

Cynhadledd Esgobaeth Llanellwy :: St Asaph Diocesan Conference



Pwyllgor Sefydlog :: Standing Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Conference held on 28th September 2021 via Zoom

1. Welcome and Opening Reflection

The meeting was chaired by Llŷr Williams who opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present to the Standing Committee. Rev'd Dr Sally Harper delivered the reflection on behalf of the diocesan spirituality group focusing on prayer.

2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

Apologies from the following members were recorded:

Hugh Burgess, Jennie Creed, Amanda Griffiths, Maryon Hughes, Sue Huyton, Peter Lewis, John Liston, Heather Loveridge, Hermione Morris, Kate Tiltman and James Turner.

Llŷr Williams asked the members of Standing Committee, having seen the agenda, whether anyone wanted to register a conflict of interest. Rev'd Dr Jason Bray registered a conflict of interest for item 9 – the election of a Vice-President of the Diocesan Conference.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Standing Committee held on 29th June 2021 via Zoom were reviewed and presented for approval by the Standing Committee.

For: 100%

Against: 0%

Abstentions: 0%

Result: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising were identified from the minutes that were not already the subject of a separate agenda item.

5. Planning our Future

Llŷr Williams reflected on the impact the coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns have had over the last year and a half. The diocese has responded well to the challenges that we faced, we have recovered from the initial shock and 2022 will be a year of reconstruction. We will try to discern how to be the church that God is calling us to be.

Llŷr Williams introduced Bishop Gregory.

Bishop Gregory stated that it is good to be able to provide an update on the progress of our recovery, and the response we have made to the pandemic. 2022 will be about reconstruction. All 19 Mission Area reviews have been written and are being considered by the Mission Area Conferences. The purpose of the reviews was to ensure that we have a sustainable future. We have made some hard proposals as we test our life against sustainability. The Mission Area review is focused on three areas – buildings, finance, and ministry. The Mission Areas now need to translate the reviews into a Mission Area plan for the year of reconstruction and consider how to grow and carry out the mission of the church in their areas.

The diocesan focus is changing. Unlocking our Potential has served us well and there has been a rise in lay leadership, ordained ministry, and growth in vocations. There have been 20 people who were ordained, and 14 new lay ministers. The new focus will be "Growing Faith, Bringing Hope, Demonstrating Love" and the bishops staff team have been meeting to plan a schedule for the rollout of this new focus. This will begin in Advent with the Advent message which will be available in video, audio, and a written format for all churches on Advent Sunday. This will be supported with the production of a diocesan manifesto in printed form which will be similar in style to the Annual Diocesan Report. The manifesto will set out how we will embody this task of Growing Faith, Bringing Hope, Demonstrating Love. In April 2022, we will be electing the new Mission Area Conferences, followed later in the year by the new triennium of the Standing Committee, and the Bishop's staff team is designing a course of four sessions intending to run from May to July 2022 with information about how to apply these new themes next year. This can be adapted and used by the Mission Area Conference.

Bishop Gregory introduced Archdeacon John Lomas who spoke about Mission Hub Churches.

The new motto moves from unlocking our potential to kinetic energy and exciting projects in the diocese. Mission Hub Churches are a five-year project with one Mission Hub Church based in each archdeaconry.

- St Asaph – St David's Church, Penrhyn Bay, Rev'd Juliet Fraser
- Wrexham – St Mary's Church, Mold, Rev'd Canon Martin Batchelor
- Montgomery – St Mary's Church, Welshpool, Rev'd Adam Pawley

The clerics will be licensed on:

- 17th October – Juliette at Penrhyn Bay
- 7th November – Adam in Welshpool
- 28th November – Martin in Mold

Mission Hub Churches are intended as a gift to Mission Areas and not as an imposition. Work has already been undertaken in preparation for the hub churches in consultation with each Mission Area. There has been an audit of the resources already in place and teams have been looking at finance, fabric and personnel. Each Mission Area Hub Church will have a curate and a youth and children's worker. The role and expectations of the Mission Hub

Churches will be underlined by LyCiG principles – prayer, presence, proclamation, persuasion.

