

# Minutes of the Edinburgh Diocesan Synod held on 21 October 2021

The meeting used the Zoom online conferencing platform in order to conform with Government safety regulations during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

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**Synod commenced with Eucharist at 5.30pm – a live stream from St Mary’s Cathedral, Edinburgh**

*There were 73 attendees – 51% (35 Clergy - 46%; 38 Lay - 58%)  
with apologies from 12 Clergy and 5 Lay*

## **SYNOD BUSINESS**

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The Very Rev Frances Burberry welcomed the new members of Synod:

- Mervyn Anthony, Lay Representative at Holy Trinity Melrose
- The Revd Russell Duncan, Curate, Church of the Good Shepherd, Murrayfield, Edinburgh
- The Revd Iain Lothian, Rector, St James’ Leith, Edinburgh
- The Revd Claire Nicholson, Curate, Holy Trinity, Melrose
- Alison Tams, Lay Representative, St Ebba’s Eyemouth
- The Revd David Todd, Curate, St Mark’s Portobello, Edinburgh
- The Revd John Vincent, Priest in Charge, St Martin of Tours, Edinburgh
- Dr Michael Wood, General Synod Representative

Bishop John asked Synod for a moment of silence to remember those who had died since the last Synod meeting

- Isla Shanks, Lay Reader Emeritus, St Matthews Roslin

## BISHOP'S ADDRESS

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Bishop John reflected that the people in exile in Babylon had been asked to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land. We were perhaps living in a land which we did not recognise ourselves, but should trust that God would walk with us. Nevertheless, in a season of pilgrimage we were constantly reminded that we were a people on the move, but trusting that God walked with us. In the face of a pandemic, many of us were weary, fatigued and unable, as yet, to discern our destination. He repeated his thanks to clergy, vestries and all in the diocese for their resolve, patience and kindness.

With COP26 looming, and with deep questions about social, trade and climate justice, it was not a time to be faint-hearted. It was clearly not a 'business as usual' Synod and whilst the agenda, with its elections and accounts and budget had a reassuring familiarity, we were embarked on a journey in which we, as Christ's people, reached out our hands in support and solidarity. It should have been no surprise that our Standing Committee had given much thought to how to support our charges. He asked Synod to remember that in those matters we were all seeking to do our best and to be faithful, and finished with the words of St Paul - 'Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.'

*(The full text of the address was made available on the diocesan website)*

## ADMINISTRATION

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### SYNOD MINUTES

The minutes of Diocesan Synod held on Saturday, 13 March 2021 were **CONFIRMED**

### ELECTIONS

Godfrey Robson presented the candidates as follows:

- **Synod Clerk** - The Rev Nicki McNelly, proposed by The Revd Jane MacLaren and seconded by The Rev Dr Stephen Holmes, and The Rev Sarah Shaw proposed by The Rev Canon Marion Chatterley and seconded by The Rev Canon Andrew Bain. The votes were cast by the voting Presbyters and Deacons present in the meeting.

- **Chapter Canon** - The Rev Markus Dünzkofer, proposed by The Rev Grace Redpath and seconded by The Rev Nicki McNelly, and The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage proposed by The Rev Jane MacLaren seconded by The Rev Liz O’Ryan. The votes were cast by all voting members present in the meeting.

## FINANCE & MANAGEMENT

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### DIOCESAN ACCOUNTS FOR 2020

Ian Lawson, Diocesan Treasurer, reported that the accounts had been signed off with no significant changes following the audit. The accounts have been filed with OSCR. The general fund surplus of £34k in 2020 had been mostly due to reduced activities. When combined with the designated and restricted funds, the surplus was £44k. The performance of the Unit Trust Pool investments had been excellent, and the dividends had provided 15% of the diocese's income.

***The Motion that Synod noted the Diocesan Accounts for 2020 was proposed by Godfrey Robson and seconded by The Very Rev Frances Burberry. The motion was CARRIED by a majority with no abstentions***

### DIOCESAN FINANCIAL POSITION 2021

The position to 30th September saw the accounts running at a likely surplus of £49k. However, some expenditure - such as for the Clergy Conference - only appeared in the latter part of the year. Other expenditure was on target, but the Support Costs line was only showing 62% due to several office staff vacancies which were not filled for extended periods during the year. Overall, this was a saving of around £20k. The introduction of the additional office technology efficiencies was producing a sustainable reduction of £6k per annum.

### DIOCESAN BUDGET FOR 2022

Ian Lawson presented the Budget. Provincial Quota would be rising by 11% from the 2021 level, which had been reduced by 18% in response to Covid. Diocesan plans for 2022 included filling four part-time vacancies – these were not new posts but three had been left vacant for part of the current year. Some items were estimated as likely receivables.

The 2021 surplus, however, would carry over and allow the Diocesan Quota increase for 2022 to be kept to 2% while still allowing break-even. It was hoped that the Unit Trust Pool distribution performance would continue into 2022. The planned

Mission and Ministries expenditure levels were very close to those seen in 2021, with a small increase of £4k to £98k. Ian Lawson also highlighted the creation of the Diocesan Covid Relief Fund, where £36k had been assembled through a mix of existing diocesan funds and some generous voluntary contributions from a number of charges, to help those elsewhere in the diocese with more limited financial resources. This had enabled grants of £16k to be made to a number of charges earlier in the year, with consideration of further grants already underway.

The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage then presented the proposal provided for in the budget for the appointment for a revised post of Ministerial Development Officer. There had been a proposal, after the 2019 review of the Bishop's Enabler of Mission role, for the funding of 3 mission posts. However, following discussion at Synod, this was scaled back to 2 posts - a Mission & Ministry Coordinator and an Administrative Assistant. Shortly afterwards, the country went into lockdown leading to recognition of the added burden on those in authorised Ministry, in supporting their communities. An interim contracted post was therefore created, and The Rev Jane MacLaren started as a half-time Ministry Coordinator, developing and supporting clergy in their roles. Jane MacLaren had already completed one-to-one meetings with almost all the clergy, as well as starting the new Ministerial Review process. The Mission & Ministry Committee was therefore proposing a three-year salaried half-time post of Ministerial Development Officer, plus the reappointment of the half-time Administrative Assistant.

#### Questions & Comments:

Valerie Hale, Lay Representative, St Anne's Dunbar

*Given the urgency of the climate change agenda, there is surprise that there is no provision in the 2022 Budget for any costs of achieving the SEC's 2030 carbon-neutral target.*

The Rev Peter Harris, Rector of Dalkeith & Lasswade

*The previous question was echoed and centrally-cascaded guidance was needed as to how the target should be achieved.*

The Rev Nick Wills, Rector of St Peters Luton Place, Edinburgh

*Consideration should be given to the diocese investing in a parcel of land for tree planting. The Finance & Management Committee could take not only an ethical view of its investments but also an ecological view.*

The Rev Diana Hall, Rector of St Anne's, Dunbar

*The General Synod declaration on climate change now gives just 9 years to achieve the net-zero position, but no subsequent guidance has been made*

*available. It is important for the diocese to support individual congregations with advice.*

Godfrey Robson, Diocesan Secretary, responded that the diocese was tuned in to the climate crisis. The proposed way forward was

- To await clarification of the Province's intentions
- To take a first view on diocesan priorities and needs – where we could make the most effective interventions – and establish some terms of reference for future work
- And on that basis, set up a small advisory group encompassing the appropriate advisory skills and expertise

The Rev Peter Harris, Rector of Dalkeith & Lasswade

*It had been suggested previously that a fundraiser be engaged by the diocese. There was clearly a need for professional help in sourcing funding for climate change initiatives.*

Bishop John responded that it might be possible to approach the Province for funding towards the cost of engaging professionals.

Helen Tyrell, Lay Representative for Old St Pauls, Edinburgh

*There was reassurance in the responses to the climate change questions, but a small diocesan group to work on the challenges should be set up as soon as possible.*

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

*Clarification should be given as to whether existing church members with appropriate climate change skills were being sought or whether it was purely external professionals.*

Godfrey Robson, Diocesan Secretary, confirmed that there was no plan to employ professional consultants. The search was amongst existing church members or friends with relevant skills. There was a need to get this right and to identify where practical progress could be made.

Andy Milner, Lay Representative of St Vincent's Stockbridge, Edinburgh

*Noting the current position of the General Fund, has it recovered from the position it was in four years ago?*

Ian Lawson, Diocesan Treasurer, responded that by the end of 2021 the General Fund would have returned to the target level of having between 3 - 6 months expenditure within the Fund.

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

*Has there been any consideration of combining some of the part-time staff posts to make single full-time ones? It could be that the post of Dean of the Diocese was combined with that of the Synod Clerk.*

Bishop John responded that the combining of posts had not been considered, but it was clear that the skills needed for the Dean and the Synod Clerk positions were distinct. In addition, the appointment of Dean was in the gift of the Bishop, and he felt that it would not be good for him to influence the elected Synod Clerk office.

Bishop John thanked Godfrey Robson and Ian Lawson for their significant amount of work in keeping the diocesan finances in good order and in presenting the information with great clarity.

***The Motion that Synod approves the Diocesan Budget for 2022 was proposed by Godfrey Robson and seconded by The Very Rev Frances Burberry. The motion was CARRIED by a majority with 5 abstentions***

## ELECTION RESULTS

The Very Rev Frances Burberry then announced the results of the voting in the elections as follows:

- **The Rev Sarah Shaw** was duly elected as Synod Clerk
- **The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage** was duly elected as Chapter Canon

Bishop John then asked Synod to pray for all the candidates who had put themselves forward for election.

Bishop John also recorded the sincere thanks of Diocesan Synod to Patricia Peattie (Convenor) and Janet McGregor for their work as members of the Diocesan Personnel Committee. Both had recently retired from the committee, and their contributions over many years had been significant in so many of the formal and structural aspects of the personnel work.

**Bishop John confirmed the Acts of Synod.**