

# 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 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022 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. Revd Martin Batchelor delivered the reflection focusing on the importance of looking outwards to the communities that we are called to serve.

#### 2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

Apologies from the following members were recorded:

Bishop Gregory, Val Aldcroft, Richard Carter, Jenny Creed, Sam Erlandson, Sarah Evans, John Gambles, Sally Harper, John Harvey, Pam Massey, Clive Myers, Carole Poolman and Frank Prescott.

Llŷr Williams asked the members of Standing Committee, having seen the agenda, whether anyone wanted to register a conflict of interest. No conflicts of interest were declared.

#### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Standing Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 via Zoom were reviewed and presented for approval by the Standing Committee. The minutes were proposed by Norma Rowles and seconded by Ros Crawford.

For: 100%

Against: 0%

Abstentions: 0%

Result: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved

#### 4. Matters Arising

There were three matters arising which were identified from the minutes.

a) **This Works!** - Sarah Wheat informed SC that **This Works!** was launched at an online event on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The recording of the launch is available to view on the

diocesan website under 'Faith in Action'. Sarah explained that the resource has been created to share information about projects which are happening in the diocese, and as a source of help and inspiration for those wanting to embark on a project. Each entry on the website is 100 words long and includes contact details for further help and information. Projects can be added to this section of the website by sending details to Sarah Wheat. The aim is to add information about project mapping, planning tools, FAQs. A video about the work of 'The Outpost Community Shop' at St Paul's Church, Rhosesmor was shared. Llŷr thanked Sarah and Karen for their work on this project.

b) **Diocesan Grants Committee** – Diane McCarthy thanked Denbigh and Pool Mission Areas for sending in examples of where grant funding has made a difference. Diane encouraged members of Standing Committee to send in more examples so we can share a range of projects with the Diocese.

c) **Diocesan Elections 2022** – Diane explained that information about the 2022 elections has been emailed out to all Mission Areas and it is also available on the diocesan website. Diane reminded Standing Committee that in order to elect a more diverse representation the SC meetings will move to a new pattern of evening and Saturday meetings from 2023 onwards.

## **5. Developing a Fresh Diocesan Strategy – our vision for 2022 and beyond**

a) **Launch of the Diocesan Manifesto** – Diane McCarthy spoke about the manifesto in the absence of Bishop Gregory. Bishop Gregory wants everyone in the diocese to have a physical copy of the manifesto entitled 'What then shall we say?' The manifesto is also available online and is a bilingual document. Distribution is through Mission Areas with spare copies available in the diocesan office. The focus is on growth, Mission Hubs, the Cathedral, and Mission Areas. Each contributor has explained the project, given a hope for the future, and provided contact details for more information.

**Peter Lewis** – asked whether the figure of 55 licensed lay ministers on the infographic included worship leaders? Diane explained that worship leaders come under the category of commissioned ministries and there are about 560 in the diocese.

b) **Faith, Hope, and Love Course** – Barry Wilson introduced the course which is in the final stage of preparation. The course has been designed so that anyone can lead it. The course has five one-hour sessions and is video based.

- i) Telling our stories
- ii) Faith and how it shapes our lives
- iii) Hope and the expectation of change
- iv) Love and the power to transform
- v) Choice and the creation of new possibilities

Each session features a welcome from Ben and Catrin Lines, a short theological reflection from Bishop Gregory, a reflection from different people across the diocese and finishes with discussion questions. Barry thanked Karen Maurice for all her hard work in coordinating and producing the high-quality videos.

c) **New Mission and Growth Initiatives** – Martin Batchelor spoke about the Mission Hub Churches which are in the infancy of a five-year project. In Mold, Martin has worked on worship, established a link with the local high school, interviewed for a youth worker,

worked with the council, is a regular presence on the high street, started a nurture study course, and has met regularly to pray with the other Mission Hub leaders.

d) **Mission Area Reviews** – Mission Area reviews are now complete and most Mission Areas have completed action plans which will be picked up in clergy reviews (MDR). After Easter, Archdeacons Andy and Barry will meet with the Mission Area Leaders and Mission Area Wardens to review progress on the action plans in the context of Faith, Hope, and Love and how this is reflected in our missional work. It is hoped that the meeting will help the MALs and MAWs to articulate their plans for the future.

