

## Diocese of Salisbury

### History, Structure and Governance

#### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide further information about the history and structure of the Diocese of Salisbury and the Diocesan Board of Finance as well as outline the synodical governance structure.

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## 1 History

The Diocese of Sherborne was created in 705, when it was carved out of the bishopric of the West Saxons. The first Bishop of Sherborne was Saint Aldhelm.

In 909, the Diocese of Ramsbury was carved out of the north-western portion of the Diocese of Winchester. In 1058, Herman, Bishop of Ramsbury, was elected as Bishop of Sherborne, and the two 'sees' (the areas within a bishop's jurisdiction) were combined under his personal oversight.

In 1078, Saint Osmund was appointed to the combined dioceses of Sherborne and Ramsbury and moved the see to Salisbury.

In 1836, Dorset was added with the abolition of the then Diocese of Bristol. Berkshire was removed and added to the Diocese of Oxford.

In 1925, a suffragan bishop, (one who assists the Diocesan bishop) was appointed to support the Bishop of Salisbury and was titled Bishop of Sherborne.

In 1972, a link was established between the Diocese and Sudan by the then Bishop of Salisbury, George Reindorp, and colleagues in Sudan. South Sudan became independent in 2011, and we retain links with both countries.

In 1974, an additional suffragan bishop was appointed and titled Bishop of Ramsbury. A formal area scheme was created, with Ramsbury roughly covering the Wiltshire part of the Diocese and Sherborne covering the Dorset part.

In 1985, a link was established with the French Roman Catholic Diocese of Évreux by the then Archdeacon of Sherborne, John Oliver, and colleagues in France.

In the late 1980s, links were established with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia. This relationship continued to grow and strengthen after Latvian independence in 1991.

In 2009, the formal area scheme was revoked and replaced by a collegiate scheme of delegated authority from the Diocesan Bishop. In many matters, the Bishop of Sherborne ministers in the part of the Diocese that lies in Dorset, and the Bishop of Ramsbury in the part that lies in Wiltshire.

Anticipated in 2022, the deaneries of Jersey and Guernsey will become formally attached to the Diocese of Salisbury, and under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Salisbury once the Orders in Council have been registered in the Royal Courts of the two bailiwicks.

## 2 Structure

The Diocese of Salisbury covers a part of England that extends from the south coast up into Dorset and most of Wiltshire, plus parts of Devon and Hampshire.

That area is segmented into four areas called archdeaonries, which are then further segmented into deaneries, each with smaller still areas within them called benefices and parishes.

### Archdeaconries

There are 4 Archdeaconry areas in this diocese. Each area has the support and oversight of an Archdeacon.

### Deaneries

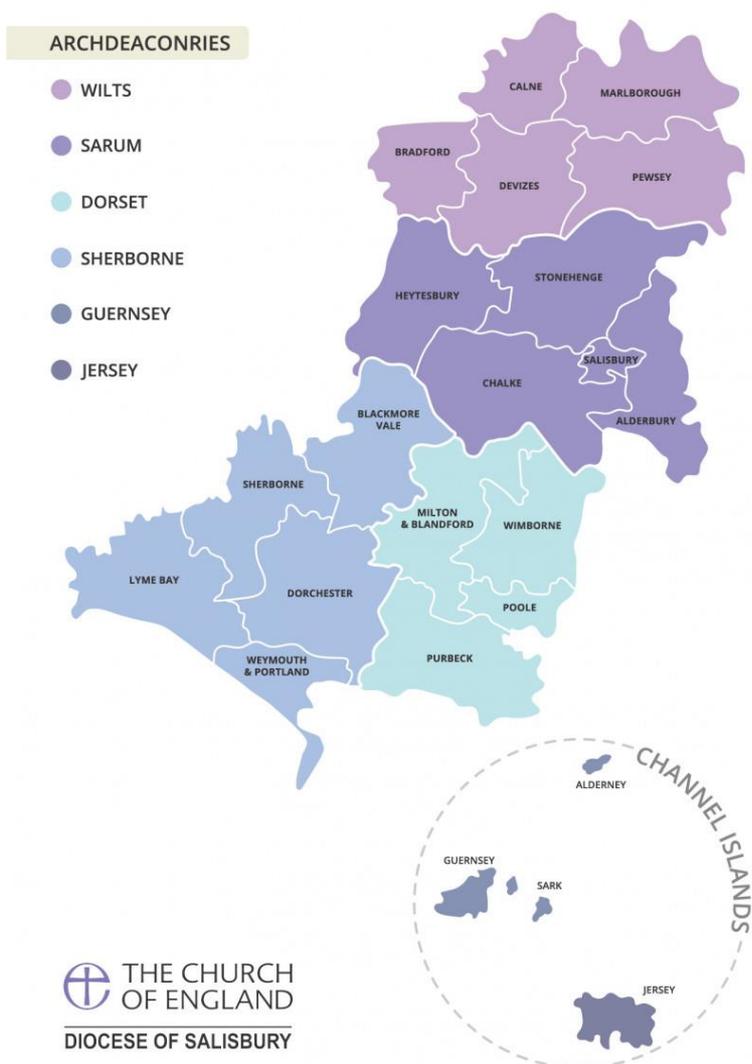
Within each archdeaconry, there are smaller areas called deaneries. A deanery is a group of neighbouring benefices (see below) forming an administrative area. Each deanery is overseen by a Rural Dean (an ordained minister) and a Lay Chair (not ordained).

Each deanery has a Deanery Synod, a regular meeting made up of the clergy and elected lay representatives from the parishes. The Deanery Synod is a forum for the parishes to exchange views on issues affecting the deanery. Its members also elect representatives to the Diocesan Synod and also to the General Synod, which is the national legislative and deliberative body of the Church of England.

The Diocese of Salisbury has 19 deaneries, plus the Channel Islands.

### Benefices

A benefice consists of a single parish or group of parishes, normally under the care of an incumbent, although a number of other arrangements are possible. We currently have 138



benefices, although this can change when we undertake a process called pastoral re-organisation, for example where benefices join together to form a team.

## Parishes

A parish is the smallest geographical area in the structure. Its boundaries outline the community which the church or churches there serve. There are currently 432 parishes in the diocese, but this figure can change when parish re-organisation takes place.

Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) are the governing bodies of parish churches and are responsible for the overall practical and spiritual wellbeing of their church, the church members, and the church buildings. PCC members can nominate and elect people to Deanery Synods.

## 3 Leadership

The mission and ministry of the Diocese is led, inspired and encouraged by the Diocesan Bishop.

The Diocesan Bishop is supported by a team of senior colleagues (2 Suffragan Bishops, 4 Archdeacons and others) who each have their own connections, contacts and networks across the diocese which enables them to serve the parishes and schools, leading to transformed lives and communities.

More information on the [Leadership and Governance](#) is available on the Church of England website.

In October 2017 the House of Bishops published [Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practical Guidance](#) “...recognising that the Church of England is not a single entity. Rather, it consists of many essentially autonomous office holders and other bodies, including both ancient ecclesiastical corporations and modern statutory corporations (many of which are charities).<sup>1</sup>” This guidance aims to clarify safeguarding roles and responsibilities and assist church communities further develop clear lines of accountability and leadership responsibilities.

### 3.1 Diocesan Bishop

The Bishops within the Church of England are called:

- To share in the ministry of the Gospel of Christ, proclaiming a narrative of Christian hope for all at a time of suffering for many;
- To exercise collegial leadership of the Church of England through the House and College of Bishops, promoting unity of the Church, and leading it in its mission and service;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/roles-and-responsibilities-practice-guidance.pdf>

- To lead, with brother and sister bishops, the emerging Church as we seek to live out our vocation locally and nationally, exploring opportunities for deepening relationships with neighbouring dioceses.

As the Bishop of Salisbury you are called<sup>2</sup>

- To lead the diocese in discerning its vision for God's mission and ministry in pastoral care and evangelism and in implementing a strategy for realising this;
- To have a care for bringing others to faith, for growing a church which is younger and more diverse, characterized by mixed ecology, by communities of confident disciples and by the care of older people and the isolated;
- To encourage people and churches to be courageous in the gospel, confident in their witness, bold in their hopes, faith-filled around an optimistic vision and energized to make a difference
- To create a culture of mutuality across the diocese and with the wider church, living this out in the senior team and in deepening relationships with churches in Sudan and South Sudan;
- To empower lay people in their leadership and in their partnership with clergy, modelling this in collaborative working relationships with lay staff;
- To welcome the Channel Islands and to encourage their mission, to develop their relationship with the diocese and to connect personally with the wider civic leadership in the Islands;
- To encourage local churches in service of their local communities, with particular care for serving military and veterans, seeking opportunities to be present in the wider public square.

The Bishop of Salisbury has particular accountability for ensuring that the Diocese of Salisbury is a safe place for children and adults at risk and that it models the highest standards of safeguarding in accordance with the policies of the Church of England.

### 3.2 Archdeacons

Archdeacons are senior priests in the Church of England who oversee and support the ministry and mission of many parishes over a defined area within a diocese called an Archdeaconry. They have a number of important public functions within a network of relationships across a diocese.

Their work includes:

- Representing their parishes to the Bishop, and the Bishop to the parishes.
- Assisting the suffragan bishops with clergy appointments.

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<sup>2</sup> From the Inauguration of the Ministry of The Right Reverend Stephen Lake as the 79<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Salisbury Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2022

- Guiding Rural Deans in their ministry.
- Individual pastoral care to church office holders (such as clergy and churchwardens).
- Involvement and support during Pastoral re-organisation.
- Presenting new deacons and priests for ordination.
- Inducting ministers into their congregations.
- Advising on parish outreach into villages, towns and cities.
- Advising on disputes, grievances and disciplinary issues.
- Advising on care of church buildings, furniture and churchyards, including support with Faculties (planning consent for changes in church buildings).
- Offering advice and support on Parish Share (a parish's contribution to diocesan finances including clergy costs).
- Annual Archdeacons' Visitations, including admission of new Churchwardens into parishes.
- Triennial Inspections (every 3 years).
- Other tasks and responsibilities, delegated by the Bishop as required.

As well as local responsibilities, an Archdeacon may also have national, and possibly international, portfolios or areas of additional responsibility.

## 4 Governance

The Diocese of Salisbury is led by the Bishop of Salisbury and governed by Diocesan Synod, consisting of clergy, bishops, and laity. Members are elected to represent the diocesan community and participate in a range of governance committees.

Visit the Church of England website for more information on [Church Representation Rules](#) that is a vital tool for all those involved in parochial, diocesan and national Church governance.

### 4.1 Diocesan Synod

Diocesan Synod is the statutory governing body of the Diocese of Salisbury. It meets regularly to discuss matters relating to church life. It is an elected body and can debate matters referred from deaneries, parochial church councils (PCCs) and from individual Synod members.

#### Why do we have a Diocesan Synod?

The Bishop has a duty to consult the Diocesan Synod on matters of general importance and concern to the Diocese and, in turn, the Diocesan Synod provides a connection to Deanery Synods and PCCs. This means that decisions about everything are taken by the Bishop, acting on the advice and consent of representatives of the clergy and laity of our Diocese that make up our Diocesan Synod.

## Who is on the Diocesan Synod?

Synod members are elected to serve for three years - a “triennium”. The new triennium for Salisbury began in September 2021.

A synod is a gathering of the clergy and laity in a diocese, so the Diocesan Synod is made up of three ‘Houses’:

- House of Bishops
- House of Clergy
- House of Laity

The President of the Synod is the Bishop of Salisbury. The Chairs of the House of Clergy and the House of Laity are the vice-presidents of the Synod and, in that role, also vice-chairs of Bishop’s Council. They share in shaping the agenda of the Diocesan Synod and chairing its meetings. They also ensure that the opinions of their respective Houses and the Deaneries are canvassed and heard.

## What does the Diocesan Synod do?

- Consider matters concerning the Church of England
- Make provision for these matters in relation to the Diocese
- Consider and express an opinion on matters of religious or public interest
- Advise the Bishop on matters on which he may consult Synod
- Consider and expresses an opinion on any matters referred to it by the General Synod

In addition, Diocesan Synod is responsible for:

- Keeping Deanery Synods informed on policies, problems and Synod business
- Delegating some executive functions to Deanery Synods
- Keeping itself informed through Deanery Synods of opinions and events in the parishes
- Discussing matters raised by Deanery Synods and Parochial Church Councils

### 4.2 Bishop’s Council and Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF)

Bishop’s Council is responsible for considering matters of policy, advising the Diocesan Bishop, and determining how matters should be taken forward to the Diocesan Synod.

- Standing committee of Diocesan Synod
- Trustees and Directors of the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) charity and company
- Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee
- Diocesan Parsonages Board

As trustees and directors of the DBF, it promotes and assists the work and purposes of the Church of England in the Diocese of Salisbury. This is achieved principally through the provision of ministry across the parishes in the diocese. The DBF also provides advice, training and resources to clergy, laity and parishes, all to support the life of the Church and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom.

### Standing committee of Diocesan Synod

As the standing committee of the Diocesan Synod it has the following functions:

- to consider matters concerning the Church of England and to advise the synod on the provisions to be made for such matters in the diocese ("policy")
- to oversee direct and co-ordinate the implementation of policy by any non-statutory body or committee established by synod
- to advise any statutory body or committee on any matter referred to the council by any such body or committee
- to plan the business of the synod, to prepare the agenda for its sessions, and to circulate to members information about matters for discussion
- to initiate proposals for action by the synod and to advise it on matters of policy which are placed before it
- to advise the president on any matter which he may refer to the council
- subject to the directions of the synod to transact the business of the synod when it is not in session
- to appoint members of committee or nominate members for election to committees subject to the directions of the synod
- to carry out such other functions as the synod may delegate to it and in its capacity as the executive committee of the diocesan board of finance, the council such functions as are ascribed to it by the constitution of the diocesan board of finance, and in its capacity as the diocesan mission and pastoral committee such functions as are prescribed to it by law.

### Trustees and Directors of the Salisbury Board of Finance (DBF)

The trustees of the Diocesan Board of Finance make decisions about the financial resources provided to support mission and ministry across the Diocese of Salisbury.

Salisbury DBF is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, no. 17442, Registered charity no. 240833. The Trustees of the DBF Charity and Company are also the members of Bishop's Council.

The DBF Chair is a member of Diocesan Synod and Bishop's Council and chairs the part of the Synod agenda concerned with financial aspects of the governance of the Diocese. There is also a strong representational element to this role in visiting parishes and deaneries, explaining policy and responding to comments.

The Vice Chair of the DBF is also usually a member of Bishop's Council.

### Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC)

This committee is established under the Pastoral Measure 1983 and the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

Its objectives are to review, as directed by the Diocesan Bishop or as considered necessary by the Committee, arrangements for pastoral supervision in the Diocese.

There are four sub-committees, each responsible for one of the four Archdeaconry areas. They meet at least three times a year in each of the Episcopal 'Areas' (ie, Ramsbury or Sherborne).

Each sub-committee is Chaired by an Archdeacon and ex-officio members consist of all the rural deans, lay chairs and ecumenical officers serving in that area. These committees come together occasionally for joint meetings in which they can share discussions on matters of interest.

There is a statutory procedure for consultation with interested parties (for example incumbents, Parochial Church Council (PCCs) and Patrons of affected parishes) before proposals are passed to the Church Commissioners, who make Pastoral Schemes and Orders.

Details of the consultations which are currently in progress and are undergoing full public consultation can be viewed on the national [Church of England website](#).

Main duties as outlined in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 are:

- to make or assist in making better provision for the care of souls in the diocese as a whole
- to review arrangements for pastoral supervision and care in the diocese
- to prepare strategies or proposals for carrying the functions under the previous two bullet points into effect, for submission to the bishop and diocesan synod for approval
- to maintain an overview of matters relating to church buildings and their use
- to carry out the use-seeking role in respect of churches which are listed buildings or in conservation areas and which have been or are proposed to be closed, and to develop proposals for the future of other closed churches
- to make recommendations to the bishop for matters which may be provided for in schemes and orders under the 2011 Measure
- to review the arrangements for pastoral supervision in each conventional district in the diocese at least once every five years or when directed by the bishop.
- The DMPC is also consulted about proposals for making a Bishop's Mission Order
- To liaise with the DBF when making or assisting in making better provision for the care of souls in the diocese as a whole, allocating appropriate spheres of work and having regard to financial implications

- To consider recommendations relating to national policy in the fields of deployment, ministry, conditions of service and stipends
- To endeavour to be in regular contact with its local planning authorities and other bodies as appropriate

## Diocesan Parsonages Board

The Trustees of the DBF has responsibility for the furtherance of the work of the Church of England by the exercise of their functions under the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972. This is primarily concerned with the provision and care of suitable housing for clergy.

Duties related to parsonage houses include:

- Improvement, demolition or erection
- Inspection and reporting on the conditions of the houses
- Execute repairs and interior decoration
- Manage ingoing works

## 4.3 Principal Committees of the Bishop's Council

### 4.3.1 Finance Committee

Bishop's Council has delegated the responsibility to scrutinise and manage the financial and employment concerns of the DBF, to the Finance Committee. Specifically, the committee assures internal controls, independent audit, compliance with all relevant legislation, and effective financial analysis that support transparent decision-making and accountability for the DBF.

Duties include:

- Financial Management & Planning
- Budget and 'Fairer Share' Preparation
- Employment matters
- Property and Trusts Matters
- Preparation, review and Audit of the Annual Financial Report and Accounts

### 4.3.2 Mission and Ministry Committee

This committee is responsible for enabling mission and ministry across the diocese in response to the strategic direction set by the Bishop's Council. The committee formulates policies, provides resources through the DBF and monitors delivery in all aspects of mission and ministry, working in partnership with the Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committees.

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#### 4.3.4 Audit and Risk Committee

The committee discusses matters in relation to the Annual Report and Accounts of the DBF and assures the Bishop's Council that the proper processes have been followed. It also considers the integrity of financial reporting, systems of internal control and the adequacy of arrangements relating to the management of risk.