

**Minutes of a meeting  
of  
Blackburn Diocesan Synod**

**14 July 2018**

**Present**

3 Members of the House of Bishops  
22 Members of the House of Clergy  
40 Members of the House of Laity  
8 Observers (new DBF Chair subject to Synod approval and new Synod members commencing in October 2018)

**Apologies**

13 Members of the House of Clergy  
17 Members of the House of Laity

**1. Eucharist and Welcome to the Bishop of Lancaster, Rt Rev Jill Duff**

**Rev Nancy Goodrich**, Vice Chair of the House of Clergy welcomed members of Diocesan Synod to the meeting.

Bishop Julian led the Eucharist which included a reading from Isaiah Chapter 6 verses 1-8 by Mr Bob Collins.

**Instrument of Delegation to the Bishop of Lancaster**

**Bishop Julian** explained that Synod approval would be required to enable him to delegate areas of ministry to Bishop Jill.

**Bishop Julian** moved that:

"This Synod consents to the Bishop of Blackburn delegating functions to the Bishop of Lancaster by an instrument in the form of the draft provided today."

Members of Synod voted in **favour** with the exception of 2 abstentions and the motion was carried.

***Standing orders were suspended.***

**Diocesan Synod meeting as members of the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance Limited**

The Annual General Meeting of the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance followed. (A separate set of minutes will go to the next Annual General Meeting for approval.)

## ***Standing orders were reinstated***

### **Meeting as Synod**

**Mr Bob Collins**, Chair of the House of Laity proposed a vote of thanks to Canon John Dell for his services to the Diocese and the Diocesan Board of Finance over the last 14 years as he stepped down as his role as Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

A presentation of a gift was made by Bishop Julian.

### **2. Appointment of Mr David Barlow as Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance**

**Bishop Julian** welcomed Mr David Barlow to the meeting. He explained that Mr Barlow is a reader and treasurer at St Johns Whittle-le-Woods and had served in the charity sector. He would have many skills to bring to the role of Chair, however, the appointment would need ratification from Diocesan Synod.

**Bishop Julian** moved that “Mr David Barlow be appointed as Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd”.

Members of Synod voted **unanimously in favour** and the motion was **carried**.

Prayers for Canon Dell and Mr Barlow followed.

### **3. Adjustments to Departmental Structures**

**Bishop Philip** explained that the new office building at Clayton House had had a huge beneficial impact on the way staff work together.

However, the existing DBF structure which contained four departments did not fit well under the headings within Vision 2026 and did not work as well as it could. The proposed new structure would be more closely aligned with the aims and delivery of Vision 2026.

The last major structural review took place eight years ago but much had changed since then, including the development of a new Vision, the arrival of two new suffragan bishops and one new archdeacon, and the departure of two department leaders.

The proposed new structure aimed to:

- increase the direct involvement of Bishops and Archdeacons
- review staff roles to better deliver Vision 2026
- replace the four existing departments with five areas of ministry named Making Disciples, Being Witness, Growing Leaders, Children and Young People and Enablers
- seek financial savings whilst maintaining effectiveness.

There would be no change to accountability and annual reporting, representation on the Bishops Leadership Team or the way staff work together.

The structure of, and the work commissioned to, the Board of Education would remain the same.

Questions and comments were invited.

**Rev Michael Hampson (Tunstall Deanery)** commended the work which he felt was exciting and visionary. He supported the more direct involvement of the Bishops and Archdeacons in the five areas within the proposed structure.

**Rev Ian Enticott (Accrington Deanery)** thought the proposal looked promising although there would be heavy reliance on the Bishops and Archdeacons. He questioned whether there would need to be changes to job descriptions and how staff would be divided up and whether new appointments would be made.

**Mrs Jacqueline Stamper (General Synod and Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery)** hoped that the Director of Discipleship and the Director of Vocations would work closely together in the new structure, as this was not clear.

**Mrs Ann Hearnshaw (Poulton Deanery)** spoke about the need to make disciples from the missing age groups in our congregations, ie those who have the income and energy, but would also like to think we can cherish our older congregations who now have end of life needs.

Canon Graeme Pollard pointed out that the Board of Finance is blessed by the current skill set and team already in place. Although reshuffling would be considered, there were no plans to replace the staff currently in place. He also confirmed that the Director of Discipleship and the Director of Vocations would need to work closely together and both would be based at Clayton House. With regard to Children and Young People, there would also be a strong commitment to working together with the Board of Education who are also based at Clayton House.

**Bishop Philip** moved that "the adjustments to Department Structures be implemented".

All Members of Synod voted **in favour** with the exception of 1 abstention and the motion was **carried**.

#### **4. Leadership and Deployment Strategy**

**Bishop Philip** presented the strategy. It had initially started as a piece of work around deployment of stipendiary clergy but it grew into a larger project. The background to the proposed strategy was Vision 2026; it is a growth strategy but the right kind of leadership would be needed. It links in with Setting God's People Free, which it is about lay people living out Christian faith on the front line.

