

Leeds Diocesan Synod

Draft Minutes of the seventeenth meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Leeds held via Zoom conferencing at 9.30 am on Saturday, 14 November 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bishop of Leeds had signed a Bishop's Instrument, which permitted the Synod to meet via electronic conferencing. This was the second time the Synod had met with full electronic presence.

Chair: The Bishop of Leeds

Ecumenical observers, Honorary Assistant Bishops, visitors and those in attendance were reminded that they were not entitled to vote and that they must seek the Chair's permission to speak. The voting period for electronic polling would be thirty seconds from the launch of the poll. Any technical issues were to be emailed to Jonathan Wood, Diocesan Secretary.

1. Opening worship.

The opening worship was led by The Revd Canon Angela Dick, Incumbent Christ Church, Sowerby Bridge, Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Mothers' Union Chaplain, Huddersfield Episcopal Area.

2. Welcome.

The following were welcomed and given the Chair's permission to speak (SO3):

Item 12 Strategy Goal 2 "Re-imagining Ministry" Lay Ministry Development: The Revd Canon Andrew Norman, Director of Ministry and Mission and The Revd Dr Hayley Matthews, Director of Lay Training.

Item 13 Diocesan Disability Strategy: Katherine-Alice Grasham, Disability Officer and Children, Young People and Families Team Member.

Item 15 Mission of the Church in Contemporary Society: Mr Mark Waddington, Social Engagement and Urban Renewal Team Leader and Director of Wellsprings Together.

New Synod members:

House of Clergy

The Revd Joanne Hustwick (Huddersfield deanery).

The Revd Ian Jamieson (Huddersfield deanery).

The Revd Stuart Stobart (Halifax & Calder Valley deanery).

The Revd Caroline Greenwood (Halifax & Calder Valley deanery)

The Revd Daniel Miles (Halifax & Calder Valley deanery).

The Revd Joanna Seabourne (Headingley deanery)

The Revd David Pickett (Headingley deanery)

House of Laity

Jonathan Bolton (Headingley deanery).

3. Apologies.

4 apologies had been received.

4. Declarations of interest – Members are reminded of the need to declare any conflict of interest on matters on this agenda.

No declarations of interest were given.

Chair: The Revd Canon Sam Corley (Chair of the House of Clergy, Allerton)

5. Minutes of the last Meeting on 26 September 2020.

Circulated paper: DS 20 11 01

The Chair moved:

“That the draft minutes of the last meeting held on 26 September 2020 contained in DS 20 11 01 be approved as a correct record.”

Voting

For: 87

Against: 0

Abstain: 13

The minutes were approved.

6. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda (if any).

There were no matters arising.

7. Presidential Address.

The Bishop of Leeds gave his Presidential Address. A copy of the address is attached to these minutes.

8. Questions to Synod

One question had been received from Roger Lazenby (Headingley Deanery). The question and response had been emailed to Synod members. (A copy is attached to these Minutes.)

There were no supplementary questions.

9. Motion: Size of Synod for 2021-2024 Term

Circulated paper: DS 20 11 02

Motion:

"That the proposals contained in DS 20 11 02 for determining the size of the Diocesan Synod 2021-2024 and the elections to the triennium beginning 1st August 2021 shall be applied to whichever of the three options for the size of the Synod receives the most votes in a poll of the synod (present and voting) which is to be conducted following the approval of this motion. In the event of a tie this shall be determined by the drawing of lots between the two options which have received the most votes."

Proposer: Canon Mrs Jane Evans

Canon Mrs Jane Evans proposed and spoke to the motion using a PowerPoint slide. Synod needed to determine the numbers to be elected for the 2021 to 2024 Synod by the deaneries. The current number of elected places was 100 House of Clergy and 100 House of Laity seats. At the date of the meeting, there were 61/100 elected clergy and 62/100 elected laity. The average attendance over the period of the current Synod had been low. There was an opportunity for Synod to re-think the size of the Synod. A feedback exercise had been carried out to seek Synod members' views on three proposed sizes for the Synod elected members: 60, 70 or 100 for each House. There was a low response but the most popular option had been for 60. Synod were asked to consider the advantages for a smaller more engaged Synod.

Questions of clarification:

None.

Debate:

The Revd Brunel James, (Dewsbury & Birstall)

Expressed gratitude for the work involved in preparing for the item. Option for 70 members as sixty plus members per house were engaged.

John Beal (Allerton)

Allerton deanery had a pattern of filling their House of Laity places. He felt the number should be left at 100. This would enable deaneries who wanted to be engaged to fill them and other deaneries be encouraged to fill vacancies.

Robert Haskins (Harrogate)

Asked if there was any research on whether if the number was 60, if 30% would not turn up.

The Revd Canon Paul Cartwright (General Synod)

Echoed what had been said by the Revd Brunel James. He queried what the distribution was across the episcopal areas. He also asked about the impact of a reduction in the elected numbers of members on the numbers required for a quorum for decision making.

The Revd Canon James Allison (General Synod)

Queried what attempts had been made to fill vacancies on Diocesan Synod. One lay representative had found it difficult to get elected on to the Synod.

Barbara Swift (Huddersfield)

Needed more engagement and for the process to be more user friendly and accessible to encourage people to become Synod members.

The Revd Canon Rachel Firth (Huddersfield)

Huddersfield deanery had recently filled two clergy places on Diocesan Synod. She would want 70 places but acknowledged there was work to be done as there had been a lot of focus on governance matters.

The Revd Daniel Miles (Halifax and Calder Valley)

Helpful session with curated in September by Chair of House of Clergy Sam Corley to illustrate how synod works and number works and would be good at parish level for people to understand spaces on deaneries and diocesan synod. 70 sensible option.

