

ELY DIOCESAN SYNOD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Ely Diocesan Synod held by video conference on Thursday 7 October 2020

Canon Simon Kershaw, Chair of the House of Laity, in the Chair

The meeting opened with Dwelling in the Word (Psalm 113) led by the Bishop of Ely.

1. **Apologies for Absence received** House of Clergy 12 House of Laity 6
2. The **Minutes** of Diocesan Synod held on 19 October 2019 were agreed as accurate and signed by the Chair, Canon Simon Kershaw. The March meeting of Synod was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic.

Matters Arising - for Synod to note - the Diocese's second submission to the Strategic Development Fund was unsuccessful.

SO86 - Ministry Share figures in budget were clarified.

3. **Oral Report from Bishop's Council 24 September 2020:** presented by the Chair of the House of Laity. There were no questions
4. **Presidential Address:** Bishop Stephen delivered his Presidential Address (attached) which was followed by breakout discussions with notes from the individual groups to be returned to the Bishop of Ely for framing future plans.

Revd Canon Alison Myers, Chair of the House of Clergy, in the Chair.

5. **Safeguarding - Interim Report :** Rebecca Boswell, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (RB), and Jon Chapman (JC), Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Liaison Group (DSL), presented their Interim Report and their strategy for 2021. RB highlighted the completion of the Past Cases Review 2, indicating future directions of work, particularly in light of the outcomes from the IICSA Report. It was noted that the positive culture of safeguarding is now becoming embedded at every level of church life. JC acknowledged the engagement and commitment from all partners who are members of the DSLG. The Diocesan Safeguarding team are currently working on focussed parish support, to understand the challenges within individual parishes, to encourage effective information sharing and communication. The Safeguarding Team were formally thanked for their excellent work during a busy year.
6. **Business of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (EDBF):** the Revd Canon Brian Atling (BA), Chair of the EDBF, advised that the final budget for 2021 had been delayed due to the fluid financial situation, affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. He anticipated a deficit budget for 2021, in excess of £1.2m, resulting from loss of investment income and a forecast reduction in Ministry Share payments.

The 2020 deficit out-turn is likely to be in the region of £1m. To reduce this deficit, and after review, savings have been made across the Diocesan Offices with a number of staff being furloughed, the Retreat House has been closed and staff made redundant; the premises have now been re-let to Kings School bringing in an agreed £100,000 per annum. With the anticipated 2020 deficit and 2021 deficit budget, funds may need to be drawn down from investments. Income from investments is normally used to keep ministry share at a reduced level.

2019 Annual Accounts: Thanks to the Financial Controller and the Finance team for their work resulting in a clean audit - the Annual Accounts have approved by Bishop's Council and submitted to the Charities Commission.

Grateful thanks were offered to parishes, benefices, Teams and Deaneries for their continued generosity in ministry share and hard work in the challenging times. A unanimous vote agreed that Ministry Share would not be increased in 2021; and that the Diocese of Ely will not increase clergy stipends or staff salaries in 2021

The Diocese of Ely's bid for sustainability funding has been prepared for submission in the very near future after strong lobbying. A decision will be known in early December 2020.

Motion: that the Diocese of Ely's 2021 Budget is accepted (subject to consultation)

Proposed: Revd Canon Brian Atling

Seconded: Devin McLachlan, Great St Mary's

In favour 60 Against 0 Abstentions 4 (Amey / Hurst / Dawson-Jones / Price)

The motion was passed

Motion: that Synod agrees that there should be no increase in Ministry Share for 2021 nor increase in clergy stipends/staff salaries for the same period

Proposed Revd Canon Brian Atling

Seconded: Revd Martin Dale, East Marshland

In favour 62

Against 0

Abstentions 2 (Warrack / Duke)

7. Elections: **General Synod**

The Privy Council met on 20 May 2020 and an Order was made under section 84 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to postpone to 31 July 2021 the date on which the Convocations of Canterbury and York will automatically stand dissolved, if they are not dissolved sooner than that in accordance with Her Majesty the Queen's directions. The General Synod is automatically dissolved at the same time as the Convocations, the dissolution of the Synod is therefore also postponed. The dissolution of these bodies triggers fresh elections.

Elections to General Synod will now take place in the autumn of 2021 and it is expected that they will be undertaken using the online election process, and the allocation of seats for dioceses shall remain as agreed at the February 2020 Group of Sessions. The inaugural session will take place in November 2021. This means that the term of office of current elected members of the Convocations and the House of Laity is extended until July 2021.

Elections for **Diocesan Synod** will follow the accepted timetable and exact dates will be advised in Spring 2021.

8. Deanery Planning Task Group: The Archdeacon of Cambridge offered a brief forward look of business to return to Synod at the December meeting concerning the new round of deanery planning that will need to take place from 2021. It was noted that deaneries may require support and facilitation to make this effective.

There being no further business, the Bishop of Huntingdon closed proceedings with prayer at 9 pm.

The next meeting of Diocesan Synod will be held by video conference on 8 December 2020 starting at 7pm