

Minutes of the Edinburgh Diocesan Synod held on 14 March 2020 at St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh

Synod commenced with Eucharist at 8.30am

*There were 73 attendees (35 Clergy - 47%; 38 Lay - 66%)
with apologies from 21 Clergy and 14 Lay*

SYNOD BUSINESS

At the start of the meeting it was asked whether the meeting should proceed because attendance had been affected by concerns about transmission of Coronavirus. After discussion from the floor, Synod was offered the choice of continuing with a full meeting or deferring business to a later date. The overwhelming majority indicated a wish to continue with a full meeting.

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

- Carol Byers, Member of congregation at St John's Selkirk
- Adrian Goldring, Alternate Lay Representative for North Berwick.
- Noreen Grieve, Lay Representative for Dalkeith
- Tim Hatton, Church Army Evangelist for the A7 Charges
- The Rev Dr Stephen Holmes, Rector of Edinburgh Holy Cross
- Liz Philip, Lay Representative for Edinburgh St Peters Lutton place.
- Donald Walker, Director of Communications, Scottish Episcopal Church

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

- Revd Canon Brian Hardy
- Revd Doreen Maybury
- Revd Margaret Raven
- Canon Trevor Williams

BISHOP'S ADDRESS

Bishop John began by asking Synod if it wished to send congratulations to the Rt Revd Kevin Pearson, Bishop of Argyll & The Isles, on his appointment as Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway. Synod **CONFIRMED** its wish to do so.

The coronavirus outbreak brought a chance to reflect, but presented a challenge to trust God and to care for others as well as ourselves, making sure those who were alone were not forgotten. Those same principles undergirded our safeguarding practices.

He reminded Synod that the principles of Safeguarding meant that we had to do all we could to keep others safe. There had been an excellent turnout at the diocesan-led Safeguarding training in January and the atmosphere had encouraged him to think that we no longer thought of Safeguarding as a tiresome chore but as an essential and joyful part of being disciples of Jesus Christ. He then spelled out his expectations – that all clergy and lay readers, all in ministerial leadership as well as safeguarding coordinators in each charge, should attend training every two to three years. It was emphasised that it was the responsibility of Vestries to provide safeguarding training for those working with vulnerable groups, and to offer appropriate supervision and pastoral care. All congregations should be aware that safeguarding, or the lack of it, was a serious risk, and there should be an awareness of 'safe recruitment'. No charge could merely claim to be a safe place, and each one must show that it had done everything to ensure that it was so.

Commenting on the Synod agenda, Bishop John acknowledged that a number of smaller congregations felt some financial insecurity but assured Synod that closure was never a first option. He noted that at the previous Synod, the Revd David Dixon, Priest-in-Charge of St Barnabas, Edinburgh had indicated an intention to propose a motion 'that this Synod agrees to keep St Barnabas Church, Moredun open for at least the next 10 years.' Whilst the Standing Committee was unwilling to include the motion on the agenda they did accept the spirit in which it was proposed, namely, that we need to look forward and plan for a future in which all our charges, whatever their size, whatever their context, may flourish. The Bishop believed that these concerns were clearly reflected in the agenda. 'A Diocese,' said the bishop, 'is not a loose collection of independent charges it is a family that supports all its members'.

The full text of the Bishop's address would be available online.

Bishop John then invited the beneficiaries of the Lent Appeal 2020 to explain a little of their work.

PROJECT EMBABAZI

Matthew Hill made a presentation to Synod, which emphasised that funds flowed through community associations in Uganda, and that no funds were spent in the UK. The work sponsored education, entertainment buildings, sponsored animals and providing grants for micro-enterprises.

OPEN DOOR

Simon Warr was unable to attend, but a video was shown, giving an insight into the social clubs and support services provided for older people within the Morningside area of Edinburgh, to reduce isolation and loneliness.

ADMINISTRATION

SYNOD MINUTES

Synod **CONFIRMED** the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2019. Subject to the following additions:

- The Rev Nick Bowry, Rector of Penicuik and West Linton, to be added to those introduced at their first Synod.
- The addition of a minute, at the end, stating that the Rev David Dixon, Priest In Charge of St Barnabas, Edinburgh, notified Synod of his intention to propose a Motion that *“this Synod agrees to keep St Barnabas Church Moredun open for at least the next 10 years”*

BERWICKSHIRE CHARGES

Synod formally **APPROVED** the linking of the charges of Coldstream, Duns and Eyemouth.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Diocesan Standing Committee

Godfrey Robson, Diocesan Secretary, presented the report, noting that the meetings provided a useful corrective guidance to the business of the diocese. He thanked the members of the Standing Committee for their time and diligence during the year.