John Lomas introduced Nigel Williams

Nigel reported that the Director of Music has now been employed in a full-time role with the intention of recruiting for the choir from local schools but also enhancing the work of music in schools. He is able to engage with children who currently have no connection with the Church, and this will then lead to outreach opportunities with their parents, family and friends. Paul Booth is a qualified teacher and already has an excellent relationship with the schools and head teachers in the area.

The Cathedral is looking to appoint a chaplain to work from Ysgol Glan Clwyd. This will be a Welsh speaking chaplain in the Welsh medium secondary school which is a feeder school to the Welsh medium primary schools in the area. Nigel has met with the headteacher at Ysgol Glan Clwyd who is working on developing the proposal with his senior leadership team. It is not a church school, and this is a new venture. The Cathedral is learning from other establishments who already have a chaplain. The school has 1200 pupils and it is hoped that the work of the chaplain will build on the relationship the Cathedral already has with the school.

Nigel Williams introduced Diane McCarthy

Eglwys Dot Church The dioceses of Saint Asaph and Bangor are working together to progress online ministry. It was felt that the working title of Digital Cathedral was a barrier to those outside the church and Eglwys Dot Church is a more encompassing title for the project. For young people there is no separation between the virtual and physical world: many of the communities they interact with are online. However, the incarnational nature of Christianity means an online community should also have access to physical church. Eglwys Dot Church needs to be distinctively Christian and we shouldn't be embarrassed about this. If people are engaging with us as a church, they will expect us to talk about God, Jesus and prayer. During lockdown there has been a lot of successful work on broadcasts and services, however new ways of worship haven't been as developed. Eglwys Dot Church will be mission-focused, creating prayer walls, daily prayers, and live chat functions to allow full engagement. It is hoped there will be a commissioning editor to manage the project together with six online chaplains, one for each archdeaconry. High level resourcing is required and the project will need to be self-funding. Alongside this there is an extensive program of training for all in all aspects of technology for both the clergy and interested people. This will be planned by the provincial digital innovation group.

Llŷr Williams opened the discussion to the floor and invited questions.

Will Marshall - The project is a good idea and we need to recognise and honour the fact that young people don't see any distinction between the virtual and physical world. The online community is the most natural thing in the world for many young people and that needs to be the core of Eglwys Dot Church. We also need to recognise the value in having a physical presence, for example, the importance of coming together for the sacraments.

Norman Morris - what is the relationship between Mission Hub Churches, Mission Areas, and the Mission Area Conference? How do you ensure best practice spreads across the church, would it be good to ask churches what their three greatest needs are?

John Lomas - The Hub Churches will work with good practice but it's already going on in Mission Areas and Hub Churches will create places to draw people into faith not necessarily a particular building. The intention is to recruit curates and train them into the best practice of church growth which can then be cascaded to other churches.

Bishop Gregory- The boundary between Dot Church and the physical church needs to be porous. Online church is a means of reaching out to worshippers for whom return to church is a physical barrier. Bishop Gregory stated that he hopes there will be a diversity of provision catering for different interests and age groups. Online church can also benefit older people or those unfamiliar with church culture and will give a new opportunity for questions of faith and worship to be discussed. Online church is not sufficient on its own and needs to be a physical witness to our Church in Wales. The culture should not be to build separate churches but integrate these communities. The digital church chaplain could provide this link.

Huw Lloyd - what is the relationship between Hub Churches and the Mission Areas? If Hub Churches are there to support others in the Mission Area, what if there is a clash between the Hub Church and the Mission Areas about what they feel is important? Will another level of Church confuse congregations some of whom are still working on embracing Mission Areas?

Bishop Gregory - Hub Churches are not another layer of decision-making. They are part of the Mission Area and a resource intended to model best practice to encourage and inspire. There is an immense pool of experience in archdeaconries and they will help to model best practice for Mission Areas. Hopefully over five years the Mission Hub Churches will be centres of mission and then we can look to plant another Mission Hub Church in the Mission Area.

