

**Note of business transacted at a meeting of
the Newcastle Diocesan Synod held on
Saturday 13th May 2023 at 10:00am at
Newcastle Cathedral**

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 Canon Brian Hurst and the Chair of the House of Laity, Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth. The Registrar was in attendance.

61 members; 5 guests; and 6 officers were in attendance.

Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth took the Chair

1. Welcome and opening prayers

The Chair opened the meeting and invited the Interim Dean, the Very Revd Dr Jane Hedges to lead the welcome. On behalf of the Cathedral Chapter, the Interim Dean extended a warm welcome to the Synod for its first meeting at the Cathedral following the Cathedral's extensive re-ordering.

The Chair invited the Revd Canon Brian Hurst to lead the opening prayers.

The Revd Canon Brian Hurst took the Chair

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from 22 members.

3. Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were made.

4. Meeting held on 26th November 2022

4.1 Note of business transacted on 26th November 2022 (paper DS22 02)

The Synod noted the business transacted at a meeting held at Rothbury on 26th November 2022 at which some members had also joined via Zoom Video Conferencing.

4.2 Matters arising

The Secretary spoke to item 5.4 of the business transacted on 26th November and confirmed the Energy Support Grants had been paid to all Parochial Church Councils in December.

5. Notices

There were no notices.

6. Questions

There were no questions.

7. Presidential Address

The Chair invited the Bishop to give her first Presidential Address to the Synod. A copy of the Bishop's address was made available immediately after the meeting and is appended to this Minute as paper DS23 07A.

8. General Synod Report

General Synod members Nicola Denyer and the Revd Robert Lawrance reported on the General Synod's February sessions.

Members of the Diocesan Synod noted the February sessions had included a substantive amount of time working with Living and Love and Faith (LLF). Other items of business included the cost of

living crisis; funds for ministerial training and a limit on increases to fees for weddings and funerals. Business had also included a diocesan synod motion from the Diocese of Durham on human trafficking.

Nicola Denyer encouraged the Diocesan Synod to give some thought to Diocesan Synod motions for the General Synod and invited members to spend a few minutes to discuss areas of work the which could potentially give rise to a Diocesan Synod motion. In response, Dr John Appleby (Tynemouth) highlighted rural poverty and rural deprivation. The Revd Canon Sarah Lunn (Bellingham) raised the injustice of siblings living together in rural areas who find they have no rights to continued occupation of a property if the sibling holding the tenancy dies. The Revd Tom Birch (Corbridge) expressed his concern about the funding changes from Renewal and Reform which had resulted in the Diocese of Newcastle receiving a reduced amount of national church funding.

In response to a question from Carol Griffiths (Bamburgh and Glendale) Robert Lawrance confirmed written reports were produced by the General Synod members for circulation and that General Synod members were available to attend meetings of each Deanery Synod.

Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth took the Chair.

The Synod received oral reports to update the Synod on progress with work on Racial Justice, the Environment and Deanery Planning.

9. Racial Justice

The Bishop of Berwick provided an oral report.

The Synod noted progress with the actions within the report 'From Lament to Action' by the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce. A Racial Justice Group had been established to develop resources and to help engagement with the actions from the Report. The Group was in touch with the Racial Justice Directorate of the Archbishops' Council to explore what national support was available to help progress work locally.

10. Environment Report

The Diocesan Secretary reported that a £15k grant had been received to help prepare a costed plan for Net Zero for the Diocesan Synod to consider in November 2023. The production of a costed plan would help to unlock other national funding which was available to help support progress with Net Zero. A Net Zero Working Party was yet to be established.

Dr John Appleby (member of the Environment Working Group and Diocesan Synod representative from Tynemouth Deanery) updated the Synod on progress with the development of an Action Plan. The plan would help to promote Eco Church and training and would address areas of minor and major investment. Dr Appleby explained there was a need to develop additional expertise and advice to help parishes with the options they have in addressing areas including lighting, energy supply, heating and solar.

