

## Leeds Diocesan Synod

DRAFT Minutes of the twenty second Synod of the diocese held at 10 am on Saturday, 18 June 2022 at St George's Church, Great George St, Leeds LS1 3BR

Chair: The Bishop of Leeds

### 1. Welcome, apologies, notices and declarations of conflicts of interest

The Diocesan Secretary, Jonathan Wood, gave notices about health and safety, social media and the summary report of the Synod to be sent to members in the week after the meeting.

Synod was notified of the following newly elected members to the Synod and they were welcomed by the Chair:

The Revd Alex Crawford (South Craven and Wharfedale deanery)  
Susan Stearn (Skipton deanery)  
Jane Way (Skipton deanery)  
Edwin Williams (Skipton deanery).

Some of the current year's Diocesan Interns were attending the Synod and they were welcomed:

Jack Smith, Megan Taylor, Josh Moore, Kay van Blerk, James Buckridge, Aileen Wilson, Becky Marles and Jess Soanes.

The following are welcomed and given the Chair's permission to speak (SO3):

Item 5 – 2021 Leeds DBF Annual Report and Accounts: Mr Geoff Park, Chief Finance Officer  
Item 8 – Church Support and Deployment update: The Revd Jude Smith, Director of Church Revitalisation.

Apologies

53 Apologies had been received before the start of the meeting.

The Chair reported that The Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs left the diocese in May to become the Bishop of Rochester, The Revd Canon Arun Arora was to be the next Bishop of Kirkstall and would be instituted at York Minster on 15.7.22. A welcome service as planned for the new Bishop of Kirkstall a Leeds Minster on 10.9.22. The Revd Canon Andrew Bowerman was to be installed as Dean of Bradford on 19.6.22.

Declarations of interest – Members were reminded of the need to declare any conflict of interest on matters on the agenda.

Chair: The Revd Canon Rachel Firth (Chair of the House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod)

## **2. Motion: Minutes of the last Meeting on 12 March 2022**

Circulated paper: DS22 06 01 Draft Minutes of the 12.3.22 Diocesan Synod

There were no notified amendments.

The Chair moved that:

*“That the draft minutes contained in DS22 06 01 be accepted as a true record of the Diocesan Synod meeting held on 12 March 2022”.*

The motion was approved unanimously.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda (if any).

There were no matters arising offered.

## **3. Presidential Address.**

The Bishop of Leeds was invited to give his Presidential Address. A copy of the Presidential Address is attached to these minutes.

## **4. Questions to Synod.**

Circulated paper: A copy of a reply to a Question to Synod from Dr John Beal (Whitkirk deanery) had been emailed to members. (A copy of the reply is attached to these minutes)

The Chair reported that a Question has been received from Dr John Beal (Whitkirk deanery) and that a reply has been emailed to members.

Dr Beale asked a supplementary question asking if the Diocesan Secretary would agree to ask relevant bodies to consider an appointment, including investigating if a grant might be possible bearing in mind the needs of the city of Leeds and those of the city of Bradford in preparation for its role as City of Culture?

Jonathan Wood (Diocesan Secretary and Secretary to the Synod)

Invited Dr Beal (any others) to send more detail of what the role would be and its purpose. Jonathan indicated national church might be approached for funding but detail of the post would be needed.

There were no further supplementary questions.

## **5. Motion: 2021 Leeds DBF Annual Report and Accounts.**

Circulated papers: DS22 06 02 2021 Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance Annual report and Financial Statements, DS22 06 02 01 2021 Annual report and Accounts highlights.

*Motion:*

*“That the 2021 Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance Annual report and Financial Statements contained in DS22 06 02 be noted”.*

*Proposer: Canon Mr Irving Warnett (Bishop’s Nominee).*

Canon Mr Irving Warnett (Bishop’s Nominee) introduced the motion and spoke to the circulated papers. The 2021 Accounts showed a slightly better result than had been expected but the context was that there was still a deficit of £1.2m and many of the diocese’s assets were restricted assets. Free reserves were £6.7m at the end of the year which was above the working figure for the upper range of required contingent reserves. The diocese had been fortunate that the Stock Market had done well in 2021 and so assets and investments improved and the National Church gave £950k of support – all of which left the diocese in a better position than it would have been otherwise.

