

Minutes of the Edinburgh Diocesan Synod held on 26 October 2017 at St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow

Eucharist was celebrated by the Bishop

The business meeting opened with a moment of silence for those members who had died since the last Synod:

Fiona Smith

The Reverend David Smout

APOLOGIES AND WELCOMES

The Rev Canon Ruth Innes, Synod clerk welcomed those members who were new to Synod

- The Rev Andrew Cooper, Priest in Charge, St John's Jedburgh
- Johnnie Burgoyne, Congregation Member, Livingston
- Ivor Robertson, Congregation Member, Livingston
- The Rev Diana Hall, Rector, St Anne's Dunbar
- Ian Lawson, Convenor, Finance & Management Committee
- David McLellan, Lay Representative, Old St Paul's, Edinburgh
- The Rev Nicki McNelly, Rector, St Cuthbert's Colinton
- The Rev Jacqui Du Rocher, Curate, St Mary's Dalkeith & St Leonard's Lasswade

There were 73 attendees (36 Clergy - 41%; 37 Lay - 60%) with apologies from 17 Clergy and 14 Lay Members

WEST FORTH AREA COUNCIL (Synod Hosts)

Duncan Sinnet, a member of the congregation at St Columba's Bathgate, related life in the churches of the West Forth Area Council, which was hosting the Diocesan Synod

The council consisted of seven churches. Recent highlights included a visit from Bishop John to present their Treasurer, David Graham-Service, with the St Cuthbert's Award, at Bathgate. At St Columba's, fundraising had been undertaken which not only had a financial aim, but it also brought people together. In 2017, the sister church of St Peter's in Linlithgow started a development to improve its facilities. A new vision was being achieved by the time and efforts of many dedicated people, and there had been huge support from the local community and from elsewhere in the Area Council. May 2018 would see the 90th anniversary of the first service in the church. There had been the institution of The Rev Sarah Shaw as the new Rector of Christ Church Falkirk. The work of the Mission to Seafarers Scotland in Grangemouth has been adopted into the Area Council through The Rev Tim Tunley. It had been a very busy cruise ship season, and facilities had been set up by the Mission for crew members to connect with their families back home. Tim was now out in Bangladesh helping with relief for the Myanmar refugees, and Duncan Sinnet asked for prayers for his valuable work out there.

BISHOP'S ADDRESS

Bishop John reflected that we lived in a world that even Luther found bewildering. Fear, anger and disorientation can lead to deeper troubles. There were many displaced people in the world, and there was a background of uncertainty. He questioned what Christian gospel and our church had to say and offer in the face of this. It could offer a sense of perspective through its history, and a sense of God. We were held by something solid and a movable. We must learn what we have in common and stand together for the values of God. This was difficult when many sought to divide. Being in St Michaels Church, and being hosted by the Church of Scotland, demonstrated the unity in Christ. This had been more than just allowing the use of the building as they had showed us their generous hospitality.

The full text of the address can be found on the diocesan website

The Bishop handed the chair to the Dean

ADMINISTRATION

SYNOD MINUTES

Synod confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2017 at St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

DIOCESAN ACCOUNTS FOR 2016

Nigel Cook reported that the audited accounts had been signed off in March. There have been a budget deficit of £5k, which had allowed for various transitions, such as the introduction of the new Provincial Ministry Support Grant. Income had been lower than 2015, as that had included the sale proceeds of St Andrews Prestonpans, which had inflated those figures. Quota had provided 62% of the total diocesan income. Investment income had now reached almost £100k. Expenditure had reduced, partly due to the timing of the appointment of the Bishop's Enabler of Mission, but a range of other savings had also been made. £15k was unspent in designated funds, where income for the St Hilda's Fund and St Andrews Fund grants had not been taken up.

THE REV ROSIE ADDIS, [EDINBURGH, ST JOHN'S] noted that there was a potential pension deficit and asked how might that be covered?

