

## **Transcript of a meeting of the Newcastle Diocesan Synod held on Saturday 23rd November 2019 at St John's Church, Percy Main, North Shields**

*President: The Rt Revd Christine Hardman, Bishop of Newcastle. The meeting was chaired by the Chair of the House of Clergy, the Revd Catherine Pickford and the Chair of the House of Laity Canon Carol Wolstenholme.*

### **Welcome**

**Canon Carol Wolstenholme** (Chair of the House of Laity) took the Chair:

Good morning everyone and welcome. I was going to say welcome to a very wet synod but that's not the right way around to it, but welcome to synod on a wet morning. Can I say welcome if we have any visitors, I believe there are one or two visitors here today? So, you're most welcome to listen to our business, but can I remind visitors that you are not able to speak unless invited to and certainly you are not allowed to vote.

We have two major items of business today. The first, is to explore Bishop Christine and the General Synod's piece of work *The Pastoral Principles of Living Together*, which is a really exciting piece of work which our bishop leads on in General Synod. And the second is our budget for 2020. I don't know if it was genius or what but I do think that the pastoral principles lead and feed really well into how we deal with our budget, so it is a good agenda. So welcome again, we will start and we will start with worship.

### **Opening Worship**

The Revd Catherine Pickford led the opening worship

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Minutes from the meeting 28<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

The minutes of a meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September were agreed.

## **Session 1 – *The Pastoral Principles of Living Together***

### **The Bishop of Newcastle, the Rt Revd Christine Hardman**

It seems to me to be very important that, as well as focussing on the very real challenges and joys that are particular to our Diocese, we stay open to the life of the wider Church, both in the Church of England and to some extent the wider Anglican Communion. So, this first agenda item is an attempt to do that.

Those of you who were on Synod in February 2017 or those of you who are Synod nerds and follow the proceedings, will know that there was something of, a real one of these moments in Synod, where things do not go, certainly as far as the bishops are concerned, as planned.

One of the issues that is dividing our Church at a very deep level are issues about teaching and doctrine to do with human sexuality, not exclusively but perhaps particularly focussed on same sex relationships and sexual activity within those same sex relationships. There is a big divide in this Church of England and beyond our shores.

The bishops (the House of Bishops) have produced a paper which they hoped would offer a way forward for the next few years. It was a take note debate, which is the lowest level. All you have to do is vote to take note of it, you don't have to say you agree with it, but Synod voted not to take note of the House of Bishops' paper. That is a big statement in Synod. That is a serious rejection of that paper, so the Archbishops had to reflect and ponder how they were going to respond to that. What they did, they issued a letter with proposals not to go down the line which Synod had clearly rejected but to form two different projects to address the issues of human sexuality.

And I remember the date the letter went out, it was the 16<sup>th</sup> of February and I was on the train coming back to Newcastle when I read it, and it said we are going to establish a group chaired by the Bishop of Newcastle.

And that was actually the first I knew about that! But it was clearly an Archiepiscopal command which of course, in obedience, I followed. The task of this pastoral advisory group was to help the Church to model the Archbishop's desire for radical Christian inclusion founded in scripture, reason and tradition, in theology and the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it. The second project that the Archbishops established at the same time, chaired by the Bishop of Coventry was what is now known as the *Living in Love and Faith* project, this is a much bigger project, a much more complex project. They are in numerous project groups producing resources to help the Church to learn how questions of human identity, relationships, marriage and sexuality fit within the bigger picture of the Christian vision of leading holy lives in love and faith in our culture.

The task of the pastoral advisory group, was and has been very difficult. On the one hand we were to bring forward meaningful guidelines for radical Christian inclusion bearing in mind reason, tradition and scripture. On the other hand, it is quite clear, our remit was explicitly not to suggest anything that changed the doctrine or teaching, the current doctrine or teaching of the Church. So, it was somewhat of a tightrope walk - extremely high risk and pleasing absolutely nobody. Part of the least exciting bit of this has been perceiving people's hurt from both sides of this division, who thought our group was not hearing their concerns, and it was on both sides.

What then emerged, we were a smallish group, a bit bishop-heavy, about 5 bishops and 4 or 5 other members, clergy and lay. We were, within the group, right across that division of opinion. That was the other thing was thinking about how were we going to come up with anything that we agreed on? It was not likely at that beginning place. The most extraordinary thing is that we actually lived that division, we were a small enough group to be able to do that. And so, we committed ourselves to a way of being in our meetings that deeply did not deny. No one was asked to deny their view, but we absolutely gave loving respect to one another even if we found that difficult at times. We developed a process for calling time out when things got painful, as they do, because we were talking about issues that were deeply important to us. There was no way that we were a like-minded group of people.

When I was training for ministry, a long time ago now, one man was very key for me. I didn't know him well but he came to lead a weekend, his name was Sehon Goodrich and at that point he was the principal of Simon of Cyrene theological institute, he came from Barbados. He later became the Bishop of the Windward Isles, he died in 2007. He said in this training weekend on my course, "*There are two types of people in the world, those who see difference as a gift and those who see difference as a problem*". That has been the case through my understanding of what it means to follow Jesus, and it was the thread of our shared understanding in the pastoral advisory group.

I am going to now let the group speak for themselves, or at least a few members from it. We were filmed at my house a few weeks ago. Now you are the first people, this is the first cut of this short video about the pastoral advisory group, and it is going to be part of the resources available to the Church at large which are being launched by April. So, it will be all kind of things, but you have seen it here first. It might change before it becomes official but I have permission to share it with you today, you're the guinea pigs – I appreciate it.

The Synod watched a video presentation from the Pastoral Advisory Group.

The product of our time together were these pastoral principles for living well together and all of us on the group own them 100% and we are very proud of what we have been able to do. But if they remain packed, stored in a warehouse we might as well not have bothered! We're very much hoping that people across the church will find ways of using these principles to help us together.

So that now is what we are going to do in this synod. You each have a pack of principles, I hope you each have one, and they are yours. I hope that you do not just keep them to yourselves, but promote them. You can have a free download of the same thing on the web and the address is on the pack, so you don't have to spend £5 on more packs and more paper. Just before I set the task now, I would just like to reinforce that the principles are there to challenge our temptation and our default position of gathering into our tribes. Tribes of like-minded people. In the country as a whole we have many tribes. In the church as well as tribes of social class, which are still very real in our church, we also have theological and ecclesiological-tradition tribes. What we have noticed is that, I think particularly churches of a more liberal persuasion get tempted to ask why the church of a more evangelical position why they are not avoiding the pervading evils. I urge you in all this please to ignore the speck of sawdust in your neighbour's eye and to focus on the plank in our own eyes. The question is very much what does this say to me, in my life?

How much time do we have left? Great, we can then happily, I think take 20 minutes in your groups. You've each got one of the principles, the principles are of course based on combatting a pervading evil and I would like you to have a genuine and deep discussion about how it affects you as people but also the churches to which you belong. Please be careful and tender with one another, be kind to one another. These issues will affect all of us, so just be aware of other people's feelings in this discussion. And then at the end of twenty minutes I am going to ask each table to offer one insight. It is up to you to decide which insight to offer to the rest of us. My pledge is that we will receive your insight and we will treasure it.

## **Session 1 Discussion: Pastoral Principles for living well together**

**The Chair:** If I can ask you all please to be bringing your conversations to an end and to offer some insights about what you have been talking about on your tables.

**Bishop Christine:** It sometimes seems cruel to stop group discussions as often they are just getting going particularly in the sized groups that we are. But I really would like you to not be focussing on is it a helpful insight or not, I just would like, as a gift to all of us from each of us, just to offer the insights that have arisen from this very brief discussion. They don't have to be the wisdom for forever but just insights. We will record these, but it would be good now just for us to hear your insights and for all of us just to treasure these insights that are arising.

