

## Diocesan Synod information note Saturday 5 March 2022

***This summary of business done at the Synod meeting has been prepared by the Chairs of the two Houses, and may be circulated by members of the Synod to deanery synods and PCCs***

The Diocesan Synod met on 5 March 2022 via Zoom, and began with an act of worship led by the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, the Ven Hugh McCurdy, after which the Revd Keith Morrison was commissioned as Bishop's Advisor on Healthcare and Chaplaincy.

Canon Simon Kershaw (Chair of the House of Laity) took the chair and announced the election, unopposed, of the Revd Canon Sarah Gower as Chair of the House of Clergy following the Revd Canon Simon Talbott's resignation.

A question was asked under SO 86 by Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (General Synod) about the application to churches of the **new rules for replacing an existing fossil-fuel boiler**, and to ensure that churches were not left without heating for an extended period. The Diocesan Secretary, Canon Paul Evans, undertook to provide a full answer to the question after the Synod.

In her **Presidential Address** the Bishop of Huntingdon spoke about the terrible situation in Ukraine, and gave an overview of the religious background over a thousand years that played a part in the war. A copy of her address is available on the diocesan website and elsewhere.

Ms Rebecca Boswell, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, and Mr Jon Chapman, Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP), formerly Diocesan Safeguarding Liaison Group, presented the **Annual Safeguarding Review**, and this was followed by a Q&A session, after which the Synod voted to receive the report *nem con*.

Canon Paul Evans reported on meetings of the Bishop's Council.

After a break, the Revd Canon Sarah Gower (Chair of the House of Clergy) took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The Ven Hugh McCurdy and the Ven Dr Alex Hughes gave a presentation on **Living Ely2025** and the current process around **Deanery Development Plans** as Bishops Stephen and Dagmar visit deaneries across the Diocese, which focused on: Why we are doing this; the importance of deanery planning to the parishes and the local context, whilst fulfilling deaneries' legal obligations; the process and what considerations there are; Church buildings; Churches and whether they are flourishing, focused or fragile and what this means; Resources available to help and supply data.

The Revd Canon David Pritchard, **Retired Clergy Officer**, gave a presentation to Synod advising that: there are three retired clergy representatives across the diocese and there is Clergy Widows Officer; as Retired Clergy Officer, David meets annually with the Bishops and Archdeacons, is involved with welcoming new retired clergy to the Diocese, and is involved with PTO renewals; is invited to Ministry Team Meetings and included in IME1 training; there are annual events for retired clergy including study days and quiet days, an annual Cathedral Eucharist and lunch, and a conference. The Ely Diocesan website includes further information for retired clergy.

The Revd Canon Brian Atling, Chair of the Board of Finance, gave an update on the **financial situation**. He thanked churches, parishes and deaneries for the magnificent way they had paid ministry share last year. This, together with a one-off payment received by the Diocese, meant that the shortfall was significantly less than anticipated in the light of Covid and all that has happened in the last two or three years. He asked Synod members to convey our thanks to everyone.

Mr Christopher Townsend (General Synod) reported on the **General Synod** February meeting, outlining items under discussion, particularly talking about Racial Justice and the Archbishops' Racial Justice Commission with an excellent address from Lord Boateng, which can be watched online. Climate change and the challenge of Net Zero 2030 was also particularly highlighted.

Bishop Dagmar then closed the meeting with prayers a few minutes before 1pm.