The Revd John Bavington (Inner Bradford)

Would choose 70 to hope to engage more people. Though he acknowledged he hadn't encouraged more to join in his role as Area Dean to push membership and engagement. He agreed with Rachel Firth that initially there had been a lot of governance items but with the new Strategy the Synod needed a wide range of people to engage with the debates.

Steve Jackson (Richmond)

Highlighted that there may be legitimate reasons why members don't attend Synod. For clergy it could be they have other commitments e.g. taking weddings. For some it may be the venue for Synod.

Michael Moss (Aire and Worth)

Laity have had elections but not so with clergy. If we moving to a more lay amenable diocese, if the laity number was lowered this would restrict the laity. If there was apathy in the clergy, connectivity with the clergy should be increased rather than reduce lay participation.

Jonny Bolton (Headingley)

Headingley deanery doesn't use all its allocated seats. A reduction in allocation made sense. If the allocation was 60 would not necessarily mean fewer members attending. If 60 people attend regularly then all spaces would be taken up. He echoed that young adults seemed in the minority on Synod and it was important that there was a wide range of people on Synod.

Matthew Ambler (Huddersfield)

General Synod was also looking at its numbers as the falling numbers on electoral rolls.

Canon Mrs Ann Nicholl (Allerton)

Favoured 60 as a group of people who were actively involved, contributed and were committed to Synod was needed.

Ian Ward-Campbell (Harrogate)

Wasn't convinced that reducing the number would engender greater enthusiasm from the people attending. What is the cost for having 100? May frustrate deaneries up to their allocations. Average attendance didn't necessarily mean the same people were attending each meeting. Perhaps Zoom may increase attendance figures.

Response to the debate from Canon Mrs Jane Evans

There was a common theme of vacancies and engagement. As deaneries elected their representatives there was responsibility at deanery level in choosing their representatives. In the last general elections for Diocesan Synod there was only one ballot, so this gave some indication of the deaneries' engagement. The image of synods generally (both deanery and diocesan) and the governance processes needed to be improved. Everyone needed to be involved and make a contribution to promote interest in getting involved in how the church works. Synod had covered many different topics for example the Environment, disability measures and missional matters. Different venues had been used in Harrogate and Synods had been fixed for central Leeds – though these had been cancelled. The venue for Synod was a live issue and kept under review.

Peter Foskett, Diocesan Registrar spoke to the query about Synod quorum Standing Order 27 provided that the quorum was 25% of each House formed a quorum. So a reduction in Synod places would reduce the figures needed for a quorum to be present. 25% was varied if there was an adjournment debate when the quorum was one third.

The Chair read out the full wording of the motion.

Synod voted on the motion:

"That the proposals contained in DS 20 11 02 for determining the size of the Diocesan Synod 2021-2024 and the elections to the triennium beginning 1st August 2021 shall be applied to whichever of the three options for the size of the Synod receives the most votes in a poll of the synod (present and voting) which is to be conducted following the approval of this motion. In the event of a tie this shall be determined by the drawing of lots between the two options which have received the most votes."

Voting

For: 97

Against: 06

Abstain: 02

The motion was approved.

The Revd John Bavington (Inner Bradford)

Offered a point of order that the resolution be amended with an option of 80 elected members for each House.

Peter Foskett advised that it was too late to offer an amendment as the motion had already passed so it wasn't possible to amend the motion.

Voting on the three options

Having approved the motion, Synod voted on the three size options for the total deaneries' elected member for each of the House of Clergy and the House of Laity for the 2021 – 2024 Diocesan Synod.

Voting

For 60 deanery elected members: 18
 For 70 deanery elected members each: 65
 For 100 deanery members: 25.

The approved size of the 2021 – 2024 Diocesan Synod was a total of 70 elected members to the House of Clergy and a total of 70 elected members to the House of Laity.

10. Motion: Method of voting – Diocesan Synod Elections 2021

Circulated paper: DS 20 11 02

"That this Synod determines that for the purposes of Church Representation Rules 2020, Rule 42 (2) the form of voting paper to be used by the deaneries in elections to Diocesan Synod will be Form 6 (Simple Majority System) as set out in Part 10 of the Church Representation Rules 2020."

Proposer: Canon Mrs Jane Evans

Canon Mrs Jane Evans proposed and spoke to the motion. There were two options, first past the post (Simple Majority System) or Single Transferable Vote for the voting in the 2021 Diocesan Synod elections. First past the post was the simpler to administer. The presiding officers in the elections were usually the twenty two area deans. Therefore it was proposed that the method be Simple Majority System.

Questions of Clarification

Barbara Smith (Brighouse & Elland)
 Are the deanery lay chairs presiding officers too?

David Corps (Huddersfield)
 The deanery lay chairs would be the presiding officers for the clergy elections. Echoed the point made, deanery lay chairs have resourcing issues and so would want first past the post.

Canon Mrs Jane Evans answered the questions of clarification

Confirmed there would be 44 presiding officers including the deanery lay chairs.

Peter Foskett, Diocesan Registrar clarified that casual vacancy elections could happen as they arise. The general election needed to be held in accordance with the provisions of the Church Representation Rules 2020.

Debate

Ian Grange (Dewsbury & Birstall)

Agreed that the method should be first past the post as it was straight forward to administer. Even though he was a supporter of proportional representation, he would vote for first past the post.

The Ven Paul Ayers (Archdeacon of Leeds)

STV was fairer and better and could be administered using a computer programme. STV is used by General Synod. Synod should be bold and choose STV.

The Revd Joanna Seabourne (Headingley)

Timing of the voting was an issue. Although no doubt it had to fit in with other matters, many deanery synods do not meet in August. Considering the discussions about ensuring engagement with the Synod, please could this be born in mind.

Response to the Debate from Canon Mrs Jane Evans

Canon Mrs Jane Evans thanked all the speakers on the debate for their contributions.

The Chair read out the wording of the motion.