### **Group 1: Pastoral Principle: Cast out Fear**

Thank you, we were talking about fear and that fear in this context is particularly about sexuality. But we also talked about the fact that we are versus each other, on two sides. There is fear for the individual of being seen as different or unacceptable, and there is fear of everybody else, fear of the stranger. Then we also talked about fear in general, there are a lot of things that we are afraid to admit - doubts or differences of our beliefs, people are afraid to admit they have been in prison. There is lots of fear of just being open about who you are and your experience and this is part of that bigger problem.

### **Group 2: Pastoral Principle: Address Ignorance**

We had *ignorance* on our table and it took us a while to pick out whether this meant ignorance as in knowledge, or a prejudice and a kind of cultural thing that you have been brought up in. But actually, we wanted to focus on ignoring – who that person is, where they are in their lives. We always came

back to the fact that we are made in God's image and God loves each and every one of us and regardless of where you are in your beliefs. It is wrong to ignore how that other person is and how that other person feels and together we need to be centred and grounded in love. So, we moved away from ignorance of knowledge and understanding and moved towards ignorance of how that person is feeling. We thought about how sometimes a throwaway comment from us can really hurt someone, because we don't take the time to understand how that person is and how that person feels, and it has to always be centred in love.

### **Group 3 - Pastoral Principle: Acknowledge Prejudice**

Our table, we were looking at prejudice and acknowledging prejudice. It took us a certain while to unpick some of that, but one thing that we did focus on is that we are part of a large institution with rules and ways of working, and sometimes we have not moved with society. And some of the rules, some of the hurdles for moving forward, particularly into licensed ministry, preclude people. These can make us be seen as an organisation that is prejudiced against particularly the gay community, but many others too. So yes, that was the main focus in our discussions and there were lots of incidents where people had either experienced that problem or were trying to guide people into ministry but making sure that their eyes were open to the challenges they may face.

### **Group 4 – Pastoral Principle: Admit Hypocrisy**

We were looking at principle five on hypocrisy and we talked a lot initially about our experiences, our sadness and our grief of a time where the church has acted in a hypocritical way, or indeed society has acted in a hypocritical way. I guess we circled around to a sense that too often we've promoted in human relationships the form of that relationship over the content of it. Particularly often promoting or seeing the deep value in heterosexual relationships and the pressure that can put on say a single person at church. You know, "Ooh when are you going to find a good husband", or whatever! Equally, we have not necessarily then interrogated corrosive heterosexual relationships and have assumed that homosexual relationships aren't as of good value. Actually, I think we should be picking up on the point made on Emma's table we should be seeing the people in front of us as a child of God and seeking and praying for the fullness and flourishing of that person in the way that is right for them. So, it is about making sure we don't get too caught on the form and not see the content of the person we are seeing in front of us.

### **Group 5 – Pastoral Principle: Cast out Fear**

We were looking at the principle of casting out fear, the same as one of the previous tables. We thought a lot around this question - can it be right that people live in fear of one another in our churches? And we were reflecting on people who are fearful about being open about who they are and feel they can't be themselves. People who fear their openness about who they are might lead to no longer being welcome where they are within communities. The fear that there is sometimes even in broaching those conversations. I think the final reflection, which is relatively short, is that the verse that goes with this is that "Perfect love casts out fear", and we often think that the opposite of love is hate, but I wonder if we need to reflect on, as a church, that the opposite of love is fear. How, if we are truly to be loving people of God, there is no room for fear because perfect love casts out that fear.

### **Group 6 - Pastoral Principle: Paying Attention to Power**

We were talking about power and paying attention to power. We began by thinking about people perceiving the church to be powerful. There is power to hurt or power to build up and our challenge is not to judge but to walk with people, then we need to know clearly what the boundaries are, otherwise we are in danger of manipulating or exploiting people. So, we have a responsibility to use our power responsibly, to use it wisely and with humility. Paying attention to where things are coming from, are they coming from a good place or a bad place, in the topic of power is important.

### **Group 7 – Pastoral Principle: Address Ignorance**

We had [addressing] ignorance. We were acknowledging and reflecting that there are people within our communities who like to be ignorant, who don't want to discuss things, who would rather that it wasn't there. While we feel uncomfortable about that we recognise that we need to acknowledge those feelings as well and that insight, that there are some who don't want to understand however painful that is.

### **Group 8 – Pastoral Principle: Speak into Silence**

Thank you, good morning. Silence. What this proved to our group is just how difficult it is going to be for any group of people to put a package together that everyone will agree on. As far as silence goes there are all sorts of reasons for that, there is no one simple reason. What I would like to say is that while we are trying to make everyone inclusive we are still using exclusive language when talking about it. We still talk about same-sex marriage, why do we have to have words to describe these people why are they not just people? God loves people and God wants everyone to be equal.

**Bishop Christine:** Thank you, have all the tables now spoken? [turning to the Chairs] Whether Carol or Catherine, we had a little trio on power. Any reference to Macbeth is not allowed. The Lay Chair, in response: I did wonder who gave us this one! We were talking about the power that we are aware of and the power that we are not aware of. **Bishop Christine:** Let us take a minute to just hold these insights and value them.

So gracious and most loving God we offer you the insights of our hearts.  
We ask you to take them, for with you all is held, nothing is lost.  
We pray deeply for one another and for the life of our church.  
In Jesus name, Amen.

Overall, there was a kind of dawning bit for us. We spent many sessions getting very anxious as we lived our process of both trying to honour the various theological positions held by our group, which were so diverse. We tried to give attention to the very unequal makeup of the group in terms of power. We tried not to become collusive, in terms of our relationships with one another mattering more to us than the task with which we had been entrusted. So, we had several meetings where our big fear was that we could come out with nothing at all. On the occasion that we attempted to tentatively come out with a guideline on one thing or the other, from one side or another the kind of impact of criticism was quite strong.

The breakthrough came with those 'can it be right' kind of questions. Like that insight can it be right that we live in fear? I can't remember how it arose but we were having a discussion and were saying "It can't be right that in a church this is what is happening". And that was like a massive shaft of light, I think it was the light of the Holy Spirit, that when we were able to voice "This cannot be right if we are living as disciples of Jesus" and then we framed it as "can it be right that?". That is where we began to identify what we called the pervading evils around which the principles are based, in order to combat those pervading evils. There was a lot of pressure on us to tame down the language a bit, the term evil can be powerful, even the "can it be right?" bit came under, from some quarters, criticism. But I think we worked very hard with this and we were right to keep the language robust and challenging for us all.

It is interesting, I reflect on the silence group the pervading evil of silence was the one with which we struggled the most because of silence can of course be a good. It was Ed from Emmanuel Church in Bristol, a large evangelical church where he is one of the leading pastors, a member living out same-sex attraction celibate, it was he who named this particular pervading evil. And what he meant by it, I think you mentioned boundaries not being clear, and he was talking about the experience of many LGBT people can have of going to a church where they have no idea what the rules are in that culture

about LGBT people. One might be warmly welcomed as a member of the congregation but as you become deeply involved and wonder if you might lead a home group you suddenly find that there is a ceiling that is not spoken about. It is not that it is wrong to have ceilings or expectations of who or who should not exercise ministry in the church we do that all the time in the Church of England, but the difficulty in his life that he saw was when people had no idea why they were being deemed unable to exercise certain roles. And that is where that pervading evil of a conspiracy of silence is about. So that is just if you are using these principles, because that is the one that I have had most people say to me, "I don't quite get that one". We tried hard but I think that is the one which we have not quite got.

I hope that, as members of this synod you will be ambassadors for taking this conversation more deeply into our parishes, where if anything is going to happen, it is important what we talk about at synod but to be honest we can overestimate our own significance quite easily. What really matters is that we begin to have honest, good conversations in our parishes about how we can live well together. All I would make a plea for is that we are absolutely careful to only apply these to ourselves so that we don't become into a judgemental group of people.

