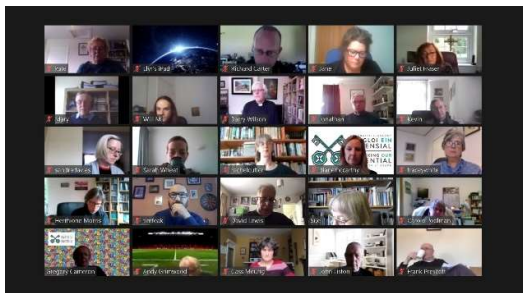


Standing Committee Bulletin 14: 30 June 2020 Via ZOOM

Sue Huyton welcomed everyone to Standing Committee via ZOOM.



Bishop Gregory opened with a reflection on prayer and how we speak honestly to God. He introduced a film made by Esther and Jon Andrews on Psalm 46:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIHF OX4Sr3w&t=5s>



Minutes from the last meeting

These were accepted as a true record.

Matters Arising

Proxy Attendance at the MAC. The guidance is in Toolkit 9 dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/2020-toolkits/ which has been circulated to every MA.

Coronavirus Pandemic: Financial Support

Diane McCarthy outlined the financial support for churches. She quoted from one of Bishop Gregory's pastoral messages issued over Easter: *We've missed some things, but perhaps have unconsciously already let go of others. The diocese's budget is completely thrown out, and for some, businesses are undermined, and work isn't coming back. The Easter message is really telling us not to look back. Jesus is in our future, not our past.* (dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/200429-Pastoral-letter.pdf)

The Representative Body (RB) and all six dioceses are working collaboratively to minimise the financial impact of Coronavirus. Church buildings are only just beginning to re-open having been closed since March. On-the-plate-giving has dried up and fund-raising opportunities are reduced. Support has been made available by the RB based on the following key principles:

- Intergenerational equity
- Receive according to need
- Mitigate differences between income and expenditure – eg move to online giving
- Accelerate the pace of change.

Our diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) wanted to respect these principles and laid out the following requirements for MAs in this diocese:

- All churches must be registered with Gift Direct. Over 70% churches



were registered already so we are well on the way with this.

- Q1 Share to be paid in full at total MA level and the same for Q2.
- The stronger churches should support the financially weaker within each MA.

The total grant from the RB is £561,925. The majority has gone directly to our MAs. There is a supplementary grant to the Cathedral. Plus, to support the principle of looking after others in our communities, there is a Coronavirus Emergency Fund.

We hope this is a transparent process. The MA will decide how their money is used once the funding is returned. Two MAs have already met the criteria and will receive their money later this week. Some MAs will give the money straight back to their churches, but others will use it to plan for the future.

The DBF has spoken of faith, hope and trust in its dealings. It is hoping the MAs will be strategic about the future and be generous in using this funding.

We know from work we have done across the diocese with treasurers, that we have significant funds across the MAs - there is enough unrestricted cash to meet our obligations if we work together. Some churches have already paid their 2020 share in full upfront.

Coronavirus Pandemic: Mission Area Reviews

Archdeacon Barry Wilson: The Church in Wales has halved in size since 1990. Even before the pandemic, we knew we were facing a time of change and things could not stay the same, even if we wanted them to.

What is going to happen to the new when the old demands come back?

We must start with honesty – this is where we are; this is the good and bad; we cannot predict the future, but we can't assume all will be well.

Barry referred people to the mapping project which shows MAs what is happening in their communities:

<https://churchneame.co.uk/resource-map/>

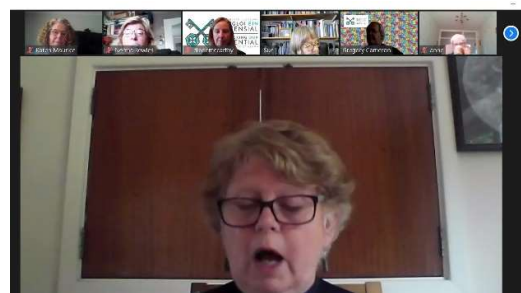
SC members were split into breakout rooms to discuss hopes and opportunities for the future.

Developing – caring for all in licensed and commissioned ministries

Bishop Gregory explained how a pastoral care tree had been established since lockdown with regular meetings of the bishop's staff, the diocesan team, the Archdeacons and MALs. He hopes people feel affirmed in their roles, that they feel cared for. MAs shared ministry teams are working well too to support congregations and communities.

For clergy there is a weekly pastoral letter from the archdeacons. Bishop Gregory issues his own pastoral letter every Thursday to all the faithful. The Esgobty team is keeping in touch with retired clergy and clergy widows.

Vocations and Discernment



Pam Powell: We have had the normal number of discernment enquiries during this time. Inquirers are being matched with a vocation advisor. Nine people have been positively discerned for training in the last week.



An Ordination with a difference will take place on Saturday at the Cathedral.

Huw Butler has taken over LLMs and Kate Tiltman looks after commissioned ministries. Pam thanked them for their work and thanked Jackie Feak for her work as Ministry Assistant.

Questions:

Will Marshall said he was encouraged to see people discerned for the role of distinctive deacon – is this a recent thing or a new push?

Pam: A few years ago, we had several distinctive deacons who then chose to go on to be priested. There were practical reasons for this. Sally Baird is currently the only distinctive deacon in the diocese. The two who went through discernment are both for NSM. One is called to explore a ministry within the art world and the other is called to work with the marginalised on the edge of society.

Stuart Evans: Richard Hainsworth is no longer involved as diocesan leader for Theology for Life so who is now responsible?

Pam: Manon is now responsible for Theology for Life in the diocese.

Heather Fenton: is there any mileage for a conversation with those who spent a long time as a deacon, before women could be priests? Perhaps there are some insights we can offer.

Engaging – caring for the most vulnerable in society

Diocesan Offering: This year's recipient is **Haven of Light** and SC watched a short interview with its founder, Alison Ussery. The film can be used in digital services, church meetings or other virtual events to encourage fund raising for the offering. You can see the film at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/diocesan-conference/diocesan-offering/>



Sarah Wheat outlined details of the Coronavirus Emergency Fund and encouraged MAs to apply for the funding. Details are at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/coronavirus/supporting-your-community/>

SC watched an update from Hilary and Adrian Murray in SW Tanganyika, our link diocese. You can see the film at <https://youtu.be/4C3W-dv0cq>

Nurturing - caring for children and young people

Tim Feak told SC that schools are re-opening this week although many were working as Resilience Hubs throughout lockdown. Now schools are offering blended learning – learning in classrooms and online.

The admissions and appeals process is taking place online this year. School building work is continuing.

The Welsh Curriculum will change in 2022. RE will become mandatory which means it can change without the need for primary legislation. It is really important that everyone, with an interest in schools and RE responds to the current consultation. The Bench of Bishops have responded, and people can follow the advice which is contained in the July Ad Clerum: <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/ad-clerum-july-2020/>

The Youth trip to Finland has been cancelled due to Coronavirus. It is yet to be decided if the Youth Pilgrimage can go ahead in August, but we have exciting online plans for the summer.



A head teachers retreat is happening virtually with gifts and reflective materials.

1 July will see the premiere of our Leavers' Service put together for our Year 6 students. We had a song specially written for us by a well-known Christian artist, including an online tutorial for children to learn the song.

The pastoral work to support schools, heads, teachers and pupils is really important and we are trying our best to accompany them through a difficult time.

Diocesan Accounts 2019



Helen Jones, Chair of the DBF, presented the accounts (see the accompanying paper) for 2019.

There was a 2.4% increase in MA share in 2019 to cover clergy stipends, lay salaries and clergy housing costs. The Share was 65% of diocesan income. All 20 MAs qualified for the discount scheme. The Block Grant from the RB remained at the 2018 level. Several historic property matters were regularised so now show up on the balance sheet, representing 9% of diocesan income in 2019.

This property income meant the diocese ended the year with a surplus. Without this money, the budget would have been in deficit by £146,936, which is an improvement of more than £14,000 on the budgeted deficit. This is due to MAs paying their share on time, more clerical vacancies than anticipated and rigorous cost control.

Helen outlined the immediate priorities for the diocese because of the pandemic:

- We need to understand the short- and medium-term impact of Coronavirus on our churches/MAs
- Continue to encourage new ways of giving
- Conduct a detailed review of the 2020 budget over the Summer
- Develop a 2021 budget to reflect the reality of coronavirus
- Support the MA review process
- Engage fully with forthcoming RB discussions

The accounts have been fully audited.

James Turner asked what assumptions are going into the budget planning process for 2021?

Diane McCarthy responded: This is a two-stage process. Firstly, we need to understand the income and cost levels this year. At the DBF emergency meeting last week, they reiterated their wish to keep the 2021 budget on track with the five-year plan but understand that the virus is not a short-term issue. Therefore, it maybe 2022 before we can create a zero-based budget. The steer to officers was to hold steady, support our churches and Mission Areas and wait for other decisions outside DBF control, eg Clergy Remuneration Review, Cathedral Review, the future of the Block Grant and the Evangelism Fund.

Voting to accept accounts: 38 in favour and one abstention.

Sue thanked the DBF for their work. Helen thanked Diane and the diocesan team for their work.

DBF Elections Those nominated for the DBF were elected. 37 for and one abstention.

Name	Category of Membership	Archdeaconry
David Christine Owen	cleric	St Asaph
Mr Clive Myers	Lay - elected	St Asaph
Mr Phil Williams	Lay - elected	St Asaph
Rosd Harmonia Morris	cleric	Montgomery
Nia Sam Allin	Lay - co-opted	Montgomery
Dr Lynne Ash	Lay - elected	Montgomery
Mr Trevor Trevor DL	Lay - elected	Montgomery
David Huw Butler	cleric	Wrexham
Mrs Nicholas Bartlett	Lay - elected	Wrexham
Mrs Helen Jones	Lay - elected	Wrexham
Mr Stuart Richardson	Lay - co-opted	Wrexham
Mr Glyn Williams	Lay - co-opted	Wrexham



Buildings – reopening our buildings safely

John Lomas: 35-40 churches have completed a risk assessment and are opening for private prayer. Details of how this can be done are on the diocesan and CinW websites.



The guidance reflects what we are allowed to do by the Welsh Govt. We are trying to align our guidance with the regulations. There will be updated guidance shortly permitting weddings and funerals. Things are changing all the time.

Huw Burgess: The CinW document is a risk mitigation document rather than a risk assessment; there is no assessment of probability. Not all risks are equal.

JL: We have tried to keep our RA in line with WG's. This is a provincial approach and it is difficult to create guidance which suits everyone. The CinW meet with the WG as part of the Interfaith Group.

Hermione Morris: In anticipation of the guidance on weddings, will it include information on licenses as we cannot read banns.

JL: This will be fully outlined for clergy in the new guidance.

Martin Snellgrove: Are we questioning some WG decisions? eg why are weddings and funerals allowed when people travel long distances for these? Local congregations tend to be very local so would not transmit the virus at normal worship

Jane Ayee: – What about local lockdowns?

JL: Any guidance we give must be passed by the Bench of Bishop. A spike in one place would not necessarily mean the closure of all churches across the diocese.

Bishop Gregory: The opening of churches is permissive not mandatory - churches will want to err on the side of caution. If there is a second spike, I would advise caution and immediate closure.

Update on Hope Street

Luke Bristowe and his family have moved to Wrexham and Luke will be ordained as a deacon on Saturday.

Andy and Rachel Kitchen moved from London to a temporary vicarage in Holywell. The purchase of a vicarage for them in Wrexham has not completed yet.

The building is moving towards completion of phase 1. The contractor, Simmonds, has restarted work on Hope Street but getting hold of building supplies and key components (eg the lift) is difficult. The project is progressing through phase 1 and we are looking at the costings of phase 2. Due to the pandemic, the project is about three months behind schedule with completion now likely to be towards the end of this year. The official opening has been moved to January 2021.

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 22 September 2020

If you attended SC via ZOOM, please complete the short online survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8YGKPB2Q>

Sue thanked Jenni Liston-Smith for all her expertise and help in hosting the meeting.

Bishop Gregory closed the meeting with thanks and a blessing.

Further information:

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/standing-committee/>