NIGEL COOK responded that the pension fund had been subjected to the same recent issues as many other funds. A revaluation was done periodically to ensure that investments were likely to cover current obligations. Capital funds from the Province had been added to the fund in 2014, which had resulted in a reduced contribution rate. The December 2017 revaluation was likely to show an easing, but any required realignment of funds would not be needed until 2018 or 2019. At present the position was unknown.

The motion that Synod noted the Diocesan Accounts for 2016 was proposed by Nigel Cook and seconded by Godfrey Robson. This was carried unanimously

DIOCESAN FINANCIAL POSITION 2017

Nigel Cook reported that a £22k deficit had been planned for 2017. It was the second transitional year of the Provincial Ministry Support Grant. Provincial quota was up by 3% and diocesan quota had increased by the same amount. At the end of September, the accounts indicated that we were £6k ahead of budget. However, the timing of the receipt of grants and certain expenditure would most likely alter that outcome.

Nigel Cook also reported that the issue with the Employment Allowance through payroll had finally been resolved. HRMC had now accepted that Charges were separate financial entities, and that claims for the Allowance were entirely valid. It was noted that Charges which had not claimed so far would be able to backdate claims.

MISSION AND MINISTRY

MISSION & MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Bishop John announced that The Very Rev John Conway had stepped down from being Convenor of the Diocesan Mission & Ministry Committee, to take up his new post as Provost of St Mary's Cathedral. He was delighted to hand over to The Rev Ruth Green, who had taken over as the new Convenor.

The Rev Ruth Green highlighted several recent changes. She thanked Elizabeth White for all her hard work, as she was stepping down from the post of Adventures In Faith Coordinator. The Rev Dr Kenneth Webb had retired from his role in Continuing Ministerial Development, and The Rev Canon Ian Paton had taken over, but in a non-stipendiary capacity. The Rev Canon John McLuckie had also stepped down from being Convenor of the International Committee.

MUSTARD SEED, EDINBURGH

The Rev Rich Cornfield was then invited to speak about the new congregation which had been established under the name of the Mustard Seed, Edinburgh. He related the vision of St Pauls & St George's Church to start and encourage new congregations.

There was already the Soul Food initiative, which was working with the homeless community, and consideration had been given to starting a new community with a physical home. However there had been practical obstacles which prevented that going forward. A decision had been taken to develop a new congregation, sharing the building at St Margaret's Easter Road, and working alongside its congregation. It was a very densely populated area and had a mixed community. Members of the congregation at St Pauls & St George's had joined the new congregation, to work with, and be a part of, that community. The key principles that the new congregation held, were 'hospitality, kindness and transformation'.

Bishop John commended the new congregation in prayer, reminding Synod that prayer was also needed for St Paul's & St George's as they helped the establishment and transition of this very valuable new congregation.

GROWING TOGETHER

The Rev Annie Naish, Bishop's Enabler of Mission, then spoke about the Growing Together visioning, which had been the subject of four roadshows around the diocese. She had been immensely heartened by the sense of joy that was felt at each of the roadshows, but also by the fact that 80% of all the diocesan Charges had been represented. Part of the joy was simply coming together to talk, eat and share experiences and stories. The notes taken from all the workshops at each roadshow had now been distilled into a set of priorities. These were:

- Developing Disciples
- Enabling Ministry
- Serving Our Communities
- Sharing Faith
- Engaging All Generations

She then handed over to Claire Benton-Evans, Diocesan Youth & Children Officer, to talk about Engaging All Generations.

Claire reflected that, a year ago, St Mary's Cathedral have been full, for the dedication of the new Diocesan Play Church by Bishop John. As Play Church had been taken around the diocese, each host Charge had now given feedback about how it was used and what its impact had. There had been some scepticism in congregations, but this had quickly disappeared. One perception was that adults and children alike, felt more at ease in each other's company, and the children had become more engaged and interested in the communion service. It was now booked out until Christmas 2018, which indicated its great success.

