

**Coventry Diocesan Synod
Minutes – 20 November 2021**

Minutes of a meeting of Diocesan Synod, held on
Saturday 20 November at St Andrew's, Shotton commencing at 9.15am with a celebration of the Eucharist.

The Bishop of Coventry took the chair

1. Welcome and opening worship

The Bishop of Coventry welcomed the new Diocesan Synod, in this new triennium, in the context of a Eucharist on the feast of St Edmund.

2. Visitors and Apologies

The Bishop of Coventry accepted apologies from several members of the Synod who could not be present and welcomed those who were there. He especially noted the new members and thanked them for taking on the responsibility.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (DS 21/17)

The minutes of the Diocesan Synod meeting held on 22 June 2021 were approved.

4. Diocesan Vision

Bishop Christopher spoke of his vision for the Diocese over the next five years.

He started by saying that the purpose of the church has remained the same for the last 2,000 years but what does it mean now in the second decade of the 21st century?

Covid has taken its toll on the life of the church which is also facing up to the massive challenge of climate change and the economic threats they both bring in their wake. What is God calling us to be and to do in the next five years?

Bishop Christopher said that for some time he has been captivated by one word - Life. God is the God of life. God loves all things into existence. Life is God's gift to us. That is the fundamental Christian ethic. God comes to us in Jesus Christ to bring us into the fullness of life. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of life and through the life giving power of the spirit we are made alive in Christ. Therefore in the midst of disease, destruction, dislocation, even death, Bishop Christopher encourages us to focus on life over the next five years.

He is writing a book called 'Mary: Bearer of life' and that is his overarching vision for the diocese of Coventry, that, we too, respond to God's call to be bearers of life. We begin by worshipping the God of life.

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. One of the first things that Mary did was to worship. Her soul magnified the Lord. God wants each human being and each community to live abundantly. God sent his Son so that everyone together in society may have life in the kingdom of God, abundance of life. Therefore as we worship God, make new disciples and transform communities, we are bearers of life, the agents of God's life in the world.

What might this look like in five years' time?

- i) First Bishop Christopher hopes and prays for **restored health**. We have seen the power of death at work in the world and are still battling Covid. We look to God to heal our world. We've risen to the challenge of Covid in remarkable ways but everything that makes for healthy

churches has been disrupted and it will take us some time to heal. We need to allow God time to restore our health and to regrow our lives. Everything we've said about nurturing healthy church communities remains. God has given us the resources we need to do this.

- ii) Bishop Christopher hopes and prays for **new growth**. Life is why we trust God to grow the life of the church. To grow the quality of that life and the quantity of people who experience the life of God through the gifts of life that God has given to the church since the beginning. Now he believes God wants us to grow something new. His hope is that, by 2030, every parish in the diocese will grow from its own life a new worshipping community reaching out to a group of people currently missing. Most will be congregations of some sort. Some, not many, will be a whole new church. Barry Dugmore was appointed as Archdeacon Missioner to take this initiative forward. Barry had asked the Bishop during the worst of Covid last year if he should put plans on hold and let the storm pass but Bishop Christopher said we need to keep moving and keep to the course that God has set us on.
- iii) Bishop Christopher hopes and prays for **renewed relationships**. The gift of life lived with others in relationship is why we pay so much attention to reconciliation in the diocese of Coventry. The cathedral tells us that God's life is stronger than the world's death. That God's amazing grace is here to reconcile us to God, to each other and to the Earth. He longs for the day when the whole diocese sees life giving growth for everyone whatever their background. All this means hunting out our biases, especially when we are not aware of them, and bringing them into the light of the deep and true identity of the church.

The purpose of the Diocese of Coventry has not changed. Bishop Christopher's vision is that, if we do these things together, we will rejoice in being bearers of life with restored health, new growth and renewed relationships. That we will be a family of parishes and church communities, schools, chaplaincies, charities and a cathedral that are life bearing agents of God's purposes in the world partnered together reaching every part of society with the good news of the life giving love of God.

The heart of the Church of England's calling is to serve the people and communities of this land. To serve them by being there for everyone, extending God's invitation to nothing less than eternal life. To serve the people of this area by being embodiments of the kingdom of God in our church life and activators of the kingdom of God in wider society.

Ministry means service. The Bishop's ministry and the test of it, he said, is to serve you as you serve the people of your communities and that is the work of the diocesan team. To serve you and to serve me better so that we can serve the diocese more fully.

Our calling is to serve the people of this place in the name of Jesus Christ. Till our work is done and we hear God say: "Well done thou good and faithful servant. Receive the crown of life."

The Chair of the House of Clergy took the chair

5. Introduction to a new Diocesan Synod

The Chair of the House of Clergy, Claire McArthur, began by introducing herself and talking a bit about her background.

It was proposed that standing orders 28-50 be suspended for items 5 & 6 of the agenda to allow for an informal discussion to take place. This proposal was carried by a show of hands.

The Chair emphasised, for the benefit of new members, the importance of reading the papers prior to meetings. She then shared a powerpoint presentation, outlining the functions, aims and structure of the Synod.

The newly appointed Chair of the House of Laity, Phil Sowards, was then introduced and welcomed and the new Joint Registrar, Jenny Dymond.

The Chair went on to explain the meaning of motions and standing orders as follows:

Motion – a formal statement presented to the Synod for debate by an individual member or a member of a Deanery Synod, Bishop’s Council or General Synod.

Questions -questions can also be asked under standing orders (SO69).

Standing orders - the rules which govern Synod. They state how debates are carried out, how members are elected and how voting should take place.

The Chair then invited any questions:

A question was asked about whether there was a limit to the number of questions asked.

The Diocesan Secretary explained that when the papers are sent out prior to the meeting there is an opportunity to ask up to two questions under standing order 69. These questions will be allocated to an appropriate member of the Diocesan Board of Finance to answer. The questioner can then ask one further supplementary question per answer. Any questions and answers are circulated to Synod members ahead of the meeting. It is the best way to ask questions.

When debating a motion at Synod, members can speak for or against the motion but it is not the time to ask questions.

For some items on the agenda there is a vote to suspend standing orders in order to allow a discussion to take place. When suspending standing orders, as many questions can be asked as time will allow. The questions and answers will then be gathered up and circulated to members after the meeting.

A question was then asked about how amendments to motions were dealt with.

The Diocesan Secretary explained that when the agenda is circulated there is an opportunity to propose an amendment to a motion but within a strict timeframe. Amendments to money resolutions require 35 days notice prior to the meeting.

Amendments can be raised during a debate without notice if, once the motion has been put and the Chair has called on anyone wishing to speak, a member wishes to speak by way of a proposal of an amendment. This amendment will then be debated and voted on first before going back to the substantive motion and continuing the debate.

The proposer of an amendment may only speak once on their amendments, they are not allowed to speak again, though they can speak once on the original motion in the debate, provided that they had not previously spoken on it. Whoever is proposing the original motion gets the last word before the vote on the amendment.

A further question was asked about what happens if there is a tie in the voting.

The answer was given that the members will continue to vote until a majority for or against has been reached.

6. **Whole Diocese Strategy (DS 21/18)**

The Synod was invited to break into small groups to discuss the whole diocese strategy and to feed back on any areas of interest or questions they wished to raise.

Questions were then asked of a panel comprising of Bishop Christopher, Bishop John, the archdeacons, the Diocesan Secretary, Dean John and the Diocesan Director of Education.

Feedback was as follows:

- We have said that new growth is vital. Restored health is also important. However, some people are afraid of attending church. Some general diocesan guidance on restored health might be useful to some parishes.

Bishop Christopher – new worshipping communities will come from the life of each parish but we need to be sensible in terms of the timeframe. We were talking about 2030, which is ambitious but is, hopefully, not putting us under too much pressure. We are in a situation of long Covid and it will take time for us to recover. In his mind he is thinking of five years. Life happens simultaneously with health and new life is happening even in the midst of death..

- The new mission objective of 150 new worshipping communities focuses on city and urban areas.

As a representative of a rural parish this is quite disturbing.

Barry Dugmore – in the last thirty years as a church nationally we have tended to move away from how we resource some of most challenging areas of our communities. For example, large estates of upwards of 15,000 have only been able to recruit a House for Duty post to serve the mission of the church in those places. It's therefore a question of rebalancing. As part of the overall growth strategy we are looking at a distinctive rural strategy over the next couple of years. We're going to look at some learning communities with rural multi parish benefices and focal ministry - a presence in every village community.

- Rural communities are carrying a heavy burden. In some churches there are no churchwardens which inhibits what can happen.

Sue Field – we are already engaged in deanery planning and part of that is not just where we put our people resources but how we use our buildings. Area Deans are invited to look at their buildings and to think which are the ones which in particular circumstances may need to be repurposed in some way. Claire Strachan is putting together a building strategy as well which will be coming out after Christmas to look at some of these issues and ask questions. We will try and move on this and we are aware of the issue.

- There is a lot of use of acronyms in diocesan papers. Please could these be explained.

Bishop Christopher – this is a good point and should be noted.

Claire McArthur – there is a glossary of terms in the induction booklet but this can be added to.

- How does the diocese think of the concept of mixed ecology?

Bishop Christopher - The growing environment of the church is wonderfully diverse. What makes for a good ecology of growth? The traditional pattern of Anglican church life was always a mixed ecology in some way. Different forms of worship for different groups of people did not split up the parish. We need contextualized forms of worship and church life that are going to reach out to different communities. One is not better than the other. One may rely more on what we have inherited, another for those who are not familiar with church are going to take a different form.

Dean John – Synod might be interested to know that the world of cathedrals nationally are a microcosm of this. Some things are being done the way they've always been done but also a lot of exploration is being done about the use of these buildings which people are coming to in increasing numbers. In this diocese the partnering between the diocese and the cathedral is making it possible to invest in new styles of worshipping communities in the cathedral. A new appointment has just been made for a Canon for the Arts and Reconciliation which will be announced in December.

- Very little mention is made lay ministry in the strategy document. Could this be raised.

Bishop John – my understanding is that this is implicit.

Phil Helmsley – it feels like the last bullet point of the last strategic objective regarding net zero has been shoehorned into the strategic objective. It is a major issue facing humanity today. Should it not be elevated to its own strategic step?

Ruth Marlow – the net zero strategy of the Church of England is relatively new. This diocese felt it was already in quite a strong place not least because we were already committed to community transformation to which net zero makes a contribution. Our Diocesan Environment Group were also working on things in that area. That is why it sits where it does but what we have done since is to develop a net zero steering group who are presenting the report today. There is always a balance between having lots of objectives and just a few objectives which capture the things that are important to us.

Coffee break.

7. 2022 Budget and long term forecast (DS 21/19)

Standing orders were reinstated and Simon Danks (SD), Chair of the DBF was invited to present the

budget:

SD said that the budget paper had already been scrutinised by the Diocesan Finance Group and Bishop's Council. He then highlighted the main aspects as follows:

The budget is based on the diocesan strategy and continues to focus on three areas:

- i) Investment in parishes
- ii) Investment in growth through mission hubs and in our disadvantaged communities
- iii) Investment in our cathedral church, schools and chaplaincies.

Clergy numbers are being maintained across all deaneries and remain largely unchanged in 2022.

The city church plant project is paying for two stipendary posts in Coventry East, one in Coventry North and one in Nuneaton and these have been removed from the table on p6 section 2 to avoid double counting.

The offers for share in 2022 reflect the struggles being faced by parishes following the pandemic. The impact is that share being offered is £5.4m, £123,000 lower than in 2021.

Hearing that there have continued to be difficulties the Bishop's Council has approved an increase in the diocesan subsidy for clergy and has agreed that historic funds are used to finance stipendary clergy to ensure their existing levels are maintained.

This requires funding of £656,553 and reflects a subsidy of 12 posts. Whilst it is right that historic funds are used to continue to support parishes at this difficult time, it is not something that can continue indefinitely. Through this budget the diocese is supporting parishes to develop parish health, discipleship and generosity, so that parishes may have fullness of life and continue to provide a presence that transforms our communities across the whole diocese.

An increase in Employers NIC rates and housing costs has driven the cost of a clergy person up by 3.69%. There have been two changes to our housing costs. Firstly, the work of the property team is increasing as a result of the change in approach to investing in our clergy housing. This change in approach will assist in minimising reactive call outs which are more expensive and time consuming, and so it is hoped that, in the long term, costs will reduce again.

Secondly, initial investment in the baselining of DBF properties in line with the national church's net zero strategy is planned for 2022. This will lead to the formulation of an approach as to how we will go about minimising CO2 omissions across our property portfolio.

As the offers from deaneries were made prior to any of these increases being known, the DBF will fund the £224k cost of that increase and not request more share from parishes.

At the end of October, 72% of the 2021 share had been collected compared to 60% in 2020 and 75% in 2019. Bishop's Council have recommended that the parish share relief scheme, which was set up as an emergency response to the pandemic, is removed, based on the view that parishes have already reduced their offers based on affordability, and to give further relief on that reduced offer would be "double dipping". We are now in a new normal and those parishes who are not sustainable financially will require more focused support. The Parish Share Relief Scheme will be replaced with an alternative means of support, the details for which will be shared as it is developed.

