

Standing Committee Bulletin 19: 28 September 2021

Via Zoom

Llyr Williams welcomed everyone to Standing Committee (SC) via Zoom.

Revd Dr Sally Harper gave the opening reflection.

Planning for our Future

Llyr introduced the new focus for the diocese: *growing FAITH – bringing HOPE – demonstrating LOVE*

We, as a church and diocese, have responded well to the challenges of the pandemic. We have continued to share God's love with people across the diocese. 2022 will be a year of reconstruction as we discern how to be the church God wants us to be.

Bishop Gregory: All 19 MA Reviews are being considered by the relevant MA Conference. MA Reviews will ensure that we have a sustainable future. They focus on three areas: buildings, finance and ministry. We've made some hard proposals as we test our life against sustainability. We're now asking MACs to translate MA Reviews into concrete proposals and to write a Mission Action Plan showing how to grow together and carry out the mission of their church in their local area.

The diocesan focus is changing. Unlocking our potential has served us well with:

- A rise in lay leadership
- A growth in vocations

We are now adopting a new focus – *growing faith, bringing hope, demonstrating love*. This will be rolled out from Advent, with the Advent Message available - in video, audio and written format – to churches on Advent Sunday. We're going to support it with the production of a diocesan manifesto in printed form in the new year. Enough copies will be available for everyone across the diocese. It will set out how as MAs we will embody faith, hope and love.



In April 2022, we'll be electing new MACs and later, a new SC so the Bishop's Staff is designing a course of four sessions intending to run from May to July. It can

be adopted and used by MAC.

John Lomas: Mission Hubs are an exciting five-year project with one mission hub church based in each Archdeaconry:

- St Asaph: St David's Church, Penrhyn Bay with Revd Juliet Fraser
- Wrexham: St Mary's Mold with Revd Canon Martin Batchelor
- Montgomery: St Mary's Welshpool with Revd Adam Pawley.

Those clerics will be licensed on:

- 17 Oct – Juliet at Penrhyn Bay
- 7 Nov – Adam in Welshpool
- 28 Nov – Martin in Mold



Mission hubs are intended as a gift to MAs and not an imposition. There's already been lots of consultation and communication in each MA. We're now looking at the personnel for each hub. This will include a curate and a youth and childrens' worker. Underpinning all this are the 4Ps from LyCiG: Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion.

Nigel Williams explained plans for St Asaph Cathedral: the Director of Music is now full time. He's able to go into more schools to recruit for the choir and enhance music in the schools. This is an outreach opportunity for the Cathedral: we get to engage with children with no church connection but who love music. It's a wonderful opportunity for them and us. Plus, we're appointing a Welsh language schools' chaplain to work from Ysgol Glan Clwyd. This is a new concept – a chaplain working within a school but not a church school.

Diane McCarthy:
Eglwys Dot Church – see the paper. The dioceses of St Asaph and Bangor are working together to progress online ministry:



For young people there's no separation between the virtual and physical world – communities are online, but the incarnational nature of Christianity means an online community should have access to physical church. Eglwys Dot Church needs to be distinctively Christian. If people are engaging with us as church, they will expect us to talk about God, Jesus, Prayer, etc. It will be Mission Focused creating interactive prayer walls, lighting candles and live chat functions to allow real engagement. High level resourcing is required and the ability to be self-funding is crucial. Alongside this, there is an extensive programme of training for

all, planned by the Provincial Digital Innovation group.



Will Marshall: We need to recognise and honour the fact that young people don't see any distinction between virtual and physical. Online community is the most natural thing in the world for many young people and that needs to be core. The question around the sacraments is important. Perhaps they will bring the online community physically together?

Norman Morris: In relation to mission hubs, how do you ensure best practice spreads across the church? Would it be good to ask churches what are their three greatest needs?

Bishop Gregory: The boundary between dotchurch and physical church needs to be porous. We are aware that for some, the return to church is a barrier but they are committed to worship. I hope there will be diversity of provision catering for different interests and age groups. Young people or those unfamiliar with church culture can explore church without the doorstep barrier. It's important that dotchurch bears witness to a physical community and the archdeaconry chaplain could provide that real link.

Hugh Lloyd: What's the relationship between hub churches and their MAs. If hub churches are there to support, how do we resolve issues that arise? Many in our congregations still struggle to understand the concept of MAs. How will they make sense of mission hubs?

Bishop Gregory: Mission Hubs are not another level of decision making. It's a resource to encourage and inspire. They



will not be telling MAs how to construct their Action plans. They will show good practice and inspire others. Hopefully over 5 years, the MA hubs will be vibrant centres of mission and we can look to plant another MA hub church.

Carole Poolman: From experience of setting up Mold Mission Hub, we are going to be talking and exploring together.

Funding for Future – Budget 2022

Helen Jones, chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, presented the budget:

The income budgeted for 2022 is £4,024,005. 82% of income comes from Mission Area Share. The block grant from the RB will be substantially reduced in 2022 by £685,000.

The DBF continues to work hard to rent out spare vicarages, which has been more challenging than usual during the pandemic.



Expenditure will be £4,119,454. The largest outgoing continues to be clergy stipends, pensions and homes. We are continuing to budget for 63.5 clergy, eight training curates and youth and children's chaplains. We have assumed there will be three clergy vacancies at any one time.

This delivers a deficit budget of -£95,449, which the DBF believes is the right thing to do and to invest in our reconstruction.

For the fourth year running there will be no overall increase in MA Share. The discount scheme for full and prompt payment will continue.

