



**THE DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH
DIOCESAN SYNOD**

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Synod held on Saturday 19 March 2022 at the Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket.

Present:

House of Bishops: Bishop Martin Seeley
Bishop Mike Harrison

Archdeacons: Archdeacon David Jenkins (Sudbury)
Archdeacon Jeannette Gosney (Suffolk)
Archdeacon Rhiannon King (Ipswich)

House of Clergy: 31 Members of the House (including 8 ex-officio) (30 apologies)
House of Laity: 39 Members of the House (including 3 ex-officio) (23 apologies)

In Attendance:

The Diocesan Registrar, 9 members of staff and 1 visitor.

Revd Canon Sharon Potter, Chair of House of Clergy, in the Chair

	WELCOME
	Revd Canon Sharon Potter welcomed members.
	WORSHIP
	Dwelling in the Word was led by Revd Canon Dave Gardner.
22.01	PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
	+Martin reflected on the crisis in Ukraine and what, as believers, are our goals to seek, pursue and long for the kingdom of God on earth.
	Bishop Martin's full address can be found on the website here: Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Synod March 2022 (cofesuffolk.org)
22.02	ANNUAL REVIEW OF INSPIRING IPSWICH
	Paper ref DS(22)P02. Archdeacon Rhiannon gave a summary of what the work of Inspiring Ipswich has achieved throughout 2021. The main points included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new church plants have been established in Ipswich (River church and Bridge church) • Smaller new churches also established (Safe Harbour church, Well Springs church)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships are growing not just through Anglican churches but across Ipswich's denominations, especially working together to help Ukraine's crisis. • One goal is to have 1,500 new believers over the 6 year period of the project. This goal is behind target and prayers would be valued, to help people talk confidently to others about their faith.
22.03	<p>LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH (LLF)</p> <p>Paper ref DS(22)P03. Revd Canon Sharon Potter, the diocesan advocate for Living in Love and Faith, introduced this item.</p> <p>Sharon led a discussion on the ongoing work of the Living in Love and Faith project, to reflect on the journey so far, next steps and how to overcome some existing barriers.</p> <p>Parishes have been encouraged to run courses to help expand their understanding of the issues to help us as Christians react and live with the issues that LLF covers. It has been designed to enable us, through conversation, to learn together.</p> <p>To date, only a small number of courses have been held across the diocese, partly due to covid and the restrictions. Those who have taken part have given positive feedback.</p> <p>A national report is due in the autumn as part of the discernment process. A Next Steps group, chaired by the Bishop of London, will meet and there will also be engagement with General Synod in July.</p> <p>Synod took time in groups to discuss key elements of the issues within the LLF.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>The Very Revd Jo Delfgou (Hadleigh deanery) commented that those participating in the course reflected that it felt exclusive and would welcome a future motion from Synod which welcomed all people, regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability etc.</p> <p>Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (Colneys deanery) commented that LGBT people and others were angry about the material as it did not follow the Pastoral Principles that it recommends to be used itself. this meant the material was one sided and always put the LGBT community as the 'problem'. He could not personally recommend it as he felt it was not welcoming to all.</p> <p>Mary Hare (Woodbridge deanery) read aloud a letter written on behalf of the deanery, regarding their concern that the timescale for engaging in discussions and feeding back by the deadline of 30 April 2022 is too short, given the pandemic's restrictions and the sense that engagement on this subject should be done face to face. Through Diocesan Synod, the deanery would like to ask General Synod to extend the deadline by a further year.</p> <p>In response, Sharon commented that although the timings are not ideal, nationally, diocesan advocates have been informed that there will not be an extension to the April deadline. Sharon did commend the course to all parishes to help engage with the issues involved.</p>