There was a wonderful lecture given by Lucy Winkett at Newcastle University, and she reminded us of the story of the tax collector and the pharisee. The tax collector, you will remember, standing at the back not daring to even approach the throne of God, you know, and saying I am not worthy, I am utterly unworthy to be in the presence of the living God. And the Pharisee right up there praying "Thank God I am not like this tax collector". It was wonderful, she said of course the real interesting thing is not that we note the difference between the tax collector and the Pharisee, but that at the end of it we often say "Thank God that I am not like that Pharisee!". Our capacity to immediately congratulate ourselves and not to see the plank in our own eye but to see all too clearly the speck in our neighbour's eye - this is a human condition.

In a moment we are going to move on to our second big item this morning which is our debate about our budget for 2020. You will have heard me say, those of you who have been around a long time, that the way we spend our money shows what we believe in. And our money is not something separate from our spiritual lives it is about how we use our resources and when we say at the Eucharist "Of your own do we give you" I suspect a lot of us are a long way from that. We think when we are giving that it is ours, and within the power of our control. So, what I would love you to do, and for me too, all of us to do, as we move into this debate hold the discussion we have just been having. Don't compartmentalise it off, keep it absolutely in your souls because one of the things we became absolutely clear about is that these pastoral principles were developed specially to focus on LGBTI people and the divisions in our church, but they can apply to all sorts of difference and diversity. The things that are there are a general tool for how we look at difference. Are we the kind of people who see difference as a gift, or are we the kind of people who see difference as a problem? Do we go into tribes, gaining our own self and who we are by separating ourselves off with those who we are not? Do we demonise other people to make ourselves feel safe? Because so much of this comes from our fear, I think.

As we are having our debate, and there will be difference of views about the way we spend our money, and that is good. It is good that we have difference, we do not want to have homogeneity, a group of clones as people. What we do want is a way of valuing our difference having a really good, clear, honest discussion about the matters on our Church that concern us, and then coming to a mind. Then once, we have come to one mind honouring that decision and going forward from here as ambassadors for the decisions that we make. This is really important, this is how we live together as the body of Christ in this place. So really, really good, honest debate. That is really important, I don't want anyone to go away from here today believing that they haven't been able to say something that is important, an insight to be offered. We receive one another's insights, we don't tell other people that they are completely wrong. We accept the difference, we receive the insights and having heard

that we pray to God that God will grant us one mind. You may well go from here feeling that your point of view has not won the day. It happens to me all the time. It is not always easy to live with, but that is what we are called to do, because we are the body together. We are not a group of individuals we are the body of Christ. Just remember that wonderful passage from Paul, where he talks of all the different parts of the body being essential. Wouldn't it be terrible if we were all ears and what kind of body would it be if it was one giant ear?! The hand cannot say to the foot I have no need of you. We have a profound need of one another, a profound need of one another's insights. This is an amazing diocese, with a fabulous sense of diversity and wisdom, insight and passion, and long may that be. Thank you.

#### **Further contributions from the floor**

I have something I would like to say. I studied for the Archbishop's diploma for Readers, which I received in the year 2000 on dementia and spirituality. Throughout this discussion it has come to my attention in my mind an occasion that I interviewed a doctor and his wife, both now deceased, and the doctor was very helpful in my deliberations but his wife insisted that the person with dementia was a non-person, they had ceased to become a being. That was a dreadful thing that pervaded various attitudes to my clients, I worked for a Dementia Care partnership for 14 years. It was through my clients that I took on the Archbishop's diploma. People drifted away from their families because they couldn't cope, they couldn't cope with the person's diminishment in what they saw as being a person, both in what they did and what they thought. Unfortunately, the phrase I think therefore I am is very pervasive. People we have thought about today are caring, thoughtful, doing people, but unfortunately if I cannot think, I realised the question becomes how do I overcome that and become that person reality.

**Bishop Christine:** Thank you, I really appreciate you taking the courage to say that and it is a wonderful example of pervading evils. On dementia - an incredible number of these pervading evils apply. Perhaps the biggest one being fear, and the fear perhaps of seeing ourselves in years to come. So, thank you for that, and thank you for that lovely illustration of how we use this kind of analysis. In Africa it is I relate therefore I am, and I think that is rather better actually.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much everyone for taking part in that discussion and particularly for Bishop Christine in a different role this morning. I am just going to explain now what we are doing for the rest of the morning. We have got two sessions, a session before the break which is about clarification and asking questions and then we will have a bigger chunk of time after the break when we will actually do the debate.

#### ***Session 2: Introduction to the proposed budget for 2020***

**The Chair:** So, this is how I would like to suggest that we use the time of this session. Just keep into your heads this is not the budget debate, this is about you asking questions and getting some clarity about what you have read in the document before you. Canon Simon has asked for about ten minutes, and that ten minutes will be to tell you where we are up to and then there will be space to ask questions and get some clarification. Can I say, with your permission, can you start by not asking questions please and we will give Simon his time. Right, Simon, your time.

**Canon Simon Harper** (Chair of the Board of Finance): Thank you very much Carol. Where I work, I work with a lot of people who have served in the armed forces and one of them helpfully suggested that he has some spare Kevlar body armour in his loft, would I like that that for this morning? But I haven't brought it with me!

On the 11<sup>th</sup> May in her presidential address Bishop Christine set out that we are at a Kairos moment as a diocese, I have to admit I think I was away at school when we did Kairos moments. But I have to admit that when I got home I listened to the address again and I did what everyone does and googled “Kairos”. Provided you spell it properly, you can find an almost limitless amount of information on Kairos and what it means and has meant to people over the years. It started to make sense that we had reached a point in our diocesan life where we have to make a decision. Which road are we going to go down and what decisions are we going to make? When Jesus called James and John to follow him they had a window of opportunity, would they leave all and follow Christ or would they stay with their fishing nets?

From a budget perspective, what decisions are we going to make and how will they impact and direct us in the future? I also read with interest about the Kairos circle, that circle allows us to focus on six things: observation, reflection, discussion, planning, accountability and finally, action. Almost unwittingly or perhaps not, the way that we are being led through our budget is our own Kairos circle.

In July we held our finance synod, in this we observed and reflected on our priorities as a diocese. We reflected on the financial challenges these posed and discussed how these could shape our budget. This was discussed to the finance group of the Bishop’s Council following that synod and in September we used those discussions to put forward some proposals of how this could shape a budget. Those discussions were not conclusive at the time, but positively helped us think about ways that we could address concerns raised. To a certain extent we took a step back. Simon White will appreciate the next bit, someone called a bob, and I am sorry that is as funny as bellringing jokes get. But we took a step back and started again and reflected. We concluded that we needed to consult and address parishes. The results of that consultation helped the Bishop’s council and synod plan this budget, reflecting what we have heard and been told. But now is the time for accountability and action. So, what has the consultation told us?

I do think it is important that we remember that a consultation is where we ask for input from parishes on matters that affect them. We were looking for input to help us to come to a decision, and you never, or very rarely, get a consistent view. Sometimes the key is how the question is worded, how people interpret the wording and also how we interpret the answer. What we were not asking parishes for was a commitment to pay a certain level of Parish Share in 2020. We shouldn’t confuse that consultation with an offer or bid system for Parish Share. But we were asking on their views if they could support an increase in the total Parish Share of 2% for 2020. We also asked for their views of a forecast of what they could afford to pay in 2019. They were also able to opt to make additional responses to the question asked. Many responses opted to support the 2% increase on the 2018 outcome, but many responses did not make any comment. Some responses noted that they would not be able to pay any more share than they are currently doing. One parish supported the 2% increase, yet they are a parish that currently cannot pay their share in full. As you can see, a somewhat confusing set of responses. We received 128 responses and 64 parishes are yet to respond. Of the 128 responses, 105 said they could support a 2% increase. I would like to thank all those and that responded and all those who provided extra thoughts and comments on the proposals.