Carol Poolman - from experience of setting up a Hub Church in Mold we will be talking and working together not against each other.

Llŷr Williams thanked everyone involved in the delivery of these exciting new initiatives and for those who participated in the discussion.

6. Funding our Future: Diocesan Budget 2022

Llŷr Williams stated that a detailed paper has been circulated in advance of the meeting including the numbers for the 2022 budget together with a commentary for this agenda item.

Llŷr called on Helen Jones, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF), to present the 2022 budget to the Standing Committee.

Income

The income budgeted for 2022 is £4,024,005.

- Our largest source of income (82%) is Mission Area Share and this will be held at its current level for the fourth consecutive year in 2022.
- To date all Mission Areas have qualified for the emergency funding available in 2020 and 2021. This totals over £2.3 million for the two years.
- The Mission Area Share Discount Scheme will be continued in 2022, offering a discount of up to 4% for Mission Areas that pay promptly and regularly during the

year. Currently for 2021, all our Mission Areas have paid their share in full up to the half year. The DBF are very grateful to them for this commitment.

- The DBF continues to work hard to rent out surplus vicarages to generate additional budgeted income of £160k. This has been more challenging than usual during the pandemic and the diocesan inspector Emyr Wyn Hughes and the diocesan and property board were thanked for the excellent management of our property portfolio.
- The block grant from the RB has reduced significantly by £687k to £356k. This is due to the RB now funding the contribution to the clergy pension scheme and has reduced the block grant by a corresponding amount.

Expenditure

The expenditure budgeted for 2022 is £4,119,454

- This year there will be an increase of 2% in stipends, lay salaries, and contributions to the clergy housing scheme. These are our most significant costs amounting together to 71% of our total expenditure.
- We have budgeted for 63.5 stipendiary clergy and maintained our investment in eight training curacies.
- We continue to invest in lay ministry and currently fund two Children and Family Chaplains and Church Army Evangelists for the new Centre of Mission in the Aled Mission Area.
- We have assumed three clergy vacancies at any given time as this is the reality.
- The first year of investment in the Mission Hub Churches is budgeted at £74K in 2022.
- Investment in the cathedral initiatives will be taken from a designated fund in diocesan reserves.
- Diocesan admin team salaries represent 9% of our expenditure. This small team manages a turnover of over £4m annually and handles all finance, investment, legal, education and property issues as well as providing vital support for the Mission Areas.

The DBF will deliver a deficit budget of -£95,449 in 2022 compared to a budgeted surplus of £7,913 this current year (2021). This surplus represents 2.4% of our annual turnover and has been factored into the DBF's five-year plan for reconstruction. The DBF believes the budget represents the right balance between investment in our future and careful control of costs. It is essential that we step out in faith financially now and invest in Growing Faith, Bringing Hope, and Demonstrating Love as we refocus the diocese in the coming year.

It is important to look at any budget in the context of past and predicted future performance and the DBF takes a medium-term view, balancing surpluses with deficits, and being willing to invest in growing the Kingdom. Over the last 11 year period, including budgeted estimates for the next two years, the cumulative picture is a surplus of £185K. The plan is that this surplus will fund the Faith, Hope and Love initiatives up to 2026. The DBF will continue to rise to the challenge of managing our financial resources as carefully as possible whilst continuing to invest in our Mission Areas and frontline ministry.

The DBF is grateful to the RB for providing further emergency funding of over £1.1m to this diocese during 2021. Without this the financial situation in our churches and Mission Areas would be very concerning. All of the money received from the RB has been paid across to our Mission Areas and to the Coronavirus Emergency Fund that supports the most vulnerable in our communities. We are grateful to our congregations who have responded generously to the crisis and particularly to everyone who has moved their giving online and made a

commitment to Gift Direct. The congregations that have committed themselves to this form of giving are finding it easier to work through the crisis and plan for the future.

The DBF has committed, as it did in 2020, that any surplus on the 2021 accounts will be reinvested in mission and ministry.

