

# DIOCESAN SYNOD

SATURDAY 11 JUNE 2022

(Christ Church, Orpington)

## MINUTES

### BISHOP SIMON IN THE CHAIR

#### 1. Welcome, Opening Worship and Presidential Address

The Bishop of Tonbridge, the Rt Rev Simon Burton-Jones, welcomed members and visitors to the meeting, and thanked Christ Church, Orpington, for hosting the Synod.

The Bishop's Chaplain, the Rev Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff, then led the Synod in a short time of worship, which included the Presidential Address:-

*I don't know which genre of literature you dislike the most, but mine is the autobiography. With some notable exceptions, too many autobiographies are self-serving, settling old scores, and telling half-truths. One of the things I love about scripture is its scepticism, a willingness to tell it as it is. And few come out of this unblemished. Daniel, perhaps? One who nearly does is Barnabas, whose feast day it is today.*

*Nearly because, at least on St Paul's testimony in Galatians, the dispute over whether Gentile converts should be circumcised and keep Jewish law produced a faction so bullyingly hard-line that 'even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy' (bear in mind that Galatians is kind of Paul's autobiography).*

*And then there is the very public spat with Paul over whether John Mark should join them on a missionary journey where Luke records: The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company. That's fascinating on two counts. One, the guy who wrote the anthem to love and two, figuring out God's guidance proved difficult even in a Church rocking and rolling with the power of the Holy Spirit. Who'd have guessed that two Christians could ever fall out with each other?*

*But these aside, Barnabas had an impeccable CV, and it speaks to us as we seek to live out the marks of mission in a Rochester kind of way. It's lazy to sum up another person in one word, given how complex our personalities and histories are, but it's noticeable how some words attach to people like sticky Sellotape. And anyone who knows Barnabas' story knows that word will be 'encourager'. Encouragement is needed in such industrial quantities today and it helps to define everyday faith, because our culture is competitive and attritional. We view other people as rivals and bolster our brittle self-esteem by elevating ourselves over them. Encouragement is so rare across society, that people often wonder what lies behind it. What do they want from me? Are they flirting with me?*

*Market values have leaked into human relationships in ways that poison, because friends and colleagues should be there to co-operate with, not to compete with.*

*As we re-assess our everyday faith, something that Nick [Shepherd] is going to speak about shortly, the wish to be an encourager should be high on our list. I've said this before that it's said that being affirmed by another person is like Teflon – the words just don't stick. But being criticised by someone is like Velcro – we just can't prize it off. And the brain science even shows that today. We need to give far more attention to the good things said to us than the bad, but we just don't hear enough of them in the first place. As changes go, being an encourager intentionally is one of the simplest and the cheapest ones to make. Funny then, that we struggle so much with it.*

*Barnabas was an evangelist, accompanying Paul on world-changing journeys, not least in sharing the Gospel on his homeland of Cyprus. Given the risks that Paul routinely took, this exposed Barnabas to potential harm, but he did not shrink from it. And he was an astute deployer of ministers. When it becomes clear how well the city of Antioch was responding the news about Jesus, Barnabas didn't stay there to bask in that or claim it for himself. He hotfoots it to Tarsus, where Paul appears to be on extended ministerial study leave, to get him to Antioch where he is needed.*

*And he also had a strong grip of what we call community engagement. For him, social concern was a function of mission. The prophet Agabus, who in a different story from Acts messed up his prediction of what would happen to Paul if he visited Jerusalem, nailed the prophecy of a widespread famine which the disciples were able to pre-empt. And, using Barnabas and Paul, relief was brought to the Jesus followers in Judea, helping to cement the new and very precarious relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians.*

*There was lingering distrust between the two communities, especially that sense that Gentile Christians were less than real Christians because they didn't believe things or do things the way that Jewish Christians did. That inspired act of generosity glued the communities together and set an example to the Church ever since when it has felt and looked divided: that money freely given goes a long way to preserving the witness and the integrity of the wider Church.*

*Barnabas' role coheres with an earlier instance in his life. When Saul converted and became known as Paul, you know he left behind a job description that made life as perilous as possible for those who followed Jesus. The believers in Jerusalem were highly sceptical of Paul. His new allegiance felt as plausible as Gerry Adams joining the DUP in 1985. Was Paul's conversion real or just a ruse to infiltrate their number the better to dispose of them? Paul could have wasted many months trying to establish his credibility but for the trusting approach of Barnabas, who vouched for his integrity with those who were suspicious. We are having vigorous and necessary debates today about how willing we should be to trust others. Here, Barnabas seems to show the priority of trust where there is evidence of God at work. As the research shows, the more responsibly trusting a society is, the happier that society is.*

*Barnabas was also highly relational, an includer of others, whether that was the rogue Saul or the new Gentile converts. So if Barnabas were alive today, who would he be looking to put in the frame? It's a truism that decisions are made by those who turn up.*

*Yet too often in life, decisions are made by those who turn up in favour of those who turn up. Maybe in the Church we need to turn this on its head, so that decisions are made by those who turn up in favour of those who haven't turned up.*

*Four groups who haven't turned up that come to mind for me are: young people, housebound people, poorer people, and all those who do not know the love of God for them in Christ. Those first three cohorts – the young, the housebound and the poor – have disproportionately lost out in the pandemic and stand to lose more than most in the cost-of-living crisis. What does good news mean for them today? Young people have presented to this Synod recently, but their voice remains faint because it still comes from the margins. Towards the end of today's Synod, Julia [Burton-Jones] will speak to the work of Anna chaplains, so many of whom minister to those who do not leave their homes anymore. And the Church of England both nationally and locally, if I can generalise, forgive me, is still the preserve of the wealthy and the articulate. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Jesus 'to bring good news to the poor'. So, what does that look like in Kent, Medway, and South-East London?*

