



THE DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH
DIOCESAN SYNOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Synod held on Saturday 1 October 2022 on Zoom conference call.

Present:

- House of Bishops: Bishop Martin Seeley, Bishop Mike Harrison
House of Clergy: 46 Members of the House (5 additional ex-officio) (18 apologies)
House of Laity: 40 Members of the House (5 additional ex-officio) (17 apologies)

In Attendance:

The Diocesan Registrar, 7 members of staff and 1 visitor.

Tony Allwood, Chair of House of Laity in the Chair

Table with 2 columns: Item Number and Description. Items include WELCOME, WORSHIP, 22.26 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, and 22.27 CHURCH BUILDINGS.

	<p>Questions:</p> <p>Justin Rabett (Clare deanery), asked what progress has been made in respect of solar panels on church roofs.</p> <p>Edmund responded to say that fitting solar panels is usually permissible, provided that they cannot be seen from ground level (the roof has a low pitch, is screened by a parapet, etc). But the economic case for them and obtaining a satisfactory feed-in tariff for the electricity generated is no less important as a deciding factor. For further information on solar panels see question 2 of item 22.36 below.</p> <p>Eleanor Goodison (Hartismere & Hoxne deanery) asked whether, when churches are taken off the Heritage at Risk Register, it becomes more difficult to obtain grants. Edmund believes this shouldn't be the case – the main consideration is more likely to be the urgency of repairs identified in the last quinquennial inspection report.</p> <p>Ian Wigston (Sudbury deanery), referring to a data collection project Edmund carried out at Canterbury diocese funded by Historic England and quoted in his report, asked if he intended to undertake a similar project in Suffolk. Edmund stated that the work in Canterbury was a one-off project, and whilst it would be very useful to do a similar information gathering exercise, this would be an enormous job. Possibly a task for the future but not possible in the short term.</p> <p>Members went into small discussion groups to share ideas in respect of how we could use church buildings, using paper DS(22)27.1 as a reference. Any interesting ideas or observations should be sent to Archdeacon David at archdeacon.david@cofesuffolk.org</p> <p>Members were encouraged to join various workshops that will be running in the autumn on different aspects of church buildings. Details can be found here: https://diocese-of-st-edmundsbury-and-ipswich.eventbrite.co.uk/.</p> <p>Revd Katherine Valentine talked about the very positive progress made by the Churches Conservation Trust's maintenance and regeneration scheme at St George's, Stowlangtoft, which is currently entering the second year of its two-year term.</p>
<p>22.28</p>	<p>UPDATE ON LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH (LLF) IN THE DIOCESE</p> <p>Bishop Martin explained that further to the last Synod, a small group has now been set up to look at how the diocese might respond and engage with the next steps of the LLF process, to discern how God may ask us to respond in Suffolk and to do so alongside and in reflection to the national process.</p> <p>The group consists of Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton Ford, Tony Allwood, Mary Hare, Dean Joe, Revd Canon Sharon Potter, Revd Canon Tiffer Robinson. Out of their first meeting came a shared view by all present, to seek a way forward of generous accommodation between differently faithfully held positions whilst holding together as one body.</p> <p>+Martin also referenced the conversation that took place at the Lambeth Conference in the summer. Bishop Martin's update can be found here: Diocesan Synod October 2022 - Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich (cofesuffolk.org)</p>

<p>22.29</p>	<p>INTRODUCTION TO THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT HUB</p> <p>Paper ref DS(22)P29. Hilary Wordsworth-Sewell, the Diocesan Children’s and Families Enabler introduced a new website that will be launched in early 2023. It will be called “Insight” and intends to bring together learning for everyone in one place. It will contain courses, events and resources and accessible to all.</p>
<p>22.30</p>	<p>DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE 2023 BUDGET</p> <p>Gavin Bultitude, Diocesan Secretary introduced the budget, paper ref DS(22)P30.</p> <p>A huge thank you was given to everyone for their contributions to parish share.</p> <p>Throughout 2018-2020 the diocese moved from deficit to a small surplus and was in a financially stable position for those three years. Unfortunately, we have slipped back into a deficit position due to the pandemic and the impact is still showing. The <i>Growing in God</i> plan underpins a plan to bring the diocese back into financial stability through growth. We are not planning for cutting or retrenchment.</p> <p>The number of active givers is decreasing which is one of the diocese’s major risks. Growing in number is therefore vital as part of the growth plan. Cashflow is also a risk and the current cost of living crisis is a major risk, both the impact on givers and the cost of keeping buildings open.</p> <p>Gary spoke to the paper, ref DS(22)P30. Some of the key assumptions made are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish share request £7.35m, aim to collect £6.54m. 5% increase from 2022 but has not been increased since 2020. • 4% pay increases for staff and clergy • Cashflow – potential sale of two properties to maintain liquidity <p>On the basis of the above assumptions, the total budget for 2023 is a deficit of £689k.</p> <p>The two motions were moved together and then opened for debate.</p> <p>The Right Revd Martin Seeley, Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich moved that:</p> <p>“This Synod authorises the Diocesan Board of Finance to expend a sum not exceeding £11,868,070 in the financial year beginning 1 January 2023 in accordance with paper DS(22)P30”.</p> <p>And</p> <p>The Right Revd Martin Seeley, Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich moved that:</p> <p>“The sum of £7,350,000 required from parishes to fund such expenditure be allocated to parishes in accordance with the current diocesan parish share allocation formula.”</p> <p><i>Debate</i></p> <p>Andrew Gray, General Synod member, asked if it were possible to obtain an example of how parish share is calculated in both an urban and a rural parish share. Gary will contact Andrew outside the meeting to take this forward.</p>

Richard Finch, Saxmundham deanery, commented on his concern that stipends are falling further behind cost of living rate. Understanding the budgetary pressures the diocese faces, but even with a 4% increase next year, levels are still falling behind inflation. Richard asked for constant monitoring of financial pressures on clergy.

Peter Goodridge, Lavenham deanery, commented that in the light of coming through Covid and now going through a cost of living crisis, he feels that he cannot ask his parish to commit to a 5% increase in parish share.

In response to the above, Gavin Bultitude responded to say the leadership team are keeping a close eye on stipends and salaries and whether 4% is manageable. If it were to be increased by a smaller percentage it would add further pressures on the budget and mean a potentially larger deficit.

Gavin also commented that the diocese doesn't in any way underestimate the difficult times we are in. Parish Share needs to increase to support *Growing in God* and keep clergy numbers at 120, but it is also looking at other ways to raise funds, ie high value donors and leaving legacies for instance. But without that giving, the diocese cannot continue with its present level of mission and ministry and if it cuts back much further it will reduce the ability to grow in the future. It will always be a difficult balance.

Geoffrey Kiddy, Waveney & Blyth deanery, commented that he can see both sides; if resources are cut further, it will be difficult to continue to minister, but alternatively it is very difficult to support an increase where parishes already struggle to find it.

Jonathan Alderton-Ford, Thingoe deanery, paid tribute to the leadership team being so transparent. The plan is courageous but we must remember that God is in control.

Tom Mumford, Ipswich deanery, asked whether the diocese has considered other ways of generating income whether that is commercially or in other ways.

David Lamming, Sudbury deanery, commented that as the budget was prepared before the changes within government and the mini budget that has been declared, David asked whether it's had any impact on the diocesan budget.

Charlotte Scott, Sudbury deanery, raised concern that some parishes are still paying the rate calculated from the previous system and paying in excess of £7k more than what it is deemed that they should be paying.

In response to the above, Gary Peverley commented that the financial uncertainty we are living in adds to the uncertainty of the budget and this is a risk but we will continue to monitor the government's plans, and that there could be scope to amend certain cost lines within it, the overall budgeted numbers within the diocesan budget will not change.

It is a priority for the leadership team to think of different ways we can raise funds and this will not change as we work through the cost of living crisis.

Gary also commented that he has considered changing elements of the parish share model for future years but the allocation based on income levels was small within the overall calculation, and having consulted a number of people, it is felt that now is not the time to amend on the basis that obtaining average income levels would be required in

	<p>order to do this correctly.</p> <p>A vote was taken on the first motion:</p> <p>“This Synod authorises the Diocesan Board of Finance to expend a sum not exceeding £11,868,070 in the financial year beginning 1 January 2023 in accordance with paper DS(22)P30”.</p> <p>Members voted by a poll over zoom. The results were:</p> <table data-bbox="300 571 646 676"> <tr> <td>For</td> <td>68</td> <td>(91%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Against</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abstain</td> <td>7</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>The motion was passed.</p> <p>A vote was taken on the second motion:</p> <p>The Right Revd Martin Seeley, Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich moved that:</p> <p>“The sum of £7,350,000 required from parishes to fund such expenditure be allocated to parishes in accordance with the current diocesan parish share allocation formula.”</p> <p>Members voted by a poll over zoom. The results were:</p> <table data-bbox="300 1064 646 1169"> <tr> <td>For</td> <td>67</td> <td>(91%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Against</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abstain</td> <td>6</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>The motion was passed.</p>	For	68	(91%)	Against	0		Abstain	7		For	67	(91%)	Against	1		Abstain	6	
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<p>22.31</p>	<p>CHANGES TO THE STANDING ORDERS</p> <p>James Hall, Diocesan Registrar summarised the paper, DS(22)P31. Modern charity law requires that trustees of the DBF (Bishop’s Council) must adhere to a code of conduct. Trustees have signed up to a code of conduct which introduces provisions to leave office in certain cases. The code needs to be embedded into the legal formalities of the diocese and therefore needs embedding into the Standing Orders. This has been recommended by both the Governance Committee and Bishop’s Council. Members are asked to approve the additional Standing Order as below.</p> <p>Ian Wigston, as a member of Bishop’s Council moved that:</p> <p>That this synod’s standing orders be amended by the addition of a further Standing Order 73.3 to read as follows:</p> <p>“73.3 A member of the Standing Committee shall cease to hold office in accordance with the provisions of such code of conduct or other terms as the Standing Committee may from time to time agree for the better performance of their duties and fulfilment of their responsibilities.”</p>																		

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22.32	<p>GENERAL SYNOD REPORT</p> <p>Jeannette Appleton, General Synod member summarised the report, paper DS(22)P32, following July's General Synod.</p>									
22.33	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>One error was noted from the minutes of the previous meeting, DS(22)M2. The first bullet of item 22.19 which reads "Total expenditure was £9.2m which included support from the national church of £600k" is incorrect. The correct figure should read "£200k". The £600k receipt refers to 2020 rather than 2021.</p> <p>Noting this amendment, the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 25 June 2022, paper ref DS(22)P33_M2 were approved.</p>									
22.34	<p>MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA</p> <p>One matter was raised, given my David Lamming (Sudbury deanery). The matter concerned point 22.24 of the previous minutes under 'questions' which related to the fact that from those members who had submitted formal questions to the Synod, none were present at the meeting.</p> <p>The minutes state the following:</p> <p>"The Archdeacon of Sudbury commented that it was disappointing to see that none of the original questioners were present at the meeting. This meant that follow up questions or discussions did not take place. Although Synod members are, of course, very welcome to submit questions, members were asked to note that it can be very time consuming for diocesan staff to prepare a detailed reply and ideally the questioner should be present to formally receive the response, perhaps ask a follow-on question, and to allow others to contribute to a wider discussion".</p> <p>David Lamming was concerned at the comment made that it shouldn't be thought an individual has to be present at the meeting in order to ask a question. Instead, it is an opportunity for synod members to ask questions and supplementary questions can be asked of any member.</p>									
22.35	<p>MINUTES OF THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL</p> <p>The minutes of the Bishop's Council meeting held on 21 July 2022, ref DS(22)P35_BC(22)M4, were received.</p>									

1. David Lamming (Sudbury Deanery) asked a member of the Synod planning team:

What was the outcome of the review by the Synod planning group into the statistics about attendance at Synod meetings revealed by my question at the last Synod meeting (see Paper DS(22)P24 page 4) and the answer to that question, and what, if any, 'further insights' from Synod members have been received to inform that review?

Reply from Tony Allwood, Chair of the House of Laity and member of the Synod planning group: The attendance figures from the last two synods in March and June 2022 have been looked at. The planning team wanted to honour the commitment made to synod members to have one Synod meeting on Zoom this year, and will take attendance figures for October's meeting into account. In respect of further insights, see item 22.37, one of the notices for October's meeting, is to ask synod members thoughts on how they would like to meet in 2023. The data will be collected and preferences reviewed before a decision is made before the end of the year in respect of meetings in 2023.

No supplementary question was asked.

2. David Lamming (Sudbury Deanery) asked either Edmund Harris, DAC Secretary or Gary Peverley, Finance Director:

In a letter published in the *Church Times* on 2 September 2022 (page 14) the Revd Carl Chambers (Rochester Diocese) suggested that to help with the rising cost of energy bills and address the welfare of the clergy, the Church Commissioners should "*use their huge buying power and expertise to source the best solar panels available and to procure these for every vicarage, rectory etc in the country.*" Some years ago this diocese was 'ahead of the game' in implementing a programme to fit solar panels to the roofs of parsonage houses, where suitable. To how many parsonage roofs in the diocese have such panels been fitted to date, what has been the average annual cost saving or financial benefit achieved, and what (if any) programme is being considered to promote the fitting of solar panels to church roofs, having regard to the constraints that may be imposed in the case of those many historic churches that are listed?

Reply from Gavin Bultitude, Diocesan Secretary: As of September 2022, 98 parsonages have solar panels on their roofs.

The financial benefit of solar PV panels is twofold. The first part is where electricity is used as it is generated, so supplying free energy to the occupants of the parsonage, for example, where a washing machine is being run on a sunny day. We would be unable to quantify this as the savings would fall directly on the occupants though reduced energy bills. The second benefit is due to a feed in tariff paid for electricity that is not used at the time it is generated and is returned to the National Grid. The Diocese does benefit from this, and the income is approximately £16,000 per year.

Fitting solar panels to a church roof would be a decision of a PCC, and they would in all cases need to secure a faculty for this work. The PCC is the custodian of the

	<p>church building, but the DAC has a duty in law to have proper regard to the listed status of a church building and the impact of PV arrays. In practice, it all comes down to whether they can be seen from ground level. A church with a low-pitched roof surrounded by a parapet or battlements (as many churches in this Diocese do) can easily take a PV array but on a church with a single high-pitched tiled roof is unlikely to be suitable. The installation also requires expertise in historic fabrics, not all supplier of PV Panels can, or should, take on this work.</p> <p>The economic case for solar PV is also quite complicated. Since the national feed in tariff was abolished, it is harder to make the case, and it is likely that for many churches the repayment period for the initial investment will be long. However, a coordinated national or regional effort to procure PV equipment at competitive prices might well help to bring the capital costs down through economies of scale and increased leverage and so reduce the payback period. Our net zero group will be looking at this work as an important step on our journey to get to net zero by 2030, and to reduce the running costs of churches.</p> <p>David made a supplementary question asking whether the issues can be taken up by General Synod members in pursuing them with the Church Commissioners.</p>
<p>22.37</p>	<p>NOTICES</p> <p>1. Diocesan Synod Meetings 2023</p> <p>Members were asked to consider the balance they would like to see between in person meetings and zoom in 2023. A short poll was carried out to understand the preferences and will be fed back to the synod planning team to make a final decision.</p> <p>Five options were given and members were asked to vote for their most preferred option in order of 1-5 (1 being most preferred). The poll was conducted within the limitations of the zoom technology, meaning that an exact 1-5 preference could not be conducted.</p> <p>In order of preference, below were the results of the poll:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 in person and 1 on zoom 2. 2 on zoom, 1 in person 3. All in person, spread across the diocese 4. All in person, at St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich 5. All 3 on zoom <p>The preferred option was considerably above the other four.</p> <p>2. Christmas</p> <p>The national campaign this year is Follow the Star but parishes are also welcome to join the local campaign of Inspiring Angels. Resources for both will be available in due course.</p>

3. Heated Cushions Trial

Tony Allwood has been working with the national church who has been willing to fund a Dutch company to provide our diocese with 30 heated cushions to conduct a trial over the winter months. The intention being to heat the people, not the building, which would be a huge cost saving for some rural parishes.

If any parishes are willing to be part of this trial, contact Tony for further details.

Email: tony_allwood@btopenworld.com

**The next meeting of the Diocesan Synod will be held at
9.30am, on Saturday 18 March 2023, location to be confirmed**