

Private & Confidential

MINUTES of a meeting of the **ST ALBANS DIOCESAN SYNOD** held via ZOOM on **SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2020**

The Synod convened at 9.30 am with the Bishop of St Albans in the Chair.

The Bishop welcomed the Deputy Registrar, Mr Jon Baldwin and the Reverend Canon Richard Hibbert, recently elected Chair of the House of Clergy.

1. **PRAYERS** were led by the Reverend Chandy Perera and the Reverend Vivienne Hathaway (Stevenage Deanery).

2. **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

The Bishop addressed the Synod and a copy of his Address is attached to the original Minutes. The Address may be found on the Diocesan website: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/bishop-of-st-albans-sermons/>.

3. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of Synod held on Saturday 14 March 2020, which had been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the President. (To note that the June Synod meeting had been cancelled).

4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BUSINESS ITEMS**

The President noted those people who had recently joined or left the Diocese, taken up new roles within the Diocese, retired or died.

The President reported that the Independent Report into Child Sex Abuse (IICSA) had been published on 6 October 2020 and advised that this could be viewed on the Diocesan Website. He emphasised that the Diocese of St Albans continued to strive to improve safeguarding practices and accepted that in an imperfect world there was always room for improvement.

Chair: The Reverend Canon Richard Hibbert, Chair of the House of Clergy, assumed the Chair.

5. **FORMULA FOR DIOCESAN SYNOD RULES TRIENNIAL ELECTIONS (2021-2024)**

On behalf of the Bishop's Council, the Chair moved:

"This Synod agrees that for the purposes of the elections to the Diocesan Synod in 2021, there shall be no change in the number of members from that used previously, as set out in paragraph 2 of (DS/20/03)."

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED unanimously.

A copy of paper **(DS/20/03)** had been circulated.

6. PROCLAMATION OF COVENANT FOR CLERGY CARE AND WELLBEING

The Diocesan Secretary proclaimed the Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing as an Act of Synod.

A copy of paper **(DS/20/04)** had been circulated.

7. ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2019

Synod noted that presentations from the Diocesan Advisory Committee and the Board of Patronage would form part of the March 2021 Synod Agenda.

The Annual Reports for the Diocese had been circulated.

The Chairman then moved:

"That the Annual Reports of the Boards and Committees of the Diocese for 2019 be now received."

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED unanimously.

8. REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE FOR 2019

Mr Colin Bird, Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, presented the Report and Accounts of the Diocesan Board of Finance for 2019 and, with the Chairman's permission under Standing Order No. 4, the Director of Finance gave an update on the current financial position.

There were responses from Mr Wayne Sime (Stevenage Deanery); Mr Anthony Archer (General Synod, Berkhamsted Deanery); Mr John Butler (Welwyn Hatfield Deanery); the Reverend Nick Salisbury (St Albans Deanery).

Mr Colin Bird responded and then moved:

'That the Report and Accounts of the St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance for the year 2019, as laid on the table, be now received.'

There were further responses from the Reverend Kaushal David (Dunstable Deanery); Mr Robin Davis (Watford Deanery).

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED unanimously.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bird and the finance team for all their work.

Chair: Canon Peter Adams, Chair of the House of Laity, assumed the Chair.

9. COVENANT FOR CLERGY CARE AND WELLBEING ROUNDUP

Feedback was received from the Reverend Canon Richard Hibbert (Chair of the House of Clergy) and Canon Peter Adams (Chair of the House of Laity) from the discussion of the separate meetings of the Houses of Clergy and

Laity held on Saturday 3 October 2020.

On behalf of the Bishop's Council, the Bishop of Hertford moved:

"In the light of GS 2133 and the work that is being undertaken across the Diocese with regard to clergy care and wellbeing, and taking note of the feedback from the separate meetings of the Houses of Clergy and Laity, this Synod:

- 1) Celebrates the work that is already being done with regard to care and wellbeing across the Diocese, and
- 2) Instructs the Director of Ministry and the Board for Mission and Ministry to consider what further steps might be taken to promote clergy wellbeing and to report back to Synod in March 2021 on how the covenant can be adopted and implemented."

There were responses from the Reverend Kaushal David (Dunstable Deanery); Mr Anthony Archer (General Synod, Berkhamsted Deanery).

The Bishop of Hertford responded.

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED with 1 ABSTENTION.

Chair: The Reverend Canon Richard Hibbert, Chair of the House of Clergy, assumed the Chair.

10. 'BECOMING AN ECO DIOCESE'

The Bishop of Hertford introduced Mrs Rachel Johnston – Diocesan Environmental Officer, who, with the Chairman's permission under Standing Order No.4, gave a short presentation on 'Becoming an Eco Diocese'.

There were responses from Mr Bill Seddon (General Synod, Rickmansworth Deanery); the Reverend Luke Larner (Bedford Deanery); the Bishop of Hertford; the Reverend Lucy Davis (Amphill & Shefford Deanery); Mr Wayne Sime (Stevenage Deanery); the Reverend Caren Topley (Amphill & Shefford Deanery); Mrs Jo Brooks (Welwyn Hatfield Deanery).

The Reverend Canon Mark Slater (St Albans Deanery) responded and then moved:

"That the Synod of St Albans Deanery, following the motion passed by General Synod in February 2020, which recognises that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation and a fundamental injustice and which calls on all parts of the Church of England, including dioceses and parishes, to work towards net zero emissions, request the Diocese of St Albans to register with A Rocha UK for the Eco-Diocese Programme."

There were further responses from Mr Tim Fleming (General Synod, St Albans Deanery); Dr Jacob Kurien (Barnet Deanery); the Reverend Simon Cutmore (Rickmansworth Deanery); the Reverend David Stevenson (Watford Deanery).

Mrs Rachel Johnston responded.

The Bishop of Hertford moved an amendment to the motion by adding at the end:

"and to seek to achieve a bronze award by end of 2022 and to have regular updates to synod to report on progress towards that goal."

The amendment was PUT and CARRIED with 2 AGAINST and 5 ABSTENTIONS.

The Reverend Mark Slater moved the amended motion:

"That the Synod of St Albans Deanery, following the motion passed by General Synod in February 2020, which recognises that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation and a fundamental injustice and which calls on all parts of the Church of England, including dioceses and parishes, to work towards net zero emissions, request the Diocese of St Albans to register with A Rocha UK for the Eco-Diocese Programme and to seek to achieve a bronze award by end of 2022 and to have regular updates to synod to report on progress towards that goal."

The motion as amended was PUT and CARRIED with 4 AGAINST and 3 ABSTENTIONS.

The Reverend Canon Mark Slater further moved:

'That this Synod request the General Synod to debate a motion in the following terms:

"That this Synod, following the motion passed by this Synod in February 2020, which recognises that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation and a fundamental injustice and which calls on all parts of the Church of England, including dioceses and parishes, to work towards net zero emissions, request that every diocese register with A Rocha UK for the Eco-Diocese Programme."'

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED with 5 AGAINST and 6 ABSTENTIONS.

A copy of paper (**DS/20/05**) had been circulated.

Chair: Canon Peter Adams, Chair of the House of Laity, assumed the Chair.

11. QUESTIONS

No questions were received.

12. STIPEND LEVELS FOR 2021/22 and DIOCESAN COMMON FUND BUDGET 2021

Mr Colin Bird, Chairman of the St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance, gave a presentation.

The President responded to the presentation and the proposed change to

the total number of stipendiary posts set out in the Ministry Strategy previously approved by the Synod.

A question was received from Mr Wayne Sime (Stevenage Deanery).

The Director of Finance responded.

On behalf of the Board and at the request of the Bishop's Council, Mr Colin Bird moved:

"This Synod, noting the impact of Covid-19 on the ability of parishes to raise funds and on other income generated by the Diocese, resolves that the stipends from 1 April 2021 for incumbents and those of incumbent status in this diocese should be maintained at the same level as for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021."

There were further responses from Mr Anthony Archer (General Synod, Berkhamsted Deanery); the Bishop of Hertford; Mr Robin Davis (Watford Deanery); the Reverend Kaushal David (Dunstable Deanery).

Mr Colin Bird responded.

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED with 4 AGAINST and 12 ABSTENTIONS.

Mr Colin Bird, then moved:

"That the estimates of requirements of the Diocesan Common Fund in 2021 in the gross sum of £15,358,256 be approved, and that the Synod authorises the Diocesan Board of Finance to expend in accordance, therewith a sum not exceeding £15,358,256 and that the sum of £13,800,000 be requested as parochial contributions in 2021, to be apportioned in accordance with the approved Parish Shares Scheme."

There were responses from Mr Wayne Sime (Stevenage Deanery); the Reverend Kaushal David (Dunstable Deanery); the Archdeacon of Hertford.

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED WITH 1 AGAINST and 2 ABSTENTIONS.

A copy of the 2021 Budget (**DS/20/06**) had been circulated..

The Bishop of St Albans thanked everybody for their contributions and dismissed the Synod with prayers at 12.37pm.