



**DS 2062** 

## Minutes of a Meeting of Blackburn Diocesan Synod

## held on Saturday 15 July 2023 at St Batholomew's Ewood

### Present

- 1 Member of the House of Bishops
- 28 Members of the House of Clergy
- 33 Members of the House of Laity

## **Apologies**

- 16 Members of the House of Clergy
- 8 Members of the House of Laity

### 1. Eucharist

The meeting was chaired by Rev Munawar Din (Vice-Chair of the House of Clergy) and opened with the Eucharist led by Bishop Philip.

## 2. Presidential Address

**Bishop Philip** spoke of the wealth of the Western world in contrast to our friends in the Diocese of Liwolo in South Sudan who have so little. He urged Synod to be more generous, firstly in our proclamation of the Gospel, secondly in our finances and thirdly in our love. He reminded Synod that it is our generosity that unlocks the generosity of God.

## 3. Budget 2024

**Mr David Barlow (Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance)** presented the proposed 2024 Parish Share Budget. The key elements of the budget are included in his slides (attached).

The budget had been produced by the Bishop's Budget Team and independently scrutinised by the Budget Scrutiny Committee before receiving approval by the Board for submission to Synod.

The maximum increase in parish share requested had been restricted to 3% until 2024 as previously agreed. As DBF reserves are utilised, it is likely that slightly higher share request increases will be required in 2025 and 2026 to achieve a balanced budget in 2026, although this will still require further contributions from DBF reserves.

The value of investments in 2022 had fallen although there had been some recovery in 2023. The increase in investment values over the years has helped underpin our financial strategy, and ongoing discussions are taking place with the National Church about further support funding. However, as Blackburn Diocese does not have major historical assets, the majority of funding comes from the generous giving of our congregations.

Mr Barlow expressed his thanks to all parishes for their support. Parishes struggling to meet their share contributions were encouraged to contact Mrs Ruth McGaughey or Mrs Julie Grimshaw at the Diocesan Offices to arrange a parish share meeting.

Mr Barlow also thanked the Bishops Budget Team, the Budget Scrutiny Team, the Board of Directors, Mrs McGaughey and the Finance Team for their involvement in preparing the budget.

Questions were invited.

**Rev Tom Woolford (Leyland Deanery)** asked about giving from more affluent parishes to poorer parishes.

**Bishop Philip** confirmed he was taking action to raise inequity within dioceses as a conversation at the House of Bishops.

Mr Barlow said that conversations are also taking place with National Church about this.

**Mrs Elizabeth Radford (Chorley Deanery)** asked about the fluctuation in the Area Deans' budget line for 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Mr Barlow explained this was due to the timing of MFF funding received from National Church to enable Area Deans to appoint administrators.

Mrs Elizabeth Radford (Chorley Deanery) asked about the purpose of parish share meetings and spoke about the difficulties her parish had experienced in meeting share requests.

Mr Barlow explained that the purpose of parish share meetings is to discuss parish finances and to see what help can be provided.

Rev Carole Backhouse (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery) spoke about the cost of living crisis and suggested it would be useful to see this in writing in the budget, given our plans for growth.

Mr Barlow confirmed this will be taken into account. The increased cost of living was considered when the budget was drawn up, but there is no easy solution. Alongside the pledge to maintain stipendiary clergy, the increase in parish share had been kept to 3% which is below the rate of inflation.

Mr David Barlow moved that:

"This Synod accepts,

- The 2024 parish share budget with expenditure of £13,351,000 and a projected budget deficit:
- of £388,000 based on a support fund of 6% being sufficient to adjust requested shares
- of £1,200,000 based on the history of contribution rates
- of £1,800,000 based on the history of cash received increases

## and is aware:

 The Directors do not consider a 1% variance on budget expenditure significant and may vary the expenditure during the year to meet the needs of the organisation."

The vote was carried on a clear majority with 1 vote against and 2 abstentions.

Questions were invited on the motion in paper DS2056 to change the age category for the RWA calculation from 16 to 18.

**Rev Tom Woolford (Leyland Deanery)** proposed an amendment to change the age within the motion from 18 to 21.

**Rev Canon Simon Cox (Blackpool Deanery)** pointed out the complexity of using a different age to what is required by National Church statistics for counting attendance.

Bishop Philip explained that the change was required because accurate data on our young people is necessary for our SMMI funding application.

Mr Barlow confirmed that a careful explanation of what is needed would be circulated to parishes.

Mrs Natalie Cox (Preston Deanery) suggested excluding anyone in full time education between the ages of 12 and 18 from the count.

Mr Barlow explained that all 18 year olds now need to go through some form of additional training.

Rev Tom Woolford moved, and Mr Tim Cox seconded, the following amended motion:

"This Synod agrees to raise the lower age for the calculation of regular weekly attenders used in the calculation of parish share to 21 for the 2023 count."

The motion was **defeated** by a clear majority with only 4 votes in favour and 2 abstentions.

## Mr David Barlow then moved that:

"This Synod agrees to raise the lower age for the calculation of regular weekly attenders used in the calculation of parish share to 18 for the 2023 count."

The motion was **carried** on a clear majority with 1 abstention.

## 4. Vision 2026 and New SMMI Funding Application

Standing orders were suspended.

Mrs Carolyn Barton, Director of Vision Delivery explained there is 1.1 billion over a 9 year period available in Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment (SMMI) from National Church. Her presentation on the planning for our first SMMI application is attached to the minutes.

There was some group work and the sections within her paper were discussed.

## Section 3 "The Rocket Fuel"

Synod asked the following questions around Continual Ministerial Development:

**Rev David Whitehouse (Leyland Deanery)** asked why the option for retreats is focussed on Whalley Abbey and the option for training is focussed on Emmanuel Theological College.

Mrs Barton explained that as Whalley is our own centre of Christian discipleship, retreats can be led by one of our own senior leaders.

**Bishop Philip** explained that Emmanuel is our own theological college and as well as being good value for money, it has the benefit of a large online library.

Mrs Esther Gregory-Witham (Burnley Deanery) asked about plans for development and the wellbeing of lay ministers and those with key lay roles.

Mrs Barton replied that whilst ways to support lay leaders/key lay postholders had been discussed, they weren't currently included in the SMMI bid. She invited anyone with ideas to email her.

**Rev Canon Cindy Rigney (Tunstall Deanery)** pointed out that M:Power was focussed on urban areas. She asked if there would be any similar thinking for rural areas and if the Young Leaders Academy would include anything online for rural areas.

Mrs Barton explained there are plans to organise a feasibility study on the Young Leaders Academy, taking into consideration young people from all contexts across the Diocese.

## Section 4 "First Aim: A Parish System Revitalised for Mission"

Rev Carole Backhouse (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery) asked if there was any scope for evaluating the parish renewal programme.

Mrs Barton replied that some work on this was underway to provide evidence for the SMMI application.

## Section 5 "Second Aim: A Church that Reflects the Communities it Serves"

Synod were asked to consider two questions regarding the subsection on A Younger Church:

What do you like about the emerging thinking? What challenges do you foresee and how could they be overcome?

The response sheets were collected in and will be used to inform the application.

### **General Questions and Comments**

Rev Claire Cook (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery) highlighted the sense of loneliness and isolation that can exist within parishes, unseen biases and the importance of networking and learning from eachother so that parishes can flourish in their diversity of worship.

Mrs Barton agreed it was important to include something to ensure individuals flourish. She spoke about the need to address some of the issues that are wider than the SMMI bid such as power structures and diversity on boards and committees.

**Rev Hugh Scriven (Accrington Deanery)** had previously been a chef and spoke about the potential of using food as a mechanism for human development.

Bishop Philip said he would like to see a few parishes experimenting with this.

The item ended with the Vision Prayer.

Standing orders were reinstated.

## 5. Joyful Generous Stewards – a Blackburn Approach to Giving and Stewardship

Archdeacon Mark Ireland, Mrs Stephanie Rankin and Mrs Christy Sawyer (Stewardship Resourcing Officers) presented on Joyful Generous Stewards. Their slides are attached to the minutes.

A number of toolkits will be made available in due course along with some tithing resources.

Questions and comments were invited.

Mrs Joan Kirkwood (Chorley Deanery) asked how do we influence those who don't share our philosophy?

Archdeacon Mark highlighted the importance of starting early. Some resources had been produced for talking to children.

Rev Carol Backhouse (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery) would like to see more on stewardship within the strategy.

Mrs Sawyer spoke about the content of the youth resources which are more about stewards and caring about our planet/eachother.

Rev Tom Woolford (Leyland Deanery) asked if talking about giving too often might be counterproductive.

Archdeacon Mark said it was important to talk to people about the abundance and grace of God rather than starting from the position of guilt, which is unhelpful and counterproductive.

Mrs Natalie Cox (Preston Deanery) asked if the resources will cover the giving of skills etc as well as money.

Mrs Rankin confirmed this is included. The resources are about helping people to understand the importance of living generous lives.

**Mr Tim Cox (Leyland Deanery)** asked how do we encourage children to get into habit of putting money aside when they no longer have a physical way of giving via envelopes?

Mrs Sawyer explained that this is covered in the children and youth resources, which helps with teaching children practical ways of saving for their needs/wants and ways of engaging them.

### Archdeacon Mark Ireland moved

"That this Synod

- a. Affirms its commitment to helping all to grow as disciples of Jesus who are joyful, generous stewards of God's bounty
- b. Welcomes the provision of new giving and stewardship resources as requested by Synod
- c. Endorses the Key Principles which set out a Blackburn diocesan approach to giving and stewardship."

The motion was carried nem con with one abstention.

## 6. Deanery Synod Rules

Canon Stephen Whittaker (Diocesan Secretary) presented the proposed new Deanery Synod Rules which had been produced by the Registrar following work carried out by Blackpool Deanery and approved by the DMPC, Directors and Area Deans.

## Rev Canon Simon Cox moved:

"That the Deanery Synod Rules are approved."

The motion was **carried** by a unanimous vote in favour.

## 7. Allocation of Lay Membership on Deanery Synod

**Canon Stephen Whittaker (Diocesan Secretary)** apologised for the paper not being on the Synod agenda in October 2022, however it was being presented to Synod now for approval.. The allocated numbers within the paper had not changed for many years.

**Mr Tim Cox (Leyland Deanery)** asked if accurate information on Deanery Synod membership could be made available after election.

Canon Stephen Whittaker agreed.

#### Rev Canon Simon Cox moved:

"This Synod approves the allocation of lay membership to Deanery Synod in Blackburn Diocese in accordance with the Schedule."

The motion was carried by a unanimous vote in favour.

## 8. Proclamation of Canons

None.

#### 9. Questions

A number of questions had been received. These questions and the answers provided are attached to the minutes.

The following supplementary questions and comments were received:

Rev David O'Brien (Blackpool Deanery) highlighted the percentage of people living in poverty both locally and nationally. He asked if the Church fully reflects the people we serve and if this is considered when we make appointments.

**Bishop Philip** replied that he has seen change in the Church, particularly with some bishops coming from working class backgrounds. Within the Diocese, there are attempts to pioneer solutions and bring about change. There is M:Power and through our partnership with Emmanuel Theological College, the usual formal education is not required.

Rev Leah Vasey-Saunders (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery) spoke of the urgency of empowering young people as leaders and said she was interested in the idea of a youth synod. She asked how their voices might be heard by the decision making bodies.

Canon Stephen Whittaker said there had been some debate about young people feeding in their thoughts and ideas, but some thought needs to be put into how this might happen as previously it hadn't worked very effectively.

**Bishop Philip** agreed that consulting young people is a real skill and he would like to set up a group to thoroughly explore the creation of a youth synod.

