

THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 23 November 2021
Via video conference starting at 7pm

Present: The Bishop of Ely (in the chair), the Bishop of Huntingdon, Mr Donald Ashmore, Revd Canon Brian Atling, Very Revd Mark Bonney, Revd Martin Dale, Mrs Sue Freestone, Canon Simon Kershaw, Mrs Elaine Levitt, Mr George Lynn, Mr Martin Macfarlane, Mr Steve Mashford, Canon Peter Maxwell, Ven Hugh McCurdy, Revd Canon Nick Moir, Mr Rob Needle, Canon Janet Perrett, Mrs Sarah Robinson, Revd Canon Simon Talbott, Canon Lizzie Taylor and Canon Tim Walters.

In attendance: Canon Paul Evans, Ms Rebecca Boswell, Mrs Sheena Bridgman, Mr James Owen, Mr Andrew Read.

Dwelling in the Word was led by the Revd Canon Nick Moir

Apologies were received from Mr Francis Burkitt, Revd Canon Adrian Daffern, Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Revd Canon Anna Matthews, Revd Carol Nicholas-Letch and Mr Stephen Tooke

The **Minutes** of the Bishop's Council meeting on 15 September 2021 were agreed and signed.

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

Bishop's Business - to assist the Diocese of Lincoln prepare for the next substantive Bishop, Bishop Stephen will, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, be Acting Bishop of Lincoln in addition to his role as Bishop of Ely, for the next 12 months. The Bishop of Huntingdon will deputise for Bishop Stephen with Revd Canon Simon Talbott, as Bishop's Senior Chaplain, in support. Following Revd Talbott's appointment, a new Chair of the House of Clergy is required and an by-election will take place in January 2022.

Bishop Stephen expressed his warm and grateful thanks to all those retiring as members of Bishop's Council at the end of the triennium.

Diocesan Synod Report - a summary of proceedings was distributed with papers.

Safeguarding update: The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Ms Rebecca Boswell, updated Council members on the current number of referrals, from whence the referrals may come, the current number of Safeguarding Agreements (19) and training numbers. She advised that the training programme for the first half of 2022 was almost full; dates for the second half of the year would be released before the end of the year.

The final version of the Diocese of Ely's Past Cases Review report will be submitted to the Project Management Board for consideration in early December.

The Diocese of Ely hopes to be invited as a Phase 1 Diocese (alongside Ely Cathedral) for the implementation of the new national casework system commencing in March 2022. All safeguarding files have been digitised in readiness for the offices' relocation, which puts Ely in good stead.

The Bishop of Huntingdon paid tribute to the DSA and her team

Business of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance - Revd Canon Brian Atling (BA)

The original forecast for the out-turn of 2021 was a deficit of approximately £1m. BA was pleased to report that, as at end October 2021, the predicted deficit was under £300k. Ministry Share income was better than anticipated, being above the November 2020 figures where the final receipts were 94.2% of request. It is anticipated that this might be slightly improved for 2021 once

final payments and direct debits had been received. Thanks were conveyed to all Deanery and Parish Treasurers.

Performance against budget was encouraging to date, with investment income being paid at higher levels than anticipated.

Bishop Stephen expressed his thanks to the Chair of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (EDBF)

Future Office Accommodation: leases should be signed in February 2022 and the hope is that the building should be completed by end 2022 if at all possible. Energy use at the new building will be considerably lower than at Bishop Woodford House, employing new technologies. It is expected that running costs are likely to be much lower.

Presentation by Diocese of Ely Property Manager - Mrs Stella Green. Mrs Green explained her role in connection with the Diocese of Ely's property portfolio and the Houses Sub-Committee of the Finance Committee and her responsibilities regarding repairs, planned maintenance and liaison with all clergy when they move.

The booklet Guide to Living in a Parsonage House can be found on the Diocesan website:
<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f0f7281dadce/content/pages/documents/1584116900.pdf>

She coordinates the acquisition and disposal of houses, together with new-builds and capital works while managing the rental of empty houses, any upgrades using longstanding local contractors and tradesmen and liaising with local agents.

Ely is proud of its houses and incoming clergy are grateful for the level of accommodation they receive. Revd Canon Simon Talbott, Chair of the Houses Committee, praised Mrs Green for her knowledge, experience and the exemplary standards set for its Houses.

Strategy Implementation Group: The Bishop of Huntingdon reported that consultation regarding the Deanery Development Planning process had begun. Copies of documents can be found on the Diocesan website:

<https://www.elydiocese.org/about/strategy/living-ely2025/living-ely2025.php>

Both Bishops are visiting all Deanery Chapters before Christmas with follow up meetings encompassing wider participation in early 2022.

Reports will be received in early Autumn 2022 in order to assist with budget planning for 2023. A more sure knowledge of resources and the requirements of Diocesan Departments will be better known at this stage.

Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee.

There had been no meeting of the Huntingdon & Wisbech Archdeaconry MPC.

Bishop Stephen reported that he had had a conversation with Revd Alasdair Paine of St Andrew the Great in Cambridge regarding the concerns about the process for appointing a second priest. The situation is now resolved while a second round of interviews is soon to take place as Deanery approval has been received.

Other Boards and Committees:

Buildings Oversight Board (BOB): preliminary discussions have taken place regarding the creation of a new Diocesan Trust for fragile church buildings, for which Bishop's Council already has responsibility. A paper will be prepared for presentation to Bishop's Council in Spring 2022 once it had been discussed at Finance Committee.

Changing Market Towns: will be presenting at the next meeting of Bishop's Council in January 2022.

The meeting closed with prayer at 8.50pm

Dates of 2022 Bishop's Council meetings: 1 February, 23 March, 21 May - all day, 6 July, 28 September, 23 November.