

THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 23 March 2022
Via video conference starting at 7pm

Present: The Bishop of Huntingdon (in the Chair), Revd Canon Brian Atling, Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker, 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, Revd Dr Robert Mackley, Mr Steve Mashford, Revd Canon Anna Matthews, Canon Peter Maxwell, Revd Canon Nick Moir, Canon Rob Needle, Revd David Newton, Canon Janet Perrett, Mrs Sarah Robinson, Mr Christopher Townsend and Canon Tim Walters

In attendance: Mr John Pigott, Ms Rebecca Boswell, Mrs Sheena Bridgman, Mr James Owen, Canon Andrew Read, Revd Canon Simon Talbott

Dwelling in the Word was led by the Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker

Apologies were received from the Bishop of Ely, Revd Canon Adrian Daffern, Ven Hugh McCurdy, Canon Lizzie Taylor and Canon Paul Evans

The **Minutes** of the Bishop's Council meeting held on 1 February 2022 were agreed and signed by the Bishop of Huntingdon. 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 from the Bishop of Huntingdon - New pages in connection with the war in Ukraine have been uploaded to the Diocesan website, these will be regularly updated with new developments.

As one of the regional suffragan Bishops, Bishop Dagmar has been appointed Chair of Eastern Region Ministerial Course (ERMC).

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

There are currently 59 referrals (increased from the 39 at same date in 2021). The team are delivering the full House of Bishops training programme, with the entire Senior Leadership Team attending training over next couple of months delivered by National Church. Leadership training will be delivered to Ordinands at Ridley Hall and Westcott (Cambridge).

The team have conducted the new Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) induction programme and will be meeting with the PSOs in early April.

468 DBS checks have been carried out in 2022 to date; there are 19 safeguarding agreements in place (with one pending).

64% of Diocese of Ely parishes are signed up to their parish dashboard (76% in Cambridge Archdeaconry and 54% in Huntingdon and Wisbech Archdeaconry). Rural Deans are to receive information about those parishes not yet signed up in order to support and encourage them to adopt, access and use the programme.

The Diocese of Ely is a Phase One adopter of national safeguarding casework system which has arisen from the IICSA recommendations for the accessing of records nationally as opposed to individual Dioceses keeping separate local records.

The final Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) report should be delivered in May. The Diocese of Ely are currently working through Ely's recommended action plan.

Starting in April 2022, an independent review of Diocese of Ely's work with and support of survivors and victims across the Diocese will be undertaken by 31:8 (an independent organisation for safeguarding).

The new Safeguarding Code of Practice Measure 2021 will be published for implementation through 2022, where the major change is the listing of specific requirements for implementation, together with advice on how to achieve these requirements. It will be necessary for all parishes to follow the requirements from the new Code. The new document also increases the list of people who have to abide by the Code of Practice

2022 priorities for the Safeguarding Team include the ongoing quality assurance of their work, the phase one adoption of the casework management system, implementing and embedding the new practice guidance, delivery of the full range of training, together with working with the parishes. Safeguarding compliance is the responsibility of the PCC as Trustees, and it is the role of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to support and advise parishes to achieve compliance, and to challenge the parishes which do not.

Business of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance - Revd Canon Brian Atling (BA) reported that the Diocese was in the midst of the 2021 annual audit - no significant issues had been reported. A preliminary draft outcome for 2021 shows a small surplus, due to unanticipated returns for Ministry Share at 94.2% of request and an unexpected payment from one of the investment managers. It was noted that the Education costs came in under budget due to cost-saving measures.

Relocation Board: Chair (Tim Walters) explained the role of the Relocation Board in the project to relocate the Diocese Offices to a better purposed building, providing oversight. The project is currently meeting cost and delivery timetables, and is, to date, within budget. Staff change is being managed well. Council requested that the Project Risk Register be presented to Bishop's Council.

Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) Measure - Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Chair of the DBE, summarised the complex process for the transition to a new model. He noted his thanks to Annabelle Evans (legal), Andrew Read, Director, (AR) and BA as Chair of the EDBF for their work.

AR advised that the role of the DBE is one of governance oversight of those bodies responsible for schools, pupils and finances. In Ely, the decision was taken for the DBE not to become standalone (incorporated). It is felt that the integration of Education with the role of other Departments was essential, particularly with Mission and Ministry and the missional role of the church. Support schools with changes going forward. EDBF own the majority of the school estate, oversight role of ensuring maintenance.

Bishop's Council agreed that the paper should go forward to Diocesan Synod for formal approval.

Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee - the minutes were accepted and no questions were raised.

Scheme for the Inspection of Churches - Geoffrey Hunter, Head of Church Buildings, explained the background to the Scheme for Inspection. The Scheme is presented for Bishop's Council to agree and authorise it to go forward to DS for enactment.

Proposed: Canon Janet Perrett

Seconded: Ven Dr Alex Hughes

The proposal was agreed unanimously

The meeting closed with prayer at 8pm

Dates of remaining 2022 Bishop's Council meetings: 21 May - all day, 6 July, 28 September, 23 November.