Parishes were thanked for their hard work in striving to improve parish share payments during the year – these had increased by £1m but were £1m short of pre Covid levels. The diocese had cash reserves to cover the shortfall but year on year the underlying deficit would reduce cash reserves. To address this issue, the diocese’s Finance, Assets and Investments Committee was working with Jonathan Wood and the Church Support and Deployment project (CSD) to ensure there was a sound change plan in hand, involving collaborative support with parishes. Canon Irving said that to thrive you couldn’t cut your way out of a deficit – you had got to grow your way out – if not the sustainability of an organization was in doubt. The purpose of the CSD was to grow the diocese’s parishes’ mission and invest in and support parishes to take the actions they wanted to take: it was all about growth. There was no hidden parish closure agenda – all parishes would be invited to grow. The diocese through the progress achieved from difficult financial decisions in the past, now had the means to support a re-modeling for parish growth.

Geoff Park, Chief Finance Officer (GP) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the 2021 Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance Accounts. GP reminded Synod that the 2021 Budget had been formed in the middle of 2020 when Covid seemed to be reaching a conclusion. The £1.2m deficit was driven by the parish share not recovering to a pre-Covid level. The reserves position was higher than when Covid began and the diocese was grateful for the support from parishes and those who had given one off grants. The diocese had received £1m from the National Church and a £1m private donation and there had been a reduction in expenditure. Some sources of income had improved eg education and some costs had increased in 2021 as activities were resumed. The parish share system was being reviewed and an update on this would be brought to the October Synod. The Clergy pension scheme had been revalued and it was understood there was a surplus.

Questions of clarification

There were no questions of clarification.

Canon Irving Warnett (Bishop’s Nominee) proposed the motion:

*“That the 2021 Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance Annual report and Financial Statements contained in DS22 06 02 be noted”.*

Synod debated the motion

Canon Professor Joyce Hill (General Synod)

The Power Point presentation of the financial information, particularly that showing unrestricted income and expenditure in the form of bar charts, was the clearest and simplest used so far and would be a useful tool for explaining the difficult situation of the diocesan budget to parishes. In particular the foundational nature of the parish share. Professor Joyce requested that the PPT presentation be supplied to Synod members and every parish.

The Revd Ian Jamieson (Huddersfield deanery)

Reminded Synod of the need to acknowledge the goodness of God in the financial outturn, rather than say it was “fortunate”.

Graham Foster (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)

Asked for an explanation of the accounting procedures and reporting of the ongoing losses in connection with the Linda Box. He asked if these had been reported or noted in the [Leeds DBF] accounts? He understood these related to discretionary trust funds as well as diocesan funds – when finalized would all losses and costs be summarized in the annual accounts?

Archdeacon Paul Ayers (Archdeacon of Leeds)

Said he was inspired by the concept of growing a way out of a deficit and he would always encourage people to spend on ministry and mission. The Talking Jesus Report 2022 suggested there was a huge non-practising fringe of Christians who do not attend church but who are open to conversation about a life of faith. Confident Christians would be needed to reach these people. Increasing church “customer base” is also for the benefit of those the church wanted to reach.

The Revd David Gerrard (Wakefield deanery)

Asked how there would be a balance between the call to grow and if the finances continued to decrease, then eventually expenditure would need to decrease too – what would it look like: the call to grow if there was less money, less money can go out - how could that be done if the diocese sticks to a principle of growth?

Response to the debate

Canon Mr Irving Warnett replied:

Use of bar graphs – this was a welcome suggestion and he encouraged Synod members to share any other ideas for communicating the complicated accounting picture in a more accessible manner.

Use of the word “Fortunate” - The point was taken and there had been no intention to be disrespectful.

What would happen if income did not grow and there had to be focus on other costs? – The diocese was fortunate that it had reserves and there was confidence in mission and God’s support that the diocese would get to where it needed to go. The diocese was not in the position of other dioceses which were having to make rapid decisions. The diocese was confident it could support the parishes to grow and take a longer term view.

