



## 6. Bristol Diocesan Synod Minutes (Draft)

**Date:** Saturday, 18 March 2023

**Time:** 9.30am to 1.00pm

**Venue:** St Michael's Church Centre, The Green, Stoke Gifford BS34 8PD

The agenda and papers for this meeting can be found on the Diocese of Bristol website at: [Diocesan Synod - Diocese of Bristol \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/diocesan-synod-diocese-of-bristol)

<b>1.</b>	<b>Opening worship</b>
<p>Christiana Olomolaiye led sung worship and prayers with James Lloyds on guitar, drawing on the power of love.</p>	
<p>Trudie Wigley in the Chair</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Introductions and Welcome</b>
<p>Trudie welcomed Synod members, then thanked the Diocesan Support Services staff team for all the work they had put into making Synod happen and Christiana and James for opening Synod with worship.</p> <p>Trudie welcomed the return of Janet Saxon, Deputy Diocesan Registrar for Bath &amp; Wells, who was deputizing for Lee Coley, Diocesan Registrar.</p> <p>Apologies. Trudie noted 17 apologies from the House of Clergy and 8 apologies from House of Laity. Trudie explained that Bishop Viv would be leaving Synod early to attend a wedding and that Bruce Finnermore was unable to be with us. Trudie confirmed that Synod was quorate despite the number of apologies.</p> <p>Trudie reminded Synod about processes and provisions in place to assist with the efficient running of the meeting. This included, if a member wished to ask a question they should raise their hand, and when called on to state their name and deanery. There was also an opportunity to ask questions via the Synod email address. A trained facilitator or Bishop's Council member had been placed on each table as a point of contact.</p> <p>Trudie acknowledged that Synod might cover some subjects that Synod members, visitors or Diocesan Support Services Staff might find triggering. Due to this, Caroline Jowett-Ive (Deputy Diocesan Secretary as well as Director of People and Safeguarding) and Simon Taylor (Director of Mission &amp; Ministry Support) were available should anyone wish to speak with them.</p>	

Trudie informed Synod that only 1 amendment had been requested to the minutes. This was to correct the spelling of The Revd Rich Cresswell's surname in sections 3 & 8 from "Creswell" to "Cresswell". With no other amendments received, Synod received the minutes from the meeting on 19 November 2023 as accepted.

Trudie explained the structure of the meeting. The meeting was largely formed of three parts.

- The first part covered routine business, including a report from General Synod, as well as updates on the post of Suffragan Bishop, Living in Love and Faith (LLF), and Transforming Church. Together (TC.T)
- The second part looked at roadmaps for TC.T and achieving net zero carbon.
- The final part focused on Bishop's Mission Orders (BMOs) and included the Bishop's Council report.

Trudie explained that there was an indication of what synod's role and capacity was against each agenda item – whether to advise the bishop, approve expenditure, fulfil other statutory obligations, or for imparting information in order to be well-informed and act as advocates and ambassadors back in deaneries and parishes. It was also shared that the nature of the agenda items we needed to bring to synod meant there was unfortunately less interaction on tables on this occasion. Trudie also highlighted that there is a slight amendment to the agenda, as Bishop Lee had been invited to address Synod at the end as it was his last meeting.

### **3. Bishop's Address – Rt Revd Viv Faull, Bishop of Bristol**

Bishop Viv gave her presidential address and focused on the King's coronation because of the demands that are faced by King Charles III and asked Synod to pray for him.

Bishop Viv's address is available on the Diocesan website at: [Address to the Synod - Diocese of Bristol \(anglican.org\)](#)

### **4. Episcopal Ministry and Suffragan Sees**

Bishop Viv explained that following consultation with Bishop's Council, an application was submitted to the Church Commissioners for a new Suffragan Bishop. The Church Commissioners has since confirmed that there was an "overwhelming case" for a Suffragan Bishop.

Bishop Viv clarified the process for nominating a candidate to the See of Swindon and assured Synod that all the appropriate checks (for example, DBS) will be carried out. Due to the time needed for the checks, the process has been started swiftly so that someone might be in post by Michaelmas.

Bishop Viv invited questions, but no questions were raised.

Trudie invited Andy Murray to pray for the process, and he committed the process

to God asking for wisdom, discernment and clarity.

## 5. General Synod report

Trudie invited Paul Langham to present his General Synod report.