Llŷr Williams thanked everyone for their contributions and introduced the breakout groups who discussed: 1. What excites you in what you have heard, 2. Is there anything missing?

A comfort break followed the breakout groups followed by plenary discussion from breakout groups. Each group had a spokesperson to feed back to Standing Committee.

**Group 1 Paulette Gower** - the group liked the idea that the Faith, Hope, and Love course was based on existing ideas not something completely new and has emerged from coming out of the pandemic. The fact that it is built on personal experience and not just knowledge is appealing as it can be lay led. The group felt a more detailed explanation of Hub Churches is needed and it would be useful to have an explanation of their relationship to an Archdeaconry.

**Group 2 Sandra Davies** – the group were excited by the launch of the manifesto showing the work of the diocese. The videos about community work were inspiring and it was interesting to hear about the work of Martin Batchelor and his work with the local community in Mold. One person had been concerned that the Faith, Hope and Love course was yet another new initiative but, having heard about the course, it was clear that it connects with work that has previously happened or is already underway. Concerns about how to reach out with the course to new people were expressed but the group would encourage the Church to speak to people about faith as there is nothing to lose.

**Group 3 Juliet Fraser** – impressed by 'This Works!' and especially the video about the community shop as these represent an opportunity to share the work we do with others. The video showed that small rural churches can be active in the community and make a difference. It can be challenging for people who don't go online but Wi-Fi mini hubs (£10 per month) can be fitted in any church to enable access to diocesan resources. The group were positive about the Faith, Hope and Love course and the manifesto.

**Group 4 Jason Bray** – the manifesto was well received and showed what is happening in the diocese. It was noted that not all MAs have received them yet. The Faith, Hope and Love course looks excellent and those who have been on taster sessions said the resources are very good. The group wasn't sure how the course fits into the manifesto.

**Group 5 Michael Plane** – The MA Action Plan and Review has been a useful exercise to get things going forward but there has been some anxiety where change has been proposed – how do we take these people along with us? Need to emphasise stewardship and giving. Positive about the manifesto but concerns expressed about the cost of producing the booklet.

**Group 6 Karen Maurice** – Positive about the manifesto but not all MAs have received them yet. The group felt it was a good snapshot of the diocese and is easy to read. Questions about how the Faith, Hope and Love course fits in with other courses (eg Alpha). It was confirmed that the full course will be available by the end of May.

Llŷr Williams thanked everyone for their contributions which will be considered as the diocese further develops its plans.

## **6. Future Archdeaconry Arrangements**

Llŷr Williams introduced Barry Wilson who spoke on behalf of Bishop Gregory. Barry explained that the Bishop's Staff team has discussed what to do about a replacement for John Lomas as Archdeacon of Wrexham. As clerics leave or retire, discussions need to be had about whether to replace clergy given funding constraints. Barry directed Standing Committee to Bishop Gregory's briefing paper and outlined three options:

- Appoint a new archdeacon now
- Make the current arrangement of two archdeacons permanent
- Maintain the interim pattern until the next Standing Committee in November

Llŷr Williams thanked Barry for his input and opened the discussion to Standing Committee.

**Peter Lewis** – any replacement would need excellent communication skills; it is good to have a pause and reflect rather than moving to an immediate replacement.

**Will Marshall** – would the current job description stand or will it be looked at and revised?

**Rebecca Sparey-Taylor** – John Lomas spent three months doing MDRs – is this a good use of time when archdeacons should be supporting Hub Churches and other work across the Mission Areas? Going down to two archdeacons is not a good idea. **Andy Grimwood** – confirmed that a lot of time is spent doing MDRs – should archdeacons be doing them?

**Barry Wilson** – MDRs are a good investment of time but the admin surrounding them takes a lot of time. Bishop Gregory's PA, Sian Sweeting Jones is now assisting with the admin and practical arrangements.

**Nigel Williams** – working with the former archdeacons, we spent a lot of time in Standing Committee looking at the job descriptions and this is the basis on which Andy and Barry applied for the role. However, in reality, they are not able to live out this role and so we have to look at this again. We have had three archdeacons for a long time, and initially there were a lot more clerics but pastoral care from them was always available. Central senior roles do not grow the church, we need people on the ground out in the Mission Areas.

**Ros Crawford** – we need to make sure that we avoid burnout and look at a new way of working so that the archdeacons can do the job that was intended.

**Stuart Evans** – Will MALs have a say in the process and we need to understand why the current archdeacons are unable to fulfil their role in order to plan effectively for the future.

**Anne Hooper** – Supervision needs to be in place for our clergy and, if the archdeacons weren't doing all the reviews, it would fall to MALs. There would need to be support and training provided if this happened.

**Barry Wilson** – the archdeacons have worked hard to fulfil the criteria of the role but we need cultural and structural change so that essential work on church growth can happen.

**Andy Grimwood** – spending time with clergy is a key part of the job. We need to look at the original job description and review it.

**VOTE:**

- i) Appoint a new archdeacon – 21%
- ii) Make the current arrangement permanent – 13%
- iii) Maintain the interim pattern until the next SC in November – 66%

Result: Standing Committee decided, by majority vote, to maintain the interim pattern of two archdeacons and to review the situation in November 2022.

## **7. Report from the Nurturing Steering Group**

Llŷr Williams introduced Jennie Downes who presented a report on the new curriculum for Wales.

Curriculum for Wales has been launched and it marks a significant change to what and how things will be taught in schools in Wales. It is the first time that Wales has had its own curriculum separate from England. It is based on four purposes for learning: ambitious, capable learners; enterprising, creative contributors; ethical, informed citizens; and healthy, confident individuals. Religious Education sits within the humanities curriculum and will now be called 'Religion, Values, and Ethics' and will reflect a pluralistic, objective, ethical, critical, and spiritual understanding of the world. Jennie shared an inspiring film from St Peter's VA School Rossett who were looking at the issue of refugees in a whole school context.

Diane McCarthy thanked Jennie for taking time to share the new curriculum. The work Jennie is doing with our schools is inspiring and engaging the younger generations with the Gospel message.

Stuart Evans– as a member of the Nurturing Steering Group, the group hasn't met for some time, but it is encouraging that excellent work is still being produced. Do we still need this Steering Group?

Llŷr Williams thanked Jennie for her work in the diocese and our schools.

Diane McCarthy spoke about future plans for the education team. There have been particular challenges for the education team due to the pandemic and the long-term absence of Roz Williams. Roz has now moved on from her work with the diocese and Diane thanked her for her dedicated work with our schools and young people over the last 16 years. Diane also recognised the excellent work of teachers, headteachers, governors, Bishop's Visitors, and the Diocesan Board of Education as they have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. There are over 6,000 pupils in our 51 church schools compared to 4,500 people in our churches on a Sunday so these pupils and their families are an important mission field. We are now proposing to separate the work of statutory education and children and youth work and discussions are underway with the Diocese of Bangor to appoint a Diocesan Director of Education to cover school work across North

Wales. Mary Stallard, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Bangor, has the portfolio for education on the Bench of Bishops, and is known to many of us as she ministered in the Diocese of St Asaph for many years. Mary has a real passion for work with schools, children and young people. Hannah Daniels has now been appointed as Children and Youth Officer; we are recruiting a youth worker for Mold Mission Hub and have plans to recruit a Community Engagement worker in the Penrhyn Bay Mission Hub; Esther and Jon Andrews continue their work in Denbigh and Aled Mission Areas; and we are developing positive partnerships with Coleg Cambria and Wrexham Glyndŵr university.

## **8. Asaph 1450**

Nigel Williams spoke to this initiative in the absence of Bishop Gregory. 2023 will mark 1,450 years since the consecration of St Asaph as the second bishop of our diocese and the establishment of the Diocese of St Asaph. Bishop Gregory is keen to mark this occasion and he wants to ensure that celebrations are driven by the diocese and so Standing Committee are asked to discuss how to proceed.

