



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Introductory note for the Diocesan Synod, 15 November 2025

To: Diocesan Synod members

Please find enclosed the agenda and papers for Diocesan Synod on 15 November at St Michael's Church Centre, North Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8PD

The Diocese of Bristol is continuing its journey through the *Transforming Church. Together* process and your contributions, perspectives, and experiences are essential for the synodical debates to ensure that the views of the people you represent are heard. We would therefore like to urge you to stay for the full meeting please, to ensure that the decisions made by Diocesan Synod are representative - and reflect the views of - its full membership and the wider Diocese.

This Diocesan Synod is largely formed of two parts:

- 1. Finance:** This includes information on the current financial landscape and challenges this is presenting, consideration on how we can respond to these challenges and to review, discuss and vote on the 2026 budget.
- 2. Routine Business:** This includes reports from recent meetings of Bishop's Council, Board of Directors, DMPC, plus an update from the Priority Communities Network.

Written questions

Any written questions must be submitted 7 days before Diocesan Synod. As this is the case, please could any written questions be submitted via the form (link in email) by 9am Friday, 7 November. This gives us time to direct your question to the most appropriate person and send you an answer prior to the meeting.

Minutes from 14 June 2025

If you have any proposed amendments or questions about the minutes, please do fill in the form (link in email) by 9am Friday, 7 November. The minutes can then be amended ahead of the meeting.

Note from the Chairs

As Chairs, we understand that Diocesan Synod meetings can be full and, at times, overwhelming with information. Our goal is to balance ensuring you remain fully updated without feeling swamped, while also providing ample time for valuable discussion and questions. To achieve this, we've implemented a few changes we hope you'll find helpful.

Papers Taken as Read

To allow more time for active engagement, standing items such as the Bishop's Council and General Synod reports will now be taken as read. This means we won't be presenting and summarising every circulated paper, but there will still be the opportunity to elaborate on certain items as necessary, and dedicated time for your questions on these documents.

Earlier Start Time

The start time of Diocesan Synod has been brought forward so we have time to properly discuss the 2026 Budget.

Housekeeping Information

At the start of every Synod, we typically share a significant amount of housekeeping information. To use our time more effectively, we've decided to list this information here for your reference rather than announcing it verbally.

Accessibility

As times during Diocesan Synod, you may be invited to stand, this is an invitation only. Please only stand if you feel comfortable to do so.

Asking a question

All Diocesan Synod members are encouraged to ask questions; however, so that all hear and understand the context of the question please wait for the microphone and state your name and deanery before starting your question.

Navigating Sensitive Subjects

Please remember that we all bring a diverse range of experiences, including lived experiences, which shape our views and beliefs. While we fully support the expression of your views, we kindly ask that you are mindful of differing perspectives when contributing to Synod debates and in your informal conversations, with everyone who will be attending Synod. Respecting these differences helps uphold our values, including generosity of spirit, and ensures we meet our legal obligations.

Should any subjects covered at Synod be upsetting or triggering for members, visitors, or Diocesan Support Services (DSS) staff, please know that support is available. Simon Taylor and GERALYN Meehan are available to talk with, and additionally you can email governance.support@bristoldiocese.org during the meeting, and a member of the DSS will connect you with them or an appropriate person either immediately or during the coffee break.

Essential Information

- **First Aider:** A trained First Aider is available should anyone require medical attention.
 - **Fire Drill:** Please note, there is no planned fire drill during this meeting.
-

If you have any questions, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact governance.support@bristoldiocese.org.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Agenda, Diocesan Synod

Date: 15 November 2025

Time: 9.15 am to 1.00pm (Coffee from 9.00am)

Venue: St Michael's Church Centre, North Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8PD

Topic	Abb.	Papers	Led by	Time
Diocesan Synod				
<i>Mr Bruce Finnamore, Chair of the House of Laity, in the Chair</i>				
1.	Eucharist		The Rt Revd Neil Warwick, Acting Bishop of Bristol	09:15 (40 mins)
2.	Welcome & Apologies	I		09:55 (5 mins)
3.	Minutes 3.1 Minutes of 14 June Synod meeting	LO	3.1	Mr Bruce Finnamore, Chair of the House of Laity 10:00 (5 mins)
	3.2 Report of 20 September LLF Synod meeting	LO	3.2	
	3.3 House of Bishop's Update	I		The Rt Revd Neil Warwick, Acting Bishop of Bristol 10:05 (5 mins)
4.	The appointment of members of Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd	LO		Mr Bruce Finnamore, Chair of the House of Laity 10:10 (5 mins)
5.	Financial Landscape & Challenges	I		Canon Richard Bacon, Chair of BDBF and Mr 10:15 (10 mins)

Topic		Abb.	Papers	Led by	Time
				Stephen Sheridan, Director of Finance	
6.	Responding to the Challenges			The Ven Christopher Bryan, Archdeacon of Malmesbury and The Ven Becky Waring, Archdeacon of Bristol	10.25 (10 mins)
7.	Bristol DBF Budget 2026 (motion below) 7.1 Presentation of Budget 2026	D&A	7.1	Canon Richard Bacon (Presentation by Mr Stephen Sheridan, Director of Finance)	10:35 (15 mins)
	7.2 Round table discussion	I			10:50 (15 mins)
	7.3 Questions & Answers	D&A			11:05 (15 mins)
	7.4 Motion to approve	DE			11:20 (5 mins)
Coffee					11:25 (15 mins)
<i>The Revd Trudie Wigley, Chair of the House of Clergy, in the Chair</i>					
8.	Bishop’s Address			The Rt Revd Neil Warwick, Acting Bishop of Bristol	11.40 (10 mins)
9.	Governance Reports 9.1 Bishop’s Council & Board of Directors report (8 July, 18 August, 14 and 31 October 2025) 9.1.1 Questions & Answers	Q&A	9.1	Mr John Sunderland, Bishop’s Council member	11:50 (10 mins)
	9.1.2 Motion: The Bishop’s Council reports for 8 July, 18 August, 14 and 31	DE			12:00 (5 mins)

Topic		Abb.	Papers	Led by	Time
	October are received. (Motion below)				
	9.1.3 Motion: CRR Scheme for Concord Church BMO (motion below)	DE	9.1.3a 9.1.3b		12:05 (5 mins)
	9.1.4 Motion: Approval of Deanery Synod Election Formula for 2026 - 2029	DE	9.1.4		12:10 (5 mins)
	9.2 General Synod report (July 2025) 9.2.1 Questions & Answers	Q&A	9.2	The Revd Canon Alice Kemp, General Synod Member	12:15 (10 mins)
10.	Question Time	Q&A		The Revd Trudie Wigley, Chair of the House of Clergy	12:25 (15mins)
11.	Priority Communities Update 11.1 Update	I	11.2	The Very Revd Dr Mandy Ford, Dean of Bristol Cathedral	12.40 (10 mins)
	11.2 Church Urban Fund (CUF) Together Network Partnership (motion below)	DE			12:50 (5 mins)
	11.3 Questions & Answers	Q&A			12:55 (5 mins)
12.	Blessing and Close				13:00

Proposed motions for debate:

6 Mr Richard Bacon (Chair of Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance) to move:
That this Synod authorises the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance to expend in the year 2026 sums totaling £15,966,000 (including project costs) in respect of the items in the budget for that year.

8.1.2 Mr John Sunderland, Bishop's Council Member to move:

The Bishop's Council report be received.

8.1.3 Mr John Sunderland, Bishop's Council Member to move:

The Church Representation Rules (CRR) Scheme for Concord Church BMO is approved.

8.1.4 Mr John Sunderland, Bishop's Council Member to move:

that in accordance with Church Representation Rules the number of lay representatives on Deanery Synods shall be in proportion to the number on the church electoral roll of each parish in accordance with the formula approved by the Bishop's Council on 31 October 2025.

11.2 The Very Revd Mandy Ford, Dean of Bristol Cathedral to move:

The Diocese of Bristol becomes an Associate Member of the Together Network, hosted by the Church Urban Fund, and commits to actively participate in its programmes, learning opportunities, and collaborative Kingdom mission to tackle poverty and transform communities.

Upcoming Synods:

Saturday 21 March 2026 (09:30 – TBA) – St Paul's Church, Malmesbury Road, Chippenham SN15 1PS

Saturday 20 June 2026 (09:30 – TBA) – St Michael's Church Centre, North Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8PD

Saturday 21 November 2026 (09:30 – TBA) – St Michael's Church Centre, North Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8PD

Diocesan Synod legend

Purpose: to outline the functions of Synod (with abbreviations), and for those abbreviations to be used against each agenda item.

Function	
Article 8 decisions passed down by General Synod, or fulfilling Synod's statutory legal obligations	LO
Decision	DE
Discussion, and advice to the Bishop	D&A
Information to enable Diocesan Synod members to be advocates in a particular area of Diocesan business	I
Questions & Answers	Q&A

