

Minutes of the Edinburgh Diocesan Synod held on 24 October 2019 at St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh

Synod commenced with Eucharist at 5.30pm

*There were 86 attendees (37 Clergy - 50%; 49 Lay - 77%)
with apologies from 9 Clergy and 4 Lay*

The Revd. Canon Ruth Innes, Synod Clerk, introduced the following new members:

- Anne Poole QC, Diocesan Chancellor
- Pippa Snell, Diocesan Registrar
- Revd Chris Jones, Rector of the Berwickshire Charges
- Revd Elizabeth O'Ryan, Rector of Haddington

Bishop John then led a moment of silence for those who had died since Synod last met:

- Revd Ian Davidson
- Revd Rodney Grant
- Revd Carol Naismith
- Ian Miller
- Brother Kentigern
- Jean Varnier
- Bishop Joseph Devine

Bishop John asked Synod to approve the award of Honorary Canon to the following:

- Rev John McLuckie (Convener of the SEC's Inter-Church Relations Committee)
- Alistair Dinnie (SEC representative on the Anglican Consultative Council)

Synod **APPROVED** the awards

BISHOP'S ADDRESS

Bishop John spoke about the Growing Together process where five themes were identified which described the priorities of our calling. He challenged Vestries and Rectors/Priests-in-Charge to describe the past year under those headings. What seeds had been sown, what harvests had been gathered over the last year, and what was planned, under the same headings, in 2020? Although the Synod agenda did not fit neatly under those five headings, there were plenty of elements of nuts and bolts stuff that made continuing mission possible.

The Lambeth Conference would gather together all Anglican bishops, and there was a hope to hold one or two events to draw the whole diocese into a deeper understanding of the history and life of the Anglican Communion and of the major issues the conference would be discussing, as well as hosting a number of bishops from across the world as guests, to the diocese.

Brexit had posed hard questions about the values that sustained our nation, and the Climate Crisis asked us what we were doing to be God's stewards both of the world and the creatures that live upon it.

The full Address was made available on the Diocesan website

Bishop John then handed the chair to Godfrey Robson, Diocesan Secretary

ADMINISTRATION

SYNOD MINUTES

Diocesan Synod **CONFIRMED** the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2019

A7 CHARGES

Bishop John reported the new arrangements in the charges of Galashiels, Hawick and Selkirk and that the change to link those three charges together required the approval of Synod.

Diocesan Synod unanimously gave its APPROVAL

EDINBURGH ST DAVIDS & EDINBURGH ST SALVADOR'S

Bishop John reported that a new linking had been set up with the Rev Andrew Bain also becoming rector of St David's Church.

Diocesan Synod unanimously gave its APPROVAL to the new linking

EDINBURGH ST THOMAS'S

Bishop John reflected that there had been much discussion at previous Synods, but the formal closure of the Episcopal charity, left in place following the exit of St Thomas's from the Scottish Episcopal Church, now needed to be enacted.

Diocesan Synod unanimously gave its APPROVAL to the closure of the Episcopal charity of St Thomas's Costorphine, Edinburgh.

DIOCESAN ACCOUNTS FOR 2018

Godfrey Robson invited Ian Lawson, Diocesan Treasurer, to present the accounts.

Ian Lawson reported that the full set of accounts had been presented at the Synod meeting in March 2019. These had now been audited, signed and filed. There was a General Fund deficit of £18.7k, which was the fund that resourced the day-to-day operations. The budgeted deficit was £10.4k, half of which related to the reduced funds from St Thomas's Costorphine. The 2018 quota receivable from St Thomas's had been £19.2k but, over 2017 and 2018, £12.2k had been written off.

The Motion that Synod noted the Diocesan Accounts for 2018 was CARRIED unanimously

DIOCESAN FINANCIAL POSITION 2019

Ian Lawson reported that there was a budgeted deficit of £47.5k, but this included a figure of £35k in the St Hilda's Fund. The budgeted General Fund deficit was £12.5k. A 5% increase in quota was to compensate for the loss of the St Thomas's income. The current projected general fund deficit was £2k, partly due to savings connected with the CMD work.

A case had been made to the Province that the loss of the St Thomas's quota income should not be included in the Provincial Quota calculations, which were always done on the basis of projected future income. After protracted negotiations, a rebate of £12k had been received from the Province.

Godfrey Robson thanked Ian Lawson for his hard work during the year to steer the diocesan finances.

