

LEEDS DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

COMPANY NUMBER: 8823593

MINUTES OF A BOARD MEETING OF LEEDS DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

Held on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 at 10am at Church House, 1 South Parade, Wakefield WF1 1LP

**Present:** The Rt Revd Dr Tom Butler (Chair), The Rt Revd Nick Baines, The Rt Revd James Bell, The Rt Revd Tony Robinson, The Ven Paul Slater, Mrs Debbie Child, The Revd Martin Macdonald and Mr Raymond Edwards.

**1 Introduction and welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting with prayer and welcomed Mrs Angela Byram to the meeting.

**2 Apologies**

Mr Simon Baldwin  
Mrs Ann Nichol  
Mrs Marilyn Banister

**3 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4 Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2014**

Minutes of the meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2014 were approved with no amendments.

**5 Matters arising (not already on the Agenda)**

5.1 Bedale allotments

Simon Baldwin had emailed a report for the Board that:

“There is no further update to Bedale Allotments other than to say positive discussions are continuing and we hope to be able to bring a formal proposal to the next board meeting with the agreement of the Allotment Association.”

5.2 Trusts/Charities with which the Company is connected/associated

Ashley Ellis reported that work would be done on identifying the connected charities and trusts as part of the preparation of the company’s annual reports and accounts and this would be included in the statements.

5.3 Funding Application

A copy of a Strategic Development Funding document and letter from the Church Commissioners had been circulated to the Board prior with the Agenda. Ashley reported that Debbie Child and he had responded to the letter and that they were now working on milestones with Nick Matthews and would be meeting with David Jennings.

It was noted that Nick Matthews working arrangements were to be adjusted to two days from four and that he was to be asked to focus on specific tasks: finding buildings for the diocesan and area offices; the governance model and scrutiny function.

**6 Items in Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2014 to remain confidential in the online publication**

*The Board discussed and agreed which items were to remain confidential in the online publication.*

## 7 Parish Share Report

The Parish Share reports for December 2014 had been circulated for information. It was noted that there had been a small reduction in collection towards the end of the year, compared with the previous year. Huddersfield and Wakefield episcopal areas had particularly low collection rate however every episcopal area was down by 2% on the previous year. It was recognised that the issue of payment of parish share needed to be addressed at all levels in every episcopal area as there was a recognised direct link between the payment of the clergy and the payment of parish share.

## 8 Diocesan Secretary sub group update report

Raymond Edwards reported on the progress of the subgroup's work. The group had met with Ashley Ellis and Debbie Child. They would be clarifying over the next couple of weeks the reporting and primary functions for each of the acting Joint Diocesan Secretaries and would then make a recommendation to the Bishop. It was proposed that the term "acting" be dropped as both Ashley and Debbie were on continuous contracts.

## 9 Parish Share Scheme update

A paper had been circulated outlining the work timetable for the group. Ashley Ellis reported on the progress of the project. A questionnaire had been sent out to all parishes and a listening exercise was being carried out with some of the parishes who had high parish share assessments. It was noted that some parishes regarded parish share as part of their spiritual duty whereas other regarded it as a tax. It was noted that the structure of the deaneries would be key to the parishes feeling involved.

## 10 Audit Arrangements

Ashley Ellis reported on the audit arrangements for the company. The auditors, hayesmacintyre would be carrying out an Initial visit during the end January to mid-February. This was for the Audit leaders to familiarise themselves with the LDBF's higher level structure, governance arrangements and reporting lines, so as to direct the interim audit work and the detailed audit planning. There would then be an Interim audit, week commencing 23rd February, 2015 with the Final audit fieldwork taking place in the two weeks commencing on 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.

## 11 Any other business

11.1 Appointment of legal advisers for the Leeds DBF

Ashley Ellis reported that at the moment the legal advisers to the Leeds DBF were the firms who had previously advised the three former DBFs. (Peter Foskett's appointment was as Diocesan Registrar alone.) Mr Raymond Edwards declared an interest in the agenda item, as he was a private client Lupton Fawcett Denison Till.

### After discussion it was agreed that:

- One firm be appointed as legal advisers to the Leeds DBF to provide advice and representation for all Leeds DBF matters (including on education);
- That in principle this firm should be Lupton Fawcett Denison Till as this would mean that the Diocesan Registrar had ease of access to other legal expertise within the firm and would be generally aware of other legal issues being dealt with for the diocese;
- Ashley Ellis would liaise with Peter Foskett to negotiate a fee structure and to get satisfactory answers to queries about the service to be provided - reserving the right to go out to tender for the service if unsatisfactory answers were received;
- It would be made clear to LFDT that the Leeds DBF may tender for any larger legal matters ie there wouldn't be an automatic right for Lupton Fawcett Denison Till to deal with all the Leeds DBF's legal work;
- There would need to be an annual review of their work;
- The current legal advisers would be retained until the new legal advisor had been appointed;

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- The authority to agree to the contractual terms for the new legal advisor for the Leeds DBF was to be delegated to the Finance Reference Group.

**11.2 Interregnum/Sequestration fees**

A document on this agenda item had been circulated to the Board. Ashley Ellis outlined that each of the three former dioceses has operated different rates of reimbursement for interregnum/sequestration fees. The Finance Reference Group had considered this issue and recommended the adoption of a flat rate of £30 with expenses.

**All Agreed.**

**12 Date of the next 2015 meetings:**

Monday 23 March, 2015	(9.30am – Bradford office)
Wednesday 10 June, 2015	(9.30am – Leeds office)
Monday 7 September, 2015	(2pm – Wakefield office)
Thursday 19 November, 2015	(9.30am – Hollin House)