Voting

For: 70

Against: 30

Abstain: 06

The motion was approved.

Synod took a 20 minute refreshment break

Chair: Matthew Ambler (Chair of the House of Laity, Huddersfield)**11. Motion: Clergy Care and Wellbeing Covenant****Circulated papers:**

- DS 20 11 03 Accompany Letter on Covenant
- DS 20 11 03 01 Covenant 3 Local 5
- DS 20 11 03 02 Covenant 2 Clergy 5
- DS 20 11 03 03 Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing Act of Synod 2020

“That this Synod adopts, welcomes and supports The Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing as set out in DS 20 11 03 03.”

Proposer: The Revd Canon Sam Corley (Chair of the House of Clergy, Allerton)

The Revd Canon Sam Corley proposed and spoke to the motion using a PowerPoint presentation. The timeline for the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant was:

- February 2020 the Covenant was affirmed as Act of General Synod;
- September 2020, it was proclaimed at Diocesan Synod;
- at the current Synod (November 2020) it was proposed that the Covenant be adopted, welcomed and supported;
- March 2021 proposals and recommendations brought.

Focussing on a covenant for clergy wellbeing did not take away from the laity. Instead as set out in the Covenant, it recognised that those called to serve as deacons, priests and bishops was both a privilege and a demand and that an undertaking by the whole Church to commit to promoting the welfare of the clergy would have positive implications for the whole people of God.

A working group had been formed to look at the application of the Covenant in the diocese. The members of the working group were: Mo Theodosius, The Revd Sonia Kasibante, The Revd Penny Yeadon, The Revd Philippa Slingsby, The Revd Charlotte Cheshire, The Revd Joanna Seabourne, Anna Mitchell, The Revd Cat Thatcher, The Revd Andrew Tawn, The Revd Andrew Norman and Jonathan Wood. It was also hoped there would be a lay focus group too.

There was much to do around communication and co-ordination. The diocese offered support for clergy wellbeing but this was often disseminated at the beginning of the person's ministry in the diocese. The aim was to ensure that resources were easily available and publicised.

There was much to improve. The resource for clergy (DS20 11 03 02) emphasised that the responsibility for clergy care and wellbeing was with individuals and those they minister with and to. The key to clergy wellbeing was joy.

The covering letter with the resources (DS20 11 03 03) outlined five recommendations which the working group would consider ready for the report to the March 2021 Synod.

A book "How Clergy Thrive" would be circulated as a pdf to Synod members. This would also be used as a resource to inform the work of the working group.

There was an email address which could be used to contact the working group:

clergy.wellbeing@leeds.anglican.org

Questions of clarification

There were no questions of clarification.

Debate

The Revd Nick Clews (Inner Bradford)

Asked why, bearing in mind the importance of licensed Readers, why the report did not focus on "Leaders".

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (General Synod)

As a member of the Standing Committee of the House of Clergy of General Synod, she welcomed the

diocese taking on board the Clergy Covenant. The clergy were not the only ones who need support. However, the clergy can be burnt out, physically and emotionally ill from stress and yet still have to lead. This Covenant was intended to prevent this happening.

Kay Brown (Allerton)

It was important to be intentional that everyone's wellbeing is important. There needed to be one culture with non-managerial supervision, so there was a safe space for talking things through. There needed to be a healthy respect and boundaries for clergy families and life.

The Revd Julie Bacon (South Craven & Wharfedale)

Supported the report and agreed that everyone's wellbeing was important. She highlighted that those clergy in interim ministry may need different support from those in other ministries.

Canon Mrs Ann Nicholl (Allerton)

There had formerly been lay ministerial development reviewers for clergy but this did not seem to have continued for ministerial development reviews. Clergy had previously welcomed being able to talk to a lay person. She encouraged the working group to find ways for the clergy to be able to talk to an empathetic member of the laity.

Barbara Smith (Brighouse & Elland)

As an ex-churchwarden she was aware of the need for the care of clergy. She was interested in what Canon Mrs Ann Nicholl has said as she too had previously attended a meeting about lay involvement in ministerial development review and then had not been called upon. She felt it was good for clergy to talk through things with lay people. She wasn't sure why but this seemed to have been abandoned.

Mark Johnston (Halifax & Calder Valley)

Wished to support what Barbara Smith had said.

He had been a Reader for more than 20 years and there had been little oversight or reporting.

Readers were part of the leadership of the church, particularly during interregnums. Clergy should be supported and built up. They should have someone who isn't a colleague to chat to.

Stephen Hogg (General Synod)

As a member of General Synod he had been involved in the progress of this debate. He is also a trustee of the Clergy Support Trust and has seen when things go wrong. He is also involved for the Diocese of Sheffield in the provision for the wellbeing of clergy spouses. He thanked Revd Canon Corley for bringing the motion to Synod.

The Revd Daniel Miles (Halifax & Calder Valley)

He believed the document was fair. Clergy do get support from the laity, for example, from spiritual directors. However, the Covenant provided a formal structure if informal provision failed.

Christine Jack (Harrogate)

She was a former Reader. Readers are licensed to parish and church not the incumbent. When incumbents change this can be a problem and a source of tension. She felt the wellbeing of Readers also needs looking at too.

The Revd Suzy McCarter (Aire & Worth)

Thanked those members of the laity who had been involved in the ministry development review process. She had found their input very helpful. In the new MDR process the input from the laity is more about gathering information from the parish. The new process will be very valuable for the future.

John Wright (Inner Bradford)

As a churchwarden he had come across clergy people who were struggling but sometimes it was difficult to support them because of how they were perceived.

Response to the Debate from The Revd Canon Sam Corley

He said that the reason for the focus on the clergy had clearly been discussed during the debate. He agreed with lay involvement in the support of clergy. Finding a way to do this which was cost effective and realistic was the key. He had greatly valued the support of lay people, lay officers in parishes and other professionals. With regard to the support for lay officers, he commented that the Warden of Readers was present at the Synod and would have noted the comments.

Voting

For - 97

Against -0

Abstain - 04

The motion was approved.

12. Presentation: Strategy Goal 2 “Re-imagining Ministry” Lay Ministry Development.

Circulated papers

- DS 20 11 04 01 Reader Review Final Report
- DS 20 11 04 02 Occasional Preachers
- DS 20 11 04 03 Extended Communion

The Revd Canon Andrew Norman (AN), Director of Ministry and Mission, The Revd Dr Hayley Matthews (HM), Director of Lay Training and Kay Brown (Allerton Deanery) (KB) gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Synod.

AN outlined the headlines in the lay ministry pathways: Reader Review, new pathway for occasional preachers and extended communion. The Digital Learning Platform had a step to step guide on how to engage with the ministry pathways.

HM outlined that there were three strands to Lay Pastoral Ministry training: Pastoral Conversations for Pastoral Visitors, a Pastoral Assistants course and a Lay Pastoral Ministers course. There had been an upsurge in numbers since the Pastoral Assistants course had moved online. The numbers attending the LPM course was also increasing as the course had moved online.

The Lay worship leaders’ course had received positive feedback from a broad range of participants who had been able to explore, experience and value a broader range of worship.

There was a new shaping of the Spiritual Director course. This was to ensure sustainability and wiser participation. The new course was a blended learning course involving face to face and online learning.

A course on working with children and young people was being delivered by the diocesan Children and Young People team. This was a ten session course covering various aspects of working with those under 18 years in a Christian/church context.

The Introduction to Theology course was a baseline one term course open to all. This included study skills too which was a useful tool for those embarking on longer courses. This course will be online in the next term starting in January.

KB spoke about the Reader Review which had begun two years previously. The Central Readers Council had a threefold vision for Reader ministry being: Teacher of Faith, Enabler of Mission and Leader in Church and Society and the vision in the diocese for Reader ministry reflected these three strands. Accessibility to training and being welcomed no matter what the trainee's educational background was key. There was a new pathway for training: an exploratory course, two years Initial Training Programme followed by commissioning, a one year IME, licensing and then annual ministerial development. There would also be a time of taking stock in the light of the new vision for those already in licensed Reader ministry.

Occasional Preachers can be authorized by the bishop with diocesan directions. There are an increasing number in various dioceses. This will be developed and there will be selection process, training, a working agreement, supervision and continuing development. There will be a fixed term.

The use of Extended Communion is a new dimension for multi church ministry in the diocese. This involves the bread and the wine being taken on the same day to another church. This would be an exceptional and provisional circumstance and is not lay presidency. Authorisation will be on a case by case basis. Training will be needed and will be kept under review.

Questions

Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley (Bishop of Ripon)

What provision is being made for eg those on Lay Worship Leader courses who are not able to access online training?

The Revd Sara Hancox (Whitkirk)

Communication by extension needs to be more flexible as taking the bread and wine out on the same day may not be practical.

Michael Moss (Aire & Worth)

It should not be a surprise that everyone who attends the Introduction to Theology course does not then go forward to the Licensed Lay Ministry course as the whole purpose of the course is to explore training. He queried what the course enabled attendees to do once they'd completed it.

The Revd Mark Harlow (Headingley)

The presentations focus was on training and understanding the need for competencies. It also included the development of competency from understanding.

The Revd Chris Lawton (Wensley)

In his parishes they reviewed their rota and settled on a pattern encouraging members to attend

matins and other forms of the service of the Word. The result has been that those who wish to receive communion attend matins and then go to neighbouring parish. Has this approach of other pathways been investigated?

Alison Fisher (General Synod)

Historically there have been age limits on some courses the diocese offers. Is this still the case?

As the item had overrun, the Synod members were encouraged by the Chair to feed back any further comments to Andrew, Hayley and Kay.

13. Motion: Diocesan Disability Strategy

Circulated document: DS 20 11 05 a draft Disability Strategy for the diocese

“That this Synod adopts, welcomes and supports Diocesan Disability Strategy set out at DS 20 11 05.”

Proposer: The Ven Peter Townley, Archdeacon of Pontefract

The Archdeacon of Pontefract proposed the motion and gave a brief introduction to the item. He said the challenge to the Church was to be loving, compassionate and inclusive. He reminded the Synod members that 2020 was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Disability Act.

Katherine-Alice Grasham (KG) gave a presentation on the motion using a PowerPoint presentation. KG a group had been established in 2018 to put together a diocesan disability strategy. The draft Disability Strategy was in line with the Diocesan Strategy. Part of the proposed Disability Strategy was to improve the team structure and to encourage a rise in the number of parish disability representatives who will provide the on the ground support.

Questions of clarification

There were no questions of clarification.

Debate

The Revd Canon Rachel Firth (Huddersfield)

Thanked the team for putting together the draft Disability Strategy. Her deanery had 25% of parishes with a disability officers. She was aware that it was intended that there would also be an area co-ordinator. She asked if this reflected where people were at the end of 2020. She felt that the issue was intersectionality. People were engaged with wider inequality issues eg Black Lives Matter, economic. She wondered if the attempt to address these involved a cross over as other groups work on a desire to show equality.

Archdeacon Anne Dawtry (Archdeacon of Halifax and General Synod)

Said the report was clear and welcomed it. The Disability Strategy was an appeal for people to be mindful of the needs of others. Parishes need to consider the Disability Strategy even if they believe they do not have anyone with disabilities. That is adopting a different frame of mind.

The Revd Jonathan Bish (Wakefield)

Highlighted that whilst the language of equality is used and it was important that people could access training at every level. The language of equality should not be about the same needs but rather that difference is valuable in its own right.

