



# Minutes – Diocesan Synod

<b>Meeting Date</b>		<b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025</b>
<b>Times</b>		1000 – 1430
<b>Venue</b>		Gryphon School, Sherborne
<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action Outcome / Initial</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and opening prayers</b>	
	Donna Gibbs led prayer.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
	<p>Apologies were received from:            House of Bishop's – 0            House of Clergy – 19            House of Laity – 17            Meaning this meeting was quorate.</p> <p>No conflicts of interest were raised.            Minutes from the AGM meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were approved with no amends.            The Chair explained the format being tested for this session – conference mode for two items in the afternoon being tested to encourage deeper engagement, feedback was welcomed.</p>	Approved
<b>3</b>	<b>Presidential Address</b>	
	<a href="#">Linked to the diocesan website</a>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Questions</b>	
	Questions were received prior to the meeting with the written responses here: <a href="#">.October 2025 - The Diocese of Salisbury</a>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Role of Synod</b>	
	One year into this triennium, prior to the meeting members were invited to revisit the induction information provided on the diocesan website. The registrar, Sue de Candole (SdC), recommended all to watch the very useful video on synodical structure and reminded all that this body's members are consultative and advisory as well as having to receive the annual accounts	

	<p>and approve the budget along with appointing chair/vice-chair and auditors. The legal trustee body and standing committee is the Bishop's Council, partly elected by Synod.</p> <p>Members were invited to have table discussions and topics noted included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important for leaders not to feel isolated</li> <li>• Need to lead from bottom-up</li> <li>• Diocesan Synod representatives need to attend their deanery synod to report (preferably in person)</li> </ul> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could DS have sight of the minutes from Bishop's Council (BC)? – this will be added to the next BC agenda and David Pain (DP) will feed back on this: <i>[following the Synod the Council decided that Working Together is the best place for the work of the Council to be communicated; the minutes only really make sense with all the documents which come to a Council meeting]</i></li> <li>• Where does the agenda for this meeting come from? – BC set and approve the agenda for this meeting</li> <li>• +Stephen at this point stressed that the language is not hierarchical – it is and should be all about the local church. He wanted all to know that he has feedback regarding a negative atmosphere and only hearing 'the same voice' at these meetings meaning other voices feeling they do not want to speak out, he felt it is important that we are all aware of this.</li> </ul>	DP to respond
6	DBF Budget	
	<p>Chair of DBF introduced the item to members and Elizabeth Harvey (EH) gave the budget highlights: <a href="#">October 2025 - The Diocese of Salisbury</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you to everyone for raising Parish Share</li> <li>• There remains the need to close the gap; this has historically been achieved through selling houses, and this cannot continue – by 2031 we will have exhausted our portfolio, which means our risk is accelerating</li> <li>• Positive – some worshipping communities are not only slowing their decline but growing – God is at work, and a sustainable future is within reach</li> <li>• Core staff will increase by 1 FTE member to the safeguarding team along with additional resource in the Fundraising team (this will be funded through the pension credit)</li> <li>• Trying to respond to window of transition with Hopeful, Pragmatic and Purposeful intent</li> </ul> <p>Questions to panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a realistic figure on those not paying share? – EH advised she is currently working with the Archdeacons to find ways to walk alongside these parishes</li> </ul>	

- Diversifying income ideas – EH informed DS of the current asset management review underway and this is helping with this area; however, the importance of remembering that clergy houses are people’s homes
- Is the DBF open to building relationships with the parishes? – DP – yes! We are currently attending Deanery Synod meetings and chapters and are more than happy to look at broadening this. Please do talk to one of the team to discuss further
- Is there a culture to encourage those that can afford to, to pay more? mutuality is built into the formula, the big churches pay more to help those that are struggling
- request for more information around can’t pay v’s won’t pay. All are struggling to pay on some level and those not paying are taking advantage of those that are paying – DBF chair stressed most are paying
- +Stephen took this opportunity to thank everyone who is paying full share and stress the gap is relatively small (15%).
- What about small, old parishes which are struggling with buildings with few amenities? – Kevin Peto-Bostick highlighted the availability of organisations which will help with these buildings, please reach out to the teams at the DBF for expert help and advice
- What about the merging of rural churches? – +Andrew pointed out the stance is for mutual co-operation
- Why don’t we advertise on national TV? – it was stated that there are strict rules against this in the UK

The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance moved the motion :

***“That the Diocesan Board of Finance annual Budget for 2026 is approved.”***

Oliver Illife spoke against the motion for the following reasons:

- Disappointment at the duration between the paper being shared and the meeting, therefore not allowing members enough time to digest fully the information
- Rise in head-count at the DBF (30% by his calculations)
- His feeling that this budget is contributing to the increase in the over-all deficit

The chair of the House of Laity extended the meeting by 30-minutes and the motion was then offered for voting:

For – 61

Against – 2

Abstentions – 7 (NB 1 abstention was due to not enough time to consider, and 3 were due to being from the Channel Islands)

Approved

7	<b>Cathedral report</b>	
	Dean Nick shared his annual report with DS which can be found on the website	
8	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	<p>SF gave a verbal update on safeguarding. She offered thanks to all PSO's for their help and support following the recent data breach, tools are available for everyone to help with the day-to-day administration. She also stressed that safeguarding is a shared responsibility and cannot all be put on one person.</p> <p>DS received a verbal update on the July sessions of General Synod which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A much calmer atmosphere</li> <li>• Moving at speed to simplify the licensing of army chaplains</li> <li>• Review around a fair and dignified retirement process</li> <li>• The need for all to speak out in the face of injustices</li> <li>• The removal of the 'Issues In Human Sexually' section – this was overwhelmingly approved</li> <li>• Hard discussions around the end-of-life bill</li> <li>• Spending plans</li> <li>• Block funding for low-income areas</li> <li>• Re-distribution of church funds</li> <li>• Approval of the national Church Governance Measure</li> <li>• Governance review for the House of Bishops</li> <li>• Archbishop's Audit and Risk report</li> <li>• Deanery Synod elections in 2026 motion being passed</li> </ul> <p>Please do reach out to one of your GS representatives if you would like further details (their details can be <a href="#">found here</a>)</p> <p>Members had received the formula for the Deanery Synod elections in 2026 prior to the meeting – this was approved unanimously</p>	Approved
9	<b>Lunch</b>	
10	<b>Climate Action</b>	
	<p>DS welcomed the climate action team who spoke into the need for all to be interested and invested in creation care and the help available to become an Eco Church.</p> <p>Information was shared with members on the tables and people were asked to reach out to any member of the team for help or to discuss matters further.</p> <p><a href="#">Taking steps to Net Zero – The Diocese of Salisbury</a></p>	
11	<b>Working for Justice: Israel and Palestine</b>	

	<p>Christian Aid prayer:  <i>Pray not for Arab or Jew,  for Palestinian or Israeli,  but pray rather for ourselves,  that we might not  divide them in our prayers  but keep them both together  in our hearts.</i></p> <p>The recently held Zoom meetings to discuss this issue and Su McCllena’s 4-C’s resonated:  Compassion  Curiosity  Clarity  Courage</p> <p>If this cease-fire holds we <i>must</i> work with the area – this is the homeland of the first Christian disciples and they look to us to be their voice. Dean Nick shared that Prf. N Maynard will be speaking at the Cathedral and encouraged all to come and hear him speak. He also stressed the importance of going on pilgrimage as soon as we are able.</p>	
12	Close	
	Next meeting: Feb 25th 2026 by Zoom	