Paul highlighted that the message from the February sessions of General Synod was a call for unity whilst holding onto deep and passionate beliefs.

He walked Synod through the Living in Love and Faith motion that was passed by General Synod, this read:

*“That this Synod, recognising the commitment to learning and deep listening to God and to each other of the Living in Love and Faith process, and desiring with God’s help to journey together while acknowledging the different deeply held convictions within the Church:*

*(a) lament and repent of the failure of the Church to be welcoming to LGBTQI+ people and the harm that LGBTQI+ people have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church;*

*(b) recommit to our shared witness to God’s love for and acceptance of every person by continuing to embed the Pastoral Principles in our life together locally and nationally;*

*(c) commend the continued learning together enabled by the Living in Love and Faith process and resources in relation to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage;*

*(d) welcome the decision of the House of Bishops to replace Issues in Human Sexuality with new pastoral guidance;*

*(e) welcome the response from the College of Bishops and look forward to the House of Bishops further refining, commending and issuing the Prayers of Love and Faith described in GS 2289 and its Annexes;*

*(f) invite the House of Bishops to monitor the Church’s use of and response to the Prayers of Love and Faith, once they have been commended and published, and to report back to Synod in five years’ time.’*

*(g) Endorse the decision of the College and House of Bishops not to propose any change to the doctrine of marriage, and their intention that the final version of the Prayers of Love and Faith should not be contrary to or indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England.*

As well as Living in Love in Faith, General Synod also debated and passed a number of other motions, this included:

- There was a debate on Resourcing Ministerial Formation, including details of a new funding strategy for Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) which would hopefully give them greater financial stability.
- A motion on the Cost-of-Living crisis was unanimously approved, calling on the government to pursue ‘policies that offer generous support to those who are falling into poverty and the organisations dedicated to supporting them.’
- The Draft Parochial Fees (Amendment) Order increased the parochial fees for weddings and funerals over their 2022 level by 5% rather than the much higher CPI figure of almost 10%.
- The Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure will allow wealthier dioceses to transfer monies from their Stipends funds to more disadvantaged

dioceses.

- There was also an update on the Church's governance review and a presentation on safeguarding from the new National Director of Safeguarding.

Paul concluded his report by explaining that Christiana Olomolaiye will take over from Abby Scott as one of our House of Laity representatives on 19/03/2023. Abby will shortly step down because she has been offered and accepted a job in Archbishops Council with the Vision and Strategy Unit.

Trudie thanked Paul for his report and all of Bristol's General Synod representatives, particularly at what was a demanding and emotional synod. Trudie also shared that with Revd Canon Martin Gainsborough now consecrated as Bishop of Kingston, Revd Canon Alice Kemp took over on 20/1/2023 as one of our House of clergy representatives.

Trudie invited questions on General Synod report.

#### Questions

Canon Edward Buchan (North Wiltshire Deanery): The final amendment which was passed (amendment G) was passed by a minority, what conclusions should be drawn from that very narrow vote? Is the church split?

Answer: The narrow margins indicate the strong views on each side, some seek change whereas others seek no change. However, it is not equally balanced. There is a majority who wish to move forward, and this is not happening quickly enough in the view of some.

Auriol Britton (Bristol South Deanery): Supported the change from Safeguarding Advisor to Safeguarding Officer but did not think this would stop people from not speaking out or covering up actions.

Answer: it was confirmed that the name change was a part of a much larger piece of work. There was also a new pilot to give appropriate levels of supervision. Everyone is however, still required to be vigilant and report any concerns.

## **6. Update on Living in Love and Faith (LLF)**

Trudie invited Bishop Viv to an update on Living in Love and Faith.

Bishop Viv explained that implementation planning would now be considered by the College of Bishops. The College of Bishops includes Suffragan Bishops, so Bishop Lee, until his retirement in April, will also be involved in the discussion.

The College of Bishops will produce pastoral guidance and rubrics which will explain when the agreed prayers can be performed.

Bishop Viv assured Synod that she will be looking closely at the legal protections for those who do not want to use the prayers as they feel they question the doctrine of marriage.

The guidance and rubrics will be brought to General Synod in July.

Bishop Viv invited Bishop Lee to add any comments and Bishop Lee explained that he found the meetings of the college of Bishops challenging because they are trying to hold together, but there are very different views on what God wants them to do.

