

**Note of business transacted at a meeting of
the Newcastle Diocesan Synod held on
Saturday 28th September, 2024 at 10:00am
at St Mary's Church, Claremont Gardens, Whitley Bay, NE26 3SF**

The President was the Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, Bishop of Newcastle and the meeting was chaired by the Chair of the House of Clergy, the Revd Robert Lawrance, The Chair of the House of Laity, Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth and the Registrar, Laura Peace.

The Register, attached, recorded 58 members; 1 visitor; and 10 officers in attendance.

1. Welcome and opening worship

The Bishop of Newcastle welcomed members to the meeting and gave a particular welcome and thanks to new members who were sitting for their first triennium on Diocesan Synod. The Bishop noted there would also be a number of new Bishop's Nominees joining Synod in the coming weeks. The Bishop thanked the Revd Nigel Taylor, Vicar of Monkseaton, St Mary's for their hospitality in hosting Synod as well as Church House Staff for their support in preparation for the meeting.

The Bishop acknowledged their sadness and grief at the recent tragic death of the Revd Captain Katie Watson, Hospital Chaplain for Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and asked Synod to join in prayer for Revd Watson. The Bishop then led the opening prayer for Synod.

As new Clergy and Lay Chairs were to be elected at Item 3, the Bishop of Newcastle remained as Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from 22 members.

3. Election of Clergy and Lay Chairs

The Chair invited the Archdeacon of Northumberland as Acting Diocesan Synod Secretary to lead this item.

The Acting Secretary asked the Chair of the Board of Finance, Canon Simon Harper (for the House of Laity) and Dean of Newcastle, the Very Revd Lee Batson (for the House of Clergy) to lead respective members of each House to separate spaces of the church so that members could cast their votes to elect a new Clergy and Lay Chair for the new triennium of Diocesan Synod.

After the voting process had ended Canon Simon Harper announced that Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth had been elected as Lay Chair. The Very Revd Lee Batson announced that the Revd Robert Lawrance had been elected as Clergy Chair.

The Chair thanked both Canon Simon Harper and The Very Revd Lee Batson for leading the vote. The Chair thanked Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth and the Revd Robert Lawrance for standing for election and welcomed both to their respective positions on Synod.

4. Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were made.

5. Meeting held on 13th July, 2024

5.1. Note of business transacted on 13th July, 2024 (paper DS24 21)

The Synod noted and approved the business transacted.

5.2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Notices

There were no notices.

7. Questions

No questions were received.

8. Presidential Address

The Bishop of Newcastle gave their Presidential Address to Synod. A copy of the Address is attached to this note.

9. Season of Seeking (paper DS24 22)

The Chair invited the Director of Mission and Ministry, the Revd Dr Richard Whaite to formally launch the Year of Seeking.

The Director of Mission and Ministry (DMM) explained that the paper attached to this item set out the missional values of the Season of Seeking and explained that the season itself was an orientation which we would work towards as a diocese. It was hoped this orientation might help guide us beyond the Deanery Planning Process and noted that 'Seeking' was not simply looking, it was part of discerning to see where God was at work, giving thanks and celebrating where we find this and then seeking to see where we might join in with this work.

The DMM spoke to the resources which had been provided to support parishes with their engagement in the Season of Seeking. They were intended to be used flexibly and repeatedly as a cycle, by individuals, small groups, parishes and deaneries as a prayer resource. The DMM urged that if people discerned where God was at work, that they note this on the postcard resource and send these in to Church House so that they could then be gathered and celebrated together.

The DMM then led Synod in prayer using the prayer set out on the resource post card.

The Chair thanked the DMM for formally launching the Season of Seeking.

10. Finance Update

The Chair invited the Chair of the Board of Finance, Canon Simon Harper to speak to this item.

The Chair of the Board of Finance welcomed new members to Synod and thanked returning members for their continued work and support. The Chair then gave an address to Synod on the 2025 Budget Consultation Process currently taking place to give an overview of the diocese challenging financial and the impact this had on the Deanery Planning Process presently and going forward.

The Chair then gave a short overview for the following items/papers:

i. 2025 Budget Consultation Process Update (paper DS24 23)

The Chair noted that paper set out the timetable for the 2025 budget consultation which aimed to bring a finalised budget back to Synod on 9 November to be approved. The Chair emphasised that the challenge facing the diocese was how the budget could be brought into a break-even position by the end of 2027. The Chair explained that as a diocese we have relatively few historic assets and the continuing structural deficit of around £1m per annum was being funded through the sale of assets and this was not sustainable in the long-term.

ii. NDBF Finance Report to August 2024 (paper DS24 24)

The Chair noted that the paper set out where we were financially at the end of August and reported that although the current deficit was only £212k as opposed to the projected budgeted deficit of £651k for this point in the year, this seemingly positive financial

performance was almost entirely a result of a shortfall in clergy stipends. There was a target to fill 80 posts, however currently only 70 posts were filled. The Chair emphasised that this was not a deliberate tactic, rather it reflected the difficulty the diocese had had in filling vacant posts as quickly as had been anticipated.

The Chair acknowledged that the most worrying aspect of the paper was that even with 70 posts the diocese was still running at a deficit. As the aim was for 80 posts, in order to fund this, Parish Share needed to increase significantly.

The Chair then reiterated that the most substantive task for Synod over the next 3 years was to draw the financial plans and the deanery development plans together into one coherent plan which could then be easily communicated back to parishes so everyone understood and fully signed up to its delivery.

iii. **Progress on the £300k of savings to be made in 2024. ([paper DS24 25](#))**

The Chair reported that the paper summarised the work the finance team had carried out over the year, in terms of the £300k of savings to be made.

iv. **The Estate of the late Bishop Alec Graham. ([paper DS24 26](#))**

The Chair informed Synod that the paper summarised the current position on the finalisation of the estate of the late Bishop Alec Graham. This continued to be a complex estate for the executors to finalise particularly in relation to the final properties.

The Chair explained for new members of Synod that the Legacy was given to the Newcastle Diocesan Society to be held for the benefit of the Diocese of Newcastle. This meant it was not legally part of the NDBF's resources but it could be made available to us.

The Chair noted that in due course Synod would have the opportunity to debate how this Legacy may be used for the best long-term benefit of the diocese. However, the Chair stressed their opinion was that the legacy should not be used to simply subsidise parish share in order to balance the budget.

v. **Departure of the Former Diocesan Secretary, Shane Waddle and Interim Secretary Recruitment Update.**

The Chair expressed his thanks and gratitude for the work of former Diocesan Secretary Shane Waddle and acknowledged that Shane was a faithful servant to the diocese. The Chair noted that on a personal level, Shane had provided him with a tremendous amount of comfort that the running of the diocese was in good hands. The Chair further noted that he was very saddened when Shane expressed that wanted to leave his role and whilst the Chair understood his reasons, he was of course disappointed. The Chair then offered a public thank you to Shane for everything he did for the diocese.

The Chair informed members that an Interim Diocesan Secretary would be announced in the next few days and reported that the process of determining what the role of our next Diocesan Secretary should be had now begun. The Chair stressed that the process to recruit a new Diocesan Secretary would not be quick and noted that it was unlikely a new person would be in post until April 2025 at the earliest.

The Chair offered some final words of encouragement regarding the diocese's financial situation and noted that although the diocese had a lot of work to do, this work would positively shape what the diocese looked like. The Chair hoped that at the end of this Synod would be able to be proud of what we had achieved, and content that we would be leaving our diocese in a better place to continue to deliver the ministry of Jesus throughout this historic, beautiful and generous diocese.

The Bishop of Newcastle thanked the Chair of the Board of Finance for their address and update and also offered their deep gratitude for the extra work load the Chair had picked up since the former Diocesan Secretary's departure.

The Chair invited questions or comments.

The Chair of the House of Laity, Canon Izzy McDonald Booth asked when Synod could expect to hear more firm ideas regarding the use of the Bishop Alec Graham Legacy. In response, the Chair of the Board of Finance explained that it may be necessary to use some of the Legacy to help fund some of the recommendations that had come out of the safeguarding audit but this would be something which would be addressed and brought to Synod in 2025.

Dr John Appleby (Tynemouth Deanery) noted that the diocese had a Net Zero target to meet by 2023 and enquired if the diocese had any update regarding Net Zero. In response, the Chair noted that the Acting Secretary would be providing an update on Net Zero at item 11.2 of the agenda.

The Revd Dr Sarah Moon (Bedlington Deanery) asked if there was a structural reason why the diocese had not able to make appointments to vacancies and whether there was anything members could do to help with this. In response, the Bishop of Newcastle noted that there wasn't any one reason that appointments had been difficult to make and highlighted that the same problem was something also faced by many other dioceses nationally. The Bishop further explained that in Newcastle Diocese, as well as their previous diocese, there was often cycles when not many applications were made and then times when many applications were received and the reasons for this were complex. The Bishop recognised that some dioceses held Open Days to encourage interest, but noted that they were unsure how successful these were and suggested that this was something the Bishop of Berwick could look into. The Bishop confirmed that the diocese does import curates and this definitely helped in terms of appointing to vacancies. The Bishop asked that members prayed that applications did come in going forward and thanked the Revd Dr Moon for raising this issue.

In relation to the 2025 Budget Consultation **the Chair of the House of Clergy, The Revd Robert Lawrance** asked if it was anticipated that the 8% increase in Parish Share asked for would be repeated, as churches were having to set their own deficits to meet this increase. In response, The Chair of the Board of Finance noted that although the 8% increase would work into the NDBF's deficit it would not get rid of it entirely, therefore, there was an expectation that Parish Share would need to increase in 2025 and 2026 in order to set a balanced budget by 2027. The Chair also highlighted that even if the budget was balanced, inflation would mean that relatively Parish Share should increase with this.

The Chair thanked members for their input and invited Synod to pause for a break.

The Synod paused for a break.

Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth took the chair

11. Standing Agenda Items

11.1 Racial Justice

The Chair invited the Bishop of Berwick to speak to this item.

The Bishop of Berwick explained for those members who were new to Synod that paper **DS23 18 Racial Justice Report and Recommendation for Diocesan Synod**, approved by Synod last year, set out ten recommendations which the diocese wanted to carry out over a five-year period with regards to Racial Justice and in response to the out-workings of the *From Lament*

to Action report. The Bishop asked Administration Officer, Candis Carr to recirculate the paper to all members for information.

The Bishop noted that unfortunately progress with this work had been slow and this was largely due to a lack of capacity to organise the recruitment process to appoint a Racial Justice Officer as well as having no real resource to fund the role. Earlier this year Bishop's Council had reviewed the diocese's Interfaith Advisor Role and following a consultation on this, made the difficult decision to approve the redundancy of the Interfaith Advisor in order to create capacity and resource for a Racial Justice Officer. The Bishop reported that Interfaith Advisor, Lesley Hillary had left at the end of August this year and shared his deep gratitude for the fantastic work Lesley had carried out for the diocese during her time in post. However, with the funding from this role released the diocese was now in a position to recruit a Racial Justice Officer. The Bishop had been in touch with Central Church to seek support for this work and their Racial Justice Director, Guy Hewitt would be consulting on this with us going forward.

The Chair invited questions or comments.

The Chair of the House of Clergy enquired if a Racial Justice Task Group had been set up? In response the Bishop explained that once appointed, this would be the work of the Racial Officer.

The Revd Charlotte Osborn (Norham Deanery) asked how Interfaith worked would be sourced in the future. In response, the Bishop reported that although the Diocesan Committee for Interfaith and Ethnic Relations had come to an end the Newcastle Council of Faiths would continue. The Bishop noted that as a diocese we would be moving away from formalized structures of interfaith work and instead seeking more organic relationships in order to develop this work.

The Revd Dr Hannah Cleugh (Tynemouth Deanery) asked what possibilities there may be to try to diversify the Racial Justice Task Group as well as other governing bodies within the diocese. The Bishop noted that this was something which was in fact part of the recommendations set out within the paper DS23 18 and it would certainly be looked at going forward.

The Chair thanked the Bishop of Berwick for all the hard work they had put into progressing Racial Justice work for the diocese.

11.2 Net Zero Action Plan Update

The Chair invited the Acting Diocesan Synod Secretary spoke to this item to give an update on the Net Zero Action Plan Capacity Building Grant application.

The Secretary informed Synod that The Net Zero Capacity Grants Panel has approved Newcastle's net zero carbon capacity-building grant to be awarded in full. The application was for £115k grant to help to set up Net Zero Team for the diocese which would include a Programme Manager; Fundraising Officer; Heating Project Manager and Heating Adviser and an Administrator (all part-time roles). The diocese was also expected to financially contribute towards this team (£65k over 18-month period).

The Acting Secretary noted that the Church of England was committed to becoming carbon free by 2050 and having a Net Zero Team to support the diocese would greatly help the diocese to contribute to this mission, not least in encouraging parishes to switch from fossil fuels.

The Chair invited questions or comments.

Kay Plumley (Central Deanery) asked who would be responsible for running/overseeing the recruitment process to appoint the new Net Zero Team in the absence of a Diocesan Secretary. In response, the Acting Secretary noted that whoever was appointed as the Interim Diocesan Secretary would be able to take on this work.

With regards to the upcoming elections to Boards and Committees for the new triennium **Carol Griffiths** (Bamburgh & Glendale Deanery) suggested that Committees/Boards accept that members are permitted to attend online as this would not only encourage those people who live far away to join, it would also contribute to cutting the diocese's carbon emissions. The Acting Secretary confirmed that apart from Diocesan Synod, this was already an option to members of all other Boards and Committees.

The Bishop's Advisor for the Environment, the Revd Tim Mayfield gave an update on Net Zero progress from parishes across the diocese and reported the following good news:

- **Backworth, St John** were soon to have their heating system transferred from gas supplied to electric. Northern Powergrid had confirmed that St John's already has a 3 Phase power supply to the building which would save an estimated £6,000 and a possible long wait for a contractor to become available. 18 electric radiators would be installed by Dunphy Ecclesiastical Heating. In readiness for this transition, St John's had switched its energy provider to Octopus Energy. Octopus had scored equal top in a survey of Green Energy Suppliers, rated in December 2023.
- **Bellingham, St Cuthbert** and **Lesbury, St Mary** were also progressing works to enable the electrification of their current oil supplied heating systems.
- **Berwick Holy Trinity and St Mary** had successfully had solar panels installed and **North Sunderland, St Paul** was currently in dialogue with Northumberland County Council over planning permission to install solar panels. **Thorneyburn, St Aidan** were also in the process of gaining formal DAC approval to install solar panels and **Wylam, St Oswin** had applied for planning permission to install solar panels on the roof of their church hall.
- **Monkseaton St Mary** had works completed to improve the insulation of the church. They were still working towards having double glazing installed throughout the church and were now at the stage of comparing quotes and looking at fund raising methods. Essential work was needed towards draft proofing the church before they were able to look at changing their energy source.

The Chair thanked the Bishop's Advisor for the positive progress update.

11.3 Safeguarding

The Chair of the Board of Finance spoke to this item to update Synod on some actions which had come out of the recent Safeguarding Audit published on the diocese's website on 29th July 2024. The Chair reported that the diocese was working with the National Safeguarding Team to help the diocese with recommendations from the report and a consultant from their team had been engaged to help the diocese redefine what our Safeguarding Team should be/look like, also as a result of the audit report recommendations. A temporary Safeguarding Case Worker had also been employed to support the diocese over the next six months. The Chair emphasised that the findings from the audit were regarding process and governance and not whether the diocese been carrying out Safeguarding or not.

The Synod paused for a break.

Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth took the chair

12. Deanery Planning

The Chair invited the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne to give an update on the Deanery Planning Process.

In order to provide some background information for new members of the Synod, the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne explained that each Deanery Development Group (DDG) had been tasked to come up with an action plan for their deanery. Both archdeacons had met with these groups every few months to enable deaneries to share ideas and information with one another and a key focus of both these meetings and the Deanery Development Process was one of facing outward towards God's work and sharing in order to grow younger and more diverse as a diocese.

The Archdeacon noted that the next meeting with DDG's was scheduled to take place on Saturday 5th October at Morpeth, St Aidan's with former National Children and Youth Adviser for the Church of England, Mary Hawes attending as a guest speaker for the event. The Archdeacon asked members to inform either herself or the Archdeacon of Northumberland if they wished to attend.

The Archdeacon applauded and welcomed the Director of Mission and Ministry's launch of the Season of Seeking and noted that this Season would link very helpfully to the Deanery Development Process.

In terms of deployment, the Archdeacon explained that the number of clergy appointed had fallen below the agreed upon 80FTE and groups had been set up to work on this issue and decide where clergy should be deployed. A sub-group of Bishop's Staff had also been working with these groups to provide extra support. The Archdeacon emphasised that what is collectively paid in Parish Share directly impacts how many FTE Stipendiary Clergy the diocese can appoint. The Archdeacon also noted that there would be a longer item on deployment at the next Diocesan Synod on 9th November.

The Archdeacon thanked all DDG's and those involved in Deanery Development Process for their continued support and hard work.

There were no questions or comments from members.

13. Notification of the Elections to Diocesan Boards and Committees (paper DS24 27)

The Chair invited the Acting Diocesan Synod Secretary to speak to this item and introduce the election process to various Diocesan Boards and Committees.

The Acting Secretary explained the structure of Diocesan Synod and how the various Boards and Committees related to it and informed members that as the new triennium of Diocesan Synod had begun, this was now also the period in which we needed to elect to all the Boards and Committees which make up Synod. The Secretary noted that the paper related to this item set out in detail the roles and responsibilities of each Board/Committee and highlighted that as they were smaller bodies in comparison to Diocesan Synod they provided more opportunity for their members to engage in strategic, pastoral and missional objectives for the diocese. The Secretary urged members to ask either herself or the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne if they had any further questions as they served on all the Boards and Committees and expressed her hope that people would carefully consider standing for election. The nomination period would officially open on Monday 30th September and close on 18th October. If it was necessary an election would be held after this period. For those members currently serving, their role would not end until 31st December. The new triennium for all Boards and Councils would begin on 1st January 2025.

The Chair invited questions or comments.

Emma Doran (Tynemouth Deanery) asked if people who were not a member of Diocesan Synod could be elected onto any of the Boards/Committees. The Acting Secretary explained that usually a person would have to be a member of Diocesan Synod to stand, but this was not always the case, therefore, if there was someone who would like to stand who was not a member they should still put themselves forward.

14. Looking Ahead to the Next 12 Months on Diocesan Synod

The Chair will lead this item to inform the Synod of items of business scheduled for meetings over the next 12 months.

The Chair noted the following items of business scheduled to take place at the upcoming Diocesan Synods:

Items of Business for Nov 2024 Diocesan Synod:

- Synod will be asked to approve the proposed budget for 2025
- Draft Proposal for the Diocesan Deployment Plan for Stipendiary Clergy would be brought to Synod for consultation.

Items of Business for March 2025:

- LLF: Moving Forward as One Church: Synod would be asked to discuss the most recent Living in Love and Faith paper from General Synod which provided an update on the work on Living in Love and Faith undertaken since February 2024.

The Chair reiterated the Acting Secretary's message regarding the upcoming elections to Boards and Committees and encouraged members to stand for election. The chair noted that Bishop's Council was essentially the Standing Committee for Diocesan Synod but highlighted that members engaging at deanery level could also influence the work brought to Diocesan Synod. The Chair further noted that members were welcome to contact her with any questions or queries in relation to this.

The Chair invited questions or comments.

The Revd Louise Taylor-Kenyon (Bamburgh & Glendale) enquired why the agenda noted only three Diocesan Synods scheduled for 2025 when there had been five in 2024. In response the Acting Secretary explained that an extra meeting had been scheduled for September 2024 to mark the new triennium and the meeting in July was to mark the close of the last triennium and this is why only three meetings had been set for 2025. To clarify these dates the Acting Secretary noted that the July 2025 meeting stated on the agenda for this meeting had been cancelled and confirmed the 2025 Diocesan Synod dates as follows:

- Saturday 8th March
- Saturday 3rd May
- Saturday 22nd November

15. Any other business

The Chair invited Carol Griffiths (Bamburgh & Glendale) to speak to Synod to pay tribute to the former Diocesan Secretary, Shane Waddle.

Carol noted that she wanted to express in personal terms her sadness at Shane's departure as well as her huge gratitude for the many years of work and input Shane had contributed to the diocese while in post as Diocesan Secretary. Carol also acknowledged that many others would agree with this sentiment and further praised the great help and support Shane had provided her with personally with regards to her work for the diocese, especially during Covid. Carol highlighted that Shane was always a pleasure to work with and that he had a true commitment to the diocese for

which we owe him a great debt of gratitude. Carol hoped that these warm wishes and thanks could be conveyed to Shane personally.

The Chair confirmed that Carol's tribute would be minuted and passed on to Shane.

16. Close

The Bishop of Newcastle once again congratulated Canon Izzy Mc Donald-Booth and the Revd Robert Lawrance on election to Synod as Lay and Clergy Chair respectively and thanked the Archdeacon of Northumberland for stepping in as Acting Diocesan Synod Secretary for the meeting.

The Bishop also gave a huge thank you to Sound Engineer, Dan Doran for volunteering his services to support Synod. The Bishop noted that Dan had recently begun a new professional role which meant he would no longer be able to provide the sound for Synod and wished Dan well in his new post.

The Bishop informed Synod that the Bishop of Berwick would soon be heading off on a three-month sabbatical and wished the bishop well for a much needed and well-deserved time of rest and refreshment.

The Bishop thanked all in attendance for their support and invited members to take a short break before a service of the Eucharist commenced at 12:30pm. The Bishop then led the Synod in prayer and with a blessing drew the meeting to a close.

17. Eucharist

The meeting concluded with a Eucharist.

Presidential Address from Bishop Helen-Ann for Diocesan Synod 28.09.24

A year ago today, I was on my way home from a meeting at Church House. I stopped off at a supermarket to pick up some groceries and happened to check the BBC news. I was shocked to see the headline: 'Sycamore Gap tree at Hadrian's Wall cut down by 'vandals'. I remember sitting in the car taking the news in and sending a few messages to family and friends. I sent a particular message to the Bishop of Leeds as we'd taken Nick and his wife Linda to see the tree just a few weeks before when they visited us. He was completely shocked and asked the question I think perhaps we all have asked at some point about any act that seems pointless and cruel: 'Why?'

The day after the tree's felling I visited The Sill. A National Park ranger took me to see the felled tree and I recall the sight of a police officer guarding the site in the extreme wind that was present that day, and the arrival of two detectives to take some forensic tests. It all felt slightly surreal, and it still does I suppose if you visit what is now just a tree stump. Except it is more than that of course. What we see on the surface belies the life-force energy pushing up from underground where there are shoots appearing and signs of new life. I know that the depth of feeling I experienced at that place: the outrage and sadness at the tree lying over the Wall, its leaves beginning to harden in the cold wind had something to do with the time I spent in New Zealand, where Māori saw elements like trees and rivers as having the status of personhood. Perhaps that is why some of the most profound reflections on the climate crisis have come from such lived and rooted peoples with a very different perspective on our human relationship with creation. We surely have something to learn about that for how we view our planet today.

Yesterday, there was a very different sort of energy at The Sill as 240 primary school children gathered at The Sill for a day of creative engagement with the arts in response to the felling of the tree. It was a vibrant event filled with busyness, joy, and moments of profound grace. Our schools (both church and community) are so important to our life together and I am pleased that we will be welcoming a new DDE soon whilst filled with gratitude for the work that Gill Booth has done in the interim.

These reflections leave me with two questions which I think are faith-centred: when we remember, who are we remembering and what are we remembering?

I reflected on these questions during my recent Sunday morning visit to Branxton observing the anniversary 1513 Battle of Flodden, which completely rewrote the political landscape of its day with its effects echoing down the centuries. It was a beautifully still early Autumn morning as a small group of us walked from the church up to the memorial monument to lay a wreath and say a prayer. In such a place of peaceful beauty it was hard to imagine the absolute horror of the battlefield. We see it still however in conflicts the world over, in Ukraine, Sudan, and the Middle East. The church is called to speak into all of this, offering a perspective that reminds us that while memory does matter, how we live matters too. And surely faith matters if it helps to tell a different kind of story, the story of Jesus – incarnate, crucified and risen - of the universality of God's love, so that a different kind of future can still unfold, for our neighbours and for ourselves. That's not a naïve hope, it's a lived reality.

None of this is about control, possession and zeal, but it is all about commitment to justice and empowerment. We grasp the reality that following Christ is not about maintaining an exclusive club but about offering hospitality and welcome to the stranger, to the very least of all. If we do that, then we can encounter the liberating power of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ. This outwards reach applies to all our work for the sake of the Gospel, and note the emphasis on the word 'our'. Climate justice is our work. So too is racial justice work is our work, in partnership and voiced hope. At the recent College of Bishops meeting in Oxford we heard powerful testimony from Monique Maddox, a descendant of enslaved peoples who were made to work on plantations in the United States. 'Stay with the work' she urged us. That directive of staying suggests that this happens both in season and out of season. In other words, the sowing and harvesting happen all of the time. There can be no rigidity or programmatic control in Kingdom of God! The granularity of our life together demands flexibility and variety. Every community, from our resource church St Thomas' to our smallest of rural communities have a part to play. The dynamics of seeking sharing sending arose from the invitation by the CNC who sought to find who God was calling to be bishop of Newcastle for candidates (of which I was one) to present on a vision you (yes that's all of you) discerned in this diocese as part of the CNC process. So seeking, sharing, and

sending are a response to a vision of becoming a church turning outwards in mission and becoming younger and more diverse, and an invitation for the years ahead. Seeking is also an opportunity for me as your bishop, exciting because God is and will reveal to all of us exciting, revelatory, and challenging opportunities in this year of seeking - God is the one doing the work through us. I don't know what the year of seeking will reveal, what we will discover and that's exciting! As well as unnerving. Remember, Acts 1 didn't know that Acts 2 was coming! We have work to do: a new Diocesan Secretary to recruit and appoint, and a consultation process to restructure our safeguarding team following the recommendations of our independent audit. Despite the challenges, I remain hopeful and express my gratitude to all of you particularly those who are new to this Synod.

Diocesan Synod is an opportunity for growth in good governance not a place for grandstanding or complaint. It is not a place for questions with unvoiced undercurrents of cynicism to be aired. If anyone has a concern, let it be heard openly. Robust engagement yes, from a deep desire for God's kingdom to be reflected and revealed on earth in our diverse communities as it is in heaven. The more I see and engage in the public square the more I am convinced that the fulfilment of the Gospel lies not in growing churches for the sake of numbers and statistics, but in partnerships forged over common ground in seeking to tackle the many pressing issues of today. We have a Gospel to proclaim, yes, but we do not possess it and we need to be prepared to change how we inhabit our lives as disciples because we encounter people in different contexts. I've said this before, we will be changed by this work and engagement. Synod is an important part of our tool kit in supporting our churches, chaplaincies, and schools to do this work. As we inhabit the life of this new triennium, and as we continue to shape our diocesan fabric to equip us to engage in God's mission I am excited for all that might unfold.

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow. (Matt.6.33-34a).

Diocesan Synod 28th September 2024


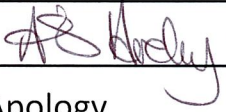
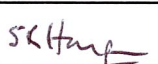
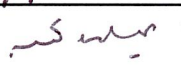


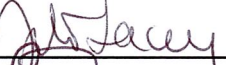
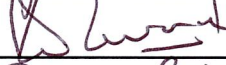


Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Abrams	Tony	Laity	Bellingham	A.C. Abrams
Alexander	Gill	Clergy	Ex-officio	Apology
Appleby	John	Laity	Tynemouth	J.A.
Atkinson	Jacqueline	Laity	Newcastle West	J.A. Atkinson
Baker	Paul	Clergy	Newcastle Central	P.A. Baker
Barwick	Joel	Laity	Newcastle Central	Apology
Batey	Annmarie	Laity	Newcastle West	abatey
Batson	Lee	Clergy	Ex-officio	✓
Birch	Tom	Clergy	Corbridge	Tom Birch
Brims	Robin	Laity	Ex-officio	Apology
Caro	Rae	Clergy	Tynemouth	Apology
Carr	Candis			✓
Carruthers	Phyl	Clergy	Bamburgh and Glendale	Apology
Cleugh	Hannah	Clergy	Tynemouth	H.Cleugh
Collingwood	Nigel			N. Collingwood
Craggs	Lynne	Laity	Bedlington	L. Craggs
Denyer	Nic	Laity	Ex-officio	Denyer
Doolan	Ben	Clergy	Newcastle Central	B. Doolan
Doran	Dan			✓

5 apology (14) attended

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Doran	Emma	Laity	Tynemouth	✓
Dunsire	Ian	Laity	Bamburgh and Glendale	Apology
Evans	Aidan	Laity	Newcastle West	A Evans
Flintoft	Ian	Clergy	Ex-officio	I Flintoft
Fox	Louisa	Laity	Newcastle East	Louisa Fox
Frier	Brenda	Laity	Bamburgh and Glendale	B Frier
Gill	Helen	Clergy	Newcastle East	H Gill
Gill	Kyrinn			✓
Glover	David	Clergy	Hexham	D Glover
Griffiths	Carol	Laity	Bamburgh and Glendale	Carol Griffiths
Grocock	Chris	Clergy	Morpeth	C Grocock

Ⓐ apology Ⓜ attended

Diocesan Synod 28th September 2024

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Hall	Malcolm	Clergy	Newcastle Central	
Harding	Allison	Clergy	Newcastle West	
Hardy	Alison	Clergy	Alnwick	Apology
Harper	Simon	Laity	Ex-officio	
Hartley	Helen-Ann	Bishops	Ex-officio	+HAN
Heslop	Neil	Clergy	Newcastle West	
Hildred	Mandy	Laity	Norham	Apology
Hills	Sarah	Clergy	Norham	Apology & Apology
Hume	Brogan	Clergy	Newcastle Central	D. Hume
Jackson	Heather	Laity	Morpeth	
Jee	Josh	Laity	Newcastle Central	Apology
Johnson	Diana	Clergy	Corbridge	
Lacey	Julia	Clergy	Morpeth	
Lawrance	Robert	Clergy	Ex-officio	
Lea	David	Clergy	Bedlington	
Llewellyn	Dom	Laity	Newcastle Central	Apology
Lunn	Sarah	Clergy	Bellingham	Apology
Mann	Remley	Laity	Alnwick	Apology
Marshall	John	Laity	Alnwick	

① Unsure ② Apology ③ Attended

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Maxim	Claire	Clergy	Bellingham	<i>Maxim</i>
Mayfield	Tim			<i>Tim</i>
McDonald-Booth	Izzy	Laity	Ex-officio	<i>Booth</i>
McKenzie	David	Laity	Corbridge	<i>Apology</i>
McKenzie	Gwyn	Laity	Corbridge	<i>Apology</i>
Minchin	Chris	Clergy	Newcastle West	<i>Minchin</i>
Mitchell	John	Laity	Hexham	Apology
Mitchell	Mitch	Clergy	Alnwick	<i>Mitchell</i>
Moon	Sarah	Clergy	Bedlington	<i>Moon</i>
Morsman	Andy	Laity	Hexham	Apology
Murray	Alice	Laity	Bellingham	Apology
Naylor	Martin	Clergy	Hexham	<i>Naylor</i>
Newlands	Annie	Laity	Morpeth	<i>Newlands</i>
O'Grady	Anthony	Clergy	Morpeth	<i>O'Grady</i>
O'Hagan	Ruth			✓
Osborn	Charlotte	Clergy	Norham	<i>Charlotte Osborn</i>
Peace	Laura			<i>Peace</i>
Plumley	Kay	Laity	Newcastle Central	<i>Kay Plumley</i>
Pope	Valerie	Laity	Morpeth	<i>Valerie</i>

⑤ apology ⑭ attended

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Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Railton	Malcolm	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Apology
Ramshaw	Susan	Laity	Bedlington	Apology
Robinson	Janice	Laity	Morpeth	3 Apologies
Robson	Claire	Clergy	Ex-officio	RRR
Royle	Tom			✓
Russell	Tara			T. Russell
Sanderson	Tim	Clergy	Newcastle Central	T
Shipton	Andrew	Clergy	Newcastle Central	✓
Smith	Adam	Clergy	Newcastle Central	AS
Sourbut Groves	Catherine	Clergy	Ex-officio	CSG
Stradling	Ruth	Clergy	Newcastle Central	MR
Styring	Roger	Laity	Ex-officio	Roger Styring
Swaile	Jill	Laity	Bellingham	Apology
Taylor	Nigel			✓
Taylor-Kenyon	Louise	Clergy	Bamburgh and Glendale	✓
Tranter	Stephen			S. Tranter
Tulip	Joseph			JR
Vilaseca-Bruch	John	Clergy	Tynemouth	J. Vilaseca-Bruch
Ward	Alice			Alice Ward

Answers 2 4 apologies 15 attended

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Whaite	Ric			L
Windass	Roger	Laity	Ex-officio	Apology
White	Simon	Clergy	Morpeth	Simon White
Wilkinson	Alice	Laity	Newcastle Central	A Wilkinson
Williams	Hugh	Laity	Alnwick	Apology
Wood	Rachel	Clergy	Ex-officio	feeling used
Wood	Simon	Laity	Ex-officio	& Apology
Wright	Steve	Clergy	Hexham	Steve Wright
Wroe	Mark	Bishops	Ex-officio	

Answers? 3 apology 6 attended