

DIOCESAN SYNOD

DRAFT Minutes of the eleventh meeting of the Synod of the diocese held at 9.30am on 16 June 2018 at Soothill Hall, Ashville College, Green Lane, Harrogate, HG2 9JP.

Chair: The Bishop of Leeds

The Bishop of Leeds opened the Synod meeting with prayers.

1 Welcome.

The following were welcomed and given the Chair's permission to speak:

Item 10 Education Update, Annual reports and Leeds DBF annual accounts:

Mr Richard Noake, Diocesan Director of Education (Education update)

Mr Geoff Park, Chief Finance Officer (Leeds DBF annual accounts).

Item 11 Motions from Inner Bradford deanery:

The Revd Canon Gordon Dey, Co-ordinator WRIB (Welfare Reform Impact Bradford) and Team Leader, Jesus Shaped People

Mr Angus McNab, member of WRIB and community outreach worker at St. Peter, Shipley

The Revd Canon Alistair Helm, Area Dean Inner Bradford Deanery and Incumbent of Manningham benefice.

Item 12 Diocesan Strategy:

The Revd Canon Andrew Norman, Diocesan Director of Ministry and Mission.

Visitors to the Diocesan Synod:

Mr John Knox, Director of Resourcing Parishes (covering Susan Rundle's maternity leave)

Ms Lisa McIntyre, Secretary to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches.

Bishop Ralph Meister, Bishop of Hanover and German Co-Chair of the Meissen Commission alongside Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, Anglican Co-Chair. Bishop Ralph was to be installed as an Honorary Ecumenical Canon at Ripon Cathedral on 17 June 2018.

The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley was welcomed to her first Diocesan Synod since becoming Bishop of Ripon.

2 Apologies.

35 apologies had been received.

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

None was disclosed.

Chair: The Revd Canon Ann Nicholl

4 Appointment of Secretary to the Diocesan Synod.

The Chair moved:

"That this Synod appoints Deborah Child to be the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod with effect from 16 June 2018."

No member wished to debate the motion.

The motion was carried unanimously.

The Bishop of Leeds noted that the Diocese was deeply indebted to Debbie for all her work for the Diocese and asked Synod members to pray for her as she has taken on sole responsibility as Diocesan Secretary.

5 Presidential Address.

The Bishop of Leeds gave his Presidential Address, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes.

6 Minutes of the last Meeting on 14 October 2017.

The Chair moved:

"That the draft minutes of the last meeting held on 14 October 2017 DS 18 06 01 be approved as a correct record."

The motion was approved with one abstention.

7 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

There were no matters arising.

8 Questions for Synod

Questions had been received from Mr Mike Willison (Headingley deanery) (2 questions), Mr Dave Collingwood, (Wensley Deanery and Deanery Lay Chair, Wensley Deanery) (2 questions) and The Revd Canon Kathryn Fitzsimmons, (General Synod) (1 question). Written replies had been tabled (a copy of the questions and tabled replies are attached to these minutes).

Mr Willison had given his apologies for the meeting. Mr Collingwood and The Revd Canon Fitzsimmons indicated they were grateful for the replies and had no supplementary questions.

There were no supplementary questions from members of the Diocesan Synod.

9 General Synod report DS 18 06 02

Synod members had received a copy of a report by Canon Malcolm Halliday of the February 2018 General Synod. Canon Halliday gave a short presentation on his report.

No questions were raised.

Chair: The Revd Canon Tony Macpherson

- 10 Education Update presentation from the Diocesan Director of Education, Annual Reports DS 18 06 03 (for noting), Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance Accounts 2017 (for noting) DS 18 06 03 01 and DS 18 06 03 02.

Members had been circulated with Annual reports for noting (DS 18 06 03) from the DAC Chair and DAC Secretary, the Diocesan Board of Patronage, the Diocesan Environment Officer, the HR Manager, the Property Director and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee. A copy of the Leeds DBF Accounts 2017 (DS 18 06 03 01) and a summary annual accounts document (DS 18 06 03 02) had also been circulated.

Diocesan Board of Education Presentation

A copy of a PowerPoint presentation to be given by Richard Noake, Diocesan Director of Education and Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education, had been tabled for members' information. Bishop Jonathan outlined the principle functions of the Diocesan Board of Education: to promote education in the Diocese, to promote religious education and religious worship in schools, not just church schools, and to promote in particular church schools and to advise and support the governors of such schools. The DBE served 242 church schools educating around 64,000 children.

Richard Noake explained that the diocesan education team works with nine local authorities and three regional commissioning areas. During 2017, the programme "Understanding Christianity" had been introduced along with the diocesan education team offering an enhanced support buy-in service for schools, the creation of two new multi academy trusts and 120 schools represented at the annual diocesan schools' conference. Future challenges included the future of rural schools, supporting those CofE schools adjudged "inadequate" by Ofsted or who faced funding challenges and the recruitment to leaders and governance. Priorities were strengthening relationships between churches and their local schools and supporting schools under the new SIAMS framework. The Diocese would be hosting a national education conference on 19 November 2018.

Leeds DBF Annual Accounts 2017

Geoff Park gave a presentation on the 2017 Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance Annual Accounts. Geoff outlined that the key issue was the deficit of £4.1m of unrestricted funds. The deficit was mainly due to:

- 1) the shortfall in contributions to the budgeted 100% collection figure for the diocesan share;
- 2) the making of a one-off provision for the Diocesan lay workers' pension fund; and
- 3) Income had decreased by £904,000.

In 2016, there had been a one off contribution of £1m from the national church to the transition work of the Diocese. If this was removed from the comparison, other income in 2017 had slightly increased. Parish share contributions had increased by £259,000 and the collection rate increased from 86% to 88%. However, expenditure, excluding the one-off pension payment, increased by £1m distributed across all areas of the Diocese's ministry.

With regard to the pension deficit, the old dioceses' defined benefits pension schemes had all been revalued and found to be in deficit to different extents. Therefore, the Diocese had been

required to put aside a provision to meet the deficits over the next five years.

The Diocese's funds position at the end of 2017 was unrestricted funds of £31.5m, restricted funds of £15.2m and £130m of endowment funds. This was a reduction from the previous year of £1.9m ie the underlying deficit offset by investment gains. Although the unrestricted funds totaled £31.5m, £32.2m comprised clergy housing being used to support the ministry in the Diocese.

The 2018 Budget approved by the Diocesan Synod in 2017 was for a deficit of £2.4m having used restricted funding of £1.15m. This was not a sustainable position. In forming the financial plan for 2019, the diocesan team would be looking at the diocesan Strategy and the diocesan vision for the future and ensuring that the Diocese's financial plans match these with the aim of moving towards a balanced budget. The financial plans would be brought to the Diocesan Synod for consideration in October 2018.

Questions

Professor Joyce Hill, (General Synod)

Asked if the Diocese's DB [Pension] scheme for lay workers had been closed to new entrants to mitigate further deficits, or was the Diocese's thinking of changing the existing members of these schemes to something like PB14, which would not be out of line with what had been happening across the country.

Geoff Park replied that there were four schemes (one from each of the three former dioceses and one from the education team) and each was closed to new members some time ago. All other decisions had not been discussed or made and so there was nothing to report.

Synod noted all of the reports unanimously.

11 Motions from Inner Bradford deanery DS 18 06 04.

Synod members had been circulated with a background note to the motions. The Revd Canon Gordon Dey gave an overview for both the motions using a PowerPoint presentation. He explained that WRIB had been working to highlight how welfare changes were having an effect on the poorest people of our communities. He reminded Synod that we are all made in the image of God, that Jesus chose to work with and prioritize the poor and we fail significantly if we don't follow Him in this.

The First motion from the Inner Bradford Deanery

Mr Angus McNab gave a presentation. He asked Synod to consider the motion from three perspectives. Firstly from a position of brokenness eg on considering news stories or the poor in the street. Secondly, for God given compassion to move across fracture lines in society. Thirdly, to draw others to Jesus and to stand against the forces and authorities which led to such suffering. In essence: to live out compassion, community and the common good.

Synod considered the following questions in small groups:

How can we recapture the priorities of Jesus for marginalised people?
Why have our priorities shifted away from those most on the edge?

Can we identify “signs of hope” that are “preparing the way” for that spiritual revival so needed?

How can we encourage and nurture those already bringing hope to the people most in need in our communities?

Synod members asked questions of clarification

Christine Jack, Harrogate Deanery

Asked for where the information was from that the CofE doesn't draw people to the Church?

The Revd Canon Dey responded that the suggestion wasn't that the Church doesn't have a priority for the poor but that the CofE has a preponderance of people from more advantaged backgrounds in its membership and fewer from the most disadvantaged and therefore a culture that reflects this. This could be seen from the statistics from the Diocese of Leeds.