Kay Brown (Allerton)

Intentionality was key. It was important to take measures to include otherwise we will find we haven't included.

The Revd Mandy Coutts (Inner Bradford)

Having worked with people who have special needs and those who struggle with poverty, she felt that some models of training were not easily accessible. Particularly the language used. It was important that we step outside our own experience to ensure we enable and equip people.

Zahida Mallard (General Synod)

Drawing on her experience as an equality and engagement manager in the NHS, she commented that quite often we talk about accessibility with reference to buildings. We need to re-think this: one size does not fit all for example, learning disability, ADHD and Autism are very different needs.

Response to the debate from Archdeacon Peter Townley

He thanked all the contributors to the debate for the points they had made on intersectionality, intentionality, training and "hidden" disabilities. KG would take these points away for the group to look in to.

Voting

For: 99

Against: 01

Abstain: 02

The motion was approved.

A 30 minutes lunch break was taken. (Breakout groups were available for members to join if they wished).

Chair: The Revd Canon Sam Corley

14. Presentation: Strategy Goal 1 Episcopal Areas & Cathedrals presentations

Each Episcopal Area and the three Cathedrals had been asked to give a five minute presentation on their implementation of Diocesan Strategy goal 1. Synod members had been circulated with the PowerPoint presentations from the Huddersfield, Leeds, Ripon, Wakefield episcopal areas and the Cathedrals.

Bradford EA presentation

For Bradford EA, Bishop Toby Howarth and Archdeacon Andy Jolley showed a presentation video. This gave an overview of the communications structure between four Bradford EA deaneries

clergy and senior laity and the senior leadership team, Bradford Episcopal Area Forum (Currently meeting via Zoom to discuss aspects of the Diocesan Strategy application in the episcopal area), and community projects and involvement during Covid.

Huddersfield EA presentation

Bishop Jonathan Gibbs gave a presentation for the Huddersfield Episcopal Area. He outlined that the Huddersfield Episcopal Area had three main towns all of which were multicultural: Dewsbury, Huddersfield and Halifax. The area was divided in to five deaneries. During the Covid lockdown mental health and well being were key issues in the EA. Most churches had adapted to online worship. Finance was significant issue. There was some anxiety around health and safety issues around re-opening. Bishop Nick had supplied the episcopal areas with a quadrant to review the effect of Covid they had experienced. This had been very helpful. Looking to the future The EA was involved in the Reaching Generation Next diocesan SDF bid. If successful it would give an opportunity for new ways of working with children, young people and families. The model would use “hubs” ie clusters of churches working together. There were also some pastoral reorganization plans in the pipeline. Parish data was being collected so that resources and support could be deployed strategically.

Leeds EA presentation

The Revd Joanna Seabourne and The Revd Lindsay Pearson gave a PowerPoint presentation for the Leeds EA. Nearly all the city of Leeds was in the episcopal area. The deaneries in the EA met together to recognize they were all part of the same city, recognize links and offer support. For example, in the summer a number of parishes had joined Leeds Citizens campaign for those in social care to receive a living wage.

Parishes have reached out to families for example at the Inside-Out church at Manston, Barwick who were involved in a project in partnership with the Methodist church which used a hybrid in person/video approach. At Ireland Wood worked with families with toddlers. Offering activities for families who booked their own “desert island” to keep them Covid secure.

This linking was also seen in the area of social care. Bardsey and St Aidan’s parishes worked together to provide a foodbank. There were other social action projects such as the Rainbow Junction café, delivering over 170 food parcels a week and 250 plates of food a day for families in need. There were also outreach groups such as the Lighthouse community and the sign language services provided by The Revd Mark Smith.

Ripon EA presentation

Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley gave a PowerPoint presentation for the Ripon EA. The Ripon EA included most of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the city of Ripon, several market towns, Catterick Garrison and RAF Leeming and is in North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Lancashire. Agriculture, tourism and food and drink production are the major employers. Covid had had a significant impact on the local economy.

There has been a high turnover of clergy as clergy retired over recent years. The Ripon Area Mission and Pastoral Committee had been a crucial part in developing the Area strategy. Of particular benefit were presentations to the AMPC from local church communities on what

mission and ministry looked like where they are. This meant the AMPC was better informed by lived examples when it considered pastoral reorganization and future clergy deployment.

Although there were elements of rural in other EAs, in Ripon EA it was embodied in all its complexity. The care required for church buildings can be a fresh challenge in the pandemic particularly where there are declining congregations.

Isolation and loneliness and poor mental health are areas of concern, increasingly evidenced by the high number of farming suicides and family breakdown. Clergy and laity often work together to offer support and pre-empt problems. They worked with the National Farming Union, and others including Wellsprings. Other issues were poor access to healthcare and internet and mobile phone reception in some of the rural areas.

Partnerships offered encouragement. For example a Wellsprings event in Skipton to bring together faith, voluntary and statutory sectors to share and value working together. Work with Church of England schools continued.

Wakefield EA presentation

Bishop Tony Robinson gave a PowerPoint presentation for the Wakefield EA. Wakefield EA was the smallest EA geographically and by population. It comprised three deaneries and was served by two local authorities. It had the lowest number of retired clergy but had just licensed the largest number of Readers.

The EA had predominantly poor parishes ie over one third were in the most deprived ten per cent in the country and over half in the most deprived twenty percent.

Initiatives included the Follow Me series of lay training events held at Wakefield Cathedral. The events included food as well as visiting speakers.

Support was offered to the Church of England primary schools in the EA as well as the Holy Trinity Joint Academy in Barnsley (A joint CofE and RC school) and the Cathedral Academy in Wakefield which was the TES secondary school of the year in 2019.

