

## Diocesan Synod Members Briefing – 15/6/24

1. Synod opened with welcomes from the Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, and Jonathan Wood, Diocesan Secretary. Bishop Nick especially welcomed the Ven Cat Thatcher, at her first Synod in her role as Archdeacon of Pontefract; and several Diocesan Interns, who kindly stepped in to help support the smooth running of the Synod.
2. The Chair of the House of Clergy, the Revd Canon Rachel Firth, promulgated an amended Canon 43 to Synod, before the minutes from the previous Synod were approved.
3. Bishop Nick then gave his Presidential Address, which highlighted the desperate situation of Christians in war-torn Sudan and their need for our prayers and support, and also examined the intellectual challenge of deciding personal priorities in the face of constant and often conflicting media. His full address can be read [here](#)
4. Bishop Nick then consulted members on the need to appoint a new Bishop of Wakefield and in doing so outlined the process to Synod. At the end of this item members showed their full appreciation for the work of the outgoing bishop, the Rt Revd Tony Robinson.
5. Synod then discussed a motion to receive the annual reports from diocesan teams. They heard from Liz Morton, Team Leader for our Children, Young People and Families Team, as she spoke about the work of her team, outlining all the support parishes have received over the last year. Liz highlighted the Children, Young People and Families Mission Toolkit, which helps parishes to plan their mission with children and young people, engaging, nurturing and discipling them. She ended her presentation with an invitation to everyone to: pray for children and young people in our parishes; think about opportunities for children and young people; and to connect with her team. Synod voted to receive the annual reports, and offered thanks to all diocesan staff for the work they do in supporting parishes.
6. Synod then heard from Elaine Swinhoe, Mothers' Union President for our diocese, about the work of the Mothers' Union, which has over 4 million members in more than 80 different countries. Elaine spoke about how as a Christian organisation the MU puts faith into action, supported by prayer, and talked about the various campaigns the Mothers' Union runs, including ones to support women who face domestic abuse.
7. Synod voted to approve changes in how we elect people to our Area Mission and Pastoral Committees, to enable the important work to be carried out by fully populated AMPCs benefitting from the broad range of knowledge and skills members bring to wisely chart paths forward for different churches.
8. Irving Warnett, Chair of our Finance, Assets and Investments Committee, and Geoff Park, Chief Finance Officer for the diocese, then gave a presentation on our 2023

accounts, prior to a motion for Synod to receive them. Irving and Geoff talked through the current financial situation, including the fact that parish share remains flat this year, which the diocese has managed to compensate for with reserves transfers and income from the sale of property. They also gave an outline of where we would like to be in the coming years, based around a 3% increase in parish share year on year. After a good debate, Synod approved the motion receiving the accounts.

9. The Revd Jude Smith, Diocesan Director of Church Revitalisation, then gave a presentation of Compass, a new tool for parishes from the Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence team. Compass is a tool designed to help churches work out where they are in ministry and mission, chart what they are currently doing, and help them decide what comes next, the barriers to this and how the diocese can support churches to move forward. The Compass process is all about honest conversations, working together and using data to plan paths forward, on a journey that looks at how to grow the cycle of engaging, nurturing, discipling and leading people in our parishes. Synod members got to have a go at a bit of the Compass process, and then gave feedback, before Revd Jude encouraged all to keep an eye out for a soft launch of the tool, which will be happening very soon. More on Compass will shortly be shared in our Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence website section, which can be found [here](#) and has lots of support and help for parishes in it already.
10. Synod ended with a Eucharist for members, as it was the last Synod of this triennium. Bishop Nick thanked all present for their contributions over the tumultuous last three years, with a particular thanks to Canon Matthew Ambler, outgoing Chair of the House of Laity, and Revd Canon Rachel Firth, outgoing Chair of the House of Clergy. The new Synod will meet in October 2024 for the first meeting of the new triennium, with more details to follow.