

THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON Friday/Saturday 25/26 January 2019
At Bishop Woodford House, Ely**

Present: The Bishop of Ely (Chair), The Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, The Archdeacon of Cambridge, Mr Donald Ashmore, Revd Canon Brian Atling, the Very Revd Mark Bonney, Revd Canon Mike Booker, Mr Francis Burkitt, Revd Canon Adrian Daffern, Revd Martin Dale, Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Canon Simon Kershaw, Mrs Elaine Levitt, Mrs Diana Lucas, Mr George Lynn, Mr Martin Macfarlane, Mr Steve Mashford, Revd Canon Anna Matthews, Canon Peter Maxwell, Revd Canon Nick Moir, Revd Alison Myers, Mr Rob Needle, Mrs Carol Nicholas-Letch, Canon Janet Perrett, Dr Arvan Pritchard, Mrs Sarah Robinson, Mr Malcolm Shreeve, Revd Simon Talbott, Ms Lizzie Taylor, Mr Stephen Tooke, Canon Tim Walters.

In attendance: Canon Paul Evans, Mrs Sheena Bridgman, Revd Canon Linda Church, Revd Dr Hannah Cleugh, Mr Adam Evans, Miss Frances Godden, Mr James Owen, Miss Eleanor Puttock, Mr Andrew Read.

The meeting opened with a welcome to the members of and Bishop's appointments to Bishop's Council for the new triennium from the Bishop of Ely and Dwelling in the Word led by Canon Janet Perrett on behalf of the Revd Alison Myers.

Four co-options to Bishop's Council were proposed and agreed:

Mrs Sue Freestone: Finance Committee
Mr George Lynn: Chair, Audit Committee
Mr Francis Burkitt: Chair, Assets Committee
Canon Tim Walters: Vice-Chair, Finance Committee

Proposed: Canon Janet Perrett Seconded: Dr Arvan Pritchard
Agreed unanimously

Opening Business

1. Apologies were received from Canon Sue Freestone and Revd Jason Taylor
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were signed.
3. Matters Arising: the Strategy for Cambridge (initiated following the Diocesan Peer Review in October 2017) is yet to be completed, recognising that growth in Cambridge has slowed. The second Peer Review for the Diocese of Ely is expected to take place in November 2019.

SESSION 1: GOVERNANCE and REPORTING

Bishop Stephen welcomed Stuart Jones, Legal Director of Birketts (and the Registrar of the Diocese of Norwich), and invited him to present his paper regarding the Roles and Responsibilities of Council members, their responsibilities as Trustees (attached).

Paul Evans (PE) gave an oral presentation about governance and the Committee reporting lines all feeding in to Bishop's Council for scrutiny and challenge as necessary. These reports will update Council members on the development and delivery of projects on a regular basis. PE urged Bishop's Council members to drill into the reports they receive and to raise areas of concern. He reinforced that the minutes of the sub-Committees form an important part of +C reporting and oversight responsibilities and should not be glossed over. The upcoming Annual Report for 2018 will provide an additional resource for Bishop's Council members. In due course, as part of the Bishop's Council Director role, members might be invited to discuss their findings with Diocesan Synod. A copy of the Governance Structure is attached.

The constitution and Terms of Reference of the Mission and Ministry Board was agreed unanimously by Bishop's Council.

PE presented the draft Diocesan Handbook containing the Synod Constitution and Standing Orders 2019 to Council; Dr Arvan Pritchard raised some concerns about the conduct of business in Synod, particularly an over reliance on proceeding by voted resolutions, which did not reflect the consultative and informative nature of business in the Ely Synod. It was agreed that Dr Pritchard would further this discussion with the Chairs of the Synod Houses and Frances Godden (FG) with a view to the Constitution and Standing Orders being taken to Diocesan Synod in June. Thanks were passed to FG for the preparation of the Handbook; work will continue on this.

PE closed with an introduction to ELY2030, advising that a new consultation coordinated by Judge Business School might be conducted in 2020/21. The purpose of this would be to ascertain how deeply the Strategy has been established within the Diocese, to obtain feedback and to inform future strategy. Further discussions will be included in future Bishop's Council agendas.

SESSION 2 : CHANGING MARKET TOWNS

Adam Evans spoke to the attached slide presentation focussing on the current levels of recruitment.

The Schools Singing Project is in the planning stages and the business case will be brought to Bishop's Council as part of the Changing Market Towns 2 SDF bid at a future meeting for discussion and consideration. Edmund Aldhouse, Ely Cathedral Director of Music-elect, will be the Music Mentor.

SESSION 3 : ELY2025 : DELIVERY

The Terms of Reference for the ELY2025 Project Board and Delivery Group (chaired by the Ven Hugh McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon & Wisbech). Project Board and Delivery Group meetings have been aligned with Bishop's Council meetings. It was accepted that the new Bishop of Huntingdon would assume the role of Chair of the ELY2025 Project Board.

Strategic Learning Community: the Diocese of Ely has been invited to participate in a series of four meetings over the next 2 years with 6 other Dioceses, being partnered with the Diocese of Leeds on 12 December 2019, 7 July 2020, 21 April 2021.

Mission and Ministry report (attached): the Departments of Mission and Ministry have now been brought together under the lead of the Revd Canon Linda Church. Two new administrators have been appointed; Revd Dr Megan Daffern has been appointed to be the new Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocations and will take up her post on 1 April 2019. Interviews for the new Mission Lead are to be held on 31 January.

The Revd Canon Linda Church (LC) presented her paper on Alternative Pathways to Ordination (copy attached)

Formal thanks were passed to Revd Anna Matthews for her work as retiring Diocesan Director of Ordinands and to Revd Canon Linda Church

The impact of the Way of Life documents is to be assessed following the soft launch on Maundy Thursday 2018 at the Chrism Eucharist.

A table discussion took place led by the Ven Hugh McCurdy. The questions discussed were:

1. What has helped raise the spiritual temperature in your benefice/parish and how has confidence grown?
2. What might the Diocese include in its workings with the parishes going forward?

LC collated the table answers for future planning.

SESSION FOUR

Bishop Stephen advised that it is planned to hold a Diocese wide conference in 2021, held over multiple days, for ordained and lay clergy jointly.

There is a possibility that the Archbishop of Canterbury may make a 3-day visit to the Diocese in 2022.

Dr Eeva John then delivered her presentation on LGBT+ and the Pastoral Advisory Project which was followed by questions.

The day ended with Compline led by Revd Simon Talbott

SATURDAY 26 JANUARY 2019

SESSION FIVE : EDUCATION

The Ven Alex Hughes (AH) introduced the session giving a background to Education in the Diocese, giving numbers of children attending Church schools, with an explanation of what Church Schools are. AH explained that the Diocesan Schools are educating for wisdom, hope and aspiration, for the community and living well together, encouraging dignity and respect.

The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) is the Statutory Body required to oversee education in the Diocese, following the Diocesan Measure for Education. Bishop's Council members were encouraged to consider becoming Board members as there are vacancies. AH then explained the role of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT), funded directly by

the Department of Education and accountable to HM Government. There is one Multi Academy Trust in Ely, although other Dioceses may have more than this.

DEMAT has grown rapidly over the last 3 years, and this expansion is likely to continue as further schools convert to Academies. There is a Memorandum of Understanding in place with HM Government stating that any Church of England School will find its place in a MAT.

Andrew Read, Diocesan Director of Education, (AR), explained the DBE part-time staffing where Sue Martin is Head of Schools Mission, Judith Skelton is Head of School Performance, supported by Caroline Vinnall and Christine Page as School Performance Officers. The Diocese of Ely comprises some of the most underfunded and least able education authorities, as well as some of the most deprived and vulnerable areas in Fenland, in contrast to Cambridge which covers some of the most outstanding educational institutions.

AR discussed the community concerns about school closures, the measures of subsidising and possible means of keeping schools open through staff sharing or school mergers. It is recognised that on occasion it is more financially efficient to keep small schools open.

Bishop's Council's role is to charge and challenge the DBE to ensure that there is confidence in its performance.

SESSION SIX : DIOCESAN BUSINESS

George Lynn, Chair of the Audit Committee, (GL) delivered the Audit Committee's Annual Review. There were no questions or matters of concern. GL advised that the Diocesan Risk Register will be presented to Bishop's Council for their consideration at the July meeting.

Revd Canon Brian Atling said that the draft financial out-turn for 2018 is in preparation and will be presented to Bishop's Council at a future meeting. A balanced budget is anticipated, despite significant non-budgetted provisions for repairs.

ELY2025 Growth Fund: all available funds have been allocated to projects. These projects have been more closely monitored through 2018 and the required reports eventually submitted. Any project not meeting the Fund's requirements may have their financial support terminated.

Bishop's Council was asked to approve the transfer of any available modest surplus to the ELY2025 Growth Fund, once the 2018 accounts have been finalised. Agreed unanimously.

Changing Market Towns: This Project is financially supported by a Strategic Development Fund grant from the Church Commissioners, matched by funds from the Diocese. No funding for this project comes from Ministry Share. The Diocese's matched funds have been achieved by the sales of DBF properties and investment income. Any surplus from the sale of parsonages goes in to the Diocesan Stipends Fund. Detailed and complex reporting/accounting is required by the Church Commissioners on a quarterly basis.

The Diocese has been encouraged to submit a further application to the Strategic Development Fund for a second tranche of six further towns (and the Schools Singing

Project) in the Changing Market Towns programme, where matched funds will again be required.

2019 cash flow is anticipated to be tight. Council received reassurance from the Chair of the Finance Committee that budgets will be closely monitored

2019 Budget: This budget was agreed the previous year by Bishop's Council and 2019 is expected to be financially challenging. It will not be possible to create any new clergy or staff posts without extremely careful consideration; this includes posts currently being considered by the DBE.

After three years of a 3% uplift in Ministry Share, it can be seen that Ministry Share barely covers the increase in clergy stipends (2.5% of this agreed 3%). Additionally, taking into account the cost of living increases, only a very small balance remained for investment in ELY2025. It is hoped to keep any Ministry Share increase to a minimum for 2020 and 2021 - possibly 2% although this is likely to be less than the increase in stipends.

The Diocese, with its membership of ACAT, is running training for Parish Treasurers, accessible to all levels. The first of these training sessions will take place in mid-May 2019. Rural Deans should encourage all their Treasurers to attend.

It is a requirement that copies of each parish's audited accounts is sent in to the Diocesan Finance Office by 31 May each year. The finance team are following up non-received copies of accounts and non-received parochial fees.

Francis Burkitt, Chair of the Assets Sub-Committee, (FB) was introduced to Bishop's Council. He explained that the income from the Diocese's investments portfolio is required to keep Ministry Share at more manageable levels. Dividend income is used for the Stipends Fund, which, it was emphasised, does not fund any work in the Bishop's Office or Ely Cathedral. The Assets Sub-Committee Annual Report will be presented to Bishop's Council in March.

FB also explained that the Assets Sub-Committee reports to the Diocesan Finance Committee, which in turn reports to Bishop's Council and then to Diocesan Synod. The Annual Calendar of meetings should reflect a sequential ordered series of meetings.

The Diocesan Secretary advised Bishop's Council of recent staff changes following an independent review of job content changes over the last 2 years. Lorraine Orbell will now be Financial Controller and Sheena Bridgman will be Operations Manager.

Thanks were passed to both for their work and support to the Diocese, together with Stella Green (Property) and Jon Green (Glebe and Investments)

Bishop Stephen announced that the shortlisting for the new Bishop of Huntingdon would take place on 13 February, with interviews towards the end of March. 3 July is being reserved provisionally for the consecration of the new Bishop, with an anticipated commencement date of early September.

There being no further business, Bishop Stephen closed the meeting with prayer at 12 noon.

Dates of 2019 meetings: 14 March / 8 May / 18 July / 26 September / 28 November