The proposed strategy is also an attack on heresy. Declinism is the assumption that we will have a much smaller church and that we should be planning for this. There is a presumption that God is no longer capable of doing anything unexpected. However, the renewal of the Church in the western world is inevitable. The question is more about whether God will choose the Church of England for this growth. If we plan for decline the answer is no, so we need to plan for growth.

The sections within the proposed strategy document cover:

- Our Vision and the role of laity
- Data, including useful statistics and trends

- What we are going to achieve
- How we are going to deliver the aims
- How clergy will be deployed
- Plan B and declinism

The strategy will need the following in order to work:

- Vocation - parishes must be calling forth future lay leaders.
- Giving – parishes will need to meet the cost of their clergy to avoid cut backs in numbers
- Mission - going for growth in every way.

Questions and comments were invited.

**Mr Joseph Brookfield (Preston Deanery)** thought the document was comprehensive and clear. There would be a lot to achieve and he felt the strategy should not be too rigid. He was surprised that the strategy only covers two years and asked whether there was an intention to revise the document in time. He also asked how progress would be measured.

Bishop Philip explained that issues around deployment are difficult. All parishes want their own priest in their own house, however, the money, people and vocations are not always available and there is a need to compromise to create full time roles instead of small, part-time roles that do not attract sufficient numbers of interested applicants. He felt that a review in 2020, in three years' time would be right.

**Bishop Philip** moved that “the Leadership and Deployment Strategy be approved”.

All Members of Synod voted **in favour** with the exception of 1 abstention and the motion was **carried**.

## 5. Generosity Gift and Grace – Interim Summary Report of the Parish Share Review Group

**Archdeacon Mark** explained that this was an interim report because Bishop’s Council had decided to extend the duration of the Parish Share Review Group by an additional year in order to ensure the right outcome is reached. The report explained the work carried out so far.

He urged people not to be afraid as God is faithful. Although the amount of parish share and fee income had reduced, the Diocese has still managed to pay for 167 stipendiary clergy. The Diocese’s operating surplus is £2 million and there are free reserves of £5.3 million. There is a lot to be thankful for.

One of the reasons for the work is because distribution of the Lower Income Communities Funding from the Church Commissioners needs to be reviewed. Also, several parishes had are unhappy regarding the current use of attendance figures to calculate parish share requests, as this can be perceived as a tax on growth.

Six areas of work were identified in the report and an action plan has also been drawn up. The report explores:

- A shift towards a change in culture.
- A system that actively encourages growth rather than manages decline is sought
- A small group course entitled ‘Generosity Gift and Grace’ will be available in autumn.

- The group will invest some time working with clergy at the start of 2019 because teaching generosity is something that can be a challenge. Training of Lay Leaders and Clergy is also being looked at.
- Development of the Parish Vision Fund, allowing people to give a legacy or to give directly to supporting initiatives.
- Changing our communication away from language which is about debt and obligation. We don't serve God because we are in God's debt, we serve God out of response and gratitude to Him. This is not a financial issue, it is a discipleship issue.
- Being realistic about the consequences for a small number of the parishes that really struggle is important. Finding ways to help them overcome challenges is being looked at.

Archdeacon Mark explained that there are two share system options being worked on. At this stage, a steer was needed from Synod regarding the two options:

- Option 1 is an adjustment of the current formula which includes <sup>Lower Income Parishes</sup> the cost of clergy housing in the cost of ministry. The Church Commissioners' money for the Lower Income Communities Funding would be allocated directly to ~~them~~. However, there have been difficulties with finding a system that is both simple and fair to all parishes.
- Option 2 involves asking those parishes who can cover the cost of their ministry to do so as well as operating a 'generous offer' system. It is a system that depends on generosity not obligation. This system would carry risks but would have the advantage of removing attendance figures from calculations.

Further details regarding the two options can be found in the report.

Questions and comments were invited from Synod.

**Rev Michael Hampson (Tunstall Deanery)** pointed out that if we believe and trust in Generosity, Gift and Grace then Option 2 is the answer. A simple formula to give people a suggested target could also be incorporated. It is important to start with the basics that each benefice pays for its own ministry costs. The option would make it very clear to explain where the money goes unlike the current system.

**Alistair McHaffie (General Synod)** was encouraged by the report and thanked the Group for their hard work.

He pointed out that a proper change for our churches is needed and that the key is to change our culture. This can only happen through discipleship, but also if the Gospel is clearly explained, taught and preached in our parishes. It is only as we grow in our understanding of what Christ has done for us that our generosity grows in response and therefore our levels of giving will increase. Furthermore, sacrificial giving needs to begin with the Leadership Team in every parish, both clergy and laity alike.

He also asked whether anything from the report might feature in the Diocesan Conference.

**Rev Roger Parker (Burnley Deanery)** also welcomed the report but would like details of any other options that had been discussed as the process should be transparent. He shared his concerns regarding how the Lower Income Communities Funding would be distributed. He asked for a guarantee that 100% of the money would go straight to the parishes it is intended for to reduce their parish share.

He does not believe that the current system is a tax on growth. If people come to church and receive Generosity and Grace from Christ, then people should respond themselves.

A formula system is essential for those parishes who are deprived. If the current formula is to be adjusted, it should be done using the figures available from the Government.

**Mr John Lowe (Lay Leader)** believes Option 2 is fairer, although there will be winners and losers with either option. There must be an effort to reduce large increases in parish share as it may result in non-payment in parishes where this happens.

**Rev Richard Marshall (Blackburn With Darwen Deanery)** highlighted that a parish's ability to pay is not necessarily determined by the poverty statistics for the area that the church is in. Some inner-city areas have some very generous givers and the ability to pay can be quite high, yet some rural areas may have a church building in need of repair and a congregation who do not give possibly because many are retired.

The Minister is there to serve the entire population which might be 15,000 people and not just the 50 people who come to church yet both options start with the parish paying for its own ministry.

He ~~also does not believe~~ <sup>agrees with</sup> there should be a reduction for SSM and House for Duty.

**Rev Canon Simon Cox (Chair of the House of Clergy)** pointed out that just putting the entire £1.2 million Lower Income Communities Funding into the neediest parishes would not make the intended difference as it would disappear into the parish share. The money does need to go to the poorest parishes but it is intended to generate growth rather than pay bills. The Church Commissioners ask for feedback on whether the funding is being applied correctly.

Rev Lisa Senior and Mr Nick Aves responded to the questions and comments raised.

Rev Lisa Senior confirmed that the Parish Share Group is very aware of the lack of money and the culture we live in. As a parish priest she thinks that when the money comes in, we need to be responsible for what it is spent on.

The Parish Share Review had been extended because any decisions made will have a knock-on effect within the Diocese and some parishes will win whilst others will lose. She believes it is right to start with a fairer system. The Group are working hard on this point, but it is not easy.

Her own parish does struggle but it also understands the cost of living. Furthermore, with Vision 2026, the congregation do want to do more and she hopes that by offering training this will help.

Mr Nick Aves emphasised that the Lowest Income Community Funding does need go to the most deprived parishes and both Options 1 and 2 allow for this.

He pointed out that top-slicing the funding could be useful, depending on what it is used for. It could be used to create a resource for parishes to tap into financial expertise or to provide support for writing grant applications.

He agreed that the make-up of congregations does not always reflect the local area, but that our strategy cannot be based on this situation continuing. Many existing members of the congregation are there because they have strong links with the parish.

**Archdeacon Mark** thanked Synod for their contributions and moved that "this report be approved".

All Members of Synod voted **in favour** with the exception of 1 abstention and the motion was **carried**.

## 6. General Synod Report – July Sessions

**Ms Jacqueline Stamper (General Synod and Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery)** presented her report. Some of the highlights of the General Synod included:

- A presentation from a survivor of abuse followed by a motion on the priorities for action outlined in the National Safeguarding Steering Group's report which was carried.
- A debate on climate change, fossil fuels and investment and a decision from General Synod to 'work from the inside and disinvest in fossil fuels from 2023.
- A vote to lobby the Government to prohibit the possession of nuclear weapons.
- A presentation on the Archbishops' Council's budget.
- A debate on the Lords' report on the long-term sustainability of the NHS and adult social care.
- A presentation from the Church Commissioners on their investment and spending strategy.
- Debate on the Cathedrals Working Group report and how they should be run.

There was also particular interest in when the document on human sexuality would be available, although this was not part of the core business.

## 7. Diocesan Synod Standing Orders

There had been some general tidying up of the Diocesan Synod Standing orders and an updated, more user-friendly version was now attached for approval. The document had already received the approval of the Diocesan Registrar, the Diocesan Secretary, Chair of the Synod Business Committee and Synod Chairs and Vice Chairs.

**Canon Simon Cox**, Chair of the House of Clergy moved that "Diocesan Synod Standing Orders be adopted".

Members of Synod voted **unanimously in favour** and the motion was **carried**.

## 8. Proclamation of Canons

**Canon Graeme Pollard** promulgated Amending Canons 36 and 37.

Amending Canon 36 is concerning forms of vesture for ministers and Amending Canon 37 is concerning burial services for those who have committed suicide.

## 9. Questions submitted in accordance with Diocesan Synod Standing Orders

None.

## 10. Motions submitted in accordance with Diocesan Synod Standing Orders

None.

## 11. Closing Prayer

Bishop Julian thanked Diocesan Synod for giving their time and support throughout the year, and gave particular thanks to those members who would not be continuing next year.

The meeting concluded with prayer.

The next meeting of Diocesan Synod will be held on Saturday 18 October.

Signed .....

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Dated .....

22/9/18