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GROW FAITH • BRING HOPE • DEMONSTRATE LOVE
DIOCESE OF ST ASAPH

Standing Committee Bulletin 23: 22 September 2022, St Ethelwold's Church Hall, Shotton

Jason Bray as chair welcomed everyone to Standing Committee (SC) in Shotton.



Anne Hooper led a reflection that encouraged everyone to go on a journey with God.

Matters Arising: The Trussell Trust will be

the recipient of the 2023 Diocesan Offering. More details to follow at the Diocesan Conference.

Diane McCarthy explained that the Mission Area Share Awareness sessions carried out online had been very well received. Details of the new formula are on the website at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/finance/mission-area-share/>

Bishop Gregory updated SC on the recruitment of a new Archdeacon for Wrexham. The Archdeacons have been caring for half of the Wrexham archdeaconry each and working very hard. One of the chief focuses of the archdeacons' work is support for the clergy and those licensed to ministry. They have taken the lead on clergy ministerial reviews and as a result their workload has sometimes been overwhelming. The bishop's staff reviewed the situation and,

to function effectively, we feel we need three archdeacons. We are coming back to SC with a proposal to appoint a third archdeacon before the end of the year.

Jane Ayee: Is it affordable? If it wasn't affordable before, is it affordable now?

Bishop Gregory: It was never a question of affordability but was a question of possibly making a saving. The appointment of a third archdeacon has always been in the budget and the money is there in the 2023 budget.

SC gave its support.

Report from the Engaging Steering Group

Sarah Wheat, lead officer, thanked Anne Hooper who is the Chair of the Steering Group and Barry who is now the group Archdeacon.



Sarah explained the recent additions to the This Works! Section of the website: <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-in-action/this-works/> There are now helpful resources including community mapping tools, links and policy documents at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-in-action/this-works/social-engagement-resources/>





On the Faith in Action page, there are links to places of support:

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-in-action/places-for-support/>

Sarah is still looking for contributions to This Works! If you're running an interesting and successful project, please contact her with details: sarahwheat@cinw.org.uk

Sarah is now a qualified trainer for **Mental Health First Aid** (MHFA). Sarah can deliver courses for adults and Hannah Daniels can deliver youth MHFA. These can be delivered face to face or online. The first adult course will be on 23/24 November. There are 14 places available – booking details will follow.

Sarah is working on setting up a **Forum for supporting Ukrainian Refugees** in partnership with Link international. There are many people and churches across the diocese supporting refugee families and having a forum to share ideas and best practice would be helpful. The first meeting is 20 October 4.30-5.30pm. Email Sarah for details.

Nigel Williams: Eco-Fest was postponed due to the Queen's death, but a new date of 1 October has been set. Thanks to Huw Bryant at Llanbedr DC for his work in making this happen. Please come along and bring your family and friends. Find out more at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/eco-fest/>

Bishop Gregory offered his appreciation and endorsement for the work supporting refugees across the Diocese and for Eco-Fest. During his recent visit to the World Council of Churches the number one issue raised time and time again was the ecological crisis that the



world was facing. The more we can raise consciousness about this, the better.

Review of Standing Committee Membership

Diane McCarthy asked SC to consider whether MALs should have a vote at SC. Often MALs have to implement the decisions of SC but unless they are the elected clerical or lay representative, they can't vote. There are two options:



1. Give MALs the right to vote during the next triennial and review the impact in terms of balance between clergy and lay
2. Maintain current arrangements and conduct a more in-depth review of arrangements.

Peter Lewis asked about the impact on numbers.

Diane: Of our 19 MALs, 13 are not the elected lay or clerical member. Of those 13, 10 are clergy and 3 are lay.

Hugh Burgess: Option 1 does change the balance of power. It increases the number of clerical votes. MALs implement the decision of SC but why should that necessitate a vote. GB makes decisions and we aren't all on GB. It's not the MAL who implements the decisions, it's the MAC who have the legal obligation.

Roy Turner: There are an increasing number of lay MALs.

Will Marshall: Given that elections to SC have just taken place, could we consider moving to a system where a MA only sends one lay and one cleric, but this could change according to MA commitments?

Jane Ayee: Could there be proxy votes?





Diane: There are other structures where proxy votes are in place. That's a different concern and could be picked up if SC votes for Option 2 which would allow us to consider this further.

Hugh: Does changing the membership in terms of option 1 need to be passed by the Diocesan Conference?

Diane: Yes, it will need to be referred to the Diocesan Conference.

Option 2 was passed so there will be no change to SC membership at this point.

Diocesan Conference

Diane outlined plans for the Diocesan Conference on Saturday 8 October, once again via Zoom. The theme is Growing Faith, Bringing Hope, Demonstrating Love. Dean Nigel is opening the conference, then we have two guest speakers, both of whom are friends of the diocese and recently appointed Cathedral Canons.

Canon Richard Peers, just appointed as the new Dean of Llandaff Cathedral, will speak on Hope.

Sr Gemma Simmonds will be talking about Love and caring for ourselves. To love one another we must first love ourselves.

There will be a chance to ask questions of the speakers too.

After the Break, **Norma Rowles** chaired the meeting.

Diocesan Budget 2023

Diane outlined the proposed budget for 2023.

It is being presented differently this year to reflect the new share formula. The MA share is going to reduce by 1% at total level and we're budgeting again for the 4% discount, which proves a great incentive.

The biggest portion of the diocesan income is MA Share. The block grant is

now called Partnership Funding and will increase to £400K in 2023.

In terms of expenditure, the Share will pay for front line ministry. Support costs will be paid by central funding.