There are a number of people whose inclination is not to engage with consultation. Not because they thought consultation is a bad thing, but they thought there was a risk of a breakdown of trust if we didn’t act upon what we heard. I do think that the process was a very positive exercise regardless of whether we liked the responses or not. For many years we have heard the complaint that the parishes view the diocese as an ‘us and them’ situation. This hasn’t resolved the communication issues but it has put us in the direction of improved communication. Communication is a two-way process, at our last Bishop Council meeting we heard from Robin Simms about the work he is doing on the Parish Share formula, and what was apparent from many of his observations was the lack of engagement or indeed apathy from many.



What have we heard: as I said, 105 parishes felt they could support a 2% increase in the diocesan budget, but we have also heard of the challenges in paying the current level of share. This has helped Philip Ambrose estimate and forecast the amount of share we are likely to receive in 2019. This has been a disappointment as it appears the amount we expect to receive is lower than the amount we originally forecasted when we were drawing up that aspect of the budget. Indeed, the level of share may not exceed the level of share we received in 2018. Given that we were asking parishes in the consultation whether they can support a 2% increase in the Diocesan budget compared to 2018 was this starting to look like a target that was unachievable from the start? This factor significantly influenced our thinking on how we should get to the target for 2020. What should we do? Should we plough on regardless of what we were hearing or should we reflect on that and modify our thought process?

We've been constantly reminded at Finance Group the need to be realistic and recognise that the level of cash we receive and not lose sight of the ever-growing gap between the share request and share received. So, we have two significant pieces of information from and about parishes, firstly their view on whether they can support an increase and secondly what amount of share they anticipate giving in 2019. Based on this information, we have estimated an achievable figure for Parish Share request in 2020 is £4,496,184. So very, very accurate – thank you Phil. This figure has been included in the budget. We've taken this figure and used the response we received from parishes in our forecast to establish an allocation to Deaneries.

This is a significant departure from previous years. In previous years we have taken the total share request and allocated according to our 70:15:15 approach. 70% based on income, 15% based on clergy points and 15% based on attendance. Historically this has led to some deaneries receiving allocations which were significantly in excess of the stated increase and others significantly less than the stated increase. We then used to adopt a policy of capping or mutual support, effectively smoothing those peaks and troughs out and aiming for a fair allocation. We haven't done this this year, but have based the amount on the responses received and the forecast for 2019. It is probably worth noting that we are not attempting to pre-empt any recommendations by the Parish Share Review Group. So please don't read anything into this method of allocation.

What is a consequence of this? At an overall level this would result in a deficit of just over £74,000. This will fund 82 full time permanent equivalent stipendiary posts, 15.5 stipendiary curates, just over 25 employee posts, a contribution of £100,000 to the Education Board and a stipendiary salary increase of 2% from April 2020. If we achieve the level of Parish Share requested and the expenditure is in line with our budget this £74,000 will have to be funded by other Diocesan funds such as our investments.

As far as our governance and approval, this result has been recommended to the Bishop's Council by the Finance Group and Bishop's Council has endorsed that view and it is now presented to the Diocesan Synod today. With us today are members of the Finance Group and Bishop's Council. I think it would be useful for everyone, if people are on either the Finance Group or Bishop's Council they could stand up so that we can actually see where they are. You may have questions, when we break in a minute, that you might like to ask them as members of these two groups, thank you – you can sit down now.

I think this has been a Kairos moment for us, perhaps unknowingly we have followed the principles of a Kairos circle. We have observed, reflected, discussed, we have planned and we are accountable. All that remains now is action. So that is our budget. The purpose of this session is to for clarification, perhaps there are some areas where you are unclear or where you would like a further explanation of items within the budget. At this point we are not asking for statements or comments on the budget.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much Simon.

We now come to this part for clarification questions. First of all, I would like to get a sense of how many people would like to ask a question. Could you please raise your hand if you think you have something you want to say at this point that clarifies things. I have only got 2 hands up here. We will start with Rachel and Benjamin, I am sure there will be some more questions as they come along. I would like to take questions in clusters of three and Simon or one of the Finance Team or whoever he chooses will answer those questions, and check you have got the information that you want and then we will pass on to another group. Let us see how we go and start with Rachel's group please.

**The Revd Canon Rachel Wood** (Tynemouth): I am not sure if I am allowed to ask this question so I wanted to check because it is a question about the process. Actually, it is a statement, a positive statement. Canon Wolstenholme: It needs to be a question Rachel if it is a statement could you keep it for the debate? Canon Wood: Yes fine, all I wanted to say was thank you and well done that is all.

**The Revd Canon Dr Benjamin Carter** (Hexham): On Annex B and it was also in the spreadsheets as well you have got transfers in £135,000. What is the source that those transfers are coming in from? And is that coming from capital or from income, if I can put it that way around? How sustainable are those transfers in, I think is the question I am asking, as the second part?

**Canon Simon Harper**: Am I allowed to just nominate people to answer these questions? I nominate Shane.

**Canon Shane Waddle** (Diocesan Secretary): I get all the good bits all the time. Transfers – the way that our fund accounting works is that we've got separate funds for income that comes in from other sources. It is not about capital, it is about funds that we are holding. For example, that might be All Churches Trust that provides funding for the Generous Giving officers that we've got. Transfers in are funds that we are holding in different accounts that come in to the General Fund but are not sitting in the General Fund, supplementary.

**The Revd Canon Dr Benjamin Carter** (Hexham): I was wondering if it could be made clearer. I am worried that to an untutored eye that looks like it is coming out of e.g. petty cash which will run out, if that makes sense... what I am saying is, to the untutored eye, if it could be clarified by saying "Transfers In" and then a note to say what funds those transfers are from could give people confidence that that is a sustainable source of income for the future. **Canon Waddle**: OK, thank you.

**The Chair**: Any other questions?

**The Revd Canon Rachel Wood** (Tynemouth Deanery): Would the chair agree that the process used for this year's budget has been difficult but has born dividends in terms of a greater sense of ownership of the budget between Diocesan Finance Group and parishes. I understand that there has been a low, not 100% response to the questions, but it has been an extremely positive shift for me personally observing. Obviously good process does not always bring good outcome, but how has that been experienced, that process, and will it be used again next year? **Canon Simon Harper**: I agree. And it is the start of a process, yes.

**The Chair**: What I would like to do, as we have a few minutes, is there anyone who isn't a member of Synod who would like to ask a question? We have time for a couple, if there is anyone who isn't a member of this Synod but is here as a guest, you're invited to ask a question if you have got one.

There were no further questions and the Synod paused for a refreshment break.

## Session 3: Value Setting

**The Revd Catherine Pickford** (Chair of the House of Clergy) took the Chair

Moving then to the second part of our agenda and following the introduction of the budget by Simon can I invite Mark and Peter the Archdeacons of Northumberland and Lindisfarne to lead us in a short session to establish the values to be held within the budget debate. Thank you.

**The Ven Peter Robinson, Archdeacon of Lindisfarne:** Thank you very much chairs, as Catherine said Mark and I have been asked to lay some foundations as it were for the conversation, the debate that is to come on finance. The first thing we would like to do is say a thank you, as Archdeacons, to all those parishes who have responded to the latest budget consultation. We'd also like to thank the finance team for the very detailed work they have done in enabling us to engage with the budget proposal in front of us.