Standing Committee moved into breakout groups for 15 mins to discuss Bishop Gregory's proposals and this was followed by a plenary session.

**Group 1 Pam Powell** – the consensus was that coming together as one big group across the diocese wouldn't work. It would be very expensive and would need extensive planning. However, the group agreed that this event should be celebrated in a more low-key way.

**Group 2 Nigel Williams** – one central event wouldn't have people attending in numbers. The group felt that a series of events over the summer would be better, possibly with central resources being produced which could then be used by each MA in a way that is appropriate to their local context. It was felt that the sale of merchandise wouldn't cover the cost of producing it.

**Group 3 Will Marshall** – it is valuable to celebrate our history but any celebration needs to do something more. It was felt that a central event wouldn't be of interest to local communities although the idea of celebrating this at the Diocesan Conference was felt to be a good initiative.

**Group 4 Ros Crawford** – the Cathedral should be the focus and schools and young people should be involved. Could there be a week of celebrations in the Cathedral?

**Group 5 Sandra Davies** – the group questioned whether there would be the support for a central event and the group suggested that a survey to MAs or churches might be useful to find out how many people would want to be involved. This group had questions about the purpose of the celebrations and how this initiative would grow the church.

**Group 6 Juliet Fraser** – the cost of a central event was raised as a concern. It was suggested that it could be the theme of the Diocesan Conference in 2023 with the Cathedral as a focal point.

Llŷr Williams thanked everyone for their comments which will be looked at as future plans are made.

## **9. Casual Vacancy on the Diocesan Board of Finance**

Papers were circulated in advance of the meeting. There is a vacancy on the Diocesan Board of Finance due to the resignation of Helen Jones. The nomination is for Kevin Weston who has been church treasurer for Nannerch church for many years. Kevin has indicated that if elected he would also be interested in serving on the Investment Sub Committee.

For – 90%

Against – 0%

Abstain – 10%

## **10. Matters Raised by the Mission Areas**

Maelor Mission Area had raised questions about safeguarding that had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and Hannah Daniels responded.

Hannah spoke about the DBS database for lay people. Michael Balkwill oversees the records for clerics and LLMs. A lot of work has been happening to rationalise the DBS register. The first step was to make sure that the records held by the Provincial Office in Cardiff were up to date. Each Mission Area has been asked to verify the accuracy of the data held by Cardiff and to remove anyone who is no longer in the role, has moved away from the area, or has died. This has now been done by most Mission Areas and resulted in one Mission Area removing over 100 out of date records. There are still some Mission Areas that need to complete this first stage but this work is almost complete. Becky Murphy has been employed in the Provincial Office to oversee compliance and she has commented that the Diocese of St Asaph is doing very well in terms of getting the database records up to date.

Anthony Griffiths, Provincial Director of Safeguarding, has recently released a draft of 'Introduction to Safeguarding' which includes information about our duty of care, safeguarding standards, signs of abuse and an explanation of the safeguarding team roles and responsibilities.

The new database is now ready to be tested and there is a meeting on 12th April with members of the provincial safeguarding team and the Denbigh Mission Area who have agreed to test the system. If this is successful it will be rolled out to all the other Mission Areas once they have updated their database records.

Training is undertaken by Emma Leighton Jones and this is mainly online training although face to face training is expected to recommence by the summer. If people in your congregations don't have access to digital training, she can arrange face to face sessions. Additional Safeguarding Trainers are being recruited to cover the rest of Wales so that Emma can focus on North Wales in the future.

In response to the second part of the question, currently those moving from England to Wales have to undertake safeguarding training in Wales. This ensures that people are aware of the procedures that are specific to the Church in Wales, and which are different from the Church of England in some important respects. Hannah has asked Emma Leighton Jones if this can be looked at but hasn't heard back yet.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022. This will be an in-person meeting at St Matthew's Church Hall, Buckley.

Nigel Williams thanked Llŷr for chairing the meeting and closed the meeting with prayer and a blessing.