As a result of investment in new clergy posts for the growth strategy, capital investment in houses is required. It is proposed that four houses are funded from a mixture of historic funds and the sale of existing clergy housing which is no longer required. The DBF is trying not to grow its housing stock, thus avoiding spreading resources and staff time even more thinly in order to manage the portfolio.

The first full year of funding for the Growth strategy, including the SDF project for City Church plants and the 6 mission hubs, is included in the 2022 budget. This paper is requesting the approval of the expenditure for the 5-year life of the project, which is summarised at the bottom of page 11. Each year's expenditure will continue to be reflected in the annual budget process.

Following the end of year results last year, the general unrestricted fund balances of the DBF were below our policy level. To ensure the correct availability of working capital a release of historic funds is being requested this year, and also a request to defer the transfer of the final £1m that the DBF committed to in 2021 to create the £5m Cathedral designated fund.

As part of our approach to good financial governance in Section 8 of the report assumptions have been made around the long term sustainability of the DBF as a result of approving the 2022 budget. The transfer of funds from Total Return has been deliberately left out of the table on page 14, thus allowing Diocesan Synod to see the deficit each year from the commitments being made in the budget.

Members of the Synod were then invited by the Chair to speak.

Phil Helmsley spoke saying that climate change is the biggest challenge the world faces; a fact which was recognised by the General Synod in February 2020 who called upon all parts of the church to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions. He said that in terms of the diocese's net zero strategy little has happened so far and even the task of working out what needs to be done has been hindered by lack of funds. He said it cannot achieve year-on-year reductions if it relies on applying for money from secular grant making bodies. Bodies who know that the church itself holds assets into the many tens of millions of pounds. The Net zero group recognises that it has limiting control. There are immediate projects which could reduce the footprint of clergy houses but no money has been allocated.

Phil Helmsley proposed an amendment to the motion to recognise that the diocese needs to be spending money this year far in excess of what has been allocated in the budget. He said that the diocese should be using funds from within the church to help reduce its CO₂ emissions.

He then proposed an amendment to the motion to add an additional point:

- ***That this Synod requires the board to review its financial plan to identify additional resources including a meaningful sum sufficient to meet the Diocese's commitment to achieve year on year CO₂ reduction Net Zero by 2030 and to bring back a supplement budget for approval at the next Synod.***

The Chair then invited comments from the floor:

Three people voiced their support of the amendment.

Bishop Christopher thanked Phil for the amendment and said that he would listen very carefully to the Chair of the Board of Finance. His principle with financial matters was to take advice and he felt an element of caution at this point as he had not received advice.

Simon Danks, Chair of the DBF took the floor, saying that the resources left by our forefathers are significant. However, the ability to access them is limited by a number of clauses. Therefore, whilst he was happy with the idea of reviewing how the budget might be looked at, he cautioned that it may not be possible to make changes to the 2022 budget. However, it may be that the DBF can look at how it releases that money in the longer term between 2023 and 2030. The historic fund that the DBF is committed to releasing in 2022 is to ensure that its working capital is right through next year. That is important to be able to pay people's wages.

The principle of how the DBF manages the budgeting process and where it looks at its budgeting priorities is something that he thinks is worth doing to support the amendment that Phil proposed.

The Chair then asked for a vote to be taken on the amendment.

Ruth Marlow clarified the vote would be on the amendment of an additional clause to the original motion. Simon Danks said it might not be possible to action it in 2022 as the money that could be drawn down for that year had already been allocated but that it was something that could be looked into.

The amendment was carried with 55 in favour, 10 against and 5 abstentions.

The Chair then invited anyone to speak on whole motion.

Sam Margrave spoke about two concerns he had for the budget: i) that there had been a lack of consultation and ii) although there were concerns about the funding of clergy and parishes, money is being spent on a whole new body of work. He did not therefore feel he could support the budget. He would like to see a focus on sustainability. He said that the church should be ensuring that there is a Christian presence in every community and supporting parishes who are using historical reserves and funding clergy before going on to new things.

Simon Danks spoke in favour of the budget, saying there was a lot about sustainability in it.

The Chair then invited members to vote on the amended motion as follows:

- ***To approve the 2022 budget, noting the release of historic funds in 2021 and 2022 to fund the planned activities***
- ***In particular the Training and Development budget for net expenditure of £1,570,814***
- ***To pass a resolution to authorise expenditure in 2022 up to a maximum of £11,067,865***
- ***That this Synod requires the board to review its financial plan to identify additional resources including a meaningful sum sufficient to meet the Diocese's commitment to achieve year on year CO₂ reduction Net Zero by 2030 and to bring back a supplement budget for approval at the next Synod.***

The motion was carried with 66 voting in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions.

8. Diocesan Board of Education Measure 2020

The Chair called on Chris Edwards (CE), Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE), to present the Measure.

It was proposed standing orders be suspended in order to enable discussion prior to items 8 & 9. This was passed.

By way of introduction CE said that the DBE exists to uphold and promote the Christian ethos of schools in our diocese. There are 76 schools in the diocese, representing 18,600 children. As 95% of children don't go to church this represents a large mission field.

CE said that the new DBE measure is less prescriptive about membership and will simplify the process which will also have an impact on the number of people coming forward to volunteer.

Questions were then invited from the floor.

George Heighton: asked why two church schools in the area (Tysoe and Brailles) were not on the list in the appendix.

April Gold, the Diocesan Director of the DBE was invited to answer. She explained by saying that the schools mentioned in the appendix currently have the DBF as their land trustee. A lot of other schools have different land trustees, including Tysoe and Brailles, and so are not on the list.

Standing orders were then reinstated so that the motion could be moved as follows:

- 1) **This Synod approves the draft Scheme under the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021 ('the Measure').**
- 2) **This Synod resolves that it is ready to make the Scheme, conditional on it being certified by the Archbishops' Council in accordance with s.23(1) of the Measure and that the Scheme will come into effect on the date specified in the certificate.**

This motion was carried unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

The Chair of the DBE then moved the second motion concerning the Diocesan Board of Education Members Election Resolution as follows:

- 1) ***The advert attached at Appendix 1 will be issued to Synod Members and be published on the Diocesan Website.***
- 2) ***The nomination window will run for 14 days commencing on the 22nd November 2021.***
- 3) ***Candidates should complete the Nomination Form. A proposer and seconder should sign the form.***
- 4) ***The Diocesan Synod shall elect a minimum of four and not more than five persons, and one of whom shall be a clerk in holy orders or licensed in the diocese, but none of whom need be members of the Diocesan Synod.***
- 5) ***If more than 5 persons stand for election Synod members will vote for candidates. The election period will run for 14 days commencing on the 8th December 2021.***
- 6) ***Votes for candidates who are either a clerk in holy orders or licensed in the diocese shall be counted first and the candidate with the highest number of votes will be elected.***
- 7) ***The remaining candidates who are either a clerk in holy orders or licensed in the diocese will then be added to the other candidates and the 4 candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected.***
- 8) ***Candidates will begin a 3 year term of office on the 1st January 2022, to end on 31st December 2024.***

The motion was carried with 69 votes for, 0 votes against and 1 abstention.

Bishop Christopher thanked Chris Edwards for his work, energy and humour and also thanked April Gold.

9. Net Zero

The Chair called on members to vote for standing orders to be suspended in order to enable discussion. This was carried.

Godfrey Armitage, Chair of the Net Zero Steering Group, introduced himself and commended the report. He also thanked Helen Grocock for her hard work in preparing the report.

Godfrey then invited questions from the floor.

A question was asked regarding the Green Journey and the fact there had been no recommendations on what to do with it.

Godfrey replied that one of the key things we should be doing in all of our churches was to have an audit. The energy Footprint tool is one of the things that the Church of England has done which anyone can do but only 39% of our churches have done so this year.

He said that Green Journey needed to be approached with slight caution. What they offer is free and the results of their survey is somewhat generic. They will come up with suggestions about

what to do. However, when you are looking at your buildings you should be thinking yourselves about what to do there, perhaps enquiring of the DAC what can be done. Probably the most important thing at the moment that we recommend you do, he said, is to look at the Practical Pathway to Net Zero which is a two page document published by the Church of England which has a checklist which goes with it. It can be found by googling 'Pathway to Net Zero Church of England'.

The other thing the Net Zero group has done is to have a desktop survey done by a group in Leamington. They have looked at 230 churches together with all of our properties to estimate what our carbon footprint is.

Godfrey invited anyone to get in touch with him or the DAC if they had any further questions.

Standing orders were then reinstated.

