

Diocesan Synod Report to Stroud Deanery Synod on 16th February 2022

There have been two meetings of the Diocesan Synod since the last Deanery Synod and key elections have been completed:

Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance – Canon Karen Czapiewski

Chair of the House of Clergy – Revd Canon Katrina Scott

Chair of the House of Laity – Carole O’Donnell

Elections were also completed for the Bishop’s Council and the Standing Committee of the Synod

NOVEMBER MEETING – held in person

Full minutes can be found on the Deanery Website

This was the first meeting of the new Synod following elections earlier in the year and a request was made for induction arrangements to be put in place. This was agreed and the February Synod was informed that an induction session will take place as part of the July meeting of the Synod.

Gloucester Diocesan Board of Education (GDBE) – Reconstitution

This item was introduced by Bishop Robert and Rachel Howie. It arose from a new national Measure that requires all DBEs to adopt one of two formal structures as the previous Measure had become very out of date. The paper to Synod outlined the options, both of which were feasible, and outlined the benefits and drawbacks of each along with the legal advice received. This was an opportunity for discussion and questions from Synod members to inform further consideration by the Bishop’s Council which would then made a recommendation for a final decision to the February Synod.

There were a number of questions and comments including what the costs of the transition to the new arrangements would be. It was confirmed that these were manageable within current financial resources and would not come from Parish Share.

GDBF Budget 2022

Karen Czapiewski presented the proposed budget for 2022, acknowledging as she did so that during 2021 some parishes had given more than originally requested in order to support others and some had drawn appropriately on reserves. The many changes that everyone was aware of over the year had been fully discussed in the Resources Group as the budget was prepared.

The key points from her presentation along with the questions raised and answers given can be found in the minutes noted above. The discussion ended with Karen

offering heartfelt thanks for generous and sacrificial giving, particularly when so many people are suffering financial hardship.

The budget was **agreed** with one abstention.

LIFE Together – Commitments 2022

Bishop Rachel introduced this item and welcomed some additional people attending to present work that had been going on in their parishes. It focussed on taking the Life vision forward over the coming period, suggesting five spotlight areas which all emerge from the original Life aims. A range of materials to support this was available.

A link to her address can be found here: www.gloucester.anglican.org/2019/bishop-rachels-address-to-diocesan-synod/ A link to the video of 'LIFE Together' can be found here: <https://youtu.be/iEGXZoINg1c>

FEBRUARY MEETING – via Zoom

All papers for this meeting are on the Deanery website

Safeguarding Annual update

The Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Advisory Panel, Simon Atkinson, and the Head of HR and Safeguarding, Judith Knight, presented the annual update on safeguarding. This has shown considerable progress in establishing the training programme required and the team has been re-organised to ensure that the full range of functions are well-covered.

It was noted that, while the number of cases being pursued has gone down, the number of calls to the team has increase. This is thought to reflect increased confidence in parishes to seek advice rather than a failure to identify the need for a fuller response. It was recognised that increased expectations on the central team also affect parishes and Judith expressed appreciation for the responses so far.

Simon is standing down as independent chair shortly and +Rachel thanked him for his work and the combination of encouragement and challenge that he brought to the role.

Environment Update

Cate Williams gave a presentation and, as she is also attending this meeting of the Deanery Synod, I am assuming she will cover similar ground!

Incorporation of the DBE

This item followed on from that at the November meeting, with a recommendation from Bishop's Council that the Synod should agree to designate a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) called the Diocesan Board of Education. This will deliver all aspects of the new Measure. The proposal was **carried**.

Parish Share

Karen Czapiewski spoke about the challenging times over the last two years in many ways and not least, financially. Up to now, because of the generosity of parishes it has been possible to keep the Diocesan Synod commitment to cover the cost of clergy stipends and housing.

Julie Ridgeway echoed Karen's comments about the generosity of parishes and noted that she is still receiving money relating to the 2021 Parish Share. The total currently stands around £6.3m which is slightly under the allocations issued, but getting close.

Both Karen and Julie offered their warm thanks to all who work to achieve the totals that are forthcoming.

Other

+Rachel concluded by congratulating Dean Stephen on his appointment as Bishop of Salisbury and confirmed that Revd Canon Andrew Braddock has been appointed interim Dean, with adjustments being made in the Mission and Ministry team to cover his absence.

Finally +Rachel related all our discussions back to the Life vision, noting how easy it is to start discussions, such as the Save the Parish campaign, from a place of scarcity, but that we need to start our thinking from a place reflecting the generosity of God and the fullness of life that we are offered.

Margaret Sheather

7th February 2022