Rev Sarah Gill (Blackburn with Darwen Deanery) suggested that the group connects with other dioceses who have done this already.

Mr Tim Cox (Leyland Deanery) asked what the purpose of a youth synod would be and how this would feed into our processes.

Bishop Philip said it would need to be explored.

## 10. Motions

None.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

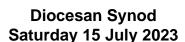
Signed: + My Blamburn

Dated: 12.9.23









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### **BUDGET 2024**

Mr David Barlow, Chair of the Board of Finance

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### Vision 2026

'Healthy Churches Transforming Communities'

We desire to make the Good News about Jesus Christ more widely known, because we believe:

- He is the One who brings 'life in all its fullness'
- Healthy church communities have a positive and transformative impact on our society.

We will work together to achieve this by making disciples of Jesus Christ; being witnesses to Jesus Christ, growing leaders and inspiring young people for Jesus Christ





## **Background to the Budget**

- · Looking to the Future
- Balanced budget by 2026
- Maximum increase in overall parish share request limited to 3% for 2024, followed by modest increases for 2025 and 2026
- Significant use of reserves of up to £1.8m in 2024 and a further £3.0 m in 2025 and 2026 to support the budget recommendations.

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## **Budget Points for 2023**

- Continue to support Vision 2026 by maintaining clergy stipendiary numbers.
- Stipends and salaries increased by 5%
- Overall Parish Share Increase for 2024 3%
- Parish Share Support Fund reduced to 6% in 2024 and 5% in 2025.
- Significant fall in the value of investments in 2022.
- · Challenge to Giving





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- Healthy church communities have a positive and transformative impact on our society.

We will work together to achieve this by making disciples of Jesus Christ; being witnesses to Jesus Christ, growing leaders and inspiring children and young people for Jesus Christ

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### Motion

"This Synod accepts,

- . the 2024 parish share budget with expenditure of £13,351,000 and a projected budget deficit of £388,000 based on a support fund of 6% being sufficient to adjust requested shares
- of £1.2 million based on historical contribution
- of £1.8 million based on the history of cash received increases

**Motion** 

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#### And is aware:

- individual parish changes of regular weekly attendance and amount of ministry will affect the allocation of costs and
- The Directors do not consider a 1% variance on budget expenditure significant and may vary the expenditure during the year to meet the needs of the organisation."

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### **Motion**

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"This Synod agrees,

To raise the lower age for the calculation of regular weekly attenders used in the calculation of parish share to 18 for the 2023 count"





## **PLANING FOR AN SMMI** APPLICATION

Mrs Carolyn Barton, Director of Vision Delivery

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## Vision 2026

- Making Disciples of Jesus Čhrist
- Being Witnesses to Jesus Christ
- Growing Leaders for Jesus Christ
- Inspiring Children and Young People



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## Strategic Mission and Ministry Funding

- · National funding for dioceses to advance plans in relation to Vision and Strategy
- An opportunity to 'catalyse' Vision 2026

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## Strategic Mission and Ministry Funding

- Diocese of Blackburn intends to submit a significant diocese-wide application to be considered at the February 2024 national board
- Will come for approval at October 2023 Diocesan Synod

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- 45 mins Questions and comments on the paper plus break out discussion time on key area(s)
- 10 mins Finance looking ahead



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- 1. 'The Big Picture' and 'The Rocket Fuel' (pages 1 to 6)
- The Big Picture: By 2030
- Prayer: A Visitation of the Holy Spirit on Lancashire
- Leadership: Faith-filled, joyful leaders



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## A Step Change in Continual Ministerial Development (page 5)

- What do you like about the emerging thinking?
   What do you think the challenges will be?
- How would recommend any new cycle of retreat and sabbaticals for clergy is shaped?



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# 2. 'A Parish System Revitalised for Mission' (pages 7 to 10)

- An expanded Parish Renewal Programme
- Administrators for Key Renewal Parishes
- Resourcing/Planting Cross-Tradition
- Investment in Under-Resourced Areas – Accrington & Burnley



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## 3. A 'Younger Church': Discussion and Feedback (pages 10 and 11)

- What do you like about the emerging thinking?
- What challenges do you foresee and how could they be overcome?



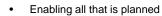
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- 4. 'A Church that Reflects the Communities it Serves' and Rest of Paper (page 11 to end)
- A socio-economically diverse church
- A culturally diverse church
- Present in all communities





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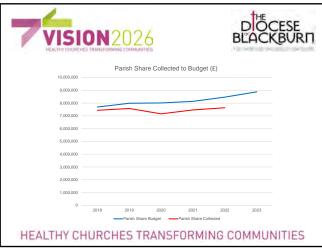




5. The Financial Dimension of the SMMI **Application** 

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- Robust plan which shows that all we are doing missionally using SMMI will help to reduce the diocesan deficit over time
- Carefully thought through sustainability planning ie, is each of the proposed roles:
  - Time limited?
  - Intended to raise up lay leaders negating the need for the paid role over time?
  - Will continue to be funded locally beyond the national funding as local giving / sources of income increase?

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#### What's the Plan?

- Vision 2026 Prayer More and deeper followers of Jesus Joyful, generous stewards
  - Parish Share Support Meetings
- MFF Exercise

  - ...including the Parish Renewal Programme
    ...including enhanced Church Buildings Support and Advice
- iv. National SMMI Application

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## What's else could help?

Further thinking over the coming months as we finalise the SMMI application but ideas include:

- Strategic deployment of SMMI investment
- Additional focus and support to those parishes significantly struggling on an annual basis with parish share

Plus exploring the opportunity for bridging funding as we work towards a balanced position.

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#### Vision 2026

- Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
- Being Witnesses to Jesus Christ
- Growing Leaders for Jesus Christ
- Inspiring Children and Young People



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#### Heavenly Father,

We embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses, to grow leaders and to inspire children and young people.

Give us eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

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## JOYFUL GENERIOUS STEWARDS A BLACKBURN APPROACH TO GIVING AND STEWARDSHIP

Archdeacon Mark, Mrs Stephanie Rankin, Mrs Christy Sawyer, Stewardship Resourcing Officers



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This Synod will be asked to:

- Affirm its commitment to helping all to grow as disciples of Jesus who are joyful, generous stewards of God's bounty.
- 2. Welcome the provision of new giving and stewardship resources as requested by Synod.
- **3. Endorse** the Key Principles which set out a Blackburn diocesan approach to giving and stewardship.

TEWARDS

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### Resources

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- Inspiring Generosity
- Talking Generosity
- Embedding Generosity
- Transparent Generosity
- Establishing Generosity

These will start to be available from Autumn 2023 with further resources to follow.



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Inspiring



## **Inspiring Generosity**





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- 1. Giving is rooted in the character of God, who is the Giver of all good gifts.
- 2. Giving joyfully is part of our worship.

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- 3. Generous giving is part of Christian discipleship as we grow in the likeness of Jesus, we grow in the grace of giving.
- 4. Giving is part of our stewardship of God's creation, using all that he gives us to his glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own wellbeing.

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- God is not a God of scarcity but of abundance, and God is able to supply all our needs to overflowing as we reflect his generosity to others.
- Giving is an act of faith, and God often takes us to the edge in our resources that we may depend on him not on ourselves.
- 7. Giving within the diocese is an expression of our mutual dependence as the Body of Christ. Parish share is an expression of our commitment to maintain a Christian presence in every local community across the diocese.

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- 8. Giving in the New Testament is a response to grace rather than a matter of rules, but many Christians find joy in following the Old Testament principles of giving both tithes (the first tenth of income) and freewill offerings.
- We enable and channel the giving of the willing, we don't put anyone under pressure. Our role is to offer wonderful people amazing opportunities to invest in the work of God's kingdom, if God so moves them.
- 10. In prayer, we seek God's guidance, surrender our worries, and offer gratitude for His provision.

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### This Synod

- Affirms its commitment to helping all to grow as disciples of Jesus who are joyful, generous stewards of God's bounty.
- 2. Welcomes the provision of new giving and stewardship resources as requested by Synod.
- 3. Endorses the Key Principles which set out a Blackburn diocesan approach to giving and stewardship.

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### Archdeacon Mark will move:

"That this Synod

- Affirms its commitment to helping all to grow as disciples of Jesus who are joyful, generous stewards of God's bounty
- Welcomes the provision of new giving and stewardship resources as requested by Synod
- Endorses the Key Principles which set out a Blackburn diocesan approach to giving and stewardship."

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## Diocesan Synod on 15 July 2023

## **Questions Received**

From	То	Question	Response
David O'Brien	Bishop Philip	Taking inspiration from the excellent work being done looking at race and gender diversity across the Diocese of Blackburn and the pioneering work of MPower and ALM schemes. Are there plans to look more deeply at class diversity and how this reflects upon opportunities for wider ministry in this Diocese?	<ul> <li>Any attempt to build a more diverse Diocese must take into account issues around social class and economic exclusion and there are a number of very important and interesting developments in this area.</li> <li>The M:Power Course is forming 20 to 30 urban leaders a year most of whom are the acknowledged as ALMs (Authorised Lay Ministers). They are moving into leadership positions in parishes and the hope is this will expand into leadership at Deanery and Diocesan level.</li> <li>The application to SMMIB is likely to include a fund that will enable some parishes to offer M:Power graduates full or part time lay ministry posts in areas such as youth work or evangelism.</li> <li>Emmanuel Theological College is soon to launch a new pathway for ordination training for those who do not have much by way of formal theological education and this will build on the pioneering work of M:Power.</li> <li>All of this (of course relies) on a continued vibrant presence in our urban areas, outer estates and areas where there is rural poverty. Continued commitment to such areas, combined with a focus in the SMMIB application on communities where church life is especially challenging, will help to guarantee this.</li> </ul>

Leah Vasey-Saunders	Bishop Philip	Children and Young people are being called to be disciples and leaders in our churches here and now. What steps were taken to ensure that they made a meaningful contribution to the development of Vision 2026 (particularly when the update was made in 2021) and what resources will you commit to ensure that they are empowered to co-create the future shape of the church in our Diocese?	The hard work of parishes in making Parish Share contributions is critical in our continuing to be a Christian presence in every community in Lancashire.  There was some consultation with youth leaders and the diocesan DBE team in the revision of Vision 2026 that was done in 2021. However the consultation took place in lockdown conditions during 2020 and was necessarily therefore constrained. There was very little consultation with young people themselves, not just because of lockdown but also because we presently lack the formal mechanisms where this can take place in a safe and constructive environment.  I would very much like to explore the formation of a Blackburn Diocesan Youth Synod and will be assessing the feasibility of this in the coming months with colleagues. This would be an especially helpful development given the emphasis on ministry to young people in the SMMIB application. It would be good to hear from anyone who may have something to contribute to the formation of such a body.
Rebecca Roberts	Carolyn Barton	Please can I ask for clarification about the distinction between the M:Power training programme and the work of M:Power in the parishes of Lower Darwen and Over Darwen, in relation to the Diocesan Synod Application to SMMI Paper – July 2023_2?  "3.ii.b The SDF funding for the M:Power programme expires at the end of 2024. It is proposed to continue the M:Power programme at existing staffing levels."  My understanding is the staffing levels are to be maintained for the training programme, but the responsibility for staffing of the parish	This is a helpful clarification as the proposal is to continue the M:Power training programme at existing staffing levels as part of a broad SMMI application. Going forward, it will be referred to as such in SMMI documents."

work will become the responsibility of the two parishes. Two members of the team are currently employed to work 0.75 planting and revitalising in the two parishes, and 0.25 as tutors on the training programme. Would it be possible in the context of the SMMI application to refer to M:Power as the M:Power training programme. This would provide clarity to the staff members and parishes involved.	
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