

10 June 2017 Diocesan Synod, St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich:

Presidential Address by +Martin

After uplifting worship led by Richard Hubbard, Music Development Director at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, and the InHarmony Ensemble, Bishop Martin announced during his presidential address that a phenomenal £50,000 has been raised in just six weeks through his and Bishop Mike's Lent appeal to help the people of Kagera, in Tanzania, our link Diocese in East Africa.

Bishop Martin said: "So one day we gave a pound for every pair of shoes we own. Another day we added 50p if our church has a branch of the Mothers' Union, and £1 if it doesn't.

"We gave 1p for every electric light in our house, and tried living on £1 a day. One day we had to put in £1 for every tree we had chopped down in the last five years – expensive for the woodsman I met that day. Another day we gave 5p for every tin of beans in our cupboard. Over six weeks in all sorts of ways, we saved our pounds and pence.

"We put on suppers and lunches, coffee mornings and cake sales. We did sponsored walks and sponsored bike rides on stationary bikes. We danced, we laughed and we ate. All wonderfully Lenten acts, and the results have been extraordinary.

"For the Bishops' Lent Appeal for Kagera, all our pounds and pence have added up, with the Gift Aid, to a phenomenal £50,000. In fact, more than that. That is by far and away the biggest sum ever raised for a Bishops' Lent Appeal in this Diocese. Thank you. That is incredible."

All the money will be sent to the Diocese of Kagera for them to use for immediate food aid and to develop their farming methods.

This substantial sum means that very important development activity can be funded as well as emergency food, promoting self-help, improved agricultural practices, and entrepreneurship.

Growing in God Workshops:

Synod delegates took part in four short workshops, focusing on creative mission within the priorities of the Diocese's vision to Grow in God:

Growing in Number – Easter Art Trail, Lavenham

Led by Lynda Sebbage and facilitated by Revd Canon Dave Gardner

Growing Younger – Sainsbury's Warren Heath, Ipswich

Led by Revd Trevor Golding (St. Augustine's, Ipswich) and facilitated by Gavin Stone

Growing in Depth – Living Vocations, North Samford Benefice

Led by Annette Shannon and facilitated by Bishop Mike

Growing in Influence – Walton Parish Nursing

Led by Lorna Bellamy and facilitated by The Very Revd Dr Frances Ward.

Plans for 2018

The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) was authorised by Synod to spend up to £8,283,000 during 2018. Anna Hughes, Diocesan Secretary and Archdeacon Ian, Chairman of the DBF, spoke of greatly improving finances within the diocese.

Anna advised Synod that losses are reducing, with the aim to work towards a budget deficit of less than £200,000 and towards break even in 2018.

She said after the cut backs her focus as the new Diocesan Secretary is on consolidation and evolution within the organisation.

Centenary Share 2018

Synod approved £7,100,000 to be provided to the Diocesan Board of Finance in 2018 to meet budgeted expenditure. Archdeacon Ian thanked all those across Suffolk who give so generously to support the work of the diocese. He also thanked the diocesan office finance team for the excellent work they are doing.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral InHarmony

Synod heard of the cathedral's exciting project to enrich music in worship at churches throughout the diocese, with the question asked would you like a visiting choir? Only a third of churches now have a choir and Synod heard that introducing new music would not mean abandoning traditional music. Music is a powerful language to communicate with God.

Suffolk Show

Archdeacon Ian, Chair of the Project Board, and Gavin Stone, Head of Transformation, gave reflections from the event, played a selection of vox-pops used and demonstrated a new interactive events map to help people to find out more about what we do and where we do it.

Ian said it is fundamentally important for the Diocese to be at the Show, being where people are, and it provides a tremendous opportunity to have meaningful conversations with others about faith.

He said 2,500 cups of coffee and tea were served to so many visitors and thanked all volunteers and officers involved in making the diocesan marquee at the Suffolk Show such a great success.

An annual Centenary Fund Concert

Canon Michael Wilde reported that this will be held on October 7 2017, with the Suffolk Philharmonic Orchestra event being at The Apex, Bury St Edmunds. The Centenary Fund aims to raise £1 million over five years to support work in our parishes.

Church insurance

Anna Hughes, Diocesan Secretary, updated Synod on a working group looking into Church insurance. She reminded parishes how important it is to always have two quotes, think about the level of cover that is needed, about excesses on the policy, and be careful not to be locked into insurance policies for too long.

Next Diocesan Synod

The next meeting of the Diocesan Synod will be held from 9.30am on Saturday 4 November 2017 at the St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich. IP1 1UQ.