Mr John Wright (Inner Bradford Deanery) proposed the motion:

“1. That this Diocesan Synod call upon the General Synod to debate a motion in the following form:

‘That this Synod call on the Archbishops’ Council to commission a study that explores (a) the reasons why, in contrast to Jesus, the Church of England is generally less effective in communicating with, and attracting people from, more disadvantaged communities and (b) ways of addressing and reversing this situation.’”

Fr Thomas Seville CR, Religious Communities General Synod

Proposed an amendment to the motion but as this had not been submitted in writing this was not permitted by the Chair.

Synod debated the motion:

The Revd Andrew Pearson, Armley Deanery

Informed Synod that the standard for Reader training was foundation university standard. He felt that this was too high, alienating church members with low academic achievements in the impoverished urban parishes. He fully supported the motion as a challenge to education in the Church of England.

The Revd Brunel James, Birstall Deanery

Offered an historical and sociological perspective. The alienation of the working classes from the Church of England was very long standing. During the Industrial Revolution and subsequently the working class in West Yorkshire were working, surviving, getting by in and around the harsh and demanding mill economy which left little time for church attendance. Sociologically, church membership, as opposed to personal faith, is fundamentally a leisure activity: the impoverished don't have the time or attention to give to anything other than getting by. Consequently, churches tend to have those in them who have the time and energy to invest. Therefore, unless society becomes equal, the people at the bottom won't have the opportunity to participate fully in church life.

The Revd Lyndsay Southern, Richmond Deanery

Endorsed the motion but said if the motion goes to General Synod, she would like there to be more information in any background paper about rural poverty, which may manifest itself in different ways from urban poverty but was as real. For example, prohibitive travel costs to

access basic services like medical care, food poverty and the unequal costs of production and poor returns in farming.

The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs

Confirmed that if the motion was passed the General Synod, the Business Committee would review the final form of the motion to be debated and so there may be some fine tuning to take account of the issues being raised by members.

Mr John Wright responded to the debate

He thanked members for their comments and assured Synod that the group had considered many of the issues which were being raised – particularly that there is more than one type of poverty and that they had been on contact with General Synod about the wording of the motion.

Synod voted on the motion:

In favour – majority

Against - none

Abstentions – 3.

The motion was approved.

The Second Motion from the Inner Bradford Deanery.

The Revd Canon Kathryn Fitzsimons, (General Synod), gave a presentation. As the established church and in line with the diocesan vision of transforming communities, she felt Synod members were called to take the opportunity to influence government thinking and practice. In the book “The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better” [by Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson published in 2009], the authors showed that the wider the gap in rich countries between the poorest and the wealthiest, the more dysfunctional a state became in terms of health and social problems. In contrast, the smaller the gap the levels of health, child wellbeing and trust increased across those societies. The 2017 World Economic Forum pointed to income and wealth disparity as the most important trend to determine development across the World over the next decade. Kathryn wishes all people would have the same opportunities for loving, for living and for learning as those who had the most. She said that “Shalom” the peace which Jesus promises, if not available for some isn’t there for anyone.

Synod discussed the motion in small groups.

No questions of clarification were raised.

Mr John Wright, Inner Bradford deanery proposed:

“2. That this Diocesan Synod calls upon the General Synod to debate a motion in the following form:

‘That this Synod calls on Her Majesty’s Government (and all political parties) to adopt an explicit policy of reducing the wealth gap between the rich and the poor and the disadvantages that flow from it.’”

Synod debated to the motion:

Timothy Slater, Huddersfield deanery

Endorsed everything that The Revd Canon Fitzsimons had said. However, he was uneasy with the wording of the motion. He felt the Church should be involved in the democratic process and not set apart from it. He also cautioned that the Church must ensure its own house was in order before it sought to tell the Government what to do. He believed that Christians should be fully involved in the democratic process through membership of political parties and influencing through the democratic structures of those political parties.

The Ven Paul Ayers, Archdeacon of Leeds and General Synod

Welcomed both of the Inner Bradford deanery motions as he felt they would give General Synod an excellent opportunity to debate matters that had become more serious and pressing. He welcomed particularly the emphasis on evangelism in the first motion. He didn't feel the specific role of the Church was to suggest to the government and political parties how things ought to be done. He said the Church should be arguing for the destination not the should stop being so squeamish about wealth (we don't want people to be poor) and secondly it shouldn't grumble so much about the middle class who he felt were crucial to making things work. He highlighted that the motions reflect our collect for growth: in numbers, spiritual commitment and in service to our local communities.

Christine Jack, Harrogate deanery

Confirmed she would be voting in favour of the motion as it would bring an important topic in to the public eye. However, she felt the Church did need to review its own structures [in the light of the motion]. She also felt that the Church should not be hostile to the rich or the middle classes. The Church's service to people in need and should be wider than just economic poverty. It was important that the Church serve people in their freedoms ie in their life choices.

Valerie Smith, South Craven and Wharfedale deanery

She felt the motion highlighted something that some Christians don't like to be reminded of. She felt that it was important that the Church made it clear that it didn't agree with the way the divide between rich and poor was getting wider. Christians needed to bold when engaging with politics and remind the Government, and particularly those who are Christians and in the Government, of the issues of poverty and the needs of the poor. She supported the motion.

The Revd Canon Arani Sen, Armley Deanery

He said as a Christians we are called to be prophetic, and to stand out where there is injustice, inequality and suffering. In twenty years in urban ministry, he had not before encountered the circumstances he currently found where many children left school and would not get any more food for the rest of the day. In his work with asylum seekers and refugees, he saw that many are left to fend for themselves and are destitute. He highlighted that poverty leads to other malaises such as illness, drug, substance and alcohol abuse and relationship breakdown. He said the foundation of society was broken if there was poverty. He supported the motion.

Mr John Wright responded to the debate

He thought that the matters of caution Synod members had highlighted would probably also be raised by General Synod members if the motion went forward. However, he also felt that there were times when we needed to be courageous to say what we believed.

The Revd Canon Alistair Helm, Area Dean of Inner Bradford deanery

Thanked Synod for its enthusiasm in the debates. He quoted Jürgen Moltmann: "The more

seriously we take the future promise of God's Kingdom, the more unbearable will be the contradictions of that promise that we meet in the present".

Synod voted on the motion:

In favour – Majority

Against – 1

Abstentions – 1

The motion was approved.

The Revd Canon Tony Macpherson notified the Synod that he had not stood for re-election to the Diocesan Synod and so would be stepping down as Chair of the House of Clergy. He thanked Synod for giving him an interesting and stimulating time.

Chair: Canon Ann Nicholl

On behalf of the Diocesan Synod, thanked The Revd Canon Tony Macpherson for his 12 years of service to the Diocesan Synod.

12 Diocesan Strategy DS 18 06 05 (to follow).

Bishop Paul Slater introduced the members of the Strategy Group: Debbie Child, Jane Evans (Calder Valley deanery), The Very Revd John Dobson, (Dean of Ripon), The Ven Andy Jolley, (Archdeacon of Bradford) and The Revd Canon Andrew Norman, (Director of Ministry and Mission). Using a PowerPoint presentation, he told the members that the Strategy group would be reporting again at the October 2018 Synod and that the work of the Strategy group would feed in to the financial plan that Geoff Park and Debbie Child were working on. It was clear from the financial presentation that the Diocese would have to consider what it can't do as well as considering what it wanted to do.

He went on to introduce the strategy process. The Strategy builds on the diocesan vision: Confident Christians, Growing Churches and Transforming Communities. With the values Loving Living Learning being a lens through which all diocesan activities are seen. The Strategy group had been looking at how the Diocese delivers this vision and embodies these values. The Strategy group had developed three enabling means: Clergy and Lay Together; Purposeful Resourcing and Dynamic Partnerships. Three consultation groups were set up to look at these. From the work of the three groups, the Strategy group has distilled goals and objectives which the Diocese can work towards and which will shape the way the Diocese resources mission and ministry.

Jane Evans explained that goals were needed to turn the strategy in to action. In particular, to identify what the Diocese was and was not going to do, by when and what it will look like when it is done. The five had been developed with input from the Leeds Board and other key groups. These were five-year goals. Set out with each goal was a vision of what it would be like when it's implemented. From the SMART objectives, initiatives and action plans could be developed. This meant there would be scope for different parts of the Diocese to develop their own initiatives. Each goal was accompanied by a Bible text as its inspiration.

There were no questions of clarification.

Synod discussed two questions in small groups (and wrote notes of their discussions to inform the Strategy group's work):

"What connections are there with the Diocesan goals and what your parish is currently doing?"

What would you like the Strategy Group to bear in mind as it works on plans to implement these 5 goals?"

Synod members gave feedback from the small group discussions:

The Revd Nick Clews, Inner Bradford Deanery

He said in his experience having a five-year plan transformed what his parish did particularly as the objectives were specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. However, he was concerned that none of the Strategy objectives were SMART. He felt he didn't know what the first objective meant as it was rather vague and didn't feel motivated to go back to his parish and encourage them to align themselves with the diocese's strategic goals. He hoped once the goals were refined he would feel they helped him in his ministry.