	<p>John Dixon (Thingoe deanery) commented on what “being welcome to all” actually means and the need to encourage everyone to talk about the issues covered by LLF, regardless of whether parishes are currently facing them or not. Dean Joe (St Edmundsbury cathedral) asked whether the course was the only way of providing feedback or would other creative responses be accepted. In response Sharon agreed that responses outside of the course feedback would be welcomed.</p> <p>Bishop Martin reflected that there was clearly a need to work together to map out a course that will work for the diocese, regardless of the national timelines. +Martin and Sharon will convene a small working group to take this forward and will feed back at June’s Diocesan Synod. ACTION: +Martin and Sharon to take forward.</p>
<p>22.04</p>	<p>BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE DISABILITY POLICY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY</p> <p>Archdeacon David and Archdeacon Jeanette introduced the two above policies. Synod was encouraged to talk with David and Jeanette in the refreshment break regarding any concerns or questions.</p>
<p>22.05</p>	<p>DIOCESAN WIDE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY</p> <p>Paper ref DS(22)P05. This diocesan wide policy was first approved by Diocesan Synod in October 2018. It has since been reviewed and two main additions have been included, a national Digital Charter and a helpful section on livestreaming.</p> <p>Questions: Revd Tiffer Robinson (Lavenham deanery) asked for some greater clarity between what is best practice versus what is advisory. ACTION: Leonie Ryle, Comms Manager, to adjust accordingly.</p> <p>Synod was asked to note the policy.</p>
<p>22.06</p>	<p>DISABILITY INCLUSION POLICY</p> <p>Paper ref DS(22)P06. This policy sets out what the diocese wants to achieve in terms of being inclusive to everyone, to value everyone equally and how we can better include those with any disability, seen or unseen.</p> <p>A group is being set up, being chaired by AD Jeanette, to work on how to best help parishes be more inclusive to those with disabilities. Jeanette is currently looking for individuals to sit on this group. Anyone interested should contact AD Jeanette.</p> <p>Questions: Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (Colneys deanery) commented that bearing in mind the recent bill concerning British Sign Language (BSL) going through parliament, could the policy intentionally mention the deaf community and involve the Chaplain to the Deaf in the working group.</p> <p>Synod was asked to note the policy.</p>

22.07

DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION (DBE) MEASURE AND DBE ANNUAL REPORT

22.07.1

DBE Measure

Jane Sheat, Director of the Diocesan Board of Education introduced the change to the DBE Measure. The Measure has been designed to make the governance process much simpler. The motion relates to the legal structure of the DBE. Paper ref DS(22)P07.1 sets out the current structure, the implications to the DBF, the recommendation and details of implementation.

Having consulted with numerous stakeholders, it is recommended that the DBE becomes a statutory committee of the DBF. Details for this are outlined in the paper. Implementation will mean going forward to Archbishop's Council in the autumn for certification. It will come into effect from 1 January 2023. Elections will be held in autumn 2022 in preparation which will be for a two year period and then will synchronise with the other triennial elections.

Bishop Mike moved that:

Diocesan Synod:

1. Approves the form of draft Scheme (designating St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Board of Finance as the Diocesan Board of Education of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich) in accordance with the proposal submitted by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich with the consent of the current Diocesan Board of Education, as set out in paper DS(22)P07.1;
2. Confirms that it is ready to make the Scheme, conditional on it being certified by the Archbishops' Council in accordance with s.23(1) of the Measure, and that accordingly, confirms the Scheme will be made and come into effect on the date specified in such certificate;
3. Authorises the submission of the draft Scheme to the Archbishops' Council and requests the Bishop, Diocesan Secretary and Director of Education to take such other steps as are necessary to bring the Scheme into effect.

A vote was taken by show of hands. The motion was carried unanimously.

DBE Annual Report

22.07.2

Jane gave a summary report of the work of the DBE throughout 2021. Highlights included:

1. Positive and increased pastoral care of headteachers
2. Developing/embedding a distinctive Christian vision in schools
3. Approved an environmental policy
4. Celebrating churches and schools working together in growing faith

Questions:

Guy McGregor (Hoxne deanery) commented that figures shows that Suffolk schools are allocated lower than the national average in regards to funding per child and asked whether this discrepancy has affected funding in church schools. Jane responded to say that yes there is a longstanding issue with funding in Suffolk schools, and this is compounded by underfunding for pupils with special needs, which is a national issue. However, our headteachers do a fantastic job with the resources they have.

	<p>Grateful thanks were passed to Jane and the education team for all their hard work, commitment and the support and advice they provide the schools with, is incredibly appreciated across the diocese.</p>
22.08	<p>GENERAL SYNOD UPDATE</p> <p>Paper ref DS(22)P08. Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin and Revd Leslie Siu introduced themselves as the current General Synod members present at the meeting. The other members are Revd Gini Williams, Tony Allwood, Jeanette Appleton and Andrew Gray. Revd Charlotte Cook also sits on General Synod as an Archbishop's Council representative.</p> <p>Charlotte, Andrew and Leslie encouraged Synod to raise issues with them as their General Synod reps and engage with them. They will ensure a link to future papers of General Synod will be on the website and go into e-news.</p>
22.09	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 2 October 2021, paper ref DS(22)P09_M3 were approved.</p>
22.10	<p>MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA</p> <p>No matters arising were raised.</p>
22.11	<p>MINUTES OF THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL</p> <p>The minutes of the following Bishop's Council meetings were received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 October 2021, ref DS(22)P11.1_BC(21)M5 • 9 December 2021, ref DS(22)P11.2_BC(21)M6 • 3 February 2022, ref DS(22)P11.3_BC(22)M1
22.12	<p>QUESTIONS</p> <p>Two questions were asked:</p> <p>1. Colin Firth (Thingoe deanery) asked the Finance Director: This question concerns finances for 2021. The minutes of the Diocesan Synod on 3 October 2020 (DS(20)M1 Item 20.05.1) pointed to a budget deficit on unrestricted fund of £0.5m on the assumption that £6.4m would be received in Parish Share. The latest Parish Share report shows Parish Share of £6.008m received. Thus expected deficit would increase by £0.4m to become £0.9m. What final deficit is now expected for 2021 and how will it be financed?</p> <p>Reply from Gary Peverley, Finance Director: With parish share received being just over £6.0m, based on budgeted parish share of £6.4m and an unrestricted fund budget deficit of £0.5m, the £0.4m parish share</p>

