

THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON Thursday 27 July 2023
In person at St Mary's, Ely

Present: The Bishop of Huntingdon (in the Chair), Revd Canon Brian Atling, Very Revd Mark Bonney, Ms Lindsay Davies, Revd Becky Dyball, Revd Canon Sarah Gower, Ven Richard Harlow, Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Canon Simon Kershaw, Mrs Elaine Levitt, Mr George Lynn, Revd Dr Robert Mackley, Revd Canon Dr Jessica Martin, Canon Peter Maxwell Canon Rob Needle, Canon Janet Perrett, Mr John Pigott, Mrs Sarah Robinson, Canon Tim Walters

In attendance: Canon Paul Evans, Mrs Sheena Bridgman, Revd Peter Leech, Revd Mark Rodel

Dwelling in the Word was led by the Revd Canon Dr Jessica Martin

Apologies were received from Revd James Blandford-Baker, Ms Rebecca Boswell, Canon Francis Burkitt, Dr Felicity Cooke, Revd David Newton, Revd Iain Osborne, Canon Andrew Read, Revd Canon Simon Talbott, Canon Lizzie Taylor, Mr Christopher Townsend

The **Minutes** of the Bishop's Council meeting held on 20 May 2023 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 6 July 2023 were agreed and signed by the Bishop of Huntingdon. There were no **matters arising**.

Bishop's Business: The Bishop of Huntingdon advised that there would be visits from Bishop Nathan from Kigali and from a Nordkirche group, both in September 2023. During the Nordkirche visit there would be an Environmental Open Synod on 23 September.

Business of Ely Diocesan Board of Finance: Canon Tim Walters (TW), EDBF Chair, introduced the management accounts to June 2023, observing that some parishes were withholding payment of Ministry Share in protest at the General Synod vote at its February sessions regarding Living in Love and Faith. These parishes have agreed to pay at a minimum the direct costs for their stipendiary clergy by November, following decisions made at General Synod.

TW expressed concern that a second year of incurring a £200k deficit would allow a structural deficit to grow and explained the necessity of bringing the accounts back into balance in order to maintain the work being carried out. It was noted that some EDBF contracted staff working hours have been increasing incrementally, specifically in the Department of Education Mission and Ministry, resulting in the equivalent of an additional 2.8 members of staff. It will be necessary to take immediate action in order to avoid any cuts in clergy numbers, either by reducing the numbers of personnel and/or identifying projects to be halted. Following discussion it was agreed that TW, on behalf of the Board, would conduct an appraisal of the staffing structure to identify any possible overlaps or duplication in roles. TW agreed to report to the Council at its next meeting.

The Diocesan Secretary advised that the two new national initiatives were being implemented, supported by the central church: Net Zero Carbon and Racial Justice. In order to receive both sets of grants match-funding from the Diocese has to be identified from savings. The Diocesan Secretary agreed to updated Council at its next meeting noting that Net Zero Carbon and wider environmental issues will be a major point of discussion at the forthcoming Diocesan Synod on 14 October 2023.

Relocation Board: Canon Tim Walters as Chair of the Board reported that the programme for the new office building is progressing smoothly and that a ground-breaking ceremony had been held. The building programme is on track and being closely monitored by Adam Evans, Strategic Programme Manager.

