

ELY DIOCESAN SYNOD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2024 AT ST MARY'S, ELY

	<p>The meeting opened with prayers led by the Bishop of Huntingdon</p> <p>Sacha Watson was commissioned as Net Carbon Zero officer, Samuel Pedlar as Church Buildings Support Adviser and Jonny Torrance as Diocesan Lay Training Officer</p>
	<p><i>Revd Canon Sarah Gower, Chair of the House of Clergy in the Chair</i></p>
1.	<p>Amending Canon No 43</p> <p><i>“I give notice that, at its February 2024 group of sessions, the General Synod resolved that Amending Canon No. 43 be made, promulgated and executed.</i></p> <p><i>Amending Canon No. 43 makes miscellaneous amendments to the Canons of the Church of England. It complements the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2024.”</i></p>
2.	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Received: House of Clergy 21, House of Laity 16</p>
3.	<p>The Minutes of the Diocesan Synod Meeting held on 9 March 2024</p> <p>The minutes were agreed and signed. There were no matters arising.</p>
4.	<p>Update on Diocesan Secretary</p> <p>It was noted that Paul Evans is on a cycle of follow up treatment following cancer surgery. He is improving but will remain on medical leave for a while longer. Synod members asked for their best wishes to be passed onto Paul.</p>
5.	<p>Questions submitted under Standing Order 86</p> <p>1. Canon Jonathan Young, Huntingdon, asked the following question of the acting Diocesan Secretary:</p> <p><i>Which parishes in the diocese (if any) have made schemes (under part 2 of the Church Representation Rules 2022) to amend or replace the model rules in part 9; and has the Bishop’s Council approved any such schemes?</i></p> <p>In the absence of the acting Diocesan Secretary, Richard Harlow, Archdeacon of Huntingdon & Wisbech, responded that the Rules allow variation of some of the standard terms of reference or governance arrangements for a PCC. The most common time that this may be permitted is when a multi-parish benefice or two benefices held in plurality wish to form a Joint Council - an over-arching body, another charity in its own right. This allows PCCs to delegate some or all of their functions upwards without ceasing to exist themselves as PCCs.</p> <p>It was noted that the Bishop’s Council has recently approved two schemes to set up a Joint Council (Whittlesey, and West and South Leightonstone); those schemes are covered by the Church Representation Rules (M37-38).</p> <p>These parishes were noted as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whittlesey St Andrew and Whittlesey St Mary, Coates and Pondersbridge (four parishes, one benefice) • All Saints: Brington, St Lawrence: Bythorn, St Leonard: Catworth, St Mary The Virgin: Leighton Bromswold, St Peter: Molesworth, St James: Spaldwick, St Botolph: Stow Longa, St Andrew: Kimbolton, All Saints: Tilbrook, All Saints: Covington (ten parishes, two benefices).

Other parishes are encouraged to consider if this model may also work for them.

Canon Jonathan Young voiced an opinion that the new Rules were much better.

2. Christopher Townsend, Cambridge North, asked the following question of the acting Diocesan Secretary:

Is the Diocese planning to make a bid for Strategic Mission and Mission Investment Board (SMMIB) funding for children's and youth ministry and, if so, for what specific projects and purposes is it envisaged such funding will be sought?

In the absence of the acting Diocesan Secretary, Iain Osborne, Director of Strategy addressed the question to confirm that the Diocese will be making a bid, subject to the views of the incoming Diocesan Bishop.

The Diocese's approach is determined by SMMIB's own process, which expects a bid to emerge from overall diocesan strategy and to have clear episcopal backing. These factors mean the earliest a bid could possibly land with SMMIB is February 2025, being the earliest that the new Bishop could express a view. Equally, the new Bishop might very well ask for this to be paused so they had more time to form their own view of priorities.

It is intended the diocesan bid should cover children, youth and family ministry. However, SMMIB's process calls for an integrated bid from a diocese rather than a series of small bids. Therefore the bid will also cover other, in addition to the diocesan aim to "grow younger".

The bid is not intended to start new projects but to accelerate delivery of the existing diocesan strategy which aims to ensure that a flourishing worshipping community is accessible for children, families and young people across the Diocese, and as a result to double the number of young worshippers by 2030. There are currently around 18 such flourishing centres, which are concentrated around Cambridge, so it is estimated that a further 30 centres will be needed. The Diocese already implements a range of means to support Confidence, Commitment, Competence and Creativity amongst those ministering to younger Christians, and it is hoped to secure funding to enable this work to be accelerated.

Supplementary question from Christopher Townsend:

As the Diocese seeks to expand the number of flourishing centres for children, youth and family ministry, what plans do you have at present to consult within the Diocese whilst the final bid is being drafted?

Iain Osborne noted that the Diocese is trying to accelerate the existing strategy on which parishes have already been consulted. Several new programmes have been underway for a while. It is planned to discuss the bid at Bishop's Council in September and to brief Diocesan Synod in October. The bid team needs to explore if there is significant overlap between what SMIBB are willing to fund and the Diocese wants to do. Big grants have been made recently to dioceses without significant reserves; Ely does have reserves of which SMIBB is aware, so the investment board may seek a matching contribution from Ely which it is not in a position to offer at present.

Supplementary question from Rebecca Cowburn, Bourn:

Are there particular reasons why current children's work is so concentrated around Cambridge?

Iain responded that the Diocese seeks to understand what makes this area so challenging. The fact its strategy is centred around Four Cs indicates the Diocese does not think there is a single factor that unlocks progress in this area. As well as training, commitment is very important, so one initiative (Launchpad) brings parishes together to ask them to commit. The Diocese is also trying to create conditions for bright ideas to be realised.

Supplementary question from Elizabeth Stazicker, Ely:

How is accessible defined? How does this work for deaneries with poor transport links?

	<p>Iain acknowledged that accessibility is a major social issue in general and unfortunately, will not be different for children, youth and family; there are no easy answers for this.</p> <p>Sarah Robinson, Cambridge North, had posed the following question to the acting Diocesan Secretary, which was asked in her absence by Revd Canon Sarah Gower:</p> <p><i>The Diocesan staff have, I understand, identified those churches (including many small and medium-sized churches) in the Diocese which have seen an increase in their average Sunday attendance over the last few years. Has any consideration been given to whether and, if so where and how, some of these churches could helpfully share their stories with the Diocese to inspire and assist the rest of us?</i></p> <p>In the absence of the acting Diocesan Secretary, Revd Peter Leech, Director of Mission & Ministry, responded. He explained that lay and ordained members from a group of parishes which according to their statistics for mission returns grew their worshipping community by at least 10% between 2016-2022, have been asked to discuss three questions: how has numerical growth happened for them; what do they wish to say to the Diocese about how can it partner with them to support growth; what do they wish to say to other parishes about growth?</p> <p>This will enable the group to identify areas which the Diocese needs to reflect on to see how it can inspire and assist parishes as well as contributing to future diocesan planning.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Safeguarding update</p> <p>Rebecca Boswell, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, gave an oral report.</p> <p>In casework and referrals, 92 referrals have been received in year to date. There are 52 open concerns of which 19 relate Church Safety Plans. Less than five open concerns relate to allegations against church officers.</p> <p>Both the National Safeguarding Standards Implementation Group and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel met this week. The safeguarding team continues to support parishes to quality assure the activity they undertake.</p> <p>The recommendations arising from the audits in Salisbury, Gloucester and Truro dioceses are being incorporated where relevant to Ely in ongoing work to drive up standards. Ely’s audit will take place in February 2026.</p> <p>The Wilkinson and Jay Response Group will report the results of its first survey, to which Ely has contributed, to General Synod in July. The report is quite polarised around its views on the future and position of safeguarding within the Church of England.</p> <p>A clear date is awaited in relation to the implementation of IICSA 1 and 8, particularly around amending Canon 42 and changes to the safeguarding adviser/officer regulations which will create a change in job title for Rebecca Boswell and a subtle change to her role and responsibilities.</p> <p>The Service Level Agreement between Ely Cathedral Chapter and EDBF has been reviewed and renewed for a further three years. EDBF will be audited jointly with the Cathedral in 2026.</p> <p>Christopher Townsend, Cambridge North, asked if General Synod representatives will be able to contribute to the Jay and Wilkinson report. This was confirmed.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Presidential Address from the Bishop of Huntingdon</p> <p>In her presidential address, Bishop Dagmar spoke first of Marquee Season in the Bishop’s Garden and the great opportunities this presented to convene different groups of people, as well as to express gratitude to those involved in serving the church and the wider community.</p> <p>She went on to reflect on General Election season and urged people to be engaged and take part in the elections. In particular, she drew attention to the Church of England campaign “Pray your Part”. She emphasised that part of our mission is to have a pastoral and a prophetic role, and both are rooted in the profound faith and hope in God’s faithfulness to humanity, expressed</p>

<p>in Jesus' life, ministry, self-giving and resurrection.</p> <p>Looking at key topics in the General Election campaign, she made scriptural links and offered vignettes of biblical insights into these topics.</p> <p>Finally, she referred to General Synod Season. In the light of the ongoing debates around Prayers of Love and Faith, she reiterated her commitment to support and, if necessary, protect all, regardless of their position. General Synod members from Ely Diocese are commended for your prayers.</p> <p>Commenting on the feedback that had been offered at the last Diocesan Synod meeting on how Synod meetings could be improved, she thanked everyone and, as this was the last meeting of this Triennium, committed to work with the Chairs of the House of Laity and Clergy in preparation of the new Synod programme.</p>
<p>8. Business of the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance</p> <p>In the absence of the Chair of the Board and acting Diocesan Secretary, Lorraine Orbell, Financial Controller, had provided notes to support Paper C, the EDBF Management Accounts to 31 March 2024 as below:</p> <p>The pie charts show that expenditure on clergy and the support of clergy in parishes is more than 75% of total expenditure. Investment income makes a significant contribution to the overall income of the Diocese and allows Ministry Share to held at a reasonable level.</p> <p>The summary figures show the net financial position is close to the budget for the first quarter, with a deficit of £381k compared to a budgeted deficit of £368k. A deficit is expected in the first quarter of the year due to ministry shares only being collected from February to November.</p> <p>Although income is under budget, this is offset by expenditure also being under budget. Key performance indicators are traffic lighted; all are yellow or green.</p> <p>The detailed management accounts show where income is below or over budget and expenditure is more or less than budgeted. The 2024 annual budget and the results for 2023 are also shown.</p> <p>Investment income has been affected by the move of investments away from fossil fuels and other non-green investments.</p> <p>Curates' costs are over budget as numbers are higher than budgeted for as some curates due to leave in 2023 had their licences extended into 2024 for pioneering or other reasons.</p> <p>Registrar, Legal & DAC costs now include supporting the work on Net Zero Carbon. The quarterly contribution to the Registrar fees of £13k was not received until April.</p> <p>Property costs are over budget due to a combination of insurance, working from home allowances and electricity bills overcharged whilst the transfer of the account to King's School takes place.</p> <p>Audit and accounting fees include the cost of the 2023 audit and £16k of charges for formal parsonage valuations as required by the auditors.</p> <p>Any queries on the accounts can be emailed to lorraine.orbell@elydiocese.org.</p> <p>The published statutory accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 would normally be considered at the June Synod meeting and the audit partner from Haysmacintyre would attend. Unfortunately, the finalisation of the accounts for 2023 has been delayed as the audit started later and there was insufficient time to complete the work before the Finance Committee met in May. The accounts will now go to Finance Committee in July, the Bishop's Council in September, and then be presented to Synod in October. This is within the timescales for submission to Companies House and the Charity Commission.</p> <p>The 2025 budget is nearing completion and will be considered by the Finance Committee in July. The budget will be very tight for 2025 as Diocesan base costs have increased due to clergy</p>

	<p>and all staff receiving a 7% pay increase in April 2024 when only 5% was budgeted. There are also costs for further work on Net Zero Carbon for which funds need to be found. The 2025 budget will be presented at Synod in October.</p> <p>Ministry share collections to date are higher than this time last year with a collection rate of 35.2% at the end of May 2024 compared to 33.9% at the end of May 2023. Initial difficulties in 2023 with receipts from the Ephesian Fund have resolved this year. Ministry share is published monthly on the Diocese of Ely website.</p> <p>James Blandford-Baker, North Stowe, noted that on page 9 of Paper C a green dot was against clergy numbers because the Diocese is operating below the 96 FTE level which allows for vacancies. He queried why this is green as although he understands it is a healthy situation in financial terms, it is not positive in other ways, and as a body, the church seeks to promote its mission and growth and the presence of a stipendiary minister is a significant aspect of church growth.</p> <p>Alex Hughes responded to assure that the Diocese is trying to fill many of those roles but not successfully so far.</p> <p>Felicity Cooke, Granta, noted that it would be useful to have a separate line to show the ministry share coming through the Ephesian Fund. This request would be relayed to the Financial Controller.</p>
	<p><u>Canon Simon Kershaw, Chair of the House of Laity in the Chair</u></p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Mission & Ministry update</p> <p>Revd Peter Leech, Director for Mission & Ministry gave a presentation on the current priorities and work of the team.</p> <p>The national priorities of the Church to double the number of young people in its worshipping communities by 2030 and to expand its number of paid and volunteer youth workers, are supported by the Diocese whilst recognising the challenges these pose. Diocesan priorities are to grow, deepen, and engage. The M&M department operates in a deeply collaborative way, working with colleagues across the Diocese. Teams have been created within the department which focus on particular areas, enabling streamlining of support and processes, and for more coherent responses. The oversight of the Bishop’s Advisers and the integration of Changing Market Towns into M&M provides additional expertise.</p> <p>The Children, Youth, Families and Schools team has embedded support structures which are a significant departure from the previous central support delivery model, and ensure support delivered is in deaneries and parishes. There are a number of national initiatives which the team is using to bring about impact. Hubs & Forums allow for local input and sharing of good practice. Launchpad works with church leaders to find ways to reach out to young people. Catalyst is a programme which trains children and youth workers. M&M offers targeted support and training, e.g., a recent inter-generational training day was held. School Chaplaincy has grown, with five people having completed their training. The Parish School Covenant focuses on the relationship between parishes and schools, initially for church schools, but now widened to include non-church schools.</p> <p>The Ordained Vocations Team has reviewed its processes in line with the new national selection discernment framework and a team of 12 ADDOs has been developed. Specialisms within this team include pioneer vocations and Global Majority Heritage vocations. The team has recently reviewed the IME2 programme to create a smoother journey for individuals between IME1 training and their continuing ministerial development. Incumbents are offered training including neurodiversity and having difficult conversations, to enable them to provide very effective supervision. There are currently 11 ordinands in training, 7 of whom are due to start in 2024. There are 12 ordained individuals, 6 of whom are stipendiary. The projected number of ordained ministers for 2025 and 2026 is 7 and 8 respectively. National figures show a decline in people coming forward for ordained ministry; numbers dropped by a third in 2022. M&M is working with the national team around the issues affecting numbers, including demographics and institutional suspicion. The discernment process has moved towards an individual journeying</p>

	<p>both with an ADDO and also as part of a group.</p> <p>The Lay Ministry team has introduced the Lay Licenced Ministry Board which oversees a number of processes. The Lay Selection Vocation Advisers is a new team which will journey with those who feel called to licenced lay ministry. Vocations events are being held to share different pathways and to ensure a mixed ecology of ministers are being trained. Emerging ministry pathways include School Chaplaincy, Homelessness Chaplaincy, authorised Local Leadership, and Evangelism Enablers. There are currently 4 lay ministers in training to be licenced. Projected numbers for 2025 and 2026 are 8 and 9 respectively.</p> <p>The Learning Team has focused on accessible and flexible training. The Open Christian Learning portal provides a one-stop shop for a range of resources. The link with CMT provides Exploring Faith resources for those who have questions about faith or are exploring it for the first time. The Leading your Church into Growth (LyCIG) annual conference will be held in October; this organisation also provides ongoing support.</p> <p>Emerging strategies for the M& M team were noted as wellbeing, rural leadership, new housing, CYFS, and racial justice. Ongoing work covers a number of areas led by Bishop’s Advisers including disability, retired clergy, and climate change.</p> <p>Members were invited to send any feedback to peter.leech@elydiocese.org.</p>
10.	<p>Annual Report 2023</p> <p>It was noted that the Annual Report of EDBF activities by department had now been published and was available on the Diocesan website: https://www.elydiocese.org/about/governance/board-of-finance/annual-reports/</p> <p>It was clarified the Report is for members to receive/note rather than to approve. The Report would be tabled in future.</p> <p>There was some confusion between this report and the annual report within the accounts and suggested that this report could be retitled Annual Review in future for clarity.</p>
11.	<p>Update on Bishop of Ely recruitment</p> <p>Felicity Cooke, as a member of the Crown Nominations Commission noted that as the proceedings of the CNC are confidential, she could only report on process. The CNC had met for the first time in May at Lambeth Palace to shortlist with the central CNC, chaired by the Archbishop of York. In July, they will meet to interview candidates in Canterbury. She asked members for their prayers for both diocesan and central members of the CNC, noting this was one of the most challenging tasks in her life.</p> <p>It was queried whether the new Bishop will live in the existing Bishop’s house. It was confirmed that this is the expectation. Improvement work on the House will be completed over the summer.</p>
12.	<p>Results of the elections to Diocesan Synod to date</p> <p>Revd Canon Sarah Gower reported that four elections were to be held: two for clergy in Bourne and Cambridge North, and two for lay in Cambridge North and St Ives. One deanery is still to put forward nominations. There are vacancies in many deaneries; individuals need to be encouraged to apply.</p>
13.	<p>Bishop’s Council Report 18 May 2024</p> <p>The Bishop of Huntingdon summarised the business of the meeting.</p> <p>The incoming EDBF Director of Education, Mr Jon Young, will join Bishop’s Council from November.</p> <p>The Revd Wendy Thompson has resigned as Bishop’s Adviser for Women’s Ministry, as well as Revd Canon Bruce Kinsey as Bishop’s Adviser for Counselling. Replacements are being sought for both posts.</p>

	<p>Etheldreda House was formally opened for staff in late April. Revd Jill Stimpson has been appointed as Chaplain for the offices and attends once a week.</p> <p>The Audit Committee is reviewing its role taking consideration to the role of the Trustee Assurance Group (TAG). A piece of work on Governance is being undertaken at request of Bishop's Council.</p> <p>Upgrades to the Whittlesey and Leytonstone Schemes were both approved unanimously.</p> <p>An extension of the Bishop's Mission Order for North Stowe was approved unanimously for a further five years.</p> <p>A reserved business meeting was held after the main meeting; this focused on improved governance, finance and HR provision. Some proposals are easy wins, other actions will need to wait for the new Bishop.</p>
14.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Thanks were extended to all members who have served Diocesan Synod this Triennium and goodbye bid to those not rejoining.</p> <p>Thanks were extended to Sheena Bridgman who relinquishes her role as Clerk to the Synod to focus on looking after Etheldreda House. She is replaced as Clerk by Shirley Thackray. Sheena thanked members for their support and comradeship over the past eight-years.</p>
15.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The first meeting of the new Triennium will take place on 19 October 2024.</p>
16.	<p>The meeting closed with Compline at 8.55pm.</p>