Bishop Viv asked Synod for its prayers.

Trudie thanked Bishop Viv and asked Synod, if comfortable to do so, to stand and share the peace together. The peace was shared.

## **7. Transforming Church. Together update**

Richard Leaman updated Synod on Transforming Church. Together.

Richard confirmed that a 170-page funding application had been submitted to National Church for the first 3 years of the strategy period.

Richard also explained that Diocesan Support Services had been focusing on planning the program overall, defining each project, agreeing the proposed governance, managing the risks, obtaining funding, recruiting, communication, budgeting and - most of all - praying!

## **8. Transforming Church. Together – Route map (to note) and Governance (to approve) (motion below)**

Richard introduced Rob Mountain, Director of Transformation.

Rob explained the program board structure for TC.T and highlighted that it has been amended to include the positioning of the Audit & Risk Committee in response to a request from a Diocesan Synod member.

Rob walked Synod through the workstreams and reporting cycles, as well as its desire to have reverse mentors. Reverse mentors are usually people in a more junior position with a different skill set or life experience who mentor people in more senior positions. This is so a diverse range of views and alternative perspectives can be considered and incorporated into plans.

If reverse mentors are identified from people who are already within the Diocesan Support Services or clergy, then the additional responsibilities will be covered by existing payment terms. To encourage potential reverse mentors from outside these areas, the BDFB will pay an honorarium because a voluntary role might exclude some people from being able to take up this role.

Synod was encouraged to nominate themselves and others who it felt might be good candidates for these positions. Nominations should be sent to [Rob.mountain@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:Rob.mountain@bristoldiocese.org).

Questions

Joel Sales (Swindon Deanery): expressed excitement, particularly about the

reverse mentors. He asked whether the BDBF was seeking particular roles, gifts or contexts?

Answer: The BDBF has established patterns, and this might be limiting or blocking its thinking. Therefore, anyone who thinks 'outside the box' would be very valuable. For example, people who are neuro diverse, or those from different cultures.

Phil Harrison (Swindon Deanery): Queried the position of Net Zero within TC.T as he could not see top line reporting on how the Diocese is doing against Net Zero.

Answer: Net zero is an integral part of governance. Environmental and financial sustainability are integral to the program; and therefore its governance and risk management.

Steve Wilkinson (North Wiltshire Deanery): The published materials haven't been clear on several aspects, for example, the table on workstreams. It would be helpful to have Diocesan, Deanery and Parish level actions. For example, does the BDBF want parishes to apply for bids? If yes, what are the timescales?

Answer: The strategy is designed to be a menu and the Area Deans should be equipped to explain to parishes how to use it and guide parishes through the options. The Archdeacons and Diocesan Support Services can offer help and support.

(Bristol West Deanery): Not seen in programs a specific program for youth engagement and a leadership development opportunity. Has thought been given on how to measure the various workstreams?

Answer: There is an under 18s workstream. This includes Growing Faith Chaplains, CYP workers in key locations and improving our digital and social media presence. The aim is to ensure, schools, homes and churches are linked together to benefit young people, and to draw more of them to faith. A clear commitment has been made to grow the number of young people attending church, and engaging with us.

Ways of measuring the impact of the strategy has been considered. For example, how many people are following our social media? How many times do we get young people into church? The clear objective is to bring more people to Christ.

Roy Hussey (City Deanery): The way reverse mentors have been described is that we identify people we already know. Is there opportunity to spread the net wider? Or opportunity for self-referral? How do Synod members identify potential reverse mentors?

Answer: Self-referral is encouraged, as is spreading the net as wide as possible. Synod members are encouraged to talk with contacts from businesses, charities, volunteer groups, local authorities and anywhere else they can think of.

Before moving the motion, Christopher Bryan highlighted that he and Neil Warwick are presenting to all the Deanery Chapters on how PCCs can engage with the strategy.

Christopher Bryan (Archdeacon of Malmesbury) moved:

a) That the proposed route map is noted;

**Motion was carried with 1 abstention.**

b) The proposed Governance for Transforming Church. Together is approved.

**Motion was carried with 1 abstention.**

There were no synod members wishing to speak to the motions.

9.

**Diocesan Route Map to net zero carbon - Delivering on General Synod's ambition – 3 years after declaration (motion below)**

Before proceeding with the agenda, Trudie relayed to Synod that over coffee it had been clarified that reverse mentors do not need to be practicing Christians, but they need to be sympathetic to the views and values of the Christian Faith.

Trudie introduced Lindsey McCullam, Director of Property.

Lindsey presented the route map to net zero. This highlighted the proposals to spend £10 million from reserves (over the entire strategic period) to enable work that will significantly reduce the Diocese's carbon footprint. This will include £6.6 million on clergy housing (insulation and heating). The Diocese of Oxford has already committed £10 million on this alone and is likely to exceed it.

Lindsey explained the challenges and the proposed next steps. This includes; understanding the existing landscape and community challenges; collating and interpreting data; identifying options and opportunities to reduce our footprint; delivering and monitoring the changes; and communicating the need for collective and individual activity and lifestyle changes. Over the next 2 years the plan also envisages energy audits of churches, church halls and residential properties.

Lindsey introduced Amy Dartington, our new Environment and Sustainability Manager.

Amy talked about carbon emissions and the need to better understand the Diocesan carbon footprint, which will enable us to measure the impact of actions against our current footprint.

Lindsey explained that positive climate change is reliant on social change. There are seven steps to encouraging social change: knowledge, desire, skills, optimism, facilitation, stimulation and reinforcement.

On approval of the Net Zero route map, £10,00 per church can be released for improvements to the fabric. This might be insulation, but not heating at this stage. This is because funding is more readily available for heating, and preparatory work (such as insulation, draft excluders, etc) is needed to make a new heating system effective.

Synod was encouraged to submit ideas and suggestions to Lindsey at [enviroment@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:enviroment@bristoldiocese.org).

Lindsey confirmed that for the remaining part of 2023, the BDBF intends to release £1,086,410 from reserves to:

- Conduct energy audits,
- employ a Sustainability Manager, to help support and guide parishes, as well as look after a program of delivery,
- to employ a Fund Outreach Officer, to help PCCs set up route maps to net zero and signpost to resources,
- And to fund pilot projects for clergy housing.

In 2024 the work will focus on delivering de-carbonisation.

#### Questions

Clive Hamilton (Visitor; South Bristol Deanery): Impressed with proposals and work in comparison to other dioceses. Commended the approach to Synod. Clive asked whether there was anything around releasing money to churches to help them embed de-carbonation into their practices.

Answer: An Outreach Officer will be employed to support PCCs and make the de-carbonation process as easy as possible. This will include looking at the use of buildings and how the space can be used more efficiently.

Simon Robertson (Swindon Deanery): What provision will there be for clergy who wish to switch to electric cars or bikes? How will the BDBF support that?

Answer: It was explained that the BDBF will create a baseline and look into the travel emissions and identify the most cost-effective ways to save carbon.

Not everybody can support an electric car. If a clergy person has an electric car, or is in the process of getting one, they are encouraged to contact the Property Team at [property@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:property@bristoldiocese.org).

It was also confirmed that smart meters are being installed in clergy houses.

John Sunderland (North Wilts Deanery): As raised at Jun 2022 Synod, given average UK personal carbon footprint c.10tCO<sub>2</sub>e and 20,000+ diocesan congregation, a mere 2.2% personal behavioural change equates to the entire diocesan 4,550tCO<sub>2</sub>e footprint. So our strategy should aim to change our behaviour (and its wider witness) as much as reducing the direct diocesan estate CO<sub>2</sub>e footprint.

Answer: It was agreed that we, as individuals, need to own what we have responsibility for. Trudie also explained that this is where TC.T workstreams overlap with discipleship.

Kate Davison (Kingswood & South Gloucestershire): How much are we as a Diocese or individual deaneries working with local authorities? South Gloucestershire Council have a meeting on Wednesday 22 March 2023, and will discuss providing solar panels for community buildings. Kate invited Synod to talk with her about this after Synod, should they wish to receive further information.

Answer: It was agreed that it was beneficial to establish partnerships and work collaboratively. To date, the Diocesan Support services has had some contact with South Gloucestershire and Bristol. It is working on more collaborative arrangements with other Local Authorities.

Rich Cresswell (Kingswood & South Gloucestershire Deanery): How much would £2,189,507 be as a percentage of the Diocesan reserves?

Answer: the Diocese has ~ £78 million in reserves of which £40m might be utilised for this kind of activity, so it would be less than 2%. By changing to total return accounting, we will be utilising the capital growth in our reserves whilst keeping them at the same level in real terms.

(Chippenham Deanery): Is there a preferred supplier in place to carry out the work? How does the BDBF intend to publicise this?

Answer: The BDBF will be talking to suppliers during the week commencing 20 March. It will carry out trials and establish a supply scheme with the companies



that give the BDBF best value for money.

Neil Warwick (Archdeacon of Bristol) moved:

- a) That Synod approve the Carbon Net Zero Budget of £2,189,507 to cover the 2 year period of 2023 & 2024. The budget is to be allocated from the DBF reserves.

There were no synod members wishing to speak to the motion and before voting, Synod held a moment of silence to think about God's creation.

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

Alison Rowe (Bristol West Deanery) prayed that the Diocese of Bristol work towards restoring the world to the world God created.

## **10. Current BMO arrangements and the role of the Bishop's Visitor**

Simon Taylor thanked Synod for the invitation to address the meeting on the subject of BMOs and Bishop's Visitors.

Simon highlighted that there was a mistake in his paper. The paper stated that Emmanuel BMO was established in 2016. This was the date of the first renewal, it was first established in 2011. A part from this, the paper clarified the current process for establishing a BMO and the role of the Bishop's Visitor.

## **11. Hazelnut Community Farm BMO – presentation**

John White presented synod with an overview of the work of Hazelnut Community Farm BMO.

John highlighted that fear alone does not inspire change, instead people need a roadmap to understand what to do and how to do it. As this is the case, Hazelnut Community Farm BMO has been working to inspire action and supporting other churches to change and reduce its carbon footprint.

Trudie invited questions for John and Simon. No questions were raised.

Kaf Smith (Swindon Deanery) prayed for John and the work of Hazelnut Community Farm BMO.

## **12. Bishop's Council & Board of Directors report 6 December 2022 and 21 February 2023, including CRR Scheme for Hazelnut Community Farm BMO (motion below)**

Abby Scott (Bishop's Council Member) summarized the Bishop's Council report and highlighted the following matters for Synod's attention:

- Church Representation Rules (CRR) Scheme for Hazelnut Community Farm BMO for Synod's approval.

Trudie invited questions. No questions were raised.

Abby then moved that:

- a) this report be received.

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

- b) the Church Representation Rules (CRR) Scheme for Hazelnut Community Farm BMO is approved.

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

There were no synod members wishing to speak to the motions.

### 13. Question Time

Trudie referred to the written questions and asked if any of those who submitted written questions wished to ask any supplementary questions.

Rich Cresswell (Kingswood and South Gloucestershire Deanery): requested that the name of the person or the group of people who answered the written questions might be added to the response.

Rich highlighted that section 8 of the November Synod minutes stated that a meeting between himself, Bishop Viv and Clive Deverell would be arranged to discuss “parish Share requests for those in ecumenical partnerships”. This had not occurred.

Answer: Richard Leaman replied that he as Diocesan Secretary took final responsibility for all written answers, having consulted before they are posted. It was agreed that if it was someone else, the name of person(s) answering the questions would be added to the written questions. Richard also offered to facilitate the meeting between Bishop Viv, Rich Cresswell and Clive Deverell, if that was felt to be helpful and necessary.

David Cain (Swindon Deanery): confirmed he had no supplementary questions.

Phil Harrison (Swindon Deanery): was not in the Synod chamber when supplementary questions were called for.

### Reflections from Bishop Lee

Trudie asked Bishop Lee to address Synod.

Bishop Lee expressed his gratitude to the Diocese of Bristol.

Bishop Lee recalled the various strategies and taglines that have been implemented by the Diocese of Bristol during his time as Bishop of Swindon.

Bishop Lee invited Synod to the Maundy Thursday service at the Cathedral and his leaving service at Pattern Church at 3pm on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023. If Synod members wish to attend, they are asked to RSVP to [Bishop.Swindon@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:Bishop.Swindon@bristoldiocese.org).

<b>14.</b>	<b>Blessing and Close</b>
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Bishop Lee concluded the meeting with thanks to all Synod members and staff for contributing to a good and fruitful meeting. He also thanked St Michael's Church and its staff for hosting Synod before closing with a blessing. As we closed Synod prayed for Bishop Lee as he prepares to start a new season.