11. Deanery Planning

The Archdeacon of Lindisfarne and Archdeacon of Northumberland provided an update about the deanery planning exercise that had started in October. Plans were due to be submitted on 30 June.

The Archdeacons thanked all who had participated with the process to date and confirmed that they had met with each of their respective Deanery Development Groups and that each deanery was due to submit a plan by the required date.

The Synod noted that members of the Deanery Development Groups had met in February to share thinking and experiences as they worked through the process. The Children and Youth Team had

also supported that meeting to help the Groups explore engagement and to help to develop practical support for growing younger and more diverse.

The Synod paused for a refreshment break before resuming for item 12.

12. Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022 (papers DS23 03A and DS23 03B)

For this item the members of the Newcastle Diocesan Synod sat as members of the Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd. The summary of the financial statements 2022 (DS23 03A) and the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022 (DS23 03B) had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

The Chair of the Board of Finance, Canon Simon Harper, made a short presentation. Within the presentation the Canon Harper expressed thanks to the Diocese of Ely for funding two stipendiary curates and the Diocese of Oxford for funding the Pioneer Minister post for the Bishop's Mission Order in Ashington. There were no questions of clarification. There being no other questions the Chair moved that the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2022 be received.

By a show of hands, the Synod voted in favour of receiving the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2022.

13. Finance: looking ahead to 2024 – 2025

The Chair of the Board of Finance, Canon Simon Harper, provided an update on preparations with the 2024-2025 budget and confirmed the following:

- Finance would be a substantive item for the next meeting of the Diocesan Synod to be held on 15th July.
- The budget consultation would begin with PCCs in the first week of September.
- Generosity Week 2023 would be held during the budget consultation period. Generosity Week would begin on 24th September. The budget consultation with PCCs would end on 23rd October.
- The 2024 budget proposal would be presented to the Diocesan Synod at its meeting on 25th November.

Within Canon Harper's update the Synod noted that Parish Share receipts had been falling since 2017. In 2022 Parish Share receipts were 15% lower than in 2017, or £679k. If it were not possible to increase Parish Share receipts in the period to 2025 the Synod noted this would reduce cash reserves by £2.1M by 2025.

In discussion, the Revd Canon Allan Marks (Newcastle Central) asked about the setting of giving targets to help to guide a Parochial Church Council's response to budget consultation. The Revd Allison Harding (Newcastle West) urged parishes to make use of the Parish Giving Scheme. The Revd Canon Andrew Shipton (Newcastle Central) asked how the deanery planning exercise would combine the needs of the deanery with overall income.

Canon Harper explained that the Diocesan Synod to be held on 15 July would include further work to help to prepare the budget consultation exercise.

14. Any other business

There was no other business.

15. Closing prayer and dismissal

The Chair drew the meeting to a close at 12:20 and invited the Synod to move to the Choir ready for a Eucharist.

The Bishop presided at a Eucharist which concluded the sitting of the Synod.

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE: DIOCESAN SYNOD

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS GIVEN ON SATURDAY 13TH MAY 2023

AT A MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD AT NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL BY

THE RT REVD DR HELEN-ANN HARTLEY

My starting point is gratitude to God for his calling to this role, and for all of you, for the welcome and care you have extended to Myles and to myself. Words of thanks are due for the way in which the episcopal vacancy has been held, for all who work and volunteer tirelessly to enable God's mission to flourish, so often in ways that don't attract attention, but which make God's Kingdom known across the diverse communities of our diocese. I would like to pay tribute to Bishop Mark, to the bishop's staff team, and to the staff in Bishop's House and to Shane and colleagues in Church House.

I'd also like to thank Dean Jane for her ministry here in the Cathedral, it is immensely valued, and it is right that I mention this here in my first address to Synod; thank you Jane and all the team here at the Cathedral.

Amongst the many kind cards and gifts I have received in the last while is this copy of the Psalms. It was handed to me on the day of the inauguration of my ministry by a representative from Worcester College Oxford. It came from Dick Smethurst who was the Provost of Worcester where Myles and I were once students. April 22nd was a long day, and it took me until later in the evening to open the wrapped gift. I took the book out of its holder, opened it, and read the inscription inside.

For Alec

From Dick

5 September 1964

Later

For Alec's most worthy successor

From Dick

22 April 2023

Dick Smethurst had himself been a student at Worcester and gifted the Book of Psalms to his then chaplain, Alec Graham who, as we know, went on to become the 10th Bishop of Newcastle. One of Alec's executors was a contemporary of Dick's at Worcester, and when he was clearing out Alec's books, he came across this copy of the Psalms and recognising the name of the donor he returned it.

Inevitably, I am aware of *all* the Bishops of Newcastle that have gone before me. Their photographs hang in the office in Bishop's House, and the desk in my office belonged to Ernest Wilberforce the 1st Bishop. My first episcopal role in Aotearoa New Zealand taught me many phrases of indigenous wisdom, one such being that we face the future with our back to it. This is not to say that we ought to be burdened by what we carry with us into the future, rather in acknowledging what has gone before, both challenging and joyful we learn from the past as we make our way in a new season. In his analysis of the Psalms, Walter

Brueggemann describes them as consisting of psalms of orientation, of disorientation, and of new orientation. One commentator suggests that while 'no schema will ever contain the rich diversity of the psalms (as Brueggemann himself acknowledges), the movement from orientation to disorientation to new-orientation is not only evident in the psalms, it is fundamental to Christian life'. There is no doubt that the Church as an institution like others continues to face ongoing challenges of sustainability. The reality of societal, national, and global issues are the waters we swim in, and what resource we have is held and used within the pressures of this wider context. Amid all of this, we are called to search for the last, lost and least, valuing all God's children in equal measure, driven by a vision of how the world can be not just how it is. Last Saturday's Coronation reminded us how the Church of England has a unique vocation to be the Church *for* England, and as such a Christian presence in every community. The parish structure is a treasure. How we resource it sustainably is an opportunity that never goes away and does require difficult questions to be addressed. You will hear me say the word 'opportunity' much more than the word challenge. Naming reality should always be an opportunity for growth and development. We need to know the white lines on the pitch to help the game flow smoothly and creatively. Clarity is everything and you will hear that word a lot from me also.

I once held the youth portfolio for the NZ House of Bishops which immersed me in the vibrant life of diverse cultures, including the Diocese of Polynesia that placed growing younger at the heart of its missional life, largely because these island nations have been at the fore-front of the climate emergency for some time, and are as a result acutely aware of what may be left to current and future generations; and doing this with far less resources than we have. Acknowledging the challenges of the pandemic season that have been both revelatory and catalytic, growing younger and more diverse should not be necessarily about scale or specific age-range (in some contexts, growing new Christians who are in their 40s and 50s is more realistic); achieving *any* of this growth is much more about **intentionality, resourcing, and vision.**

I have heard musings on what it is to share faith with a NE accent, but I wonder if accent is sometimes used to perpetuate a 'them and us' mentality, when what is needed is an appreciation of our different *dialects* which honour the different contexts in the diocese, all woven together singing to the same tune? Threads that are bound together are stronger than in isolation. This is why the Deanery Development work is both key to our future but is also a profound illustration of the Body of Christ at work in the present.

In July last year, General Synod witnessed a powerful debate on affirming and including disabled people in the whole life of the Church. The first bi-annual report of the Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice was published soon after. The LLF process has been a response to a call for justice in our diversity. What I have discerned in all of this, is that as the Church turns ever more outwards in mission and ministry, and becomes younger and more diverse, it changes (*we are changed*). This is surely a sign of the fullness of God's Kingdom. We have nothing to fear, and everything to hope for.

The **commitment** to be a Church turning outwards in mission and ministry, and younger and more diverse is **characterised** by:

SEEKING through *being* Open to God's transforming love;

SHARING through *being* Generous with God's transforming gifts;

SENDING through *being* Engaged in God's transforming work in the world.

These values of **seeking, sharing, and sending** are **enabled by intentional resourcing** in our use of *current* resources and projects: supporting the deanery development work; and *growing* resources, taking

advantage of the new national funding period seeking locally-based development opportunities, particularly those that might be nurtured by collaboration across parishes, deaneries and dioceses; this connects with the importance of **attentiveness to our diverse contexts**, civic and business relationships, education and public-sector contexts *along with* local challenges (like access to reliable internet, affordable housing, and transport); and from that attentiveness to context, **effective partnerships** and **no silos!**

There are already *many* examples of creative mission endeavours across the diocese, a good number of which I have witnessed at first hand already. There are opportunities to be proactive, identifying where fresh engagement might be possible, and partnerships that might lead to **reimagining ministry**, with new Christian communities or different ways of configuring ministry locally, leading to revitalisation and renewal. Much of this is to the fore in the Deanery Development work, and this will continue to form a key part of our strategy in this new season, discerned locally, refined in consultation and supported centrally. The work of our Board of Education and our Church schools is also a vital aspect of our life together, as are the many excellent and creative partnerships with community, non-Church schools. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Canon Paul Rickeard and his team for all that they do.

The vision for turning outwards in mission and ministry and becoming younger and more diverse is **embedded in our diocese** by **building confidence in belonging and believing**, lifting morale; being realistic and hopeful about finances; communicating effectively making information on the diocesan website more stream-lined and accessible, reflecting the vision; encouraging local creativity; equipping clergy and lay together, and nurturing vocations, lay and ordained especially amongst under-represented groups. The desire, to be blunt, is to enable every person to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ, grounded in the five marks of mission. It will change us and our expectations, and I encourage each of us to be open to that change.

I want to turn briefly now and say something about governance.

I used to think that governance wasn't the most exciting topic, until I became involved in the early stages of the National Church's recent governance review process. How our structures and governance function can get us into a real muddle; get it right and clarity and confidence abound, and that can help people engage with the issues, have good and healthy debate, and ultimately grow God's Kingdom. It's worth giving attention to, and I will be initiating a review of our governance with some suggested outcomes gleaned from my episcopal experiences over the years.

Our Diocesan Synod is where matters of policy, resource or direction should go to for presentation or agreement. Let this Synod be a place of good and wise listening and engaged debate! Likewise, Deanery Synods, engaging with local issues, bringing motions to this forum which could end up on the floor of General Synod and impacting and shaping national policy and initiatives.

I am proposing Bishop's Council becomes the Diocesan Board, which will consist of Council, the Board of Finance *and* the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee. These three are statutory, and their terms of reference must be observed. The incorporation of the Mission and Pastoral work into a newly formed Diocesan Board is key because it means that decisions about reorganisation are properly held and engaged with at the centre rather than kept in a silo off to one side; I am grateful to Liz Kerry who is embracing this proposal with energy and enthusiasm; thank you Liz. The Mission and Pastoral work will be largely carried out by a delegated committee, but it will report back to the Board for any discussion and decision-making.

Bishop's Staff has no statutory function or rights. I bring together my senior colleagues in order to keep an overview of (a) diocesan business, (b) those decisions for which bishops and archdeacons are legally responsible (licensings, vacancies, and so on), (c) the initiation and discussion of policy or initiatives which might then need to go to the Board or Synod. In my experience, it is wise to use Bishop's Staff to try things out and argue the virtues or otherwise of potential initiatives and business in order to test viability, desirability, and so on. This is why the BSM needs people who will argue well; immediate colleagues take note!

Nine-and-a-bit years of episcopal ministry have taught me about the vital importance of pastoral care and listening, with patience, challenge, and a determined hope in the Gospel, holding things together, bringing clarity and confidence, matching boldness and courage with humility and patience. It has also taught me much about getting licensed appointments right; placing a priority on clergy wellbeing and development; ensuring safeguarding is shown the highest regard; the importance of supporting and building-up a senior team; and using intelligence from networks and relationships I already have at the national level for the sake of the diocese *and* feeding insights from our diocese *back into* those national conversations to help shape policy and priorities.

The language we use is important; 'growing church bringing hope' has served us well, but it's now time to retire its use with gratitude. I invite us to be outward-facing in our approach, mindful of how others may interpret the words and phrases we use and the values we proclaim. *Seeking, Sharing, Sending* is I hope an invitation to connect and strengthen communities and partnerships in mission in our worship, hospitality, and service.

In 2032, the Diocese of Newcastle will celebrate its 150th anniversary. A commitment to turn outwards in mission and ministry and become younger and more diverse is a hope-filled headline to direct and inspire the season that lies ahead. We have an amazing story to share about Jesus, and of God's love for every person and place and the heritage of our Northern saints. How we engage and grow a Church that is younger and more diverse should be achievable in rural multi-church benefices as much as in coastal towns. Our diocese ever-turning outwards in mission and ministry and becoming younger and more diverse can surely do that with renewed confidence. Sisters and brothers in Christ my invitation is for the whole diocese to help me take ownership of this vision, to make it real for you and for all our communities, churches, chaplaincies, schools, parishes, and benefices, seeking, sharing and sending together.

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Hartley	Helen-Ann	Bishops	Ex-officio	Attended
Wroe	Mark	Bishops	Ex-officio	Attended
Birch	Tom	Clergy	Corbridge	Attended
Brown	Christine	Clergy	Newcastle West	Attended
Caro	Rae	Clergy	Tynemouth	Attended
Cleugh	Hannah	Clergy	Tynemouth	Attended
Dixon	Steve	Clergy	Tynemouth	Attended
Dobson	Peter	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Attended
Doolan	Ben	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Attended
Flintoft	Ian	Clergy	Ex-officio (General Synod Member)	Attended
Gill	Helen	Clergy	Newcastle East	Attended
Harding	Allison	Clergy	Newcastle West	Attended
Hardy	Alison	Clergy	Alnwick	Attended
Hennebry	Ian	Clergy	Bedlington	Attended
Heslop	Neil	Clergy	Newcastle West	Attended
Hughes	Adrian	Clergy	Tynemouth	Attended
Hunter	Matthew	Clergy	Newcastle West	Attended
Hurst	Brian	Clergy (Chair of House of Clergy)	Newcastle Central	Attended

Diocesan Synod 13th May

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Kennedy	David	Clergy	Corbridge	Attended
Lawrance	Robert	Clergy	Ex-officio (General Synod Member)	Attended
Lunn	Sarah	Clergy	Bellingham	Attended
Maclaren	Clare	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Attended
Marks	Allan	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Attended
McDermott	John	Clergy	Alnwick	Attended
Moon	Sarah	Clergy	Bedlington	Attended
O'Grady	Anthony	Clergy	Morpeth	Attended
O'Sullivan	Helen	Clergy	Alnwick	Attended
Pearson	Pauline	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Attended
Robson	Claire	Clergy	Ex-officio (General Synod Member)	Attended
Shipton	Andrew	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Attended
Sourbut Groves	Catherine	Clergy	Ex-officio (Archdeacon of Lindisfarne)	Attended
Swinhoe	John	Clergy	Morpeth	Attended
Taylor-Kenyon	Louise	Clergy	Bamburgh & Glendale	Attended
Terry	Neal	Clergy	Newcastle East	Attended
White	Simon	Clergy	Morpeth	Attended
Wood	Rachel	Clergy	Ex-officio (Archdeacon of Northumberland)	Attended

Diocesan Synod 13th May

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Wright	Steve	Clergy	Hexham	Attended
Appleby	John	Laity	Tynemouth	Attended
Atkinson	Jacqueline	Laity	Newcastle West	Attended
Barclay	Carol	Laity	Newcastle Central	Attended
Charlton	Joyce	Laity	Hexham	Attended
Craggs	Lynne	Laity	Bedlington	Attended
Doran	Emma	Laity	Tynemouth	Attended
Fisher	Meg	Laity	Newcastle West	Attended
Griffiths	Carol	Laity	Bamburgh & Glendale	Attended
Jones	Jennie	Laity	Newcastle West	Attended
King	Matthew	Laity	Newcastle East	Attended
McKenzie	David	Laity	Corbridge	Attended
McKenzie	Gwyn	Laity	Corbridge	Attended
Morsman	Andy	Laity	Hexham	Attended
O'Hagan	Ruth	Laity	Newcastle Central	Attended
Pope	Valerie	Laity	Morpeth	Attended
Ramshaw	Susan	Laity	Bedlington	Attended
Swaile	Jill	Laity	Bellingham	Attended

Diocesan Synod 13th May

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Vickers	Ella	Laity	Newcastle Central	Attended
Williams	Hugh	Laity	Alnwick	Attended
Denyer	Nicola	Laity	Ex-officio (General Synod Member)	Attended
Harper	Simon	Laity	Ex-officio (Chair of Board of Finance)	Attended
Kerry	Liz	Laity	Bishop's Appointment (Chair of Mission & Pa	Attended
Styring	Roger	Laity	Ex-officio (Chair of Diocesan Advisory Cttee)	Attended
McDonald-Booth	Izzy	Laity (Chair of House of Laity)	Ex-officio (General Synod Member)	Attended
Ambrose	Phil	Officer	Finance Manager	Attended (non member)
Askew	Pete	Officer	Bishop's Chaplain	Attended (non member)
Peace	Laura	Officer	Registrar	Attended (non member)
Stuart	Rod	Officer	Director of Communications	Attended (non member)
Waddle	Shane	Officer	Diocesan Secretary	Attended (non member)
Whittaker	Kyrinn	Officer	Administrator	Attended (non member)
Hedges	Jane	Visitor	Acting Dean of Newcastle	Attended (non member)
Mayfield	Tim	Visitor	Tynemouth Are Dean	Attended (non member)
Lea	David	Visitor	Bedlington Deanery Finance Officer	Attended (non member)
Shaw	Iain	Visitor	Tynemouth Deanery Finance Officer	Attended (non member)
Collingwood	Nigel	Visitor	Member of Diocesan Finance Group	Attended (non member)

Diocesan Synod 13th May

Surname	First Name	House	Deanery	Attended (Signed)
Alexander	Gill	Clergy	Ex-officio (Chair of Board of Education)	Apology
Allinson	Paul	Clergy	Newcastle West	Apology
Bowsher	Andii	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Apology
Glover	David	Clergy	Hexham	Apology
Grocock	Chris	Clergy	Morpeth	Apology
Hills	Mike	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Apology
Hudson	Rachel	Clergy	Norham	Apology
Macpherson	Catherine	Clergy	Bedlington	Apology
McGowan	James	Clergy	Newcastle Central	Apology
Park	John	Clergy	Morpeth	Apology
Abrams	Jane	Laity	Bellingham	Apology
Arckless	Robert	Laity	Alnwick	Apology
Brown	Christine	Laity	Bedlington	Apology
Evans	Aidan	Laity	Newcastle West	Apology
Field	Carole	Laity	Bamburgh & Glendale	Apology
Holmes	Gary	Laity	Morpeth	Apology
Mitchell	John	Laity	Hexham	Apology
Robinson	Janice	Laity	Morpeth	Apology

