

DIOCESE OF EXETER

BISHOP'S DIOCESAN COUNCIL

comprising

**The Bishop's Council and Standing Committee
The Executive of the Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd.
The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 9th February 2019
At the Old Deanery, Exeter at 10:00**

The meeting began with worship and a time of induction for new members.

I. Apologies and Notices

- Apologies were received from the Diocesan Registrar, the Bishop of Plymouth, the Archdeacon of Exeter, Preb Mike Partridge and Mr Phil Mumby.
- The Bishop welcomed the following new members: Mr Bob Mills, Dr Michael Wykes, the Revd. Ed Hobbs, Miss Hannah Dunn, the Revd. Samantha Stayte, Mr. Ray Shapland, the Revd. David Bailey and Mr. Mike Jefferies.
- At the request of the Chair of the DBF, members agreed to include an additional confidential item of business to the agenda.

2. Declaration of any actual or potential conflict of interest arising from the agenda or accompanying papers

No such declarations were made.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2018 **Paper BDC/01/19**

The minutes were approved with the following amendment: Agenda item 8 was changed to read 'To agree actions arising from the Diocesan Synod's ~~debate~~ presentation of 'Setting God's People Free'.

4. To receive the Bishop's nominations for the triennium

The Bishop indicated that he had nominated the following people for the triennium:

The Revd Preb. Simon Franklin,
Canon Mike Williams,
Mr Bob Mills
Dr Michael Wykes.

5. To appoint the vice chairs of the Diocesan Board of Finance

Canon Mike Williams and Mr Bob Mills were appointed as Vice Chairs of the Board.

6. To appoint the Standing Committee of Diocesan Board of Finance and to agree its terms of reference **Paper BDC/02/19**

The following were appointed as members of the Standing Committee:

Mr Giles Frampton (Chair of EDBF)
Canon Mike Williams (Clerical Vice Chair of EDBF)
Mr Bob Mills (Lay Vice Chair of EDBF)
Preb Mike Partridge (Chair of the House of Clergy)
Mrs Annie Jefferies (Chair of the House of Laity)
The Ven Douglas Dettmer (Archdeacon of Totnes and Bishop's nomination)
Mr Stephen Hancock (Diocesan Secretary)

Members discussed and were in general agreement over the draft terms of reference. Formal approval will take place once the Registrar has reviewed the draft.

7. To review the terms of reference and membership of the Assets Group **Paper BDC/03/19**

Members requested that further work is undertaken to make the language more gender neutral but were otherwise content with the terms of reference. Members were informed that if they wish to see the management accounts reviewed at each meeting of Assets Group they could request them.

8. To appoint members of Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committees

The members appointed the following people to the Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committees:

Totnes: The Revd Preb. Will Hazelwood
Plymouth: Mr Mike Jefferies
Barnstaple: The Revd Samantha Stayte

An appointment to the Exeter Committee will take place later.

9. To consider the membership and functions of the Church Buildings Strategy Committee **Paper BDC/04/19**

The members were informed that in future they would receive the draft minutes of the committee, which, while subject to amendment, would give a more timely indication of the work in hand.

The members agreed to co-opt the Revd Penny Dobbin to the Church Buildings Strategy Committee.

10. To nominate members to the Vacancy in See Committee **Paper BDC/05/19**

Members approved the following nominations:

Mrs Lesley Thurley
Miss Hannah Dunn
The Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw, MP
Dr Liz Grier

Mr Stephen Hancock shared results from recent Statistics for Mission surveys which indicate that attendance at major festivals, and church attendance more generally across the diocese, is showing signs of growth. While this remains a relatively new trend and further data is needed to determine its strength, it is encouraging and challenges a popular view that the Church is experiencing irrevocable decline. It also raises the question of how to determine if this is due to any particular area of investment or whether there are other key performance indicators suitable for investigation.

He also outlined the four focus areas within the strategy of children, young people & families, students/youth, fringe Christians and people over the age of 55. Each of these focus groups will report to the Bishop's Strategy Group in March and also present their discussions to date at the March meeting of Diocesan Synod. The feedback from synod members will inform future work in these areas and the strategy in general.

Members were supportive of the work already undertaken in these areas. Key points made included the importance of a broad consideration of each demographic (for example maintaining a broad consideration of rural and urban situations, considering the full range of churchmanship); the benefits of looking beyond paid positions; and the balancing need to identify what to give up in some situations.

12. To consider recommendations from the working group on the Common Fund scheme of assessment

Members discussed the recommendations of the review group and the shape of the paper to be submitted to Diocesan Synod for further discussion in March. It was emphasised that the final recommendations for option 1, which would be voted on by Diocesan Synod at the June meeting would stand or fall together and that there would not be an option to approve some recommendations while rejecting others.

It was explained that the recommendation for a large church allowance had been retained, despite some opposition. It was noted that the language used originally had been unfortunate giving the impression that only large churches were engaged with mission. However, as has previously been noted smaller churches are already assisted in some measure by the flat rate church buildings allowance. Furthermore, ongoing reductions in the common fund shortfall could mean that any discount could be covered by general improvements in giving rather than by imposing a greater burden on smaller churches.

Support was given to the additional recommendation of a cap on annual increases as they are experienced by individual parishes.

There was significant discussion of the cost of clergy model, which had been explained more fully in the current paper than previously. Many members disagreed with the underlying theology of the model which inhibits a spirit of mutuality where the strong support the weak. However, it was acknowledged that it does afford a more realistic understanding of the cost of stipendiary ordained ministry although further work may be required on what should be included in the costs. It could also act as an impetus for some to increase their contributions.

Members identified a clear need for more effective communications on the reality of costs and the extent and uses of the common fund.

There was some support for a blended model that took into account the cost of ministry in the local area modified by other considerations. It was noted that the current system already contains an element of the cost of clergy model as participant numbers, used to calculate common fund, are also used in the clergy deployment formula.

It was agreed that the review group, assisted by members of the Bishop's Staff, would decide on the content of the recommendations for discussion by Diocesan Synod in March.

Thanks were expressed to Mr Giles Frampton, Mr Neil Williams and other members of the review group for their work on this issue.

13. To receive an update on proposals to the Strategic Development Fund and consider any issues arising **Paper BDC/08/19**

The Bishop of Crediton outlined the progress to date of the Exeter Resource Church bid and its possible future timeline. The first round bid was successful and a more detailed stage two submission, including reference to serving the outer estates in Exeter, will be made by 3rd May. She highlighted the need for clear and open communications along with a willingness to learn from past failures as well as past successes. She encouraged members to circulate the accompanying paper to all with an interest in the bid.

A further stage one bid will be made in October for ministry in the Torbay area.

Members were made aware that, while strategic funding of this kind is provided by the Church Commissioners, the process, criteria and decisions are under the auspices of the Archbishop's Council.

14. To receive an initial report of the financial situation at the end of December 2018, including information on the Common Fund collection rate **Paper BDC/09/19**

Mr Neil Williams gave a further update on the financial situation. As at the 9th February the collection rate was 94.74% compared with 93.18% at the same point last year. Five deaneries have now contributed in full.

15. To agree items for inclusion on the agenda of Diocesan Synod in March 2019

The following items were agreed for inclusion

- Minutes
- Presidential address
- Vision and Strategy
- Report of the Working Group on self-supporting ministry
- Financial update
- Presentation on the work of the Growing the Rural Church Project
- Common Fund scheme of assessment
- Any necessary consideration of the Phase 2 application to the SDF re the Exeter Resource Church

- It was suggested that, given the other items for discussion the following should be deemed item:
 - Report from General Synod
 - Annual report of the DAC
 - Setting God's people free
 - Annual report of the DBE (alternatively this could be moved to the June meeting of Synod)

Deemed Items

16. To approve draft meeting dates for 2020 for the Diocesan Synod and BDC **Paper BDC/10/19**
17. To receive the annual report of the New Housing Areas working group **Paper BDC/11/19**
18. To receive a report from the Assets Group **Paper BDC/12/19**
19. To receive a report from the DBF Standing Committee **Paper BDC/13/19**
20. To note documents sealed by the Diocesan Board of Finance **Paper BDC/14/19**
21. To note Trusts and funds for investment accepted by, or wound up by, the Diocesan Board of Finance **Paper BDC/15/19**
22. To receive a report on the results of elections to Bishop's Diocesan Council, the Vacancy in See Committee, the Diocesan Board of Patronage, the Diocesan Board of Education and the Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committees. **Paper BDC/16/19**

Meeting dates for BDC and Diocesan Synod in 2019

Synod	Saturday 30 th March, 10.00 – 16.00	Westpoint
BDC	Wednesday 8 th May, 18.00 – 21.00	The Old Deanery
Synod	Saturday 15 th June, 10.00 – 16.00	Westpoint
BDC	Saturday 20 th July, 10.00 – 13.00	The Old Deanery
Synod	Saturday 19 th October, 10.00 – 16.00	County Hall
BDC	Saturday 30 th November, 10.00 – 13.00	The Old Deanery