It has not been an easy journey to get to this place. It has been a long journey starting well before the July Budget Synod. Along the way there has been a huge amount of discussion and debate in Bishop's Council, and in the Finance Group of the Bishop's Council, with deanery finance officers and in many other places. The journey we are on with our finances and all the implications that flow from them is not and has not been an easy one. It is a difficult journey in which we have sought to hold together differences of views and opinions, and this journey continues at this Synod this morning. The budget before us comes out of a deep listening process over the past five or six months. It shows we believe a deep and serious engagement with the reality of our finances probably at a level we have not had before. And because we are working together at a deeper level of honesty, sharing what we have been thinking has perhaps been more costly and has engaged our emotions and feelings more than ever before on this subject. It is really important as we go into the debate in front of us to acknowledge that not everybody who has been involved so far has been able to agree on everything, neither the details nor the process.

At Bishop's Council residential last weekend, we were all working with the responses that had come back from the parishes. I have to say everybody on Bishop's Council took part in the conversation. We wanted to bring a proposal that had everyone's ownership, but also, we wanted to acknowledge the hard realities of our discussion and the indeed the time that it took to have those discussions.

I would ask you to engage with the budget report that we have in front of us today not as a compromise but as a living, creative proposal, built on our engagement with reality, our engagement with difference. As Bishop's Council we have tried to hold together all the different views under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Not compromise perhaps, but creativity and opportunity. The journey of the church in our diocese around finance and budgeting, of course and this is the really key point Mark and I wish to make this morning, is not unrelated to the pastoral principles that we have already reflected on with our bishop. We are seeking to live well and journey well within the context of diversity, difference of opinion and with our struggles to identify reality in our parishes and our deaneries, so that we can make good decisions. This is not an easy task. We are all acutely aware that we are involved in serious decision-making this morning. On the one hand we are aware that our budget decisions today will have significant implications for the resources that we can deploy to serve our parishes and our communities. On the other hand, we are all passionate about recognising that this is a moment of opportunity and time of change when we are confident in faith and in the hope that we will find God doing a new thing amongst us and in this diocese. These are things that I think lay the foundation for the debate, because actually I believe we all hold that in common.

**The Ven Mark Wroe, Archdeacon of Northumberland:** As we have been thinking about this morning and looking at both our budget and our finances, but also the debate around pastoral principles it becomes clear that we can't separate them out, the two are linked. As a diocese we have principles,

we have values of being generous, engaged and open. We hope that our generosity, our engagement and our openness will lead to us growing as human beings who are created by God, as churches who are alive to God. We also hope that we will be bringing the hope of Jesus Christ, of our good news, to our communities. It seems to me that these six principles help, give a new shade of light, highlight some of those principles of generosity and openness, of growth and hope. They highlight some issues and help us to really get into the meat of them and what they mean. So, we want to reflect just briefly as we go into this budget debate on how these principles might help us in our reflections around money and finance.

Hypocrisy - where does our hypocrisy play a part as we come to look at money? I don't mean to say your hypocrisy out there, I mean my hypocrisy in here when it comes to thinking about finance and money? How do we make our values ones that are truly generous? If we approach Parish Share as something which is an agreement between my parish and the so-called diocese is that different to thinking about Parish Share being my agreement with all the other parishes in the diocese? How do we look at the way we think about money? Where do we need to be aware of our hypocrisy if we want to be valuing everybody?

What about thinking about power? How do we need to pay attention to power in debates about money? It largely comes down to who has the money and are they willing to give it, or indeed radically in the church to share it? Who holds the power when it comes to issues of money in our debate and our thinking?

What about silence, speaking into silence? It is all too easy, if you are anything like me, to stay silent in debates about money and finances. Sometimes we don't quite understand all of the issues, sometimes we don't quite get what is going on, and how we understand and how other people understand it. So, how can we take a view? Perhaps we are anxious about sharing our view and how it might be heard, so we choose to stay silent. Perhaps for too long we have been silent in our churches on the whole issue of giving and money. How might these pastoral principles challenge us around those.

And, of course, the principles go on.

**The Ven Peter Robinson, Archdeacon of Lindisfarne:** Perhaps we need to confront our ignorance about finance. We are always conscious on the Finance Group of the Bishop's Council as to how much there is to communicate to parishes, and deaneries and benefices. We can never do enough because there are always new people joining us, becoming members of our PCCs and becoming new Churchwardens all the time. Perhaps we have not addressed our ignorance of finance as we might have done, perhaps we have not addressed our own ignorance of finance as individuals. Perhaps we have hidden behind a tactical ignorance in order to not address the deeper questions.

Have we engaged with our fear about finances, fear of the future in particular? We hear regularly that parishes have spent their reserves to pay the parish share over the past years and how there is a worry about where parish share payments might come from in the future. We're fearful that a new generation of churchgoers might not be so committed to generous giving as older churchgoers as older churchgoers move on.

If we include our personal finances and how we give generously in conversations and so on in discipleship, then perhaps as a church community we need to own our prejudices. As we enter into this debate it may well be that we need to pay attention to our attitudes towards others. It might be that we feel resentful towards a neighbouring parish, that we don't feel pulls it weight over finances or doesn't attend deanery treasurer's meetings. It might be that we have let a particular prejudice grow in our own hearts, but it might also be that we as a parish feel that we are not able to pay our parish share, and maybe there has been a particular prejudice or attitude develop over that as that has lingered over many years. We might feel resentful about being asked for more than we can afford

and we don't know how to respond to that and the attitudes that have grown up in our hearts about that.

**The Ven Mark Wroe, Archdeacon of Northumberland:** Earlier this morning you each were given a particular pastoral principle we just want to invite you for two or three minutes before we begin our budget debate to reflect on the principle that you have and how you think that relates to finance and budgeting and Parish Share. Remember with these principles that it is not about other people first, but it is about us and what insights we bring.

So just in your tables for a couple of minutes, how does your principle relate to money and the debate that we are about to have? Thank you.

We are about to move on to our debate proper, if I can invite you to bring those conversations to an end. Again, with the apology that often the conversations are just getting going but do keep hold of those thoughts and if there are things you need to feedback from your discussion as you maybe ask your questions or make your comments on the debate do that. Our hope is that thinking with these values in mind doesn't stifle our debate but actually makes it richer because it pays attention to who we are both as individuals but also as part of God's people, here, in this diocese. These principles I think as Bishop Christine has said speak very powerfully to me in my role as an Archdeacon, particularly as a newly-formed Archdeacon in that sense about how am I acknowledging the prejudices we find, casting out fear, admitting hypocrisy, addressing ignorance and paying attention to power. These are really significant words and principles and I hope they might inform you in your thinking and in your own following of Jesus Christ. Indeed, they are going to be forming a key part for me in my role. I also hope that it has been a helpful discussion for you and for all of us as we come to think about our budget and we will move to comments on that now. Thank you very much for taking part in that.

#### **Session 4: Budget Debate**

*This session was chaired by Revd Catherine Pickford, chair of the House of Clergy, and the motion was proposed by Simon Harper, chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance.*

**The Chair:** Thank you, Peter and Mark for the really helpful way in which you framed the budget in the light of our values and ethos as a diocese and the pastoral principles. I am now going to invite Simon to come and remind us of the motion that is in front of us and then I am going to ask for a show of hands. If you could put up your hand in a minute, on whether you would like to speak. I know that you don't always know at the beginning of a debate if you want to speak or not but it will give me a sense of how many people we are looking at. I will then ask and call people in groups of three and if we need it there will be a speech limit of five minutes. Thank you, Simon.

