

Diocese of Leicester

Acts of Synod held on Saturday, 9 October 2021 at 2.00pm at Christ the King, Beaumont Leys

<u>Present:</u>	House of Bishops	1
	House of Clergy	52
	House of Laity	44
<u>Apologies:</u>		13
<u>In attendance:</u>	Ecumenical Observer	Apologies
	Officers and Speakers	9

Chair: Wendy Dalrymple, Chair of the House of Clergy, was in the chair for the meeting, with Stephen Adshead, Chair of the House of Laity, attending to those participating by Zoom.

As this was the first meeting of the new Synod elected over the summer, the meeting began with a Eucharist led by Bishop Martyn.

Presidential Address and Shaped By God Together

The discussions began with a Presidential address by Bishop Martyn who made reference to the Leicester Royal Infirmary, which had recently celebrated 250 years of service to the people of Leicester and Leicestershire. Over the years the facilities had improved significantly as technology had advanced, but its core purpose remained the same. In the same way, the core purpose of the Church has not changed, but it is necessary for the way that purpose is delivered to be updated as times change.

Bishop Martyn stressed that, in spite of what Synod members may have read in social media feeds, the parish is not in danger in the proposed Minster Community framework, but is in fact very much part of these proposals. The plan is that parishes, Fresh Expressions and schools will work together to support and encourage one another. The framework envisages a mixed ministry team in each Minster Community involving stipendiary and self-supporting clergy, lay ministers and pioneers, one of whom will have a focus on children and young people through Growing Faith.

The Shaped By God Together process had taken a year and had involved 400 conversations, with Bishop's Council and the Area Deans and Lay Chairs scrutinising the proposals. The framework that had emerged, that of Minster Communities, was a hybrid of two models which had both received significant support from the extended Bishop's Council. Bishop Martyn explained that he was seeking a 2/3 majority for approval of the Framework and that applying the framework would involve detailed local conversations with PCCs, Fresh Expressions and schools.

In order to require a 2/3 majority, the Synod then approved the suspension of the relevant paragraph in the Standing Orders, as votes of Synod are usually agreed on the basis of a simple majority.

Wendy Dalrymple then invited Synod members to ask questions about the proposals. Questions were received from 21 Synod members and included such issues as the impact on rural ministry, the role of patrons, whether schools had been consulted and how transition would be managed. Each question was answered by Bishop Martyn or another member of the Bishop's Leadership Team.

Following questions, contributions were invited from those in favour of the motion. Seven Synod members spoke in favour highlighting, among other things, the opportunities for ministry in the new Framework, the breaking down of distinctions between lay and ordained, and the need to develop a more sustainable way of being the Church.

The Synod then considered two proposed amendments to the motion. The first of these from Jon Walker proposed further work and delaying a decision until a future meeting of Synod. Following discussion the amendment was defeated by 75 votes to 19. Chris Johnson then proposed an amendment to require that the Oversight Minister in each Minster Community must be ordained. This amendment was passed by 53 votes to 26.

Synod then heard from speakers against the substantive motion, with seven speakers highlighting issues such as the difficulty of working across differences of church tradition and theology, the need for more consultation, and a preference for working out the details before voting on the principle.

After more than 2 hours of discussion and debate Synod approved the adoption of Minster Communities as the Diocesan Framework, with an ordained oversight minister in each by 65 votes to 25 with a clear 2/3 majority among both clergy and laity and only one abstention.

Diocesan Budget 2022

In the time that remained David Palmer, Chair of the DBF, presented the budget report in advance of detailed discussion of the diocesan budget for 2022 at the December Synod meeting.

DBE Measure

Carolyn Lewis and Stephen Adshead then guided the Synod through the implications of the DBE Measure and the recommendation from the Board of Education that the DBE should continue to be constituted as a separate charitable company. This was approved by the Synod by an overwhelming majority.

Other Business

In final business, Synod noted three written questions received from Ann Reddecliffe and Jon Walker and the answers to them. There was then a presentation to David Wilson to mark his retirement as Chair of the House of Laity.