

Leeds Diocesan Synod

DRAFT Minutes of the twenty sixth meeting of the Synod of the diocese held at 9.30 am on Saturday, 14 October 2023 at St George's Church, Great George St, Leeds LS1 3BR.

Chair: The Bishop of Leeds

1. Welcome, apologies and notices.

Jonathan Wood confirmed the meeting procedures and gave the health and safety information for the meeting.

Welcomes

The Chair welcomed:

1 Bishop Anna Eltringham and Bishop Smitha Prasadam attending their first Leeds Diocesan Synod.

2 *Visitors*

Diocesan Interns and Mission Apprentice who are assisting with the stewarding of the Synod were welcomed.

Gill Dean of the Children's Society who had brought an information stand to the Synod and the Mothers Union which had also brought an information stand to the Synod which was being staffed by Elaine Swinhoe, (MU President for the Diocese of Leeds and Bishop's Nominee on the Diocesan Synod).

Rohan Clay – Diocesan Intern, who will be assisting The Revd Eve Ridgeway with this afternoon's time of worship.

3 The following were welcomed and given the Chair's permission to speak (SO3):

Item 7 "Presentation and discussion: Budget 2024" and Item 8 "Motion: Budget 2024 – money resolution": Mr Geoff Park, Chief Finance Officer.

Item 10 Barnabas update: The Revd Jude Smith, Director of Church Revitalization.

Apologies

29 Apologies have been received. The Revd Canon Rachel Firth, Chair of the House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod was unwell and had given apologies for the meeting.

Publications

The Chair announced that the 2024 Sudan Link Calendar was now available and that the Archbishop of York's 2023 Advent book, written by Bishop Arun Arora, was also now available.

Chair: Canon Matthew Ambler (Chair of the House of Laity).

2. Proclamation of Amending Canon No 42. DS23 10 01, DS23 10 01 01

The Chair promulgated Amending Canon No 42 as follows:

"I give notice that, at its July 2023 group of sessions, the General Synod resolved that Amending Canon No. 42 be made, promulgated and executed. "Amending Canon No. 42 amends Canon C 30 by replacing the requirement for the bishop of each diocese to appoint a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) with a requirement for the bishop to appoint a Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) with responsibility in the diocese, independent of the bishop, for professional leadership on and management of safeguarding matters. The Canon also provides for the professional supervision of DSOs and for the quality assurance of their work by the National Safeguarding Team. The changes will come into force diocese by diocese upon certification by the Archbishops' Council."

3. Motion: Minutes of the last Meeting on 15 July 2023. DS23 10 02

The minutes of the previous meeting were for approval. The Chair proposed:

"That the draft minutes contained in DS23 10 02 be accepted as a true record of the Diocesan Synod meeting held on 15 July 2023".

The motion was approved.

Voting

For: Majority

Against: None

Abstentions: 4.

4. Presidential Address.

The Bishop of Leeds gave his Presidential Address. A copy of the address is attached to these minutes.

5. Questions to Synod.

A Question has been received from Mr Chris Thompson (Almondbury & Kirkburton deanery). The reply from Jonathan Wood, CEO and Diocesan Secretary had been emailed to Diocesan Synod members. (A copy of the question and reply is attached to these minutes).

Chris Thompson confirmed he did not wish to ask a supplemental question. The Chair invited supplemental questions from the Synod members. None were asked.

6. Presentation and Discussion: Diocesan Link Dioceses

Dean Andy Bowerman, Dean of Bradford (AB) gave a PowerPoint presentation on this item. A review of the diocese's link dioceses and other companion links (Link(s)) had been taking place over the previous nine months. A summary report hadn't yet been prepared as the Diocesan Synod's feedback from the current meeting was needed first. The work on the review so far was in the form of correspondence with sixty eight people and at least one person from each Link Diocese/Partner, with the exception of Hannover. AB cautioned that no report of this type would be without bias as each contributor's response would be informed by their own experiences.

The key findings of the review to date were:

Why we have the Links: emersion in another culture challenges our assumptions and how we interact; learning about mission from others and using this in our own contexts; and

The different types of links: schools, parishes, social enterprise, training, crisis response and support for those who are persecuted.

Recommendation had emerged from this feedback:

Using the Diocesan Sudan Link for learning to develop and inform companion Links; creating a Companion Links Strategy Group with representatives from each task group. This would be used to share learning between the groups; appointment of an Engaged Champion and an empowered Coordinator. The Coordinator would draw the people involved in the Links together; regular updates would be presented to the Bishop's Staff meeting so there was an overview of the Links across the diocese; holding an annual companion Links day. External groups would be invited to this eg CMS; remodeling of the Links with one diocesan Link with Sudan and each Episcopal Area having its own Link; creating a new Link with Hong Kong and ending other Links.

The proposal was for the link with Sudan to be the Diocesan Link. Each episcopal area would have its own link as follows:

Bradford with Faisalabad (Church of Pakistan)

Huddersfield with Scandinavia

Kirkstall with Hong Kong

Ripon with Sri Lanka (Diocese of Ceylon); and

Wakefield with Mara, Rorya and Tarime (Tanzania).