**Canon Simon Harper:** Thank you, at this point we change our hats so we move away from being the synod and actually now sit as being members of the Diocesan Board of Finance. The motion that we want to debate is, as we put it, is synod sitting as the Board of Finance to decide as follows:

- a) That the budget be approved; or
- b) that the budget be referred back to the standing committee

One of the questions I was once asked a number of years ago is what happens if the answer is B. What that would mean is that between now and the end of the year we would have to re-sit as a standing committee and then come back to synod sitting as the Board of Finance before the 31<sup>st</sup> December. Just to be clear, that is the consequence if we go for B not A. It is not impossible, but there would be a lot of work to do. I just think that we need to bear in mind that as what are the options that we are really looking at? That is not to stifle and to say you cannot vote for B, but I think it is useful to know

what the consequences are, does this just delay it for another year or does it delay it by six weeks? Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you Simon, so could I have a show of hands please if you know at this stage that you would like to speak. Don't all jump at once! We might get home for an early lunch. Going once... going twice... Well done, Tom Birch. Just before Tom speaks, can I ask that you stand if you are able and say your name and parish [deanery] please.

**The Revd Tom Birch (Corbridge):** I am a member of an Edinburgh debating society that still exists through a complete accident really. Way back in the day we had a debating hall and University of Edinburgh came along and said we would quite like to build a university college on top of your debating hall. We said that's fine have our debating hall, have £10,000. I was the librarian and therefore treasurer some years ago now so the very thought of having £10,000 in the late eighteenth century seems outrageous. Anyway, they knocked down our debating hall, they built what is now Old College giving us debating rooms for exclusive use and perpetuity. Now, there were debating clubs a plenty in Edinburgh when this started and this is the only one left. Why? Because it happened to invest in something that proved to be quite useful later on. And the reason that this come to me is because to stand and speak first in a debate in that place is called to take the Rhodes position, it is simply to take up time whilst everyone else thinks of something to say. I would encourage people to think of something to say over the remaining two minutes of this speech. I intend to commend all the work that the Bishop's Council, that the Board of Finance, that the senior staff have done. I intend to commend and offer to God all those many, many conversations that I have had with people over these months as to where we are at. Money is important to the Church, but as I said to my PCC earlier in the week it is important that we become a rich and enthusiastic church in how we do mission and when we do that I am convinced that people and money and joy and excitement will all follow. Then we could spend more of Diocesan synods talking about those joyous things. So there having stood to commend the work that has been done, to give you all an extra little time to think actually you might all be really quite grateful for this budget document. Budget documents are not things that we feel grateful about particularly often. We think of budget documents as necessary boring things in our church, not what we are necessarily here for, but actually this does reflect what we are here for invited as we are to be fellow workers for God to take out his good news. I will certainly be voting for A, thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Tom that was really helpful. Was anybody able to use the minutes, the 30 seconds worth of distance run that Tom has given us to think of something to say? Yes? Thank you.

**John Ayerst (Norham):** I want to emphasise the importance of taking this back and selling it to our parishes. we can't just leave it to the vicar we can't just leave it to the clergy, to sell this idea of how important the Parish Share is. It is not just because of the money it is about being part of our Diocese. That is all that I wanted to say, thank you.

**Canon Simon Harper:** Thank you for that. We have started on a journey of consultation so I think in all the time I have been a chair this is the only time we have consulted with the parishes as part of the process. Another one of the things that is really difficult is actually getting the message back to parishes, because there are some people who love documents like this and actually would say the only downside of this document is that it is not long enough. There are people who say but I don't really want to read the whole document have you got anything which is much shorter, much more succinct and could help me. That is either for a member of a PCC or just the person on the pew to help them understand what we have just been talking about. I know John you have some views on this. So, I will just ask John who has done some work on how we could help PCCs.

**Dr John Appleby** (General Synod Member): Thank you, Simon. I am a member of a PCC as well as lots of other things. I discovered that our PCC who are good people doing good things nonetheless don't know very much about what the diocese does at this level and at a budget level. As Simon says if you give out a document like that, and I think these documents are much clearer and better than they used to be, nonetheless, they are still quite long. It is clear to me that not all PCCs get it. If they get it, they don't necessarily read it, if they read it they don't necessarily understand it. There are a lot of myths around - people say "the diocese doesn't have any vision for the future", "the diocese wastes a lot of money, what about all those posts in Church House?" and this kind of thing. So, what I did for my own PCC was to take essentially two parts of this document, and if you want to check all I did really was I took Annex C which is the overall breakdown of where most of the money goes with a brief explanation, and I took Annex D which is the list of posts. I compressed it to get the entire thing onto one page in a digestible form. So that when PCC looks at the question of what is our Parish Share doing it becomes very clear and it dealt with some of the myths of "all those posts in Church House" kind of statements. People were asking "Well what about these new posts", which were in fact, externally funded and so on. So, having done it for our PCC I asked a few other people, including Simon who you would think knew everything about everything on this subject and he said, "Ooh that is useful I'll take it to my PCC". So, he hadn't done it and I tried one or two other people who said, "Oh that would be useful". So, I am proposing that the diocese tries to do that kind of exercise and I am very happy to offer what I have prepared so that it can be sent out generally. A one-pager for every PCC member to be able to see what we are spending our money on. It hasn't got all the detailed lists of money, it hasn't got the income stuff it is simply: what is the diocese spending its money on?

Do you agree that this would be a useful thing? So we will circulate it, well I will update it as it doesn't have the latest figures in. If you want me to do that, I think it could be sent out to all parishes if people think that will be useful. Yes?

**The Chair:** I think that is a yes John, thank you. Thank you, John Appleby. Are there any more contributions from the floor? Anybody else? Bishop John followed by Andrew Shipton, thank you.

**Bishop John Packer** (Tynemouth): Thank you chair. I just wanted to draw our attention to the bringing hope through partnership section of the budget, which is in Annex C and then in the budget summary. Just to remind us really, that is the area, as I understand it Simon, that sees the greatest decline in the amount that is being spent on that area in the coming year, in 2020. A decline of some 11%. I am delighted to say that we were able to say that the amount being spent on Education is not going to be reduced though we do have to note that that is dependent on a reduction in previous years, and we are still not actually contributing as much, as we used to, to the Education department of the Diocese. But it does mean that actually the rest of that work – our social responsibility and our contribution to ecumenical and Interfaith work in collaboration with other churches and organisations across the region does have a significant reduction in this particular budget. I hope we are going to vote for the budget, but just to take note of that and note that for the future. I don't know whether in that context you can just comment on the fact that the PICA representative has now been dropped out of the budget. We are still raising money for PICA, for partners, can I ask how is that money going to be used, since there is no longer an officer responsible for it?

**The Revd Canon Andrew Shipton** (Newcastle Central): I want to congratulate all those involved with the budget. We are moving into uncertain times and unpredictable times. Just one issue, when it comes to clergy fees - it is very hard to predict what the clergy fees will be for next year. There is a figure there, a very accurate figure. Obviously, there is no guarantee that we will raise those funds. Just a comment on how unpredictable life can be and maybe a call to revisit this halfway through and just see how things are moving on.

**Canon Simon Harper:** I don't know if Shane wants to answer the PICA one, but in relation to the fees - the fees is a really interesting one. Because what we do see is, certainly, parishes where they are in

a vacancy the fees go down because there is no incumbent to take the weddings, funerals etc. But there does appear to be a trend of people having weddings that aren't church based and indeed funerals that aren't church-based. A number of years ago I drew some gasps of horror when I said maybe a bad winter would help with some fees, but that is not the wish of the Diocese it has to be said.

**Canon Shane Waddle:** Dare I remind Simon that these sittings are recorded? Bishop John you asked about Partners in Community Action (PICA) and whilst that officer post is not appearing in that list of jobs in the back, Partners' work in the future will be looked after by Together Newcastle. Therefore, part of the resourcing of Together Newcastle is the Partners' administration. That is moving there pretty soon, the decision for that has just been taken.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Shane. I know the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne would like to speak – is there anybody else at this stage? Peter, thank you?

**The Ven Peter Robinson, Archdeacon of Lindisfarne:** Archdeacon of Lindisfarne. I only want to speak because I just think this is a very significant moment in the life of our Diocese. I think it would be wrong to let that moment go unsaid in the debate, even though it is clearly there in the document that we have got in front of us.

