

Minutes of the Edinburgh Diocesan Synod held on 3 November 2016 at Palmerston Place Church, Edinburgh

APOLOGIES AND WELCOMES

The Revd Canon Frances Burberry welcomed the following newcomers to synod:

- The Revd Oliver Brewer-Lennon – *Edinburgh, St Peter's Lutton Place*
- Valerie Elcock – *Alternate Lay Representative, Haddington*
- The Revd Yousouf Gooljary - *Edinburgh, Christ Church, Morningside*
- The Revd Jane Green – *Edinburgh, St Ninian's Comely Bank*
- The Revd Simon Metzner - *North Berwick and Gullane*
- Barnaby Miln – *Lay Representative, Edinburgh, St Vincent*
- Siân Harris – *Diocesan Communications Coordinator*
- John Marsden – *Congregation member, Galashiels*
- The Revd Annie Naish - *Bishops Enabler of Mission*
- The Revd David Paton-Williams - *Edinburgh, St Columba's by the Castle*
- The Revd Willie Shaw - *Grangemouth and Bo'ness*
- Eileen Spence - *Alternate Lay Representative, Bo'ness*
- Susan Ward - *Lay Representative Grangemouth*

There were 103 attendees (57 Clergy - 66%; 46 Lay - 74%) with apologies from 11 Clergy and 11 Lay members

BISHOPS ADDRESS

Bishop John began by asking for some moments of silence to remember those who had died since the previous synod:

David Maybury

John Towers

Bishop John brought greetings from the Diocese of Espoo, where he had attended a conference in September. He and Claire had been accompanied by the choir from Old St Paul's Church in Edinburgh, which bore witness to the link bearing fruit.

He reflected that 2017 would see the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. As a church, we think of ourselves as both Catholic and reformed. Both the good and the less tasteful elements of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation offered time for penitence as well a celebration. Out of some of the chaos of the Reformation came many positive things - Luther's German bible, Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes and Cranmer's prayer book, as well as many examples of holiness and

self-sacrifice on both sides of the Christian divide. The current issues of 'Brexit', the refugee crisis and the American presidential elections leads many to ask "what is the world coming to?" This was a time to understand the perspective offered by the Reformation. The current uneasy feeling for many people was also a constant one for many others. Change was hard, but did we not believe in a God that was good? The church was still here 500 years after Luther. God showed us how to live our church lives through good and bad. He underlined that not all would agree in the pending debate about same-sex marriage, when it came to the General Synod in 2017. The challenge was to learn to speak respectfully and courteously. In the Reformation, it was decided that the different views should result in dividing the church. He hoped that this would not be an outcome this time.

The 2017 budget being laid before Synod emphasised mission. Some of the business could be seen as mundane, but all of it was important, and was the result of a great deal of work by some very able people, and should be applauded. We did not choose God, God chose us, and chose us to bear fruit. Fruit that would last.

ADMINISTRATION

SYNOD MINUTES

Synod approved the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2016.

DIOCESAN ACCOUNTS FOR 2015

Nigel Cook, the Diocesan Treasurer, reported that the accounts had been audited and signed off on 12th of March 2016. Synod had agreed a deficit of £19k. There had been an allowance for the appointments of a Bishop's Enabler of Mission, a Communications Coordinator, and additional hours for the Youth & Children Officer. A number of unplanned transactions had changed the eventual outcome. The proceeds of the sale of St Andrew's Prestonpans of £93k had not been in the budget. The St Andrew's Building Fund had been created from those proceeds. There had been an unexpected legacy of £2.5k, which had remained dormant in a solicitors accounts for 38 years. With accumulated interest, a sum of £16.5k had been added to the St Hilda's Fund. Following a review of contracts and procedures by Simon Filsell, a reduction in Diocesan Office costs of £20k had been achieved, freeing up funds for mission instead. The timing of receipt of grant income from one or two sources had added extra funds to the budgeted sum. There had been a gap between Kenneth Fleming finishing as the Mission Officer, scoping the role, and the appointment of the full-time Bishops Enabler of Mission, and this had led to an underspend. There was, therefore, an unusual net surplus of £151k.

The Rev Peter Harris, Rector, Dalkeith and Lasswade

He thanked Nigel Cook for an extremely good and enlightening report. As the calculation for charge quota was based on the overall budget, should some of the surplus therefore come back to the charges?

Nigel Cook responded that most of the surplus had been invested in order to increase long-term income rather than looking at one off payments. This would provide a longer term sustainable benefit to charges.

The motion that Synod noted the Diocesan Accounts for 2015 was proposed by Nigel Cook and seconded by David Palmer

THE MOTION WAS carried unanimously.

DIOCESAN FINANCIAL POSITION 2016

Nigel Cook reported that there had been an agreed deficit of £4.7k. The budget has enabled the continuation of various developments, previously agreed. The new Provincial Mission and Ministry Block Grant was being phased in. The Province had increased quota by 3.3%. Synod had agreed that diocesan quota would be increased by 4.5%. There had been a delay in the appointment of a Bishop's Enabler of Mission, due to the need to re-advertise the post. This had resulted in savings, added to by the gap in the reappointment of a Communications Coordinator. IME training costs were due to be covered by the Province, but this had not been the case and the costs were therefore additional to the budget. There was an indicated £8k surplus at the end of September, but the timing of a number of items of income and expenditure might not result in that being the outcome at the end of the year.

DIOCESAN BUDGET FOR 2017

Nigel Cook reported that the various new developments seen in 2016 were settling in and the anticipated spending in 2017 was much better known. There would be the second year of the transition to the new Mission & Ministry Support Grant from the Province. There would be a 3% increase in provincial quota. The overall outcome proposed was a deficit of £22k. This was being found from existing funds and was not being sought through charges' quota. The Mission & Ministry part of the budget would see a reduction in spending, not due to less work being undertaken but due to changes in the way it was funded. Charge quota was being brought back to a 3% increase, which was lower than in previous years.