Godfrey Robson handed the Chair back to the Bishop John

MISSION AND MINISTRY

Safeguarding

The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage, Convenor of the Diocesan Mission & Ministry Committee, reflected that the committee's work covered a wide area of activities and was, in many ways, the heartbeat of the diocese. Much of the work was directed to enable congregations to grow, but one important area was to keep people within those congregations safe. This was a critical time for the diocese to develop its own practices in this area. She then handed over to Simon Filsell, Diocesan Protection Officer.

Simon Filsell reported that, at the last Diocesan Synod, there had been a clear request made for action to be taken at diocesan level to increase support for Safeguarding, and discussions had therefore taken place to look at doing that. A short video had been produced, featuring Bishop John, Simon Filsell, Claire Benton-Evans (Youth & Children Officer) and Maureen O'Neill (Director of Faith in Older People), and this was then presented to Synod.

It was not intended as a publicly-available resource, just an internal one, but would be uploaded to the diocesan website, and publicised internally. This was intended to be the starting point for all new clergy and PVG Coordinators in the diocese, backed up by the resources within the Safeguarding page on the diocesan and provincial websites. There was also direct personal help available from Simon Filsell and from Claire Benton-Evans. He reminded Synod that it was too important a subject to be complacent about, and that he dealt with several cases within the diocese each year, and that there should be no sense of being immune.

The Provincial Safeguarding Audit was presented to the General Synod back in June, and Canon Marion Chatterley, who was the Edinburgh Diocese's member of the Provincial Protection Committee, was now also on the Safeguarding Audit Implementation Group. Both of those committees were due to look at Safeguarding from the widest possible perspective - to include all the potential abuses of power within the church, not just the abuse of identifiably vulnerable people. The work would include addressing the urgent need for training, proposals for systems to care for victims of any kind of abuse and the pastoral care of families of abusers.

Simon then announced the first of a series of training events, being run by Edinburgh Diocese, to start to address the gaps identified which, it was hoped, would become a regular programme each year.

Claire Benton-Evans then reminded Synod that, as Youth & Children Officer, she aimed to help charges embed good Safeguarding practices when working with children and young people, and was always available to talk through what was needed to achieve a safe environments for those activities.

QUESTIONS:

Revd Simon Cake, Rector of the A7 Charges

“I welcome the course coming in January, but in the rest of the UK there is a requirement to maintain child protection standards through mandatory training. Whilst Scotland does not have that, is there any reason why, as Synod, we cannot set our own standards?”

Bishop John responded to say that he thought that was a very good suggestion.

Prebendary Bob King, Rector of Kelso

“If an accusation was made directly against a member of the clergy, what action should be taken?”

Simon Filsell responded to say that contact should be made immediately with himself and/or Donald Urquhart, the Provincial Protection Officer, and without that clergy member engaging in immediate dialogue about the accusation, so as to avoid escalating the matter further. A proper investigation into the allegation could then be conducted at diocesan/provincial level. The Annual PVG Checklist, issued by the Diocesan Office, asked whether the contact details of those officers was clearly displayed in each church, to ensure that contact could be easily made in such circumstances. Regularity of training would embed the awareness of what to do in those circumstances.

Revd Peter Harris, Rector of Dalkeith & Lasswade

“For a number of years it had felt as though we were being reactive to Safeguarding, and I welcome the provision of training which should always be available and proactive.”

Bishop John added that cases in the diocese did arise and, although they were not made public, as that would be inappropriate, we should not become complacent just because we do not hear about them. However, he emphasised that clergy and vestries were not alone in facing them. Indeed, the province and the diocese needed to be proactive, but each congregation also needed to be proactive. That is why, if the subject is on the agenda at Vestry meetings, responsibility can be taken for attending training. He also reflected on the need to keep ourselves and our clergy safe, and that needed to be taken seriously. Any training needed to also take that into account.

MISSION & MINISTRY CURRENT WORK

The Revd Dr Sophia Marriage reported on the work undertaken since the March Synod. The work following the appointment of the Revd Annie Naish as Bishop's Enabler of Mission 3 years ago, had inspired many across the diocese. At the 2019 March Synod feedback was invited on the proposals for the new Discipleship Team. There had been some concern raised at the financial implications, but it was recognised that there was a need to invest in mission and discipleship support for lay and clergy in the diocese.

