

MINUTES of a meeting of the **ST ALBANS DIOCESAN SYNOD** held at Putteridge Bury on **SATURDAY 12 OCTOBER 2024**

A Eucharist was held to mark the beginning of the new triennium, at which the Bishop of St Albans presided. This was followed by separate meetings of the Houses of Clergy and Laity.

The Synod convened at 1100 with the Bishop of St Albans in the Chair.

1. ELECTIONS

The Bishop of St Albans announced that Reverend Will Gibbs had been elected as Chair of the House of Clergy and Clerical Vice-President of the Synod and Reverend Kate Pearson elected as Deputy Vice-President. The Bishop of St Albans announced that Canon Peter Adams had been elected as Chair of the House of Laity and Lay Vice-President of the Synod and Mrs Kerry Smith as Deputy Vice-President.

2. INDUCTION FOR NEW MEMBERS

With the Chair's permission under Standing Order No. 4, the Diocesan Secretary gave a brief overview of the workings of the Diocesan Synod for new members.

Chair: Will Gibbs, Chair of the House of Clergy, assumed the Chair

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Bishop of St Albans addressed the Synod, and a copy of his Address is attached to the original Minutes. The Address may be found on the Diocesan website [here](#).

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Synod held on Saturday 15 June 2024, which had been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Bishop of St Albans.

The Minutes were ACCEPTED.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BUSINESS ITEMS

The Bishop of St Albans noted those people who had recently joined or left the Diocese, taken up new roles within the Diocese, retired or died.

6. QUESTIONS

Two questions had been received as set out in paper (DSQ/24/01), together with their responses.

Three supplementary questions were asked, and replies made, as set out below:

With reference to the First Notice Paper (DSQ/24/01) Question 1, Canon Peter Adams (Luton Deanery and General Synod) went on to ask the following supplementary question:

‘How can we see this grow in terms of being essential to the restoration of trust in Soul Survivor in the diocese and the wider church and for the church to be a continued source of vocation?’

In response to the supplementary question, The Bishop of St Albans thanked Peter Adams for the question and acknowledged that there were people at Synod who were or had been members of Soul Survivor and had been through a difficult time. The Bishop assured Synod that, as per the report, there would be nothing covered up, apologies would be made for mistakes and lessons learned. With regards to the new Bishop’s Mission Order, the Bishop’s Visitor, Revered Canon Tim Lomax, had made a report and a new Order needed to be made which would incorporate the learnings of the Scolding Report. The Bishop noted that the Trustees had been very open throughout the process and were committed to moving forward.

With reference to this question Emma Robarts (Buntingford Deanery) went on to ask the following supplementary question:

‘In terms of learning lessons, what specific changes will be made at once to diocesan policies?’

In response, The Bishop of St Albans thanked Emma Robarts for the question and noted that many changes had already been made since the beginning of the investigation.

With reference to the First Notice Paper (DSQ/24/01) Question 2, Canon Peter Adams (Luton Deanery and General Synod) went on to ask the following supplementary question:

‘Can I suggest that the thinking and work done on this is brought back to Synod for discussion and debate in the near future?’

In response to the supplementary question, The Bishop of St Albans thanked Peter Adams for the question and reported that a thoughtful reflection would be brought back to Bishop’s Council and Diocesan Synod.

7. AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

With the Chair’s permission under Standing Order No. 4, the Diocesan Secretary gave an update (DS/24/09).

Contributions were raised by Reverend Peter Ackroyd (Bedford Deanery) and Reverend Anne Crosby (Luton Deanery).

On behalf of the Bishop’s Council, the Chair moved:

“This Synod approves the amendments to their Standing Orders as noted in paper DS/24/09, with immediate effect”.

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED with ONE against and THREE abstentions.

8. DIOCESAN BUDGET AND STIPEND LEVELS 2025

With the Chair's permission under Standing Order No. 4 the Diocesan Secretary, the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Director of Finance introduced the budget and referred to the circulated recorded presentation. Time was allowed for table discussion.

Paper (DS/24/10) was enclosed.

A minor amendment to the first motion was noted and agreed (final date 1 April 2025, not 1 April 2024).

At the request of the Bishop's Council and on behalf of the Diocesan Board of Finance, the Chair of the Board of Finance, moved the following amended motion:

"That this Synod, noting the recommendation from the Central Stipends Authority that the stipend for this diocese be increased by 3% from 1 April 2025, resolves that the stipends for incumbents and those of incumbent status in this diocese should rise by £953 (3% of £31,758) to £32,711 from 1 April 2025."

Contributions were raised by Reverend Dr Peter Waddel (Watford Deanery), John Davie (Wheathampstead Deanery), and Emma Roberts (Buntingford Deanery).

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED with THREE abstentions.

At the request of the Bishop's Council and on behalf of the Diocesan Board of Finance, the Chair of the Board of Finance, moved:

"That the estimates of requirements of the Diocesan Common Fund in 2025 in the gross sum of £16,792,105 be approved, and that the Synod authorises the Diocesan Board of Finance to expend in accordance therewith a sum not exceeding £16,792,105 and that the sum of £14,567,000 be requested as parochial contributions in 2025, to be apportioned in accordance with the approved Parish Shares Scheme."

Contributions were raised by John Butler (Welwyn and Hatfield Deanery), Reverend John Hookway (Hertford and Ware) and Reverend Chris Kilgour (Cheshunt Deanery).

The Motion was PUT and CARRIED with FIVE abstentions.

Synod broke for lunch at 1300 and reconvened at 1400.

9. LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

On behalf of the Bishop's Council, the Bishop of St Albans gave a brief update, starting with a recorded presentation from the Bishop of Leicester, as Lead Bishop for LLF.

Contributions were raised by Catherine Harer (Rickmansworth Deanery), the Very Reverend Jo Kelly Moore (St Albans Deanery), Reverend Caren Topley (Amphill and Shefford Deanery), Geoff Harrison (St Albans Deanery), Reverend Canon Jane Banister (Berkhamsted Deanery) and Reverend Patricia Reed (Hitchin Deanery).

Chair: Canon Peter Adams, Chair of the House of Laity, assumed the Chair

10. PARISH GRANTS AND WELFARE GRANTS

On behalf of the Bishop's Council and with the Chair's permission under Standing Order No.4, the Diocesan Secretary gave a presentation.

Contributions were raised by Emma Robarts (Buntingford Deanery) and James Stewart (Sharnbrook Deanery).

11. GROWING YOUNGER AND MORE DIVERSE

On behalf of the Bishop's Council, the Bishop of Hertford and, with the Chair's permission under Standing Order No.4, the GYMD Programme Manager, gave a presentation.

Contributions were raised by Janna Bond (Luton Deanery), Reverend Chris Kilgour (Cheshunt Deanery) and Rebecca Mynett (Amphill and Shefford Deanery).

12. NET ZERO CARBON ACTION PLAN

On behalf of the Bishop's Council, the Bishop of Hertford and, with the Chair's permission under Standing Order No. 4, the Deputy Diocesan Secretary, and the Net Zero Carbon Officer, gave a presentation. Time was allowed for table discussion.

Paper (DS/24/11) was enclosed.

Contributions were raised by Reverend Kaushal David (Dunstable) and Reverend Michael Norman (Watford Deanery).

13. THE YEAR OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL AND WELLBEING

On behalf of the Bishop's Council, the Bishop of Hertford and, with the Chair's permission under Standing Order No. 4, the Reverend Oliver Blease, gave a presentation.

Contributions were raised by Reverend Jessica McLaren (Hitchin Deanery) and Janet Bird (Hertford and Ware).

The Bishop of St Albans thanked everybody for their contributions and closed the Synod with prayers at 1553.