Llŷr Williams offered the opportunity for any questions.

Kevin Horswell pointed out that there is a discrepancy between the paper budget deficit of £74K and the notes which show a deficit of £95K.

Diane McCarthy apologized for this error. The correct figure is -£95,449 and it will be corrected for the Conference.

Llŷr called on the SC to accept the proposed budget for 2022.

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| For | 97% |
| Against | 0% |
| Abstain | 3% |

Llŷr Williams thanked Helen, the DBF members and the diocesan team for their work on the budget.

Bishop Gregory thanked Helen for all dedicated work for the Diocese and informed the SC that Helen will be stepping down as chair of the DBF after the Diocesan Conference.

After a comfort break, the delegates were welcomed back to the meeting.

7. A report from the Diocesan Spirituality Group

Llŷr invited Bishop Gregory to speak about the relaunch of the Spirituality Group and the importance of prayer in the life of the Teulu Asaph.

Bishop Gregory reminded SC of Psalm 127:1 "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain". Bishop Gregory reported that he is excited to share with Standing Committee all that is being planned for Faith Hope and Love. In the end, mission is about building relationships with God through Jesus Christ. The focus of mission is allowing us to journey to bring healing and wholeness. Spirituality is so important to our common mission. Bishop Gregory introduced Rev'd Dr Sally Harper in her new role as Director of Spirituality for the diocese. Sally is a member of the Cathedral staff team and part of the St Beuno's outreach team.

Sally Harper - The spirituality group has been re-launched but hasn't met in person yet. The group will consist of a core of eight people representing the three archdeaconries, different traditions, young and old, and male and female. The group will meet face-to-face for the first time in Loreto spirituality Centre in Llandudno for a two-day retreat and meeting. Part of the meeting will be working out the purpose and remit of the group and the individual roles and boundaries (for example do we include healing ministries?). The spirituality group is for the whole diocese and Sally said that they will do lots of listening and will want to hear from others. The group is hoping to revamp the prayer pages of the diocesan website and to produce a good range of resources which are acceptable, accessible and ready to use. This will include reflective liturgies and bilingual material. The group are looking to run an

event at the cathedral next year looking at ways of exploring prayer, godly play, and labyrinth resources. Sally shared an example of a recent prayer card with the Standing Committee.

Vision

Our inner life: prayer that is life-giving, comforting, something which draws us in

Our image of God: who do we come to in prayer? Do we know God as loving, compassionate, and faithful?

Pob un yn ei iaith ei hun: each in our own language, allowing people to be who they are and allowing people to find their own way of praying.

Holy ground: praying in our own buildings – we have a great tradition of pilgrimage in the diocese but what do we do inside the buildings? Whether they are ancient and beautiful, or new and functional we need to look at how we use them.

Cathedral as our mother church – it is an important place in our diocese and a prayer pilgrimage will be launched shortly.

Llŷr thanked Sally for her presentation and offered the opportunity for any questions.

8. Governing our future and looking at the future pattern of Standing Committee meetings

Llŷr outlined the current plans as set out in the accompanying paper. As we are entering the last year of the Standing Committee triennium, we need to consider the next cohort and what Standing Committee might look like for those elected in 2022 to start in November 2022. We need to consider how we encourage different voices to stand for Standing Committee, especially those who are currently excluded due to job commitments, education, and childcare. Standing Committee currently meets four times per year on weekdays meaning that it is difficult for some people to stand for election as they wouldn't be able to attend meetings. The proposal to Standing Committee is:

- Meet in person for a full Saturday in a central location in February. This will enable more business to be done with a focus on discussing vision and strategy.
- Meet online for two x two-hour evening meetings in May and September where essential business and urgent matters are discussed. The September meeting will focus on the Annual Accounts and the finance reports for the Diocesan Conference.
- If required there could be a short meeting after the Diocesan Conference.

Llŷr invited Bishop Gregory to comment.

