



DIOCESAN SYNOD SYNOD QUESTIONS NOTICE PAPER

Question 1

Q Fr Martin Hislop (Kingston Deanery)

How many parishes are currently in an interregnum? How many House for Duty posts are currently operating in the Diocese? How many self-supporting or non-stipendiary clergy as distinct from PTOs are licensed in the Diocese?

A The Deputy Diocesan Secretary

As of 8 March 2024, there are 258 Benefices¹ in the Diocese which would be overseen by Incumbents/Priests-in-Charge. Southwark Diocese currently has 34 benefices which are vacant. For most of the vacant benefices, the recruitment process is underway or an appointment has been made and a licencing date set. Of these 34 vacant benefices, 12 have other stipendiary clergy ministering in the benefice as Team Vicars, Assistant Clergy or Interim Minsters.

As of 8 March 2024, the Diocese has 14 House for Duty posts and two of these posts are in vacancy.

As of 8 March 2024, there were 68 self-supporting or non-stipendiary ministers (SSMs). These numbers include those who are in secular jobs or not in employment but who offer licensed ministry i.e. are not paid sector chaplains nor Diocesan roles. It includes 14 SSM curates. This figure does not include those who now have PTO nor those holding House for Duty posts as these have been included above.

Question 2

Q April Alexander (Tandridge Deanery)

What progress has been made in the work that was promised to ensure that hustings can take place in 2026, even if the number of candidates is high?

A The Diocesan Secretary

Planning for the General Synod elections in 2026 will not begin until late 2025. Hustings are run by, and at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, in our case the Diocesan Registrar, and we will be working closely with them when planning for the elections and hustings. However, as previously stated, we will seek to hold in-person hustings at the next set of full General Synod elections but will also have the opportunity for them to be held online.

Question 3

Q Ruth Inwood (Reigate Deanery)

As a churchwarden, I welcome what was said in the last Presidential address, (18th November 23) regarding the introduction of PLF, that the Diocesan leadership will protect "the spectrum of conviction" on the Prayers of Love and Faith. In the event of a church being in vacancy, how will the wishes of a PCC that does not want a future incumbent to use the Prayers of Love and Faith be protected?

Will such a statement be required in the Parish Profile, Job Description and Person Spec, and how will the Diocesan Leadership ensure the wishes of the PCC are met?

A The Bishop of Southwark

The procedure for presenting a candidate to a benefice, or appointing a priest-in-charge, is clearly laid out in the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 and other relevant legislation. Section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 empowers the PCC to prepare 'a statement describing the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish'. This would be the natural place to describe the theological convictions of a parish on this matter. At present the material commended in the Prayers of Love and Faith may not be used in a 'standalone' service but only as part of a regular service of worship, and the discretion to use them or not is the minister's. Should the Prayers of Love and Faith be authorised under Canon B2, the Pastoral Guidance is clear: 'No minister can be made to use a form of service against their conscience even if a PCC would like them to; conversely, an incumbent cannot overrule the decision of a PCC if they have decided not to use the PLF' (para. 1.1.2). Para. 1.1.9 of the Pastoral Guidance explores this question further.

Question 4

Q The Revd Jonathan Macy (Plumstead Deanery)

I am thankful for Bishop Christopher's statement in his Presidential Address of November 2023, where he spoke of the 'leadership of this Diocese' being 'unshakeable in protecting the spectrum of conviction in this matter and continuing to hold in high esteem and respect the sincerity of those who do not wish to use the prayers as well as those who do'.

Team ministries are invariably accidents of geography, financial necessity, or poverty, and rarely of theological unity and shared conviction. What specific concrete actions will the Diocese take, beyond hoping for "goodwill", "honouring consciences", or "seeking assurances" to ensure that churches within teams who specifically decline to use PLF, whereas the Rector is fully supportive and looking for a parish wide policy, will not have PLF used in their church and that their wish for a non-PLF using minister will be heard and acted upon.

A The Bishop of Southwark

Using commended prayers as part of regular worship can only happen at the discretion of the minister with the cure of souls. 'No minister can ever be forced to use the prayers against their conscience' (Pastoral Guidance, para. 1.1.8). The Pastoral Guidance (para.

1.1.8) offers some clear principles applicable to Team Ministries should the Prayers of Love and Faith be authorised under Canon B5 and a PCC decide to offer them. It notes, 'Diversity within a team can be a source of conflict, but it can also be an asset in ministering to groups of people who will never be fully monochrome, and gives an opportunity to model generous handling of difference'.

Question 5

Q The Revd Jonathan Macy (Plumstead Deanery)

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Please could it be confirmed that this view has, and will continue to, play a central part in the selection for all future senior appointments, and that these finally appointed people will reflect this diversity directly into the Senior Leadership of the Diocese.

A The Bishop of Southwark

The Diocese of Southwark is committed under God to appointing the people best qualified for the various ministries to which we are called and to honouring the diversity which is God's gift to us. Until the untimely death of Bishop Karowei, the College of Bishops exemplified unity in theological difference held in good faith. Similarly, there is a generous range of theological conviction among the Bishop's Senior Staff, and today a new Dean of Revitalisation is being commissioned. The record of appointments speaks for itself and attitudes to the Prayers of Love and Faith are only one vector of diversity among many.

Question (6)

Q The Revd David Ruddick (Merton Deanery)

Would the Diocesan Secretary supply some more information about the impact of the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith on the Parish Support Fund to date? In particular:

- a) The actual impact upon the collection rate for 2023;
- b) The actual impact upon income in 2023;
- c) An estimate of the total money which will not be received into the PSF in 2024, because parishes have opted not to make a formal pledge and not to pay anything to the PSF (based on the pledges of those parishes as things stand);
- d) An estimate of the total money to come in 2024 from parishes which have made a pledge to the PSF whilst indicating that this may change;
- e) An estimate of the total money to come in 2024 from parishes which have opted not to make a formal pledge to the PSF for 2024, but have instead given an indicative maximum figure which they are intending to pay as things stand;
- f) An estimate of the total money to come in 2024 from parishes which have opted to pay this money through the Church of England Evangelical Council's Ephesian Fund, or other alternative payment mechanisms, such as the Good Stewards Trust.

A Gabby Parikh

We are very grateful for the generosity of our parishes enabling us to reach our budget expectations of over £15.9m in Parish Support Fund collections for 2023. The impact of the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) on the Parish Support Fund (PSF) in monetary terms is as follows.

- a) The collection rate for 2023 was reduced by 0.5%. Nevertheless, parishes generously fulfilled 99% of all pledges.
- b) Just over £85,000 of pledges were unpaid in 2023 due to PLF concerns.
- c) There is only one parish who, because of PLF, has opted not to make a formal pledge nor pay anything to the PSF in 2024. In 2023 their pledge contribution was approximately £30,000.
- d) Parishes with approximately £200,000 in pledges have said that their pledge may change due to the PLF. However, please note that some may increase.
- e) One parish has chosen not to make a formal pledge but has given an indicative maximum figure of around £168,000 which they are intending to pay as things stand.

Currently we are expecting to receive approximately around £220,000 from the Ephesian Fund or Southwark Good Stewards' Trust in 2024.

Question (7)

Q The Revd David Ruddick (Merton Deanery)

How many parishes have currently indicated to the Diocese that clergy members or PCC or both are planning to make use of the Church of England Evangelical Council's informal spiritual oversight on a temporary basis, until structural provision is provided for those who cannot in good conscience support the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith into our national liturgy? It would be helpful to know the numbers of clergy and electoral roll members this figure represents.

A The Bishop of Southwark

The Bishop of Southwark's office is aware of four parishes whose PCCs have contacted the CEEC for temporary and informal spiritual oversight and one parish where the incumbent is seeking the same. To these five parishes, ten clergy are licensed (i.e. 1.96% of 508 licensed clergy). They have a combined electoral roll of 1,112 (i.e. 4.13% of 26,896 on our electoral rolls). The PCC of a sixth parish wrote to the CEEC to seek its oversight to be told that provision was already made through the episcopal care extended through the Bishop of Ebbsfleet.

Question 8

Q Catharina Stibe Hickson (Tandridge Deanery)

What percentage of our diocesan properties have upto date levels of insulation. I seek a response by Properties by category type. Eg domestic housing, places of work, places of public meeting etc. Also by category of insulation eg roof insulation, double glazing, doors, cavity walls etc.

A Ruth Martin

At this moment in time, we do not have all of the data for all of the types of property you have set out. This is very relevant data as the Diocese is committed to achieving NZC and having achieved Bronze Eco Diocese award is working hard towards the Silver Eco Diocese award. