



2. Bristol Diocesan Synod Minutes

Date: Saturday, 10 June 2023

Time: 9.30am to 1.00pm

Venue: St Michael’s Church Centre, The Green, Stoke Gifford BS34 8PD
The agenda and papers for this meeting can be found on the Diocese of Bristol website at:

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/aboutus/governance/diocesansynod/diocesansynod>

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| 1. | Opening worship |
| Charles Sutton led opening worship focusing on St Columba and the Iona community. | |
| Andrew Lucas in the Chair | |
| 2. | Election of Chair of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd for the period from 1 September 2023 until the AGM 2025. |
| Andrew Lucas welcomed Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance (BDBF) members to the AGM and explained that Synod membership was co-terminus with BDBF membership. | |
| Andrew reminded all present that there was an opportunity to ask questions via the Synod email address, or directly after his briefing. | |
| Andrew explained that he was stepping down as Chair of the BDBF and this was consequently his last AGM and Synod as Chair. The AGM was therefore required to elect a new Chair to cover the residue of the current term of office, 1 September 2023 until the AGM in June 2025. | |
| Andrew commended Richard Bacon. Vice Chair of the BDBF, to the AGM as Andrew felt that Richard had both the expertise and spiritual commitment to flourish in the role and serve the diocese well. | |
| Richard Bacon was nominated by Bishop Viv and seconded by the Revd Beverley Charles. | |
| Andrew asked for any other nominations from the floor. There were no nominations. | |
| Richard Bacon was elected unanimously as Chair and will take over from 1 September 2023. | |
| 3. | The Directors’ Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022 |

Andrew referred the AGM to his tabled summary paper and the accounts as he summarised the diocese's finances.

Current Situation

Funds administered by the diocese total some £73.2m. This was down by £4.5m since Dec 2021. It was also noted that the value of our investments, not unexpectedly, is down by £3.9m because of the impact of the stock market performance in 2022. These were unrealized losses. This accounts for most of the fall in total funds. Despite this, the Net Current Assets were £3.4m.

Andrew walked the AGM through a detailed summary of the accounts and concluded with what the account revealed and what we should expect ahead.

We cannot expect Parish Share to meet our ministry and support costs, but they form a vital element of the financial plan going forward. In addition we will use National and local grants to deliver the change programme, which also envisages some new fundraised income and additional cash resource from Total Return Accounting.

We are committed to holding on to the goal of maintaining stipendiary clergy numbers, if at all possible, and we now benefit substantially from lower clergy pension premiums.

The transition to TC.T will place pressures on the system, and we will need to make sure we have the capacity to achieve our collective goals.

Whilst we have a stubborn operating budget deficit somewhere between £600k and £800k, we are on track to achieve a balanced budget by 2027/28, at this stage.

The Future

A plan to lower the operating deficit over the next few years to achieve financial balance.

An ambitious new programme of change funded by the national Church (thus far £6.8m for the next three years), and our own reserves, to bring the Gospel ever closer to the heart of our communities.

Andrew thanked DSS staff, especially Richard, Jeff and Finance Team for their hard work during challenging circumstances.

Andrew Lucas then moved:

- a) That the BDBF receives and adopts the Directors' Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Limited for the year ended 31st December 2022.

The motion was carried unanimously.

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| 4. | Appointment of Auditors for the year ending 31 December 2023 |
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Andrew explained that the AGM needed to appoint the auditors for 2023.

Andrew Lucas moved:

- a) that the BDBF appoints Mazars LLP as auditors for the year ending 31st December 2023 and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration.

The motion was carried unanimously.

5. Appointment of the member of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd

Andrew welcomed Matt Stone as a new member of the BDBF and Synod.

Andrew formally declared the AGM closed, and handed the meeting over to Bruce to commence Synod.

Before Synod officially started, Bishop Viv thanked Andrew for his 12 years of service as Chair of the BDBF, commenting that his love for, and commitment to, Christ and Christ's church has been extraordinary. Bishop Viv also suggested that the unanimous vote for the accounts demonstrated the AGM's trust in Andrew.

Bruce Fynamore in the Chair

**6. Welcome
Minutes of last meeting, apologies**

Bruce welcomed Synod members, then thanked the Diocesan Support Services staff team for all the work they had put into making Synod happen.

Bruce reminded Synod that if anyone wished to ask a question, they should raise their hand, and when called on state their name and deanery. There was also an opportunity to ask questions via the Synod email address,

Bruce highlighted that there was now a [Diocesan Calendar](#) so that the dates of Diocesan events (including Synod) might be easily found on the Diocesan website.

Bruce informed Synod that 2 amendments had been requested to the minutes, these were:

John Sunderland's question under Section 9 was amended from "John Sunderland (North Wiltshire Deanery): The Diocese of Bristol is about 20,000-30,000 people and from the June 2022 Synod, we were informed that the Diocesan carbon footprint was 4,550 tons which equates to about 3.4%. By changing our behaviour by 3.4%, we could erase out footprint. So, alongside our actions to reduce carbon emissions, we should also encourage individuals to change their behaviour" to "John Sunderland (North Wilts Deanery): As raised at Jun 2022 Synod, given average UK personal carbon footprint c.10tCO₂e and 20,000+ diocesan congregation, a mere 2.2% personal behavioural change equates to the entire diocesan 4,550tCO₂e footprint. So our strategy should aim to change our behaviour (and its wider witness) as much as reducing the direct diocesan estate CO₂e footprint".

The answer to Rich Cresswell's query in Section 9 was amended from "£78 million in reserves (of which £40m might be utilised for this kind of activity), so it would be

less “2.6%” of the total.

With no other amendments received, Synod received the minutes from the meeting on 18 March as accepted.

Bruce informed Synod we have received 0 apologies from the House of Bishops, 8 apologies from the House of Clergy and 11 apologies from the House of Laity.

Bruce confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Bruce explained the structure of the meeting:

The meeting was largely formed of two parts.

- Routine business including reports on the work of Bishop’s Council and Net Zero, as well as a Risk Register update.
- Safeguarding, hidden disability and TC.T.

Bishop’s Address

As Synod was running ahead of schedule, the Bishop wanted to take the additional time to address questions she had been receiving about the Ugandan Government’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill and the Ugandan Church’s backing of the Bill.

Bishop Viv had been asked to comment on the Ugandan Church’s position and whether it would impact the Diocese of Bristol’s relationship with Uganda. Before publishing an [official comment](#), Bishop Viv explained that she wanted time to reflect and discuss a response with Chris Dobson (Adviser for Parish Discipleship & Evangelism) who was the lead on Uganda. This had not so far taken place as Chris was on annual leave.

Bishop Viv then read out the statement made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd Justin Welby.

Following this, Synod was given a couple of minutes for discussion on its tables.

Bishop Viv’s address focused on Acts, questioning whether we often read the book through or instead read bitesized chunks and consequently miss the broader context and messages of this scripture.

8. Bishop’s Council & Board of Directors report 9 May

Bruce invited Kaf Smith to represent the Bishop’s Council report.

Kaf summarized the report and particularly thanked those who work tirelessly to get the TC.T funding.

Kaf explained that Bishop’s Council had reviewed the accounts, plus updates on Net Zero, TC.T, all of which had or would be discussed in more depth within the Synod meeting.

Kaf Smith moved:

- a) That the report be received;

The motion was carried unanimously.

9. Net Zero Update

Bruce invited Richard Leaman to present the Net Zero update.

Lindsey McCallum (Director of Property) and Amy Dartington (Environment and Sustainability Manager) were unable to attend so Richard presented the update.

Richard explained the progress chart which demonstrated that the Net Zero plan was progressing well. To date, the BDBF had awarded the energy audit task to 'Inspired Efficiency' who had significant experience with churches. Plans for installing PV for fifteen clergy houses and for five VA schools has also been instigated. Pilot schemes for heating are under review and it was being decided what form they would take.

Richard picked up on a point made by John Sunderland at the last Synod that as individuals we could do more, and this will have a greater impact than anything the Diocesan 'technical' response will achieve. Since then, the BDBF has created more content for its resource hub and appointed, Kit Connell, Environment and Sustainability Outreach Officer whose post will be funded from the Carbon Net Zero Capability Fund.

Richard also encouraged Synod members to join the Net Zero Advisory Board and if they wished to do so to contact either himself (richard.leaman@bristoldiocese.org) or Amy Dartington (amy.dartington@bristoldiocese.org).

Bruce invited questions but none were raised.

10. Risk Register and Scorecard briefing

Richard introduced Rob Mountain, Director of Transformation, to present the Risk Register and Scorecard briefing.

Rob explained the Risk Register and Scorecard were normal project management techniques to ensure the plan was implemented and the risks reduced. He outlined the methodology for both.

Rob highlighted that the TC.T grant of £6.82m had been awarded by National Church for the next three years; however, sustained Parish Share was of fundamental importance to the ongoing work the diocese.

Bruce invited questions and the following were raised:

Julia Childerhouse (Chippenham) – There were a collection of soft and hard measures on the scorecard. How might these be measured? Are they dependant on the people who measure them and what if these people change?

Rob explained that there is a variety of ways of measuring progress and success. One means would be to review good news stories and assess them in line with the four values to ascertain what has been achieved. Richard added that – for example – 'Clergy Wellbeing' was challenging to measure, but we have found a way to do it. A key consideration is that we do not want to overburden parishes with requests for reports, but we do need to ensure our efforts to transform are bearing fruit.

David Stephenson (City) – TC.T was a way of discerning what God is doing amongst us. Can there be some thought given to resourcing PCCs to do similar discernment within the parishes?

Richard agreed.

Adam Beaumont (North Wilts) – In understanding our level of risk, Adam suggested that we needed to know our appetite for risk and asked whether there was an official level of risk?

Richard confirmed that the audit and Risk Committee have an approved register of

our risk appetite which can be made available on request.

Kat Campion-Spall (City) – Noted that Andrew had mentioned the lack of increase in Parish Share and the challenges of sustaining clergy in this context. Kat highlighted that it was challenging to encourage parishioners to give more during a cost-of-living crisis, so would this mean parishes who do not meet their parish share will lose clergy?

Richard confirmed that not maintaining Parish Share was a risk to the BDBF's financial wellbeing, and the pace of future activities, but reassured Synod that:

- a. our strategic intent is to sustain stipendiary clergy numbers and
- b. there was no planned correlation between decreasing Parish Share and decreasing clergy numbers. The drop in Parish Share would instead make TC.T more challenging (and slow) to deliver.

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| 11. | Question Time |
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Bruce referred to the written questions and asked if any of those who submitted written questions wished to ask any supplementary questions.

- Clive Deverell (Swindon) supplementary question – The projects highlighted in the Risk Register and Scorecard briefing showcased churches with very few or no women in leadership positions. If both the Bishop and Dean were replaced by men, the Diocese of Bristol would have less women in senior positions than when Archdeacon Christine Froude was appointed in 2010. Clive wanted to raise this concern because he has been encouraged by women in ministry and does not wish the legacy of women in the diocese to disappear.

- Bishop Viv confirmed that the diocese needed to remain alert to opportunities of being inclusive and diverse, in all areas. She also expressed her gratitude to Kat Campion-Spall for all the work she did as Dean of Women's Ministry and how she has highlighted issues during her time in post, most particularly the issues faced when clergy are married to other clergy.

Simon Stevenette confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question.

Becky Waring (Bristol South) – In Becky's parish the relationship with Uganda was already controversial, given the Ugandan Church's decision to support the Government's Anti-Homosexuality Bill, what link options were there with Uganda for parishes with a more inclusive view of theology?

- Bishop Viv confirmed that she would be looking at the matter closely in the days to come but understands that many don't want to lose the close personal and local relationships that have developed over many years.

Simon Stevenette noted it was recently the 60th Anniversary of Self-Supporting Ministry, and questioned whether there would be an SSM Bishop or Archdeacon.

Charles Sutton informed Synod there was a lot happening in the SSM world, especially for the Diocese of Bristol which had 46% SSMs. What was once very much located in some dioceses, now had a regional and national focus. For example, there is now a national SSM officer, plus the bishop that has oversight used to be an SSM. Charles agreed to draft a communication about the developments for SSMs, so Synod and the wider diocese is kept informed.

Trudie Wigley in the Chair

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| 12. | Safeguarding Annual Report for 2022 |
| <p>Trudie welcomed Caroline Jowett-Ive, Deputy Diocesan Secretary and Director of Safeguarding and People to represent the annual Safeguarding report.</p> <p>Caroline explained that it was a statutory obligation for the BDBF to present a Safeguarding report each year.</p> <p>The BDBF Safeguarding Team has had its capacity increased by appointing a female caseworker, Esther Williams, and the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator, Katheryn Caithness, hours had been increased to full-time.</p> <p>Bristol Diocese was working on the pioneer Pathway Pilot Project, which was a national safeguarding case management system which pools records called MyConcern. This will allow all diocese to track the movement of people and identify concerns.</p> <p>The Past case review (PCR2 report) was finalised and submitted. There is summary on the website. The matrix of recommendations were being actioned.</p> <p>As part of TC.T the Safeguarding team was committed to finding ways of making the requirements of safeguarding less onerous for parishes and was investing time in developing the Safeguarding Hub.</p> <p>Trudie invited questions and the following were raised:</p> <p>John Sunderland (North Wilts) – Is there any direct cost to the BDBF for people taking the online courses? If not, John wanted to encourage more people to take them so that this is general awareness.</p> <p>Caroline confirmed that there wasn't a direct cost per use.</p> <p>XXX Chippenham – commended the deanery dashboard for people who hadn't yet used it as it made the requirements of safeguarding easier to manage.</p> <p>Steve Wilkinson (North Wilts) – Steve was pleased that he was finally no longer needing to justify the need for Safeguarding training to his volunteers; however, he was concerned about the content of the online courses as it had led some to question their commitment to their role.</p> <p>Caroline explained that the course content was not designed by the BDBF; however, it had a channel to feedback so any concerns should be sent to the Safeguarding Team (Safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org). Also, if online learning was a barrier, face-to-face training might be arranged dependant on capacity.</p> <p>Simon Stevenette (Swindon) – Simon queried how instances of spiritual abuse might be reported.</p> <p>Caroline confirmed that spiritual abuse should be reported in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.</p> <p>Phil Harrison (Swindon) – Phil had received a lot of feedback about the online training and was concerned about the content because some volunteers had needed pastoral support afterwards. Phil suggested that more face-to-face training options might be beneficial because we are asking volunteers to carry out the training on their own without any knowledge of how it might affect them.</p> <p>Caroline acknowledged this issue and agreed to raise it with the Safeguarding team.</p> | |
| 13. | Hidden Disability – Sunflower Lanyards |

Trudie welcomed Alice Kemp to present on Sunflower Lanyards.

Alice informed Synod that disability was likely to affect us all. 22% of people are disabled and 42% of state pension aged people are disabled. There were then all the people caring for those who are disabled. Consequently, disability will at some point impact our lives.

Alice highlighted that conversations about disability tend to focus on ramps and accessible WCs. However, disability was often hidden or might fluctuate.

Alice referred to three stories that demonstrated when hidden disabilities had significantly impacted people's lives because there was a lack of understanding.

Person one had, at the age of 32, Parkinson's. When they were returning from a concert in London members of the public misconstrued their shaking as being drunk and shouted and abused them verbally.

Person two struggled with long Covid and consequently found the return to work challenging. Colleagues did not recognise this, and support was not put in place.

Person three had Crohn's disease and would consequently need the toilet urgently. As this person did not have an obvious disability, they often faced disapproving people when they used the accessible toilet.

Alice highlighted that being accused of faking it and experiencing stigma was a real problem for people with hidden disabilities. We therefore need to put in place support so that they do not need to constantly explain themselves.

Heathrow had this conversation in 2016. Through conversation with the disabled community the Sunflower Lanyard was developed. The Sunflower Lanyard is something discreet for people to wear that signals they may need support. The need for the scheme was demonstrated by rapid expansion to cover 19 countries in just 9 years.

The BDBF has been looking at this as a scheme to help churches be more inclusive and have consequently signed up. All BDBF staff will all be trained over the next three months on the hidden disability scheme. Sunflower Lanyards had been ordered to be distributed at Synod, but they have not arrived, they will be available at the November Synod.

The BDBF wanted to encourage PCCs to sign up. It costs £60; however, if a PCC cannot afford this, they should contact Alice (alice.kemp@bristoldiocese.org) who can provide training.

Trudie invited questions and the following were raised:

Rich Creswell (Kingswood and S Glos) – was interested in the scheme but asked if someone from the Diocesan office might produce a position paper that could be presented at PCCs?

Alice agreed to write and circulate a paper. Alice also took the opportunity to introduce Hayley Brydges (Mental Health Adviser).

Clive Deverell (Swindon) – Reminded Synod about the Voices of Shalom.

Alice expanded that the Voices of Shalom was a group that meets online to support others in the diocese who have disabilities so that they have a voice.

Steve Wilkinson (North Wilts) – encouraged everyone to ensure that accessible WCs are not used as cupboards and house the Hoover etc.

Teresa Taylor (Kingswood and S Glos) – Queried whether there was an alternative version of the lanyard for people who do not wish to wear it around their necks.

Alice confirmed that bracelets wear available.

Trudie asked Phil Harrison to commit Safeguarding and hidden disabilities to prayer

14. Transforming Church. Together – interactive session

Trudie invited Neil and Christopher to lead a discussion-based session on TC.T.

Neil and Christopher started their session by thanking Synod for all its commitment and drive to deliver the work of TC.T. Laura Thomas committed TC.T to God through prayer.

They explained that TC.T should not be an extra 'bolt on' but should be an integral part of work and life together. To help foster this approach the Archdeacons asked a series of questions to encourage conversations about TC.T.

Synod considered the following questions:

1. What is it about TC.T that you are most excited about?
2. What scripture and/or person in the bible relates best to your favourite part of TC.T?

Feedback from tables:

Table 1 was excited by the work around inclusion and racial justice.

Table 2 had joined another table.

Table 3 suggested that the book of Acts was a model for TC.T.

Table 4 suggested that we were gathering in order to be sent out and need to focus on Mission and engagement opportunities.

Table 5 was excited to work with under 18s.

Table 6 was eager to engage with working with younger generations.

Table 7 was concentrating on the Holy Spirit and waiting to see what the Holy Spirit has in store.

Table 8 felt that starting TC.T was similar to what it must have been like to be a disciple. Need to figure out who you are and what you are doing.

Table 9 referred to Jesus meeting the woman at the well and wanting to help encounters with Jesus happen.

Table 10 compared TC.T to the disciple Peter as TC.T intended to take ordinary people and transform their lives to help build Christ's kingdom.

Table 11 was looking forward to moving away from managing decline and focusing on how to grow.

Neil committed TCT to prayer and thanked Synod for its contributions. He encouraged Synod to send further feedback to synod@bristoldiocese.org.

The Archdeacons' concluded the session by explaining next steps:

1. Discernment and discovery across parishes and deaneries
2. Formation of advisory groups
3. First steps in the program.

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| 15. | Blessing and close |
| <p>Trudie thanked all Synod members and staff for contributing to a good natured and fruitful meeting. She also reminded Synod that the next meeting was on 18th November 2023 and confirmed that minutes will be circulated along with the slides and papers tabled at the meeting.</p> <p>Bishop Viv closed the meeting with a thanksgiving prayer for the ministry of Andrew Lucas. Bishop Viv also prayed for our senior officers, Richard Bacon who had taken over responsibility the Diocesan Board of Finance, Richard Leaman for his work leading the Diocesan Support Team, and for Lee Coley who has kept us on the right legal path.</p> | |

Post Synod note

The Updated Annual Report and Financial Statements were discussed at the Audit and Risk Committee and Jeff Loo (Director of Finance) gave a summary on the main item of the duplication of a pension provision which also caused a complication in completing the cashflow. These have now been resolved and the AR&A adjusted as agreed with Andrew Lucas (Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance). These were non-material corrections. This will be reported formally at the next Synod meeting.