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GROW FAITH • BRING HOPE • DEMONSTRATE LOVE
DIOCESE OF ST ASAPH

Standing Committee Bulletin 21: 28 June 2022 St Matthew's Church Hall, Buckley

Norma Rowles, as chair, welcomed everyone to Standing Committee (SC) at St Matthew's Church Hall in Buckley.



It is the first in-person SC since November 2019. Norma introduced Ryan Marsh the new Diocesan Churches Inspector to SC.

Jason Bray led a reflection that focused on welcome and an invitation to all.

Funding our Diocesan Strategy – our vision for 2022 and beyond

Diane McCarthy gave an update on funding plans for the diocesan strategy, acknowledging the importance of the Coronavirus Support package (£1.2m in 2021) from the Representative Body (RB). She thanked the MA and Church Treasurers for all their hard work throughout the pandemic.

In 2021 the markets rallied but the dividends are not yet back to pre-pandemic levels.

There have been significant changes to the Block Grant from the RB. Clergy pensions are now paid centrally so this has been removed from the amount paid to each diocese.

The bulk of the income to the DBF comes from MA Share and the DBF remain committed to funding frontline ministry.

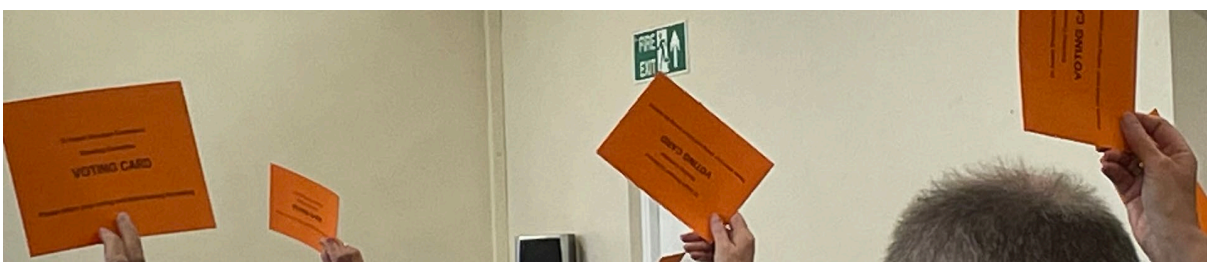
There has been no increase in clergy stipends, clergy homes or lay salaries in 2021. The expenditure breakdown is:

- 52% on clergy stipends
- 7% parsonages
- 7% staff salaries
- 22% coronavirus enabling scheme
- 12% other costs

2021 ended with a surplus of £197,247 on operations mainly due to emergency funding and restrictions on activities. This was the 4th year of no overall increase in MA Share.

The immediate priorities for the DBF are:

- Understand the medium-term impact of pandemic
- Develop a 10-year financial strategy
- Support outputs of the MA Review process
- Fund 'Grow Faith, Bring Hope and Demonstrate Love' across the diocese.





Additional surpluses over the last two years will be reinvested in the *Grow Faith, Bring Hope, Demonstrate Love* initiatives. Any additional funding required will come from diocesan reserves.

SC voted unanimously to accept the 2021 Annual Accounts.

MA Share Formula



Diane: During 2021, the DBF commissioned a working party to look at changing the MA share formula, which had been in place for 14 years. The new

formula needed to complement the diocesan strategy, encourage our Mission Areas and encourage growth. Since the pandemic there have been no meaningful attendance figures, which has formed the basis of the formula up until now.

Some key principles which were agreed:

1. MAs will pay for frontline ministry
2. Central funds will cover support costs
3. The Sunday attendance element will be removed – partly as there is no data and because Sunday data on its own is an inadequate measure of the life of the church. Church is much more than just Sunday attendance.
4. Ability to pay will be considered with the principle that the stronger should support the weaker to ensure the flourishing of all our churches
5. Population will be considered - a church should look out at the community it serves
6. There will be a minimum charge for each church building
7. Limits will be in place on the size of increases and decreases to build in some stability

Advantages of the new model

It encourages growth by removing the link between attendance and Share level.

It supports our strategic vision.

There is now every reason to draw as many people as possible into the life of the Teulu Asaph to share their resources, time and talents.

In time, it will encourage a significant culture change with a strong incentive to grow, to focus on mission, to consider buildings and to support one another.

Next steps

Good communication will be essential.

Different audiences will be considered

Rollout will begin in the autumn (after the Diocesan Conference)

The new formula will be effective from 1 Jan 2023 – but it will be kept under review and could be adjusted if necessary.

MA Treasurers will have a central role in its implementation.

The roll out will run alongside the piloting of a new Membership App in Estuary and Mountain MA and Valle Crucis MA that will give greater insight into the potential of our many mission fields.