The EA was involved in various projects:

- The Saviour Trust provided 350 units for the homeless in Wakefield and Pontefract and was now also working in Leeds.
- St Catherine's church, Wakefield ran a service for the vulnerable with a free meal.
- Wakefield was part of the City of Sanctuary project aimed at those seeking sanctuary in the UK
- The Cross Project was working in schools in the EA and it was hoped that the SDF bid would build on this work.
- It was planned to give a Christmas card from the EA to each of the 64,452 homes in Wakefield.

Looking to the future reimagining ministry and planning was giving new pastoral opportunities.

Cathedrals Joint presentation

Dean Jerry Lepine, Dean Simon Cowling and Dean John Dobson gave a joint presentation for the three Cathedrals. Cathedrals were a public space, resource and place of pilgrimage. They provided effective icons of the Christian Faith in the region and a daily rhythm of worship, actively serving the Diocese and region. Each of the Cathedrals faced different challenges, was distinctive, complimentary and spoke in different context and was well placed to meet with wider society. This was particularly the case in the welcome provided to visitors. The Cathedrals were spaces of learning, the arts and in the Covid pandemic, through technology, places of outreach through daily prayer. Cathedrals engaged with the needs of the World, partnering with public and private sectors, providing sanctuary and engaging with military communities. Cathedrals were involved in the diocesan structures for example, attending Bishop's Staff meetings but were a free gift to the Diocese as they did not call on diocesan resources.

The Chair thanked all the presenters and encouraged Synod members to contact the person who presented on any issues or themes in their presentation.

15. Motion: Mission of the Church in Contemporary Society

Circulated paper: DS 20 11 06 Wellsprings leaflet.

"That this Synod:

- 1) *Affirms the rich engagement of parishes with wider society in the work of "Transforming Communities" envisioned in the diocesan Strategy;*
- 2) *Commends Wellsprings Together in encouraging and resourcing engagement with wider society in the work of "Transforming Communities"; and*
- 3) *Requests the Diocesan Secretary to write to each parish to encourage clergy and lay together and PCCs to:*
 - a. *study the activities of Wellsprings Together outlined in the leaflet DS 20 11 06, and*
 - b. *explore how Wellsprings Together, as a resource for engagement with wider society in the work of "Transforming Communities", may be able to assist them in their context."*

Proposer: The Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford.

The Chair welcomed Theo Watts from Wellsprings who had joined the Synod meeting to observe the debate of this item.

Bishop Toby Howarth proposed and spoke to the motion. The diocesan vision is Confident Christians, Growing Churches, Transforming Communities. The motion looked at the third part of the vision: Transforming Communities. Within that the focus of the motion is Wellsprings Together, a diocesan joint venture with Church Urban Fund which began in 2019. Wellsprings has come in to its own during the pandemic, in food provision, bringing together people from different faiths and action in response to homelessness. He was proposing the motion as he was

also the Chair of Wellsprings Together. Wellsprings existed to offer support and encourage parish based social action.

Mark Waddington (MW) gave a brief introduction to Wellsprings Together. Wellsprings is a charity with a Board of trustees chaired by Bishop Toby Howarth. Wellsprings is staffed by MW (Director), Theo Sheridan-Watts (Development Worker), Cathy Henwood, (Food network coordinator), Kaneez Khan, (Near Neighbours Coordinator) and Birgit Carey (Network Assistant). Wellsprings is funded from various sources. Food co-ordination is funded by Feeding Britain, Bradford Council, Leeds Community Foundation and others. Work among the homeless is funded by the Bramall Foundation through the Church Urban Fund and social cohesion work through the Church Urban Fund and the Near Neighbours' programme which received money from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Core funding has been received from Allchurches Trust and the Diocese contributes fifty percent of the cost of the Director post, staff costs and benefits in kind such as accounting and payroll services and office space.

Bishop Toby reported that Theos, the think tank on religion in society, had published its report "Growing Good" which looked at the relationship between church growth, social action and discipleship in the Church of England. Social action brings congregations in to relationship with people in their local context and where they can confidently share the motivation for their actions.

MW shared examples of how Wellsprings Together engaged with churches. A parish had recognized the need for some youth work with local young people but wasn't sure what to do. Wellsprings discussed this and gave links to youth specialists. Sometimes the links were from external specialists or from diocesan experts.

In other parishes, there could be a need locally but not the capacity to put a plan in to action. For example, an idea in a parish for the parish's church grounds to be used as a community garden. Wellsprings had helped with the project designing and sourcing funding support.

Wellsprings also connects churches which are looking at similar projects or helps churches share their success stories locally and nationally.

Questions of clarification

There were no questions of clarification.

Debate

Professor Joyce Hill (General Synod)

Reported that Wellsprings had been helpful in a project for food distribution which now distributed to over 300 people. Kaneez Khan had shown particular insight. Wellsprings had helped raise their social media profile and ensure social inclusion.

The Revd Ann Russell (Bowland & Ewecross)

Her context was a rural area. Wellsprings had been helpful in listening to their context (Issues of loneliness, homelessness in a huge rental sector, and food poverty). She commented that the Gra:CE project was about support and growth but that it was also about the faith and commitment and confidence of congregations.

The Chair confirmed the link to the Gra:CE project was available in the Zoom chat [<https://cuf.org.uk/what-we-do/the-grace-project>]

The Revd Brunel James (Dewsbury & Birstall)

He was a trustee of Wellsprings Together and said it was a great resource for the Diocese. The Gra:CE report followed three years of research and showed that social action leads to church growth. This had been experienced in his own parish which provided home shopping, a food bank and phone support and had transformed the image of the church in the area and attracted new worshippers.

The Revd Mark Umpleby (Dewsbury & Birstall)

Fully supported the motion. Support had been given to Batley parish and it had really helped them. He encouraged Wellsprings in the work they were doing.

