

THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 23 November 2022  
In person at King's Ely

Present: The Bishop of Huntingdon (in the Chair), Revd Canon Brian Atling, Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker, Dr Felicity Cooke, Mrs Lindsay Davies, Revd Canon Sarah Gower, Ven Richard Harlow, Canon Simon Kershaw, Mrs Elaine Levitt, Mr George Lynn, Revd Dr Robert Mackley, Revd Canon Anna Matthews, Canon Peter Maxwell, Ven Hugh McCurdy, Canon Rob Needle, Revd David Newton, Canon Janet Perrett, Mr John Pigott, Mrs Sarah Robinson, Revd Canon Simon Talbott, Canon Lizzie Taylor Mr Christopher Townsend and Canon Tim Walters

In attendance: Ms Rebecca Boswell, Mrs Sheena Bridgman, Canon Paul Evans, Mr James Owen,

**Dwelling in the Word** was led by the Revd Canon Anna Matthews

**Apologies** were received from the Bishop of Ely, Very Revd Mark Bonney, Mr Francis Burkitt, Revd Becky Dyball, Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Revd Canon Dr Jessica Martin, Mr Steve Mashford, Canon Andrew Read

The **Minutes** of the Bishop's Council meeting held on 28 September 2022 were agreed and signed by the Bishop of Huntingdon. There were no **matters arising**.

**Bishop's Business:** The Bishop of Huntingdon advised that Revd Canon Brian Atling would be standing down as Chair of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance at the end of 2022 and that Canon Tim Walters had been invited to succeed him.

**Diocesan Synod Report:** There were no questions to the Chairs. It was highlighted that the 2023 Budget had been accepted and approved by majority at the Diocesan Synod meeting in November 2022.

**Safeguarding update:** The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Ms Rebecca Boswell, presented her regular update to the meeting.

There are currently 225 referrals (increased from the 200 at same date in 2021) reflecting a 12.5% uplift. 71% of parishes have now signed up to the Safeguarding dashboard, a slight increase over that previously reported (68%)

1906 DBS checks have been carried out in 2022 to date; there are currently 20 safeguarding agreements in place, with 2 pending.

The National Casework System: Despite some initial problems, information can now be recorded directly into the system. Automatic reminders about DBS renewals and safeguarding training renewals are being researched.

Safeguarding Season was launched on 14 November and will culminate in a service on Sunday 20 November. The week has been planned with webinars, talks and workshops at Ely Cathedral.

The Safeguarding Team are implementing the actions identified in the Survivor Care Review and Past Cases Review 2.

Bishop Dagmar thanked the Safeguarding Team for their work.

**Business of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance:** Revd Canon Brian Atling (BA) advised that Ministry Share receipts were standing at 80% of ask in comparison to 77% at the same stage in 2021. He felt

that this was on budget. The management accounts reflected a surplus, due to a continuing tight hold on costs and the maintenance of clergy appointments within the 104 cap set by Bishop's Council.

The Budget for 2023, while having been approved both by Bishop's Council and accepted by Diocesan Synod, will be continually under review over the next few months due to the current financial climate. Regular updates will be brought to Bishop's Council. Investment income has dipped, although it is expected that the market will recover.

Clergy stipend increases have been set (pending confirmation from the Archbishops' Council in December) at 5% with Ministry Share being increased by 4% in 2022. The difference will be covered by investment income.

Canon Tim Walters, Chair of the Relocation Board, presented his report on **Project Lancaster** (the move of the Diocese of Ely offices to Witchford). He stated that significant progress had been made and that full planning permission was expected in the near future. The next stage will be to go out to tendering.

George Lynn, Chair of the Audit Committee, advised that the Diocesan **Risk Register** had been reviewed and that it would be presented at the next meeting of Council. There were 8 increases in risk, 3 reductions and 2 new elements at risk.

BA advised members that the Energy Support Grant has been made available from central funds and that £600 would be distributed to each parish before year end.

Proposal: that a flat rate of £600 would be paid to each parish as support to cover the increase in energy costs over the winter.

Proposed: Canon Tim Walters  
Passed unanimously

Seconded: Revd Dr Robert Mackley

BA thanked members for their positive response.

**Changing Market Towns:** Revd Jon Randall (JR) gave a presentation about the Changing Market Towns reset advising that the Strategic Investment Board would be meeting in early December to consider the Diocese's proposals. He mentioned that recruitment for a Central Operations Manager would be carried out to coordinate activities across the project. The question of sustainability after the project end was raised.

The Ven Hugh McCurdy, Chair of the Changing Market Towns Project Board, thanked JR, Adam Evans and Martin Kenward for their focussed efforts in preparing the project reset document.

Geoffrey Hunter (GH), Head of Church Buildings and Pastoral Department (CBPD), presented a review of the arrangements for the **Diocesan Advisory Committee**.

Proposed: Rob Needle  
Agreed unanimously

Seconded: Revd Canon Anna Matthews

GH advised that the REACH Ely project had been formally launched in early November 2022 with good attendance from across the Diocese together with representation from national bodies including Historic England and the Historic Religious Buildings Association. CBPD and Mission and Ministry Department will be liaising in connection with communicating the data that has been collected via a roadshow.

## **Deputy Director of Development and Planning (DPP)**

A broad discussion was held regarding this proposed new role which would be introduced alongside a restructuring of Diocesan delivery and governance. Each statutory committee would report direct to Bishop's Council and would include a member of Bishop's Council in an oversight role as part of its membership.

It was agreed that a detailed Job Description for the new DPP role (reporting to the Diocesan Secretary) would be prepared for the next meeting of Council, together with more information about how the role will function, relationships with other Departments, resourcing and accountability.

Council agreed by majority (one against and 2 abstentions) that further information relating to proposals for new governance arrangements and any changes in structures would be brought to the next meeting.

**Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee:** There being no meetings held, Council members were invited to approve the appointment of new time-limited post for Associate Minister for Christ the Servant King, Hampton (Yaxley Deanery) be created. Council members approved this unanimously.

The meeting closed with prayer at 8.59pm