

THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 23 March 2023  
In person at St Mary's, Ely

Present: The Bishop of Ely (in the Chair), Revd Canon Brian Atling, Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker, Very Revd Mark Bonney, Dr Felicity Cooke, Ms Lindsay Davies, Revd Becky Dyball, Revd Canon Sarah Gower, Ven Richard Harlow, Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Canon Rob Needle, Revd David Newton, Revd Iain Osborne, Canon Janet Perrett, Mrs Sarah Robinson, Revd Canon Simon Talbott, Canon Lizzie Taylor Mr Christopher Townsend and Canon Tim Walters

In attendance: Ms Rebecca Boswell, Mrs Sheena Bridgman, Mr Jon Chapman, Revd Beth Cope, Canon Paul Evans,

**Dwelling in the Word** was led by the Revd Canon Simon Talbott

**Apologies** were received from the, Mr Francis Burkitt, Canon Simon Kershaw, Mrs Elaine Levitt, Mr George Lynn, Revd Dr Robert Mackley, Canon Peter Maxwell, Revd Canon Dr Jessica Martin, Ven Hugh McCurdy, Mr John Pigott, Canon Andrew Read

The **Minutes** of the Bishop's Council meeting held on 23 November 2022 were agreed and signed by the Bishop of Ely. There were no **matters arising**.

**Bishop's Business:** The Bishop of Ely advised that a Requiem Mass would be held for the Revd Anna Matthews on 26 April 2023 at Ely Cathedral.

The national funding body is responsible for the distribution of £300m support for Mission and Ministry across the dioceses. This is similar to the Strategic Development Funding structure and is available on application. Funding for the Deputy Director of Planning post is likely to be sought, their Board meeting will take place in June to consider bids. A job description for this role has been compiled and is under discussion following agreement for the post at the November meeting of Council - it is planned that this will be included in the papers for the May meeting. Other funding areas to be considered are Children and Youth; New Communities and Vocation in Ministry. Ely plans to submit a bid in order to grow the full economy of ministry across the Diocese.

**Diocesan Synod Report:** The Chair of the House of Clergy gave a verbal update following the Synod meeting held on 11 March 2023. There were no questions.

**Safeguarding update:** The Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, Jon Chapman, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Ms Rebecca Boswell, presented the Safeguarding Annual Report to the meeting.

There were 248 referrals through 2022, which represented an increase of 15% over the previous year. At the end of 2022 there were 21 Safeguarding Agreement in place across the Diocese - a new Practice Guidance framework will be published in 2023 which will give updated guidance on the risk assessment process, including a new risk assessment template. 2105 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were carried out.

The majority of Safeguarding Training can be carried out online, with the Safeguarding Team continuing to deliver the national Leadership and Parish Safeguarding Officers Induction training. The team plans to deliver both virtual and face-to-face training through 2023.

There is a Service Level Agreement with Ely Cathedral. One of the Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers, Lisa Pearson, works with the Cathedral one day a week as Cathedral Safeguarding Adviser.

The Diocese of Ely has adopted the National Casework Management System and went “live” in July 2022.

The National Past Cases Review Overview Report was published in October 2022, at which time the Diocese published its Executive Summary.

Thirtyone:eight, an independent reviewer, was commissioned in March 2022 to undertake a review of the identification and support afforded to victims and survivors. Areas for Development identified and number of recommendations to further improve the strong foundations of effective safeguarding processes already in place across the Diocese.

Four virtual meetings with Parish Safeguarding Officers were held through the year which were well attended and well received. The Safeguarding Dashboard is available to all parishes free of charge and 74% of parishes are currently registered.

Revd David Newton thanked them for their presentation. Mr Chapman thanked the Safeguarding Team for their work through the year.

**Business of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance:** Canon Tim Walters (TW), EDBF Chair, advised that some parishes are currently pausing their Ministry Share contributions which is affecting figures and cashflow. Stipends, being statutory payments, will continue to be paid and conversations are taking place to ensure that these payments are being covered in the short term.

**Relocation Board.** TW, as Chair of the Relocation Board, told Council that invitations to tender had been issued and that returns were due mid-April, after which an appraisal and selection meeting will take place.

The **Risk Register** item is deferred to the all day meeting of Bishop’s Council on 20 May.

**Northstowe:** As the construction phases continue to expand Northstowe, the future for Diocese of Ely presence is being considered. The formation of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a shared vision is being explored in conjunction with the Eastern Baptists and the Eastern United Reformed Church. The opportunity to make a bid for a new building, the “chapel by the lake”, has arisen and it was hoped that Council members would endorse this bid.

There was unanimous support.

**Proposed Project:** Council members were asked to note a future housing development. A meeting is to be held to present further detail regarding the Heads of Terms. Council’s approval was given in principle to proceed with the drafting of this document.

**Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee:** There being no meetings held, the Archdeacon of Cambridge advised Council that there would be a proposal for an interim appointment of a new time-limited common tenure incumbent post for St Bene’ts, Cambridge, following the death of Revd Anna Matthews. It was agreed that this be distributed after the meeting.

The meeting closed with prayer at 9.15pm