I think that it is really important that we recognise that we, as we support this budget document as I hope we will today, it is really important to notice that the number of the stipendiary clergy that this budget supports is three less than what it was when it came to synod in September. So instead of supporting 85 full time equivalent stipendiary posts next year we will be supporting 82. That is really significant. From the last budget document there was a strong indication of the way forward, and I say this slightly provisionally that 82 will not be our end point. I just think as a synod as we pass this document that we have to acknowledge that we are moving into a period of significant change in terms of the patterns and shapes of ministry that we wish to have in a new church that is born out of a Kairos moment, a moment of opportunity. In the future I believe there will be more ministers, there will be more ministry. There will be differences, there will be fewer stipendiary clergy posts, there will also be a greater relationship, a deeper relationship between lay and ordained in ministry that is deeper than it is now, and that enables lay people to take responsibilities, perhaps, that they are not taking on at the moment in our existing structures. I rejoice in that, I support that. I think that is God's spirit at work but I also have to acknowledge that the path to those new shapes, those new patterns that re-imagining of lay and ordained in ministry together in a deeper way than we have done before, the pathway to that is not easy. It will not be easy and will require very difficult decisions, some of which we have begun to take now. But clearly to achieve an 82 stipendiary post full time equivalent figure for next year means increasingly hard decisions will have to be taken. I wanted to underline that because I think that is of the moment. I think that needs to be articulated verbally in our midst as we consider this budget so we are under no misapprehension of what we are voting for. We are voting for a new way of being church, a new model of ministry and that is really exciting. But the pathway to it will I believe be to some extent a struggle and I wanted to articulate that as we deliberate this budget.

**Canon Simon Harper:** I think it is really, really valid that we just raise that because the trajectory of how we have arrived at that figure of 82 has evolved with the whole process. When we were sitting here, well we weren't sitting here but, as a synod back in July it was 85, in September it was 82.5 and we have landed at 82. That is as we say a new way of working and we shouldn't ignore the fact that that adds additional pressure to the clergy. And I suppose the historical way of thinking is that the clergy are here to support the laity but actually as a more joined up way of thinking the laity are here to support the clergy as much as they are there to support the laity.



**The Chair:** Thank you, Simon. I know John Appleby would like to speak, is there anybody else? John Appleby followed by David, followed by I am sorry I can't see who you are...the lady behind the pillar? Carol, thank you.

**Dr John Appleby** (General Synod Member): Thank you, something Simon that I do not think has come out clearly yet is that for years we have been asking "What can we ask for, and what we will get?". Sorry in this case the 'we' in this context is Diocesan Bishop's Council and so on. The way that this budget has been constructed and projected we believe is a request that can be and will be met. In other words because we have based the calculations (I mean, Shane and co have done the calculations, but I am also on the finance group) because we have based the calculations on what we think people will be able to pay in 2019, it is entirely realistic to think that the figure will be met in the coming year. That is actually a change. It is an important change because if we can actually fulfil the request we are making this year then we have got to a much more stable and secure place for future planning, including with the Parish Share Review Group. Because we are not inventing figures that we know won't happen we are actually talking about figures that we believe will happen and everybody will know where they stand. I think that is a very good thing that has come out of the consultation and very significant linking perhaps to what Peter said. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, John. David?

**David Ratcliff** (Hexham): David Ratcliffe, Hexham Deanery. I just wanted to clarify something about what is stated on page 6 of the budget proposal where you mention first the 82 full time equivalents of stipendiary clergy, and then the way that it is explained in Annex D where the 18% vacancy figure is given as the way in which we are going to achieve that. My question is: is that the intention constantly to have an 18% vacancy figure year on year on year or is there a more strategic intention to make 82 stipendiary equivalent clergy the target? If 18% vacancy lasts for a very long time as the way of achieving that is that fair in those deaneries where the numbers are reduced and vacancies are common and continuing because they would have to bear the burden of paying what they are being asked to pay without having the number of clergies that are owed to them?

**The Chair:** Thank you, David. Carol?

**Carol Griffiths** (Bamburgh & Glendale): Thank you. Talking about fear, I am trying to overcome my fear of asking a very stupid question, but it is to ask for clarification on page 5 and indeed the final page. There is reference to the deficit of just under £75,000 and I wanted to ask more about that and about implication for the future. I have no idea about Diocesan reserves but could you comment Simon on actually running at a deficit, thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Carol. Simon are you happy to take those three together?

**Canon Simon Harper:** I think both Archdeacons are fighting over wanting to answer David's point. Peter would you like to pick up David's point in terms of our resource planning etc.

**The Ven Peter Robinson, Archdeacon of Lindisfarne:** In terms of our resource planning, and I am sorry I really didn't get the last end of David's question but in terms of the stuff around full-time equivalent posts, the reality is at the moment that we formally are working with about 101.5 stipendiary posts in total, now that doesn't of course translate from 101.5 posts to 101.5 people because some posts are fractional posts if that makes sense. So, we have a number of tasks on hand, but I think we do have a fairly clear vision as to where we are going. One task is to reduce the number of posts from 101.5 down to a place that we have yet to decide formally, but is somewhere around 80 posts. That is one task and that is very considerable as a task. There is another task of reducing the number of full-time stipendiary equivalents down from 86 this year to an average of 82 next year, so again that is not the

number of full-time stipend equivalents at any one time, that is an average. Does that make sense? So, there are two tasks in front of us but the bigger task is to define the goal. As we see it at the moment the goal is that if, for example, it is 80 full-time stipendiary equivalent posts that we would have 80 full time equivalent stipendiary posts, that we would not seek to balance the budget in terms of vacancies. In other words, we would fund 80 full time equivalent posts, we would aim to have 80 full time equivalent stipendiary posts at any one basis and because we are not funding the budget by vacancies in post and that is no about 18% as you said David, we would be able to have finance to work with parishes in vacancies. When I was talking about earlier about a different model of church, you can see that in the budget that the vacancy would not then be used, as we have used it, to balance the budget every year. It is a different alignment of deployment of strategic resource through our stipendiary clergy and the budget Parish Share process. It is a different model of relating Finance to the deployment of resources. I hope that at least answers the first part of David's question.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Peter. This is Mark coming in on the same point.

**The Ven Mark Wroe, Archdeacon of Northumberland:** Yes, just to add a little more, if I may. It is no comfort to know that we are not the only diocese to be facing this kind of situation and the financial implications that puts on us. In terms of looking at plan, we have begun looking at what has been called elsewhere the people plan, in terms of how do we sustain ministry and mission with the posts that we might be able to sustain moving forward. But as Peter has already said that is quite a radical thing for us as a diocese and the national church is not unaware of the situation that we face, which is in common with several other dioceses. So, we are working on our people plan, work on that will begin in earnest, indeed work on that has already begun this year, on how we as a diocese sustain mission and ministry. So, it is not a long-term strategy to have a high vacancy rate, in fact quite the opposite. But it will mean that the beginning of the radical change we propose today being realised over a period of time in the future. The aim would be that at the end of 2020 we would have a firm sense of direction as to where we are going in terms of how we manage that. That will partly be part of consultations moving forward throughout 2020. Be assure an 18% vacancy rate is not a long-term strategy. It is where we are at the moment and plans are being developed and will continue to be so throughout 2020.

**Canon Shane Waddle:** Carol, you asked about the deficit. From the projections of Parish Share that we have done and what we have included in this document they are the minimum amounts that we require from each deanery in 2020. A deanery that met for its synod on Wednesday asked me for some heads up about this week's synod because they were going to be talking about their share. They asked me, "Well, what happens if we can give more, does that mean we can have a credit into 2021?". Of course, the answer to that was that if you are able to be generous and give more then that will go against the deficit that we have in 2020. If those minimums are all that can be achieved in 2020 then we will have to draw down from diocesan investments. Those investments at the current time provide us with income, that income helps us to reduce Parish Share. Does that help to answer the question that you had? Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Shane. Has John's question been addressed, that was a statement not a question, so are there any more questions? Claire?

