

Cynhadledd Esgobaeth Llanelwy :: St Asaph Diocesan Conference



Pwyllgor Sefydlog :: Standing Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Conference held on 30 March 2021 via Zoom

1. Welcome and Opening Reflection

The meeting was chaired by Norma Rowles who opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present to the Standing Committee.

Adrian and Hilary Murray from our sister diocese in South West Tanganyika led the opening reflection, focusing on Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength" and explaining their work in their local school and hospital. They concluded the reflection by sharing the words of William Cowper in a song by Graham Kendrick.

2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

Apologies from the following members were recorded:

Jason Bray, Jenny Creed. Sarah Evans, Kate Tiltman, Huw Bryant, Richard Burton, Roger Dutton, Helen Jones.

No conflicts of interest were registered.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Standing Committee held on 24 November 2020 via Zoom were reviewed and presented for approval by the Standing Committee.

For:	88%%
Against:	0%
Abstentions:	13%
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 for the future – the challenge of Recovery and Reconstruction

Developing a Fresh Diocesan Strategy – articulating our vision for 2021 and beyond.

Tracey White introduced the feedback from the previous meeting in November under the following headings:

- Leadership – collaboration, change, management, accountability
- Balancing old and new – being bold and looking outward, recognising the tension between the new ways we have found to work and the older more traditional approach. Considering the blended nature of the old and new as we move forwards.
- MA reviews – a broadly positive response, although for some the MAs haven't always been the opportunity people hoped for.
- Vision – being clear about who and what we are.

Bishop Gregory explained that vision is fundamental to the diocesan journey and he recapped the current diocesan strategic goals:

- Growth – building the life of God's people
- Service – ministry in the name of Christ
- Youth – sharing good news with young people
- Enablement – discerning the breadth of God's work
- Mission Areas – focussing on God's Kingdom

These goals were brought together into the current mission focus of 'Unlocking our Potential' which has sustained our life as a diocese.

In November 2020 Bishop Gregory had outlined the new priorities for 2021 and beyond:

- A vision of faith which is energising
- A financial model which is sustainable
- A leadership which is committed to collaborative ministry
- A leadership which is intentionally missional (prayer, presence, proclamation, persuasion)
- A leadership which says its prayers

At the end of the November meeting 2020 Bishop Gregory considered where the vision would take us: Respond (2020), Recover (2021), Reconstruct (2022).

Bishop Gregory set out the timeline for the next two years. March SC will be about setting out general principles; June SC will be agreeing specific goals, helping us to define areas which are important and the words that need to be central to our life for the coming years; November SC will be about adopting plans for 2022 onwards.



	<p>OUR MISSION is to communicate that: Anything can happen when we travel with Jesus on a life-changing journey</p>	
<p><i>Three things will last forever – faith, hope and love (1 Corinthians 13.13)</i></p>		
The KEYNOTES of our lives as disciples		Our Mission Goals
<p>FAITH is the FOUNDATION of all that we do</p>	<p><i>For God has already placed Jesus Christ as the one and only foundation, and no other foundation can be laid. (1 Corinthians 3.11)</i></p>	<p><i>Grow Faith</i></p>
<p>HOPE is the CATALYST which inspires action</p>	<p><i>... that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people" (Ephesians 1.18)</i></p>	<p><i>Bring Hope</i></p>
<p>LOVE is the EXPRESSION of our faith</p>	<p><i>Be sincere in your love for others ... Love each other as brothers and sisters and honour others more than you do yourself. (Romans 12.9,10)</i></p>	<p><i>Demonstrate Love</i></p>

Bishop Gregory explained the rationale for the 'Teal Brick' which came out of work done by a combined team of the Bishop's Staff and diocesan senior officers, facilitated by Tracey White. The collaboration first considered the mission - 'Anything can happen if we travel with Jesus on a life changing journey' – and then considered our values and arrived at the three Biblical principles from 1 Corinthians 13:13 'Faith, hope and love'. The mission goals for 2022 will be:

- Grow Faith
- Bring Hope
- Demonstrate Love

This would replace 'Unlocking our Potential'. Bishop Gregory explained that it's not about restarting everything, but building on what has been achieved already. There will be a programme of work designed to support these three imperatives:

- Focusing on MAs
- Using LyCIG local
- Resource Church
- Mission Hub Churches
- Online Church



More information will be provided about Mission Hub Churches in the June SC meeting but it is intended that the Archdeacons will mentor one project in each archdeaconry, modelling the growth of our church.

Diane McCarthy spoke about digital innovation, explaining that our digital response has been one of the most remarkable things we have achieved as a church in 2020 and continuing in 2021. We have been catapulted forward a number of years in our levels of digital competence in areas of ministry and worship, courses and pastoral care, and we have managed to keep the work of the church running during the pandemic. The digital world moves quickly and so significant investment will be needed to continue this work. A Digital Innovation Group has been established under the leadership of Leon Hughes, Head of IT and Communications for the Church in Wales.

At this point the SC broke into breakout rooms (30 mins) where members were asked to reflect and discuss the information heard. Each group was facilitated by a named person who recorded the salient points.

After a comfort break, the delegates were welcomed back, and each group fed back their discussion to the meeting in a plenary session.

Richard Carter: the group generally thought that we are travelling in the right direction, but some felt that we are good at words but slow to action. How does the 2022 vision track back to individual churches and MAs? The group thought that the 'teal brick' was very powerful and people were enthused but also somewhat overwhelmed at what lies ahead. They felt that this would work alongside the MA Reviews but strategic thinking was needed to make sure that all churches and MA were working cohesively.

Sarah Wheat: The group thought that we were travelling in the right direction but we don't always need to come up with new initiatives as established ones already exist eg the five marks of mission, seven marks of growing a healthy church. We need to focus on taking the church to people and not bringing people to the church. Coronavirus has had such a big impact that we want to ensure we maximise innovations and we don't slip back. There needs to be a focus on growing disciples and it is too easy to focus on finance and not on communities and what we are doing. We need to embrace partnership working and a clear plan is needed. The group thought that a digital platform would help across the churches and MAs and there was a feeling of 'let's get on with it' and not to hold back.

Llŷr Williams: The group felt it was too early to say if things were moving in the right direction but agreed that the information that had been shared sounded good. A lot of digital work had already been done in churches and MAs due to the pandemic and we need to do something to hold on to those people who had been attending digital church. When physical church starts again, we need to make sure we provide a welcome to those who have joined via digital church. Congregations, clergy and DO staff need to adapt and develop new skills to fulfil our potential. The group said that Mission Hub Church is an exciting prospect. Some



people are still grappling with the idea of MAs so we need to ensure that we bring this new vision to others and ensure that everyone understands the terms. The group felt they needed more information about the timetable but were generally positive about the proposals.

Hannah Daniels: The group felt it was difficult to think about the future as we have no idea what the church will look like that we are returning to. There has been much change in the past few years and there has been a lot of information to absorb. Some felt that we need to be still and think about where God is leading before we launch into another initiative. We have had strategies in the past which haven't had time to come to fruition and there was the question as to whether these have been evaluated. There was concern about disparity between MAs and a worry that one vision might not fit all circumstances. The group felt that the diocese is travelling in the right direction but at different speeds and sometimes it might be necessary to diverge from the path. We have valuable resources in all the churches and MAs but we need to acknowledge the difficulties of putting some things into practice.

Tracey White: The group was split on some of the issues discussed. Some felt that the words Faith, Hope, Love were quite 'churchy' and traditional but others had already adopted something similar in their church. The group agreed that we need to get off the page and into action but there were concerns about promising something we couldn't deliver. The MA reviews were giving opportunities and ensuring that accountability and a timetable is built into the reviews.

John Lomas: The group generally thought that we are travelling in the right direction but there are caveats. We have to embrace the old and new and we have to be relevant to others in our service to them. Being cut off during the pandemic has made us think about how we are connected but we need to be aware of those who are isolated – paper still works well! The vision excited and enthused the group but with some apprehension about the timing when we are thinking about returning to church. What we do depends on our setting and we need a blended church. We need to carry things that work into the future and leave behind those that don't. The group liked the idea of centres of excellence and questioned the idea of how we collect our data in the future.