*In addressing the issue of climate change, the United Arab Emirates has created a 'Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and the Future'. Hungary has an 'Ombudsman for Future Generations'. Neither nation, you will know, is exactly a paragon of human rights, but they have identified people outside the room who should figuratively be in the room when decisions are made. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 in Wales enshrines into law that the well-being of the current and future people of Wales is explicitly the core purpose of the Welsh government.*

*Who do we want to bring figuratively into the room when we are making decisions? If we decided to do this with a specific cohort of our choosing, it would make a tangible difference, perhaps freeing up our imagination in ways that committee meetings usually don't because they operate on tram lines. It would, if you like, release our inner Barnabas.*

*In our reading from John 15, Jesus said: I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. I notice that I'm slow on the uptake over some things, and these words of Jesus are a good example because it's only a few months ago – and pardon me for this – that the penny dropped for me. Fruit does not last. By definition it goes off really quickly. So this spiritual fruit must be of a different order. Imagine fruit that never went off, that remained forever ripe, sweet, and chewy. That's the fruit you're growing.*

*And its Barnabas-textured seed bed is encouragement, concern for others, both spiritual and social, and a desire to bring in from the cold all who have been left outside when decision making is skewed in favour of those present.*

Bishop Simon then took the opportunity to update members of a number of items:-

Appointment of new Bishop of Rochester – The Rt Rev Jonathan Gibbs, the date of service of welcome was likely to take place in September 2022.

## 2. **Everyday Faith**

Bishop Simon welcomed Dr Nick Shepherd (Senior Consultant within the Vision and Strategy Diocesan Support Team of the Archbishops' Council) to the meeting.

Dr Shepherd began by asking members to tell the person next to them how much time a day they spent watching TV, eating and drinking, and sleeping. The UK average for sleep was 8 hours and 28 minutes per day, for watching TV it was 2 hours and 10 minutes, and for eating and drinking it was 1 hour and 20 minutes. And the UK was right in the middle of national statistics. Norway had the highest amount of leisure time at 369 minutes in a day!

He went on to say that everyday faith was important when we thought about who we were as the church – the church was everybody but in particular what we call the 98% in the 95%. Bishop Simon had already spoken about people who were not in the room and, if one just thought about people who were in the room in terms of part of the church, 98% of the church did not hold any formal roles in the ministry or the governance of the church. 98% might do activities and volunteering and help within the life of the gathered community but the majority of their time was spent in other places with other people – the 95% of their lives.

So everyday faith was fundamentally about encouraging the life of the church as the 98% in the 95% of life, and it had been good to see over the last few years how this had become a key focus, particularly in Rochester.

The way to encourage this was by seeing a reconnecting or a reinforcing of what one might call the 'being' and 'doing' of church. One was part of the church wherever one was sent, Sunday to Saturday. One was the church when at work and when having coffee with friends – living out one's lives as the church wherever God placed or sent one.

That 'being' of church – how one did community and friendship, connecting with others at work whether they had a faith or otherwise, serving the local community – had to link into the life of 'doing' church. Doing church in terms of gathered worship life, where one came to be nurtured by sacrament and the Word, gathered together in order to be sent out in God's grace to serve God's mission in God's world; and the doing church at gatherings like Synod to think about the wider life of the Church and Diocese, and the way in which they were organised in order to be part of God's mission in God's world.

Everyday faith required thought about the way in which church was done, the things that were prioritised, the things that were talked about, in order to help make that connection. Because sometimes, when the church gathered together, people did not know what others had been doing in the week. And even though liturgy fundamentally reinforced being gathered together and being sent out again, sometimes it was not explicit enough about where those places might be. So connecting together the being and doing of church was vital to enable one another to be the whole people of God serving the whole mission of God in the whole of life.

It was encouraging to see how adopting the five marks of mission within the Diocese of Rochester was fundamental to its vision. But it was important that worshipping communities were engaged with the wider communities in serving God's mission, in being places of proclamation, in being places where the needs

of the community were met, and un being places where the rights of others were upheld. But the mission of God did not just stop at church projects. It did not just stop at organisations who might gather together to talk about and tackle, for example, slavery. It flowed into the whole of life and all the areas of life where one might be called to serve.

Looking at an issue like housing or poverty, it was really important that some of the services– like foodbanks, debt advice, those kinds of activities (and organisations like Christians Against Poverty are fantastic) – were continued, but there was also need to see and affirm Christians who were working in the housing sector, in the finance sector, and those called into politics – Christians who were called to transform the unjust structures of society from within.

Everyday faith, therefore, was about encouraging and understanding that all were called – whatever their age, whatever their role – to serve the mission of God where they were placed. And that encompassed the whole of life.

Dr Shepherd then shared three stories that illustrated what he meant:-

- A retired couple received a Freedom Pass and decided to use them to get out and about, find new places, etc. As they thought about it, they sensed God saying it was new phase for them in their life of witness. Before they travelled, they would pray and invite God to do something surprising on the journey. On one bus trip, they were talking to a young woman and, in the course of the conversation, invited her to a church lunch. She came to the lunch and the church was able to put some support around her that she needed.
- A young schoolgirl was invited to someone's birthday party, which she did not want to go to. Her parents told her to pray about it and she did. The next day she decided she should go, so as not to cause upset or hurt. Because she went, a couple of other friends also went and the birthday girl had a good time because there were so many friends there.
- A gentleman said he had lots of conversations around faith in his workplace – people were intrigued that a research scientist was also a Christian and a chorister. He always made sure that his interests were understood as being part of his worship and connecting with God. But his science also helped him connect with God, describing his research as worship – he found connection with God by studying God's natural world and looking into the mysteries that it held.

Having heard these three stories of everyday faith, Dr Shepherd encouraged members to take a few moments to share their everyday faith story with the person next to them, to tell them what they loved about the role they found themselves in each day. And then think about what good it brought to the world, when they found it hard, and how others could pray for them.