Kevin Horswell: Will Mission Hub Leader costs be included in the MA Share?

Diane: the stipend of the Mission Hub Leader is included in the MA Share calculation but additional costs (like the curate and youth worker etc) are funded centrally.

Will Marshall asked what happens if space is rented?

Diane: A cost per church will only be included where the CinW owns the building. Where additional space is rented, this will not be included in the calculation.

Roy Turner: We don't own one of our churches and all the maintenance is done by the landowner – would that be included?





Diane: No

Hugh Burgess welcomes the change. What is the process for allocation of share between churches?

Diane: We will have to start with where we were in 2022. We provide several alternatives for MAs as a starting point for the MA discussions. There are different situations in different churches that we will want to reflect. We will be learning so much this time and the DBF is committed to remaining open and flexible.

Hugh: notes £500 for each church building. There might be a very good pastoral/mission reason to keep a building although it doesn't make financial sense.

Paulette Gower welcomes the move away from Sunday attendance to focus on mission. This will be exciting!

Diane we do so much more than just Sunday services – hopefully it's a liberation to do new and creative things.

Hugh Burgess: could you say more about the membership app – what's it for?

Diane: An App will be rolled out by the RB to record in real time the activity which happens across the church. It will include worship, social engagement, fresh expressions (e.g. forest church) and the idea is to consolidate the information we collect in a more timely manner. People who lead a service, for example, can log how many people attend. This will go to a dashboard and all the information is compiled and saved. It will be accessed from Smart phones, laptops etc.

Huw Bryant: There are concerns about the level of clergy; the easiest thing to do will be to lose staff (clergy or lay workers) to balance the books.

Diane: This is an important point – we will need to monitor this as we will need people to resource our churches to grow.

Roy: Dividing the share between churches could lock in historical attendance by default, especially if we're looking to offer stability.

Diane: That is a risk but the quality of conversations is what will make the difference.

Funding new initiatives for growth



Bishop Gregory: diversity is going to be the future of the church. Tradition will be our source of strength, but we need to look to new initiatives to invite people.

St Asaph has been good at being bold with new initiatives. We now have two centres of mission in partnership with the Church Army, in Wrexham and in Pensarn.

Hope Street was funded by the Evangelism Fund. Hope Street was launched in lockdown and yet managed to establish a new church, which is seeing substantial growth.

Mission Hub Churches are using the expertise of the Archdeacons to support a focus for growth. Good things are already happening in the Mission Hub Churches and each are doing things in a locally appropriate way. Having achieved that with three, we would like to roll out more Mission hubs in the future.

The DBF would like to consider supporting another generation of mission hub churches – where best practice is already taking place. The DBF has taken the decision to identify and support a 4th Mission Hub Church – Holywell in EMMA. Something remarkable is happening there – a new congregation is emerging and that is something as a diocese we want to support.





Archdeacon Andy: We have three key principles which underpin the theology of mission hubs:

1. The objective is church health not church growth – growth will happen as a consequence of good health.
2. Numerical growth is expected consequently
3. Both church revitalisation and church planting are apostolic models.



Hope Street is a church plant. The mission hubs are part of the revitalisation model. There are advantages and disadvantages of both, but God will build His church, His way.

3 key areas:

- Leadership – vision / communication / facilitation
- Discipleship – willing people – serving and using their gifts
- Buildings – practical – fit for purpose – servant to the church – in the right place

What do we do?

- Don't be reactionary
- Have a plan
- Pastor people
- Be practical.
- Be patient – it will take 5 years.

Be ready to persevere – after 18-24 months the honeymoon is over! At times it will be hard. Central is prayer and the Word – shepherd every soul.

10 year financial plan

Diane: The RB is planning to:

1. Release more direct funding to the diocese in the form of the block grant, now known as partnership funding. This will be another £0.25m to each diocese this year.

2. Release more core funding each year. £100m over 10 years to be released from the Provincial reserves for
 - Spiritual and numerical growth
 - Organising better
 - Planning for the future

With additional RB funding we can move forward much faster.

Hugh Burgess: The paper mentioned Ukraine, are there specific initiatives for supporting Ukraine?

Sarah Wheat explained the partnership between Link International and the diocese. She encouraged SC to find out more at <https://www.link-international.org/cinw>



Review of SC Membership

Archdeacon Barry: Membership of SC has an anomaly which is that MA Leaders are invited to attend but cannot vote, unless they are the elected clerical or lay rep for their MA. It is curious that people at the heart of delivering the diocesan strategy cannot vote on the strategic direction and management of the diocese. To rectify this, SC is asked to consider the following options:

1. MALs should continue to attend SC but don't automatically need to have a vote.
2. By virtue of their office they should have a vote **in addition to** the lay or cleric rep
3. By virtue of their office they should have a vote **instead of** either the lay or cleric rep.