The Revd Canon Rachel Firth (Huddersfield)

There were parts of Diocese which were not engaged yet. So far she had not seen how Wellsprings could help in her area. However, she would support motion as without it they wouldn't know how Wellsprings would be able to help. She asked that the Wellsprings leaflet be more concise and clear about what Wellsprings Together could do to help parishes and use less third sector-style wording.

Response to the Synod debate from Bishop Toby Howarth

Wellsprings Together was reasonably new in the diocese and was grateful for as much help as possible. He thanked Synod for their insights. Wellsprings wasn't the only answer but it was where the Diocese was focusing its resources. He asked Synod to keep praying for Wellsprings Together.

Voting

For: 91

Against: 0

Abstain: 03

The motion was approved.

16. Bishop of Leeds Blessing and Close.

The Bishop of Leeds gave closed the Synod with a blessing.

The Synod ended at 13.55 hrs.

Diocese of Leeds

Seventeenth Diocesan Synod, Saturday 14 November 2020

Presidential Address

One of the most beautiful cities in the world is Vienna. It is one of those places that echoes the heights of human culture and the depths of human misery. One of the things I was keen to see on my first visit there several years ago was the Holocaust memorial by Rachel Whiteread in the Judenplatz. It is really powerful: a large white inverted library with doors that don't open – suggestive of books that had been burned by the Nazis and the attempt to extinguish the stories of people, 65,000 of them Austrian Jews who perished in the concentration camps. It is known as the 'Nameless Library'.

What struck me when I visited a couple of years ago was that, standing about ten metres in front of it on the square, is a statue of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the German writer, philosopher and thinker who died in 1781 and is regarded as a giant of the Enlightenment. Given Lessing's powerful influence on German culture, not least education, and standing between the statue and the memorial, I found myself asking how on earth a country and a culture can descend so quickly – within a few generations – from Enlightenment to Holocaust.

Now, this might seem like a weird way into an address to a diocesan synod in Leeds in 2020. But, it isn't. We live at a time of massive challenge in which all the assumptions of progress, democracy, patriotism, the common good, and so on, are being thrown up in the air. We do not know how they will land. I grew up in a world that was determined never again to allow genocide – but look what happened in Bosnia and Rwanda. The post-war generation built nations and societies that assumed progress – that the world could only get better; that human beings had evolved through the horrors of the first half of the twentieth century and there was to be no going back; that the conventions of public discourse could only get better.

Well, I give you climate change. I add in Donald Trump and the direct and deliberate undermining of confidence in democratic norms and processes; we don't yet know the end of the US election story. Or the coronavirus pandemic that has thrown the world into disarray, exposing inequalities and inconsistencies across the globe, but also close to home. Or the hit to the economy of a convergence between the pandemic and the ending of the Brexit transition next month. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh might seem small and distant, but so did Serbia in 1914.

Nothing is for ever. Nothing can be taken for granted. Norms are only norms for as long as they are normal (as opposed to extraordinary). We have no idea what tomorrow will bring; but, we do know that empires and 'norms' that take centuries to build can be demolished in weeks. We are not in control of everything.

And this is the context in which we meet as a synod today. We are in a second lockdown and are promised a vaccine soon; yet, we have been promised many things that have not been delivered. Our politics – at home and abroad – are being questioned everywhere, and going back to where we were fifty or thirty or even ten years ago is simply a nostalgic fantasy.

So, what does the church have to say in this context? The church that has been hit by two reports on its handling of sexual abuse in recent months? A church that has been forced by government to close its buildings for worship, rendering its ability to thrive and be properly resourced into the future at best questionable? A church that has just launched a process of addressing questions of love, faith, relationships and identity in *Living in Love and Faith*?

Let me briefly address each of these in turn.

I welcome the IICSA report and the light it throws onto how the Church of England has addressed abuse in and through the church. Light always exposes reality, and you can't argue with reality. I am confident that we have a very good and experienced safeguarding team at the heart of this diocese, driving processes and systems that are strong. There is much further to go in offering care and redress to survivors of abuse – nationally – and we are alive to that. Bishop Jonathan leads for the bishops nationally in safeguarding matters and is making a significant difference. I will simply say, in the light of IICSA and the Whitsey Report, that many of the recommendations are already embedded in our systems here. For example, I always take the advice and leading of our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers who, already, function as 'officers' in such matters.

The church, via the bishops, continues to question the rationale behind the closure of churches for worship in the latest lockdown. Closure of buildings does not close the church, but it changes it. We do not know what local church worship, attendance, and so on, will look like in the years to come. We know it will not look like it did a year ago. We can either mourn the loss of what was familiar, or we take responsibility for shaping what might become. As I said earlier, you can't argue with reality, and lockdown has made immediate a number of challenges we had assumed might be addressed over time.

So, we have not only a challenge, but also an opportunity to be creative and bold and humble as we seek primarily not to recover a *form* of church life, but to renew the *content* of that life – our worship of God, our growth as followers of Jesus Christ, and our sacrificial service for our communities in the name of Christ. In short, we will discover whether we believe all this stuff about good news, death and resurrection, self-sacrifice, and Christian truth.

In other words, the situations that gave rise to the writing of the New Testament letters become more identifiable to us in our current situation. We are invited to read Scripture differently now. We can enter imaginatively into the minds of biblical writers because the precarious contingency of their situations is one into which we now have experienced a glimpse. And this, I suggest, is a gift. It reminds us of what we in England have too quickly forgotten: that life is fragile, social order is not a given, and control of the world is actually an illusion born of hubris.

Living in Love and Faith is not incidental to this. There has been a suggestion that the church is dragging its feet in questions of sexual identity because of its contentious or controversial nature. The opposite is true. This is the most significant and serious work done by any church anywhere and it has been published now – later than planned because of the impact on everything of the pandemic – in order to prevent further delay. It opens up a process for encounter with people, not just debate about a topic. I encourage you to look at the materials on the website and to engage with us as we roll out a programme of consultation during 2021-22. Bishop Helen-Ann is leading on this (as she is also part of the national 'Next Steps' group with the Bishop of London and others). Bishop Toby was part of the national group that has led on the process thus far.

