



BIRMINGHAM DIOCESAN SYNOD (DS)

Saturday 12 November 2022 at 9.30am

St Columba's Church, Banners Gate Road, Sutton Coldfield, B73 6TX

MINUTES

1. Prayers, Welcome, Apologies, Previous Minutes and Bishop's Briefing

Prayers were led by the Revd Beccy Allen.

Bishop Anne noted the apologies given before the meeting. No further amendments to the Minutes of DS 220714 had been received so they stand as agreed by Bishop's Council.

RESOLUTION: The Diocesan Synod approved the Minutes of DS 220714

Following the sad passing of the Revd Canon Priscilla White, a vacancy was created for a representative to General Synod. As the vacancy occurred within two years of the most recent ordinary election, it has been filled in accordance with rule 45(1) of the Clergy Election Rules 2020, by using the voting records of the ordinary election. It was announced that the Revd Philip Calvert confirmed his willingness to serve on General Synod, representing the Diocese of Birmingham, until 2026.

It was noted that a service of thanksgiving would be held for the Revd Canon Priscilla White in Birmingham Cathedral on 15 January 2023.

Bishop Anne reported that the process of the Vacancy in See had begun. Further details were available on the Church of England Birmingham website which included opportunities to engage with the process by attending a Zoom public meeting or by completing an online form.

Bishop Anne gave an update on the Living in Love and Faith process and encouraged members to look at the resources available on the Church of England website.

Synod were asked to hold both these processes in their prayers.

Focus was given to the challenge of rising costs in energy and Bishop Anne highlighted two initiatives that Thrive are currently involved in:

- Birmingham Warm Welcome:
https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50274/cost_of_living_support/2637/birmingham_warm_welcome_spaces
- Toys4Birmingham:
<https://thrivetogetherbham.org/toys>

Bishop Anne also urged members to join her at the St Basil's Big Sleep Out taking place at Millennium Point on 25 November 2022:
<https://stbasils.org.uk/events/bigsleepout/>.

2. Deanery Synod Representatives 2023-2026

The Revd Tim Bateman (General Synod Representative) proposed an amendment to the motion, however, in accordance with the Diocesan Synod Standing Orders, amendments to motions must be received 7 days in advance of the meeting of Synod. Bishop Anne thanked Tim for his proposal, and it was agreed it would be revisited at a future date.

The following motion was then put and carried on a show of hands with 4 abstentions.

RESOLUTION: The Diocesan Synod adopted the following motion put forward by the Chair:

In order to comply with Part III, Section 19 (3) of the Church Representation Rules 2022 (Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969), this Synod resolves that the number of parish lay representatives in each Deanery Synod be

calculated according to the formula below and approves the composition of the Deanery Synods to be elected in 2023 for a term of three years from July 2023 to June 2026 as set out in [DS 221112 2]:

Number on Electoral Roll (inclusive)	Members
1 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 100	3
101 to 200	4
201 to 400	5
401 to 800	6
801 above	7

3. Report of the Proceedings of General Synod – July 2022

Mr Guy Hordern (General Synod Representative) reported on the July 2022 session of the General Synod. A copy of his report is attached to the Minutes

4. Mission and the Church's engagement in Further Education

Bishop Anne welcomed Nigel Roberts, West Midlands Further Education Chaplaincy Ambassador and the Revd Claire Turner, Research Chaplain to the Bishop of Aston, to Synod.

Nigel gave some background as follows:

In 2021, the Church of England published '*Vocation, Transformation and Hope: A Vision for the Church of England's Engagement with Further Education*'. The report highlights three themes, exploring how FE makes a significant difference to people's sense of vocation, their personal transformation, and their hope for society. The report also notes that there are almost 2.2 million students enrolled in 168 FE Colleges, with nearly twice as many 16-18-year-olds as in school sixth-forms. The CofE is nonetheless underrepresented across the sector, in contrast to its extensive links with schools and universities.

The report concludes by recommending that making effective partnerships with colleges should become a core part of the CofE's own mission planning and in doing so, the Church should develop support for students, for community partners and for chaplaincy.

