



Bishop's Council report, 20 May 2021

The Bishop's Council met via Zoom on 20 May 2021.

Transforming Church. Together.

The Bishop's Council was joined for the first part of the meeting by a number of clergy and diocesan officers who had participated in a workshop a week earlier to discuss the findings from the *Transforming Church. Together* engagement that took place between February and April. The workshop outputs were presented at this meeting and participants had the opportunity to reflect on them.

Diocesan Registrar

The Bishop's Council consented to the appointment of Lee Coley as Diocesan Registrar following Roland Callaby's retirement on 1 July.

Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) Annual Report & Financial Statements 2020

Canon Andrew Lucas, Chair of the DBF, spoke to the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements, drawing attention to the narrative related to the impact of COVID19, diocesan priorities and the review of the 2016-20 Strategic Plan.

Andrew drew attention to the explanation on page 12 of the report as to how the operating budget reconciled to the Statement of Financial Activities on page 24. The operating deficit for 2020 was £551,000. In the context of a challenging year, this was considered a creditable result. Expenditure on ministry had been maintained, savings had been made in non-staff costs and through furlough, and additional grant income had been obtained to further offset the reductions in Parish Share and fee income. Gratitude was expressed to the faithfulness of parishes in continuing to give all they could.

Meanwhile, the assets of the DBF had grown by £7m or 10%. This is explained on page 12 and resulted from gains on investments, sale of properties, pension adjustments and the transfer of funds into the DBF that had previously been held by a separate charity which granted the income to the Diocese by way of a grant.

The Directors welcomed this stewardship of the Diocese's resources, thanked those involved in the preparation of the Annual Report and the work it represents and approved the accounts to be received and adopted by the Annual General Meeting and signed by the Chair.

Diocesan Secretary vacancy

The Bishop's Council discussed Oliver Home's resignation as Diocesan Secretary and the upcoming vacancy. There was much gratitude expressed for Oliver's immense contribution and the dedication and gifts he brought to the role and the Diocese.

The Council noted that the Diocesan Secretary is a fundamental leadership role in any diocese: as Chief Executive Officer of the DBF, Secretary to the Synod, Chief Operating/Administrative Officer to the Diocese and a key member of the Bishop's Staff Team. They were invited to comment on shaping the role for the future, with the optimum balance of strategic, implementation and operational experience and skills.

The Council approved the Bishop of Bristol and Chair of the DBF to move forward the recruitment and bring back a role profile to its next meeting at the end of June with a view for a search process over the summer. Plans for interim arrangements for the vacancy would also be brought to the next meeting.

Plans for the second half of 2021

The Council received a progress report on the overall development of *Transforming Church. Together*. The Council agreed that the Project Board would bring back a revised plan for the rest of the project, noting the impact of various workstreams, the Diocesan Secretary vacancy and some adapted elements of *Transforming Church. Together*.