**The Revd Claire Robson (Diocesan Director of Ordinands):** It has been a real joy over the past few weeks to be involved in training for our ministries, in the worship strand. They tend to be really energetic and put themselves forward to do this for the first time. I was speaking to a colleague earlier about how training lay ministry should support our parishes, and that this is absolutely crucial, not just in the three strands of this training ministry but in all sorts of other areas too. I was just thinking about the training and development budget. I know that we are blessed to be well-resourced in terms of training for clergy and supporting their ministry and development. What proportion of that training

and development budget is dedicated specifically to lay training and how are we going to make sure that this is sustained?

**Canon Shane Waddle:** Thank you, Claire. To be honest, I think it has been very low in the past. I would refer you to the back page of the document. What this budget does do is bring in a very small resource of a lay training and development officer, which is a new post, and that new post is funded within this budget that we have put to this synod. That is new work, it arises partly from Setting God's People Free, but also from authorised lay ministry training that we are doing. So, there is a new post coming in. One would hope that that is the start of additional resource for lay training, it is small but it is a start. You have a supplementary?

**The Chair:** Thank you, Shane, we will take Claire's supplementary followed by Rachel.

**The Revd Claire Robson** (Diocesan Director of Ordinands): Simply just to ask note 5 on the bottom of that back page says that the Lay Training and Development resource is a fixed term post, how long is that fixed term? And how sustainable then is the continuation of that role and that resource thereafter?

**The Chair:** Would you like to respond to that now Shane and then we will come to the Rachel's question after?

**Canon Shane Waddle:** Yes, I think it is probably easier to do so. Usually our fixed term posts are for three years, that is because we are able to project exactly what that post will cost us over that three years. Things might change and if our finances get much better we may be able to have much better lay training and development. But a lot of new posts that we have been introducing of late have all been fixed term because of the financial predicament that we are currently in.

**The Chair:** Rachel Wood, and then Emma

**The Revd Canon Rachel Wood** (Tynemouth): The question about PICA raised earlier has made me look for the Together Newcastle post in the budget and I can't find it. Am I just not looking in the right place – that is all that I am asking? **Canon Shane Waddle:** We don't have a post for Together Newcastle, we make a grant to Together Newcastle, they have a post. So, there is some grant funding in the budget. **Canon Wood:** Sorry, which line is that grant funding in the budget? **Canon Waddle:** It comes into partnership working, and that is actually funded by an external source. We have got income coming in that we then use to fund that. **Canon Wood:** Thank you. I speak that because that work is enormously important and of value and it would just be good, because I couldn't see it I was wondering if we valued it or not. **Canon Waddle:** There is provision for Together Newcastle's work, but that is not a post of the Board of Finance.

**Emma Doran** (Tynemouth): I don't want to sound slightly controversial but I am sure that if you asked some of the lay people they would offer to pay for some of their training because that gives a level of commitment, and it shows willingness, rather than you providing training and then not seeing any fruit from it. I think if you asked the lay people, "Look we are offering you this course, it will cost this much to do this course, would you be interested in paying for it, I think that you would find that some lay people actually would like to contribute that to show their commitment to being part of this vision. So, it is very nice that you are giving it out for free, but I do think, as a professional, I have to pay so many fees every year to show my commitment to my continual professional development at work that I think something similar could work with this commitment from lay people for the training that you can give them.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that Emma, do you want to reply to that Simon?

**Canon Simon Harper:** I think that it is a really good idea, I think we need to think about it because there are two responses. One, which is of course why wouldn't you, but I would never want our training to be on ability to pay or financially driven. It is similar to the higher education argument, isn't it, that it should be done on ability, not ability to pay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** I call the Chair of the House of Laity followed by Rae Caro.

**Canon Carol Wolstenholme:** I just want to respond to Emma, I think I disagree with you because there is something about doing a lot of work into Setting God's People Free we talked about working together in teams and the need to feel like equal partners in mission and we don't charge clergy for their training. I think there is something about not opening that chasm even wider.

**The Revd Rae Caro (Newcastle East):** I also just wanted to respond on the subject of lay people paying for training. Where I am, in Byker, you know, we speak to lay people about going on a safeguarding course or whatever, and even the travel to get to church house from Byker, even that is a barrier to some lay people. We absolutely cannot be in the position where lay people are doing the training on the basics on whether they can afford it or not. These people are called in mission by God.

**The Chair:** Emma Doran.

**Emma Doran (Tynemouth):** Can I just respond to that and say that I did not ever want it to be that you would be obliged to pay but that if you were willing to contribute to that payment then you could. It is a bit like at school, when there is a school trip you are asked to pay if you are wish, but you are not forced your child is still able to go on that trip. I just think that if you asked for a voluntary contribution that is in no shape, size or way expected then some people may wish to give that.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that helpful conversation. Anybody else? Well thank you for the quality of that debate, and can I say a special thank you to Tom Birch without whom there would have been no debate. The power of being able to say something no matter what it is. So now, before I completely lose control of the synod, can I pass over to Canon Simon Harper to propose the motion standing in your name.

**Canon Simon Harper:** Thank you, before I do that I have one observation, which is that I find it really interesting the number of questions of clarity in the first session was positively and surprisingly low, and I think that is down to the quality of the documentation that Shane has provided. Every year the documents are better and better than the previous year. Working with Shane is a bit like watching a duck, he serenely navigates his way but underneath the legs are going like clappers. So, anyone of you who has received emails from Shane at 1 in the morning know that those legs have been going like clappers for a long time and I don't think we could have got here without all the hard work that Shane has put in.

**The Chair:** Simon, I am sorry to cut in, but I am sure I speak for all of us when I say to you and your team thank you for all that you have done to put this budget together and to work with us today. Thank you.

**Canon Simon Harper:** OK, just to remind ourselves we are now sitting as the Board of Finance, and the resolution in front of us is:

- A) That the budget be approved or
- B) That the budget be referred back to the standing committee.

Can I have votes for option A please? Thank you.

I think we should probably have Votes against option A, which I think is option B.

Any abstentions, which I think is option C which doesn't exist on my list?  
Are there any votes for option B? Thank you very much.

I think that is option A carried.

**The Chair:** I declare that option carried thank you very much synod. Bishop Christine can I call you to give us our blessing please?

**Bishop Christine:**

This weekend we celebrate the feast of Christ the King, which is a relatively new feast in the Church of England, it is even a relatively new feast in the Roman Catholic Church introduced by Pope Pius XI in 1925. I am preaching tonight on Christ the King at Christ Church Shieldfield, it is their feast of title which is marvellous. I thought it would be interesting, as one does, to look on the internet and see what people are saying about the feast of Christ the King at the moment. Perhaps not surprising, there is a degree of ambivalence about the whole notion of kingship and particularly in relation to servant ministry and our servant Lord. So, I did a little bit of thinking, and you will see that I will not waste this tonight, about why did Pope Pius introduce this feast, and what was his thinking behind it. When you read the story of Pope Pius XI, and he died in 1939 just before the start of the second world war, any suggestion that he was introducing a monarchical spirituality of kingly power for Jesus is kind of blown away in his courage in tackling fascism in Italy and in Germany. He sent a cyclical that was read out in churches, one of the few in German in 1937 and he was deeply attacked by the Nazi regime. He was really promoting the kingdom values of our faith, so it is with great joy that I ask you to stand for a Christ the King blessing on this feast of Christ the King.

Christ our King make you faithful and strong to do his will, that you may reign with Him in glory. And the blessing of our Lord God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you now and remain with you always. Amen

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ, Amen.**