She then invited Olivia Smith, an Under-18 representative on the Provincial Youth Committee, to talk about her experiences and observations at the Glenalmond Youth Camp.

Olivia had observed that many teenagers were passionate about their religion but did not necessarily attend a church. At the Glenalmond Youth Camp leaders did not patronise the delegates, allowed them to freely discuss Christianity, and take part in worship in their own way. That bred a tremendous sense of trust. The community of Glenalmond continued outside the events each year, with strong friendships being built. The youth members in congregation needed to be proactively integrated into the adult congregations so that those two designations then ultimately became unimportant.

Members applauded her observations

The Rev Annie Naish concluded that the challenge was then how to take those priorities forward. This would be done by:

- two focus groups to discern the direction of the priorities, and how they would appear and work in each congregation
- developing resources to enable that to happen
- holding a whole-diocese celebration, which would take place on 28th of April 2018 in St Mary's Cathedral.

The journey had begun and needed to continue.

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

DIOCESAN BUDGET FOR 2018

Nigel Cook reported that 2018 would see the third year of the transition of the Provincial Ministry Support Grant. After the first year of the work of the Bishops Enabler of Mission, costs associated with that work had been better identified. Following the Rev Dr Kenneth Webb's retirement from the Continuing Ministerial Development post, a stipend would not now be required. Provision had therefore been made to provide administrative support in the office for The Rev Canon Ian Paton's work, in his non-stipendiary capacity. There was also provision for an enhanced Communications Coordinator role. Support for the stipend at Dunbar was included, with an aim towards phased self-sufficiency. Income was increasing due to the Provincial Ministry Support Grant transition, as well as in other areas, such as Adventures In Faith course fees and diocesan office earnings, through the printing service for Charges.

THE REV PETER HARRIS [Rector, Dalkeith & Lasswade] commented that the communications coordinator had been much valued and he hoped that it would receive continued financial support.

NIGEL COOK commented that the current postholder worked under a contractor arrangement. That contract ended in 2018 and the Information & Communications Committee needed to consider the ongoing provision. Funds had been put in place but the detailed use of them had not been finally decided.

CANON HELEN HOOD [General Synod Representative] queried why there was an increase in income from the Clergy Conference?

NIGEL COOK responded that, in previous years, the level of diocesan subsidy to the conference fees paid by charges had covered gradually increasing costs. That level of subsidy now needed adjustment, and would result in an increased amount paid by each charge, for the attendance of their members of clergy.

NIGEL COOK then responded to a question regarding support for the Ecumenical Partnership at Livingston. He reported that provision in the budget had been taken out as the initial agreement for £5k per annum towards Ministry costs had only been for three years, and discussions with the Sponsors Council concluded that the continuing contribution was not now needed.

THE REV MARTIN ROBSON reflected that the 3% increase in diocesan quota and the allied 3% increase in provincial quota was a challenging increase given the low wage settlements seen by members of many congregations. Had this been considered in setting the percentage?

NIGEL COOK reported that he was unable to comment on the process for provincial quota budgeting, as this was outside the direct control of the diocese.

The motion that Synod approved the Diocesan Budget for 2018 was proposed by Nigel Cook and seconded by David McClelland. The motion was passed by a majority, with three abstentions.

The Bishop thanked Nigel Cook for the clarity of his presentation and for his hard work in safely steering the financial direction of the diocese.

A.O.B.

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL

The Very Rev John Conway thanked the many people who had sent him messages of support following his installation as the new Provost. In that role he had been tasked with deepening the bonds between the Cathedral and its diocese, and he asked for prayers as he took on that task. One intention was to pray, month by month, for every Charge in the diocese, in the regular Cathedral services. He asked members to go back to their congregations and to let him know what particular situations and challenges needed prayer. He wanted to encourage diocesan clergy to preach at the Cathedral, and for congregations to bring along symbols to indicate the life and witness in the individual churches.

THE BISHOP CONFIRMED THE ACTS OF SYNOD