10. Questions from Synod under SO69

It was noted that two questions and supplementary questions were circulated and answered as follows:

Question 1 under Standing Order 69 November 2021

Sam Margrave to ask

We have so many lay people who work tirelessly for our Church and Communities. Other Dioceses use honours or awards or Canons to recognise service and contribution.

Many other Dioceses around this time are listing those recognised on their website.

What is the process for recognition in this diocese, how many lay canons have been made in the last 12 months and how many clergy, and how can we as representatives nominate individuals from our Parishes and wider community for recognition?

Response from Bishop Christopher to Sam Margrave:

Thank you for reminding Synod of the often-unseen contribution of so many hundreds of lay people right across the diocese who work tirelessly for our Church and our communities in a variety of ways.

We do not have a system of honours or awards, as is the case in some other dioceses eg Chichester under the Order of St Richard, where it is possible to make nominations for an annual award for lay people within the Diocese who have made exceptional contributions to the parish, the local community or the Diocese. However, at the invitation of the Royal Almonry and in common with all other dioceses, I do nominate lay people who have given faithful service to their parish, Cathedral or wider life of the Diocese to be presented to Her Majesty The Queen for receipt of Maundy Money.

There has not been an installation of new Honorary Canons for some years. With the Dean, I am reviewing names on the College of Canons in compliance with the Cathedral's current Constitution and Statutes. Not more than 20 Honorary Canons (lay or ordained) may serve on the College, and they are appointed by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Dean, for a term of office of 5 years subject to renewal for further such terms. Honorary Canonries are not awarded for the purposes of reward or recognition, although distinguished service and the ongoing capacity to

continue to serve the Diocese and the Cathedral are relevant factors. Award of an Honorary Canonry comes with an obligation to serve on the College of Canons. There is no system for nominations.

**Question 2 under Standing Order 69
November 2021**

Sam Margrave to ask

While there are different opinions regarding the use of individual cups for communion rather than only receiving in one kind or shutting churches in a pandemic

Legal advice sought nationally has not been released publicly.

Has this Diocese sought legal opinion as to the use of individual communion cups and if not, will you do so to ensure parishes are clear of the legal opinion?

Response from Bishop Christopher to Sam Margrave:

The Diocese of Coventry has not sought its own legal opinion on the question of the use of individual cups at the Holy Communion. This is because the matter is one of Canon Law that pertains to the whole of the Church of England. The current understanding of the House of Bishops, following clear advice of the Legal Advisory Commission, is that the use of individual cups is not permitted by Canon Law. I have no reason to believe that this position is not known by clergy of this diocese. The House of Bishops is giving wider consideration to the manner of reception of the consecrated wine at the Holy Communion.

**Question 1 Supplementary under Standing Order 69
November 2021**

Sam Margrave to ask

Has the diocese considered developing a similar system of honours or awards to recognise the exceptional work of laity in the diocese as they do in other areas and, if this idea was rejected, what were the reasons?

Response from Bishop Christopher to Sam Margrave:

There has been no consideration of developing a diocesan system of honours or awards to recognise the exceptional work of laity. It is possible to nominate anyone for a distinguished national honour or award such as MBE or OBE, and full information is available on the Government website. I am aware that a number of our laity have been recipients of such national honours for their outstanding contributions to the life and ministry of the Church.

**Question 2 Supplementary under Standing Order 69
November 2021**

Sam Margrave to ask

To keep members of Diocesan and Deanery Synods informed as to the legal positions on the use of individual cups, is it possible to provide the legal advice given to the house of Bishops to members of Diocesan Synod or can this information be accessed online?

Response from Bishop Christopher to Sam Margrave:

The advice of the Legal Advisory Commission (LAC) was provided to the House of Bishops and, therefore, the question of its wider publication is a matter for the House.

In answering a question at General Synod, the Bishop of Lichfield indicated that he would have no objection for the LAC advice being made more widely available, which I would expect to have a bearing on the House of Bishops' decision.

11. Date of meetings in 2022

The meeting dates for 2022 were read out as follows:

19 March - morning

21 June - evening

19 November - morning

The Bishop of Coventry took the chair.

12. Closing prayers and meeting concludes

Bishop Christopher said that it was Ruth Marlow's last Synod as she would be retiring at the end of February. He thanked her for her hard work and great dedication during her five years with the Diocese and for everything she has contributed to Diocesan Synod and Bishop's Council.

The Chair of the House of Laity closed the meeting after Bishop Christopher had given the blessing.

Attendance: Bishops: 2 ; Clergy: 31 Laity: 37, Attendees and guests: 29

Voting:

Signed: Date: