

Presidential Address by the Bishop of Bristol

Rt Revd Vivienne Faull gave her first Presidential Address to Synod as the Bishop of Bristol. She spoke of taking the opportunity, not to set out a new vision, but to reflect on the ways the diocesan vision of Creating connections – with God, each other and our communities – can be implemented.

Looking back on the Remembrance services of the previous week, Bishop Viv noted that many saw large numbers of people in attendance, communities “bound together in faith and hope and love”.

Calling on the Church to venture outside of the church walls, Bishop Viv said: *“I believe passionately that we need to get out more. That will require determination and courage, but it is God’s calling.”*

She added that, with thousands of social projects being run around the country, there was a revived confidence that the Church had something to offer. She warned there would be resistance to the witness of the Kingdom of Christ – evidence that it was having an impact - and urged Christians to maintain their integrity.

Bishop Viv said: *“We are called to understand God’s ways in the world, to get under the skin of what is going on. We are called to engage with care, and to speak and act out of care. We are called to be people of faith and hope and love.”*

Downloads and Links

- [Bishop’s Council, Board of Directors and Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee report](#)
- [General Synod report \(July 18\)](#)
- [Vocations: Diocesan Synod report](#)
- [Mission Areas: Diocesan Synod report](#)
- [Diocesan Support Services report 2018](#)
- [Budget for 2019: Commentary for Diocesan Synod \(Nov 18\)](#)
- [Presidential address by Rt Revd Vivienne Faull, Bishop of Bristol](#)



DIOCESAN SYNOD REPORT

17 November 2018

Diocesan vision and mission gets Synod backing

Members of Diocesan Synod have overwhelmingly backed the plans and priorities for mission in the Diocese of Bristol for 2019.

The Synod voted in favour of the budget for next year, giving their support to its on-going ministry, following a morning in which members heard more about different aspects of the strategy, including the growth in vocations and the ongoing work across Mission Areas.

Greater investment in front-line ministry has resulted in an 8% increase in the budget over 2018.

The increase can be found in three areas, all directly related to the Diocese’s strategic focus on growth through ministry and mission:

- expenditure on parish clergy, up by 4% (and 13% over two years);
- expenditure on curates and ordinands, up by 25% (and 53% over two years);

- expenditure on clergy housing, based on an increase in ministers, up by 15% (and 8% over two years).

As a result, the Synod was asked to approve expenditure of £9.64m against an income of £9.17 with an anticipated deficit of £133k.

Members voted in favour of the expenditure of the 2019 budget. However, there was a recognition that this was a stretched goal in terms of Parish Share; Synod discussed Parish Share at some length and was committed to maintain this goal while recognising the risks and challenges this presented.

The meeting at Freshbrook Church was the first of the new three year term of the Diocesan Synod.

During the session, Revd Canon Graham Archer was licensed as Acting Archdeacon of Malmesbury.

Update on Parish Share

Diocesan Synod agreed overwhelmingly that Parish Share must continue to be a priority for parishes if the Diocese of Bristol is to achieve its ambitions for ongoing ministry across the Diocese.

Speaking to the Diocesan Synod, Bruce Fynamore, newly elected as Chair of the House of Laity, stressed the importance of Parish Share if as a diocese we are to continue to make greater investments in front-line ministry and mission.

Having heard from Andrew Lucas, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, that central support costs were being kept down and well-managed, Bruce said: *“Parish Share contribution should be the first commitment parishes consider when planning their budget for the year.”*

“Parish Share is fundamentally important to the achievement of our mission, our strategy, and our work to help build the Kingdom of God.”

“Each one of us needs to be an advocate for Parish Share, not as an end in itself, but as a means to a much more important and worthwhile end.”

“We need to be ambitious, optimistic and energetic, to help those within our parishes who may be less confident.”

Many parishes have already committed to increase their Parish Share for 2019, often in faith that giving and income will increase as a result of what is happening.

However, there remains a small number of parishes that have indicated they are not confident to maintain their current levels of giving and others that have yet to make their commitments.

The Synod recognised the challenge to meet the goal in the budget but agreed that we should continue to work towards it as a diocese and as a result there will need to be further requests to review the level of giving during 2019.

Vocations

Speaking about the work being done around vocations, Revd Chris North, Acting Head of Ministry Development and Adviser for Ministerial Vocation, said there were encouraging signs of growth and diversity in the Diocese.

The number being selected for ordination has more than doubled in the last three years and 52 people are now actively looking into ordained ministry. Despite an increase in the number of young women and BAME candidates to explore ministry, more work still needed to be done.

Chris said: *“We are becoming more diverse in the age and in ethnic background of our candidates. But we need to think more widely than finding the people who look just the same as us.”*

He emphasised that the process was about more than just finding a way of filling vacancies in parishes.

“Discernment is not a recruitment process,” Chris added. *“It is about discerning God’s will in somebody’s life. It is about releasing people into the service to which God is calling them.”*

Mission Areas

Revd Mat Ineson and Revd Malcolm Strange updated Synod on the work being done in the Mission Areas.

They highlighted the numerous examples from both Avonside and Yate and Fromeside, resulting in a deepening of church members’ faith and communities being served.

In Avonside:

- Prayer and mission – a prayer and celebration event in October saw 75 people gather, while six missional communities have also been launched.
- Sharing resources – school services are being planned together.
- Serving those in need – volunteers have been helping at Foodbanks and with CAP.

In Yate and Fromeside:

- Prayer – 80 people from all churches attended a prayer walk.
- Collaboration – Messy Church has started in Fromeside with help from Yate.
- Mission – four missional communities have been established.
- Young people – youth event Acts for Eden took place in September, with 36 young people and 16 helpers.

Mat added: *“As our churches work together across boundaries, we are starting to see the social, cultural and spiritual transformation of their communities, through the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

The Mission Area is also adding capacity for the training of CEMEs, ordinands and curates.

HAVE YOUR SAY:

