



2. Bristol Diocesan Synod Minutes (Draft)

Date: Saturday, 19 November 2022

Time: 9.30am to 2.00pm

Venue: Pattern Church, Penzance Drive, Swindon, SN5 7JL

The agenda and papers for this meeting can be found on the Diocese of Bristol website at:

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/aboutus/governance/diocesansynod/>

1.	Opening worship
	Kate Davison led sung worship and prayers, drawing on Sunday’s theme of Christ the King, acknowledging the recent accession of King Charles III and recognizing the changes and challenges we face as a church, nation and world.
	Trudie Wigley in the Chair
2.	Introductions and Welcome
	<p>Trudie welcomed Synod members, thanked Pattern Church and the Diocesan Support Services staff team for all the work they had put into making Synod happen.</p> <p>Trudie explained that there was a strong desire to make Synod more inclusive and give members more opportunity to express their views, consequently more time for discussion had been built into the agenda. Facilitators had also been seated at each table to help encourage conversation throughout Synod and thanks were extended to all those who had volunteered. Further facilitator training sessions will be arranged.</p> <p>Trudie thanked Synod for filling out the travel form. A brief analysis of statistics showed that through car sharing Synod had saved 915 miles by car (-22%), 0.38 tonnes of CO2 (-31%) and £515 in expenses (-27%). Trudie challenged Synod to increase its car sharing to 50% for next Synod, or travel by public transport.</p> <p>Synod approved the notes of the last session.</p> <p>Apologies. Trudie noted 1 apology from the House of Bishops, 14 from the House of Clergy and 13 apologies from House of Laity.</p> <p>Trudie explained the structure of the meeting. The meeting was largely formed of three parts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first part covered routine business. • The second part looked at the financial plans for the year ahead .

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final part was an opportunity for Synod to discuss together the potential impact of the cost-of-living crisis. During this time, Synod considered options for alleviating some of the burden this might put onto PCCs, parishioners and our wider communities. • After Synod had formally ended, there was an opportunity for the House of Laity to meet separately.
3.	Appointment of the members of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Limited
	<p>Revd Melanie Otto, Revd Kaf Smith and Revd Rich Creswell had joined Synod since the last meeting in September. Synod formally appointed them. Trudie welcomed Nathalie Makeham, Governance Support Co-Ordinator, to her first Synod.</p>
4.	Bishop's Address – Rt Revd Viv Faull, Bishop of Bristol
	<p>Bishop Viv gave her presidential address and focused on the new energy in the Church of England and particularly referenced the Synod venue, Pattern Church, which opened four years ago.</p> <p>Bishop Viv's address is available on the Diocesan website at: Presidential Address - November Synod - Diocese of Bristol (anglican.org).</p>
5.	General Synod report
	<p>Ed Shaw gave his General Synod report from the July meeting. Ed urged Synod to contact its elected representations to ask questions and pass on any comments on forthcoming General Synod agendas.</p> <p>Abby Scott, General Synod representative, had made her maiden speech sharing the good news of the Well Church in Swindon (www.thewellswindon.org/)</p> <p>One comment was raised in relation to the "Affirming and Including Disabled People in the Whole Life of the Church" section of the report back from General Synod. It was suggested that the section might be read as flippant, whereas the Church must take seriously its commitment to making church and church buildings accessible to all, which Ed affirmed.</p>
6.	Bishop's Council & Board of Directors report 14 July, 5 September and 17 October 2022, including
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deanery Synod election formula approval - CRR Scheme for Shine Pinehurst
	<p>Christopher Bryan summarised the Bishop's Council report and highlighted the following matters for Synod's attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deanery Synod election formula for Synod's approval. • Church Representation Rules (CRR) Scheme for Shine Pinehurst BMO for Synod's approval. • Bishop's Instruments for virtual meetings of PCCs, Deanery and Diocesan Synods, for Synod to note. <p>Christopher informed Synod that through Alice Kemp, Kat Champion-Spall had raised a concern prior to Synod that the wording in the Bishop's Instruments was not inclusive:</p>

“A person is to be regarded as present at a meeting of the PCC/Synods at any given time if the person is at that time able to hear and be heard, and where practicable see and be seen, by the other persons present”

Lee Coley, Diocesan Registrar, had confirmed that the phrasing comes from the general legal position for valid meetings for companies and thus are general hallmarks for virtual meetings across the country. Given these were legal hallmarks, Lee advised that for those who were disabled by this there would have to be a contextual solution rather than one written into the instrument because the instrument would not be able to cover every eventuality.

