

THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON Saturday 21 May 2022
in the Bishop's Palace, King's Ely, starting at 9.30am

Present: The Bishop of Ely (in the Chair), Very Revd Mark Bonney, Dr Felicity Cooke, Revd Becky Dyball, Revd Canon Sarah Gower, Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Canon Simon Kershaw, Mrs Elaine Levitt, Mr George Lynn, Mr Steve Mashford, Revd Canon Anna Matthews, Canon Peter Maxwell, Revd Canon Nick Moir, Canon Janet Perrett, Mr John Pigott, Mrs Sarah Robinson, Canon Lizzie Taylor Mr Christopher Townsend and Canon Tim Walters

In attendance: Ms Rebecca Boswell, Mrs Sheena Bridgman, Mr Adam Halsey (haysmacintyre), Mr James Owen, Canon Andrew Read, Revd Canon Simon Talbott

A Eucharist was led by the Bishop of Ely in the Bishop's Palace Chapel. The commissioning of Mrs Sarah Conant, Deputy Director of Education, and the Revd Peter Leech, Deputy Director for Mission and Ministry took place during the service.

Apologies were received from the Bishop of Huntingdon, Revd Canon Brian Atling, Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker, Revd Canon Adrian Daffern, Ven Hugh McCurdy, Revd Dr Robert Mackley, Canon Rob Needle and Revd David Newton.

The Minutes of the Bishop's Council meeting held on 23 March 2022 were agreed and signed by the Bishop of Ely. There were no matters arising.

Diocesan Synod Report from the Chairs of Houses - Deanery Development Planning and Finance will be on the agenda for the Diocesan Synod meeting in June, with Living in Love and Faith being discussed at the October meeting.

Bishop's Business: a presentation by the Bishop of Ely

Safeguarding update: The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Ms Rebecca Boswell, presented her regular update to the meeting.

There are currently 92 referrals (increased from the 73 at same date in 2021). The team are delivering the full House of Bishops training programme. 476 have already completed the newly published Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse Training. A small number of face to face training sessions are being offered in September 2022 to gauge the takeup over the current virtual sessions.

825 DBS checks have been carried out in 2022 to date; there are 20 safeguarding agreements currently in place.

65% of Diocese of Ely parishes are signed up to their parish dashboard. This free service is offered across the Diocese and the safeguarding team are endeavouring to encourage the remaining 35% to join and are using every means of communication available.

The Diocese of Ely is one of 11 dioceses who will be piloting the national safeguarding casework system. Data is being cleaned reading for migration to the central files in July. This will enable the sharing of information between dioceses.

The delivery of the Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) report has again been delayed until possibly July 2022. The Diocese of Ely are currently working through Ely's recommended action plan.

RB advised that the independent review of by 31:8 of the Diocese of Ely's work with and support of survivors and victims has been communicated on both the Diocesan and the Ely Cathedral websites.

The learning lessons review relating to the William Scott Farrell case will be published across the UK in late May 2022.

Business of Diocesan Synod - Canon Simon Kershaw and Revd Canon Sarah Gower (Chairs of Houses). The next meeting of Diocesan Synod will be held in person and will include the Diocese of Ely's Annual Accounts for 2021 as well as the schemes for the Diocesan Board of Education and the Inspection of Churches which were both approved at the last meeting of Bishop's Council. Living in Love and Faith and reducing our carbon footprint will be on the agenda for the October meeting, while Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing and Equality and Diversity will be subjects for future meetings.

Directorate of Education, Mission and Ministry: Canon Andrew Read introduced Revd Peter Leech (PL) and Mrs Sarah Conant (SC) to the meeting as the newly appointed Deputy Director for Mission and Ministry and the Deputy Director for Education respectively. The two Departments have, since the start of Covid, come together to work closely with combined focus, purpose and intention.

PL spoke about the Mission Initiatives covered by the members of clergy (ordained and lay) and associated workers across the Diocese. He advised that the integrated departments will be working under Four Pillars: Leadership Formation and Development, Parish Innovation and Development Support, Community Mission and Shared Operations Support.

SC presented the numbers and different types of schools across the Diocese. She then expanded on the challenges: System leadership/Government policy, Ensuring school standards rise, Community and Financial Sustainability.

Bishop's Council was invited to note their thanks to Canon Peter Maxwell on his retirement as Chair of DEMAT

Deanery Planning - the Archdeacon of Cambridge gave an update to Bishop's Council, advising that the education sector across the Diocese would be included in the process, and confirming that consultation will be open to the whole economy of ministry. He explained that the previously agreed total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) clergy continues at 104, but that these individual posts/postholders may be redeployed. This number does not include curates. Applications for financial support will be made to the national church to fund clergy in new communities.

The Bishop of Ely introduced and spoke to a tabled paper relating to Church Types the use of which might assist in Deanery Planning considerations.

Delivery Oversight Board: the Terms of Reference were presented to Bishop's Council. With the addition of the point below, the document was approved.

"Ensure that the deanery perspective is heard, given due weight and used to shape diocesan and departmental planning."

Proposed: Revd Becky Dyball
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Revd Canon Sarah Gower

Business of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (EDBF) - in the absence of the EDBF Chair Revd Canon Simon Talbott introduced Mr Adam Halsey, partner of haysmacintyre, the Diocese of Ely's auditors.

Mr Halsey noted the financial and governance responsibilities of elected Bishop's Council members and gave his presentation relating to the 2021 Diocese of Ely Annual Accounts.

No points of significant weakness were noted and he confirmed that the Diocese of Ely is a going concern. Due to the current global economic situation, investment income was likely to be less

predictable over the forthcoming 12 months, therefore it was suggested that free reserves be increased to £10m.

It was suggested that increased narrative be considered for inclusion in the quarterly Management Accounts. Mr Halsey highlighted that as income streams from the parishes are uneven, forecasting is unpredictable. He highlighted the need for close and regular maintenance of the parsonage houses in order that their market values be preserved.

He praised the work of the Financial Controller, Mrs Lorraine Orbell, and her team for the meticulous and accurate keeping of the complex sets of diocesan accounts, endorsing that the systems and procedures used are fit for purpose. He also thanked them for the smooth operation of the annual audit.

Proposal for the approval of the 2021 Diocese of Ely Annual Accounts

Proposed: Canon Janet Perrett
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Canon Lizzie Taylor

George Lynn, Chair of the Audit Committee reiterated his thanks to the Diocesan Secretary and Finance Team for the quality of the accounting practices. He outlined the importance of Bishop's Council's role in monitoring the Diocesan Risk Register ensuring that systems are in place. He advised that there is currently a vacancy for risk management expert on the Audit Committee, inviting nominations for the position.

He described the role of the Audit Committee in ensuring that controls on expenditure are in place and that resources are appropriately applied.

Audit Committee has specific roles regarding the review of the Relocation Board because of the use of Diocesan funds, together with an overview of the Deanery Planning process.

The updated Diocesan Risk Register will be presented to future meetings of Bishop's Council

Changing Market Towns: a presentation by Revd Jon Randall (JR), Project Lead. JR explained that, following the mid-term review by John Truscott, the Changing Market Towns project was currently undergoing a project re-set with focussed SMART objectives for each town. There may be a need for ethical closure of some elements of the project where investment has not been as successful as originally anticipated. The central Strategic Development Unit remains supportive of the Diocese of Ely project. Revised outcomes and objectives for the project are being considered in all areas, and more realistic targets will be identified.

Changing Market Towns will in future be under the scrutiny of the Delivery Oversight Board (DOB).

Francis Burkitt gave a detailed presentation about the role, function and membership of the **Assets Committee**, which is a Sub-Committee reporting in to the Finance Committee. He outlined the role of each of the Diocese's investment managers, and explained the focus on ethical investment within each portfolio.

The Archdeacon of Cambridge gave an outline presentation relating to **New Communities** emphasising the number of new housing developments with new populations. He explained that there is no longer any potential for funding from the national church for the founding of new churches within these new developments, but that there is a role for the Diocese to create a Christian presence in these new housing areas. There is a potential for some of the Diocese's larger churches to create church plants, although the nature of these partnerships must be carefully considered.

Relocation Board: Revd Canon Simon Talbott, as a member of the Board, gave a brief update about the Project.

The **Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee:** there had been no meetings since the previous meeting of Bishop's Council

The meeting closed with prayer at 3.37pm

Dates of remaining 2022 Bishop's Council meetings: 6 July, 28 September, 23 November.