



# Minutes — Diocesan Synod

Meeting Date	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
Times	1800 – 2000
Venue	Amesbury Baptist Church

Item	Description	Action Outcome / Initial
1	<b>Welcome and opening prayers</b>	
	All were welcomed to the meeting with special thanks to Canon Alan Smith, First Church Estates Commissioner, for joining Diocesan Synod (DS). Prayers were led by Andy Perry	
2	<b>Introduction</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Apologies were received from the following: 1 Bishop 26 Clergy 17 Lay Meaning the meeting was quorate</li><li>Conflicts of interest – none</li><li>Minutes from the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March were approved with no amendments</li><li>Notices – it was noted at this point that no questions had been received prior to the meeting</li></ul>	Approved
3	<b>Presidential Address</b>	
	+Stephen shared his presidential address wishing farewell to both AdAlan and AdAntony along with welcome to AdLouise – to her first DS. +Stephen shared the good news regarding funding which we have recently been awarded to further enable the diocesan vision, 'Making Jesus Known in every place, so that all may flourish and grow, seeking His kingdom here and now'... Read the full address <a href="#">here</a> .	

4	<b>Diocesan Synod Questions</b>	
	No questions were received prior to the meeting	
5	<b>AGM of the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance</b>	
	<p>David Pain (DP) outlined the AGM for DS; focus included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• safeguarding and making the church a safer place with the trustees responding to charity commission audit, which highlighted the central role of our PSO's. This has led to further support for them in their roles as well as monthly drop-in sessions which are very well attended. Work is still to be done in hearing survivors and victims. It is hoped that it is apparent to all that safeguarding remains a priority and thanks were given to our safeguarding team</li> <li>• V&amp;S – three urgent challenges have been identified: declining attendance, missing generations and diminishing resources. This highlights the need for committed courageous Christian leadership. DP shared his feeling of encouragement by the wide range of conversations across the diocese which illustrate creative partnerships in local mission, which have been locally focussed and led. It is great news that we have the money from national funding to support the acceleration of our vision and strategy delivery in 13 focus churches (mission hubs) – now the work really begins! As this work gets underway, we will be actively working with local leaders to develop our approach for the second phase. We also continue to be committed to working for justice integral to mission and just last month we held the Sanctuary Road conference which was a huge success. The fifth mark of mission commits us to action for the climate and nature and thanks were offered for the work you are all doing in this area, we continue to develop on-going intergenerational engagement</li> <li>• Share – the V&amp;S also encompasses a commitment to finance the future sustainably; this has seen roll-out of a new share request system. We aim to be fully transparent about the cost of being church. The giving team continue to work hard regarding donations, and we strive to find ways to close the persistent gap between income and request which is evident again in these accounts as an operating deficit of £1m</li> </ul>	

- As the DBF moves forward with Making Jesus Known – investment in people remains central, to this end we welcome Laura Kelly as People Director and part of her role will focus on assisting the Ads and Bishops with ministry deployment as well as taking steps in staff employment and support for volunteers
- A review of the DAC is now underway the results of which will impact the way we support and work with you

DS introduced Elizabeth Harvey (EH – Director of Finances) and Olivia Otieno (OO – Head of Finance). Thanks were offered to AMW and team for all their hard work.

A review of the past 25-years of accounts indicates that the pattern in our income, expenditure and deficit has continued throughout this time.

- Share remains in line with previous years at 87% collection rate
- Operating deficit of just under £1m
- Funding through the sale of houses is unsustainable
- We continue to budget for more clergy that we have and challenges around recruiting more remain – this is consistent with the national picture
- DBF service costs are broadly in-line with the previous year (highlighted some of the increase is funded by external grants). Areas where staff headcount have increased are due to compliance requirements

Thanks to all who attended the finance meetings (over 70 people joined) and more dates have been added:

22<sup>nd</sup> July @ 1730

1<sup>st</sup> October @ 1730

We have also listened to your requests to make the budget/accounts simpler and reduced the number of pages.

Looking ahead to 2026:

As a diocese we have a high dependency on Share income, so with the support of the Finance and Resources Committee a review of Asset Management is underway to consider what opportunities are available to grow capital and income. More funding is becoming available from National Church – more information to follow.

Q – Who and where are the 13 Mission Hubs?

Details of the first wave were shared with DS and further information can be found [here](#).

	<p>Request for more emphasis to be placed on rural parishes – JT responded that SB is currently working with rural incumbents to start the next wave of work, and this second phase will have real emphasis on ecology.</p> <p>Q – How many stipendiary roles will this money raise? – JT still working on the design, we are not looking to create mega deaneries, but we are also not at capacity for our deacons, so we are looking to import.</p> <p>Questions around increase in DBF staff compared to stipendiary was called out by +Stephen as ‘othering’ which he wished to cease. Of course we are uncomfortable with the vacancy rate, but this is a national problem that we need to address in a more rounded way and is constantly being reviewed by the FRC.</p> <p>The chair moved: <i>"That the Diocesan Board of Finance receives the Directors' and Trustees' Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024."</i></p> <p>Report and Accounts 2024 were received by DS and the summary was received and approved.</p> <p>The chair moved: <i>"That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the appointment of Crowe as the auditors for the Diocesan Board of Finance."</i></p>	<p>Received</p> <p>Approved by majority</p>
<b>6</b>	<b>Financial matters, national and local</b>	
	<p>A video had been shared with DS prior to the meeting outlining the unveiling of Major investment in local churches and parish clergy as £1.6bn three-year national spending plans.</p> <p>Canon Alan Smith was invited to address the meeting, the recording can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>The Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 2024 as amended by the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2025 was proclaimed to DS.</p>	Received

	DS received a Safeguarding update paper and the importance of this item being a topic on every agenda was stressed. Any questions please contact Suzy Fatcher.	Received
	DS received the updated Bishop's Guidelines on Parochial Fees. It was explained that both Bishop's Council and Bishop's Leadership Team have reviewed the guidelines document	Received
<b>8</b>	<b>Next meeting</b>	
	The next meeting of Diocesan Synod will be a day session on <b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025, 10.00 – 16.00 at Gryphon School, Sherborne.</b>	