Other current Links, for example those with the Cathedrals, may be maintained and remain.

Synod members broke in to small groups to consider five questions:

- Do we endorse the vision and rationale for continuing companion links
- Does any of our links need to be disbanded?
- What should drive our decisions on links - finance, relationships, history, the future?
- Is the Diocese / Episcopal area approach the right one? If not, what might be an alternative?
- Where might USA, Hannover, Skara & Erfurt fit in?

The Chair invited Synod members to provide feedback following their group discussions of the five questions.

The Revd Eve Ridgeway (North West Leeds deanery)

If there was a main diocesan Link it would be helpful to strengthen the episcopal area links if the Cathedrals also championed their episcopal area's Link.

Robert Haskins (Harrogate deanery)

Said that there had been a good discussion in his small group, particularly around the purpose of the Links and mission issues. The group had also queried what other dioceses did concerning Links, including support for some of the Leeds diocese's Links.

AB said there was no national central strategy concerning companion links. Sudan for example, was also linked with another diocese.

The Revd Pete Gunstone (Inner Bradford deanery)

There were different experiences with regard to Links. Some experiences were deep, some personal and some parish based for example the Mara Links. Other churches had no experience of Links. It was important to make sense of what the Links are.

Stephen Hogg (General Synod)

The decision process for disbanding Links needed to be two-way. The Links should be consulted too.

AB confirmed that all the Links had been consulted.

Archdeacon Jonathan Gough (Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven)

In Archdeacon Jonathan's group the discussion had focused on the proposed Ripon episcopal area link with Sri Lanka. It was felt that the Link with Sri Lanka had run its course. So looking forward, was the episcopal area looking for a Link which was unlike it or somewhere facing similar issues but in a different setting. For example, a Link with Scandinavia would be reflective of the rural issues in the Ripon episcopal area and would work easily.

The Bishop of Leeds

Said he wasn't sure about a link with Scandinavia, telling Synod that the current link with Scandinavia was Skara which was linked Wakefield Cathedral. The Links were varied in size and type and Links depended on the views of the Link too. The Diocese of Leeds could do something unique because it had lots of Links.

The Revd Suzy McCarter (Harrogate deanery)

Suzy said that the discussion in her group had included that the Links would be better if they were all diocesan Links with a lead in a particular episcopal area. For the existing Links some Links continue as important church Links even if the Link isn't as visible at diocesan level. There was no recollection of being asked if there was particular interest in any part of the World specifically.

David Ashton (Dewsbury & Birstall deanery, General Synod)

David said that with regard to the third question (What should drive decisions on the Links?), David said the diocese needed to think what it had received from its Links. His and his family's interaction with visitors from Tanzania had had a lasting and profound affect. His church had helped build a church in one of the Tanzanian parishes. It was important to recognize that a lot of churches had deep relationships with their Links.

Diana Tremayne (General Synod)

Diana, said that communication about learning from the Links will be important as was the breadth of the Links. Tangible and clear examples were key.

The Revd Robb Sutherland (Halifax & Calder Valley)

Robb commented that the diocesan Links needed to be accessible at parish level and not just by the Bishop's Staff. Links should be held in common and the episcopal area select locally which it engages with. There needed to be a framework of priorities, how the Link works and current actions and the freedom to be involved.

Bishop Smitha Prasadam (Bishop of Huddersfield)

Bishop Smitha commented that the Links should be seen in the context of the diocese's relationship with its global siblings. Critically the Links were about mission and a change to the past approach to Links. The Links need to be considered in a different way. For example there could be a three-way Link to connect with the USA and mainland Europe.

The Revd Fr Thomas Seville CR (General Synod)

Fr Thomas was heartened by the feedback. Some Links were best formed locally eg the one between a parish in Halifax and one in Archen. The reference in the presentation of reports from the new Links committee to Bishop's Staff seemed to have great prominence, whereas the focus should be more local. Fr Thomas also shared that the Community of the Resurrection has formed a group historically with churches in Europe. On a review for ending the links, the result had been that there was great feeling for the links to continue.

The Revd John Bavington (Inner Bradford deanery, General Synod)

Thanked Dean Andy for the work on the Links review. John said that continuing diocesan Links was good. The questions to ask were "What is the Link giving to us and those the diocese is linked with? How does the Link enable us to pray well with others and the Link to pray for us?"

The Revd Anne Russell (East Leeds deanery)

Thanked Dean Andy for the work on the review and the great discussion at the Synod. The Sudan link was a great blessing, including for those with Sudanese heritage in the Diocese of Leeds. The Link wasn't about money but about relationship, loss, hope and praising God in suffering. Anne suggested that the diocese should review the communities in the diocese with heritage from other places too.

Canon Ann Nicholl (East Leeds)

Canon Ann reminded the Synod that there had been great involvement with the Sri Lanka link by the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds. Ann had been to Sri Lanka three times and children from the Ripon and Leeds' schools had visited Sri Lanka via the Ripon and Leeds Link.

Reply to the feedback

AB confirmed that a recommendation for the Companion Links would be made to Diocesan Synod in early 2024. AB thanked the Synod for engaging with the development of the Links strategy.