The Church of England Birmingham has significant experience in working within a number of education contexts and has historically supported our local Higher Education Institutions through the provision of chaplains in multi-faith settings at the University of Birmingham and Aston University. All of this work seeks to help young people reach their full potential, to flourish as citizens whose skills and gifts are recognised. However, reflecting the situation described in *Vocation, Transformation and Hope*, CofE Birmingham hasn't traditionally engaged strategically with its FE colleges.

Local Context

There are 9 colleges spread across 16 sites within the Diocese as follows:

College

Birmingham Metropolitan College - James Watt Campus
 Birmingham Metropolitan College - Matthew Bolton Campus
 Birmingham Metropolitan College - Sutton Coldfield Campus
 South and City College – Digbeth Campus
 South and City College - Longbridge Campus (Bournville College)
 South and City College – Bordesley Green Campus
 South and City College – Hall Green Campus
 South and City College – Handsworth Campus
 South and City College – Golden Hillock Women's Centre
 Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College
 Cadbury Sixth Form College
 National College for High Speed Rail
 University College Birmingham
 Queen Alexandra Sixth Form College
 Solihull College and University Centre
 Solihull Sixth Form College

Local Parish

St Matthew, Perry Beeches
 St Martin in the Bullring
 Holy Trinity, Sutton Coldfield
 St Martin in the Bullring
 St Stephen's, Rednal
 Saint Mark with Saint Saviour, Saltley
 St Peter's, Hall Green
 St Michael's, Handsworth
 All Saints Small Heath
 St Paul's, Balsall Heath
 St Nicolas, Kings Norton
 St Philip's Cathedral
 St Philip's Cathedral
 St Faith and St Laurence, Harborne
 Solihull Parish
 Solihull Parish

A video was shown which featured the Revd Stephen Blyth in his role as Chaplain at a Further Education College in Nuneaton, Warwickshire. Members were then asked to form small groups to discuss their thoughts on what the needs of a local college might be:

- Pastoral help in crisis (staff and students)
- Mental health support
- Spiritual and religious care
- Input to teaching
- Work experience/placement support
- Listening services
- A voice/advocate for the college community
- Positive role models
- Mediator for conflict resolution

Mr Adam North (Kings Norton, Mosely & Shirley) asked what resource would be available from the diocese to make this happen. Bishop Anne responded that the conversation would be taken forward but that training of chaplains would be given to give confidence to the colleges.

Members noted that a Further Education Chaplaincy Zoom Surgery hosted by Claire and Nigel would be taking place on Thursday 24 November, 7.00pm-9.00pm. Synod members were invited to join this surgery for a conversation about how their parish might be able to support this work.

More information about FE Chaplaincy can be found on the West Midlands Churches Further Education Council website: <https://wmcfec.org.uk/>

5. Strategy Update

Dr Jan Smart, Diocesan Secretary, and the Venerable Jenny Tomlinson, Archdeacon of Birmingham, gave a strategy update. A copy of the presentation is attached to the Minutes.

6. Update from the Reference Group for Racial Justice

The Revd Canon Bamidele Sotonwa (Chair of the Racial Justice Group) gave an update from the Reference Group for Racial Justice.

The recommendations contained in From Lament to Action report have provided our church (at all levels, National, diocesan, deaneries and parishes), the privileged opportunity to reflect Jesus further in practical and intentional ways (moving us beyond indifferent rhetoric and platitudes) to realms where:

- hope is restored in the hopeless,
- voice is given to the marginalised and the silenced,
- dignity, honour and value are place on humanity and,
- The evil of racism and discrimination is defeated effectively.

The report recommends the creation of a racial justice board which will work with the Racial Justice Directorate to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

In response to this, the Church of England Birmingham has recently inaugurated the Racial Justice Board made up of 12 men and women from across the diocese, full of grace and wisdom and who have committed themselves to journey with the diocese, deaneries and parishes in our processes, approaches and responses to racial justice and equity, underpinned by our diocesan vision to be a transforming church. This board is accountable to the Bishops Council and Diocesan Synod and will give regular updates on progress made.

One of the immediate tasks of the board is to work with the leadership of the diocese, and the HR, to recruit a Racial Justice Director - a key recommendation to dioceses, from Lament to Action.

Alongside is the West Midlands regional conversation that is also ongoing. You may recall that Bishop David mentioned this in one of his briefings and this conversation is now being led bishop Anne, who will give us more insights into how that is shaping up.

We have a call to be God's church to His world. This world is diverse, made up of men, women and children, some who would be like us, and others who would be different from us, but all of whom have been created in God's image and who deserve to be loved as God loves His church.

Our takeaway thoughts for today is from one of the two summaries of the law: "you shall love your neighbour as yourself". How can I (we) be more loving of my (our) neighbour(s) as the Lord expects us of us - in our dioceses, deaneries, and parishes, using the story of Zacchaeus whom Jesus reached out to where he was on the tree?

Members of the Racial Justice Board are as follows:

Canon Dele Sotonwa - Chair
 Jenny Thurston - Vice Chair
 Revd Tariro Matsveru - Secretary
 Dawn Brathwaite - Member
 Theresa Harris - Member
 Fred Rattley- Member
 Daniel Mayes - Member
 Revd Guy Donegan-Cross - Member
 Revd Sarah Hayes - Member
 Canon Douglas Machridza - Member
 Canon Nejib Boumenjel - Member
 Revd Calvert Prentis - Member

Bishop Anne reported that a West Midlands Racial Justice collaboration meeting with Bishops and Diocesan Secretaries would be taking place on 21 November. One of the items under consideration is the potential to share resources to recruit a Racial Justice Officer across the region.

The Revd Canon Catherine Grylls (Kings Norton, Mosley & Shirley) asked how we could be proactive and promote participation by true diversity in regard to the deanery synod elections in 2023. Dele responded that we should engage with the Area Deans and parishes. Dr Jan Smart added that the DBF are committed to looking at the whole issue of governance to get greater representation.

The Revd Becky Stephens (Aston & Sutton Coldfield) suggested that some people may need to step back to make space.

7. Environmental Update

Dr Jan Smart gave an update on Net Zero and the estimated costs for the CofE Birmingham to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2030. The current estimates are: Church Buildings £17.2M; Church Schools £35.4M; Parsonages £6.6M. Total £59.2M. Church Halls are currently being surveyed and the estimate will be added to the total once known.

A huge thank you was given to those parishes who had completed the Energy Footprint Tool. The importance of completing this return was reiterated as the data is used to build an estimation of costs.

The following Routemap milestones provided by the national Church are proposed to be debated and agreed at Synod. A special meeting will be held in January/February 2023 to review, debate, and produce a recommendation for the Synod in March 2023. All members will be invited to participate.

General

- Provide an outline of decarbonisation plans to Diocesan Synod as a Net Zero Carbon Action Plan 2023

Churches

- The top 20% of energy-consuming churches to develop net zero carbon action plans. 2022-27
- Diocese to have a 90%+ completion rate for the Energy Footprint Tool. 2023+
- At the point of contract renewal, all churches to switch to 100% green electricity tariff. 2024

The Revd Trevor Meardon (Aston & Sutton Coldfield) raised a concern with working with the DAC. Jan responded that the DAC are bound by regulations, but this is being looked at nationally.

The Revd Ben Green (Kings Norton, Moseley & Shirley) asked if there was a list of recommended consultant and suppliers that he could contact. Jan responded that this is being looked at regionally and that Gloucester diocese are taking a lead in this area.

Bishop Anne thanked the Property Team for their work on providing the costs.

8. 2023 Budget

Mr Steven Skakel, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance reported that in terms of the economic environment, the outlook could be seen as bleak. An inter-diocese forum is held twice a year with financial reporting coming from the National Church. The most recent report included forecasts on outturn for 2022 and the latest budgets for 2023. It was noted that no dioceses are breaking even and costs are higher than income. There has been a substantial decline in Common Fund across the board and Steven wanted to reassure Synod that we were not alone in the situation and that we had a very competent grasp of the numbers. Many dioceses are using historical reserves to plug the gap but this cannot last. Common Fund has dropped and is taking longer to recover than expected. Investment in mission and strategy continues and assets, i.e. property are being liquidated to balance the books. Steven was hopeful that recovery would be found but it was not certain what this would look like.

Ms Karen Preece, Finance Director, gave a presentation on the 2023 budget. A copy of her presentation is attached to the Minutes.

The Revd Ben Green (Kings Norton, Moseley & Shirley) raised the following questions:

- What is the definition of vacancy?
- Is the reduction in vacancies, actual vacancies this year?
- How are retired clergy being involved in People & Places?

Archdeacon Jenny responded that the definition of a vacancy was to have no priest in charge at a parish. They may, however, have a curate. She also clarified that the figure of 17 was a vacancy factor. Recruitment is continuing but there are difficulties in this nationally. Archdeacon Jenny responded that a wider discussion would be needed with regards to retired clergy but confirmed that it was never assumed to rely on retired clergy for P&P.

The Revd Becky Stephens (Aston & Sutton Coldfield) asked that, in the interests of clergy wellbeing, any work to be done on parsonages would be carried out soon.

The Revd Toby Crowe (Yardley & Solihull) raised the question on when we would know we have got there. Karen responded that this was unknown. Birmingham is not blessed with assets and we are preparing for a difficult period. Steven added that it was unknown what the national church would do to help dioceses which are resource-challenged. Ongoing conversations and analysis would be taking place with the national church but a practical plan was needed.

The Revd Nick Parker (Yardley & Solihull) welcomed the 5% increase in stipend but asked about the situation for those clergy in receipt of a housing allowance. Karen responded that this will be considered.

RESOLUTION: The Diocesan Synod adopted the following motion put forward by the Chair of the DBF:

This synod authorises:

- a) expenditure of £ 111,333,000 in 2023 in accordance with the 2023 Budget following approval by Bishop's Council based on a parish stipendiary clergy deployment of 111.5 with an average of 17 vacancies and an average of 28 stipendiary curates-in-training;***

The following motion was then put and carried on a show of hands with 1 abstention.

- b) an incumbent's stipend of £27,985 (+5.0%) and a staff salary rise of +5.0% with effect from 1 April 2023***

and notes that the Bishop's Council will determine the allocation of Common Fund (projected income of £4,975,000) in accordance with the Transitional Diocesan method under the People & Places framework as agreed by Synod at their meeting on 14 November 2020.

9. Result of the Election of the Chair of the House of Clergy

Following the sad news of the death of the Revd Canon Priscilla White, a casual vacancy arose for the Chair of the House of Clergy for the remainder of this term, which runs to November 2024.

Nominations were invited from current serving members of the House of Clergy of Diocesan Synod, and a meeting of the House of Clergy was held before this session of Synod began.

Bishop Anne gave thanks to the candidates for standing for election and announced that the Revd Toby Crowe was duly elected as Chair of the House of Clergy.

10. Meeting Dates 2023 followed by The Blessing

Members of the Diocesan Synod noted the meeting dates for 2023.

On behalf of Diocesan Synod, Bishop Anne thanked the Revd Beccy Allen and members of St Columba's Church for hosting the meeting. Bishop Anne also gave her grateful thanks to the Revd John Routh who will be retiring as Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Sutton Coldfield in March 2023. Thanks were given for his contribution and involvement over many years to Diocesan Synod, Bishop's Council and the Finance, Investment and Property Sub-Committee (FIPS).

The next meetings of Diocesan Synod are:

Saturday 25 March 2023 at 9.30am

Thursday 13 July 2023 at 7pm

Saturday 18 November 2023 at 9.30am

Synod adjourned at 1pm with prayers led by Bishop Anne followed by the Blessing.

Summary of Resolutions

Agenda Item	Resolution																
1.	The Diocesan Synod approved the minutes of DS 220714																
2.	<p>The Diocesan Synod adopted the following motion put forward by the Chair:</p> <p><i>In order to comply with Part III, Section 25 (2) of the Church Representation Rules 2017 (Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969), this Synod resolves that the number of parish lay representatives in each Deanery Synod be calculated according to the formula below and approves the composition of the Deanery Synods to be elected in 2020 for a term of three years from July 2023 to June 2026 as set out in [DS 221112 2]:</i></p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;"><i>Number on Electoral Roll (inclusive)</i></th> <th style="text-align: right;"><i>Members</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>1 to 25</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>1</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>26 to 50</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>2</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>51 to 100</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>3</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>101 to 200</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>4</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>201 to 400</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>5</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>401 to 800</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>6</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>801 above</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>7</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>Number on Electoral Roll (inclusive)</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>1 to 25</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>26 to 50</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>51 to 100</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>101 to 200</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>201 to 400</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>401 to 800</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>801 above</i>	<i>7</i>
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