Minutes — June 2026

Meeting Date	Wednesday 24th June 2026
Venue	**This meeting was held on Zoom**

Item	Description	Action Outcome / Initial
1	**Opening and Welcome**	
	Meeting was opened by Chair House of Laity (RC). Synod noted the election of Jane Williams (JW) as the new Chair of House of Clergy. Synod wished +Karen (+K) a Happy Birthday and thanked her for her leadership as acting Bishop of Salisbury. Quorum for the meeting was confirmed and no conflicts of interest were declared. The minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2026 were received and approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. No matters arising were raised. David Pain (DP) outlined the timetable for the forthcoming General Synod elections and encouraged members to consider standing for and participating in the process.	Quorate Received and approved
2	**Presidential Address**	
	+K delivered the presidential address, reflecting on recent developments with +Stephen. Statements from ++Sarah and Lambeth Palace were shared. She reflected on the bishop's role in providing unity, mission leadership, governance oversight and spiritual encouragement. She used the address to balance acknowledgment of current difficulties with examples of encouragement from across the Diocese. The full address can be read here.	Received
3	**AGM of the Board of Finance**	
	Jane McCormick (JM) presented the Directors' and trustees' report and consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2025. This was framed around both financial stewardship and charitable impact. JM highlighted the	

	DBF's purpose of supporting ministry across the Diocese and encouraged members to read the separate Impact Report detailing the breadth of diocesan activity, including work linking churches and schools. Members were informed that Crowe had completed their first audit of the DBF accounts. The audit process had been thorough and provided assurance regarding the quality of financial management and governance. Drawing on the finance summary paper, JM highlighted that: • Parish Share remained the Diocese's principal income source at approximately £10.3 million. • Parish Share income continued to fall short of funding direct ministry costs. • The Diocese continued to face a structural deficit broadly estimated at around £2 million annually. • The reported operating deficit for 2025 was £1.4 million. • Significant work was underway to reduce diocesan expenditure, including a target reduction of approximately £500,000 in central costs. • Trustees were reviewing ministry deployment, asset utilisation, investment management and glebe management as part of a wider sustainability strategy. The paper highlighted that 70% of diocesan income was derived from Parish Share and that direct ministry costs remained the largest area of expenditure. Members also noted significant grant income growth, increased rental income from clergy housing, and continued pressure on unrestricted reserves. JM moved the motion: "That the Diocesan Board of Finance receives the Directors' and Trustees' Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025." JM further reported on governance and risk management associated with the ongoing audit concerning allegations of financial irregularities by Bishop Stephen Lake which had led to him stepping back from active ministry. The matter had been reported to the Charity Commission as a serious incident. Trustees had established additional oversight arrangements, were receiving regular briefings and were working closely with National Church Institutions and Lambeth Palace. The Charity Commission had confirmed support for the approach being	Received

	taken by trustees which is determined by policies of the church in collaboration with the National Church Institutions and Lambeth Palace. The trustees have moved swiftly to secure new arrangements for delegation to Bishop Karen as acting bishop including the appropriate use of Bishop's discretionary funds, and to ensure support is in place for all of those impacted by the events. Synod was informed that this was an ongoing process which may have further impact on the reputation of the DBF charity as we move forward. In this context JM drew the attention of Synod to the risk report and to the ongoing attention to risk by the DBF trustees. JM moved: "That the Diocesan Board of Finance approves the appointment of Crowe as the auditors for the Diocesan Board of Finance."	Approved
4	**Synod Questions**	
	Questions received prior to the meeting were answered and shared with all and can be found here. Supplementary Questions: 1. Simon Chambers – concerned over the proposed outsourcing of clergy housing department. DP explained the objective was to improve quality of support provided to clergy households while retaining diocesan oversight. A contract management function and clergy involvement in governance arrangements were planned. 2. Oliver Iliffe asked about opportunities to realise value from land holdings with development potential. DP outlined ongoing work to identify suitable opportunities while balancing planning, community and financial considerations; he also confirmed further work was underway through a renewed professional tender process. 3. Oliver Iliffe sought clarification regarding Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board funding. JM and DP explained that the funding was tightly controlled, subject to detailed reporting and directed towards agreed mission priorities. Another member cautioned against creating posts dependent on short-term funding without a sustainability plan. JM confirmed that this risk was recognised and actively managed.	
5	**Safeguarding Update**	

	Suzy Futcher (SF) presented a verbal update on Safeguarding. This focused on culture and barriers to effective safeguarding. She shared some examples of comments received by the team including that safeguarding is not needed where there are no children present or that long standing members did not need checks or training. This affects compliance and creation of a genuinely safe church environment. Members heard that increased reporting was viewed positively because it indicated greater awareness and willingness to raise concerns. Examples of safeguarding work included: • Adult safeguarding cases involving dementia and domestic abuse • DBS disclosures • Offender management arrangements • Historic abuse disclosures • Mental health concerns impacting church communities Questions from members explored categorisation of safeguarding concerns and the threshold for referral. Suzy confirmed that even where concerns ultimately fell outside formal safeguarding criteria, they were often recorded because they might develop into safeguarding matters later. Members were encouraged to consult the safeguarding team whenever concerns arose. Members thanked the safeguarding team for its work.	Received
6	**Ministry In Low Income Communities**	
	James Menzies (JMz) introduced a motion concerning ministry within Low Income Community (LINC) parishes. JMz outlined the distinctive challenges associated with ministry in LINC areas. Members heard that such communities frequently experienced greater levels of poverty, poor health, social isolation, lower educational attainment and reduced trust in institutions. The motion argued that these realities required sustained local presence, incarnational ministry and long-term investment. It also highlighted concerns that financial pressures across the Church could increasingly lead to ministry deployment being shaped by local financial capacity rather than pastoral and missional need. Members spoke in favour of the motion:	

	• Pressure experienced by clergy serving deprived contexts • Importance of maintaining ministry where measurable outcomes may be slower to emerge • The need to hear voices from communities often underrepresented within diocesan structures Others voiced concern: • Whether a commitment to 'prioritise' LIINC parishes might unintentionally disadvantage other communities experiencing deprivation • Whether Synod should seek to influence ministry deployment decisions that belong with bishops and archdeacons • If references to 'high-quality ordained ministry' could imply differing expectations elsewhere Amendments to the motion were debated and voted upon: 1. Deletion of second bullet point relating to deployment strategy 2. Deletion of the adjectives 'dedicated, adequate, high quality' before 'ordained ministry' The amended motion was carried with 96% support. Viz: That this Synod: • Recognises the unique challenges of ministry in LINC parishes • Requests the DBF to consider ways that ordained ministry can be funded where churches are not (currently) self-sustaining, for example parish partnerships	In favour 54% In favour 71% Report back to DS in 12-months
7	**Consultation re Bishop Ramsbury**	
	+K outlined the statutory consultation process required before the Vacancy In See of Ramsbury could be filled. She shared that the Bishop's Council had already supported continuation of the post and invited Synod's views before a submission was made. A vote recorded over-whelming support (97%) for filling the vacancy with observations about the future scope of the role including: • Links with military communities and garrison towns • Continued support to archdeacons • Heritage and church buildings work	Approved

	+K asked members to submit additional comments regarding role scope and priorities so she and DP can work on the submission.	
8	**AOB**	
	No AOB items were raised. +K thanked everyone and closed with Grace.	