



6. Board of Directors, Bishop's Council and Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee Report

14 July, 5 September and 17 October 2022

The Bishop's Council, Board of Directors and Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee met in person on 14 July and 5 September and via Zoom on 17 October 2022.

The Council focused primarily on drafting and then finalising the Diocesan Strategy (Transforming Church. Together), and the associated budgetary implications. Synod approved the strategy in September, and the aligned 2023 budget is brought to this Synod meeting, to agree our proposed expenditure plans.

Transforming Church. Together (TCT).

After intensive activity by 12 working groups early in 2022, and a period of listening, discernment and prayer, the draft TCT strategy was presented to Synod on 19th March 2022. This was followed by several months of feedback from - and discernment with - parishes and clergy, and the final version of the strategy was approved by Synod on 7th September 2022.

The Council also oversaw extensive work to prepare and submit a bid to the National Church to invest in our transformation programme, to the sum of approximately £5.6m over 5 years. The bid has recently passed stage 1 approval (transformation concept, and design), and we expect stage 2 approval (transformation scheduling, performance metrics and governance) in the new year. There has never been an instance where a Diocese has passed stage 1 and not been granted the funding at stage 2, so Council have therefore approved the 2023 budget based on the sound assumption we will get the support we have requested.

The Council will now oversee the development of the project governance, milestones and performance metrics so we are ready for implementation in the new year. Concurrently, we have entered another period of prayer and engagement with parishes to understand what the strategy could mean in each specific context. The Council's intention is that the changes that actually take place in the Diocese are driven bottom-up, not top-down.

DBF Budget and Parish Share for 2023

The Board of Directors has regularly reviewed the DBF's financial performance (and forecasts) throughout 2022, with regular supporting briefings from the Finance Committee. The forecast for the end of year looks promising, in that we will probably underspend overall, mainly as a result of clergy vacancies - currently being addressed – but also taut cost control

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in other areas of expenditure. In September, 2022 Council considered the draft 2023 Budget, and in October, it approved the final version – presented at this Synod. The DBF is determined to bring the budget into balance over the next 5 to 6 years, and therefore to gradually reduce the need to draw on our reserves to operate. In broad terms, we expect to be able to sustain clergy numbers, whilst utilising National Church funding to deliver the transformation programme overall. There are risks to the programme; not least the impact of the cost of living challenges and the potential drop in investment income as a result of a plethora of global and national pressures. The DBF will adjust expenditure (and hence activity) over the period to ensure that we remain within the parameters of the TCT strategy and budget and – ultimately - achieve financial sustainability. More details are given in the 2023 Budget paper.

The DBF, and subsequently Bishop's Council, reviewed and approved the 2023 Parish Share formula. The new formula is based on extensive feedback and discussion with a significant number of parishes, and is designed to be fair, simple and transparent. Whilst it is recognised that the current economic climate will make it challenging for parishes and benefices to meet their share next year, it is also a time when the need for generosity – for the benefit of the whole Diocese – has never been more important.

Risk management

The Board of Directors continue to oversee the activities of the Audit & Risk Committee, who are in the process of updating the risk register to align with the new strategy. Inter alia, the potential risks include:

- the current unstable national and international landscape,
- the financial risk of a shortfall in income,
- a lack of buy in to the strategy at Parish/Benefice/Chaplaincy level,
- a gap between the expectations of what TCT can deliver and our ability to meet them at a variety of levels in the diocese,
- The impact of any National Church policy changes.

Mitigation is already in place for many of these risks, and more measures are being developed. This register will be presented to Synod in 2023 once Bishop's Council have reviewed and approved it.

Concord church plant, Brabazon

Concord church, located on Filton airfield and within the new Brabazon housing estate, launched on 8 September and is led by the Revd Andy Carter. The church was planted from the resourcing church, St Nicholas, Bristol, and comes under the same Bishop's Mission Order.

Mission and Pastoral Committee work

In addition to noting several matters that are currently in progress, the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) made recommendations about ten suspensions and about one pastoral order.

In addition, and in line with the rule 24 (1) of the Church Representation Rules (CRR) 2022, the Committee considered a Scheme to provide for representation for the Bishop's Mission Order (BMO) Shine Pinehurst on Deanery Synod. The Committee duly recommended a supplementary instrument and the CRR Scheme. Diocesan Synod will be asked to approve the CRR Scheme as part of the motion to receive this report.

Deanery Synod Election Formula 2023-2026

Options for the formula for the next Deanery Synod triennium were considered leading to a recommendation outlined in a separate paper. Diocesan Synod will be asked to approve the Deanery Synod election formula as part of the motion to receive this report.

Bishop's Instruments to provide for virtual meetings

Following the emergency provisions that were put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, Bishop Viv directed that a permanent solution should be found that would allow Synods and PCCs to meet virtually should they need to do so. In line with rule 78 (5) (6) of the Church Representation Rules two Bishop's Instruments have been drafted to that effect. Diocesan Synod is asked to note the two Bishop's Instruments.