The Motion that Synod approved the report of the Standing Committee was proposed by Godfrey Robson and seconded by Victoria Elliott. This was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Diocesan Finance & Management Committee

Godfrey Robson presented the report. He was grateful to the members, not just for attending, but for the rigorous discussions. A subgroup had been formed to closer monitor and regularly analyse the accounts during the year. The committee was looking at software to help charge treasurers and to make their job easier. The Diocesan Buildings Committee had noted the poor state of maintenance of some rectories, and was looking at ways to help charges with their upkeep.

The Rev David Dixon, Priest in Charge of Edinburgh St Barnabas

The accounts were showing a small surplus of £7k against a budgeted deficit of £74k. Over the previous 2 years, income was always seeming to be higher than budgeted and expenditure lower. Could this be explained?

The Rev Dr Stephen Holmes, Rector of Edinburgh, Holy Cross

The matter of occupancy agreements for rectories had been raised by the Diocesan Buildings Committee. He had recently moved into the Rectory at Holy Cross in Edinburgh, which was in good shape. Having moved from the Church of England, where the support and guidance was comprehensive, he noted that in the Scottish Episcopal Church it was minimal. Any occupancy agreement should cover the responsibilities of both rectors and vestries.

Prebendary Bob King, Rector of Kelso

He supported Stephen Holmes's comments and felt that this was a very important matter.

Alex Stewart, Convenor of the Diocesan Buildings Committee, responded.

The responsibility for rectories lay with both rectors and vestries. There was currently a lack of clarity and the committee was urging the province to compile a Rectory Occupancy Agreement, but which steered away from the perception that it was a lease.

The Motion that Synod approved the report of the Finance & Management Committee and its pendant committees was proposed by Godfrey Robson and seconded by the Revd Philip Blackledge. This was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CATHEDRAL ACCOUNTS

The Very Revd. John Conway, Provost of St Mary's Cathedral, presented the 2019 Cathedral Accounts. He was pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the finances of the diocese's cathedral. It was facing the same challenges as many other charges. There had been an increase of 10% in congregational giving after a sustained stewardship campaign, but the deficits of recent years could not be met by congregational giving alone. Funds had been raised in recent years for major organ work, but the Cathedral could now concentrate on other areas of need. The £127k deficit the previous year had been partly due to repairs at some of its residential properties. In addition, it had moved to the Living Wage level for its lay staff. The year had also seen the closure of the St Mary's Cathedral stone workshop. There was now a more robust budget process, and contactless donation facilities were being installed, alongside developing concert venue facilities. It was looking at innovative ways of supporting the choir and music expenditure, particularly to help students and scholars. There was a challenging balance to be struck between managing finances and proclaiming the kingdom.

ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Synod noted the report. Simon Filsell reflected on a very positive diocesan-led training session Edinburgh in January 2020 which focused on how to be aware of signs of abuse, how to deal with incidents and reports, and the contact points for passing those cases to the specialists in the Province. There would be a further training session, led by the Province, in May, to highlight the policy changes within the SEC and then a repeat of the diocesan-led session, but in the Borders, sometime later in the year. He then emphasised the importance of having Safeguarding as a standing item on all vestry agendas, to keep the subject live in each congregation.

ELECTIONS

The following were elected to current vacancies:

General Synod - Clergy

- The Very Revd John Conway
- The Revd Dr Stephen Holmes
- The Revd Dr Sophia Marriage (2nd term)
- The Revd Nicki McNelly
- The Revd Dr Jenny Wright (2nd term)

General Synod – Lay

- Mrs Anne Martin

Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections

- The Very Revd Frances Burberry
- Godfrey Robson (re-elected)

Diocesan Mission & Ministry Committee

- Mrs Helen Godfrey
- The Revd Libby Talbot

Bishop John then handed the chair to the Dean

MISSION AND MINISTRY

Diocesan Mission & Ministry Committee Annual Report

The Revd. Dr Sophia Marriage, Convener of the Mission & Ministry Committee, presented the report. There had been several diocesan-wide events. There had been 10 Days of Prayer in May and June, which brought many innovative ways of praying. The Big Sing in the Cathedral saw over 100 people singing Evensong at the end of the day. There had been a number of grants from the St Hilda's Fund, which had enabled St Anne's Dunbar to open a debt advice service alongside the Salvation Army and the Methodists. She then invited Helen Mitchell to speak about the work enabled by Eco-Congregation Scotland at St Ninian's Comely Bank. The grant funds had been used to plant an orchard in the green space outside the church as a place to help restore physical and mental well-being.