Lee and Alice agreed to work on a contextual solution.

Questions

- It was hard to recruit for Deanery Synod and consequently there were a lot of vacancies. It was therefore suggested Deanery Synod meetings should be made more meaningful by delegating powers to Deanery level to encourage new members.
- Who elects Deanery Synod representatives on behalf of a Bishop's Mission Order (BMO).

The Diocesan Registrar confirmed that it should be those on the Mission Initiative Roll who elects the Deanery Synod representatives.

- Concerns were raised about the relationship between a BMO and PCC, accountability and communication about a BMO's objectives.

It was agreed that local clergy would be brought in earlier when discussions about new BMOs begin this was so the relationship between the PCC(s) and BMO would be established from the beginning. It was also agreed the BMOs and their associated CRR Schemes would be accessible on the [Diocesan website](#) so that everyone can see how they are accountable and what their objectives were.

Bishop Viv and Simon Taylor (Director of Ministry Development) will draft a note on the current BMO arrangements and the role of the Bishop's Visitor and will present this at Synod on 18 March 2022.

Whilst virtual meetings would have a significant environmental benefit, Synod was urged to think about how to make any virtual meetings inclusive so that all have equal opportunity to take part.

Christopher then moved that

- a) this report be received.

Motion was carried unanimously.

- b) in accordance with Church Representation Rules the number of lay representatives on Deanery Synods shall be in proportion to the number on the church electoral roll of each parish in accordance with Formula A – the formula approved by the Bishop's Council via email between 21 – 28/10/2022. Agreed.

Motion was carried unanimously.

	<p>c) the Church Representation Rules (CRR) Scheme for Shine Pinehurst BMO is approved.</p> <p>Motion was carried unanimously.</p> <p>d) The Bishop’s Instruments for virtual meetings of PCCs, Deanery and Diocesan Synods are noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
7.	<p>Safeguarding – report from Past Case Review 2</p>
	<p>Adam Bond (Safeguarding Officer) presented the Past Case Review 2 (PCR2).</p> <p>It was highlighted that ten years ago Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance had two part-time Safeguarding Officers and that the National Safeguarding Team had one employee that was shared with the Methodists. Since then both teams have expanded, the BDBF now employees five safeguarding team members.</p> <p>It was explained that the 2020 PCR2 across all 42 diocese came about because the 2008 review was deemed insufficient. The 2008 review only reviewed child abuse and did not include deceased clergy files.</p> <p>The PCR2 purpose was to ensure that any concerns relating to children, vulnerable adults (including Domestic Abuse) had been reported and any new cases that were identified during the review were acted on.</p> <p>An independent reviewer found that the Diocese of Bristol was “proactive in its safeguarding. ...the safeguarding improvements seen in the timeline from around 2012 – to current was impressive, in particular the last 5 years has embedded safeguarding firmly in the Diocese and parishes”.</p> <p>Of the PCR2 26 recommendations there are 12 for the Diocese and parishes to implement. The Diocese of Bristol has joined with Bath & Wells, Salisbury, Exeter and Truro to establish a regional pilot to explore the implementation of recommendations 1, creation of the role of Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, and 8, external audit of safeguarding in church of England with development of a quality assurance process and standards. Pilot has now started and will conclude after 18 months.</p> <p>Key actions for PCCs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCCs need to understand where they are in terms of their safeguarding arrangements • Use the Parish Dashboard to develop an action plan • Ensure that all PCC members and Church officers are safely recruited • Ensure all PCC members and Church officers complete the required training for their role <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the election of PCC officers and safer recruitment meant to align, in particular the question of references. It was confirmed that the nomination counted as a reference. • Can there be Deanery or clustered parish safeguarding officers?

	<p>Parts of the role might be shared; however, each parish does need a named parish safeguarding officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does a PCC member need to be safeguarding trained? Can they opt out? Every PCC member is required to complete the training because the PCC member is a trustee of the charity and is required to oversee the work of others. People are expected to complete the training within a reasonable period (i.e. 12 months). • In 2021 a letter was sent to all parishes asking them to account for past cases, what happened to letter for parishes in vacancy? They were sent to the Churchwardens. • If PCC members don't complete the training is there a mechanism to remove them from the PCC? Need to create a mechanism for handling that locally. If PCC members haven't completed the training by "x" date, they cannot continue in their role until they have done so. PCC's might add this to its Code of Conduct. • How do we connect and share with our ecumenical partners? Not part of the pilot project but the Church of England is in touch with its partners. • It was suggested that the Safeguarding Team explains why training has to be done in its communications. • It was highlighted that the Diocese of Litchfield had recently approved a motion to try and close the gap between the Church Representation Rules (CRR) for appointing PCC members and Safeguarding Training. • Many feel that the Church of England is spending too much time and money on safeguarding. However, if safeguarding is handled badly, the impact on individuals, families, communities and the church is catastrophic. The impact can be clearly seen in Ireland. <p>Adam Beaumont prayed and committed this matter to God.</p>
8.	Bristol DBF Budget 2023
	<p>Richard Bacon presented the 2023 Budget.</p> <p>Richard thanked Jeff Loo (Interim Finance Director) and Finance Team for putting together 2023 Budget.</p> <p>The differences between the 2023 and 2022 budgets were explained. The difference in expected expenditure was minimal, if you take out strategic spending that will be funded by the National Church.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why would the roll out Transforming Church. Together be slowed down if Parish Share is lower than expected if it is being funded by National Church.

Parish Share is the foundation of the BDBF income, therefore if this is reduced it would impact on the day-to-day budget of the Diocesan Support Services and therefore our ability to oversee, roll out, and support the change programme (HR, Comms, finance, and so on).

- What do new income streams refer to?

The BDBF is looking for new ways of generating income, these include approaching grant making bodies and all conventional forms of fundraising used in the 3rd sector. It will also look to build partnerships with other organisations, which may deliver income, benefits in kind, a 'voice' in our campaigns work, and volunteers.

- Is the budget realistic in light of economic environment?

Assumptions had to be made based on the current information the BDBF has. The National Church grant(s), stipends and staff salaries have all been built into the budget. The big variable is Parish share.

- How will the budget be monitored?

The budget will be managed by Finance Committee who meet regularly and receive full management account reports and forecasts. This is reported to Bishop's Council who are a standing committee of Synod. Synod will also get a regular report on the budget. If there are any significant issues, there might need to be an additional meeting of Bishop's Council and then Synod.

- The National Church grant will be spent on staff, support services and consultancy; are we getting value for money? Suggested that there might be other ways of growing numbers and clergy could be asked how they grew their congregation numbers.

The DSS is too small to do its current job, and certainly not the right size and shape to support a change programme as big as ours. Vital to recognise that the additional roles (in the DSS and out in the parishes and benefices) are there specifically to help parishes make the strategy real in their context. All new posts (bar one) are being funded by the National Church or Local Grant Making bodies. The one role - recruitment assistant - will be funded by core finances.

- Can we see the reserves policy and what are the reserves made up of?

The reserves policy is in the annual accounts, and we have in the region of £22.4m of designated and unrestricted funds. Given the current uncertain climate, the Finance Committee are monitoring our reserves carefully on Synod's behalf.

- How is early indication of parish share taken? Those in local ecumenical partnerships are asked for contributions from two churches is this taken into account?

Early indications have been heartening, but it is clear that some parishes have tried really hard to meet the request, and are unable to do so. On current responses and past trends, we hope to reach at least 95% of the annual target.

Bishop Viv, Clive Deverell and Richard Creswell will look into Parish Share requests for those in ecumenical partnerships.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the budget reduce the deficit? The 5-year plan envisages the annual deficit reducing in a gradual and controlled way, whilst sustaining clergy numbers and increasing our missional impact. • Can we see the projections for reducing the deficit. People have been told there is a new Parish Share scheme? Has this been consulted on or presented at Synod? The strategy document approved by Synod in September included all the financial projections up to 2028, and demonstrated the gradual reduction of the deficit, reaching balance at the end of the period. • Naomi Buckler (Senior Giving Adviser) and The Archdeacons consulted a significant number of parishes about a new system. The feedback highlighted three main principles that parishes wished to see: fairness, transparency, and simplicity. Bishop’s Council – as Synod’s Standing Committee - has agreed the new formulae. Feedback has been generally very positive, and pledges generous. <i>(Post meeting note – some parishes read the document in a way which indicated the Diocese expects all parishes to pay for their clergy by the end of the strategy period. This is not the case; the Diocese is hoping all parishes will meet their calculated share figure by the end of the period).</i> • Need to keep commitment to real living wage and balancing parish share? Is there anything in our risk register in the demographic of the regular givers? The risk register is currently being reviewed. <p>Neil Warwick then moved that: This Synod authorises the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Limited to expend in the year 2023 sums totaling £10,968,000 in respect of the items in the Budget for that year. Motion was carried with no votes against, and one abstention.</p>
9.	Question Time
	<p>Bruce informed Synod that written questions had been submitted by two Synod members. Copies of the questions were available on each table.</p> <p>Written questions The Revd David Stephenson Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Three years ago, this Synod unanimously agreed to adopt a motion making the declaration of Climate Emergency. We were one of the first Dioceses to make this declaration and it paved the way for General Synod’s declaration and our reps were a significant voice in GS’ commitment to achieving net-zero by 2030. Having proposed the original motion three years on I want to ask to what extent we are acting as if we are in an emergency? 2) To what extent is the situation we are facing informing and shaping our theological perspectives, our discipleship formation, our missional priorities and commitments, our prayer and our worship, as well as our behaviours as individuals and our vocation as communities?”

Answers:

1) We recognise this is an emergency but, as in any crisis, we must plan and allocate resources in a deliberate and sustainable manner, to ensure we successfully overcome it. We have now appointed a lead for DBF (Lindsey McCullam) to take on the CNZ2030 challenge - across the Diocese - and she is currently assembling her team and determining the best way to allocate resources. We have also worked hard to both bid for National Church funding, and to gain DBF approval in principle to release funds from our own reserves. Bristol is so far ahead of other Dioceses that we have been chosen as the CNZ2030 'pathfinder' for the CofE as a whole. We are now aligning our Diocesan route map with the recently released National Church route map (where it makes sense to do so) and we are on a steep dive now into energy utilisation assessment, decarbonisation plans and the focussed and planned roll out of infrastructure greening. We will also undertake activities to enable data collection for benchmarking and infrastructure changes, and to ensure we are able to drive training and behavioural change for the organisation as a whole. We continue to support and engage parishes with EcoChurch and Creation Care, providing a more holistic approach to the Climate and the Environment, and to provide opportunities for the Church and staff communities to attend talks and conferences with expert speaker contribution. There are already Churches trialling different approaches in the Diocese; many of them scoping infrared and heat pump technologies, and vicarages that have PV. There are several others who are set to pilot new emerging technologies. We have had a short hiatus in communicating these activities (and agenda) whilst we responded to some persistent staffing challenges in the Communications Directorate, but this is intended to resume shortly with some good news stories, and to provide guidance on how Parishes might wish to make a start on their own journeys. We expect to be able to present a fully costed plan to achieve CNX2030 at the March 2023 Synod.

2) This is a very valid question and one which we must address in the coming months. Undoubtedly CNZ2030 is a fundamental part of TCT, and we must integrate our technical activities with the 'hearts and minds' work we have already planned and undertaken, and the reality that this is all being done in a Christian context. We would welcome the involvement of Synod members (including the questioner) in discerning how we can achieve this integration, and a more holistic pastoral approach to getting to Net Zero by 2030.