There will be an increase of 2% in clergy stipends, clergy housing costs and lay salaries.

Any surplus on the 2021 accounts will be reinvested in mission and ministry.

Kevin Horswell: There's a discrepancy between the paper budget deficit of £74K and the notes which show a deficit of £95K?

Diane McCarthy: Apologies for this error. The correct figure is £95,449 – it will be corrected for the Conference and an amended paper sent to all members of the Standing Committee.

Helen and all the DBF members were thanked for their work. Helen will be stepping down as chair and she was thanked for her work by Bishop Gregory.

The 2022 Budget was passed.

Re-launch of the Spirituality Group

Bishop Gregory introduced Revd 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. So far, the group has only met via Zoom. The group reflects various traditions and backgrounds. It will meet in mid-November in Loreto Spirituality Centre in Llandudno for a two-day retreat/meeting. Part of the meeting will be working out our purpose and remit, our individual roles and our boundaries. Alongside this we want to hear from you too. Please get in touch.

Practically, we hope to revamp the prayer pages of the diocesan website, offering a good range of resources which are accessible, bilingual and ready to use. Prayer cards to share on social media are being created for special days.

We'll be looking to run an event at the Cathedral next year looking at different ways to pray.



What is the vision? It might include:

- ✓ Developing our inner life, which is life giving, comforting. Something which draws us in.
- ✓ Our image of God: Who is the God we come to in pray? Do we know God as loving, compassionate and faithful?
- ✓ A time to listen...listening in a way we are comfortable in stillness and silence.
- ✓ Each in our own language – allowing people to be who they are – we relate to people in different ways.
- ✓ Our buildings are holy ground – prayed in places – ancient and beautiful or functional – what do we do inside them?
- ✓ The cathedral, as our mother church, is an important place. A Prayer pilgrimage will be launched shortly.

Governing our Future and looking at the future pattern of SC meetings.

Llyr offered the headlines from his paper. As we are entering the last year of the SC triennial, we need to consider the next cohort and what SC might look like for those elected in 2022 to start in November 2022. How can we encourage different voices to stand for SC, especially those who are currently excluded due to job commitments/education/childcare? Instead of meeting during the working week, the proposal is to:

- 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, two-hour evening meetings in May and Sept where essential business and urgent matters are discussed. The September meeting will focus on the annual accounts, the budget

and reports for the Diocesan Conference.

- If required there could also be a short meeting after the Diocesan Conference.

Bishop Gregory: I'd always envisaged SC to be the key policy forming body of the diocese. I'm conscious that our pattern of meetings excludes people who can't take time off work to attend. I believe this way gives us a chance to revitalise our work. The point about presenting this paper now, is that people can know what they're committing to.

Pam Powell: I support this change. My only comment is to ask why February – that's often the month with heaviest snow fall?

Llyr: We will look again to ensure people can attend in person.

Jonathan Smith: Will there be an appetite to meet immediately after the Diocesan Conference?

Llyr: This will only be if necessary and not immediately after conference!



Clive Myers: We are frequently told that SC is the decision-making body, but I wonder if we can have more say? There's a tendency for most things to come as a final paper, 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?

SC voted: 74% for / 19% against / 6% abst. The proposal will be developed further in light of the comments received.

Next meeting in person or by zoom?

Diocesan conference will take place on 9 October and that is by zoom. SC voted by a narrow majority to meet via Zoom for the next SC in November:

In person: 40% / Zoom: 50% / Abst: 10%



Election of vice presidents

SC approved the election of Revd Dr Jason Bray as a Vice President of the conference.

Report from GB

Bishop Gregory updated SC on the recent work of Governing Body:

1. Rite of Blessing Same-Sex Unions: This caught the news headlines and was passed by a 2/3 majority in each house. All six Bishops have issued letters of authorisation for the experimental use of the rite for 5 years. The Rite is now available on the Provincial website and can be used from Friday 1 October: <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/publications/liturgy/same-sex-civil-marriage-or-civil-partnership-blessing/>

It includes a conscience clause. Any priest approached who doesn't wish to use the rite, can refer the matter to the chief pastor of the diocese, ie the Bishop, who will make a decision on the way forward.

2. Life Events – each MA 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 2 November with two reps from every MA invited.

3. Governance Reform Working Group – looking at the Governance of the CinW and trying to ensure that what happens at Diocesan level and Provincial level cohere. The first report to GB made some changes to the way electoral colleges are run and changed the way motions at GB are generated. It will also look at nominations to vacant positions and the role of MA leaders and Area Deans.

4. Climate Change: – motion passed.

5. Biblical literacy: 2022 has been designated as a year of biblical literacy.

High quality materials will be produced to get us reading our Bibles.

6. Post Pandemic Joint Strategy Working Group reported on its vision for the future: what is the culture to be embodied in the Church in Wales and do our structures support that culture?

Norman Morris welcomed the year of biblical literacy and hope it tells the story of the development of the scriptures.

Matters Raised by MAs

One question from Dyffryn Clwyd MA on measuring/reaching zero-carbon (please refer to the full paper on the website):

GB has discussed this and agreed that diocesan level areas will cover: Esgobty, the Cathedral, churches and church halls, the diocesan office, glebe land, clergy homes and staff, clerics and volunteers' church-related travel.

In early 2022, the Energy Footprint Tool 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. In the meantime, the RB 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 360carbon.org.

Date of the next meeting: Thursday 25 November 2021...via Zoom.

Bishop Gregory closed in prayer.

Further information.

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