Stipendiary Clergy costs are directly apportioned to MAs but there are some roles which are shared across the diocese like the archdeacons, the bishop's chaplain, curates etc. £3.284m is the total cost of frontline ministry.

We have 64.5 stipendiary clergy and have maintained our commitment to 8 curates.

The budget is showing a large increase in diocesan office costs mainly due to the expected rise in energy prices.

The impact of these decisions is a deficit of £235,142, in addition to the deficit of £95,450 in the current year. The DBF want to invest for the future and will use recent surpluses and reserves in order to invest in the grassroots.

There will be several challenges this year:

- Clergy stipends and lay salaries will increase by 5%
- Clergy housing costs will increase by 7.3%
- The DBF has allocated a further year's funding for MAA grants.

2023 will be the second year of the five-year strategy to grow and invest in mission and ministry. If central funding is increased, we can extend and accelerate our plans.

Hugh Burgess: thank you. He is delighted to see the change in the MA share and the way it's used. He had one concern: Having separated MA and centre items we're generating a budget of £1m on central costs. If we needed to save money in future budgets, could those central costs be cut?

Diane: It is true that our investment in the future sits in central funding costs. If we've





been saving for a rainy day, those rainy days are here now and we have to step out in faith and make those investments.

John Liston: Other major costs is showing £50K less than last year. Is there a reduction in posts?

Diane: There is no reduction of posts, but we always have a bit of movement in costs, and some costs are now allocated differently following the change in the Share Formula.

Nia Morris: Do lay MALs get the same pay as clerical MALs?

Diane: They receive the same allowance as their clergy colleagues and there are no plans to change that. They are a vital part of the huge number of people who volunteer in our churches and without whom we could not do what we do.

One change to the Share calculation: there is no longer a charge for self-supporting clergy so that gives more flexibility in terms of deployment.

SC accepted the 2023 Budget.

Norma thanked every member of the Board of Finance for the work they do and their investment for the future.

Towards a 10-year financial plan

Dean Nigel Williams:

Over the last 3 years there has been a good conversation in the RB about how the church needs to be more strategic.



Investments are doing well and have grown substantially. Now there is a financial commitment which is looking seriously at the future. They've been looking at the funding previously given, e.g. during lockdown and via the Evangelism Fund and there's a realisation that the existing church needs support.

Now, the RB is investing £100m in people on the ground. Having seen the spiritual hunger of people during the national period of mourning following the Queen's death, perhaps this investment is coming at just the right time –hopefully we're ahead of the game.

There is an appetite for the province and dioceses to work together. There will be no application process – it will be given out.

Jason Bray: What's the timescale?

Nigel: It's starting now. There is money being released now.

Bishop Gregory: The Bench of Bishops is wholly signed up for an agenda of evangelism and church growth. The Bench is working to articulate a common vision and common set of purposes, values and goals. At the next meeting in October, the Bench will work with all the key central bodies and the diocesan secretaries to ensure we are building a common vision.

Each diocese is in a different place. The principle we are hoping to adopt is that each diocese should receive what it needs to move forward. Here in St Asaph, each MA has a MA action plan and we need to keep that under annual review to ensure we keep moving forward. We're investing in training through LyCiG and MAL training. We're investing in resource church and mission hub churches, plus we have a culture of readiness to experiment and a culture of empowerment of the grassroots.

Review of the Order of St Asaph

Bishop Gregory reminded SC of the discussion regarding the Order of St Asaph at the last meeting. Having reviewed the comments from last time, it was felt no consensus for change was emerging. That is not to say that the work of review and consideration shouldn't continue. Part of the job as Bishop is to offer affirmation and encouragement. If anyone feels that a





letter from the bishop would be helpful as an affirmation, he is happy to help. Each year Esgobty provides certificates of appreciation for about 10-12 people.

SC was broadly happy with this.

Proposal to transfer St Mary's Church Cefn from Denbigh to Elwy

This will be with immediate effect, but will be formally ratified from 1 January 2023, when new MA decrees will be produced.

Rebecca Sparey-Taylor: The Denbigh MA have agreed to this change.

Nigel Williams: Elwy MA have agreed to this change.

SC approved the proposal unanimously.

Matters Raised by the MAs

Stephen Hayes outlined why the question from Tanat Vyrnwy had arisen. He said it arose from several conversations across the Archdeaconry of Montgomery. He was clear that it's



not a plea for top-down management or a suggestion that management isn't good but does arise out of recognition that should a MA collapse then the cost maybe very substantial: financial cost, personal cost, broken relationships and alienation from the church. It's worth investing against failure and this question is designed to provoke a discussion.

Archdeacon Barry thanked Stephen for his excellent paper. The third point is the key issue - should there be a minimal resource for each MA. MA reviews are undertaken annually, and a template can be developed for risk management. The bishop's staff team will take time to work on responding to this paper.

Hugh B: does each MA have a risk register?

Tracey White: there is a risk assessment template on the diocesan website: <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/missionarearesources/policies-for-a-mission-area/>

This question highlights one of the areas of work over the last year – working with the MACs on Governance. Over the last 5 years there has been a massive shift in culture from PCCs to MACs who are now the Trustee Board. We now have the Trustee Guide to the Mission Area: https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Trustee_Guide-to-the-Mission-Area_English-FINAL.pdf

There is a raft of simple policies and procedures on the website. If there are other policies required, please let Tracey know and we can add it to the website.

Date of the next meeting:

Tuesday 29 November at St Peter's Church Holywell.

Further information

All the papers to accompany this meeting can be found at: <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/standing-committee/>

The meeting closed with a Eucharist in St Ethelwold's Church, followed by lunch.

