actions and their omissions might have on one another, and be accountable to God and to our denominational leadership. They were not about rationalisation, a centralised decision-making process or closing churches and cutting clergy. Nor were they about exclusivism or principally about structural change.

Bishop James then introduced a brief video presentation featuring the Revd Graham Skinner who spoke about the Eden Wild Goose Mission Community and how he was approaching his role as the Mission Community Leader in that place.

Bishop James then continued to address the process through which the vision and strategy had been developed. In December 2021, a range of 24 representatives had been asked to make presentations that answered the question 'What does a thriving expression of church

or mission or faith look like In your context?’ They represented all 4 partner denominations, were lay and ordained and came from a complete cross-section of churches and communities. The presentations that they gave helped to inform the support and development of the broad God for All Vision & Strategy that was now before Synod.

Bishop Rob started his presentation with a video of a jazz band. This was to illustrate the picture of how he envisaged that Mission Communities could work. There was a central melody and then each musician played their solo before the performance all came back together to a central theme. Each person was contributing a different element and was encouraged to improvise on their element, but united by a central theme. Each person used their gifts and skills to create something beautiful out of different parts.

The phrase we were using to encapsulate this approach was 'faithful improvisation'. Across the churches of Cumbria, each church, each person and each Mission Community was different and each was called to play a different part. Each church community would be full of people with different skills and different gifts that could be used to serve the different needs in each place. And so we were each playing a slightly different part in the overall music that God was calling us to play.

A key part of this was that each of us mustn't simply go off in a different direction musically, resulting in a cacophony of all sorts of different sounds. Instead there should be a unity of purpose. This 'faithful improvisation' was the way that our churches and Mission Communities could work and develop because we couldn't and shouldn't impose one way of doing things, but we should all expect to try new things.

Bishop Rob asked Synod Members to discuss in small groups how, in their Mission Communities and church communities, they were already working at, or could work towards, this idea of faithful improvisation.

Bishop Rob then reiterated that Mission Communities were crucial to our strategy and remained the cornerstones which supported a shared perspective on mission. There were 4 key areas of this shared perspective. The first was strength in diversity. There was strength in having diverse, vibrant and locally-driven mission which was being lived out through local churches working together for the sake of reaching everybody in their communities. The second was living in hope. There had been a long term decline in church attendance and finances so we needed to be good stewards of the resources that God has given us to best serve our mission. We should therefore live in hope but with a healthy dose of reality. The third shared area was that local was key, that the local church mattered, reflecting and serving the locality. The fourth area was discipling all, because ultimately we wanted more Christians being more Christian.

To support this a number of key strategies had been developed, informed by the whole process of the refresh.

The first strategy was a Ministry Strategy which would help the local church discern and release all shapes of ministry. Mission & Ministry must be seen and shown not just to be about keeping church going, but more importantly supporting people in their everyday

mission & ministry, in the workplace and the local community. The Ministry Strategy was also about developing and growing leadership for Mission Communities and the local church. Bishop Rob was excited that funding had been secured from the National Church for six extra curates and two 'Posts of First Responsibility' to serve and empower Mission Communities.

The second strategy was for Church Buildings. The overall aim of that strategy was to get the right number of fit for purpose church buildings in the right locations. This would only be achieved by talking about our churches together and then creating a local, actionable buildings plan for every Mission Community.

The third was a Digital Strategy which had 4 main priorities: to mainstream digital so it became a part of everything we did, to equip more people to take on digital roles, to improve online content production and produce content that attracted and engaged people, and to ensure that young people were better represented online and included in digital roles and in the content creation.

The fourth area was a strategy for Growing Younger which would see the creation of new worshipping communities that were culturally able to welcome young people, alongside additional investment in Network Youth Church and encouraging culture change.

The fifth was a Schools Strategy. This included three key areas which would support an intentional, consistent and coordinated approach to ministry via our schools, building on and further developing good practise on the part of the Board of Education.

The sixth was an Environmental Strategy which was principally about helping our church communities achieve a target of reaching zero net carbon emissions by 2030. The strategy would include measuring and reducing the energy footprint of our churches and other buildings and, more widely, protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The diocese was going to make 2023 the Year of the LED, providing LED lighting for every vicarage, making grants available to churches to replace their lighting with LED systems and encouraging schools to do the same.

The final strategy was about Church Planting and Pioneering. This was about encouraging imaginative mission in all our mission communities, but also about specifically planting and growing new Christian communities in particular locations. One of the ways in which we wanted to support imaginative mission was by providing micro-grants of up to £250 from the Diocesan Growth Fund to any church or mission community that wanted to try something new in their outreach. These grants would be very simple to access and it was hoped that they would stimulate people to think imaginatively about how they could reach out and serve their communities better.

Bishop James informed Synod Members that there were still a lot of questions to be answered, and that the budgets that would fund the work had yet to be ratified. We were looking at external funding streams to support some of the particular strategies. He saw the implementation of the refreshed Vision and Strategy as a 10 year project with space along the way to make objective assessments of how it is proceeding.

During the discussion a question was raised about chaplaincy and ecumenism. Four or five years ago there had been a piece of academic research about how ecumenical Mission Communities impact upon chaplains and chaplaincies. That research was undertaken across the board and over 100 chaplains had been involved. Four or five years down the line, what was the Bishops' assessment of it? Had we together fully embraced ecumenism?

Bishop James replied that with regard to ecumenism it remained patchy across the county. In some places it was taken for granted, growing extremely well and people were really benefiting from and enjoying working together. In other places, there sadly remained a deep suspicion of working together for a whole variety of different reasons. But we were deliberately and unashamedly ecumenical in this county, and would continue to be so. He continued to encourage everybody to work more closely with their Christian brothers and sisters if they possibly could. As far as chaplaincy was concerned, in almost all chaplaincy contexts the work was ecumenical anyway. Chaplaincy was one of the ways that ecumenism could demonstrate its value.

### **9. Archdeaconries Review:**

Canon Cameron Butland introduced the Archdeaconries Review.

He traced its genesis back to the work of the Financial Task Group set up in 2020 to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the finances of the Diocese. That Task Group had considered the resources allocated to the oversight and management of the diocese and recommended that, at the next vacancy in a senior clerical role (suffragan bishop or archdeacon), we should review the mix of those roles with the intention of moving from 4 to 3. That recommendation had been agreed by Synod.

The next vacancy had come at the end of May 2021 when Bishop Emma had moved on to her new role. There had been considerable debate at Bishop's Council and Synod as to whether that role should be refilled and Bishop James had consulted the Diocese Commission, which he was required to do. The conclusion of those debates and consultation was that we should have a Bishop of Penrith and should appoint to the role as quickly as possible. Bishop's Council and Synod had both approved the appointment of a new Bishop of Penrith.

However, that still left the question of how we reduce the senior roles in line with the Task Group's recommendation and that is what the Archdeaconries review report was all about. The report would be available on the Diocesan website later that week, and Synod members would be invited to read it and send in responses. Comments received by the 31<sup>st</sup> of October would be considered at the Bishop's Council meeting on the 7th of November. Subsequent comments would be considered at the Bishop's Council Residential meeting in January, which was where the key discussion would take place.

We currently had three archdeaconry posts but because of the resignation of the Archdeacon of Carlisle one would become vacant at the beginning of 2023.

The report to Synod had been presented in outline to Bishop's Council on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September and was now being opened up for substantive discussion. The Bishop's Leadership Team would be considering it on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October and 21<sup>st</sup> November and it would be discussed in detail at the Bishop's Council residential in January 2023. Following the residential it would come back to Diocesan Synod in March 2023 for final discussion with the intention of implementing a decision after Easter 2023.

The report contained:

- Summary of Past Reviews, from 2007 to 2022
- Summary of key roles performed by Archdeacons
- Summary of the finances and costs of having Archdeacons
- Summary of conversations both internal and external to the diocese and comparisons to the situation in other dioceses
- Review of SDO role and workloads
- Summary of the legal requirements involved in changing Archdeaconry boundaries

The report provided the information requested by Bishop's Council to inform a conversation across the diocese leading up to the January 2023 meeting. It identified five options, namely:

- Two Archdeacons and two Archdeaconries
- Two Archdeacons working across the whole county, one pastoral and one statutory role
- One Archdeacon supported by a strategy and administrative team
- Three Archdeacons in three Archdeaconries, each with a parish role
- Two Archdeacons covering three Archdeaconries, pending a later decision

The questions posed to Synod Members for further deliberation were:

- What was the primary role of an Archdeacon – buildings, finance, people & legal or strategy?
- If the number of Archdeaconries were reduced, what changes would be needed to the diocesan structure and staffing to support two Archdeacons?
- How could we help Archdeacons to offer local leadership and support and avoid their roles being overwhelming?

The full report would be made available on the Diocese of Carlisle website immediately after the Synod meeting and responses could be made over the coming 3 months.

Synod members raised questions about the timescale and process for commenting and contributing to this work and Cameron Butland clarified that any responses received by the end of October would be initially be considered by Bishop's Council at their November meeting, but that the Council's substantive discussion would be in January. Comments and suggestions could therefore be submitted throughout the remainder of the year.



## **10. Healing Ministry and Wellbeing:**

Dr Alison Fleetwood, the Diocesan Healing Advisor introduced this item. Alison informed Synod of activities under the Healing Ministry umbrella. The Healing Ministry team included approximately 10 people who were a mixture of ordained and lay, and of all different church traditions. They offered a range of healing training opportunities.

Healing Ministry should be viewed as outreach and was very much a part of God for All. Specific examples of the Ministry in practice included the Renew Wellbeing initiative which was promoted nationally. There were now 5 Renew Wellbeing cafes in the diocese offering spaces where it was 'OK not to be OK'. They were places where there was companionship, tea & coffee, shared hobbies or activities such as doing a jigsaw together or going for a walk. They were great places for people who felt isolated or lonely, or who had recently been bereaved or had mental health challenges. From a church point of view they were really easy to set up and didn't cost a lot of money to run. They simply required two or three hosts with appropriate training which was provided online from the national team, along with an obvious need to satisfy safeguarding requirements. Renew Wellbeing also involved an element of prayer.

Healthy Healing Hubs were a project that emerged from the Guild of Health at Saint Raphael in response to Covid. They provided a training framework and support system within which a variety of contextualised projects could be delivered in support of healing, health and wellbeing. If a church or church group wanted to explore this project then they would need to do the on-line 'Introduction to Healing Ministry' course which was run by the Guild nationally. Once the church or group had undertaken the training then the Guild, which was national, well-recognised and well-reputed, would award the church its badge. With that badge church groups could then approach local providers and commissioners including social prescribers in primary care networks and integrated care communities.

Bishop James extended his gratitude to Alison for all the work she undertook in her role and for delivering the presentation. He also informed Synod that Revd Julia Powley had been appointed as Deputy Healing Advisor to share some of Alison's work. She, Alison and others on their team were very happy to visit any church or Mission Community to talk about various aspects of the Healing Ministry and also to engage in training of groups and teams.

Ali Ng, Head of HR and Governance, gave a brief update on clergy well-being support.

Over the last year the diocesan Clergy Wellbeing Group had sought to strengthen the resources available for clergy in respect of wellbeing. Over the summer, Revd Nicky Smith, the Director of Ministry Development, and Ali had updated the website with the range of support that is now available.

The support on offer was extensive and both proactive and reactive. It included:

- the Clergy Support Trust
- Good Mental Health
- the Inter Diocesan Counselling Service
- Listening Service
- Living Ministry

- Thrive Worldwide – occupational health
- Saint Luke's charity
- advice on posture
- advice on anxiety
- Suicide Awareness
- ReSource
- Health Assured employee assistance service
- Sanctuary Days – offered next in spring 2023
- Reflective Practise Group
- Healing Advisor
- Retreat providers

Two of these were worthy of particular mention. Reflective Practise Groups were relatively new in the diocese. They were specifically designed for clergy and were run by an independent, trained practitioner and were intended as opportunities for clergy to undertake focused reflection on ministry and life. They should be seen as a legitimate part of Continuing Ministerial Development. Not only were they beneficial to individuals in their own right, but they also offered building blocks for mutual flourishing.

Health Assured was an employee assistance programme designed to help people with personal and professional problems. In addition to supporting individual clergy the programme was open to spouses and children who are aged 16 to 24 in full time education.

There were no **Deanery Synod Motions**.

#### **Private Members Motions:**

**Questions:** Simon Bickersteth (Carlisle) tabled the following question:

‘Considering the Church of England’s ambitious aim to be carbon neutral by 2030, and the impact the rise in price of gas and electricity is having, what practical and financial support can the Diocese offer to help churches make the switch to renewables? In addition, what consideration is being given to ensuring properties owned by the Diocese (in particular vicarages) are as energy efficient as possible, and help facilitate the switch away from fossil fuels?’

Derek Hurton answered the question as follows.

The first piece of advice to churches would be to complete the “Practical Path to Net Zero”. This would help the church identify what actions were needed and whether the installation of renewables was justified. For smaller churches, where usage was not high enough to justify the installation of renewables, the practical action (when markets had stabilised) was to switch to a 100% renewable energy supplier. This could be through Parish Buying’s Green Energy Basket or other suppliers. For those churches considering the installation of renewables, the Diocese was working on support in the form of local and national case studies. The DAC could also offer preliminary advice.

In terms of energy efficiency and switching to renewable energy the diocese had a fund available called the Parish Property Fund which paid small grants to churches for improvement work. Energy efficiency measures in churches were now regarded as improvements and were therefore in scope. Grants of up to £3k were available. The DBF could also provide low-cost loans to parishes for larger scale projects. Any applications should be sent to Ric Jaques. The Church Commissioners had also announced £190m of funding over 9 years for the work to Net Zero by 2030. Details on how this would be allocated had not yet been announced, but this could potentially provide a further funding source.

As a Diocese we were also strongly encouraging churches to sign up to the A Rocha UK Eco Church award scheme. Eco Church addressed all aspects of environmental impact including the renewable energy side.

In July, General Synod had endorsed the national Routemap to Net Zero. The Diocesan Environmental and Net Zero Working Group were now working to turn this into specific decarbonisation plans for each in-scope area, including vicarages. These plans would set out specific areas of action for our Diocesan context. A steering group had been established to oversee progress towards net carbon zero on clergy housing and retrofitting reports had been commissioned for a small sample of the housing stock. One newly purchased parsonage was being used as a test bed to explore the issues around achieving carbon neutrality. More broadly on clergy housing, the budget that had been approved today by Synod sitting as the Diocesan Board of Finance created a specific fund of £250k a year for net zero work with parsonages.

Finally, there was also the 'LED challenge' which Bishop Rob had mentioned earlier. That initiative would cover the costs of clergy replacing incandescent or halogen bulbs in their parsonages with LEDs.