



DIOCESAN SYNOD SYNOD QUESTIONS NOTICE PAPER

Question 1

Q Paula Brackenridge (Richmond & Barnes Deanery)

One of the Southwark Anti-Racism Charter principles is "a clear strategy for increasing and sustaining diversity in our governance structures at Diocesan and parish level, so as to ensure representation and participation of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds at all levels of our organisation."

The Turning up the Volume Action plan commits to "increasing the number of UKME post-holders recruited, both lay and ordained" and "increasing diversity in representative participation on Synodical and Diocesan and parochial governance structures".

As the principles suggest a clear strategy, it would be appropriate that the strategy includes numeric targets and target dates so that we can measure how we are doing and where we want to get to. Will the strategy include these?

A The Bishop of Croydon

Southwark Vision has a clear statement of intent, working to increase the diversity of leadership in lay and ordained roles in our churches and in every area where we are engaging staff and volunteers. This is to ensure that we better reflect the people we serve. The goal is set out in the [Anti-Racism Charter](#).

We know that around 35% of our parishes have UKME majority congregations and that, overall, London as an area (though not East Surrey) has over 50% of the population coming from UKME backgrounds. We have not set any specific targets, quotas, or target dates for individual parishes or for Diocesan structures. Set out below are our reasons at this stage for not doing so.

To be able to set a target we have to ascertain our baseline data, across all of our structures, Diocese, deanery and parish. This includes employed staff, clergy or lay, licensed or volunteers in church offices - such as on the PCC. We are currently undertaking this task.

To ensure greater diversity we need clear and transparent processes for recruitment, promotion, and nomination to roles and responsibilities, reflected in posts being advertised including job descriptions and person specifications for all roles. This work is in hand as is very much a part of our Human Resources' strategies.

Once these first two points are addressed, it may be possible to consider broad quotas at Diocesan level, however, successful implementation and monitoring is dependent upon the active support and engagement of leadership all levels. This is because successful implementation of targets and/or quotas necessitates a change in culture and must be accompanied by appropriate awareness raising and training, showing the benefits that institutions can draw from a more diverse and inclusive leadership balance. We are currently rolling out Unconscious Bias training (and training of trainers) to address this training need at Diocesan and parish level.

Question 2

Q Neal Harvey (Merton Deanery)

How many safeguarding incidents have been reported to the Diocesan officials in the past 12 months? Of those how many have been satisfactorily closed out, how many are ongoing, and are there any that have raised serious concerns to the Diocesan Secretary?

A The Diocesan Secretary

All safeguarding concerns are logged and for the purposes of this question are described as the 'safeguarding incidents' raised by the questioner.

The number of safeguarding concerns reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for this year (01/01/2022 - 11/11/2022) is 352. The majority of which are not allegations but queries around procedure such as safer recruitment advice and practice. Of these, 80 have been closed, or identified as ready for closure subject to final review by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. So far out of the 352 concerns there are 16 new allegations/concerns regarding church officers reported to the Diocesan Secretary (who is also the Bishop's Lead for Safeguarding) all of which necessitate a safeguarding core group in line with House of Bishops' Guidance. Serious incidents, requiring referral to the Diocesan Secretary for onward referral to the Charities Commission, are finalised at the end of the year and are likely to be fewer than 5.

Question 3

Q Neal Harvey (Merton Deanery)

In the light of the Bishop of Oxford's recent comments, does the DCT have any plans to bring forward proposals in support of the establishment of Same Sex marriage in the Church of England?

A The Bishop of Southwark

Questions of doctrine are not properly the remit of the DCT, which is confined to Diocesan governance and administration. The national LFF process is coming to a conclusion after a long period of careful and intensive listening and the House of Bishops will bring its reflections to General Synod for prayerful consideration in 2023.

Question 4

Q The Revd David Ruddick (Merton Deanery)

While applauding the scientific basis, moral imperative and impressive impact of the recent Gaia installation at the Cathedral, was there any discussion as to whether it was appropriate and worthy for the Cathedral to be elevating an exhibit in the name of a false pagan goddess?

A The Very Revd Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark

Questions which do not bear reference to the business of Diocesan Synod or are not directed areas which fall under the responsibility of Diocesan Synod, its constituent bodies or its officers, are not within the remit for Formal Synod Questions. The installation was itself a matter for the Cathedral's Chapter. However, the Very Revd Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark, has requested that this Question be informally answered below.

"The Chapter gave much consideration to the fact that the artist, Luke Jerram, named his work 'Gaia' which, as David rightly says, is a reference to pagan beliefs.

On balance we thought that the benefits that would come from having the installation in the Cathedral and the opportunity to explore issues around climate change and sustainability outweighed this pagan reference.

In all the material that the Dean and Chapter, with members of staff, produced to be used by visitors to the exhibition there was a clear Christian message and no further reference to this pagan element, beyond the name itself.”