

EXETER DIOCESAN SYNOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Exeter Diocesan Synod held at

County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter

on Saturday 15th October 2016 at 10.00am

Introduction and Worship.

The Bishop of Exeter in the chair.

1. Notices:

- Apologies were received from eight members of the House of Clergy and eight members of the House of Laity.
- In the recent casual election for one clergy person from the Exeter archdeaconry to serve on the BDC (replacing the Revd. Selina Garner), the Revd. Jeremy Trew, Vicar of Seaton & Beer, was duly elected. No nominations were received for the two lay vacancies from the Totnes and Barnstaple archdeaconries. It was requested that members contact Ed Moffatt, Assistant Diocesan Secretary if they have any nominations for these outstanding vacancies.

2. To approve the minutes of the meeting of Diocesan Synod held on 12st March 2016 and to consider matters arising **Paper S/11/16**

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the previous meeting without amendment.

3. To view 'Our Vision' and to receive an interim update on 'Bishops in Mission'

The 'Sharing the vision 2016' video was presented, after which each of the three Bishops spoke briefly on their experiences of 'Bishops in Mission' to date. The video can be viewed at: <http://exeter.anglican.org/sharing-vision-2016/>

The Bishop of Plymouth: Cadbury, Holsworthy and Woodleigh Deaneries.

The Bishop of Plymouth reported that he has been welcomed at every locality, and has found the 'Bishops in Mission' visitations both encouraging and informative. Visiting the smallest churches in each community he has heard many stories of positive community engagement, even within our smallest congregations. He highlighted the need for balance between faithful traditional services and contemporary uses of our churches, stating that he hopes the 'Bishops in Mission' initiative will bring hope to our communities.

The Bishop of Crediton: South Molton and Tiverton & Cullompton.

The Bishop of Crediton highlighted the importance of the 'Bishops in Mission' initiative in encouraging and enabling people to grow in confidence. She echoed the sentiments of the Bishop of Plymouth in stating that she hoped the initiative would provide hope and reassurance to our church communities. She reported that although she has found the experience a real encouragement, one challenge has been to encourage people to talk about their love of God more openly and overcome their reticence to share their experiences of God's love.

The Bishop of Exeter: Aylesbeare and Tavistock

The Bishop of Exeter also reported that he had come away from his visits hugely heartened. He reported that his lunch with eighteen local farmers had been especially poignant, as issues of food security and affordable rural housing were discussed, alongside the potential impact of Brexit on our farming communities. Furthermore, a visit to a local mobile home park was a positive experience, opening new avenues of communication between this community and local churches. He will be visiting Plymouth and Torbay next month.

4. To receive informal presentations on local actions to implement the 3 core priorities of the Diocesan Vision and Strategy

Synod received presentations from three local church communities exemplifying different aspects of the three core priorities of our diocesan vision and strategy: growing in prayer, making new disciples and serving the people of Devon with joy.

St Peter's Foundation, Woodleigh Deanery presented by Revd. Daniel French. St Peter's Foundation is a small group exploring ideas of vocation, community and living a good life, providing service to the local community.

The St Peter's Foundation video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NX-thSY5BU>

Saturday Church, Holsworthy presented by Morag Loble and Katherine Lyddon, Diocesan Children's Work Adviser. Saturday Church was designed with the idea of attracting new families and children into the Holsworthy church community. It has been a highly successful venture, with several new families joining and a large increase in child participation in the parish. Saturday Church's full presentation can be viewed at <http://exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/synod/synod-presentations/>

The Living Room, St Mary Magdalene, Torquay presented by Revd. Mark Searle. The living room is a not for profit community café run in St Mary Magdalene, which provides free food, companionship, sign posting and help for all the community, regardless of background or faith. The Living Room's video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGewGH9Xemo&feature=youtu.be>

After the presentations members had the opportunity to ask questions of all three speakers. Several members expressed their great encouragement for the projects and enthusiasm for having presentations like this again. All the presentations from Diocesan Synod can be found on our website: <http://exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/synod/synod-presentations/>

5. To receive the Diocesan Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2015 **Paper S/12/16**

The Synod received the Diocesan Report and Audited Accounts for 2015.

6. To approve the diocesan budget for 2017 **Paper S/13/16**

Mr Giles Frampton, Chair of the EDBF, presented the diocesan budget for 2017 for approval. This would enable the Common Fund calculation for each parish to be made and communicated. It was highlighted that the 2017 budget should be seen as a transitional year, as we align our budgets with the new Vision and Strategy.

The key assumptions made within the budget, and endorsed by BDC at their meeting held on 20th September 2016, were outlined as below:

- An increase in the Common Fund request per participant of 2%;
- A shortfall in Common Fund received of 6%;
- The budget to provide for a clergy allocation of 192.4 whole time equivalent stipendiary priests in payment;
- Inflation to only be built into those budgets where an inflationary increase is anticipated;
- Clergy stipends continue to be paid at a level equivalent to the Regional Stipend Benchmark (with any increase being applied from April 2017); and
- Include a contingency for a lay staff salary increase for July 2017 in line with the underlying level of inflation assumed in the Finance Plan.

Additionally, it was noted that the general reserves have been brought down to nearly the upper end of the 25-30% range of total annual expenditure which is thought appropriate for the Diocese.

The floor was then opened for members' questions. The following members contributed to the discussion: Jack Shelley (Cadbury Deanery), Francis Sansbury (Christianity Deanery), Simon Friend (Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery), Rev'd Edward Hobbs (Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery), the Ven. Douglas Dettmer (Archdeacon of Totnes), Mr Giles Frampton, the Bishop of Crediton and the Bishop of Exeter.

Members queried whether it will be possible to fill the proposed number of clergy posts. The Bishop of Exeter replied that 2016 had been more fruitful than 2015 and he therefore felt confident for the year ahead. Concurrently, the Bishop of Crediton highlighted that there is a working group currently developing strategy for the issue of increasing clergy recruitment.

Members enquired whether a greater break down on budgetary expenditure in some areas, such as Church and Society, could be provided next year. It was agreed that this could be done.

Several members voiced concern that the budget continues to increase year on year, while other organisations are making cuts. In reply the Bishop of Crediton highlighted that we need to demonstrate transparently how central money is being used to support mission and ministry in Devon. Mr Giles Frampton, Chair of the EDBF, also commented that the EDBF is planning to hold a full review of the budgets for next year and expenditure will be reviewed.

A concern was expressed concerning a potential flaw in the delivery model of the £1.8m 'Growing the Rural Church' project. Although the vision for tackling issues of declining participant numbers in our rural churches was to be welcomed, it was suggested that the project might deliver a greater benefit if the funding were directly available to qualifying churches, rather than being used to employ a centralised staff team. In reply Bishop Sarah reassured members that this project has mission at its heart and diocesan officers are working hard to ensure that the project supports parishes in making better missional use of their buildings. It was noted that the project, more than half of which was being funded by a grant from the Church Commissioners, would invest substantial amounts of time and specialist expertise (not normally available in most small parishes) freely and directly into a large number of rural churches.

In addition, other members voiced concerns regarding the proposed increase in the Common Fund request in the light of declining participant numbers. The Archdeacon of Totnes, Douglas Dettmer, noted that the morning's presentations demonstrated fully that effective leadership and mission work is often done by volunteers.

It was noted that Mr Neil Williams, Diocesan Director of Finance and Mr Giles Frampton, Chair of the EDBF, are happy to receive supplementary questions regarding the budget.

The diocesan budget for 2017 was passed by a large majority.

7. To receive the Annual Report of the Diocesan Board of Education **Paper S/14/16**

Synod received the Annual Report of the Diocesan Board of Education. Director of Education, John Searson provided a brief presentation on the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education's current work. The full presentation can be found at <http://exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/synod/synod-presentations/>. Due to time limitations it was asked that questions be addressed to Mr Searson after the meeting.

8. Questions

6 questions were submitted and a written answer was tabled for each one. Standing Order 69 states that "any member may ask one supplementary question in respect of each original question". The opportunity to ask supplementary questions was provided for each original question in turn: details of supplementary questions can be found in the attached Appendix I.

Deemed Items

9. To receive the Annual Report of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee
Paper S/15/16
10. To receive a report from General Synod
Paper S/16/16
11. To approve the scheme of lay representation to deanery synods for 2017 – 2020
Paper S/17/16

2017	
Date and time	Venue
Saturday 18 th March, 10.00 – 16.00	Council Chamber, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter
Saturday 7 th October, 10.00 – 16.00	Council Chamber, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter