

Bishop's Council
Tuesday 7 July 2021

The minutes of a meeting of the Bishop's Council, held via Zoom video conferencing, on Wednesday 7 July at 5:30pm. The Bishop's Council is also the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod, the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee and the Board of Directors of the Coventry Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd.

Members present:

Joyce Amos	Kay Dyer	Kate Massey	David Stone
Karen Armbrister	Alison Evans	Claire McArthur	John Stroyan
Stella Bailey	Sue Field	Tim Pollard	Jill Tucker
Chris Baker	John Franks	Peter Rogers	Yvonne Warren
Simon Danks	Jim Kendal	Helen Simmonds	John Witcombe
Barry Dugmore	Jo King	David Spiers	

23 members attended the meeting, who were all eligible to vote.

In attendance:

Julie Bellamy, Director of Finance
Stephen Davenport - Director of Operations
Sue Dawson - Governance & Grants Officer
April Gold – Director of the DBE
Ruth Marlow - Diocesan Secretary
Graeme Pringle - Director of Communications

Apologies received:

Christopher Cocksworth
Clive Hogger, Richard Williams.

John Stroyan, the Bishop of Warwick took the chair.

1 Opening prayer and Bishop's reflection

Bishop John led the Council in prayer.

With reference to Rowan Williams' book 'Looking East in Winter', in which he looks at what the Western church could learn from the orthodox church, Bishop John reflected on solidarity. Bishop John referred to the Kapsabet initiative as an example of partnership and mutual solidarity. Highlighting 'glimpses of solidarity' in the football world, Bishop John emphasised that all are called, not just to prayer, but also to action to create an environment where everyone is equal. The Committee was invited to spend a few moments in quiet reflection about what it might mean to express solidarity with humanity across the world before Bishop John closed in prayer.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Christopher Cocksworth, Clive Hogger and Richard Williams. The Council were invited to continue to pray for Richard Williams' restoration to health.

3 Declaration of Interests

Simon Danks declared a possible interest in Bedworth (item 13) Stella Bailey declared an interest in item 6, both of which were noted.

4 Minutes of the last meeting (BC 21/46)

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2021 were approved.

5 Kapsabet update (BC 21/47 a & b)

Richard Suffern thanked REM for the invitation to speak about the link diocese of Kapsabet. Bishop Christopher had suggested the link up with the newly-formed diocese in Kenya five years ago. Since then there have been a number of reciprocal visits and both Bishop Christopher and Bishop John have been there. The link was inaugurated three years ago. Richard believes there is potential because the church there is vibrant, we can learn a lot from it and we have a lot to give it as well. It is a good diocese to visit as a way into life in Africa. There is great enthusiasm on the part of Bishop Paul for this companionship link. Richard Suffern has regular updates from him on the church there and life

in Kenya which is difficult, especially due to Covid which is pretty rampant there. The current wave is worse than the previous ones with hospitalisation and the death rate is high and many people are turned away. Knock on effects such as school closures and teenage pregnancies are a major issue, as well as the economic repercussions not helped by a locust invasion affecting harvest prospects. Richard Suffern invited the Council to come up with ideas about how the companionship link might develop. The Diocese has already helped to build a new ward at a health centre and has sent funds to help two people who needed urgent medical care. Planned visits between the two dioceses have been put on hold for the time being. Jo King suggested a link between readers in both dioceses be explored. Any other ideas should be emailed REM or Richard for Richard to feed into the next companionship meeting. Bishop John suggested that Bishop Paul or others from Kapsabet join a future meeting of the Council on Zoom.

Claire McArthur, the Chair of the House of Clergy took the Chair.

6 Appointments (BC 21/48 a & b)

Three appointments were voted on as follows:

- The approval of the re-appointment of John Denning as a member of the Audit & Risk Committee until 30 June 2024 which was carried. The Chair noted the Council's thanks that John Denning was willing to stand again.
- The Council was invited to vote that they were content with the proposed appointment of Stella Bailey to the Chair of the DAC. This was declared by a show of hands. Stella was thanked for being willing to stand.
- The Council was invited to vote that they were content with the nomination of Revd. Mark Bratton to serve on the Clergy Disciplinary Measure 2003 Provincial Panels. This was also carried. Mark was thanked for being willing to stand.

7 Parish Share Review group (BC 21/49)

Simon Danks, Chair of the DBF introduced the report. No questions or comments had been received on the paper.

Simon reported that the group feels that the best thing to do at this time is to get the questionnaire out in order to better understand how PCCs understand the parish share and how they talk about it. The aim is to send the questionnaire out by email in the next 2-3 weeks with feedback up to the middle of September. As stated in the report, there have been some ideas regarding tweaking how calculation is made. Some modelling is to be done on this. If it is felt that it will increase the transparency on the way share is made then it will be brought to the BC in October for discussion and approval before going to Synod. Members were invited to email Simon if they have any comments to make.

8 Strategic Development Funding bid (BC 21/50 a & b)

Barry Dugmore provided an update on the summary document (BC 21/50b) and took the opportunity to thank Emma Harrington on the brilliant work she is doing on the Stage 2 application.

50a is the 80% ready document which needs to be submitted to the Strategy Funding Group in early September. BD took Council through paper 50b which is an overview and summary of where they are with that (50a). BD outlined highlights since the last Council meeting, mainly on the progress made in the area of appointments. BD reported that one of the ordained leaders was being licensed the following evening.

BD then opened the floor to questions.

Jo King commented that, with specific reference to Tile Hill and Wyken, where there are readers in posts working in the community, there was no mention of them and asked if this was something that was being looked at. BD replied that the funding specifically looked at the revitalisation of church plant leaders and the new posts coming into play but didn't exclude reader ministry. Claire McArthur confirmed that the readers had been consulted.

Stella Bailey had posed a question earlier regarding funding but felt it had now been clarified.

The Chair drew the Council's attention to the points for action on the report, namely to note the content of the Stage 2 submission, to approve the temporary changes to the delegate authority to approve initial grants and to note the progress since the last meeting.

A poll was taken on the second point which was duly approved.

The Chair thanked Emma and Barry on behalf of the Council for their continued work.

BD asked everyone to hold in their prayers some conversations which would be taking place in August with a potential church plant leader and for all that they are doing in this area.

Emma Harrington left the meeting.

9 **Net Zero Carbon strategy (BC 21/51)**

Godfrey Armitage shared a presentation which started by reminding us that creation care is an integral part of the Gospel. The challenge issued by the General Synod in February 2020 was for all parts of the Church of England to reduce emissions year-on-year. He asked the question 'What can we do to reach Net Zero emissions by 2030?' and pointed out that we face challenges but also opportunities, not least among young people of whom 90%, according to a recent Tearfund survey, thought the church did not care about creation. Godfrey went on to summarise has already been done as Diocese.

The Diocesan baseline footprint is estimated to be 6751 tonnes of CO₂ pa and the net carbon footprint of churches in the diocese 2500 tonnes. The Diocese only has direct control of the footprint of clergy housing and land/property and partial control over offices and travel.

The top priorities for schools are:

- i) To switch energy use to renewables
- ii) To establish current levels and investigate further development of renewable energy use within in scope schools
- iii) To continue to engage with Salix to access funding

39/74 diocesan schools were identified as 'within scope' by the DBE. However, they are not under the control of the DBF and can only be encouraged to switch to renewable energy.

The top priorities for churches is to :

- i) Get all PCCS to use the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT)
- ii) To do energy audits
- iii) To switch to renewables
- iv) To sign up to Eco Church

Every church in the diocese should read and use the Church of England's **Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon** document available on the website.

At this point Godfrey's internet connection was lost.

The Chair commented that this was a good strategic direction that needed to be looked at and taken note of. What was particularly good in the presentation and the work that has come out of the sub committee is the priorities which have come out of each of the different areas.

BD invited Helen Grocock, who has worked on the paper with Godfrey, to share any further information. Helen said one of the key things to stress was to bear in mind what things could be influenced and what things could be controlled. In the majority of areas which were not under the direct control of the DBF, communication, education and engagement were key.

Karen Ambrister asked if there had been any consideration to support parishes with grants, citing a quote of £4k her PCC had received to convert all the lighting to LED.

REM responded that the committee were looking at whether they could develop some grant work through the grant structures that already exist but that it was tricky as money is very limited. However, there may be some scope for help through the Church Fabric Improvement Fund which, although set up to make churches fit for mission, would be looked at to see if it could help in this area. Parishes are encouraged to view it as a long term investment and to weight up the long term savings against the upfront investment.

BD added that, essentially, we are talking about the 5th mark of mission so, hopefully a way forward can be found to embrace some of that.

Tim Pollard said that he was very positive about the strategy. Referring to the Diocesan Net Zero paper (BC 21/51) Tim called for the sentence 'We may not reach absolute net zero by 2030, but we can be sure that a failure to try will be noted', quoted under the heading **Challenge, Opportunity and Risk**, to be removed as he felt this to be very negative. Tim queried where the ambition was and said the aim should be to achieve as much as possible.

On another point Tim suggested that guidance should be given to parishes on when decisions should be made, .i.e. when is it a good idea to replace light bulbs with LED ones? Now or when they reach the end of their life? What's the lower carbon option? A quick reference guide on recommendations would be very valuable.

Chris Baker asked how and when the programme was going to be rolled out to the deaneries and what degree of involvement would there be from the deanery to the parish at that time. Bearing in mind the financial implications for older church buildings and the need to get everyone on board Chris asked how this would be done.

BD invited Helen Grocock to comment. Helen said some deaneries have a large number of eco churches so they would be building on that network and also drawing on the knowledge that is out there from the work that has already been done.

Chris Baker asked for a deanery and parish timetable for this. BD said this had been noted and would be brought back at the next meeting.

Godfrey rejoined the meeting by phone to say he was still having problems with his computer and would forward his presentation to Helen for distribution to the Council.

REM called for a vote on the recommendations on p11 of the report (BC 21/51), namely:

- 1. To note this strategy, as an agreed pathway to work towards the aim of Net Zero diocesan carbon emissions by 2030.**
- 2. To recommend this strategy to the Diocesan Board of Education and Cathedral Chapter, for their acceptance.**

Both resolutions were carried by a show of hands.

10 Race Equality Strategy (BC 21/52)

REM stated that she had nothing further to add to what was already written in the report only to add that the Steering group, of which Bishop John was the Chair, had been working on this for some time and the document produced had been consulted with by the Race Equality Advisory Group. REM had attached the amended strategy in Appendix 1 of this paper to reflect their comments as well as attaching in Appendix 2 the thoughts and comments of the Race Equality Advisory Group.

Dean John commented that he had an issue with the biblical verse at the top of Appendix 1, saying that the term 'race' was considered to be contentious in the area of race equality and that the imagery, although scriptural, assumes that white is good. Dean John therefore suggested it was taken out as he didn't feel that it was a great help to the policy.

Bishop John said it would be reviewed at the next meeting of the Race Equality Strategy Group. Dean John emphasised that he is not criticising the policy in any way.

Bishop John underlined that it is an organic strategy paper and there will be other opportunities to engage with it.

Kate Massey commented that the verse could be truncated or revised and would be happy to go back and have another look at it.

There being no further comments a poll was taken and the strategy was approved.

11 Whole Diocese Strategy and shared objectives review (21/ 53 a & b)

The Chair thanked REM and the team for producing a new document which is much clearer concerning the high level strategy and KPIs. The Chair explained that the committee were concerned to have proper KPIs in order to evaluate the progress of lots of projects.