Bishop Gregory thanked Llŷr for the preparation of the paper. He said he has always envisaged the Standing Committee as being the key policy-making group in the diocese. All the major aspects of the diocese are brought for discussion and discernment to Standing Committee and he stated that he is conscious that the current pattern of meetings excludes people who can't take time off work to attend. Bishop Gregory stated that the proposals give us a chance to revitalise our work and the point of presenting this paper now is that people can know what they are committing to in advance of standing for election.

Llŷr Williams invited questions from Standing Committee.

Pam Powell – why is the day meeting scheduled for February which is the month with the heaviest snowfall?

Llŷr responded that we will look again at the timing of the meetings to take account of the weather. We could make the full-day meeting the May meeting when the weather is warmer and the days are longer.

Jonathan Smith asked if there would be an appetite to meet immediately after the Diocesan Conference.

Llŷr responded that this will only be if necessary and not immediately after the Conference!

Clive Myers - We are frequently told that Standing Committee is the decision-making body but I wonder if we can have more say about policy making? There is a tendency for most things to come as a final paper merely seeking approval. Could some things come earlier so members of this group could have input into the process? Can we have a say and have the chance to make a difference?

Llŷr proposed the vote on whether the Standing Committee should move to the new pattern of meetings as set out in the paper.

For: 74%
Against: 19%
Abstain: 6%

The vote was passed and the details of the proposals will be looked at in the coming months.

Llŷr opened a vote for Standing Committee to say whether they would like to meet in person for the next meeting:

For: 40%
Against: 50%
Abstain: 10%

Llŷr stated that the next meeting would therefore be on Zoom.

9. Election of Vice President of the Diocesan Conference

Llŷr asked Diane to speak to this item as Secretary to the Diocesan Conference. Diane stated that the current clerical vacancy had arisen due to Steve Willson moving away from the diocese.

Reverend Dr Jason Bray has agreed to stand for election as the Vice President of the Diocesan Conference until the end of office in September 2022.

For: 94%
Against: 0%
Abstain: 6%

Reverend Dr Jason Bray was approved as vice president of the Conference.

10. Report from the Governing Body

Llŷr asked Bishop Gregory to speak about the recent work of governing body. Bishop Gregory stated that it is important for Standing Committee to be aware of what is happening at a provincial level and to be able to respond to it.

Rite of blessing of same-sex unions: for some time, the Governing Body has been debating this issue.

In 2014 there was a report from the Standing Doctrinal Commission

In 2015 there was a process of diocesan consultations

In 2018 the Governing Body stated it was not pastorally sustainable not to make some liturgical provision for those in same-sex marriages or civil partnerships.

The current vote is a result of that determination and desire expressed by GB which the bishops took seriously. The Standing Liturgical Advisory Committee was asked to draw up a rite of blessing. It was presented as a bill to the Governing Body, then went through a six-month process of consultation and revision by a select committee, and on the first day of Governing Body in September 2021 the morning was taken up with amendments to the bill. Following a vote at Governing Body a motion was passed by 2/3 majority in the House of Laity, Clergy and Bishops. Since then all the bishops have issued a letter of authorisation in each of the dioceses for the experimental use of the rite for five years. The rite is available on the provincial website and it is available for use from Friday 1st October.

An important feature of the bill is a conscience clause. It was recognised by the bishops and Governing Body that the rite is not something everybody feels they would be able to sign up to. There is therefore a conscience clause included in the rite which allows every cleric the right to withdraw from using it. Any priest who is approached who doesn't wish to use the rite can refer the matter to the chief pastor of the diocese, who is the Bishop, and s/he will make a decision on the way forward.

Life Events

The Church in Wales, together with the Church of England, has commissioned a piece of work known as Life Events. Each Mission Area will have access to high-quality accessible information about baptisms, marriages, and funerals. These resources will include cards, certificates, celebratory messages, and follow-up messages which can be used for each of these events. These will be launched on the 2 November at an event in Hope Street to which two reps from every Mission Area will be invited.