7. Presentation and discussion: Budget 2024 DS23 10 03, DS23 10 03 01

A 2024 Draft Budget and Sustainability plan report and the 2024 Draft Budget and Sustainability Plan had been circulated to the Synod members. Canon Mr Irving Warnett (IW) gave an introduction to the 2024 Draft Budget. The diocese had been operating a deficit over the last few years. Sales of properties had alleviated this to some extent but it couldn't continue. The situation was different from 2018. Synod needed to be clear what was causing the deficit and understand what needed to be done by the Synod, parishes and deaneries.

There was a perception that costs were excessive. The Finance Assets and Investments Committee had reviewed this. Since 2018 central costs had reduced by one third (£1.5m). The Diocese of Leeds central costs were 13% of the total costs. The average for all dioceses was 16%. Since Covid, there had been £417k additional cost reductions and a further £200k were included in the 2024 draft Budget.

The main cause of the deficit was the fall in parish share receipts. Since 2019 paid share from parishes had fallen from £13.8m to £12.4m in 2022. Some of this was due to the loss of church attenders and it was understood that this had been a big issue for parishes. For 2023, it was forecast that the parish share receipts would at best remain flat or be a fall from 2022. The diocese would like to support clergy with the cost of living increases and maintaining properties to a high standard. However, the diocese could only pay out of what was received. The early signs were encouraging with regard to the Barnabas project. However, the benefits from the hoped for growth would take time to filter through.

The key planks of the draft 2024 Budget were:

- 1 Going further with the reorganization of mission and reduction of full time clergy posts over the next 4 to 5 years. There was a need to reduce by a further 12 posts over the next 5 year. However it was felt that through adoption of new models of ministry, there was good opportunity to still intentionally grow our focus on mission.
- 2 The currently flat parish share payments needed to increase by a similar percentage as the increase in clergy and other costs. So a 3% increase in parish share payments was being asked for each year to 2028. At this rate it would still take until 2027 to bring parish share payments to the pre Covid level.

IW said he believed this was possible and asked the Synod members to speak with parishes and their deaneries about this. IW encouraged parishes and deaneries to contact the Stewardship Team for help with these conversations.

Geoff Park (GP) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the detail of the draft 2024 Budget. GP highlighted that the PowerPoint was different from the PDF circulated earlier. The Budget deficit for 2024 was £823k compared with the current forecast of £1.5m in 2023. Savings had been built in to the 2024 Budget as a result of the current anticipated deficit. Savings were being made with regard to property and support and increased clergy reduction. The Budget included a 3% per year increase in parish share. If this fell to an increase of only 1.5% the deficit would remain in 2028 rather than being cleared.

For the eight months period to the end of August 2023, parish share payments were £443k behind budget. Though there had been some recovery of parish share payments in 2022 this didn't seem to be continuing in 2023. Properties had been sold historically to fund other deficits (e.g. clergy and lay pensions). Recently property sales had been used for operational deficits. Ideally, funds from the property sales would be used for other support in the future. There had been increased income from renting properties particularly in the context of the shortage of housing. As the number of clergy reduces there would be more properties to rent.

The diocese had many different funds. There were statutory funds, for example the Pastoral Fund for Mission and Pastoral reorganization and closed churches. The funds from the sales of church buildings went in to this fund. The fund was £6.6m at the beginning of 2023. It was proposed that £300k be transferred to unrestricted funds from this fund. The Stipends Capital Fund balance was £13.3m at the end of 2022. This pays the clergy stipends. In line with other charities, the Leeds DBF was looking to adopt Total Return Accounting. This will enable the DBF to access c.£300k pa for ministry and mission.

GP outlined different scenarios with regard to parish share receipts. If share receipts fell, more properties would need to be sold to maintain the reserve position.

The costs review carried out during the pandemic identified £1.3m possible savings. So far £662k had been delivered of the possible "green" savings. The matters discussed in today's Budget presentation were now the additional amber or red savings which were identified as being needed if income did not recover.

The Chair invited Synod members to discuss the presentations.

The Revd Jeff Payne (Wensley deanery)

Queried the reason for the reserves and paying for buildings. He asked if Barnabas could offer support about how to explain to PCCs their responsibility for maintaining ancient monuments. With regard to education and sustainability, many clergy were ex officio on governing bodies of schools and acting as a free resource. This should perhaps be considered with regard to the clergy stipend.

The Revd Lindsay Southern (Richmond deanery)

Thanked the Finance team for the work done on the draft Budget. She said a 3% increase in parish share didn't seem unreasonable as it was clearly needed. However, she cautioned that her parish had no reserves. They worked hard to pay parish share and basic bills – but had no money for mission or building maintenance. After Covid, the parish weren't paying parish share. The reality was that 4-5 pubs had closed in their area, the village café had reduced hours and other businesses

were ending and the school was in deficit. Many parishioners were on a fixed income and working 2-3 jobs. Even with the goodwill of the community the church was unlikely to increase its giving. She was sorry to report this but couldn't say anything different.

Tabitha Tanna (Wakefield deanery)

Thanked IW and GP for the good report and said she could see the struggles to put the detail together but it was helpful. The budget over the next five years was bleak with a silver lining in 2028 but that was a hope. Tabitha asked how the budget could realistically be sustained over five years when she expected that most parishes would not be able to raise funding by 3%. The diocese was fortunate to have funds over the next 5 years but what would happen then if the money was still not coming in? Tabitha asked if the diocese needed to pray more for God's guidance.

Jonathan Wilson (Harrogate deanery)

Asked if the 3% was applied to all parishes or aggregated. He commented that some parishes may not raise 3% and so some others will have to pay more. Harrogate deanery may be a net provider for the diocese for cash raised from capital fund eg legacies which were unrestricted. Also, increasing congregation head counts wasn't sufficient. People needed to grow as Christians and to learn the heart of Christian stewardship.

Geoffrey Berry (Ripon deanery)

Asked about the funds from the central church which had been decreasing recently and the investment management by CCLA. He said instead of selling properties to finance the deficit, the funds from property sales should be put into other investments to bring in income. Geoffrey commented that church attendance was decreasing and congregations were ageing. Consequently, collections were also decreasing. He asked if parishes could have a list of grant funding available for church fabric.

The Revd David Gerrard (Wakefield deanery)

Commented that when clergy numbers were cut this didn't decrease the amount of work for those clergy who are left. If clergy numbers are cut, all clergy time is taken up with maintaining church rather than growing church. So the only solution is to cut down the work expected of the clergy.

Kay Brown (North West Leeds deanery)

Kay said she was also a DBE member. Education was a mission field for the church. School was as close to church as many children would experience. The diocese needed to make sure that the s554 fund was used to focus on the mission field ie support for church schools. She asked that this be kept in mind when thinking about the Budget.

The Revd John Bavington (Inner Bradford deanery and General Synod)

General Synod had increased the Church Commissioners' resources and the assets they held. There had been a change in how support funding was granted, firstly via SDF and now SMIBB. He asked for an update from the senior staff about what pressure was being put on the Church Commissioners to release more resources to assist parishes.

Bishop Toby Howarth (Bishop of Bradford)

There had been a clear message that even if parish share came in it would only pay for 70% of the cost of clergy stipends and housing ie it goes to pay for the clergy and it doesn't pay for all of that.

There had also been talk during the Synod about growth happening eg in schools, parishes with new congregations, new churches being revitalized and Bishop's Mission Orders. He cautioned the Synod not to talk down what was happening because the numbers were difficult. He believed that people would give but when they felt they were giving to something worth giving to. He encouraged the Synod to talk up what was being done by the Grace of God in the diocese.

Jonathan Wood, CEO and Diocesan Secretary (JW) responded to the discussion. JW said there had been an open and honest reflection of where the diocese was and it was helpful to hear this. There would be an update on the Barnabas project after the lunch break which would outline what help was available and planned. JW said he understood that the situation felt difficult. There was no easy solution and there needed to be trust in the difficult decisions and actions which may be needed in the near future. New mission models and doing things in a different way under the Barnabas project would help with this.

With regard to the question about pressure on the Church Commissioners, the responsibility sits with all the General Synod members and those engaging with the national church. The former general maintenance funding from the national church for all dioceses was reducing. More funding was accessed for specific projects and programmes. The Archbishops' Council had commissioned a full review of all dioceses to see what funding there should be. The Diocese of Leeds was part of the pilot process for this.

For grant funding access, parishes should contact the diocesan Stewardship Team who maintained a database of this type of funding.

IW commented that the discussion had been helpful. Each parish had its own story and part of the Barnabas project was to share good ideas and good practices.

8. Motion: Budget 2024 – money resolution. DS23 10 03, DS23 10 03 01

Motion:

“That the Diocesan Synod authorise (or direct) the diocesan board of finance to raise and expend a sum not exceeding £22,132,971 for the calendar year 2024”.

Proposer: Canon Mr Irving Warnett (Bishop's Nominee)

Canon Mr Irving Warnett proposed the motion in his name:

“That the Diocesan Synod authorise (or direct) the diocesan board of finance to raise and expend a sum not exceeding £22,132,971 for the calendar year 2024”.

Questions of Clarification

There were no questions of clarification.

Debate

Archdeacon Paul Ayers (Archdeacon of Leeds)

Commented that the Budget was about the future of the church and opportunities available.

Members needed to consider how they wanted to spend the next five years in church. There must be prayer for revival and renewal and attitude of can do and growth with fewer clergy. Everyone in the room as leaders in the church had a responsibility for this

The Revd Alan Garrow (Harrogate)

The Budget should be taken as a springboard to action over the next few years.

There was no reply given.

Synod voted on the motion.

The motion was approved.

Voting:

For: Majority

Against: Nil.

Abstention: 2.

The Synod broke for Lunch

9. Brief Update on process: General Synod including LLF

The Bishop of Leeds reported that the next General Synod would be in November 2023. The bulk of the Synod would be on Living in Love and Faith as outlined in his Presidential Address. The bishops had been trying to navigate a way to do justice to the motions the General Synod had passed. He asked the Diocesan Synod members to keep praying about this matter.

10. Barnabas update

Jonathan Wood (JW) and The Revd Jude Smith, Director of Church Revitalisation (JS) gave an update to the Synod on the Barnabas project. JW outlined to the Synod what Barnabas is: How the diocese does being church and the tools it will need to bring about growth. Barnabas is an enabling tool for confidence in mission, confidence in the future, confidence in leadership and confidence in witness.

JS updated the Synod members on progress in the Barnabas project. The Diocese had been awarded £3.98m from the national church to fund the project. There were conditions to the award, £1m was for a youth discipleship project in Wakefield, some of the resource was for children and youth work across the diocese, some for mission accompaniment and for resources to support growth in parishes. There were also some small pots of the funding for the area leadership to discern other projects for funding applications.

Barnabas support was at its initial stages with more development on the way. Currently available were policies for parishes on the website, Personal Growth and Leadership courses had been expanded, 19 clergy were on a bespoke leadership course, clergy mentoring was available, learning communities were beginning as was mission accompaniment (An outside person coming to a church to review and advise on next steps for mission). In the future, there would be taster sessions for Personal Growth and Leadership, more support for congregations and an online tool to help churches to find the right support for the next step in mission. Members were asked to check the diocesan website for more communications about Barnabas.

11. Motion: Deanery member allocations 2024 Diocesan Synod elections. DS23 10 04

Motion:

“That for the purposes of Church Representation Rules 2022 Rule 37(1) – (3), this Synod adopts whichever of the two proposed methods contained in DS23 10 04 for determination of the number of members to be elected by the houses of the diocese’s deanery synods to the 01.8.2024 – 31.7.2027 Diocesan Synod receives the most votes of the members of this Diocesan Synod (present and voting) on a show of hands vote to be conducted following the approval of this motion. In the event of a tie this shall be determined by the drawing of lots by the Chair between the two options.”

Proposer: Canon Mrs Jane Evans (Halifax & Calder Valley deanery and General Synod).

Canon Mrs Jane Evans (JE) spoke to the circulated paper. JE outlined that 2024 was an election year for Diocesan Synod. The Synod needed to agree how the elected membership would be allocated across the deaneries. There were two choices before the Synod. If the Synod agrees these choices it will then vote on each choice. The choices were for the 70 elected clergy and 70 elected lay places on the Synod. The Church Representation Rules provided for a minimum of two representatives for the clergy and two for the laity from each deanery. In 2021 the method of allocation was to allocate the required minimum then apportion the rest per size of deanery and adjust to ensure the figure was within the 70 places. The alternative was to do the allocation the other way around. First allocate all the 70 places to take account of the size of the deanery and then do the adjustment to ensure 2 per deanery. An example of the resulting allocations were set out in the circulated paper. Each method had a different advantage: Method 1 ensured a more even spread across deaneries and Method 2 had fewer represented by each elected member.

Questions of Clarification

David Corps (Huddersfield deanery)

The Church Representation Rules provided that the Synod was to vote on a system for the allocation. If method one is used this is using the existing system.

There were no further questions.

JE proposed the motion in her name:

“That for the purposes of Church Representation Rules 2022 Rule 37(1) – (3), this Synod adopts whichever of the two proposed methods contained in DS23 10 04 for determination of the number of members to be elected by the houses of the diocese’s deanery synods to the 01.8.2024 – 31.7.2027 Diocesan Synod receives the most votes of the members of this Diocesan Synod (present and voting) on a show of hands vote to be conducted following the approval of this motion. In the event of a tie this shall be determined by the drawing of lots by the Chair between the two options.”

Debate

David Jorysz (South Leeds deanery)

Supported the adoption of Method 2. If every deanery was the same size there would be little difference which method was chosen. Although the electoral roll may not perfectly reflect church membership it was the basis for all church governance structure. David felt that Method 2 most closely follows a plain reading of the Church Representation Rules compared with Method 1.

Lindsay Southern (Richmond deanery)

Said she was against the motion as she felt the system as it worked at the moment gives smaller populations representation. The diocese was diverse and the current system gave voice with just as much significance to the small populations.

Canon Professor Joyce Hill (General Synod)

Chaired the committee which reviewed and updated the Church Representation Rules. The provision was to be interpreted as proportion to size and two per deanery as the fallback position. Two was the safety net. She supported the new method.

The Revd John Bavington (Inner Bradford deanery and General Synod)

Felt the new system was a protection for smaller deaneries and larger deaneries. The second option seemed more just.

The Revd Alan Garrow (Harrogate deanery)

Raised an issue of Area Deans being automatically on the Diocesan Synod.

It was confirmed that Area Deans were not automatically on the Diocesan Synod.

The Revd Erik Peeters (Dewsbury & Birstall deanery)

With regard to the laity, it seemed at present that all 70 places weren’t being filled in any event.

Response to the debate

JE thanked all the contributors for their comments. JE clarified that the first vote was on whether to vote on the two methods. The intention was to have a fair system. If the Synod votes against the motion, then Method 1 (the current system) would be adopted. If the

Synod votes to choose between Method 1 and Method 2 there will be another vote. JE encouraged Synod members to encourage people to stand for election.

JE proposed the motion in her name:

"That for the purposes of Church Representation Rules 2022 Rule 37(1) – (3), this Synod adopts whichever of the two proposed methods contained in DS23 10 04 for determination of the number of members to be elected by the houses of the diocese's deanery synods to the 01.8.2024 – 31.7.2027 Diocesan Synod receives the most votes of the members of this Diocesan Synod (present and voting) on a show of hands vote to be conducted following the approval of this motion. In the event of a tie this shall be determined by the drawing of lots by the Chair between the two options."

The motion was approved.

Voting

For – majority

Against – 4

Abstention – 1.

As the motion had been approved, the Synod moved to voting on the two proposed methods contained in DS23 10 04:

Method 1 (the current method)

In favour: 13

Method 2 (new method)

In favour: 47

The adoption of Method 2 contained in DS23 10 04 was approved.

12. Motion: Mode of voting – Diocesan Synod Elections 2024 DS23 10 05

Motion:

"That this Synod determines that for the purposes of Church Representation Rules 2022, Rule 42 (2) the form of voting paper to be used by the deaneries in elections to Diocesan Synod will be Form 6 (Simple Majority System) as set out in Part 10 of the Church Representation Rules 2022."

Proposer: Canon Mrs Jane Evans (Halifax & Calder Valley deanery and General Synod).

Canon Mrs Jane Evans (JE) spoke to the circulated paper. In essence the Simple Majority System was simpler to administer. The Area Deans and Deanery Lay Chairs would be the Presiding Officers in the elections and so JE asked the Synod to keep things as simple as possible. JE highlighted that though regrettable, in recent elections there was hardly ever a ballot, with only three taking place in 2021.

Questions of Clarification

Geoffrey Berry (Ripon deanery)

Echoed what JE had said about getting people to stand for election. He said the Synod members needed to encourage people to stand – particularly to have the opportunity to speak with other Synod members when the Synod was held “in person”.

Steve Jackson (Richmond deanery)

Asked what pool the candidates for Diocesan Synod drawn from.

The Chair confirmed that (broadly) elected clergy were from the Deanery Synods’ clergy and the elected laity from those on the electoral rolls of the parishes.

JE moved the motion in her name:

"That this Synod determines that for the purposes of Church Representation Rules 2022, Rule 42 (2) the form of voting paper to be used by the deaneries in elections to Diocesan Synod will be Form 6 (Simple Majority System) as set out in Part 10 of the Church Representation Rules 2022."

Debate

David Ashton (Dewsbury & Birstall deanery and General Synod)

Asked the Synod to vote for the motion as a deanery synod chair he would welcome anything which made the process simpler.

The Revd Pete Gunstone (Inner Bradford deanery)

Asked if electronic voting had been explored.

Jonathan Wood replied that electronic voting hadn’t been explored because it was expensive. For example for General Synod elections, the diocese has to use an online elections services provider. For the 2021 elections the cost had been four figures. Although the diocese was happy to look in to electronic voting, it didn’t seem a proportionate response.

Members voted on the motion

The motion was approved.

Voting

For – majority

Against – 1

Abstain – Nil.

13. Church Representation Rules 2022 Rule 24 Scheme: The Hunslet Gathering BMO DS23 10 06

David Whitaker, the Diocesan Registrar and Legal Officer to the Synod (DW), spoke to the circulated paper. Bishop’s Mission Orders sat outside the parish structure. So the Bishop of Leeds was

instructing the Synod to make a scheme to provide for the representation of the Hunslet Gathering to give them the same rights as a parish for representation on their local deanery synod.

There were no questions of clarification.

Motion: The Chair to move that:

“That this Synod approve the deanery synod representation scheme annexed to DS 23 10 06 in respect of the Hunslet Gathering Bishop’s Mission Order.”

The motion was offered for debate.
No debate was given.

Synod voted on the motion.

The motion was approved.

Voting:

For – All.

Against – none.

Abstentions – none.

14. Worship.

A time of worship was led by The Revd Eve Ridgeway and Rohan Clay, a diocesan Intern.

15. Bishop of Leeds Blessing and Close.

The Bishop of Leeds closed the Synod with a blessing.

Signed:

Name (Print):

Date:

Diocese of Leeds

Twenty Sixth Diocesan Synod, Saturday 14 October 2023

Presidential Address

When Bob Dylan wrote 'The times, they are a-changing' way back in 1964, he was merely stating a universal truth. Times always change. The problem and the challenge is that, in whatever era we live, we always seem to assume that 'now' is ultimate. But, as with the term 'post-modernism', we know what it is 'post', but we don't know what it is 'pre'. That's the nature of things. Time never stands still, and today's opportunities and challenges simply give way to – or generate – the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow and beyond.

This has been driven home to me recently by a number of things. I wrote this address immediately after emerging from an online webinar on UK Defence with the Head of Strategy for the British Army and a chaplain who addressed some of the theological and ethical lenses through which we need to look at military policy and activity. The UK's Integrated Review of 2021 had to be refreshed in 2023 because the world had changed again – war in Europe changed the complexion of our engagement in the so-called Indo-Pacific tilt. (Boris Johnson famously laughed off the notion that "tanks would roll across the soil of Europe" ... only a couple of months before tanks actually did roll into Ukraine.

But, I have also been reading John Kampfner's new book 'In Search of Berlin' – an overview that constantly makes you wonder why no one thought to stop what was evidently coming as the Kaiser gave way to Weimar, Weimar led into Nazism, Nazism collapsed into the GDR, and then western democracy assumed that the world had changed for the better and for ever. But, the rise of the Far Right in Germany now fuels fears of what might happen in the 2030s and 2040s, despite memories of what happened in the 1930s and '40s.

Now, I know you haven't come this morning for a history lesson. But, I cite these examples in order to stress the need for some perspective when 'events' happen. Now is never the ultimate; the last word has never been spoken. The end of one thing gives way to the beginning of another. We can learn from the past, but the past can never be repeated ... any more than a river can pass the same point twice. What is key is simply this: how do we remain faithful to what we believe to be our core vocation when the world around us keeps revolving away from any sense of control?

And here is the nub of the matter. Human beings like to be in control and start to fear when control is felt to have been lost, or uncertainty colours our perceptions of our own agency. But, as I noted many times during the Covid lockdowns, uncertainty is the norm in this world – it is not an aberration. And learning to navigate uncertainty with confidence and faith is key to effective leadership and living.

By now you will have figured out why I have started this address in this way. Since we last met as a synod the world has changed. A week ago, international news was still dominated by Ukraine - Russia's behaviour in prosecuting its war and challenges to international support of Ukraine, particularly in the United States (now paralysed by the absence of a Speaker of the House). Then Hamas, rooted in the tradition and mindset of Islamic State, committed unspeakable atrocities in Israel, and everything changed. The news focus shifted to Gaza. And we now, as the shock and horror become accommodated, await Israel's next steps in securing its territory, defending its people and responding to the outrageous terrorism that has struck at its heart. And we know that whatever happens next won't be the end of the chapter, let alone the end of the book, and that what happens in the next few days and weeks will change again the possibilities facing the world. However

justified Israel's response might be, we also know that the children of violence will harbour their own grievances and feed them into the next generation of violence. And so it will go on.

Which is why words of hope cannot and must not be empty. They must be rooted in realism, but not bound by the 'ultimate now'. As Dr Alan Garrow brilliantly opened up at the Diocesan Clergy Study Day in Wakefield Cathedral on Thursday this week, the Lord's Prayer – at the heart of our Christian and Anglican liturgy – actually has us asking for "tomorrow's bread today": "Give us today the bread of the future kingdom." We long for the fulness of peace rooted in grace and mercy, the eschatological feast of heaven, whilst committing ourselves to the world as it is now. I have phrased this theology in the past as: "Christians are not driven by fear, but drawn by hope". This hope, whatever is happening in the world and however uncertain we feel about control of events, comes to us from the future – tomorrow's bread – and looks like resurrection. This is the vision that draws us.

This is why our diocese has lived for most of its nearly ten years with a simple set of values (all beginning with 'L' for Leeds...): Loving Living Learning. We love God, the cosmos of his creating, and our neighbour as ourself. We live in the world as it is, but are drawn by a vision of how it might be – the kingdom of God. And we are having to learn as we go ... because a changing world compels us to look differently and afresh and learn from our experience and the perspectives we gain from history.

In today's synod we will look at matters that have as their backdrop the uncertainties of the world at the moment. But, that does not diminish the importance of the local or the immediate. Underlying much of what we discuss today is a fundamental question for which we as a synod must take active responsibility: what sort of a church do we need to be in order to serve the world we are called to live in at this point in history? And, if we have an idea of what that church ought to look like – if it is to be faithful to its particular vocation in the world – then what role do I play in helping to shape it accordingly?

Now, that sounds fairly straightforward ... until other people, other Anglican Christians, begin to put in their perspective. This week the House of Bishops came to some conclusions about 'Living in Love and Faith' (LLF) and the next steps. I was not present – a combination of ill-health and the very short notice of the House meeting. I also did not know that eleven bishops would issue a dissenting statement on Thursday. I will reserve my views on this behaviour, but note that not a single newspaper thought it worth reporting on. In other words, we are now talking to ourselves because no one out there is interested. This says something.

However, as I said at the beginning, the last word has not been uttered in these matters ... and never will be. Circumcision might not be a burning issue for today's western church, but the factors that led to schism in the early church around the issue – theological and cultural – still colour our debates about sexuality today. Again, Dr Eeva John's address to the Clergy Study Day on Thursday invited us to be honest and 'real' about ourselves (what we actually think about our handling of the Bible rather than our aspirations), about the real world (the varying experience of other Christians/Anglicans), the reality of others (rather than wishing they could just see things the way I do), and the real God who, as revealed in Scripture, cannot be controlled, appropriated or bent to my particular biblical preferences. I have long been haunted by John 5:39 where Jesus confronts the biblical authorities of his time with this: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life."

Just think about that. Where do we place ourselves in that context? Standing with Jesus over against the Jewish leaders? On the sidelines looking on as entertained observers? Or with those whom Jesus is addressing? As a church leader who has been reading the Bible for sixty years, I place myself with those who need to hear Jesus's words: you search the scriptures and miss the point completely, even though he is

standing in front of you. Some humility about our readings of scripture, of the world, of ourselves and of other Christians will not go amiss.

Let's briefly put this in a different perspective. This morning we will look at a review of our partnership links with other dioceses around the world. Nearly ten years in to the partnerships we inherited from the historic dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield, it is right to review and, consequently, refresh, revive, conclude or re-envision. As we do this, what is unavoidable (I hope) is the conviction that having links around the world and the Anglican Communion is vital to our own life here. Looking through the eyes and listening through the ears of Anglicans whose life experience, cultures, norms and expectations are different confronts us – sometimes uncomfortably – with how we are seen, understood and experienced by them.

This is why LLF – and being faithful to challenges to our vocation as the Church of England – has to be seen in the context of our unity with other Christians. And what is immediately obvious is that Christians do not agree on certain vexed matters. It is unlikely many will change their mind in order to pursue unity (which would be a fantasy if based on a utilitarian desire for peace at all costs); so, we have to do two things: first, accept the reality of disagreement; and, second, to accept that this very living with difference might be what God calls us to and has designed his church for. Maybe, just maybe, our vocation is to show the world what it can look like for people of difference to live in unity ... despite, or even because of, their differences. I haven't the time to illustrate this from the scriptures themselves, but the Bible is riddled with this stuff.

Now, to go back to the point: if we are to be a church that makes a difference in a conflicted world – less concerned or preoccupied with our internal purity and more committed to showing the world what redemption and grace look like – then we need to take seriously who we are as Anglicans in Yorkshire and what should guide our priorities. Today we look at the budget ... which is not a set of numbers to be agreed with, but is (what the Archbishop of Canterbury once described as) 'theology in numbers'. Our budget tells us whether we think it is worth coughing up sacrificially to resource a church or diocese that believes it can and must make a difference in and to the world. That is what our parish share is about. Not funding a bureaucracy – which it doesn't – but enabling a mission that is transformative: building confident Christians who grow churches that help transform their communities.

That is why elections to deanery and diocesan synods matter. Conviction has to be earthed in mundane structure and attention to process and people. I hope we will note the creation of the Hunslet Gathering – a new initiative in church planting. Promulging Amending Canon 42 doesn't sound exhilarating, but it is the structural prioritising of safeguarding in the church, but for the sake of the world around us.

I have said enough. Thank you for your patience. Today let's listen and speak with grace, asking God for wisdom as we navigate contested territory and seek a common mind as God's church here in the Diocese of Leeds. Bob Dylan is still going strong; so can we as the times change and we seek to be faithful to God's call at this time and in this part of God's world.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines
Bishop of Leeds

14 October 2023

Diocesan Synod 14 October 2023 – Item 5 Questions for Synod

Question received from Mr Chris Thompson (Almondbury & Kirkburton deanery)

“To The Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

“What is the current state of progress towards meeting our Diocesan goal of carbon net zero by 2030”.

From the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

1. In February 2020 the General Synod called all parts of the Church of England to strive to be net zero carbon by 2030. In 2021 the Board approved and Diocesan Synod welcomed the diocese’s first strategic decarbonisation plan Saving Creation: Strategic Action to Combat Climate Change.
2. The plan was introduced to Synod in October 2021 and built on both the General Synod motion in 2020 and a previous Diocesan synod motion in 2019 committing the Diocese of Leeds to carbon reduction targets (50% reduction by 2030 and zero by 2050)
3. The Diocese of Leeds has been a national leader in environmental mission over the past decade, holding the Anglican mark of mission “to safeguard the integrity of creation”, within our wider mission and strategy. We have led a wide range of innovative projects and, consequently, have high parish and diocesan staff engagement and responses to the current climate and ecological context.
4. Our strategic action plan and supporting toolkit (six steps to net zero) shows that good progress is being made across the six key areas of focus:
 - Our clergy properties
 - Our offices
 - Our schools and academies
 - Our churches
 - Our travel
 - Our land
5. Actions delivered to date include:
 - Installation of retrofit measures including solar panels on a selection of vicarage properties. This work was undertaken with grant funding and managed by EON as the delivery partner.
 - Work undertaken to provide a completed EPC record for all DBF homes. This is now almost entirely complete.
 - Presentations on net zero given to all Deanery Synods and regular webinars provided.
 - Encouraged and celebrated engagement with the Eco Church Award Scheme.
 - Put in place the data collection mechanisms, policy framework, upskilling, piloting and capacity building training to support the transition to CNZ NZC.
 - 50% of PCCs completing the Energy Footprinting Tool section of the Online Parish Returns.
 - DAC sustainability and heating policies and guidance developed.
 - Carbon Literacy training programme rolled out for diocesan staff and wider diocese.
 - CNZ training included in First Incumbents and Curates training, three tier Eco Mission Enabler Ministry Pathway piloted
 - 4 Area Environment Champions and 170 Parish Environment Officers recruited

- 45 churches now at carbon neutral.
6. The dioceses is on track but the plan has always been loaded to increased delivery in the final 2-3 years before 2030. There is still a significant amount of work to do. Much of this will depend on accessing external funding and we are working hard to ensure we are in a position to facilitate access to this wherever possible as we move forward.
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DRAFT