



## Bishop's Council report, 9 September 2020 and 15 October 2020

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The Bishop's Council, Board of Directors and Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee met via Zoom on 9 September and 15 October 2020. The primary areas of business were a review of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, consideration of the 2021 budget in the light of performance and forecasts for 2020, and work on the vision, values and strategy development, all of which are brought to this Synod meeting.

### **Review of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan**

In October, the Council reviewed the outcomes of the six strategic initiatives identified as the diocesan level plan for supporting the overall 2016 – 2020 Vision and Priorities. It focussed on detailed evaluation and on what has been learnt from the work that has been done. The Council discussed the themes coming from that learning that will act as an input into the vision and strategy development.

### **Transforming church: developing vision, priorities and plans**

In September, the Bishop's Council considered in detail a renewed proposal developing the Diocese's future vision and plans. Bishop Viv introduced the discussion by giving a theological perspective on where she is seeing God at work. The decision was considered in the light of national Church of England work on developing vision and strategy, the capacity and capability required for this to be led by the Bishop and her senior staff, opportunities to work with national Church of England resources, now and in the future, and, of course, the uncertainty of Covid19 which had delayed and changed the approach.

The proposal focuses on enabling the whole Diocese to discovering what it is that it is called to be and to do through a process of engagement, listening, prayer, discernment and formulating plans. This will involve people inside and outside the Church, with a view to reaching and serving those who do not normally engage with it. The proposal involved applying for a Strategic Capacity Grant to the national Church of England to resource the development project. The primary engagement would take place in the first half of 2021 in order to have plans in place by the end of 2021.

The Bishop's Council agreed to the proposal in September and received a progress report in October, including confirmation of the grant to support the development work. Further plans will be shared at the Diocesan Synod.

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### **DBF Budget and Parish Share for 2021**

The Board of Directors has considered the DBF's financial performance in 2020 to date and forecast to the end of the year at every meeting since May, each with a briefing from the Finance Committee. In September and October, it considered two iterations of the draft 2021 Budget in the light of that following detailed work at preceding Finance Committee meetings. It also considered and approved the Parish Share approach for 2021.

The Directors recognised the structural deficit in the DBF's budget as a result of not meeting the income goals set in the 2017 to 2020 Financial Plan. However, they chose not to address it substantially in 2021. This decision was to ensure long term expenditure was in line with future vision and strategy and did not pre-empt them and to provide stability for parish ministry and its support as we continue to face the challenge of Covid19. Both decisions were a direct result of the Covid19 pandemic, in effect using the DBF's reserves to buy time for prayerful and discerning decisions for the longer term sake of the whole Diocese.

At the same time, Diocesan officers were asked to continue to build on the cost control measures in place, making further in year savings where possible, and the Finance Committee has commissioned an Income Generation Task Group to identify additional sources of income to Parish Share, investment and grant income. This group will identify the scope and potential of additional DBF income and report into the strategy development process.

The Board of Directors agreed to recommend the 2021 expenditure for approval to Diocesan Synod. Full details are given the 2021 Budget paper.

### **Diocesan Synod 2021-24 election numbers**

The Council recommended a formula for the 2021 elections outlined in a separate paper. This will be proposed as part of the motion to receive tis report.

### **Representation and Mission and Pastoral Committee work**

The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee made recommendations about five suspensions of presentation, an alteration to a Pastoral Order, a Supplementary Instrument for Shine Pinehurst BMO and to approve the BMO for St James Lockleaze.

Following changes to the Church Representation Rules, it also recommended schemes for synodical representation of clergy at Emmanuel Bristol.