Pam Powell: There was agreement in the group that we are travelling in the right direction but the vision is perhaps reactionary rather than intentional. The teal brick was very popular as it relates to our individual lives and also our community life. 'Life changing journey' was popular with the group and the strategy had strong correlation with the MA Review process. The vision needs to be owned by the MAs, churches and congregations and not just be delivered 'top down'. The vision encouraged us to take things on and continue to care for the community beyond the church. The group felt the timetable is right but we need to start and not delay. There was great support for the initiative.

Barry Wilson: We are travelling in the right direction and the words are easy to understand and remember. We need to know how to implement these broader



ideas but they are exciting and inspiring and we want to move forwards. The group felt the vision would go down well in MAs and offered new possibilities and workable values, and that it would both affirm and challenge. The group felt the timescale was right but we need to get it right in practice.

Ros Crawford: Working together helps us all and there are exciting opportunities to be brave – we should look to the future and not back. The pandemic has led us to look at new ways of working and technology does help. Mission statements should be open-handed and for some there was the reluctance to move away from the New Testament model of community. The priority is to focus on what we are – do we need fewer buildings, do we need to change our focus and mission and discipleship? It was felt that the timetable was correct although some thought it should happen sooner. Some felt that we needed to get the MA Reviews out of the way before starting on a new initiative. It is a balance of the old and new and we need to think about some of our smaller rural communities.

Norma thanked everyone for their contributions and asked Bishop Gregory to summarise the plenary.

Bishop Gregory: There was rich feedback offered which will take some time to digest. Overall it was positive and it is clear there is a readiness to embrace the direction of travel. We need to be careful about how this is communicated and ensure that it doesn't come across as 'initiative overload'. We will be looking at the feedback in detail and more details about the general principles in the June meeting. We will then look to launch the new initiative in September.

Before the next item there was a comfort break.

6. Generosity and Stewardship

Norma invited **Andy Grimwood**, Archdeacon of St Asaph, to speak about generosity and stewardship.

Andy presented the key findings and recommendations from the Anglican Giving Survey 2021.

- A third of Anglicans do not give to their Church.
- 40% of Anglicans have never been asked to give regularly and nearly half of Anglicans have never been asked to review their giving.
- The under 40s are motivated to give through preaching and teaching about giving, but only half of Anglicans (53%) have heard a sermon on giving in the past 12 months. 60% of those who had said it didn't change their thinking on giving.
- Anglicans are three times as likely to leave a legacy to charity than they are to their church. Only 15% of Anglicans have ever been asked to support their church by leaving a legacy. Only 27% of Anglicans view their church's financial need as 'very important'.



- 49% of givers said they would feel motivated to give more if they understood the impact of their giving. 70% perceive Churches as generous organisations but only 23% feel they are inspired by their Church to be generous themselves.
- Less than a third of Anglicans say they are regularly thanked for their giving.
- Half of Anglicans are aware of the recommendation to tithe. 25% agree with it and 23% say they do it. This suggests that about 1 in 4 Anglicans tithe.
- Anglicans are more likely to be female, older (65+), from an AB social class (49%) and attend church in a rural setting. 49% belong to the AB social class (compared with 22% of UK population). Many of our church members are amongst the most affluent in our society, 71% have been a Christian for more than 40 years.
- An Anglican's trust and confidence in their church is very high (80%). The most popular reason for giving is to keep the building maintained - 39% very important, 48% important compared to paying for ministry - 32% very important and 44% important. Most Anglicans would increase their church giving to help their local community (74% regular givers and 61% of non-regular givers said this).

Andy Grimwood explained that there would be the chance to think and reflect on how we take this forward in our Mission Areas and gave an invitation to a generosity webinar on Wednesday 28th April at 10:00am and repeated at 7:00pm. Details of the Zoom link will be given in StAR.

Norma thanked Andy for the presentation and asked for questions and comments: Diane McCarthy confirmed that the PowerPoint slides would be distributed with the minutes.

7. Matters raised by the Mission Areas

We have had no matters raised on this occasion. Norma reminded all Mission Areas of the opportunity to raise any matters that they want to share – good or bad. We ask for questions to be raised in advance so that we can make sure questions are considered properly and that the right people are in attendance at the meeting to respond.