There was then a panel discussion to highlight some of the challenges being faced by a range of charges:

The Rev Nicky McNelly, Rector of Edinburgh St Cuthbert's

She reflected that St Cuthbert's had an elderly congregation, and that many of them found it difficult to find ways of talking to the younger generation.

The Rev Canon David Richards, Rector of Edinburgh St Paul's and St George's

In an increasingly secular society, there was a need to find ways to show our faith to all, but in a respectful way.

The Rev David Dixon, Priest-in-Charge of Edinburgh St Barnabas'

It was increasingly difficult to get members of the congregation to fill the statutory vestry roles and to lead the congregation.

MISSION POST

The Revd. Dr Sophia Marriage reminded Synod that, 4 years ago, it had taken the brave step of approving the appointment of the Bishop's Enabler of Mission. The objective of the post was to help develop, implement and communicate the mission strategy of the Diocese. Annie Naish took up the three-year post in September 2016.

In 2018 Diana Hall was asked by the bishop to start a review of the post, to establish the next steps. As a result of all the reviews undertaken Synod was presented with a plan of action, which included limiting the job, which had grown beyond what was originally envisaged, to ensure that contractual issues were properly documented and in line with appropriate legislation and good practice.

The suggestion to Synod in March 2019 was to develop the role of Bishop's Enabler of Mission into a Director for Mission and, alongside, appoint a half-time role to lead on the ongoing training and development of individuals around the diocese – both clergy and lay. Although it was an expensive option, Synod agreed.

However, it subsequently became clear that Annie's advice was that the post as then envisaged was not one she felt would work. At the same time, General Synod in June received a worrying report of the state of clergy well-being, a trend that was becoming clear to the Bishop and the Dean as well in their work around the diocese.

At the October Synod, Synod was clearly concerned by any potential increase in financial commitments at a time when churches were struggling. At the November clergy conference, the need to urgently address the issue of clergy support was voiced loud and clear.

It became clear to the Mission & Ministry Committee, the Dean and the Bishop, that a new direction was needed. Revised proposals were taken to Standing Committee and then, in due course, to Personnel Committee. What emerged was a very different job for the diocese, a role that was more generic, which brought lay and clergy learning together intentionally, to grow disciples for mission. The new post sought to encourage and support the spiritual growth, development and well-being of diocesan clergy, and foster a sense of diocesan collegiality.

The focus of the role would move from a central diocesan focus to supporting the agents of mission – rectors and congregations – in their localities. It would bring people together for training and support rather than long-term work on specific issues and places. The post would be open to both lay and ordained, and would be an office holder within the diocesan office structure.

Robin Wilson, Lay Representative of Innerleithen St Andrew's

He wished to note the huge appreciation of Annie Naish's work within the congregations of Innerleithen and Peebles as their Interim Pastor. He was appalled by the way she had been treated by the diocese.

The Rev Libby Talbot, Associate Rector of Edinburgh St Pauls and St George's

Having looked at the role description, it seemed to overlap with the Bishop's and Dean's work. Also, it seemed very similar to the previous role of Bishop's Enabler of Mission.

The Rev Capt Simon Cake, Lead Evangelist of the A7 Charges

Would Area Councils have the opportunity to look at the job description?

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

It was heartening to see that 35% of the role was devoted to developing discipleship. Lay involvement was key, and concern was expressed at the lay vacancies on the Mission & Ministry Committee. Vestries should be encouraged to put forward nominations.

The Rev Canon Dr Marion Chatterley, Vice Provost of St Mary's Cathedral

The job description was an example that we never learn. One area is developed at the expense of others.

The Rev Canon David Richards, Rector Edinburgh St Paul's and St George's

He was sad at the way things had turned out, and reflected that making someone redundant was never easy. The method of communicating that had not been good. There was a sense of crossover with the previous job, and he questioned whether a lay person could deal with the matter of clergy well-being. There was also a question about the ability to legally advertise for a 3-year limited contract post, under employment law.