The Revd Dr Phill Harrison:

Question:

3) It is welcome that members of Bishop's Council have stated very clearly that Transforming Church Together does not plan to make any further reductions in the numbers of stipendiary clergy across the diocese. Notwithstanding, there is still some significant anxiety about this, particularly in those parishes that are not able to cover their 'cost of ministry' (as itemised in the September Parish Share requests). The draft budget seen by Synod on 7th September contains a figure for the cost of Parish Ministry in 2023 that is 93k down on 2022, but there is no detail behind this figure. To allay fears of creeping reductions in headcount, please can the directors publish figures for the number of stipendiary clergy in each deanery over the last triennium and the assumed numbers for 2023. For each year, please

	<p>specify what is the ‘establishment level’ as well as the actual level once vacancies have been taken into account.</p> <p>Answer:</p> <p>3) The Diocese is not planning to make any reductions in clergy numbers. They may undulate over time, depending on appointments and vacancies, but the establishment will stay the same throughout the 5-year period. Very few other Dioceses are able to make this commitment.</p> <p>The parish share requests are clear that the aim is for parishes to meet their new calculated figure in 5 years’ time, <i>not</i> that each parish should give enough to pay for their clergy in 5 years’ time. With the basic cost of clergy between £50-70k per annum (depending on whether or not you include pensions and housing, for example), for many churches, the latter would be an impossibility.</p> <p>The reason the cost of clergy has dropped in the 2023 budget is because the contribution the Diocese has to make to the clergy pension scheme will drop from 40% to 28% next year, significantly reducing the cost of clergy to the Diocese.</p> <p>The figures on clergy numbers in the past are available in the Diocesan Office for those who wish to examine them. For the next 5 years we aim to keep them the same.</p> <p>David Stephenson spoke to his written question about the environment and the Diocese’s response to it. He empathised that the environment is not a practical matter to fix, instead we need to change hearts and minds to encourage others to engage with the climate emergency.</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the cost of Clergy include vacancies? It was confirmed that the vacancies were not included. • It is becoming increasingly clear that decisions have been taken which benefit some areas and exclude others. For those not in the new mission areas or who are in rural areas, this is of concern. What portion of the money has been promised already? What is still left for people to apply for? Absolutely no money has been spent or set aside yet for mission areas, nor indeed for any other parish/benefice/BMO. <p>It was further explained that TCT has two levels. Firstly the Diocesan-wide offer that impacts the entire diocese i.e. clergy wellbeing, volunteers, racial justice, and Net Zero. Secondly the local level – which will be driven ‘bottom-up’ as far as possible. Given the new resources are finite, at some stage we will have to discern where spending the money will have the most impact. The Archdeacons are working together with Deaneries to discern particular areas of focus and need.</p>
10.	Cost of living crisis
	Before the cost-of-living discussion got underway, Simon Pugh-Jones (Synod member and Chair of the DAC) informed Synod that a radiant

	<p>heating chandelier trial was being carried out at St Matthew’s, Kingsdown. Whilst the trial is ongoing, early results suggest that churches can be brought to a comfortable temperature through radiant heating that costs significantly less than traditional boilers and has much less impact of the environment.</p> <p>Richard Leaman spoke about the cost-of-living crisis and asked to consider the following questions on the tables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your parish doing that other parishes can learn from? - What else can we do to alleviate the short-term pressure on PCC budgets? <p>Feedback from tables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches to link in with schools and other organisation helping vulnerable families. • Comfort and Joy raised £28 000, distributed £22 000 to families in need. This was achieved through Ecumenical partnership. • Opening more food banks, community larders, and clothes banks in churches which can be accessed anonymously. Engaging with commercial partners to help with this. • Looking for those who are isolated or might be in need. Making it open to people of all faiths and communicating that. • Need for support for grant applications and policies. Having a template so PCCs can produce what is needed. <p>A Grants Officer has now joined BDBDF. Please email Richard Leaman (richard.leaman@bristoldiocese.org) or Harrison Leonard (Harrison.leonard@bristoldiocese.org) if help is needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to ask the question of why we are in the situation we are in? • Effective partnerships. i.e. Parish Councils and other charities to produce a co-ordinated response and share the resources we have. • Whole change in our energy economy. • Event based opportunity. Fruitful revisiting of annual giving days so people understand what is going and short-term aims. <p>Synod was encouraged to send further thoughts to synod@bristoldiocese.org.</p>
11	Blessing and close
	<p>Bishop Viv concluded the meeting with thanks to all Synod members and staff for contributing to a good and fruitful meeting. She also thanked Pattern Church and its staff for hosting Synod before closing with a blessing.</p>