REM thanked the Chair for her recognition of the improvements made and also thanked Emma Harrington for her help in assisting the project leaders in developing the KPIs. REM underlined that there is still work to be done to get project leaders into a discipline of updating the details, which are not contained in this paper, on a regular, quarterly basis.

The Council went into breakout groups to discuss any comments or observations on the progress contained within the report. Feedback to be given to REM which will then be circulated to members of the Council.

After the breakout groups a poll was taken on whether to continue with the shared objectives as the basis for decision making. The motion was carried with 71% in favour, 10% against and 19% abstaining. Any comments from the breakout groups were invited and were as follows:

- Bishop John commented that in his group they all felt that the environmental issue should be the third lens in all of these priorities. REM replied that one of the particular recommendations in the strategy is that, when reports are written for BC and Synod, that the environmental implications of what is being asked to be done is included.
- Dean John commented on the number of abstentions on the vote to approve the six objectives as the basis for the budget for 2022. Dean John felt that this was largely because this is not exactly where we are right now and was the reason he abstained. Dean John expressed his concern about whether a huge decision had just been made about how the budget is going to be shaped without having a proper discussion

REM asked for comments to be collected and sent to her which REM will then feed through to the core staff meeting next Thursday. The very question 'is this right for this time?' could then be put on the agenda for next week in order to ensure that anything that is captured from the breakout groups is not lost.

Dean John then asked if it will come back to Council. REM affirmed it would in the context of informing the budget as the budget will be approved by the Council in October. She added there were also DFG and core staff meetings prior to that so there were opportunities for anything fundamental that came out of the discussions to influence the budget.

The Chair suggested that the Chairs of Clergy and Laity carry out a review with REM so that if there was a need to change anything this could be done before the budget was submitted to Council in October. Dean John commented that, by the time the budget is submitted to Council in October, it was then very difficult to have a strategic discussion which might involve a rewrite of the budget. Due to the structure of the Council it was not always easy to spot the moment when one can say 'I'm not sure this is the

right way forward'. Dean John appreciated that there could not be a major discussion about this now but felt like it was a significant discussion to have.

The Chair commented that it was not easy in Covid times and that the questionnaires that would have been produced by the NCD might not be as relevant as they need to be in the current situation that we find ourselves in and they might not be telling Council what it needed to know at church level. Therefore, as a council, there is a bit of work needed to be done between now and the budget setting.

BD agreed with the Chair and added that one of the pieces of work he had asked of Tim was in developing more local ambassadors for NCD which, after eight years, they were disappointed that hadn't grown or that offers of work hadn't been taken up by the team. However, there continues to be a significant investment in the Serving Christ project which is NCD based and resourcing Healthy Church. It's there and is developing but is nuanced. Attempts have been made to engage churches with Healthy Church who have found NCD to be more about compliance. They are trying to look at how Healthy Church is done in a way which engages churches more in the principles of it but in a slightly different way. This is part of the growth strategy and it is hoped that any new worshipping community will engage with Healthy Church. This year has been particularly difficult as it was not possible to carry out any surveys although BD has just been informed by Fr Gary, the Ebbsfleet minister, that there will be seven surveys coming in over the summer.

The Chair asked whether Council needed a sub committee to look at this over the summer. BD would be in favour of a mini meeting in the summer but it would have to line up with the dates of Council changes.

REM pointed out that the Bishop's core staff are ex officio members of Council and so maintain the continuity from one Council to the next. They can and will consider the valid points Dean John made over the summer.

Stella Bailey thought financial issues should be discussed in a wider group than just the Bishop's core staff but did appreciate that there were timing issues.

The Chair summarised that there was a general consensus that more work needed to be done over the summer and questioned whether the Bishop's Core staff could do that and report back. REM said she would be passing the feedback from the breakout room discussions on to the remaining members of Council, e.g. the ex officio members, as Council would be dissolved shortly prior to the elections.

Helen Simmonds, the Chair of the House of Laity took the Chair.

12 – Bishops Council Triennium Review (BC 21/54)

The Chair said that the Review asked members to look back and celebrate, learn and suggest.

Quick comments were invited on:

(i) what should be celebrated

- Chair – that the Council has approved so many grants which have done some good work.
- Stella Bailey - so many churches have committed to the Parish Giving Scheme as a result of the Diocese pushing it.
- David Spiers – should celebrate how much has been done.
- Chair – celebrates the willingness of people to have read so much

(ii) what has been learnt

- Jo King – the need to be listening to the breadth of people involved in the Diocese. Nobody should feel that their voice isn't important. Really important that we engage the laity more in thinking about the strategy of the Diocese because they are the people who make it work.

- Jim Kendall – has learned how Bishop’s Council works
- Kay Dyer – Bishop’s Council is more effective and efficient than in the past

(iii) any suggestions

- Bishop John – has heard from a number of people the suggestion, not least for environmental reasons, of continuing to meet by Zoom a fair bit of the time. On the other hand, when there is a residential or retreat day more should be made of it and the opportunity to meet physically.
- David Spiers – has found break out groups work better than breaking up into small groups in a room. Would like more of them.
- Dean John – the need to have clear timelines. Not always easy to spot which of the conversations are the really significant ones.

The Chair recommended that the three points above be looked at in the Business Committee.)

- Claire McArthur – a clear induction for new members to the Council so that they know where Council is at on decisions. A Zoom call prior to their first meeting so that they could ask questions would be useful.
- Chris Baker – likes the crisp and clinical way the votes are taken on Zoom. Allows for the unease which Dean John picked up on to be spotted which wouldn’t have been under normal in person voting conditions.
- Tim Pollard – the opportunity to chat to each other before and after the meetings is lacking on Zoom and could be incorporated into breakout rooms in order to get to know each other

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and invited any further suggestions to be sent to REM.

13 DMPC report. (BC 21/55a, b, c & d)

- a** Steve Davenport had no further comments to add to the report and accompanying papers.
- b** The Council were invited to comment and vote on a scheme to join the parishes of St George, St Peter and St John in the Rugby deanery into one benefice. Permission was also requested to use the email protocol for any future decisions.

The Chair pointed out that she was a member of the Rugby Deanery but had been advised that there would be no conflict of interest.

There being no comments it went straight to the vote which was carried unanimously.

- C & d** The Chair invited any questions on the scheme to dissolve the District Church Councils of the Bedworth Team. There being none it went straight to the vote which was carried.

14 Items for future meetings *Consent item.*

Members were invited to email any suggestions for future meetings and for Synod to REM.

15 Papers to note

The Council noted the following of which the first two were confidential:

- Minutes for the Investment Sub-Committee meeting on 10 November 2020 (BC 21/56)
- Minutes of the Glebe Committee 25 March 2021 (BC 21/57)
- Annual Report and Financial Statement for the Parish Giving Scheme (BC 21/58)
- Report to the PGS AGM from the Chief Executive of the PGS (BC 21/59)

16 Communication and confidentiality (BC 21/60)

There were no objections or changes to the papers of which could be widely shared.

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REM said she would like to plug the Parish Giving Scheme and urged members to get it out into the deaneries and encourage churches to join.

Tim Pollard asked if the Net Zero powerpoint presentation should be considered confidential or if it could be shared widely. BD to check with Godfrey and, when received, REM to email powerpoint presentation to members with a message about whether it is private or not.

17 Date of future meetings

The next meeting is on 19 October 2021 and will be the first of the new triennium.

16 Close

Bishop John thanked Helen Simmonds for her very able chairing during the last Triennium and the ways in which Helen sought maximum participation. Thanks was also given to the Council members for their active participation.

Bishop John particularly thanked Yvonne Warren, not only for her contribution to Council, but also for her huge contribution to the Diocese.

Bishop John then closed the meeting in prayer.

Signed:

Date: