

## Diocese of Leicester

Acts of Synod held on Saturday, 21 November 2020  
at 9.30am by Zoom

|                       |                       |    |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----|
| <u>Present:</u>       | House of Bishops      | 2  |
|                       | House of Clergy       | 37 |
|                       | House of Laity        | 35 |
| <u>Apologies:</u>     |                       | 29 |
| <u>In attendance:</u> | Ecumenical Observer   | 1  |
|                       | Officers and Speakers | 13 |

Chair: Peter Hooper, Chair of the House of Clergy, was in the chair for items 1 to 3 and David Wilson, Chair of the House of Laity, for items 4 to 6.

### 1. Worship

The opening worship was led by the Community of the Tree of Life who led the Synod in a prayerful reflection on the Old Testament image of God as the potter.

### 2. Presidential Address

For his presidential address ([watch a recording of it here](#)), Bishop Martyn spoke of another Old Testament image, this time drawing on Psalm 122 to reflect on the mixture of weariness and anticipation experienced by pilgrims as they approached the gates of Jerusalem. He noted that, in that moment, the psalmist prays that Jerusalem will be the place it has been called to be – a place of Shalom peace. This was, he felt, an appropriate image because the work of Shaped By God Together involved reflection on the diocese's journey, but also because of the need to pray that we might be the people that God is calling us to be. He invited the Synod to join with pilgrims down the ages in praying this prayer as part of the Shaped By God Together (SBGT) process. ([This is a text version of his address.](#))

### 3. Shaped by God Together

Following this there were three brief presentations highlighting different aspects of the SBGT process.

- Bishop Guli talked about [Insights and Values](#) that were emerging from the story gathering process. She then highlighted the values of attentiveness, creativity, and generosity which were part of the SBGT process, and invited those present to reflect on how they could live these values out as well as how they might be seen as a gift.

- Claire Bampton set out the [Process and Priorities](#) which were reflected in the motion to Synod. She also briefed Synod members on the working groups which were considering different workstreams within the process.

- Richard Worsfold's [Engaging Imaginations](#) talk was about the imaginative rethinking of church that is taking place because of the pandemic and gave examples of this both from within the diocese and from our link dioceses.

Synod members then had time to reflect on what they had heard in breakout groups. During the question time that followed, Bishop Martyn and the other speakers were able to assure the Synod that there wasn't a pre-planned blueprint for the future, that the 3 Key Questions remained very much an important part of thinking about ministry and that Shaped By God Together was not a knee jerk reaction to the pandemic, but simply an accelerated process for dealing with structural issues that had already been known about prior to 2020. Claire Bampton spoke about the process of conversations that would need to take place across the diocese from January to March and asked for the assistance of Synod members in identifying groups of people who would struggle to participate in these conversations under current circumstances.

Synod approved the following motion:

This Synod agrees:

1. To the *Shaped by God Together* process which will involve a series of conversations with as wide a range of people as possible in the Spring of 2021 around proposals for the future shape of ministry, diocesan finances, and care of church buildings. These proposals, revised in the light of the diocesan-wide conversations, will be brought to Synod for approval.
2. That the starting point for framing these proposals will be our vision (kingdom of God); strategy (three key questions); values (attentive, creative and generous) and six strategic priorities (as outlined in the paper *Shaped by God Together: why and how?*):
  - New communities
  - Intercultural communities
  - Intergenerational communities
  - Eco-communities
  - Reconciling communities
  - Anglican communities

Voting figures were

- For – 62
- Against – 1
- Abstentions – 2

#### **4. Clergy Wellbeing Covenant**

As attention moved to the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant, Bishop Guli explained that this was an Act of General Synod which had to be proclaimed to each Diocesan Synod. She outlined that the purpose of this covenant was to draw attention to an area which had been neglected and to encourage all PCCs to engage in conversation about the wellbeing of their clergy. In response to questions Bishop Guli said that this was not intended to be a one-off initiative, but part of an ongoing

conversation, and that the bishops would send the document to PCC secretaries and churchwardens with encouragement to get involved.

Synod approved the following motion:

The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scripture and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in every generation.

In its formularies, the Church of England recognises that God calls some to serve as deacons, priests and bishops to build up and equip the whole People of God.

Conscious that such a calling is both a privilege and a demand, we commit together to promote the welfare of our clergy and their households.

We undertake to work together to coordinate and improve our approach to clergy care and wellbeing so that the whole Church may flourish in the service of the mission of God.

Voting figures were

- For – 63
- Against – 0
- Abstentions – 2

## 5. Diocesan Budget 2021

The diocesan budget for 2021 was presented by John Orridge, who reported that, following two meetings of the DBF trustees and a budget briefing for Synod members, he was able to present a budget that was similar to that which had been brought to the September Synod. It was unusual for the diocese to have a deficit budget but this was necessary to allow time for strategic decisions to be made for 2022 and beyond through the Shaped By God Together process. It was possible as a one-off interim budget thanks to our investments and to the contributions the parishes make to resourcing frontline ministry across the diocese despite the financial challenge every church is facing right now.

The budget enables the diocese to:

- ensure our DBE schools work and St Philip's Centre interfaith work can continue despite a temporary cut in grants;
- maintain our existing ministry commitments such as youth workers in parishes;
- continue support for ministry in our churches and fresh expressions etc. at parish level

Synod approved the budget with voting figures as follows

- For – 61
- Against – 1
- Abstentions – 2

Stephen Barney then paid tribute to John Orridge, who was leaving the diocese after 10 years to take up the post of Director of Finance with the Diocese of Oxford.

## 6. Updates

### a. Living in Love and Faith

Bishop Martyn reported that the [Living in Love and Faith resources](#) had been published and that the diocesan Living Well Together implementation group was using the course before Christmas, prior to considering how to encourage use of the resources.

### b. 'Women, The State of Play' Report

Karen Rooms, Women's Ministry Enabler, introduced the ['Women, the State of Play' research](#) which would be published the following week and added that discussion of it would take place at a future Synod.

### c. Quinquennial Inspections Scheme

Claire Wood presented the revised scheme for Quinquennial Inspection of church buildings and this was formally adopted by Synod with voting figures as follows

- For – 63
- Against – 0
- Abstentions – 1

### d. Diocesan Synod elections 2021

Andy Brockbank reported that Jon Walker had been elected to take the lay place on General Synod which had been created by the resignation of Jonathan Cryer. Synod then approved the allocation of places on Diocesan Synod by deanery for the elections which are to take place in 2021 with voting figures as follows

- For – 61
- Against – 0
- Abstentions – 0

Bishop Martyn then closed the Synod with prayer.