Governance Reform Working Group

Chancellor Pam Powell is the diocesan representative. They are looking at the governance of the CinW and trying to ensure that what happens at diocesan and provincial level coheres. The first report to Governing Body made some changes to the way Electoral Colleges are run and changes the way motions for Governing Body are generated. It will also look at nominations to vacant positions and the role of Mission Area leaders and area deans.

Climate Change

This coincides with our own Diocesan Conference agenda and a motion was passed on this subject.

Biblical Literacy

2022 will be designated as a year of Biblical literacy. High quality materials will be produced to get us reading our Bibles, particularly focusing on the Book of Luke.

Church in Wales Post Pandemic

The work of the Joint Strategy Working a group reported on its vision for the future, including the culture to be embedded in the Church in Wales, and structures that support our structure.

Llŷr invited questions and comments from Standing Committee.

Pam Powell - asked MA Leaders to respond to the Life Events training invitation by the end of the week. The diocese has purchased a pack with all the resources for each MA. There will be Mission Area Leader training on 18th November.

Norman Morris - welcomed the year of Biblical literacy and hopes it tells the story of the development of the scriptures.

11. Matters Raised by the Mission Areas

One question was raised from Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area on measuring and reaching zero carbon targets. Michael Plane, Diocesan Churches Inspector, summarised the response received from Julia Edwards, the Church and Wales Climate Change Champion, who attended our last meeting.

Question: With the Church in Wales having declared a Climate Emergency and committed itself to working to become carbon net-zero by 2030, this will require quite a bit of thought and work on the ground in every church. We are looking to start this in Dyffryn Clwyd however what we can do is limited by not knowing:

A) What is going to be included in the measure

B) How this will be measured

Before we can decrease our carbon footprint we need to measure where we are now and set targets for year on year improvements. We know that this is being developed but is there a time-frame for when this will become operational? We have just over 8 years to do this and the church is not famous for its ability to change quickly!

Inscope activities:

Having consulted widely on the boundary of the Net Zero Carbon Church in Wales project, proposals were presented to the Governing Body earlier this month that the following diocesan-level areas and activities will be included in our carbon footprint:

The Bishop's House

The Cathedral and other ancillary buildings

Churches and church halls

The Diocesan Office
Glebe land
Parsonages
Staff, clerics' and volunteers' church-related travel

The Energy Footprint Tool:

In early 2022, the Representative Body expects to launch the Energy Footprint Tool. The online tool, targeted initially at churches, will enable the calculation of your church's carbon footprint based on your church's energy use. After the input of energy data, the Energy Footprint Tool will calculate the carbon footprint of your church building(s) automatically and the results presented instantly as an easy-to-interpret visual.

Each church will be asked to provide information about your energy use (the heating and lighting of your church and church buildings) obtained from your energy bills for 2021. The 12-month period will enable your church's annual carbon footprint to be calculated. It will also form the baseline for you to compare year-on-year progress towards net zero carbon as each year, churches will be requested to submit their latest annual energy use.

Information will also be collected about average attendance at services, meetings and other activities as well as an estimation of the average length of time (in hours) a person typically stays in the building to attend each of the events.

With the additional building-usage data, the Energy Footprint Tool will be able to generate a more detailed analysis of your church's carbon footprint based on how efficiently you use your energy, referred to as your carbon intensity.

In future years, the Energy Footprint Tool will be expanded to include other church areas and activities, such as parsonages and offices.

In the meantime, the Representative Body will apply official, estimated values to calculate a broad Church in Wales' carbon footprint, while encouraging individual churches to engage with an online carbon calculator, such as 360° carbon which Eco Church recommends [The Collaborative Carbon Calculator for Churches, Charities and Small Businesses • 360°carbon.org \(360carbon.org\)](https://360carbon.org).

Additional carbon tools:

The Representative Body is also working to provide two additional online tools that will enable churches to compare carbon emissions from physical, face-to-face with remote, online meetings and church service-generated emissions.

12. Date of next meeting

Thursday 25th November, 10am on Zoom.

Bishop Gregory reminded Standing Committee about the Diocesan Conference on 9th October on Zoom and closed the meeting with a blessing.