Hugh Burgess: The present structure is adequate but there is an anomaly. It's not about MAL voting but about representation of the MA. Giving MALs a vote will change the power dynamics. Personally, I'm not in favour.

Nigel Williams: MALs have to implement the decisions of SC and therefore they





should have a vote. They should have a vote as part of their role. The MA Share is a classic example.

Paulette: I understand the power dynamic but as a non-voting MAL, I have a responsibility for delivering things. There is a big difference in the role of the MAL and it is important that we have a say.

Kevin Horswell: There is value in having more than one clerical rep in SC and in feeding back.



Andy Jones: To focus entirely on MALs is a bad thing. As a MAL, it shouldn't just be my voice and there are already many demands on my time.

Val Aldcroft: As MA rep I come to represent what the MA has agreed – that can be done by any cleric or lay person – it doesn't have to be the MAL. We have to look at how the MAL is chosen/appointed. They are not appointed by the MAs.

Huw Bryant: As a MAL who won't get to vote later, I worry that SC will grow so large that it can't make decision. If I come too, there are two clergy out of the MA. What about a single transferable vote?

Stephen Hayes: MAL is a vital role but not giving MALs a say in strategic decisions is not right.

Tracey White: The constitution says there should be a balance between cleric and lay reps. By adding MAL we might skew that balance (although a growing number of MALs are lay).

As there was a diversity of opinion and views, a clear proposal will be brought to the next SC meeting.

Jason Bray took over the chair of the meeting after a short break.



Pam Powell outlined the recent work of the Developing Steering Group. Pam outlined the wonderful diversity of licensed lay ministry in the diocese: evangelists, pioneers, pastoral chaplains and readers.

ASAPH 1450 – celebrating St Asaph

Bishop Gregory: We are one of the few dioceses named after a saint. The 1450th anniversary of Asaph in 2023 offers a great opportunity to celebrate. After the last meeting, Bishop Gregory acknowledged there were mixed feelings about if/how to mark the anniversary.

Jane James: My MA doesn't connect with St Asaph at all. At the moment, with the MA being so fragile putting my energies into this would be counterproductive.

Hugh Burgess: We should focus on looking forward rather than looking backward. We need to focus on mission.

Bishop Gregory: looking at the past can unlock the future. There are two future benefits of celebrating St Asaph:

1. It should help in creating a sense of pride: we are the inheritors of a tradition 1450 years old and we've survived. We can be proud of our identity and proud of the locality of being the Teulu Asaph – a Christian family in this part of the world.
2. St Asaph, along with St Beuno, St Tysilio, and others, evangelised this part of the world – why did their Christian witness thrive? How did they relate to this part of the world? What was the nature of their witness?

There was a sense that people would be interested in local events, not one big event. These could be used as a springboard for the future. Bishop Gregory asked for volunteers to assist with this.





Adam Pawley wondered if 1,500th anniversary was more appropriate and perhaps efforts now should be put into ensuring the diocese is in good shape to celebrate in 50 years' time!

Review of the Order of St Asaph

Nigel Williams asked SC if the Order of St Asaph should be revised so it can be awarded to people who offer outstanding service in their Mission Area or church. At the moment it is only awarded to those who make an outstanding contribution to the diocese. Each member receives a medal. Esgobty commits to 2 or 3 awards each year.

Archdeacon Barry: Can we award more than three each year?

Paulette Gower: Could we have a separate award for outstanding work in Mission Areas/Churches – perhaps the Order of St Kentigern?

Tracey White: We call ourselves the Teulu Asaph and yet there are some parts of the family who are excluded from this award.

Hannah Daniels: do we need to make our communications clearer?

John Gambles agrees with Tracey and Barry. If someone has been of great value, why should they face a competition?

Bishop Gregory: We don't want to have a two-tier system, with different classes. Is it a long service award or is it for excellent work? If we widen the criteria, it must be very clear.

Hugh Burgess: we need more information before voting.

SC didn't vote formally on this matter but indicated with a show of hands that it would be in favour of retaining the Order of St Asaph and making it available to those offering outstanding service to the diocese, mission area or church.

Diocesan Offering

A film from Hilary and Adrian about the 2022 Diocesan Offering is available to watch at:

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/diocesan-conference/diocesan-offering/>

2023 nominations

The information presented for each charity was not in a consistent format so SC will be offered a postal vote before the next meeting.

The next meeting

SC voted to meet in person on Thursday 22 September as this will be the last meeting of this SC cohort. The venue will be confirmed once arrangements have been made.

Congregations were offered to John Harvey who is to be the new Archdeacon of Ynys Môn.

Bishop Gregory closed SC with a blessing.

Further information.

All the papers to accompany this meeting can be found at:

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

