

THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON Thursday 14 March 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, Revd Canon Mike Booker, Revd Martin Dale, Canon Simon Kershaw, Mrs Elaine Levitt, Mrs Diana Lucas, Mr George Lynn, Mr Martin Macfarlane, Mr Steve Mashford, Canon Peter Maxwell, Revd Canon Alison Myers, Mr Rob Needle, Mrs Carol Nicholas-Letch, Canon Janet Perrett, Mrs Sarah Robinson, Revd Simon Talbott, Ms Lizzie Taylor.

In attendance: Canon Paul Evans, Mrs Sheena Bridgman, Revd Canon Linda Church, Revd Dr Hannah Cleugh, Mr Martin Kenward, Mr James Owen, Miss Eleanor Puttock,

Dwelling in the Word (Thessalonians 3 v6-13) was led by the Ven Hugh McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech.

1. Apologies were received from the Very Revd Mark Bonney, Mr Francis Burkitt, Revd Canon Adrian Daffern, Canon Sue Freestone, Revd Canon Anna Matthews, Revd Canon Nick Moir, Dr Arvan Pritchard, Mr Malcolm Shreeve, Revd Jason Taylor, Mr Stephen Tooke and Canon Tim Walters.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed. There were no matters arising. The question raised under Standing Order 41 by Mr Rob Needle (Paper B) is addressed under agenda Item 7.

2. Bishop Stephen highlighted Raising the Spiritual Temperature and the Spiritual Thermometer (raised at the Strategic Learning Community) which is central to ELY2025. Reinforcing that ELY2025 will take the Diocese forward with the strategic outcome of a confident People of God, Bishop Stephen reminded those present that both positive and negative decisions will be required for projects within the ELY2025 programme. Adam Evans, Strategic Programme Manager, was requested to press those involved for outcomes.

3. Business of the Diocesan Board of Finance. The Revd Canon Brian Atling, Chair of the Diocesan Finance Committee, advised that the 2020 Budget continued to be adjusted. Cuts are required in some areas to ensure a balanced budget. The 2018 Annual Accounts are likely to show a surplus; Council was reminded that a resolution had been passed at the January Residential meeting that any net surplus would be transferred to the ELY2025 Growth Fund. A final figure will be known once the 2018 annual audit is complete.

The Schools Fund currently shows a surplus, there being lower staff expenses in 2018.

A bid for a second tranche of new funds is being prepared for submission to the Strategic Development Fund in mid 2019.

4. Sustainable Ministry and Role Descriptions. Most Diocesan clergy operate under common tenure. Statements of Particulars contain basic guidance for clergy to carry out their roles. Under ELY2025's Lever 2, the areas of clergy Wellness and the impact of unrealistic expectations on members of the clergy need to be addressed, together with the possible lack of understanding of the role by members of congregations. There is an

uncomfortable number of clergy (and their family members) requiring professional psychological and medical support.

The first draft of the Church of England's Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing paper is available online via

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/A%20Covenant%20for%20Clergy%20Care%20and%20Wellbeing%20Consultation.pdf>

This will be debated by General Synod later in 2019. The principles will apply to clergy with freehold as well as those in common tenure.

The Diocese of Ely's Clergy Wellbeing Group is led by the Revd Canon Sue Wyatt with the Revd Canon Bruce Kinsey as Bishop's Adviser

PCCs are encouraged to discuss the deployment and wellbeing of their parish clergy. Vacancies provide the opportunities for change. In order that clergy may work more healthily and efficiently, vacancy groups should evaluate their requirements, holding key and detailed discussions before appointment decisions are made regarding the roles and responsibilities for both clergy and parish workers, with the aim of avoiding conflicting expectations. Role descriptions should be prepared and be included as part of the parish Development Action Plan, placing the clergy person within the hierarchy of the wider collaborative team and not performing the role of a paid administrative parish worker. Review of the role description should form part of the annual clergy MDR process. Specimen role descriptions are being drawn up by the Archdeacon of Cambridge.

Members were asked to consider what Bishop's Council could initiate to bring about positive change, to encourage parishes to discuss between themselves and to share best practice. The Diocesan Communications Team will prepare stories to help facilitate discussion and break down barriers and denial.

The Revd Simon Talbott, member of General Synod, recommended that Deanery Synods hold this in their purview and that the topic be discussed at Diocesan Synod.

5. ELY2025: Contactless Giving: rollout. Martin Kenward, Projects and Development Officer, presented on the improved financial opportunities for all parishes as part of the Parish Giving Scheme. He also updated Council on the design, progress and status for the new generation of stand-alone WiFi free contactless "tap and go" units for churches. Paul Evans reinforced that these units were already having a very positive impact in the parishes where they are in use. Council was reminded that there is an agreement to supply an appropriate contactless unit for gifts and donations to each parish in the Diocese.

Thanks were passed to Mr Kenward for his work on progressing the Parish Giving Scheme and Contactless Giving.

6. ELY2025: The Communications Team and beyond. The Revd Canon Alison Myers introduced a presentation about Communications in the Diocese of Ely, the support provided by the Diocesan staff team (James Owen and Eleanor Puttock) and the necessity to share information effectively and widely. She emphasised that all those who hold positions throughout the Diocese are responsible for the dissemination of information both upwards and downwards to grassroots level.

After Canon Myers presented her thoughts on communicating for engagement, Council members discussed "What else could we do to raise awareness, generate understanding and invite participation" and "What is the role of the members of Bishop's Council". This

table discussion was designed to be the first stage in a developing conversation focussing on the sharing of information and communications at all levels across the Diocese.

Canon Myers posed the suggestion of a one-day conference or workshop to roll out a communications strategy through the Diocese. She invited Council members to email the communications team with their thoughts and suggestions. Email link: communications@elydiocese.org.

7. Pioneer Partners - review and report. Further to the question put forward by Bishop's Council member, Mr Rob Needle, under Standing Order 41, the Revd Canon Linda Church prepared a presentation detailing the costs incurred in setting up the Pioneer Partners programme, the progress of each of the original six participants - now reduced to two individuals, only one of whom is on the Diocesan Ordination Pathway. She detailed the lessons learnt from the programme and explained that the Diocese of Ely will be joining the Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme (CEMES) from early summer 2019. Advertisements for participants to live and serve in Cambridge have been placed.

8. Mission and Pastoral Matters

Cambridge ADMPC: The Ven Dr Alex Hughes highlighted the planned increase in stipendiary clergy in the Cambourne Team and was reassured that clergy numbers are budgeted to be maintained at 104 full time equivalent (FTE) posts. Bishop's Council has the authority to vary this number between 2019 and 2025.

Huntingdon and Wisbech ADMPC: The Ven Hugh McCurdy requested Council's support for the return of the parish of West Lynn to the Diocese of Norwich. The PCC has unanimously approved the proposed transfer.

The proposal was agreed and approved unanimously.

The Changing Market Towns (CMT) Project Board now has a full complement of members. Ms Lizzie Taylor and Mr Rob Needle are the Council's representatives on the CMT Project Board.

9. Boards and Committees

The minutes from the Diocesan Board of Education, the Diocesan Advisory Committee and Changing Market Towns Board meetings were received and all deemed business.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.05pm

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