

Annual Report 2019

Terms of Reference: The Council has a dual role and function, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod and giving advice to the Bishop on any matter about which he consults the Council. During the year the Council met four times, the Policy Sub-Committee met twice and the Agenda Group met six times. In January, there was a Joint Trustee Training Session with the Council and the Diocesan Board of Finance from Ms Amanda Francis – Buzzacott.

2019 saw a newly elected Bishop's Council for the new triennium make appointments to the following Boards and Committees: Agenda Group, Board for Mission and Ministry, Vacancy in See Committee, Electoral Commission, Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee Executive, Closed Churches Uses Committee and HR Advisory Group.

Living God's Love

Early in the year, the Council highlighted the intention to refocus LGL from January 2021. As part of the planning, the Council approved the 'Big Conversation' project, to enable all parishes to be involved in the refocussing of Living God's Love 2025. Preparations for this project were underway and a facilitating team had been recruited to start work with parishes early in 2020. The Council emphasised that LGL 2025 was building on a process that was already established and was not something new. In October, the Council noted that as part of this project, digital materials had been sent out to PCCs in advance of the "Big Conversation" visits in 2020, focussing on how the diocese can 'grow younger'.

In October, the Council received the Reaching New People Highlight and Progress Reports as part of a PowerPoint presentation from the Director of Mission and noted that, whilst numbers appeared to be going in the right direction, focus needed to be centred on monitoring the stewardship of new disciples going forward.

The Council dealt with the following subject areas:

Safeguarding:- During the year, the Council received regular reports and noted that the two Safeguarding Advisors continued to promote Safeguarding policies and practice whilst dealing with a substantial workload. In the Autumn, the Council noted that to begin the process, the Safeguarding Past Cases Review 2 timetable for 2020 had been sent to all parishes. A pilot Past Cases Review in two Deaneries had produced relatively few new cases and it was hoped that this would be replicated across the Diocese.

Diocesan Registrar:- In January, the Council noted that Mr Matthew Chinery, the Diocesan Registrar, had left the Diocese to take up a new position. In April, Mr Jon Baldwin and Mr Owen Carew-Jones of Winckworth Sherwood, were appointed Deputy Registrars. The new Chancellor, Mrs Lyndsey de Mestre, was formally commissioned and, in July, Mr D Willink was appointed as Deputy Chancellor.

Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee:- The new arrangement under which the Council acted as Mission and Pastoral Committee meant that they received regular reports from the Mission and Pastoral Executive Committee and considered draft proposals for pastoral reorganisation to promote appropriate models of ministry to support mission in each part of the Diocese.

The Council received updates on the work of the **Development Plans Monitoring Group** which included progress reports on new housing developments in the Diocese and parish responses to new opportunities for growth. The Council also received updates on the work of the **Closed Churches Uses Committee** where discussions continued with the Greek Orthodox Church who owned the church building at East Hyde and wished to improve access to the churchyard. During the year, alternative options for St Mary Old Church Thundridge emerged as a group of local residents were supported to develop their vision for the site to be preserved as a monument.

Reaching New People Project:- In October, following a presentation from the Director of Mission, the Council noted that the headline figure of around 7,000 people participating across the 150 New Worshipping Communities was a significant number, it was important to focus on the level of engagement with the wider Diocese, and in particular with parish clergy, to ensure that the RNP Team continued to focus on growth.

Restructuring of Lay Training:- In July, the Council started the process for the restructuring of Lay Training and were involved in the formation of a strategy paper approved at Diocesan Synod in October 2019.

Budget and Accounts:- The Council approved the budget and accounts for presentation to Diocesan Synod and received updates from the Chairman of the Board of Finance on planning assumptions for the Budget 2020.

Resource Churches:- During the year, the Council considered a proposal for a Resource Churches plan for Hatfield and Watford and agreed that this should initially be developed using existing Diocesan resources, rather than applying for further Strategic Development Funding from the National Church.

General Synod:- Early in the year, the Council received reports on proceedings at General Synod which included topics as diverse as (1) Responding to youth violence; (2) Clergy wellbeing; (3) Mission-Shaped Church and the role of Lay people; (4) Social Issues – the state of the nation; (5) Advertising and Gambling; (6) Mission and Ministry among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities and (7) A moving presentation and debate on Living in Love and Faith.

The Future of the Caribbean Link:- In the Autumn, the Council received a presentation from Mr Stephen Lyon, Chairman of the Caribbean Links Group, and considered a report on the Future of the Caribbean Link. The Council noted that responses to three questions on the 2019 Archdeacons' Articles of Enquiry had shown that of the 47 parishes which had responded, none had links with the Caribbean. Mr Lyon agreed to take this forward for discussion with Archbishop Howard Gregory, the new primate of the Province of the West Indies.