The Rev Sarah Shaw, Rector of Falkirk Christ Church

She wished to commend Annie Naish for the great work she had done and hoped that there will be an opportunity to thank her formally. There were concerns with the similarity of the new post to the previous one of Bishop's Enabler of Mission.

Helen Vincent, Lay Representative of Edinburgh St Mark's Portobello

Lay involvement within the role objectives was very important. There was a question about a 3-year post them being made redundant. Why was this not a 2-year post which simply ended, meaning there would be no need for redundancy?

The Rev Peter Harris, Rector of Dalkeith St Mary's and Lasswade St Leonard's

He had seen Annie Naish's good work. Had it ever been considered to take the Dean's role out of its joint part-time Rector arrangement?

The Rev Philip Blackledge, Rector of Melrose Holy Trinity

He knew of Annie Naish's frustrations over 3 years, and was glad to know that she had been involved in discussions for the new post. He questioned whether there was an ability to fix several matters within one person's role?

The Rev David Dixon, Rector of Edinburgh St Barnabas

In a time when there was a struggle to recruit clergy, Annie Naish had taken on the additional role of Interim Pastor at Peebles and Innerleithen. He felt that we were losing a great person.

The Very Rev John Conway, Provost of St Mary's Cathedral

He reminded Synod of 2 key items which were considered before the initial appointment 3 years ago. It was strongly articulated that, first, when the funds were agreed for the post everyone should buy in to the principles of mission and work collaboratively. Second, the no one was a 'Messiah' figure and could only be a catalyst for that collaborative working. Discussions recently had become slightly fragmented. There was a need to be clear what it could be expected for one person to achieve. Collegiality was important and how the new job linked with other roles.

The Rev Canon Malcolm Round, Rector of Balerno St Mungo

He was amazed at what Annie Naish had done. He urged everyone to speak honestly, but emphasised that we must be gracious to one another and show respect. The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage was working on her own as a busy Rector as well. We were all in it together.

The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage responded.

There had been a huge amount of appreciation for Annie Naish and the diocese was now in a very different place through her amazing and inspiring work. The Personnel Committee had discussed both job descriptions in detail and the training and support for clergy well-being was incorporated within the new role. Clearly there was a new area of focus. The job description had then been through the Standing Committee and Personnel Committee. There was a desire to hold the new job within clear

boundaries. There had been an effort to fit the post within the synodical structure, and it would have more responsibility than the previous post towards the Mission & Ministry Committee and, ultimately, Diocesan Synod. It was indeed sad to lose a friend and colleague, and she urged everyone to pray for Annie Naish as she faced her changes and new challenges.

CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

Victoria Elliott, Lay Member of General Synod, reported that, following the outbreak of the Coronavirus and the response to it, a small ecumenical team had been formed to compile online resources for churches and members of congregations. These would cover liturgical and theological aspects. She was looking for help with that work and for help with disseminating and publicising those resources.

After the lunch break, Synod paid tribute to the work of the Rev Annie Naish as she finished her time as Bishop's Enabler of Mission. There was long applause and a standing ovation.

YOUTH & CHILDREN OFFICER'S REPORT

Claire Benton-Evans, Diocesan Youth & Children Officer, reported the involvement in the Church & Society Sleepover at St John's Princes Street, with attendance from within the diocese and the wider Province. There had been a group of young people who had painted the mural at the end of St John's Church, depicting the issues important to young people. Olivia Smith, who had addressed Synod in 2019, was now working for the HeartEdge charity at St Martin's-in-the-Field Church in London. Sam Harris had been working at the Scottish Parliament as Co-Convenor of the Cross-Party Group on Children & Young People and had chaired a meeting of over 100 people. Caitlin Conway had been Co-ordinator for Media & Outreach for the Scottish Youth Climate Strike. There were now several diocesan representatives on the Provincial Youth Committee. A sum of £4.1k had been raised at the 'Wee Sleepout' and a special award had been received from Social Bite. Play Church continued to be popular.

Claire reported that she was increasingly being asked to give direct help to charges, and to advise on resources and recruitment. She was due to hold a lunch for all the employed youth workers in the diocese, as a celebration of their work, and to provide a time to network and engage in cross-collaboration and share each other's

experiences and resources. She then presented a video by St Anne's Dunbar, which was an example of direct mission through youth work.