Jane Evans confirmed that the Strategy group was working on the objectives being SMART.

The Revd Brunel James, Birstall deanery

Thought Goal 1 helps creating a shared culture for the new diocese. However, there were different experiences of re-imagining ministry across the parishes. This was particularly true if they had recently been part of pastoral re-organization in contrast to parishes where there had been no challenge to the inherited model of leadership.

The Revd Sam Corley, Allerton Deanery

Encouraged the Strategy group to be bold in its aims (eg to increase by five times the number of young people and children in the churches). He felt setting a bold aim would result in the other key goals following.

The Revd Nicholas Turner, Skipton deanery

Said the retirement tsunami shouldn't be regarded as a challenge or problem or threat. It was part of life and the natural cycle of replacing the old with the new.

David Collingwood, Wensley deanery

Hoped that people within the Church would be trained in electronic media skills so they can reach the people the Church is trying to reach. He believed the Church needed to train people to chair meetings, communicate and in the skills of teamwork.

Jane Evans outlined that "doing church electronically" is a stream of the Renewal and Reform work of the national church. She also reminded the Synod members that the Diocesan Communications team provided training in digital communication skills.

The Revd Kathryn Fitzsimons, General Synod

Said she didn't like the use of the word "pipeline" for leadership.

Jane Evans explained this was about succession planning. Particularly, attracting people to come to the Northern Province and encouraging people in to both clergy and lay leadership.

The Rt Revd Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford

Said as transforming communities is a large part of the initial vision; it would be good if this was a little more obvious in the strategic goals – particularly looking outwards to transform communities.

Jane Evans replied that although the vision and values were outward facing at the current time as a young diocese, there are things that need putting in place to make this happen. The intent is that the outcome will be outward facing.

The Revd June Lawson, Wakefield deanery

Asked if the intention was that parishes, deaneries and episcopal areas would eventually take the goals and map their mission action plans against them.

Jane Evans confirmed this was the intention. They were not to be burdensome. Parishes would be able to look at what they had done or intended to do and see how they fit with the Strategy.

Brian Daltrey, Headingley deanery

Hoped that the leadership pipeline has a strong emphasis on lay leadership as outlined in the conclusion of the report "Setting God's People Free".

Patricia Waite-Wright, Birstall deanery

Thought the aim of the Strategy group was commendable. However, thought there were there stages to this type of process: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? How are we going to get there? She felt the parishes particularly needed this final question answered and continuous support from diocesan groups to achieve it.

Peer Review

Debbie Child gave a brief update on the diocesan peer review, which took place in December 2017. The peer review process had involved all dioceses being reviewed by peers from other dioceses. The peer review panel had visited the Leeds diocese for a day to carry out the review speaking to the Diocese's peer review group. The Panel also spoke to other individuals across the Diocese including clergy and laity in rural and urban parishes to build up a picture of the Diocese of Leeds. Their role was to be critical friends and were both challenging and supportive. The Panel were pleased about the Diocese's direction of travel and the work done on the diocesan strategy so far. The Panel left the Diocese with some key issues to consider. These were: 1) how

the Diocese would develop its communication around vision and strategy so everyone has a knowledge and understanding of it, 2) partnership with the Board of Education and considering if the DBE strategy was in line with the diocesan strategy, 3) the diocesan finances – particularly the diocesan deficit and how to collect a greater percentage of share and 4) ensuring the development of the training of both laity and clergy. The Panel chose not to return before the next cycle of reviews in two years' time (this contrasted with some other dioceses who had received a second visit only a few months after the first). The full report is available on the diocesan website.

The Chair gave The Revd Mark Harlow, Priest in Charge, Ireland Wood, permission to address the Synod on this item.

Resource Churches

Bishop Paul spoke about the Resource church initiative. The Diocese was looking at ways of rejuvenating the center of the city of Leeds and it had decided to follow the Resource churches initiative to do this. The Resource Churches initiative is about giving resources to a particular church so that they grow in order to give away. The Revd Mark Harlow and fifty people had transferred from St George's parish in Leeds to Ireland Wood parish. They had also taken with them £60k of giving. Mark Harlow outlined the process of the transfer and its effects on both St George's and Ireland Wood parishes. The challenges for both parishes was a lot of change happening very rapidly rather than evolving. Particularly for St George's giving away money and people and for Ireland Wood suddenly having money (ie £60k plus diocesan funding) when they had been used to having little finance. There were also new structures and ways of working for both sets of people as Ireland Wood moved forward. The challenge for the church's mission was to re-engage with the local community.

Bishop Paul explained that Ireland Wood would receive a curate in summer 2018 with a view to Ireland Wood planting a church elsewhere in three to four years' time.

Chair: The Bishop of Leeds

The Bishop of Leeds thanked Ann Nicholl on behalf of the Diocesan Synod for her faithful service as Chair of the House of Laity.

13 Closing Eucharist

The Bishop of Leeds presided at a Eucharist service to close the Diocesan Synod term.

14 Bishop of Leeds Blessing and Close.

The Bishop of Leeds led the Synod in prayer and gave his blessing.

Presidential Address

Thank you for making it through the weather this time! I am sorry we had to cancel the last Synod in March because of snow – a decision not taken lightly, especially as I had some good jokes in my Presidential Address for that meeting on St Patrick’s Day. (Why do people wear shamrocks on St Patrick’s Day? Because genuine rocks are too heavy! (Boom boom!))

Anyway, back to today and the weighty agenda upon which we are asked to deliberate together. In order to open our thinking, let me report briefly on a recent experience.

Two weeks ago I spent a week in Novi Sad in Serbia, leading the Anglican delegation to the General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches – an event that takes place every five years. Novi Sad lies on the Danube, about an hour north of Belgrade, and became well known in western Europe during the NATO action in 1999 aimed at stopping the Balkan wars that involved the systematic slaughter of Muslims – you might remember the massacre of 7,000 Bosniak boys and men in July 1995.

The Conference (CEC) considered themes such as hospitality, justice, hope and witness. It is easy to discuss such themes if you all come from the same place and share certain fundamental assumptions about God, the world and events. Bring together nearly 500 people from a huge range of countries with their own histories, and from the ecclesiastical spectrum from Orthodox through Anglican and Methodist to serious Protestants, and the exercise becomes more challenging.

The main challenge came as we concluded the six days by agreeing a communique. The preamble to the communique suggested that there was some significance in the fact that we had met in a place where physical bridges had been destroyed in order to build new bridges between Christians of differing confessions. At this point an Orthodox metropolitan wanted to insert a direct reference to the fact that NATO had bombed the bridges of Novi Sad in an act of (unwarranted) aggression. Having listened to a range of one-way speeches by politicians and bishops about “NATO aggression” and the demand to restore territory to Serbia (meaning Kosovo), I was very uneasy about all this. The proposed amendment made a response essential.

The fact is this: the General Synod of the Church of England voted to back NATO action. Secondly, NATO didn’t bomb several bridges in Novi Sad because they had nothing better to do on a wet Wednesday afternoon. And there is a reason why Kosovans want to be independent of Serbia.

So, how can people involved be so blind to the events and motivations that led to NATO action?

The truth is that we all live within narrow lines of experience and understanding. The assumptions that shape our understanding of – that is, the way we see and think about – our world do not often get challenged. But, get a group of people whose experience is different and we might just begin to spot the weaknesses in our own position. You can’t guarantee it; sometimes it is just too costly to drop the ‘prejudices’, and we thus continue to push our case blind to the experience of others.

Well, last Sunday afternoon I installed Bishop Helen-Ann into Bradford Cathedral – two down, one to go (Wakefield next month) – the Old Testament reading came from Jeremiah 6:16-21 and began with these words: “Stand at a crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it and find rest for your souls.” The prophet goes on to challenge the people of God to listen to what they don’t want to hear, and to give heed to what they would prefer to ignore – even though disaster is coming and fear for their future security is growing.

Just as Novi Sad stands on the Danube at the crossroads of Europe and has historically paid the price for its location, so do we stand at a crossroads. Not just the Diocese of Leeds, but we as individual Christians called to be disciples of Jesus Christ in a world that is becoming less secure and more chaotic. Old ways are being challenged or even dismantled, and we cannot know what will follow. Even diplomacy has become undiplomatic in the hands of one or two world leaders. I need not refer more here to the chaos that is Brexit – whichever side of the debate you stand on.

But, we need to hear with clarity and courage the call of God to the prophet – and to us – to stand at the crossroads (a difficult and complicated place to stand) and listen for the voice of God ... however uncomfortable that voice might be. One of the big questions that runs through the whole of the Bible is: dare we listen for the word of the Lord, or simply for reinforcement of our own view which we can then claim coincides with the word of the Lord? This is why repentance' – metanoia, literally a changing of the mind – is the primary call by God to all people, but especially to those who claim his name.

We are no longer a new diocese. We are now a young diocese (though I hope we don't dwell for long in the toddler stage ... and the teenager phase promises to be interesting ... or maybe we should not press the metaphor too far?). We have travelled a challenging road since Easter 2014, trying to listen for the ancient wisdom and to be faithful to the call of God to shape our common life and priorities according to his will and his way.

This is why we held an excellent Lay Conference last Saturday in Harrogate. Clergy and laity, we are the Body of Christ, with a particular vocation as the Church of England in this part of the world – a vocation that involves, as it always has with people who follow the call of God, laying down our life, our preferences, our priorities, for the sake of the Kingdom of God. The last four years have been about that mission, and it has not always been comfortable. However, it has been our vocation, and we have had to choose whether to bemoan it or join in and shape it. The Lay Conference felt like a significant milestone in our life and I wish to express my deep gratitude to all those who worked so hard to get us there and make it all happen.

As we have recognised in the past, clergy numbers are going to reduce in the years to come. Yet, it is not for this reason – a reaction to a clergy challenge – that we are highlighting in our emerging diocesan strategy the need to reimagine how clergy and lay must belong together, share in ministry and mission together, acknowledge both commonality and differentiation in calling and order. Clergy and lay together. As I always say to those shortly to be ordained: your ministry must derive from your discipleship, not the other way round. If our exercise of a particular ministry – clergy, Reader, churchwarden, and so on – is the sole expression of our discipleship, then we will not survive. Discipleship – following Jesus, come what may – must be the well from which the exercise of any ministry draws.

To this end, we have devised an online learning portal that invites clergy and lay people to take responsibility for their own discipleship, learning and growth. This was launched at the Lay Conference last Saturday, and you will have found the card with all the details about it on your seat today. Please take time to explore the portal – there is a huge range of training possibilities available to all. Whatever our strategy looks like, our intention as Anglican Christians in this part of Yorkshire must be clear and unambiguous: to enable us to recover and strengthen our confident commitment to discipleship, worship, witness and service.

Our strategy is not a means of increasing bureaucracy or finding things for diocesan officers to do with their time. It is not about dreaming up gimmicks that will turn the ship around when we already have the engineering in place and need to make sure the parts are properly oiled. It is not about a high-level board dictating to everyone else where our priorities should lie. It is about shaping the diocese, its

support for parishes and its pastoral responsibility to be good stewards of people and things/money, in such a way as to prove sustainable in the years to come. It is about our witness and service of Christ – it is about God and the world, not essentially about our own satisfaction or sense of fulfilment.

This is not about a retreat into some privatised spirituality that aims to make us feel secure in the face of a frightening world. We must avoid colluding with some of the language and communication reflexes in increasingly common currency today that demonise or dehumanise other people, reducing them to commodities to be traded or categories to be dismissed. We must be a people unafraid to walk in the light, sharing the same uncertainties as everyone else, but knowing we are held onto by the God who walked the road to Calvary before leaving behind him the emptiness of a tomb. We, too, stand at a crossroads where difficult decisions must be taken – not least financial (and some of these will be demanding and painful). We do not stand alone.

The German theologian Jürgen Moltmann famously said: “God is our happiness; God is our torment; God is the wide space of our hope.” Faith does not let us escape; rather, faith holds us ... whatever the circumstances we find ourselves facing (as individuals and as a church). “God is our happiness; God is our torment; God is the wide space of our hope.”

Well, at the heart of all I have said this morning lies the faithfulness of the God who calls us to follow him. It is trust in this faithfulness that allows us sometimes to take steps in new directions – not just as a diocese, but also as individuals. Today we welcome to her first Diocesan Synod Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley who has moved around the globe to assume her ministry here as Bishop of Ripon. Her feet are under the table, but it will take time for her to find her way – even if she already agrees with me that Beltex sheep are just plain ugly. Pray for her as she continues to settle in and gets to know the diocese, the episcopal area and the region. We welcome Geoff Park to the hard task of managing our finances and challenging as well as supporting our priorities. Pray for Debbie Child as she carries enormous responsibility as Diocesan Secretary following the departure of Ashley Ellis.

Much of our agenda as a Synod in the last four years or so has been getting our foundations dug and established, sometimes placing a focus on internal matters as a priority. In future, now we have done much of that hard work, our agenda can also develop in a more outward-looking direction, inviting us to learn, discuss, debate, resolve, and so on. I look forward to the parishes and deaneries working on more motions like the one today from Inner Bradford. Today’s agenda addresses the fraught world of education, poverty and evangelism. I am grateful to this Synod for all we have done together, and look forward to the election of a new Synod for the next triennium. The agenda should in future be more outward facing.