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GP replied:

Linda Box – nothing had been recognized in income and expenditure in the Accounts to date but we were working closely with the auditors who were content with how it was being disclosed. Having taken legal advice, it was understood that the prospective gains from the current insurance claim outweighed the legal costs. This advice also included the Bishop of Leeds's funds losses. Once the claim was resolved then the net income from that process would be recognized. Graham Foster was encouraged to have a conversation with Jonathan Wood and David Whitaker on this matter if he would find that helpful.

Synod voted on the motion:

For: all

Against: None

Abstain: None

The motion was approved unanimously.

**Extra item of business under Standing Order 21 – Bishop of Huddersfield (Bishop's Consultation on Vacancy).**

In advance of the Diocesan Synod meeting, Members had been circulated with a legal note from the Diocesan Registrar, David Whitaker, entitled "Bishop of Huddersfield (Bishop's Consultation on Vacancy)" setting out the process under s17 of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 concerning consultation by the bishop of a diocese in respect of a see of a suffragan bishop.

The Bishop of Leeds

Explained that he needed to consult the Synod on whether the vacancy in the See of Huddersfield should be filled.

If the Synod agreed that the see needed to be filled, then the Archbishop of York and the Dioceses Commission would need to be petitioned and give their consent.

If the Dioceses Commission agreed to the filling of the vacancy, then a time line would be put in place for the appointment process. This would include formal notices, longlisting, shortlisting, interviewing, Prime Minister's nomination to the Queen, announcement and a service of consecration. All of these stages took time and so, realistically, the post wouldn't be filled until Easter/summer 2023.

Synod members were invited to comment on whether to fill the see of Huddersfield vacancy. Only one comment was made before a unanimous show of hands approved the petition.

*A refreshment break was taken.*

Chair: Canon Matthew Ambler (Chair of the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod)

6. Motion and Presentation: Annual Reports from Boards and Committees for noting and a presentation to Synod from the Diocesan Safeguarding team. DS22 06 03

*Motion: "That the annual reports contained in DS22 06 03 are received."*

*Proposer: The Ven Jonathan Gough (Archdeacon of Richmond & Craven).*

Circulated paper: DS22 06 03 Annual Reports from Boards and Committees.

Archdeacon Jonathan Gough (Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven) introduced the motion. He outlined that the reports gave an indication of the huge amount of work being done by diocesan staff members and volunteers throughout the diocese and said Jonathan Wood was going to give a short presentation on the Safeguarding team's report.

Jonathan Wood (JW) firstly, referring to DS22 06 03, confirmed that there was a typographical error in the Board of Patronage report and the report should refer to 31 December 2021.

JW spoke to the Safeguarding report. He emphasized the importance of Safeguarding and the vision of a safer church for all.

The Safeguarding team worked incredibly hard. They were a point of contact for all parishes to support and advice on safer recruitment and all aspects of Safeguarding. In addition, parishes were encouraged to use the Safeguarding dashboard available on the diocesan website. This enabled parishes to work through all they needed to do for safeguarding. The dashboard was a really useful tool.

Over the last 18 months the Safeguarding Team had offered over 1200 training places for the new C2 leadership training. All people who had given feedback on the training said it had been helpful.

The Team had been involved in the PCR2 review of all of its files. This was instigated by the National Church. Files were analyzed by independent Safeguarding professional to ensure that appropriate action had been taken. This review was successfully completed at the end of November 2021. The diocese was waiting for the national church to publish its national summary before it could publish the diocesan summary of the review. It was thought the national publication would be in the autumn. However, Synod could be assured that the independent assessors were content that the diocese had met all it was asked to do by PCR2 and they had recommended that the diocese move to a digital system. This was something the diocese was going to do anyway as part of a national project.

The Safeguarding team operate a triage system and were available to help and members were encourage to always ask the Team if they were unsure about a Safeguarding issue. The Team's contact details were on the diocesan website.

#### Questions of clarification

There were no questions of clarification.

Archdeacon Jonathan Gough (Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven) proposed the motion:

*“That the annual reports contained in DS22 06 03 are received.”*

#### Debate

John Beal (Whitkirk deanery)

In response to the presentation on Safeguarding, the diocese had something to be proud of and this was not true of every diocese – he pointed to articles online about other dioceses. He thanked all involved in Safeguarding in the diocese.

#### Voting on the motion:

For: all

Against: none

Abstain: none

The motion was unanimously approved.

Dean Simon Cowling (Dean of Wakefield)

Asked the Diocesan Secretary to pass on the thanks of the Synod to all officers and staff who add huge value to the work done in the diocese.

7. Presentation: Introductory presentation of a motion from Outer Bradford deanery concerning the Common Cup (*Introduction to a motion to be debated at 15.10.22 Diocesan Synod*).

The Chair outlined to the Synod that this item was an introductory presentation to a motion which would be brought to the October Synod. As the subject matter fell within SO 91 (Doctrinal Matters and Forms of Service), in addition to today’s introductory presentation, three months before the October Synod, the Diocesan Synod members would also receive copies of the motion together with a report from the Standing Committee (Leeds Board) and a background report from the Outer Bradford deanery.

The Revd Tracy Milne (Outer Bradford deanery)

Gave an overview of the background to the Outer Bradford deanery’s motion to Diocesan Synod on the Common Cup. This had arisen from discussions about what the Church would be like after the pandemic and the use of individual cups at Holy Communion. PCCs and parishes had discussed this before the deanery synod. There was much discussion at the deanery synod and the motion was agreed overwhelmingly to be sent to the Diocesan Synod. The main feedback from the deanery synod was that there was no provision to use individual cups and a significant number of parishioners would like to receive in both kinds but only if there were individual cups. Some key discussion points were as we emerge from the pandemic Covid has not gone away, so how do we live with it and yet also prevent the spread of disease and what would happen if a new strain of the Covid virus becomes prevalent?

The Bishop of Leeds

Clarified that it was possible to receive Holy Communion in both kinds eg simultaneously.

*Synod took a lunch break.*

Chair: The Revd Canon Rachel Firth (Chair of the House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod)

8. Presentation and Discussion: Church Support and Deployment update

Presenters: Jonathan Wood, Secretary to the Synod and Diocesan Secretary (JW)  
The Revd Jude Smith, Director of Church Revitalisation (JS).

i. Presentation

Using a PowerPoint presentation, JW outlined the structure of the Church Support and Deployment project (CSD) to the Synod. The Diocese was running a deficit and it needed to live within its means. The CSD was a project to define missional priorities for the diocese, build confidence in mission and financial sustainability. To identify what needed doing to grow presence, the CSD team had reviewed models of ministry and identified where support was needed, whilst living within our means.

JS presented to the Synod on how CSD would be actioned. There were to be two strands to the CSD: supporting action which promotes mission and discipleship and providing support for sustainability, stewardship and governance.

There would be three levels of support:

Significant - the request for this support would come from an archdeacon or area bishop ie something needed to be done

Specific – this would be joint working with a parish at the request of the parish or bishop

Strengthening – this was building on the effective things which were happening in parishes already, including sharing between parishes.

Examples of types of support were:

Leadership development

A vacant parish which was having difficulties recruiting may have an Interim Minister for period

Incumbents may be invited to leadership courses to equip them for the future.

Planning a new worshipping community by and in the parish

Support and training would be available for parishes.

Strategic grafting for revitalization

Larger churches working with smaller ones

Stewardship support

Assisting growing churches to embed a culture of giving.



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### Buildings

Possible proposals included a group of churches working together to share ideas.

### Governance

To ensure churches were safe, legal and effective, resources to support parishes eg policies to use.

CSD would be relational, clearly intentional and helping and supporting parishes to move forward. The markers for CSD achieving its aims, would be a relational process owned by bishops and area deans and underpinned by prayerful action. There would be a review to see which support was being effective, parishes and churches would be thriving and would have the space to bring the Good News to their communities.

## ii. Discussion groups

Synod members discussed in small groups with reference to CSD:

- i) What excited them
- ii) What causes concern and
- iii) What missing.

Each member was asked to first reflect on what their own hopes were for their church in five years' time.

## iii. Plenary discussion.

A plenary discussion followed, feeding back from the small groups.

The Revd Dr Hayley Matthews (Headingley deanery)

CSD should also accommodate the idea that each church in context will be doing specific things beyond it. Mission action planning and deanery planning needed to address the reasons behind the actions churches take.

JS – missional leadership development was implicit in CSD but in the context of each church.

Jen Read (Headingley deanery)

CSD seemed to be a “top down” project – there was a preference for the proposals to have been taken to the deaneries and PCCs first and then for the plan to have been put together. It was thought that CSD will be seen as the diocese telling the parishes what to do.

JW – Acknowledged this was a fair challenge. The process had been intentional thought through as the concern was that if deaneries and PCCs had been consulted first, discussion would have stalled at what the problems were and not on the way forward. The CSD team were happy to receive feedback on anything which was thought to be missing.

The Revd Canon June Lawson (Pontefract deanery)

The reality of more benefices held in plurality and uniting benefices was more responsibility for the

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clergy but there had been little mentoring, support and sharing wisdom on this. CSD was an acknowledgement of this and there would be more support. Colleagues in these types of post felt they were being stretched as there was an expectation from every parish in the multi-parish benefice for 100% of the vicar's time. There needed to be education around this to recognize the reality ie a culture change.

JW – The CSD team were aware that simplification of the governance around benefice, parish and PCC structures and models would be of benefit to benefices and their context and so feed in to the leadership roles.

The Revd Daniel Miles (Halifax and Calder Valley deanery)  
Asked where the clergy and laity fell in the CSD proposals.

JS – Missional leadership development was clergy and lay together.

David Jorysz (Armley deanery)

Expressed concern about the language being used: “revitalization” – how would parishes respond to being told they were being revitalized? It was important to get the language right from the beginning.

JW – Language was important and what resonated with people was very personal. However, some parishes aren't growing or sustainable and it was important to speak plainly about this. There were parishes where there would need to be significant support.

The Revd Julie Anderson (Almondbury and Kirkburton deanery)

Expressed concern that there were some clergy who were serving parishes who had congregations of 20 – 40 people who were all over 70 years, on fixed incomes and had no enthusiasm to do anything missional, feeling they had done this already. There were clergy who were tired and feel they have failed. So some parishes will be starting in a very difficult position.

JS – CSD is not an exercise in making people feel bad but a project for intentional support to make a difference. CSD wants to give everyone a chance.

Canon Professor Joyce Hill (General Synod)

The current Church Representation Rules provided more scope to do some clever things with governance which weren't available under the old rules. Missing from the discussion was the national picture. General Synod had decided more clergy were needed to replace those who were retiring and a need to increase resources for this. However, those who were coming forward for ministry believe there may be no jobs for them at the end of the day. So there seemed to be a disconnect between General Synod and the diocese.

JW – confirmed the CSD team were aware of the need to be supportive of creative thinking around parish governance. With regard to the number of clergy nationally, the diocese had a large number of curates due to take up curacies in the diocese and the diocese had received additional funding for this. Nationally there were more clergy completing training than available posts but national funding was being made available for posts where there would not ordinarily be money available for a post.

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Mike Moss (Aire & Worth deanery)

Expressed concern for parishes where there was a disconnect between clergy and laity wishes to get involved with CSD – whether clergy or laity disengagement.

JW – Acknowledged there was no simple answer but reminded Synod that it was not only clergy who were responsible for mission and reaching out to communities. It was important for parishes/clergy to ask for help from and have conversations with their archdeacon and bishop.

It was important that it was understood that CSD would not be rolled out to every parish from the beginning. Support would be offered in a prioritized way ie helping those in most need first.

The Revd Anne Russell (Whitkirk deanery)

Said she was amazed at how hard parishes worked in their communities and the commitment of the clergy and the sense of failure they carry for the community – there was so much to thank God for. She was concerned that in other community orientated organisations and groups, emphasizes context and on the ground - up work and listening to communities. She heard that there needed to be difficult conversations and speaking plainly but what did this mean with regard to understanding whether a church was “working” or not. Seacroft may be seen as failing as it hadn’t paid its parish share and had a congregation of 15, yet there were hundreds of people coming through the church doors every week, many with complex needs. So there may be different opinions about whether a church was working or not. It was important to look at context and affirm what was happening using the language of love and care.

JW – Confirmed that there was a clear intention in CSD not to talk about closure but about support in context ie the type of support needed and sought.

JS – Part of the CSD process is to create a framework for parishes to do on the ground – up work.

Archdeacon Paul Ayers (Archdeacon of Leeds)

Seacroft was a good example of both top - down and on the ground – up, if the diocese had done work in previous years then the parish would be a different situation.

The Revd James Theodosius (Skipton deanery)

Reflected that it was tiring when what was offered as support was received as a threat. It would be important to consider the relational and where the dissemination of the information was best placed. Thanking the clergy in the presentation would be useful. To create a clergy skills database, which could be shared locally, would be helpful as it may be that local clergy had the answer to issues between them. This would have a much more positive feel.

JS – Confirmed there was an intention to create a culture of sharing skills – though this may be more as CSD developed.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (General Synod)

Asked how the “deployment” aspect of CSD was going to be addressed? This was of particular interest as clergy were worried about their posts. What is in the plan for this?

JW – Confirmed that the presentation didn’t include any numbers for deployment as people would think about cuts. There was already a 2019 diocesan plan to reduce stipendiary posts and the plan

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was to continue with this and use different models of ministry to accommodate fewer stipendiary clergy in the future. The plan was for a reduction of 25-30 clergy. The diocese usually had c. 25 vacancies.

Alex Berry (General Synod)

Asked what “proposed models of ministry” meant.

JS – There were different models of ministry and CSD would look at what was the appropriate model of ministry including offering stipendiary support in a particular context.

Alex Berry (General Synod)

Asked what was the process for making this decision and would it be brought to the Diocesan Synod?

JW – the process for these decisions would be a conversation with PCCs when there was a vacancy about what was the appropriate ministry model for the parish. There was a recognition that context would be key and there were lots of different models which could be used.

Roger Lazenby (Headingley deanery)

He was a lay member of the Leeds Area Mission & Pastoral committee. He confirmed that many of these ministerial model review conversations already took place with parishes when there was a vacancy. Communication with parishes was important and vital to the success of planning.

David Ashton (Dewsbury & Birstall deanery, General Synod)

What would happen where there were churches where the congregation worked hard but numbers were slowly decreasing and they felt it was time to close but the church was perceived to be in a strategic area?

JW – This would be for a conversation with the parish.

The Chair called on the Bishop of Leeds to speak.

The Bishop of Leeds

Thanked JW and JS and the CSD team for their work. Reflecting on Synod’s discussions, he noted use of language had been mentioned. A lot of work on the language used had already been done so language was at the forefront of the Team’s minds. Secondly, if there isn’t “top- down” working on parameters, it was likely no decision would be made after a significant time frame. The job of the diocese is to take the resources available and formulate a coherent plan. A diocesan bishop had a responsibility to bring order and consider how to allocate/order ministry across the diocese given the resources available or might have if a different strategy is used. Synod’s questions about local level and diocesan level needed to be included to make the conversations cohere. This would be the start of the discussion on CSD and he thanked Synod for the really good conversation.

The Chair commented that CSD was about how everyone had something they could do. It wasn’t about something which would be done “to us” but how, in all the different parish contexts, CSD was available to support all.

9. Worship.

There was a time of worship led by The Revd Che Seabourne and Abby from St George's, Leeds parish.

10. Bishop of Leeds Blessing and Close.

The Bishop of Leeds closed with Synod with prayer and a blessing.

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### Twenty Second Diocesan Synod, Saturday 18 June 2022

#### Presidential Address

There's really not a lot to talk about at the moment, is there? The world is at peace, all is well with the UK economy, politics are predictable and boring, challenges are few, and, apart from England losing the footie and winning the cricket, nothing much changes.

Well, I know many people who wish it were so (apart from the football, that is). But, you'd have to live each day with your head deep in the sand, if you think that all is well. I only have to mention Ukraine and Russia, Afghanistan, the energy crisis, food banks, poverty, hungry children and families, the rising cost of living, questionable public ethics, and we know all is not well with the world. To add to the burden, the island of Ireland is worried about renewed tensions fuelled by political division and the unilateral breaking of international law; parliamentary sovereignty is being replaced by increasing moves toward executive sovereignty (decision by ministerial fiat); we export refugees to Rwanda, denying them human rights under the rule of law at a very basic level.

And the Church - bishops in particular - comes under the cosh of certain political and media interests for daring to have something to say.

I have thought a lot about this. Partly because I get communications that tell me to keep out of politics (despite sitting in Parliament and, therefore, holding particular - and sometimes uncomfortable - responsibilities). It's also partly because I often think I might be wrong. It's mainly because I would actually like a quiet life away from the constant storm of criticism, fire and fury, nastiness and debate.

But, there are two fundamental complicating problems here: the Bible and Christian vocation.

I keep having to explain to critics that politics is about people and the right ordering of society. This raises questions, then, about how we judge what a good society should look like ... and why. It is not enough merely to assume this without questioning the moral basis of any particular political order and social arrangement. Politics involves creating spaces in which competing judgements about the values and ethics underlying social order and political commitment can be articulated and debated, with passion and seriousness. It can never simply be a power game; it involves and affects people's lives and communities.

And this is where the Bible comes in. Some of the foundational texts from which our western democracies have derived their legitimacy and development - especially the particular settlement in the United Kingdom - are rooted in certain judgments and commitments. Notions of human rights and the rule of law did not drop from heaven and are not self-evidently right. If we claim that human beings matter and have value, or that truth and justice matter, we have to ask on what basis we make that claim. For Christians it is that every human being is made in the image of God. The creation narratives of the Old Testament lead into explorations of what it then means for human beings to live together. Notions of justice come into place, but the idea of justice itself is not self-evident or merely arbitrary.

The Old Testament tells a developing story of how particular communities took their vocation under God seriously and struggled to create social orders that enshrined justice and equity and generosity and mercy and love. I haven't time to flesh this out here, but would be happy to do so elsewhere.

The point, therefore, is that to claim a separation between faith and politics is to do violence to what it means to be human in the first place. The moral basis of any political claims must be subject to scrutiny; otherwise, they must be suspect - assertions of power that are potentially so weak they cannot be challenged in the cold light of day. (Charges that the bishops who publicly oppose the exporting of refugees to Rwanda have no alternatives to propose - the windbag theory - are downright lazy and inaccurate. I invite those politicians and journalists to read the many contributions by Lords Spiritual to House of Lords debates on, for example, the Nationality & Borders Bill. Specious mantras don't help further serious debate of important matters.)

It is not just bishops, though. No Christian can avoid the political implications of biblical ethics. And some of us cannot avoid - except for reasons of cowardice - articulating in the public square the political implications of ethical judgments derived from a serious reading of our foundational texts, the Bible. Compartmentalising faith and real life (including our responsibility for the right ordering of society according to justifiable ethical values) is not an option. Were it so, then we would not have a statue of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the west front of Westminster Abbey and Archbishop Desmond Tutu would be an historically irrelevant nuisance.

This, then, is the context for the work we do today as a synod - literally, bringing together people - in our case, Anglican Christians - with differing perspectives and commitments and experiences in order that together we scrabble our way towards discerning the mind of God for the part of the world we live in. Our particular question, then, is: how do we, as the Diocese of Leeds, so shape our vocation and resources in such a way as to be consistent with our unique vocation? But, the dynamic has to be clear: we help shape the church and diocese in order that church and diocese help shape the world around us. The church is not the end; the end is the kingdom of God and, at every level, its claims on the world in which we live.