The Rev Canon Fred Tomlinson, Rector, Edinburgh, St Peter's Luton place

He noted that the changes in the arrangements for payroll had been undertaken to allow the new government Employment Allowance to be claimed. The validity of this had come

into question, and he asked whether charges would possibly face a large repayment bill if this was found to be incorrectly claimed?

Nigel Cook stated that the diocese and the province had been very clear that it was a valid claim. The question was around being a 'connected charity' and the control that one had of the other. It was being maintained that the diocesan charity had no direct control over the charges, as charities. The province had obtained a legal opinion which supported the validity of the claims. This was being communicated to HMRC. If, ultimately, the claims proved to be invalid, it was true that charges would have to repay the amounts, with backdated interest. It was emphasised that charges should continue to claim the allowance, so as not to indicate any doubt about the validity of the claim, which could be used within the current contention.

The Rev Peter Harris, Rector, Dalkeith and Lasswade

If the advice to claim the allowance had been incorrect, was there not a claim against those who had advised that?

Nigel Cook reported that the advice has come from the government and HMRC, which had been very clear at the time.

The motion that Synod noted the Diocesan Budget for 2017 was proposed by Nigel Cook and seconded by David Palmer

THE MOTION WAS carried with one abstention.

The Bishop thanked Nigel Cook for an extremely clear and succinct presentation and also for his very wise stewardship throughout the year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SCHEME

David Palmer reported that he had picked up a few additional changes since the original Scheme was approved by Synod in 2015. The changes proposed that the Diocesan Treasurer became a Standing Committee member, that the Standing Committee should have a power to co-opt, and to abolish a now-defunct committee - namely the Diocesan Audit & Governance Committee. The work of that latter committee was now under the remit of the Standing Committee.

The Rev David Dixon, Edinburgh, St Barnabas Moredun

Under item 4 of the Standing Committee revision in the paper, it stated that vacancies would be filled by suitably qualified members of the Diocesan Synod. Would it be prudent to allow for appointments from outside Diocesan Synod?

David Palmer reported that the item only related to filling vacancies occurring in the elected membership of the Standing Committee, and the proposed revision would indeed allow co-options from outside Diocesan Synod.

The motion that Synod approved the changes to the Administrative Scheme was proposed by David Palmer and seconded by Barnaby Miln

THE MOTION WAS carried unanimously.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage, Convenor of the Information & Communications Committee, reflected that Gillian McKinnon, the previous Communications Coordinator, had also scope the role whilst undertaking the core work. Part of that was to rebuild the website. She had felt unable to continue to commit time to the role and had stepped back. Siân Harris had been appointed as the new Communications Coordinator and had started work in mid-July.

Siân Harris then addressed synod and reported that she was looking forward to meeting many Synod members very soon. She hoped to spark ideas of ways to develop communications both in the diocese and in charges. She had developed an Activity Planner to see what was happening in charges, and to be well ahead in planning advanced publicity. This would also drive key messages to be communicated to the wider communities. In addition it would enable charges to see what other charges across the diocese were doing and to possibly collaborate. Very soon, the diocese would be starting to offer fully-supported and secure websites through a new hosting company. This support would be full-time and the security would protect against the hacking, which had been seen previously. There would be invitations to website managers and newsletter editors to an event to network with each other and to produce new ideas. This would take place on 21st January 2017, and would be hosted by the diocese. Siân Harris emphasised that she was in post to support charges as a primary function.

MISSION AND MINISTRY

The Revd John Conway began by highlighting the imminent dedication of the new Play Church, which was the idea of Claire Benton-Evans the Youth & Children Officer, and had been created by the Grassmarket Project. The Play Church was on display and had been created to be portable to enable it to be used right across the diocese.

The October 2015 Synod has debated whether to commit money to appoint a Bishop's Enabler of Mission. He felt that this was one of the best debates and decisions undertaken by Synod in recent years. In addition, a permanent Adventures in Faith Coordinator had been appointed to promote the lay learning programme. Elizabeth White had been appointed to that post, and The Revd Annie Naish has taken up the

Bishop's Enabler of Mission post in mid-September. He then handed over to Elizabeth White and The Revd Annie Naish, who introduced themselves to Synod and explained their aspirations for the work they were undertaking.

Annie Naish stated how passionate she was about mission. She spoke about her foundations for the role and the five strands of mission - in proclaiming the good news, renewing the life of the church, responding to human need, transforming unjust structures of society, and safeguarding and sustaining creation and the life of the Earth. She was committed to enabling others, and helping to move people from membership into discipleship and to grow their faith and confidence. This would involve both listening together and discerning together.

Elizabeth White reflected on her new role coordinating the Adventures in Faith programme. She saw this as being a hub of support to help the sharing of good practice. Although there would be an amount of initiating learning opportunities, the quarterly newsletter was also intended to publicise events already planned within charges and the wider diocese. The role would also extend to the coordination of spiritual direction and pastoral supervision. She encouraged members of all congregations to get in touch with her, both in wishing to attend events and in volunteering to help with their delivery.

Synod welcomed them both and applauded their presentations.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

THE DEAN

The Very Revd Susan Macdonald reported, with regret, that she would be standing down from the role by the end of the year. This was related to health issues, and she was heeding the doctor's advice to reduce her hours. Over the 5 years as Dean she had found the work hugely rewarding, and viewed it a great privilege to be Bishop John's first Dean. She would be continuing as Rector of Christ Church, Morningside. She asked for prayers for Bishop John as he considered who should be appointed next in the role.

Synod gave long applause.

Bishop John then confirmed the Acts of Synod