

Archbishop's Council and Standing Committee of Diocesan Synod
14 October 2025 6:00pm St Paul's Parish Centre, Church Street CT1
1NH Draft Minutes of the Meeting



Present:

+Rose Hudson Wilkin	Darren Miller	Will Adam
Tony Richter	Iain Blythe	Andy Bawtree
Estella Last	Gareth Dickinson	Amanda Boucherat
Simon Tillotson	John Moss	

In attendance:

Natalia Olszewska	Fiona Coombes	Quentin Roper
Neville Emslie	Richard Braddy	Colin Evans
Patti Russell (Registrar)	Phil Gallagher	

Apologies:

Miranda Ford	Sandra Yardley	Graham Codling
David Monteith		

The Bishop opened the meeting with reflection and a prayer.

Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies noted above, no declarations of interest were reported. The Bishop reported on the appointment of Bishop Sarah Mullally as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. Details of her installation service will be provided in due course.

Governance Review

The Bishop welcomed Phil Gallagher (PG) an external consultant to the meeting to present on his proposal for a new governance structure. PG briefed the Board on the proposal for a new governance structure and how this proposed new structure will make groups more efficient, improve decision making and effectiveness. PG explained that staff and members of the various committees had completed surveys and participated in workshops which had resulted in this proposal. A number of questions were raised by members of the Board. PG advised that he revised proposals would be presented to the Board in the New Year.

It was agreed that there was work to be done and following the meeting the Diocesan Secretary set out the following steps:

- FAQs would be produced
- An ABC/Synod group would be established to share wisdom on the proposals as they developed
- A Webinar would be presented, probably in the New Year, for Synod members
- Better organograms would be produced
- A skills audit would be run

- Meetings would be planned with current chairs and staff members impacted
- Terms of reference would be prepared and circulated to ABC Committee members

Phil and Iain left the meeting at this point.

Finance

Parish Share

NO reported that in the August report of parish payments from National Church we were only beaten by Winchester as the diocese who have received the most parish share payments, over 58.9% of parishes have paid over 60% of parish share to September, by year end it will be 80%, the percentage is dropping but the amount is increasing.

Budget for 2026

TR reported that there were three budget proposals for which approval was being sought:

- Designation of the time limited funding over 9 years
- Stipend and salary increases from 2026
- Overall budget proposals for 2026

Overall budget proposals for 2026

TR reported that the Board was proposing a total income of £11.4million and total expenditure increasing by 8% over 2025 to £11.6million. The end line proposals in the budget were a 10.7% and 3.5% stipend and salary increase respectively and a flat 1.25% increase in parish share.

The Board was proposing the use of one-ninth of the nine year “cliff edge” funding from the Church Commissioners of £222k.

In addition, one-third of proposed property sales (expected to generate £3million over the next 4 years) would be used to support budgets to 2030 and at the same time a Property ring-fenced fund would be created with the balance and future sales, the interest on which will be used to carry out improvements to clergy housing.

There had been various internal cost-cutting and income increasing measures amounting to £92k and LInC funding would increase to £1.1million from 2026.

TR explained there had been in a change in the way this budget has been presented from previous years and assuming a parish share payment rate of 90%, should the rate of parish share paid increase to 92% the deficit would reduce to £15k effectively a balanced budget.

Designation of time-limited funding

Following the diocesan finance review undertaken by the Archbishops’ Council Canterbury DBF had secured just over £2million time limited “cliff edge” funding which

will be tapered over nine years of which an initial payment to be received of £516k in 2026.

Recognizing costs will increase in future years the Board proposed to use £222,000 in 2026 (one-ninth of the total amount) and each year. It was proposed the balance of the funds would be designated for this purpose and invested accordingly.

Overall, this was a cautious approach which the Board hoped would reduce the pressures on parish finances more evenly over the coming years.

Stipend and salary increases

The Archbishops' Council recommended that the national stipend benchmark should increase by 10.7% which represents a catch up in inflation since 2011, to note only 4.1 increase to be applied to Archdeacons stipends. With regard to staff costs the Finance & Assets Committee agreed an uplift of 3.5% from 1 April 2026.

A detailed discussion took place with questions raised regarding the number of clergy retirements over the next 5-10 years and the impact it will have on ministry in the diocese.

The Committee received the proposals for the 2026 Budget and approved the following:

- the designation of the time limited funding being provided over the nine years
- the stipend and salary increases of 10.% and 3.5%
- the budget proposals for 2026

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Audit

FC reported that preparations are going well, a lead group has been set up to oversee the audit and will meet monthly. FC advised the Board that they may be approached to give evidence for the audit. The portal for evidence opens late July/early August 2026.

FC referred to the papers provided regarding Charity Commission serious incident reporting. A discussion took place around delegation of authority on behalf of the DBF and parishes. Patti Russell (PR) clarified the difference between the two and recommended that the Board also seek the appropriate delegation to enable FC and Paul Brightwell to report on behalf of the DBF. PR also recommend that a small group of the Trustees eg the Bishop, TR and an Archdeacon who focusses on safeguarding have oversight of serious incident reporting. PR confirmed that she would email the appropriate paperwork to IB for completion.

FC mentioned that a Season of Safeguarding in collaboration with the Cathedral would include "Safeguarding Sunday" on 16 November, including a eucharist of lament for victims and survivors. Information was to be sent out to parishes shortly.

Cathedral and Diocesan Survivors' Charter which FC would be drafted for approval by the Board.

Emerging Strategy

WA updated the Board on the work of the Strategy Working Group which was more than applying for grants and involved embedding strategy in all aspects of the Board's work.

The maximum SMMIB funding Canterbury DBF could be awarded for 2026 to 2028 was £3.5 million, but the Board could apply for further £5million for programmes going forward. Future SMMIB bids will need to be very targeted and the plan is not to rush to put in a bid at this time.

A detailed discussion took place about the plans for future SMMIB bids. A question was raised on the funding awarded in 2023 for a Church Planting Adviser amounting to £271k as the post has not yet been advertised. WA advised that he would follow up on this point.

Elections

Diocesan Synod

PR updated the Board on the results of the latest elections to fill vacant seats on Diocesan Synod. Although a good proportion of vacant seats had been filled vacancies remained in some deaneries. PR recommended pausing further elections but that if deaneries are aware of people keen and willing to fill the vacant seats they should hold elections to fill them.

Archbishop's Council

PR explained that there were two vacancies in the House of Laity for Ashford and Canterbury Archdeaconries.

PR referred to rule 85 of the Synod Standing Orders that the Board can direct that as the vacancies are House of Laity only members of the House of Laity can vote to fill these vacancies.

The Bishop put forward the proposal that an election be held to fill the vacancies on Archbishop's Council and as they are House of Laity only members of the House of Laity may vote to fill the vacancies.

All in favour, the proposal was carried.

Casual Vacancies on the Vacancy in See Committee for 2025-2027

PR reported that there were six vacancies on the Vacancy in See Committee for the current triennium. After consultation with Alex Macgregor, Legal Adviser to the NCIs, it is recommended that these vacancies be filled.

WA proposed an election to fill the six vacancies on the 2025-2027 Vacancy in See Committee in accordance with the Vacancy in See Regulations.

All in favour, the proposal was carried.

General Synod Elections in 2026

PR reported that General Synod elections in 2026 will be slightly different, a timetable had been set.

Any Other Business

Minutes of the Finance/Assets Committee meetings of 23 July, 17 September, 7 October

All minutes were received by the Board.

Minutes of the Meeting of Archbishop's Council held on 10 June 2025

The minutes were accepted as true record of the meeting.

Draft Agendas for Diocesan Synod on 15 November 2025 and 14 March 2026

An update on the Church in Society Funds

NO reported that CCLA hold funds of £10k for this charity which no longer exists. NO explained that we would like to do something with this money and therefore need to resurrect this charity, this was a charity shared between Canterbury and Rochester. It was proposed that the Archdeacon of Canterbury act on behalf of Canterbury Diocese along with a representative from Rochester Diocese who would decide jointly how to distribute the funds.

To Approve the appointment of Trustees to the Board of Trustees of the Social Justice Network

JA sought the approval of the Board for the appointment of the following trustees to the Board of Trustees of the Social Justice Network:

Iain Blythe
Dr Cindy Rajpaul-Baptiste
The Rev'd Sue Rose

JA confirmed that the Board of Trustees had approved the appointments. A short discussion took place followed by a vote.

All in favour, carried.

To Approve the appointment of James Kenton as an Architect Member of the DAC

The Board were asked to approve the appointment of James Kenton as an Architect member of the DAC.

All in favour, carried.

The Bishop closed the meeting with a blessing.

The meeting ended at 20:49