So, today we have an opportunity to consider the diocese's annual report and accounts. These tell a story (or stories). Not everyone gets excited by words and numbers, but the important thing is to ask what these tell us about our common life, our priorities, our values and our real Christian convictions. Reports cannot always tell the vivid stories of how our organisation - the Diocese of Leeds - fulfils the vocation of the Church of England in this part of Yorkshire, but they summarise our commitments and pose the higher-level question of how faithful we are being in responding to that vocation.

Today we will spend time looking at what we are calling 'Church Support and Deployment'. This represents a process that began before the pandemic, but which the pandemic and its fallout has expedited: what resources can we expect to deploy (money, people, buildings, etc.) in the future that enable us to fulfil our particular vocation as the Church of England in our part of the country? Like political commitments, this necessarily involves competing choices. Where we invest our limited resources is not always obvious; so, we need to understand the options available to us as we shape the future. But, what must be clear is this: if we do not shape the future, we will simply become victims of other factors, events or decisions ... and that is not a healthy way to live.

As you know, the Archbishop of York recently led a process aimed at identifying and articulating a renewed vision for the Church of England. Those involved came up with a framing around three words: simpler, humbler, bolder. (I prefer Loving Living Learning, but you can't win them all!) These words compel us to face up to who and how we are - for what and for whom we exist in the first place. So, as we continue to emerge from the irruption of a pandemic over the last couple of years, we try to simplify our mission, humbly address our challenges, and boldly embrace our opportunities for the sake of the Gospel.



## Diocese of Leeds

This always hits me with particular force when each year I come to ordain new deacons and priests. They must make the Declaration of Assent and swear oaths. At the heart of the Declaration lies this claim and charge: “The Church ... professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called *to proclaim afresh in each generation.*” Easy to say, but harder to reimagine in the heat of the day. But, the task of doing so much pushes us back into ‘keeping the main thing the main thing’. And at the heart of the main vocation of the Church is worship - principally the Eucharist.

Which, of course, gets rooted in another of our agenda items today: Communion and the Common Cup. Whatever our churchmanship or liturgical preferences, it still remains the case that the only ‘service’ Jesus commanded us to celebrate is the Eucharist. This is where we strip everything back and remind ourselves - re-tell the story, if you like - of who God is, what God has done for the world in Jesus Christ, that we come with empty hands to receive the gifts of God’s grace afresh ... together, as one body, broken-but-healed, unashamed of the wound marks that accompany resurrection, conscious anew of our need and God’s abundance. Here - in spoken word and simple sacramental action - we recover our story and renew our commitment to take out the life of Christ, in our very bodies that have been fortified by bread and wine, to those among whom we live.

Whatever else we discuss around the mechanics of this, we must not lose sight of its purpose and essence.

So, we pray that God will bless our deliberations together today. Pray also for the bishops of the Anglican Communion as we prepare to meet in Canterbury next month for the Lambeth Conference. Thank God for our own Bradford being named City of Culture for 2025, recognising that culture is about people, collective vision and practice, ritual and celebration, the arts that explore and colour our common life. Book tickets for the array of events at the Bradford Literature Festival at the end of this month. Pray for those being ordained deacon and priest in the next few weeks, and for the parishes they will serve.

Above all, as we face the challenges and opportunities for proclaiming the Gospel afresh in this generation, let us strive - joyfully and generously - to be faithful to God’s call to us at this time and in this place.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines  
Bishop of Leeds

18 June 2022

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## Diocesan Synod 18 June 2022 – Item 4 Questions for Synod

### **Question received from Dr John F Beal, Whitkirk Deanery**

“To The Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

In the light of the unsocial working hours, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the increasing physical and verbal abuse of those who work in the Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism industries has there been any consideration of a mission initiative by appointing a chaplain to those who work in these industries, many of whom live in some of the poorest areas of the city and whose working hours often make it difficult for them access pastoral support from local parish clergy?”

From the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

This is a new idea and so has not been considered. The key challenge in resourcing a post like this is what would be stopped in order to fund it. Doing things in new and creative ways is something we are keen to explore but requires us to look at resourcing across the whole diocese.

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