He went on to say that 'Setting God's People Free' identified that, if the church was to be enabled to be the whole people of God, serving the whole mission of God, in the whole of life, then the thing to pay close attention to was our culture, ie the way things were done in families, in churches, in the diocese, etc.

Sometimes, the culture in the church did not actually often help foster an encouraging sense of everyday faith. The important aspects of doing church (and they were important) could cloud one's attention and focus one on the business to be done. Sometimes one's love of participating in the life of the church – whether in worship or service – could actually dim the sense of how the whole of one's life is to the worship and glory of God, and all places one found oneself were intended to be places where God's whole mission could be served.

Another aspect of church culture that did not assist everyday faith was the elevation of particular roles as special or important in God's economy, in God's mission. Sometimes that was done unintentionally, sometimes it was done deferentially. And this was applicable to both lay and ordained members of God's church. Particular attention had to be paid, therefore, to how other roles were named and affirmed, and how people were helped to see into those spaces as places where God called and equipped people to serve his church.

Changing a culture was a little like changing the course of a river – it was a hard thing to do. One way to change the course, though, was to release wolves. Yellowstone Park released wolves back into the wild and noticed after a few years that the rivers had changed. That was not the intention, but the wolves scared away the deer, who then hid in the woods away from the riverbanks, thereby allowing vegetation to grow back and stop silt entering the river from the banks. The rivers then flowed faster and cut new channels.

Dr Shepherd concluded by saying that, if the culture of the church was to change, three things should be introduced:-

- Everyday Faith Commissioning Services – commissioning people for their callings in everyday faith in a variety of shapes and spaces
- Change in the way that one prayed – pray for the different roles held by members of the congregation during intercessions and invite God's blessing and anointing on them
- Everyday faith slots every time the church gathers – hearing from someone about their faith within their particular role, and then praying for them in that role.

The Bishop thanked Dr Shepherd for his presentation, saying that, having a focus of everyday faith in mission and ministry could transform congregations and the way they related to their parishes.

The Synod TOOK NOTE.

### **3. Parish Giving Scheme**

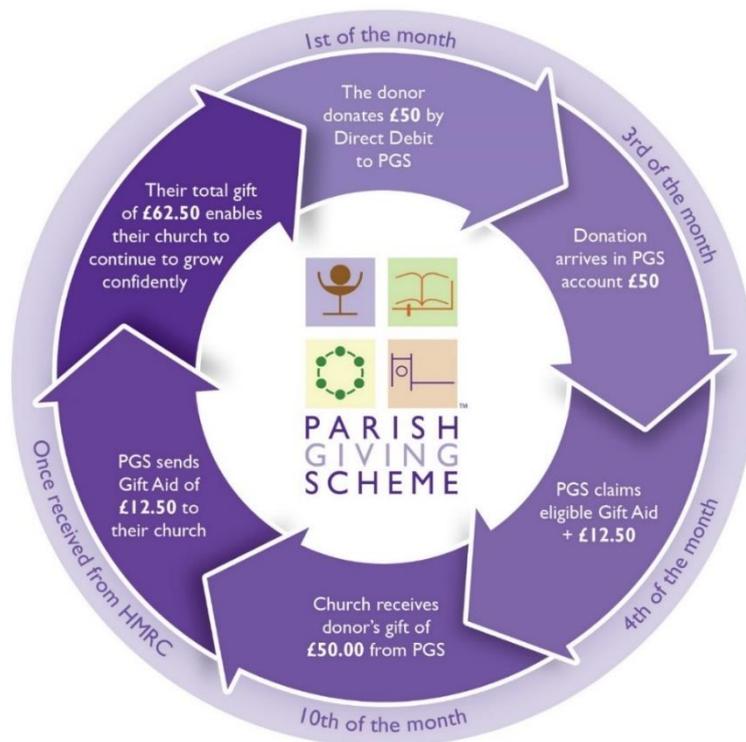
Mrs Liz Mullins, the diocesan Generous Giving Adviser, said that she would be talking about the Parish Giving Scheme and putting it in the broader context of why the Diocese was encouraging participation. She began by showing a short video produced by the Church of England to help parishes build a generous church. The video can be viewed [here](#).

Mrs Mullins then told members about an Anglican Giving Survey that had taken place in 2021. The purpose was to understand the current perceptions and practices of Anglican giving across the Church of England and the recommendations that came out it were:-

- **To promote and encourage regular giving, say why it is important and the impact it has on the parish.** A PCC giving review was available, which helped PCCs think about their values. Help was also available to enable parishes to run an annual giving campaign/review. PCCs were also encouraged to offer a personal thank you to all givers annually, perhaps outlining what their giving had enabled within the life the parish.
- **Help people to learn that living a generous life is part of discipleship.** It was not just about the money – the money was only important in that it supported the ministry of the church and the mission that flowed out from that ministry. [Preaching Generosity](#) was a lectionary-based resource for anyone who wanted to preach, providing by email 250 words drawing out a generosity theme from one of that week’s readings. National resources were available on the [Church of England](#) website. And clergy and lay training can also be provided.
- **Encourage giving using a variety of different methods.** Parishes could consider digital giving via card readers, etc. There was also material to help parishes encourage people to leave legacies to the church.

Mrs Mullins then came to the Parish Giving Scheme, which was a Direct Debit scheme developed in the Diocese of Gloucester in 2009 and 34 dioceses were now part of it.

A church would register with the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) – a separate charitable trust owned by the member Diocese that was part of the Scheme, and church givers could then sign up directly with PGS. This meant that monies did not go direct into the PCC account, it went to PGS. The graphic below illustrated how the Scheme worked, and parishes had found it very easy to manage.



Mrs Mullins then shared some statistics around the PGS:-

- Average weekly gift via PGS was £22.00 per head (CofE - £14; Rochester Diocese - £16)
- 89% of PGS donations were Gift Aided
- 53% of donors opted to increase their donation with inflation
- Almost £54 million was given via PGS across the Church of England in 2021, representing 702,000 individual gifts

The benefits to being part of the PGS were:-

- There was little difference as far as donors were concerned
- There was an option for donors to build in an annual inflationary increase
- Gift Aid was processed by PGS
- Gifts could be made anonymously
- It could reduce administration for PCC Treasurers, with PGS supplying a monthly statement of donations

The Diocese of Rochester had undertaken a trial period from October 2021 with around 10 parishes involved. Based on the outcome of that trial, the Diocese had joined the Scheme formally in March 2022, with a low key launch which saw 23 parishes joining or intending to join.

In 2021 there were 59 gifts overall, bringing in £6,500 after gift aid. In the first three months of 2022, £24,588 had come into parishes. More parishes were joining the Scheme each week. One of the suggestions, upon joining PGS was to join with a giving campaign of some sort, as it had been seen to have a marked effect on the levels of giving.

Whilst encouraging parishes to explore the PGS was a large part of her role, Mrs Mullins assured members that there were other priorities in her workload too and

these were to encourage parishes to also look in more depth at legacy giving, digital giving, and Preaching Generosity.

Mrs Mullins concluded by saying that her role was to support parishes, on the ground, to encourage generosity in all its forms, which should help churches resource the mission of God in the Diocese of Rochester and the ministry on which that mission depended.

The Rev Gordon Taylor (Tunbridge Well Deanery) asked if PGS had the capacity for giving to separate projects/appeals. Mrs Mullins responded that she thought so if it used a different bank account from general giving but she advised talking to PGS direct in the first instance.

On being asked if there was a fee, Mrs Mullins said that the Diocese paid a modest fee but there was no direct cost to any individual parish.

Mr Rodney Hutchinson (Tunbridge Wells Deanery) wondered how the concept of tithing fitted in with the PGS. Mrs Mullins said that, since the 1970s, the Church of England had been recommending that one gave 5% of one's income to and through the church and that was after tax but before anything else, with the assumption one would then give a further 5% to other causes. In practice, it was no one person's job to tell people what they should be giving – that was between the individual and God.

Some parishes did teach tithing but if one looked at the giving levels – if they were really all tithing – they were probably on low incomes. So people were encouraged, instead, to review what they gave and to think about whether increasing by 1-2% at a time was right for them.

The Synod TOOK NOTE.

#### **4. Safeguarding Update**

The Archdeacon of Rochester reminded members that the National Safeguarding Team's independent Lessons Learned Review into the recruitment of William Scott Farrell, former Director of Music in Rochester Cathedral, was published in May 2022. The full report was on the Church of England website, and there was a statement from the Dean of Rochester on the Cathedral website.

He then went on to highlight the new [Safeguarding Dashboard](#) to which the Diocese had subscribed. The Dashboard was an online tool to help parishes manage their safeguarding requirements and outlined all the requirements with links to documents and forms. The service was free for parishes to register, to update and to receive action plans on demand. Rochester was one of 26 dioceses now using the Dashboard, which had been developed by professionals within the Church community. It could be accessed on a mobile phone, computer, or tablet, and Parish Safeguarding Officers had found it very easy to use. In Rochester Diocese 134 parishes had already signed up to it and 96 were using it actively. A further 81 parishes had been invited to use the system but had not yet signed up. The Archdeacon urged members to encourage their parishes to sign up if they had not already done so.

The Rev John Musson (Orpington Deanery) thanked the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for the way in which they ministered to parishes in so many ways, and he commended the Safeguarding Dashboard and its ease of

use. He recognised the strain the Team was under, liaising with the parishes as well as with the burdensome requirements sometimes placed on parishes by the National Safeguarding Team. He wondered, however, whether the time doing things like safeguarding was sometimes at the expense of the everyday faith that Dr Shepherd had spoken about. Whilst he was fully committed to safeguarding, he urged the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to consider how changes to requirements were notified to Parish Safeguarding Officers and that some rationale could accompany that notification. The list of 13 duties of a PSO was too much, in his opinion, and it was unlikely that new PSOs would be found quickly when needed.

Mr Musson asked, therefore, whether the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Team could ensure that the National and local Teams were aware of what happened in small, local, churches and the effects that new requirements had, and how those changes might be notified in ways other than in an email.

Referring to the 2022 Articles of Enquiry, he noted that they contained important questions relating to compliance with safeguarding and asked how the information would be used. Would the statistics be published or at least communicated to Diocesan Synod, and could a figure be provided for how many parishes were struggling to appoint a PSO?

Finally, Mr Musson wondered if stories of good practice at parish level could be published on the diocesan website.

The Archdeacon said that some of what Mr Musson had raised would be taken away and responded to in due course. He thought there were 6-10 parishes in the Diocese that were struggling to recruit a PSO, noting that there were rather more struggling to recruit churchwardens. There was an awareness of the difficulty around volunteers. A number of churches were looking imaginatively at how they recruit churchwardens and how the load was shared, as they were with the list of duties for a PSO and how they might be shared across the PCC, other volunteers, and the incumbent. It was recognised that there was a job to be done around embedding the safeguarding culture in the lives of churches but also that there were moments when that was a burden. Communication with the National Team was ongoing, and the issue around good stories/practice would be explored, as would the sharing of the information gleaned from the Articles of Enquiry.

Mr Martin Sewell (General Synod) said that there was some concern that the reporting of the Past Cases Review might be driven by Communications officers, rather than a desire for transparency and accountability.

Mr Sewell went on to say that he was very critical of the new Independent Safeguarding Board. He assured members that did not come from a desire to be difficult, but the Board had been set up in way that was originally going to have the power to do things. Then those powers were removed and, at the General Synod in February, the new Chairs said that they did not have a reinvestigative, reviewing, insisting, sanctioning, or directing role. However, they had now been asked to do those things, so there was a real issue there that he was following up.

The Synod TOOK NOTE.

## **THE REV CANON JEREMY BLUNDEN IN THE CHAIR**

### **5. The Environment and Sustainability**

The Called Together Manager reminded members that one of the Diocese's Five Priorities was to protect creation's life for future generations, to work for the protection of the natural world and to equip Christians and churches to care for it.

Diocesan Synod last spoke about the environment in March 2020, and lots had happened since then. However, Miss Boxall's intention today was to focus on the target to reach carbon net zero by 2030 and to look at what the Diocese, parishes, and individuals were doing.

The Canon Theologian, Dr Ruth Valerio, speaking under Gaia on 8 June in Rochester Cathedral reminded those present that the poorest people were always hit hardest by climate change issues – be that severe weather events or the rising cost of household energy – and therefore caring for the environment was also an issue of social justice and peace.

General Synod had set the target of reaching carbon net zero by 2030, and had created a route map for that, which would return to General Synod in July 2022. The route map outlined the actions for the National Church and for dioceses and the most pressing actions around measuring and planning were set out in the Bishop's Council report.

In diocesan terms work was being undertaken on the largest impact that could be made, which was around clergy housing and energy efficiency. This also had a positive aspect in view of high energy bills and clergy wellbeing. Properties were currently being surveyed and, once the data was available, a plan would be drawn up. It was very likely that insulation and windows would be looked at, rather than photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps ASHPs, but each home was different and so would need a different approach. The 'harder to do' things would also be explored, like alternative heating for those currently using oil. The planning process would take time and was very much a work in progress.

Many of the large changes required to reach that target needed significant capital investment, and in the past month the National Church had announced additional funding from the Church Commissioners for that work. The shape of that funding was not yet known but it was vital to have projects and plans ready to roll both at both diocesan and local parish level so that, when the funding was announced, applications were ready to go live. It was usually the case that National Church liked applications to be made through dioceses, rather than individual churches.

Miss Boxall then moved on to what could be done at parish level. She urged members – if they only took one thing away from her presentation – to find out who in their parish completed the online parish finance and statistical data, and to encourage them or work with them to complete the Energy Footprint Tool. The deadline for completion was 31 July 2022, noting that it was handy to have the previous year's energy bills to hand. It was necessary to begin with what was currently being done so the starting point for changes could be identified. The information within the EFT would enable the Diocese to work with parishes on projects, plans and ideas.

There was lots of advice available on the [Church of England website](#), which had a really helpful area on 'the practical path to net zero', with live and recorded webinars, guidance documents, and a checklist. Miss Boxall also recommended that members found like-minded people – it was Churches Count On Nature week and in September the Great Big Green Week would be taking place. Throughout the year there were various awareness days and events scheduled to engage with people in parishes and communities, and all year round there was Eco Church – and congratulations should go to Rochester Cathedral, which had recently gained the Silver Award.

Acknowledging that not everyone could install a huge art piece such as Gaia to get people talking about the climate crisis, she pointed out that churches could engage the community through eco fayres, through competitions and exhibitions, working with local groups such as scouts and guides, or if the parish had land perhaps invite a local school to build bug hotels or to carry out a wildlife survey in the churchyard. There were also Christian and secular organisations providing resources, inspiration, opportunities to meet, learn, lament and act.

Canon Dr Valerio, when speaking in the Cathedral, had cited John Stuart Mill who said: "Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing."

Everyone had choices to make about their individual impact on the environment but people often asked why they should bother doing anything if 'big corporations and other countries' did not. Dr Valerio, however, spoke on the challenge of living in ways that were careful and gentle. Her five tools to make a difference were Acknowledgment, Community, Action, Sabbath and Hope, and Miss Boxall urged members to listen to her lecture, which was on the [Cathedral website](#).

Dr Valerio also quoted an African proverb that stated 'if you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a closed room with a mosquito!' Small actions could have a big impact.

Miss Boxall acknowledged that making environmentally friendly choices often came at a financial cost and, with the cost-of-living crisis, she had asked Dr Valerio what the most effective thing individuals could do with limited choice. She immediately said changing one's diet to one of mainly vegetables and grains, and also pointed out that many changes which positively impacted the planet also positively impacted individuals' pockets – so changing one's diet, driving slower or less, and turning down the heating thermostat had a knock-on effect for personal finances as well as the environment.

The Rev Trudi Oliver (Gravesend Deanery) said that the ethos of 'everyone can do something' was one that she tried to encourage in her parish. She shared how she had reduced her personal use of plastic simply by no longer colouring her hair, by using toothpaste tabs rather than paste, a bamboo toothbrush that could be recycled, a bar shampoo instead of from a bottle.

The Rev John Musson (Orpington Deanery) asked who his parish should talk to when considering replacing the heating system in church. Miss Boxall said that the DAC Secretary, Mrs Sarah Anderson, should be his first port of call as she was compiling a list of experts who were not always economically benefited by giving advice on heating systems. This was beginning to come together and she urged Synod to be in touch with her if they had any such contacts. Mr David Fitzpatrick (Orpington Deanery) said that he had a contact and would be in touch.

The Rev Carl Chambers (Dartford Deanery) informed members that, when buying a bottle of cleaning product, around 5-10ml was concentrate and the rest was water or colouring. His parish was using eco-friendly concentrates instead. The purchase of a 5l bottle, which could be decanted into re-usable and recyclable bottles 10ml at a time, thereby produced a tremendous cost saving.

The Rev Martyn Saunders (Rochester Deanery) wondered if the Synod could do its part by committing to having its meetings in buildings that were close to public transport links and which used green energy.

Miss Boxall responded by saying that, where possible, public transport links were taken into consideration. Going forward, she would try to ensure that those links were made known to members and that meeting times were fitted around them.

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (Ex-Officio) asked how all the good and helpful ideas mentioned were being captured for sharing.

Miss Boxall said that, in conjunction with Canterbury Diocese, the communication was still being worked out. She asked members to let her have suggestions that would work for them – email, website, presentations, information for pew sheets, etc.

The Rev Canon Jeremy Blunden (Ex-Officio) concluded the item by emphasising the difference adopting a plant-based diet could make, informing members that it took 2,400 litres of water to produce one hamburger.

The Synod TOOK NOTE.

## **6. Annual Report & Accounts 2021**

**DS Jun 22 – 6**

The Chair of the DBF, Mr Nigel Pope, encouraged members to read the Annual Report & Accounts 2021, if they had not already done so and added that there would be a digital version available on the [diocesan website](#) in the coming weeks. He also informed members that there were two posters available to take away to parishes – The Year In Numbers, and Financial Overview. Mr Pope expressed his thanks all those who had worked on bringing the Annual Report & Accounts together.

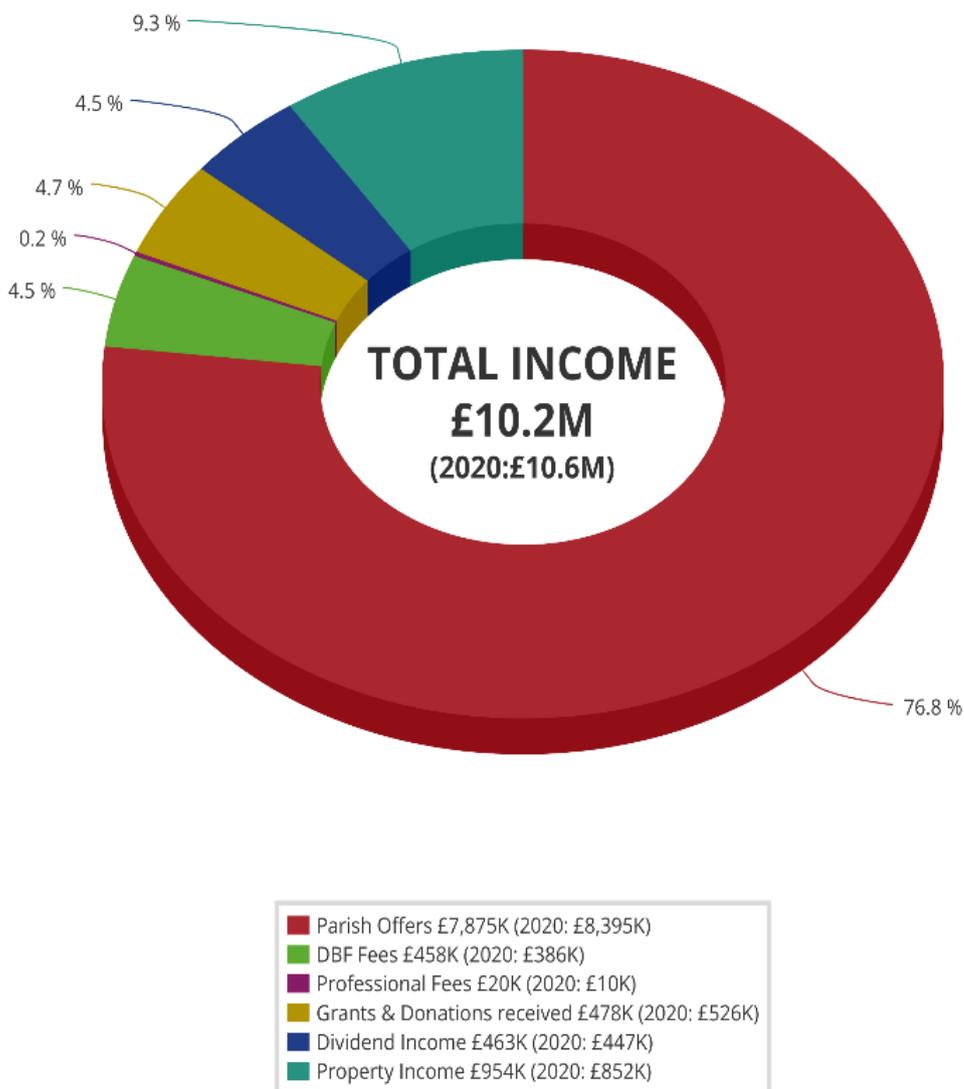
Mr Pope then moved on to looking at the financial highlights of the previous year. There had been a net income surplus of £4.1m for the year. The reason behind this was an increase in value in the investment portfolio (glebe property and market investments) of £3.8m and profits on sales of properties of £1.8m. The diocesan investment portfolio overall of property and market investments in 2021 had a total return of 16%.

The operating result on the Common Fund had a deficit of £1.6m, which was not sustainable in the long term. However, an operating deficit of £1.8m had been budgeted for and, coming in below that in a tough year financially, showed a good performance overall.

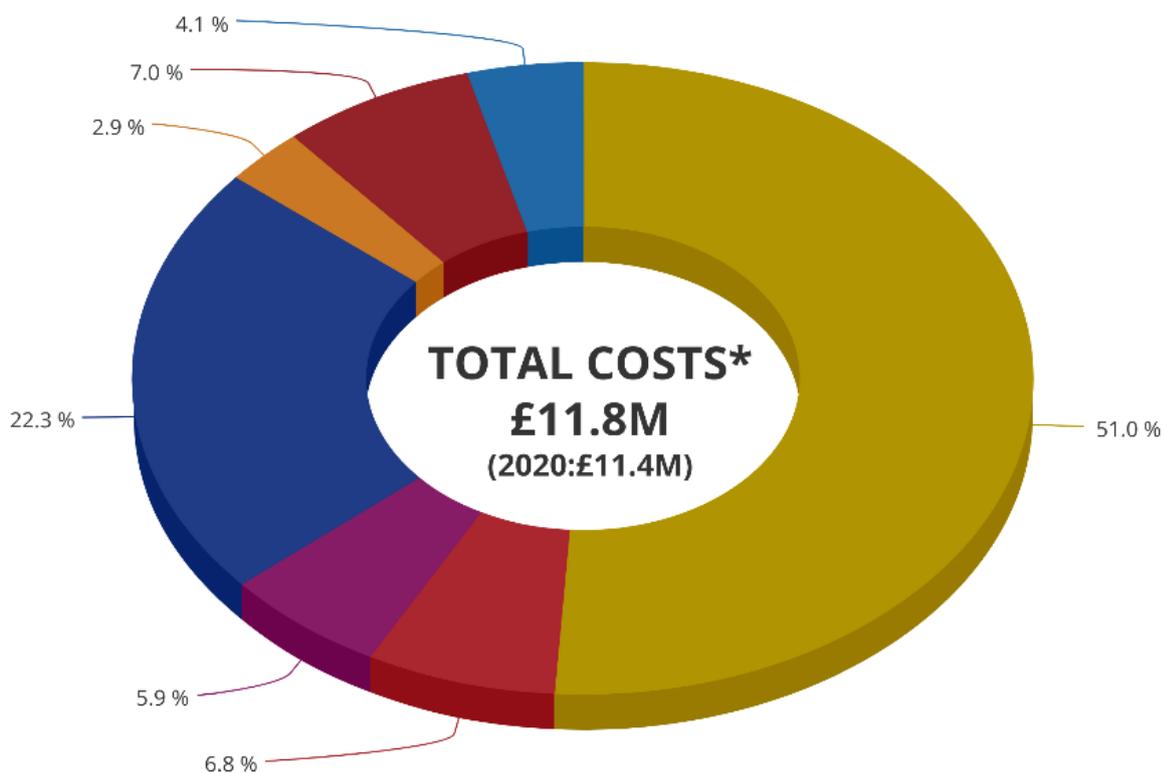
The reserve balance on the Common Fund was £5.1m as at 31 December 2021 which slightly exceeded the requirement under the reserves policy of £5m.

The balance sheet showed net assets of £82.2m, and the overall cash balances at the end of the year stood at £7.6m, which was in excess of the current policy level of minimum liquidity and cash reserves of £5m.

The graphic below showed the split of the income for the Common Fund. It should be noted that parish offers and fees made up 81% of the Common Fund income. In 2021 there was a 5.3% drop in parish offers and fees from 2020, and a drop of 9.1% from 2019. In the circumstances, whilst it was significant, it was really a very limited drop thanks to the generosity of many parishes. Mr Pope added that grants and donations in 2021 did include a £286k sustainability grant from the Church Commissioners.



The costs for the Common Fund totalled £11.8m and the graphic below outlined the breakdown of those. The costs of ministry formed a very significant part of the expenditure.



Incumbents & Associates	£6,047K (2020: £5,827K)
Training Curates	£809K (2020: £862K)
Ordinands	£694K (2020: £650K)
Diocesan Parish Support Costs	£2,639K (2020: £2,464K)
Wider Diocesan Mission	£344K (2020: £395K)
Other Costs	£824K (2020: £696K)
Contributions to National Church	£490K (2020: £508K)

\*after transfers from restricted funds

Looking at the balance sheet, Mr Pope went on to say that the Diocese had net assets of £82m, tangible fixed assets of £52m, investment assets of £33m, current assets of £8.5m, and current liabilities of £11m.

Mr Pope reminded members that the diocesan Financial Strategy was to achieve a financially sustainable position and to successfully underpin the diocesan strategy of Called Together. The pandemic had set this goal back significantly. Going forward it would be necessary not only to sustain the funding of the existing parish structure and to invest in the renewal and recovery, but to also be bolder in investing in future ministry and the emerging church. Targeted intentional investment was seen to work as demonstrated by the various Strategic Development Funding (SDF) projects running in the Diocese. It was hoped that future partnerships with parishes and the National Church to use those investments, and discussions with the new Diocesan Bishop around the utilisation of Unapplied Total Return funds from past investment gains above inflation on our endowment would soon be underway.

Moving on to financial sustainability, the Diocese was budgeting a deficit of £1.54m for 2022. Parish offers had not recovered as fast as hoped and the cost-of-living crisis had understandably also had an impact on offers. Work had started on how resources should be allocated, and the aim was still for a financially sustainable model of mission for the Diocese.

Mr Pope concluded by saying we were called together as parishes, deaneries, and Diocese, and thanked everyone for their partnership as we moved forward looking to God to inspire and empower by the Holy Spirit to build the Kingdom of God.

Mr Glyn Allen (Gillingham Deanery) was confused around the average figure for parishes' indicative offers, when the compensation for parishes that could not pay the full offer was taken into consideration. Mr Pope said that, if all parishes paid the average of £81k, the budget would balance. However, some were asked to pay more to support poorer parishes where possible.

The Rev Nigel Bourne (Gravesend Deanery) said he supported the Total Return policy but noted that both high inflation and lower returns would have an impact and urged caution so that future generations were not left in a worse position. Mr Pope responded that decisions on how much of the surplus return was to be invested/spent would be made having sought advice from the Investment Committee and Investment Advisers. The Diocesan Secretary added that it should not be looked at only as diocesan funding but also as funding that could be made available to attract other outside funding.

Mr John Garthwaite (Paddock Wood Deanery) said that, from the perspective of his own church, the key issue for parishes making a lower offer was trust and in particular about the deficit and the issues surrounding that. He emphasised that work needed to be done to build up that trust between the Diocese and parishes. Mr Pope said that there was a commitment to being open and transparent, and officers were always to explain how monies were spent and why.

The Chair of the Board of Finance MOVED on behalf of Bishop's Council that:

"The Synod

- (i) adopts the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021; and
- (ii) appoints Haysmacintyre as auditors for the year ended 31 December 2022 and the Chair and Secretary be authorised to determine their remuneration.

On being PUT, the motions were CARRIED *nem con*.

The Annual Reports & Accounts 2021, as signed by the Auditors, would be available on the [diocesan website](#) in due course.

## **BISHOP SIMON IN THE CHAIR**

### **7. Chair of the DBF**

On the nomination of the Bishop's Council, the Synod APPROVED *nem con* the re-election of Mr Nigel Pope as Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and thanked him for all that he brought to the role.

### **8. Anna Chaplaincy**

Mrs Julia Burton-Jones, the diocesan lead on Anna Chaplaincy began by saying that Rochester Diocese had been prominent in pioneering Anna Chaplaincy as a vocational pathway. She then outlined her role which comprised recruiting, training, and supporting Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends in Rochester and Canterbury Dioceses. She ensured regular patterns of local hub meetings for team members to learn together and support one another, working with six newly commissioned archdeaconry leads. Each archdeaconry had one lay and one ordained lead.

Anna Chaplaincy began with a strong focus on the spiritual needs of people affected by dementia. Churches across the Diocese had established groups and activities for those people, and Mrs Burton-Jones ensured those were advertised widely and supported those leading each initiative, particularly in restarting after the impact of the pandemic.

In practice, it now offered community based spiritual care for older people of strong, little or no faith, particularly those in the fourth age of their life with a measure of frailty and dementia. It was ecumenical in its focus.

Anna chaplains could be in paid roles or voluntary, male or female, lay or ordained. The role each fulfilled would depend upon the context of their local community and their own gifting. Many visited older people at home, perhaps taking Communion, leading services and visiting individuals in care homes. Some ran groups for older people/those with dementia, whilst others offered inclusive worship services in churches. They often partnered with local organisations that had a role in enabling older people to live fulfilled lives, and frequently they were the voice for older people in the community.

In June 2022, there 34 Anna Chaplains and 29 Anna Friends working within the Diocese of Rochester (18 and 9 in Canterbury Diocese). Many more dioceses had embraced Anna Chaplaincy, following Rochester's lead. The dream was to have a chaplain in every parish. It was envisaged that there would be a doubling in the numbers of people aged 85 and over from 1.6m to 3.2m by 2041, and a trebling to 5.1m by 2066. That age group would then form 7% of the population, instead of the current 2%. Consequently, there would also be a rapid increase in numbers of those living with dementia. Churches needed to be equipped for those demographic changes with teams of committed people to respond to the ageing population. And that was where Anna Chaplains stepped in – to offer those teams support by way of local hub meetings, study days, networking events, retreats, annual gatherings, online resources, mentoring, and group supervision.

Mrs Burton-Jones concluded by urging members to pray for the ministry of Anna Chaplaincy, and for more to join to team – training and support would be provided to help them develop in confidence and skill. There was a need for more male Chaplains in particular.

On being asked to explain the difference between an Anna Chaplain and an Anna Friend, Mrs Burton-Jones said that Chaplains spent more time in their role – at least a day a week, some many more hours than that – and they had a leadership role within the local church. Friends were doing many of the same kind of things – coming alongside older people – but did not take on a leadership role and were not expected to commit to as many hours (although many did).

The Synod TOOK NOTE.

## **9. Time for Questions**

### (a) Question from Mr Martin Sewell (General Synod)

Can you confirm that the PCR 2 is now delayed to July 2022?

Can you please confirm:-

- (a) Whether it will be released before General Synod meets (if known) to enable appropriate questions to be asked;
- (b) The reason for the delay ( if provided);
- (c) Whether it is correct that the Communications Department of Church House has advised that Dioceses release only an executive summary rather than the full report, duly redacted to safeguard sensitive complainant identifying information; and
- (d) Whether Church House has provided any reason for departing from the principles of Transparency and Accountability which General Synod has frequently endorsed as best practice in such matters?

### Response from the Archdeacon of Rochester

We are unable to confirm a timescale. The national overview report is subject to sign off by the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG), prior to a publication date being confirmed.

- (a) Please see answer above.
- (b) The PCR 2 Project Management Board has previously said that there was a delay in the original timescale for completion of the national PCR2 process due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the widespread issues this caused, not least in accessing physical files to review.

In terms of current progress, we understand that following the submission of diocesan reports, a process of data validation is being undertaken by the PCR 2 Project Management Team with dioceses, together with the drafting of the national PCR2 report which will collect and analyse themes and recommendations from across the settings.

This report will be signed off by the National Safeguarding Steering Group, prior to a publication date being confirmed.

We can confirm that the Diocese of Rochester's own independent report was submitted on time.

- (c) The original PCR 2 protocols and guidance did not specify any expectation that independent local reports should be made public, and many have not been written with the intention of publication.

The PCR 2 Project Management Board has therefore subsequently worked with, and considered feedback from various stakeholders, including Victims and Survivors, around publication of the overview report, and how local PCR2 processes and outcomes might be shared alongside it.

National Church Communications has been part of this but has been collaborative with dioceses.

Based on feedback from all these stakeholders, the Board has issued suggested guidance about publishing an executive summary and the format it might take, in order to provide a consistent approach.

However, it remains with individual dioceses, in consultation with the Bishop and their DSAP, on how to share information about the process they undertook and their key findings.

- (d) Please see answer above.

## **10. Closing Prayer**

The Bishop closed the meeting with prayer.