

## Standing Committee Bulletin 18: 29 June 2021

### Via Zoom

**Sue Huyton** welcomed everyone to SC via Zoom. **Gregor Lachlann-Wadell** on behalf



of the diocesan Eco-group opened with a reflection based on Psalm 8.

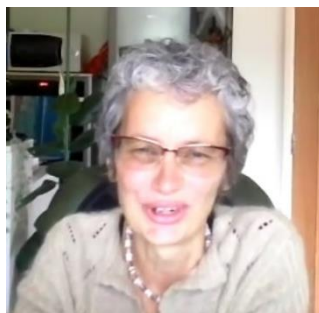
#### Report from the Diocesan Eco-Group

**Nigel Williams** introduced the work of the eco-group. Six films outlining the inspiring work being done across the diocese are available to share via <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/eco-church/eco-church-stories-and-inspiration/>

Nigel introduced **Julia Edwards, the Church in Wales' Climate Change Champion**. She

explained why climate change is a priority for the CinW and ways in which the province is moving to be carbon neutral as soon as possible. She

encouraged churches to download a practical guide to Net Zero at <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/about-us/our-campaigns/environment/>



#### Planning for our Future

**Bishop Gregory** thanked SC for giving a positive reaction to *Growing Faith; Bringing Hope; Demonstrating Love* as the focus of our mission.

Having proved ourselves resilient during the pandemic and having almost completed the Mission Area Review programme, now is the time to create a vision for the future. We should not return to the old ways but seek points of light, to guide the path ahead.

We will be creating:

1. Mission Hub Churches – one in each Archdeaconry
2. New ministries at St Asaph Cathedral, reaching out to schools with a full-time director of music to build the choir and the appointment of a Welsh language chaplain for the Welsh medium schools in the local area
3. Digital Ministry with the creation of a Digital Cathedral/Mission Area and investment in training, equipment and innovation.

Locations for two out of the three Mission Hubs have been identified, although consultation is still at an early stage: Mold in Wrexham Mission Area and Welshpool in Montgomery Mission Area.

The three Mission Hubs will be places to access resources and training, to learn together and will be multifaceted considering finance, buildings and creating teams both of clergy and lay ministries.



**Nigel Williams** said: We have a very gifted Director of Music, and our sacred music



and chorister development would be greatly enhanced if he was appointed full time. Most of those parents who come with choristers have no previous involvement with church. In addition, we're looking to appoint a full-time chaplain to engage with all our local Welsh medium schools, primary and secondary.

**Diane McCarthy** explained how Bangor and St Asaph dioceses are developing a Digital Cathedral/Ministry and Mission Area and this is being supported by the RB through the provincial Digital Innovation Group. The key priorities are resourcing digital ministry, supporting digital innovations, training our mission area teams, providing hardware and software to MAs and creating content and resources for use.

The Digital Cathedral would be a new online presence for the CinW which isn't linked to any physical church. It would be a space for new audiences to explore faith and spirituality at their own speed. It would be a wide-open door to welcome all. It would be locally owned and distinctively Welsh but not limited by geography.

**SC went into breakout rooms to discuss the proposals. Feedback from the breakout sessions included:**



Being excited by the eco-films and the focus on outdoors – our churchyards could become a resource rather than a burden.

Communication is always crucial when making changes.

There's no one size fits all.

Some people still prefer paper and there are still some digital not-spots.

There's a great deal of pressure on clergy, with lots of new initiatives – go cautiously.

Digital offers greater flexibility to new audiences. Beware, however, of a lack of togetherness and the impact on finances.

The idea of Mission Hub churches sounds great but need to ensure the surrounding churches are still valued. At the moment the approach feels quite urban – what about our rural churches?

There's excitement about digital training and resources being available to everyone.

Mission Hubs – could energise others and share resources.

Eco-church was very positively received. It's an opportunity to engage with people who think the church has nothing to say about climate change.

Pitfalls – deciding what to leave behind to take up new things. Doing too much maybe a pitfall.

We need to celebrate the local. Consult with local to find out what has worked well with their local digital services.

Focus on balance between physical and digital – it's not just about doing services we already do – it's about how we do things differently.

The pandemic has been hugely draining – we need to rest. Energy levels are low for some people.

Consult, consult, consult...

We are not out of Covid yet – many are still cautious – a danger of rushing into lots of things.

We need to engage theologically – what does this mean to people? How do we evaluate God in all this?



Perhaps we can be a pressure group to get better connectivity for our communities.



Don't be afraid to fail – it can be a positive thing.

We need time to digest things. Help us know there is light out of the darkness.



**Bishop Gregory** responded to the feedback saying he hears much enthusiasm and affirmation but also a note of

caution. He definitely doesn't want to create a two-speed church: one church getting the funding and others being disenfranchised or left behind.

In the end, the future of the church lies in all 210 of our churches and congregations as we move forward. Any new initiative should support the flourishing of each congregation. It is about building a future in which people have a stake and sense of ownership.

### Diocesan Accounts

**Diane McCarthy** took Standing Committee through the accounts (see the meeting papers). Income was substantially higher than anticipated due to the £1.2m received from the RB as Coronavirus Emergency Funding.

Thank you to the MAs who all met the terms of the financial enabling scheme which meant the DBF was able to return this funding to each MA. They could use that funding in their own local context.

For expenditure, the priority remains frontline ministry, but clergy vacancies were higher than usual due to the pandemic when recruitment was paused. The diocese saved £130,000 on the total for clergy and housing costs – the main cause of the £203,981 underspend in 2020. The other factors were:

- £50,000 left in the coronavirus emergency fund (which has now largely been awarded)

- Restrictions on activities due to the pandemic, eg travel and accommodation for Provincial meetings.
- The fantastic efforts of MAs to pay their share in full and on time.

*The immediate priorities for the DBF are:*

- To understand the short-and medium-term financial impact on MAs of the pandemic
- Continue to encourage the proactive responses of our MAs specially to encourage regular giving online using Gift Direct
- Develop a 2022 budget that supports the new reality
- Support the MA Review process and the emerging Mission Action Plans
- Fund *Grow Faith, Bring Hope, Demonstrate Love*.

*How will Grow Faith, Bring Hope, Demonstrate Love be funded?*

The DBF has committed to fund *Grow Faith, Bring Hope, Demonstrate Love* over the next 5 years to allow initiatives to mature.

All the 2020 surplus of £203,981 will be re-invested in developing the Mission Hubs, digital and Cathedral ministry.

The DBF also holds £265,000 from the sale of the Bangor Hostel, which will be used to provide Welsh medium Chaplaincy.

Additional financial support will come from the RB for Cathedral ministry and digital innovation.



The balance required (approx. £200K) will come from diocesan reserves. We need to be willing to use our reserves now to re-generate the church.



There will be no further financial demand from the local churches to support these initiatives.

Accounts have been fully audited and approved by the DBF.

**Hugh Burgess** asked about Hope Street.

**DM & John Lomas responded:** The grant from the RB for Hope Street has been fully credited to the DBF and payments will be made over the coming years. Hope Street is now open and is beginning in-person services. Numbers and expectation for numbers are going well.

**Bishop Gregory** explained that decisions on stipend levels are made a year in advance. There is no increase in stipends in 2021.

SC accepted the accounts by a majority.

#### **Merger of Penedeyrn and Valle Crucis MA**

(See the meeting papers for an outline of the proposal.)

SC accepted the merger by a majority.

#### **Vacancies on the Governing Body**

(See the meeting papers for biographical information on both candidates.)

Thank you to Carol Jones and Jennie Willson for their commitment to GB over the past years.

SC approved the appointment of Melody Lewis and Lewys Evans to GB by a majority

#### **Matters from Mission Areas**

**Cedewain MA** had asked about the discernment and training process for NSMLs (non-stipendiary ministers-local).

Bishop Gregory had asked Archdeacon John Thelwell to write an independent report on the process which made two recommendations. In future:

Expectations for discernment, training and formation will be fully explained to each candidate for NSML.

We are unlikely to accept NSML candidates who are beginning this process and are already over the age of 70.

**Nia Wyn-Morris** said: Time has moved on and the individual who prompted this report is happy with their place and ministry. However, we are finding that Readers are facing more scrutiny. Better communication is required.

**Pam Powell** responded: detailed information is already on the ministry section of the diocesan website: <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/vocations-and-ministry/>

**Maelor MA** asked about DBS and a new database. Hannah Daniels will send out the information to all MA Leaders and Administrators for circulation.

#### **Date and format of the next meeting**

SC was asked if the next meeting in September, should be in-person in St Asaph Cathedral or online.

SC voted to remain on Zoom for the next meeting.

**Bishop Gregory:** he respects the decision of SC but is disappointed. Having recently started to resume physical meetings at a provincial level he realises how much we have missed. We should have a debate in September about the pattern of meetings going forward.

Farewell and thanks to Steve Willson – who has served as Vice-President – and Jennie Willson.

Bishop Gregory closed in a blessing.

#### **Date of the next meeting**

Tuesday 28 September, via Zoom.

#### **Further information.**

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