In the meantime, Synod, thank you for your patience, your prayers, your faithfulness and your hopefulness – probably sometimes against your better judgement or sentiment. We hold before us a vision of God’s ‘wide space of hope’ as we turn to our agenda and attempt to see our work and hear our words through the eyes and ears of the Christ who calls us.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines
Bishop of Leeds

16 June 2018

Diocesan Synod 16 June 2018 – Item 8 Questions for Synod

First Question received from Dr Mike Willison, Headingley Deanery

“To the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

The Parish Share Report for December indicates that the share collection rate in 2017 was 88% (86% in 2016), with just over 60% of parishes paying in full.

Will the Board therefore ensure that the low level of parish share collection will be addressed?”

The Board reviews and discusses Parish Share collection at each of its meetings, as do the Bishops Staff meeting and the Finance Committee. Additionally, a regular review of parish share payments is carried out by each episcopal area staff meeting, which includes the area bishop, archdeacon and members of the diocesan Finance team. These meetings identify parishes that may be struggling with their share payments and agree steps to support, which may include help from the diocesan Resourcing Parishes team. The team advise on improving income and expenditure, fundraising, stewardship programmes, budgeting and financial management.

In addition, parishes are offered the opportunity to attend parish share surgeries where the parish can meet with their archdeacon or area bishop and a member of the Resourcing Parishes team to discuss the particular challenges facing the parish and discuss strategies.

Although there was an increase of 2% in parish share payments from 2016 to 2017, it is recognised that for some parishes there are financial challenges to meet 100% share payment. In those circumstances we look to support and encourage parishes to do what is possible.

Second Question received from Dr Mike Willison, Headingley Deanery

“To the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

Historic Parish Share stood at £13m in 2015 and by the end of 2017 had risen to £18.2m.

Although a Historic Share Relief Policy was implemented in May 2017, by the end of the year only about half of all the parishes with historic share had paid their share in full. Will the Board, nevertheless, encourage parishes, where and whenever possible, to pay off some or all of their historic share?”

Whilst our primary focus is on assisting parishes to pay their current year share in full, we do encourage parishes that are able to pay some or all their historic share. The Historic Parish Share Relief Policy encourages parishes to pay 100% of their current year parish share, knowing that where they have historic share they will benefit from the write-off of one-third if paid in full. Any payment of historic parish share will go towards meeting the Diocese’s strategic aims and, in the current context, reducing the deficit.

First Question received from Mr Dave Collingwood, Wensley Deanery

"To the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

Please would you make available on the website an organisation chart for the Diocese showing all people, Lay and Ordained who hold any Diocesan or Area responsibilities? Without this information it is very difficult to know who to contact on any particular subject."

A copy of an organisational chart is now available on the Diocesan website at:

<https://www.leeds.anglican.org/content/diocesan-organisation-chart> . Please do email

enquiries@leeds.anglican.org or ring the office (0113 2000 540) if you have any queries at all. Someone will always be able to help.

Second Question received from Mr Dave Collingwood, Wensley Deanery

"To the Secretary to the Diocesan Synod:

How many people, Lay and Ordained, are employed by the Diocese? This information should indicate whether they are employed full or part-time. If the later what is their 'full-time equivalence [FTE]? [for example if a fulltime employee works 36 hours then someone working 18 hours would be a 0.5FTE].

Many clergy have a dual role with both parish [benefice] and wider responsibilities. Can their numbers be indicated in a similar way please?"

Please find the information requested in the table below which shows the breakdown of staffing between full-time and part-time and lay and ordained.

Diocesan Employees	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Part-time Employees Full-time Equivalent
Lay	86	50	36	21.20
Ordained	14	8	6	3.60

Of those that are ordained, 7 are in dual roles

Question received from The Revd Canon Kathryn Fitzsimons, General Synod

"To The Bishop of Leeds, Chair of Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance:

I note from the annual report that the site of the former Ripon & Leeds Diocesan office has been sold. Thanks to those who have taken this forward.

What are the plans for the sites of the former Wakefield and Bradford Diocesan offices?"

Having reviewed our requirements for the former Bradford and Wakefield Diocesan offices it has been concluded that these should be progressed to sale. We are working with our agents to investigate what planning permissions could be obtained to maximise the value of these premises but intend to have these on the market in the autumn.