Identity is not just a matter for people who like that sort of thing. If we are to value human beings as made in the image of God, then we have some complex and challenging – as well as engaging and potentially joyful – work to do. And we need to approach it with open hearts and generous minds.

So, today we have a varied agenda, set in the context I have described just now. Some items look more interesting than others and some are what we might call ‘housekeeping’ – how we order our common life and decision-making. We will consider the well-being of clergy, but recognise that this is not to downplay the well-being of lay people. We will discuss what a ‘re-imagining of ministry’ might look like in the months and years to come, but remembering that any ministry involves all people of all abilities and gifts. We will take seriously the life of the diocese as it is, and we will grow our confidence in its future.

Is that a rash thing to say, given the uncertainties with which we live? No, it isn't. Our confidence is in the God who calls us, in the Jesus Christ whose church we are, and in the power of the Holy Spirit who constantly drives us out of what is familiar into the places of challenge where life is to be found. The risen Christ keeps telling his friends not to be afraid; we need to hear that clearly. We are called to be the church (and the Church of England with its unique vocation) now; it is no accident that we are here and called for just such a time as this. And we need to build one another up in faith as we venture into the uncertain world of 2021 and beyond. We are called to be faithful, even if some of what we attempt fails. We are called to do our business with faith, hope and – not least – charity.

There are many examples of individuals and churches fulfilling that calling over recent months in the way they have supported both their communities and the work of the church. We have seen parishes across the diocese respond graciously and sacrificially to the financial challenge that was laid out at our last Synod. Since then we have also benefited from the generosity of the national church who have given us the £1m we asked for to help the pressure on our finances. We have also received much generosity from individuals and parishes and I want to express my and our gratitude. We are not out of the woods and there is much to do, but we are moving in the right way and in the right direction.

To conclude. I began with reference to Rachel Whiteread's Holocaust memorial in the Judenplatz in Vienna. We cannot know what the future holds, but we can so live now that when people in the future look back at how we handled this present world, they give thanks for our courage and wisdom ... and don't simply spot the things we failed to grasp out of fear or familiarity. I trust we will be a blessing to the next generation and not a curse.

As we approach Advent and an unusual Christmas, a changed shape to our collective worship and outreach does not impede in any way the shining hope of God's presence in the world – even in the cry of a tiny babe (as Bruce Cockburn put it). Our gospel – of light shining in the darkness - is rich and is for today. Comfort and joy are what we have to offer, albeit in a variety of creative ways this year.

We turn to our business in this light and in this spirit. May God bless us in our deliberations together for the sake of his kingdom.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines
Bishop of Leeds

14 November 2020

Diocesan Synod 14 November 2020 – Item 8 Questions for Synod

Question received from Roger Lazenby, Headingley deanery

“To The Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

In the light of the recently published IICSA report into the Church of England and also mindful of the more recent independent review reports relating (a) to events in the parishes of Stowe and Maids Moreton (Diocese of Oxford) and (b) under the title ‘Betrayal of Trust’ into the late Bishop Whitsey (Diocese of Chester); would he please advise what plans are being made and actions taken in the Diocese of Leeds to address the issues raised?”

From Jonathan Wood, Secretary to the Diocesan Synod

The Diocese of Leeds has always been committed to safeguarding. Since its inception, clear and rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures have been established and the senior leadership of the Diocese have made clear their expectation that these policies are followed in every situation.

This continuing commitment is further evidenced in the fact that the Safeguarding Team has been restructured recently to increase capacity. The team consists of a Safeguarding Team Leader/ Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, two Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers, with the addition of a new Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and a dedicated Safeguarding Trainer appointed within the last two months. Additional support with administration and taking of minutes has also been provided to the Core Groups. This restructure anticipated the IICSA report and was not made in response to it. We are also undertaking the Past Cases Review 2 project, which is a significant piece of work in its own right. Additional resource has been provided here to ensure it can be completed without impacting on the current safeguarding team and its capacity.

We are committed to learning from the lessons outlined in the IICSA report as well as those in other recent reviews. At present the national church are considering its response to the IICSA recommendations which were only released last month. Once these are agreed at a national level, then we will take steps to implement any required changes. However it is worth noting that the Diocese of Leeds has already made significant progress in relation to the main recommendations and so any changes will be to further enhance a very solid foundation. This solid foundation is reflected in the SCIE audit of 2016 where the auditors stated ‘There is a strong safeguarding lead from the Bishop and his staff team’ and that the Diocese *“is open to learning and taking safeguarding forward”*.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers play an integral role in all safeguarding matters. The DSAs inform and guide Safeguarding Core Groups of clergy and laity convened to scrutinise any reported case of abuse, which are considered in close detail and with due respect. Guidance on subsequent actions comes directly from the DSAs and is adhered to in all circumstances in conjunction with public authorities.

As mentioned above the Diocese is subject to audit by the Social Care Institute of Excellence, as well as reporting on behalf of Parishes quarterly to the Charity Commission on serious incidents which have occurred. It also works closely with safeguarding teams across the North and with the national safeguarding team to share and implement best practice. Safeguarding is a standing item at both the Bishop’s senior staff meeting and at the Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance. Additional oversight of the safeguarding function is provided through the Strategic Safeguarding Committee which meets three times a year and is independently chaired by an experienced safeguarding chair, Edwina Harrison. This provides further support for the DSAs in ensuring that their voice is heard.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility but the Diocese is determined to ensure that it provides a professional and effective service. We are working hard to introduce further improvements to the resources we provide (including a new tool to support parishes) and are confident that the processes in place ensure those who are vulnerable are protected.