	<p>shortfall would in isolation lead to an increased deficit of £0.9m, as stated in the question.</p> <p>However, due to the following factors, our actual 2021 unrestricted fund deficit is £0.2m, ignoring unrealised gains, such as investment revaluations:</p> <table data-bbox="408 465 1098 763"> <tr> <td>2021 budgeted deficit</td> <td>(£0.5m)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shortfall on parish share</td> <td>(£0.4m)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shortfall on parochial fees</td> <td>(£0.1m)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sustainability funding</td> <td>£0.2m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pension deficit repayment</td> <td>£0.2m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Underspends from budget</td> <td>£0.4m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Actual deficit</td> <td>(£0.2m)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Please note that the figures above are still subject to external audit and therefore are not finalised. The resultant £0.2m deficit will be financed from our unrestricted funds and therefore will reduce the overall value of our unrestricted funds. We are again thankful to Archbishops’ Council for their financial support in 2021 of £196k sustainability funding which is in addition to the £600k granted to us for 2020.</p> <p>2. Sally Wainman (Colneys deanery) asked the Diocesan Secretary: Regarding energy targets and reaching net zero carbon by 2030, would the diocese consider caution in recommending any new smart meters in churches and other buildings?</p> <p>Smart meters can now send back readings every half hour to a supplier which, with surge pricing, could increase energy costs for churches. Also, smart meters can be converted remotely by a supplier to pre-paid metering, which would also be more expensive.</p> <p>Reply from Anna Hughes, Diocesan Secretary: Sally Wainman permitted us to have the time to investigate her question with the national church, there being little on the Parish Resources website to guide our answer. Noting that with the energy markets in considerable flux, this is a rapidly changing situation. We agreed to bring the results to June Synod.</p>	2021 budgeted deficit	(£0.5m)	Shortfall on parish share	(£0.4m)	Shortfall on parochial fees	(£0.1m)	Sustainability funding	£0.2m	Pension deficit repayment	£0.2m	Underspends from budget	£0.4m	Actual deficit	(£0.2m)
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22.13	NOTICES														
22.13.1	<p>TIMESCALE FOR APPROVAL OF THE 2023 BUDGET</p> <p>Gary Peverley, Finance Director, commented that in consultation with Bishop’s Council, he will bring the approval for the 2023 budget to Synod in October, rather than June. In doing so, it would enable him to present a more realistic and appropriate budget for 2023. Gary committed to giving parishes an indication about parish share in the summer, and providing actual parish share allocations in early October.</p>														

22.13.2	<p>PROMULGATION OF VACANCY IN SEE COMMITTEE REGULATIONS 1993, AS AMENDED</p> <p>Revd Canon Sharon Potter read the promulgation of the Vacancy in See Committee Regulations 1993, as amended.</p>
22.13.3	<p>SUFFOLK SHOW / QUEENS JUBILEE</p> <p>The Festival of Suffolk is the county wide initiative to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. The diocese is involved, under the banner “Suffolk Blessing”. Booklets have been produced with lots of resources and showing parishes how they can get involved. Postcards have also been designed which can be given out as a blessing to others. Copies of both can be obtained from Leonie Ryle, Comms Manager, at the diocesan office.</p>
22.13.4	<p>CATHEDRAL UPDATE</p> <p>Dean Joe gave an update on cathedral matters. Highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on recovery after covid, with groups starting to return such as choirs and hospitality visits. Parishes are welcome to book in a visit. • The shop has been refurbished • A recent vigil for Ukraine • The Abbey 2020 events that were cancelled due to the pandemic are planned for this year instead.
	<p>Bishop Mike closed the meeting with the ministry of the sacrament.</p>

**The next meeting of the Diocesan Synod will be held at
9.30am, on Saturday 25 June 2022 at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds**