

# Archbishop's Council and Standing Committee of Diocesan Synod

27 January 2026 6:00pm St Paul's Parish Centre, Church Street

## 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	David Monteith
Judith Andrews		

### In attendance:

Orla Garratt	Fiona Coombs	Patti Russell (Registrar)
Phil Gallagher		

### Apologies:

Miranda Ford	Sandra Yardley	Graham Codling
Richard Braddy		

The Bishop opened the meeting with reflection and a prayer.

### Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any issues at the relevant part of the meeting.

### Update on Services and Welcome

Members received an update on the 106<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, Dame Sarah Mullally, whose installation would take place on 25 March. On 28 March there would be a Diocesan Welcome. Both services would take place in the Cathedral.

The Bishop welcomed newly elected member, Judith Andrews, to Archbishop's Council.

### Governance Review

Archbishop's Council received the revised proposal emphasising that this had been put together to support local mission and ministry.

TR welcomed the clarity commenting that the proposal makes complete sense. ABawtree asked how will this affect staff on a day to day basis, what are the implications? IB responded that it will make work more streamlined and more effective. GD wanted to know how the Directors felt about this proposal. IB confirmed that there was general support, and that there had been a wide, open and transparent consultation with staff, Synod and Committee members.

AD Darren was encouraged by the proposal which would mean fewer meetings for Archdeacons and other senior staff. AD Will commented that the Archdeacons have several meetings with the same people in them talking largely about the same matters

where decisions were made which could have been seen as having limited accountability and was fully behind the proposals.

ABourcherat fully supportive of the proposal but raised a concern around business as usual, commenting that this also needs a high level of scrutiny and governance. Thinking ahead to Diocesan Synod, they will want to know who might be members or Chairs of such meetings these are likely questions and how does this affect representation on Archbishop's Council once the frameworks are disbanded.

GD commenting on the Outline Terms of Reference encouraged to see more lay and clergy participation but wished to raise the point that there is no clergy representation on the Finance & Assets Committee. TR confirmed that the current lay representatives all have a finance background with the Bishop emphasising the importance that members have the right skill set.

IB confirmed the matter would be brought back to the Council in early March before Synod to get further approval.

**The Council voted unanimously in favour of the direction of travel of the review.**

## **Finance**

The Chair of the DBF presented the November Management accounts and the draft December Parish Share.

It was noted the deficit for the year was £577k, based on expenditure of £9million which was just below the budgeted figure of £9.1million which underlined the improved control of costs.

Revenue was £8.5million against the request of £9million. As at the end of November Parish Share received was £5.8million or 75% of the amount requested of £7.8million. The Council noted that progress has been remarkable and in cash terms (compared to 2025) the parishes have contributed an additional £420k. TR commented that this has been an incredible effort by everyone and that we should communicate our thanks. The Bishop commented that this was something to celebrate.

GD agreed that this better news but asked to get some clarity on the overspend under Property Services, Property Services costs and People Services amounting to £350k overspend against budget. The Property Team was largely a new team, and the priority has been to stabilise the service and progress several partially committed projects toward completion. This has resulted in budget pressure but has been necessary to reduce operational risk and improve service continuity. Significant changes had been made to ensure clergy housing was better served and this would remain a priority.

There remained a high volume of reactive repairs, large and minor works, which collectively create cost pressure. This reflects historic underinvestment in parts of the portfolio, leading to a higher day to day maintenance costs. While some of these works

must be appropriately challenged and be managed by the incumbent to ensure value for money, the Board remains responsible for maintaining properties to a suitable standard for clergy.

In December, the team successfully on-boarded Fixflo to manage day-to-day repairs and statutory compliance, supporting more efficient processes and ensuring our legislative obligations are met. In addition, a community project scheme has been piloted. This is an open prison rehabilitation programme, to support minor high labour works while delivering wider social value.

The team has a clear commitment to improving services for clergy through strategic planning and being commercially aware. This will include creating policies, service plans, and stronger cost controls to ensure value for money while delivering a consistent and improved housing service.

Cost increases continue to be a factor driving higher budgets and costs in the repair and maintenance sector are expected to rise by around 3–5% this winter alone due to elevated wages and employment related taxes, material costs, age and capability gaps increasing in the industry and regulatory pressures.

**Action:** Communication to be sent out to parishes thanking them for their generosity in achieving a higher contribution towards Parish Share.

### **Safeguarding**

The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer reported impacts for trustees of charities following the ruling by the Charity Commission arising out of its investigation into two dioceses.

Safeguarding matters were now routinely on Council agenda and Trustees were advised that a spreadsheet would be available on Teams for them to access, and would contain relevant information regarding reporting levels, and whether a matter is pending or closed.

PR to spoke to the matter. She advised that the official warnings issued by the Charities Commission against Chelmsford and Liverpool had set hares running amongst dioceses. The interim advice is to err on the side of caution any serious incident at parish level needs to be reported by the DBF as it carried a reputational risk for the Board.

The Charity Commission wanted all trustee bodies to treat all allegations, even those that do not fall within safeguarding definitions within the Church of England context and give them as much scrutiny and care as they would if it was a safeguarding matter.

[Note: the March meeting of the Council would contain recommendations around the creation of a body to oversee such issue.]

A discussion took place around the complexities of reporting such allegations and the responsibilities of the DBF Trustees.

DMonteith raised a point about the intersection of several pieces of legislation, noting that it is the Trustees' decision to report on such matters but for safeguarding the DSO has the responsibility to report safeguarding issues. Would that be requirement of the DSO with these allegations eg bullying? FC clarified that as DSO she has delegated authority to report safeguarding issues on behalf of the DBF. [Note: this is addressed within the proposals being brought to the March meeting.]

ST asked if the DBF selected a smaller group of the Trustees to manage this on behalf of the DBF would that satisfy the Charities Commission. PR responded that the Charity Commission were expecting greater information to be provided to the Trustees.

### **Emerging Strategy**

WA reported that there was not much to say, the Strategic Programme Board had met that day, a tremendous amount of work is being done pulling all the strands together for the SMMIB bid which will be submitted after Easter.

GD asked for an update on the £271k not spent on the Church Planting Officer. IB confirmed that the money is still available and we are reviewing the strategy to ensure that we are doing it right, to review how funding should be used and when it should be used. It may be that the Church Planting Officer role is no longer needed. An additional Archbishop's Council meeting will be set up for late February/early March to review the SMMIB bid. GD commented that as Trustees we had to take responsibility for this money, his understanding from SMMIB is that we will need to submit a change request if the money is to be used elsewhere. IB responded that this can be done reasonably quickly and added that the Youth Ministry funding had from which lessons needed to be learned.

ABoucherat commented that it would be helpful to have matters arising at the next meeting to ensure that items such as this are followed up.

**Action:** To add Matters Arising to next agenda.

### **Deanery Synod Elections**

IB reported that a suggested review of the process has been received but that the deadline for any change had been December 2025.

The Proposal for the formula for the allocation for seats for laity on Deanery Synod to remain the same as the previous triennium was put to the Committee. **All in favour.**

### **Powers of Delegation**

+Sarah officially became the Archbishop of Canterbury on Wednesday 28 January. It is important that the Powers of Delegation are approved tonight.

WA asked if there was any necessity for the Bishop of Richborough to have such delegation. PR responded that the Provincial Registrar was arranging the paperwork for

the provincial episcopal visitors who did not need a formal delegation as they had a commission in place. DMonteith asked why ++Sarah was referred to as the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, PR clarified that +Sarah sits in the House of Lords and has asked to keep that title.

The Committee were asked to approve the Powers of Delegation. **All in favour.**

### **Ordinary Business of the Committee**

#### The minutes of the Finance & Assets Committee

These are not finally approved by the Committee, rarely any change but if there is a change TR will report back.

#### Minutes of the Meeting of the Archbishop's Council held on 14 October

The only amendment was to include OG as an attendee.

All content that this was an accurate record of the meeting.

GD raised a query on the Finance & Assets minutes regarding the item on additional funding for the Ignite project in Aylesham and wanted to know where does that decision lie if it is a Strategic Programme matter. IB confirmed that this was the only opportunity for it to go before a committee at that time and reported that nothing had happened with that proposed funding.

ST asked why the fees policy not discussed today as tabled on the agenda. WA responded that the paper is incomplete and requires more work and that it will be added to the next agenda for discussion.

### **AOB**

The March Synod agenda was attached for information.

The Bishop closed the meeting with a blessing.

The meeting ended at 19:31