



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

TRANSFORMING CHURCH. TOGETHER.

Agenda Ref	7.1
Report Title	Board of Directors, Bishop's Council and Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee Report (11 May 2026 & 15 May 2026)
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Introduction

1. The Bishops Council Board of Directors and Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee met on 11 May 2026, 15 May 2026 (for a one day 'Residential' event) and 2 June 2026. The following topics were on the agendas:
2. **Bishop's Council**
 - a. **Locally Supported Ministers (LSM) Policy**

The LSM policy was drafted following 3 parishes enquiring about funding their own minister, which they considered financially viable. The Revd Canon Simon Taylor, Director of Mission & Ministry Support advised that the policy would enable them to act in accordance with their wishes, whilst protecting the clergy person and the parish/location wanting to employ them, as well as minimising the risk of being regarded as parishes who are seen to receive more than others.

The Ven Becky Waring, Archdeacon of Bristol advised there was no budget for additional stipends and so parishes employing their own LSM may be the only way parishes who want additional ministers could achieve this. The Ven Christopher Bryan, Archdeacon of Malmesbury confirmed the LSM's rights and entitlements would be the same as any other clergy person in the Diocese.

The policy was approved by the Bishop's Staff, with recognition that work would need to be done in conjunction with the Registrar on a standard form of agreement between the Diocese and the hiring parish, if Bishop's Council were to approve the policy.

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Council approved the adoption of the policy, which can be obtained from the Governance team.

b. Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy

Following some amendments by Stephen Sheridan, Director of Finance and IT the Council approved the COI policy, which can be obtained from the Governance team.

c. Safeguarding

Council received the safeguarding report from Adam Bond, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. This report, with some additions, will be presented to Synod at this meeting.

Churchwardens' DBS checks are currently slightly behind where they should be, so Bishop Neil has signed a Bishop's Directive mandating churchwardens to complete safeguarding training, which is only 'recommended' by national guidance. Work with the Archdeacon's team is ongoing considering how best to communicate this with churches.

Council also discussed the increasing interest being paid by the Charity Commission (CC) into the Church of England. The CC are clear that Council are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of anyone coming in to contact with the church, not only vulnerable adults and children. National guidance is being developed, but in broad terms, more serious incidents would need to be brought to the attention of trustees.

Council have agreed to nominate lead safeguarding trustee to enable a better link between trustees and the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group (DSSG), and also to add safeguarding to every Council agenda.

Council also discussed the progress on the new Safeguarding Structures work, which is progressing well. Trustees were encouraged to contribute to the consultation survey.

Praise and positive sentiments were provided to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) for their continued good work.

d. Transforming Church. Together (TC.T) Update

Council were briefed on the progress with TC.T and also a proposal to gather more diversity data. Bishop's Council approved the use of a survey measuring demographics in leadership roles, which, with census data, should allow some analysis at a lower level.

Council were also briefed on the mechanics for our funding bids to continue TC.T from 2027 onwards. Rob Mountain, Director of Transformation also noted his departure date of 1st July.

e. Trustee Code of Conduct

Council reviewed the latest update to the Charity Code of Conduct (prepared by Richard Leaman, CEO). They directed Richard Leaman to produce a Bishop's Council Code of Conduct policy for their review and in time, approval. Council also agreed to conduct a skills audit and to work to fill the areas of expertise/representation currently missing.

f. Carbon Net Zero Strategy

Council reviewed and, with some amendments, approved the strategy submitted by Joe Flatman, Director of Property and Estate. This strategy will be briefed at this Synod, and will need careful communication. We have the ambition, we have a plan, we are now working on finding the money.

g. Parish Share & Culture of Generosity

Leanne Hubbard, Director of External Relations and The Ven Christopher Bryan, Archdeacon of Malmesbury briefed Council on the strategy for encouraging a culture of sustainable generosity. A significant (nearly £3m) gap remains between the cost of ministry and Parish Share received. Parish Share is understood to be a sacrificial gift, to be received and used appropriately, and greater emphasis is needed on the parish journey (communication, support, and encouragement), rather than solely on calculation methods. Trustees made some helpful suggestions and the final report will be circulated more widely when ready.

Leanne also briefed on the need for the Diocese to register with the fundraising regulator and we are awaiting National Church guidance on a fundraising policy.

h. Ephesian Fund

Council discussed use of the Ephesian Fund at both meetings and unanimously resolved that:

'Contributions of Parish Share through The Ephesian Fund will be accepted, and the amount received by the BDBF will be recorded as the amount of Parish Share contributed.'

'Restrictions on the use of funds given in response to the Parish Share request will not be accepted.'

The Ephesian Fund have been informed.

3. **Board of Directors**

a. Canon Richard Bacon, Chairman of Bristol Diocese Board of Finance briefed on previous Finance Committee (FinCom) minutes and noted that FinCom had approved in principle the earmarking of some reserves to sustain TC.T activities until May next year in the event that the National Church did not grant 'Transitional Relief' funding in June this year, and the October SMMIB bid is unsuccessful.

b. End of Year Accounts

The accounts for the year ending 31 December 2026 were presented. Following advice from Finance Committee, it was agreed that they would be recommended to Diocesan Synod at its meeting on 20 June 2026, subject to minor amendments requested during the meeting.

4. **Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee**

In addition to noting several matters that are currently in progress the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee made recommendations to the Bishop about seven suspensions one supplementary instrument for a Bishop's Mission Order.