

Chair, House of Clergy, Rochester Diocesan Synod
Chair, House of Laity, Rochester Diocesan Synod

Thursday 9 January 2025

For the attention of the trustee members of the Archbishops' Council

Dear Mr Nye,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Archbishops' Council, dated 20 December 2024, in response to the motion passed at Rochester Diocesan Synod in December.

We note that the same letter was sent to the Bishop of Rochester on 11 December, to which he replied on 12 December, thanking the Council for its correspondence and confirming that a fuller response would be sent once there had been opportunity for those who lead Diocesan Synod to consult together.

Whilst we are aware the Council's letter has already been published on the Church of England website and elsewhere, we have now been able to meet and are pleased to be able to formally respond to your letter and address some of the points raised.

Firstly, we are grateful for the information you have provided about the actions being undertaken by the Council and will ensure this information is shared directly with Synod members via your letter.

Secondly, we think it important to underline that the motion was brought forward and debated in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Synod as a response to the urgent situation facing the Church of England. The terms of the motion, made very clear by the proposer, did not call for resignations or recommend specific courses of action. Neither were any individuals, whether trustees or officers, criticised by name or function.

Rather, the motion stated that the Synod did not have confidence in the Archbishops' Council's oversight of safeguarding as existing, and called for a more effective response. Speakers in the debate highlighted a number of concerns about the Council's oversight, including its response to earlier reviews, as well as to the Makin Report and the urgent need for the voices of victims and survivors to be set at the spiritual centre of the approach to safeguarding.

It was also acknowledged that, whilst responsibility for change rests with all of us, the focus on this occasion was on the Council as the executive body responsible for the Church of England's work on safeguarding at national level.

Our hope and intention, as that of Diocesan Synod, is that the passing of this motion draws the attention of the Council to the deep concerns of those in the Diocese of Rochester and across the Church of England for the need for a fundamental change of culture, not only around safeguarding but also around transparency and accountability in leadership and governance.

In the collaborative spirit of the motion, we would be pleased to take up the Council's offer of further dialogue in due course.

With our prayers and good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

The Revd Canon Jeremy Blunden
Chair, House of Clergy

Mrs Sarah Poole
Chair, House of Laity

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