

**A meeting of the Newcastle Diocesan Synod was held on
Saturday 16th May 2015 at the Dr Thomlinson School,
Silverton Lane, Rothbury NE65 7RJ
from 10:00 am to 1:15 pm**

The meeting was chaired by
the Revd Canon John Sinclair (Chair of the House of Clergy)
and Canon Carol Wolstenholme (Chair of the House of Laity)

Opening Worship

The Revd Pete Askew, Northumbria Community, opened the Synod with a short act of worship.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Canon John Spence (Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee); the Revd Dr Malcolm Brown (Director of Mission and Public Affairs, Archbishops' Council) and all members and guests.

The first part of the meeting leading up to the break was open for members and non-members to engage with the programme of Reform and Renewal.

2. Programme of Reform and Renewal

Canon Spence and Dr Brown were invited to present to the meeting on the subject of Reform and Renewal in the Church of England. The presentation began with a video prepared by the Church of England Communications Team which was followed by Canon Spence and Dr Brown.

The audio files for this session were made available immediately after the meeting at: <https://soundcloud.com/diocese-of-newcastle>

The presentation was followed by group work and a plenary session.

The meeting broke for refreshments. The Synod reconvened after the break. Non-members were welcomed to observe the remaining part of the meeting. Canon John Sinclair took the Chair

3. Farewells

Bishop Frank thanked two people who were unable to attend the meeting. The Bishop paid tribute to: Jeremy Fitt (Director of Education) who would be retiring towards the end of May; and to the Reverend Canon Kevin Hunt who was preparing to leave the Cathedral to take up a new post in Vancouver.

The Bishop thanked the Revd Canon Jim Robertson who had served the Synod as Vice Chair of the Board of Finance. On behalf of the Synod the Bishop wished Jim and Margaret, his wife, a joyful retirement and the Synod responded with applause.

The Bishop thanked the Reverend Canon Alison White who had been appointed as the next Bishop of Hull. Canon White had served as the Diocesan Spirituality Adviser as well as at Riding Mill. On behalf of the Synod the Bishop

presented Canon White with a Pastoral Staff, which had been made by Neville Straker, and the Synod responded with applause.

4. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been recorded separately by the Secretary. No further apologies were offered.

5. Minutes

The Synod approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2014 and the Chair of the House of Clergy signed the minute as a true record of the meeting.

6. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

7. Notices

a) Promulgation of Amending Canon No.32

The Amending Canon No.32 was promulgated.

b) Promulgation of Amending Canon No.33

The Amending Canon No.33 was promulgated.

8. Safeguarding

Ruth Rogan (the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser) explained that although the five safeguarding policies for the Church of England had been adopted by the Bishop's Council they had not been adopted by the Synod and the motion would correct this position.

The Archdeacon of Northumberland proposed:

'that the five Church of England, House of Bishop's policies be adopted.'

The Synod adopted the policies.

Ruth Rogan presented the Diocesan Safeguarding Plan set out in paper DS(14 04) and thanked those who had already attended training sessions for their participation and urged those who were yet to do so to sign up to one of the planned sessions.

The Archdeacon of Northumberland proposed:

'that the Diocesan Safeguarding plan be endorsed.'

The Synod endorsed the plan

Canon Wolstenholme took the Chair

9. Evangelism Way Forward

The Chair invited Capt. Steve Dixon, Chair of the Evangelism Task Group, to present to the Synod. Capt. Dixon took the Synod through a short presentation covering the process that had followed the September 2014 Open Synod Forum, Evangelism Way Ahead.

The Task Group hoped that the draft Evangelism Way Forward booklet would help parishes with their planning. Capt. Dixon emphasised that the booklet was in draft format and that the final version would be circulated in the near future.

Synod commended the themes within the booklet.

10. Annual Reports

a) Financial Statements for 2014 (Paper DS 15 04)

Canon Simon Harper introduced the Financial Statements and highlighted the summary sheet which focused on the General Fund. Canon Harper thanked the parishes for the contributions to Parish Share and confirmed that certificates had been circulated to parishes.

Canon Harper reflected on the discussions within the first session with Canon Spence and Dr Brown and focused on how the changing pattern for distributing central funds would require the Diocese to be brave, innovative and strategic as it moved forward with the Reform and Renewal proposals. He highlighted the fact that the shortfall in Parish Share was close to the sum received by the Archbishops' Council through the Selective Allocations and urged members to support efforts towards a 100% contribution to Parish Share.

In discussion questions were asked about the speed at which the Selective Allocation would be reduced and about the types of ministry included within Parish Ministry and Parish Share. In response members noted that there would be a ten year transition to new funding arrangements and that Parish Ministry expenditure and contributions to Parish Share supported both ordained and lay ministry.

The Chairman of the Board of Finance proposed:

'that the Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2014 be received.'

The Synod received the Financial Statements

b) Annual Reports for Boards Committees, Supporting Ministers and Task Groups (Paper DS 15 05)

The Archdeacon of Northumberland introduced the Annual Reports for 2014 and thanked all who had contributed to the work together with those items not included within the Report.

The Archdeacon of Northumberland proposed:

'that the Annual Reports for Boards, Committees, Supporting Ministers and Task Groups be gratefully received.'

The Synod received the Annual Reports.

13. Presidential Reflections

The Rt Revd Frank White reflected on the two sessions and thanked those who had contributed to the discussions. The full recording was made available at immediately after the meeting at: <https://soundcloud.com/diocese-of-newcastle>

14. Dates of next meetings in 2015

19th September, 6th October and 28th November

15. Close

The meeting closed with a blessing from the Bishop