8. Report and Reflection from the Nurturing Steering Group

Norma introduced Heather Loveridge, Interim Diocesan Director of Education and Tim Feak, Diocesan U25s Officer, who presented a report on behalf of the Nurturing Steering Group.

Tim Feak explained that a lot of training had been conducted during lockdown and thanked our clergy, youth chaplains, and the new youth and children's workers



at Hope Street for producing, training and directing people to sources of support. The under 25s ministry team has worked closely with Care for the Family, attended an excellent digital youth ministry course hosted by Glyndwr University and used resources from the Church of England.

The Youth Forum took a pause during lockdown and reviewed its membership. There are now 16 people on the Youth Forum with a waiting list. The first meeting was held digitally and the forum has identified Eco Church, Mental Health and Multi Faith as the topics they want to work on and discuss.

The Youth Pilgrimage and trip to Finland had to be cancelled but Tim maintained the link with the Discipleship Program. The Diocese has been asked to work with the Finnish government on a programme called 'Time to Talk' promoting healthy dialogue on difficult issues. We will be training up our young people to be facilitators and the materials will be translated into Finnish, English, Swedish and Welsh.

Mental Health First Aid Training for Children and Young People – Tim reported that all clergy have received the Awareness Training and we have 22 people who are Mental Health First Aid trained. All 51 Church Schools now have a Mental Health First Aider in their school, paid for and organised by the Diocese.

Heather Loveridge: Heather introduced herself as Interim Diocesan Director of Education during Roz Williams' absence from work. Heather provided background on the 21st Century Schools Programme and its impact on our Church Schools. The Welsh Government is providing significant funding to local authorities to ensure that schools are up to 21st Century standards in terms of size, number, viability and ability to deliver the curriculum.

Powys County Council Education Transformation Programme seeks to close/reorganise a number of rural schools, including Church Schools. We currently have 9 Church in Wales Primary schools in Powys.

Llangedwyn (23 pupils) and Llanfechain (46 pupils) were both originally proposed for closure in 2022. The Education Team have negotiated with Powys:

- Defer closure of both schools until at least September 2023.
- Alternative Church in Wales school places to be made available at the next local school which is Llansantffraid.
- Conduct a feasibility study on the proposal for 3 classroom extension at Llansantffraid Church in Wales School, thus creating permanent capacity for an extra 90 places and securing long term sustainability of that school and better facilities for learners, representing an opportunity to grow Church in Wales school places.

Heather explained that this represented for us the best outcome we could have hoped for. Heather then outlined some of the work the Education team had been doing during covid:



- We have 51 church schools with nearly 6,000 children on roll which represents a significant opportunity for mission and ministry, as well as a real blessing.
- Bishop's Visitors – Heather thanked the 16 Bishop's Visitors who offer both pastoral and curriculum support.
- Weekly Bulletin to Headteachers.
- Video clips and online access to services and celebrations including Christmas and Easter.
- Headteacher drop-in sessions for our diocesan schools.
- Regular curriculum materials provided.
- Personal phone calls to support schools.
- Ongoing support for governance, admissions and buildings
- Thanks were given to Bishop Gregory for the books he has made available as a gift to all of our schools. They were very much appreciated.

Heather concluded by saying that the Education Team has continued to work effectively during the pandemic and some of the things which have been developed digitally will continue into the future.

Tim Feak introduced a film which has been produced by **Jennie Downes** (Schools Officer) showing the work the Education Team have been doing for a special service in May about the work of the translators of the Welsh Bible.

Tim concluded with a film he had made with a reflection using a poem by John O'Donohue "This is the time to be slow".

Norma thanked Tim and the Education Team, School Team and Nurturing Steering Committee for their hard work.

9. Date of next Meeting

Norma reminded everyone that the next meeting would be on **Tuesday 29th June 2021**. It is expected that the meeting would probably be held via Zoom but this will be confirmed well in advance.

Bishop Gregory thanked Norma for chairing the meeting and all of the members of the diocesan team who support and carry forward the work of the Kingdom. Bishop Gregory concluded the meeting with a blessing.

