



6. Board of Directors, Bishop's Council and Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee Report

13 July & 12 October 2023

1. The Bishop's Council, Board of Directors and Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee met in person on 13 July and 12 October 2023.

Mission and Pastoral Committee work

Overview

2. In addition to noting several matters that are currently in progress, the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) made recommendations about four suspensions, two pastoral schemes/ orders, and one BMO.

CRR Scheme for The Well Church, North Swindon

3. In addition, and in line with the rule 24 (1) of the Church Representation Rules (CRR) 2022, the Committee considered a Scheme to provide for representation for the Bishop's Mission Order (BMO) The Well Church, North Swindon on Deanery Synod. The Committee duly recommended the CRR Scheme. Diocesan Synod will be asked to approve the CRR Scheme as part of the motion to receive this report.

Bishop's Council

TC.T

4. The Council have continued to monitor progress with Transforming Church Together (TC.T) and looked at ways of supporting parishes as they seek to build their own plans for the future and discern how the various elements of the National funding might be applicable. A key focus has been on how the strategy is communicated to parishes and how they can be energised to start conversations about their future(s).

5. Diocesan Synod Election Formula 2024-2027

Options for the formula for the next Diocesan Synod triennium were considered leading to a recommendation outlined in a separate paper. Diocesan Synod will be asked to approve the Diocesan Synod election formula as part of the motion to receive this report.

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DBF

Budget 2024

6. The Board of Directors has regularly reviewed the DBF's financial performance (and forecasts) throughout 2023, with regular supporting briefings from the Finance Committee. The forecast for the end of year looks promising, in that we will probably meet our previously planned reduction in the operating deficit for 2023 when underspends, overspends, and transfers are taken into account. In October Council approved the draft 2024 Budget presented at this Synod.

The DBF is determined to bring the operating budget into balance over the next 4-5 years, and we remain on track to do that. In broad terms, we expect to be able to sustain clergy numbers, whilst utilising National Church funding to deliver the transformation programme overall. There are risks to the programme; not least the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on Parish Share, and the recent drop in investment income as a result of global and national challenges. The DBF will adjust expenditure (and hence activity) in 2024 to ensure that we remain within the parameters of the TCT 5-year budget and – ultimately - achieve financial sustainability. More details are given in the 2024 Budget paper.

Whilst it is recognised that the current economic climate will make it challenging for parishes and benefices to meet their Parish Share next year, it is also a time when the need for generosity – for the benefit of the whole Diocese – has never been more important.