

DIOCESAN SYNOD ACTS

22 November 2021



Acts of the Diocesan Synod held on 22nd November 2021 at St Paul's Church, Bursledon. 60 members were present.

Meetings by Houses

House of Clergy

The Chair of the House of Clergy opened the meeting and welcomed members.

Co-options

The Chair of the House of Clergy discussed the value and purpose of co-opting members. He reminded members that the house could look to co-opt 5 additional representatives. Expressions of interest had been received from clergy who had not been successful at election. He proposed that the House allow time to reflect on the experience and skills needed before agreeing co-options. Members agreed to defer filling co-options until 2022.

The Chair of the House of Clergy thanked members for his new term and expressed his desire for better, more frequent, communication.

House of Laity

The outgoing Chair of the House of Laity, Alison Coulter welcomed members and the incoming Chair of the House, Alastair Barron. Members thanked the outgoing chair for her hard work and commitment over the last 6 years.

Members discussed the vacant lay position on Bishop's Council, the chair of the WDBF vacancy, the use of co-option's within the house and how to achieve better communication between parishes, deaneries, the Diocese and general synod. Members expressed desire to engage with synodical process and informed debate.

Opening Worship and Welcome

Opening worship was led by Eastleigh Deanery representatives.

The Chair of the House of Clergy gave welcomed members, introduced key personnel and gave thanks to Bursledon for hosting the meeting.

The Chair of the House of Clergy requested members approve that the outgoing Chair of the House of Laity (Alison Coulter) co-chair the meeting. The incoming Chair of the House of Laity (Alastair Barron) was also acting as interim Chair of the DBF and would focus on that role during the meeting. Members agreed to this request.

Overview of Synodical Processes DS 21/02

The Director of Operations gave a presentation exploring the roles, responsibilities and processes of Diocesan Synod. He encouraged members to contact the Diocesan Team with any questions.

He highlighted, from the handbook, to members the mechanisms available to bring business forward to Synod and the rules of debate.

Questions Under Standing Orders

Two formal questions had been received from James Pitkin and Michael Minton. A written response was issued by email to members on the day of the meeting.

James Pitkin asked the following two supplementary questions –

1. Could the supplementary questions from March Synod to be recorded?
The Director of Operations responded that moving forward these would be included in the Acts but there may not be a record of the questions from March 2021.
2. Is Romsey the only Deanery funding a House of Duty post, rather than the Diocese.
The Director of Operations confirmed this was correct.

Michael Minton asked the following –

1. Could Synod be provided with an update on resource churches?
The Director of Operations confirmed that the Business Committee would consider this item for a future meeting.

The outgoing Chair of the House of Laity took the chair.

Introduction to Diocesan Finances DS21/03

The Interim Chair of the DBF gave an induction to Diocesan Finances. He addressed the recent allegations in the press of financial mismanagement and updated members on the steps taken by the board to reassure themselves that the finances had been properly managed. He explained that whilst communication and engagement with Synod around finances had been poor the board was satisfied there had been no mismanagement. They committed to more open and transparent communication around finance with Diocesan Synod including:

1. Greater synodical involvement in meaningful budget discussions and debates
2. Commitment to produce financial Annual Review documents and other resources that open up our finances to wider scrutiny
3. Better briefings and updates to synod, clergy and parish officers through meetings of the Synod Houses, Clergy Breakfast Briefings and budget consultations
4. Increased representation and involvement on sub-committees

He then gave an overview of the annual review and financial statement for 2020, as adopted by the Directors of the WDBF at their meeting in July. He highlighted that:

- The auditor confirmed “that the financial position, shared with the diocese, had been accurate and the savings wholly necessary.”
- The lack of diversity in Diocesan income and the almost entire dependency on CMF collection.

- The CMF collection level of 89%, whilst the lowest in a decade, showed the commitment and sacrifice of parishes during an exceptional time.

The outgoing Chair of the House of Laity gave thanks to the Director of Operations and the Chair of the DBF.

Members requested a breakdown of the governance costs, the Director of Operations committed to circulating this following the meeting.

Presidential Address

The Bishop of Southampton gave the presidential address.

She noted the importance of listening to each other and the importance of journeying together, speaking about the Road to Emmaus. She confirmed the process to look at the future of the Chief Executive role was underway and invited any comments on how this to be sent to her directly.

Update from Bishops Council DS 21/04

A written update had been circulated to all members on the 17th November.

Members asked the following questions:

- What was the rationale behind creating the housing strategy?
The Director of Operations responded that this was in response to the need to diversify Diocesan income streams to reduce reliance on CMF.
- Was there an update on the future of OAP?
The Director of Operations updated members that the initial marketing of the building had not produced appropriate offers. Bishop's Council had therefore decided to pause the sale until the property market had recovered from the affects of the pandemic.

Members were advised that it was the intention to provide written updates from Bishop's Council to all future meetings of Synod to ensure better communication between the two groups.

The outgoing Chair of the House of Laity thanked members for completing the survey and explained that the Business Committee would review the responses in planning future meetings. If there was a clear desire to move to Saturday meetings new dates would be sent out as soon as possible.

The meeting closed with prayer led by the Bishop of Basingstoke.

DEEMED BUSINESS

Approved nem con.

- Acts of Synod March 2021