



Bishop's Council report, 23 June 2021, 13 July 2021, 15 September 2021, 21 October 2021

The Bishop's Council, Board of Directors and Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee met via Zoom on the 23rd June and 13th July and in person on the 15th September and 21st October 2021.

The primary areas of business were the continuing work on developing the vision, values and strategy priorities of the Diocese (*Transforming Church. Together*) and consideration of the 2022 budget, in the light of performance and forecasts for 2021. Both of these matters are brought to this Synod meeting and other notable items of business are described below.

Transforming Church. Together.

The Council spent considerable time working on the strategy development process, encompassed by *Transforming Church. Together*, included holding an extra meeting in July to work through the draft vision and values.

The Council discussed the process and timetable for delivering the desired outcomes of *Transforming Church. Together*, as well as revised governance structures for the project in light of Oliver Home's departure.

Based on the considerable engagement work undertaken earlier in the Spring, development work had been undertaken with an external consultancy firm to review the information gathered and to agree and carry out a process for establishing the vision, values and behaviours that will form the basis of new strategy.

The visual representation of how the vision, values and behaviours fit together, and which details a complex narrative within a simple design, were shared and discussed by the Council, along with the theological underpinnings of the various component parts of these 'vision building blocks'. These were approved by the Council, ready to be shared more widely at September's introductory meeting of Diocesan Synod.

The Council also considered a comprehensive "As Is" exercise that had been carried out over the Summer, with the aim of giving a picture of how the Diocese "looks" at the moment. This work highlighted six framing paradoxes and these were shared with the Council. These paradoxes are being analysed using root cause analysis and will help the process of

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discerning the Diocese's strategic priorities. It is the discernment of the strategic priorities that the Council has now turned its attention to and will be the focus ahead of Diocesan Synod in March 2022.

DBF Budget for 2022

The Board of Directors has considered the DBF's financial performance in 2021 to date and forecast to the end of the year, with regular briefings from the Finance Committee. In September and October, it considered two iterations of the draft 2022 Budget in the light of the detailed work at preceding Finance Committee meetings.

The Directors recognised the structural deficit in the DBF's budget continues as a result of not meeting the income goals set in the 2017 to 2020 Financial Plan. However, given the imperative to ensure that long term expenditure is in line with the Diocese's future vision and strategy, the Directors made the decision to continue to fund this deficit from reserves in 2022. This should continue to provide stability for parish ministry and its support, particularly as the Diocese continues to recover from the challenges of Covid-19. In effect, the DBF continues to use its reserves to buy time for the longer term sake of the whole Diocese, while the prayerful and discerning work of *Transforming Church. Together* continues.

Meanwhile diocesan officers and budget holders have been asked to continue to build on the cost control measures already in place, making further savings where possible. The work of the Income Generation Task Group, which identified additional potential sources of income to Parish Share, investment and grant income, will be further developed in 2022.

The Board of Directors agreed to recommend the 2022 expenditure for approval to Diocesan Synod. Full details are given in the 2022 Budget paper.

Risk management

The Board of Directors considered a report from the Audit & Risk Committee, which had reviewed risks relating to the impact of Covid-19 on resilience, energy and capacity at all levels; the reputational risk in relation to a gap between the expectations and the ability to meet those expectations as a variety of levels in the diocese; the financial risk of a shortfall in income; a lack of progress in strategic development and/or communication about that progress and a reduction in capacity and knowledge caused by the resignation of current Diocesan Secretary and forthcoming vacancy.

The Directors discussed steps that could be taken towards mitigating the risks identified. The risks highlighted related to the Diocesan Secretary vacancy and the *Transforming Church. Together* program and were picked up for particular focus (as detailed elsewhere in this report).

Diocesan Secretary recruitment

The Council was kept informed about the process of recruiting a new Diocesan Secretary / Chief Executive, following the departure of Oliver Home in July 2021. This included the interim arrangements that have been put in place.

Following a rigorous recruitment process, the Council was pleased with the announcement that Richard Leaman will be taking on this crucial role in the life of the Diocese.

www.bristol.anglican.org/news/bishop-of-bristol-appoints-new-diocesan-secretary-and-ceo.php

Well church plant, North Swindon

The Council considered a proposal by the Pattern Church to plant a church in North Swindon, to be called The Well. The Council was encouraged by the work and ministry of the Pattern Church and the support of the Ministry Development Team in developing this proposal, noting the strategic importance of this exciting, new development.

The Council was in agreement that The Well church plant in North Swindon should be established and was pleased by its subsequent launch in September 2021.

www.bristol.anglican.org/news/candy-floss-and-bouncy-castles-north-swindon-celebrates-new-church-launch.php

Mission and Pastoral Committee work

The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) made recommendations about two suspensions of presentation; a proposal to dissolve a team ministry and unite a benefice; a separate proposal to unite a benefice and a draft proposal for a parish boundary change.

The DMPC also considered proposals for a re-constitution of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) from 1 January 2022. The proposals aim to ensure that the requirements of the DAC constitution are met, any gaps in knowledge and experience have been identified, and new volunteers are recruited accordingly. These proposals were duly approved.