There had been discussion to find out what was going on in congregational communities around diocese, which revealed a huge amount of activity, which had been incredibly inspiring to hear. There was a need to build on each other's resources, and the new mission posts which were proposed would nurture that. It was an exciting time for the diocese, as it invested in people and their discipleship journeys.

DIOCESAN BUDGET FOR 2020

Ian Lawson reported that there had been additional investment in Mission & Ministry resources, with a £20k increase in funding, to cover the new mission and discipleship posts and £12k for the costs of the Lambeth conference. It was proposed, however, to restrict the quota increase to 3%, despite those increases in costs. The Standing Committee had been looking at how the General Fund was to be rebalanced in future years. Based on current trends and practices, the General Fund would fall into deficit in 2022. A 10% quota increase in 2020 would arrest the decline, but a 15% increase in 2020 is what would be needed to fully rebalance the Fund. If the latter approach was adopted, congregations would be paying around 12.7% of their assessable income, as opposed to the current level of 10.8%. By way of comparison, congregations in other Scottish Episcopal dioceses paid between 14% and 25% of their assessable income in quota. Other options could be to sell Unit Trust Pool shares but, it was acknowledged, that practice would then reduce future investment

income. There could be consideration of charging for mission services to those congregations that directly benefited, although a mission benefit from those services might only see financial benefits in the longer term. There could be levies on specific types of income, such as legacies, which were currently excluded.

Overall, Synod was asked to approve the 2020 budget, based on a 3% quota increase.

QUESTIONS:

Revd Diana Hall, Rector of Dunbar.

“What was the relationship between the Profit & Loss situation and the assets in the balance sheet, which was showing as being around £4 million. Could some of that be realised?”

Godfrey Robson responded that, although the balance sheet for 2018 showed £4 million in assets, some of which was property, which could not be sold. He reminded Synod that any capital sales permanently reduced future income, which could exacerbate the problem.

Helen Tyrrell, Lay Representative, Old St Paul's, Edinburgh

“The Adventures in Faith initiative, which was suspended a few years ago, signposted supported training around the diocese. Small charges were made for Adventures in Faith led events. Might that system of charging be considered again?”

Godfrey Robson responded that Adventures in Faith had taken a backseat during the new mission team plans. Ian Lawson had, however, mentioned the principle of charging for such activities.

Revd Steve Butler, Rector of St James's Leith.

“We are being asked to fund two new posts, but it is unclear what is contained in the job descriptions for those posts?”

Godfrey Robson responded that there had been two reports submitted to two successive Synods, which had led to a significant amount of discussion and debate.

Revd Martin Robson, Rector of St Michael & All Saints, Edinburgh

“It is difficult to reconcile the aspirations proposed with the funds available within congregations. St Michael's & All Saints had achieved the aspiration of providing a warm and watertight building and breaking even financially, rather than looking to increase the Ministry team. Its financial position remained challenging and a financial team was being formed to address the future of its finances. A similar approach might be taken in the diocese.”

Godfrey Robson responded that the Finance & Management Committee was still looking at any savings it could make elsewhere in the diocese. It was

acknowledged that it was a difficult financial position. Indeed, Diocesan Office costs had been reviewed around 4 years ago, and were reduced by 20% (c.£20k), demonstrating that work has been done to ensure that central diocesan costs were kept to a minimum.

The Revd Dr Sophia Marriage reminded Synod of the continued discussions in the previous years at Synod meetings, about the new mission and discipleship posts. The Growing Together Roadshows around the diocese highlighted that charges had felt unsupported, and the current proposals were a response to that.

Ian Lawson reported that the Lambeth Conference costs were weighted towards Edinburgh Diocese, due to its comparative financial position. The Allchurches Trust had recently reviewed its grants to all dioceses, and it was reducing the grant level for Edinburgh Diocese, again, due to its comparative financial resources. Discussion was ongoing about how to help congregations with fewer resources, and this would be an important discussion at the March 2020 Synod.

The Motion that Synod approved the Diocesan Budget for 2020 was proposed by Ian Lawson and seconded by Barnaby Miln.

The Motion was CARRIED by a majority with 5 against and 8 abstentions.

Any Other Business

The Revd David Dixon, Priest-in-Charge of St Barnabas Moredun, wished to give notification of his intention to propose a Motion for Diocesan Synod on 14 March 2020 to the effect that:

“This Synod agrees to keep St Barnabas Church Moredun open for at least the next 10 years”

This matter was noted.

The Bishop confirmed the Acts of Synod