The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage proposed a vote of thanks to Claire for all she did to inspire us in the diocese. She also thanked the members of the Mission & Ministry Committee for their hard work and support.

The motion that synod approved the reports of the Mission & Ministry Committee and its pendant committees was proposed by The Revd. Dr. Sophia Marriage and seconded by Godfrey Robson. This motion was CARRIED BY A MAJORITY WITH ONE ABSTENTION.

The Dean proposed a vote of thanks to Sophia for steering the diocese through a very busy and challenging year.

The Dean handed the chair back to the Bishop

FUTURE FINANCES

Ian Lawson, the Diocesan Treasurer, presented a paper to Synod. He was looking for discussion, but also to follow up and canvass views from those not able to attend. He reminded Synod that the General Fund was gradually reducing and that had to be addressed. The matter had been raised at the October 2019 Diocesan Synod. A continued 3% increase in quota would not address the decline in the General Fund balance, based on current expenditure plans. Currently, charges paid 11% of their assessable income as quota. If diocesan quota increased by 7% in future years, the assessable income level would rise so that charges would pay 11.8% of that income.

Other options for addressing this issue included charging for diocesan services, a levy on legacies, reducing expenditure, selling investments, and seeking voluntary contributions. He then set out 5 questions for consideration and discussion:

1. *Should the reserves be rebuilt to, at least, the target level?*
2. *Is the standard quota assessable income percentage fair?*
3. *Should the diocese and province seek to reduce central costs?*
4. *Should investments be realised?*
5. *Should voluntary contributions be invited?*
6. *Any other options suggested?*

The Rev Canon Malcolm Round, Rector of Balerno

He wished to remind Synod that members should not vote for anything they were not prepared to do themselves, and should not look solely to others to resolve the issues.

The Rev Philip Blackledge, Rector of Melrose

He commended the very helpful paper. There were many things that could be done with quota. It might be helpful to standardise policy across the diocese, so that charges did not sit on large capital funds rather than encouraging congregational giving. We should look wider at what the diocese wants to be. We often expect those who work part time hours to deliver full-time work.

Ian Kerry, Lay Representative of West Linton St Mungo's

The Bishop's Enabler of Mission had helped the diocese with spiritual growth, but there should also now be help with stewardship to promote financial growth.

Wendy Pemble, Lay Representative of Falkirk Christ Church

There was concern at the legacy levy proposals. The roof work at Christ Church Falkirk had been mostly funded by a legacy and any levy on them might discourage those donations.

Alex Stewart, General Synod Lay Member

There was a challenge in getting charges to identify as being part of a wider diocese, and there was a sense of some being remote. All charities were encouraged by OSCR to develop a reserves policy and charges needed help with exploring that. Those with reserves above a certain level could be assessed for quota on that additional amount.

The Rev Markus Dünzkofer, Rector of Edinburgh St John's Princes Street

Synod could not have those discussions outside the discussions on mission as well.

The Rev Mike Parker, Edinburgh St Pauls and St Georges.

He commended Ian Lawson for the very detailed paper. The simplification of central structures needed to be looked at, both within the diocese and at provincial level.

The Rev Dr Stephen Holmes, Rector of Edinburgh Holy Cross

In the Church of England clergy stipends and housing were all provided and managed centrally. In Truro diocese quota had increased by 20% and the central diocesan operation was not viewed well. Centralisation opened up a dangerous avenue if charges refused to pay their quota and left the diocese and other congregations financially vulnerable.

The Rev Dr Canon Marion Chatterley, Vice Provost of St Mary's Cathedral

A quota on legacies was worthwhile as it was generally the richer charges which were more likely to see significant legacies.

Bishop John thanked Ian Lawson for the helpful clarity of the paper and for his work in steering the finances of the diocese.

DEAN'S REPORT

The Very Rev Frances Burberry reported on her year. She hoped her report would give a sense of the calls on her time and energy during the previous year, and a taste of what was involved in her working alongside Bishop John. This included institutions, the Chrism Mass with thoughts of the disastrous fire at Notre Dame in Paris, a pilgrimage to Ravenna, visitations to 13 charges, a visit from Espoo Diocese, the 25th anniversary of the first ordination of women, and a forward look to her sabbatical in 2020.

Bishop John thanked the Dean for her report which highlighted all the work which she did, but also thanked her for the huge amount of work which supported him and enabled his own work in the diocese.

The Bishop confirmed the Acts of Synod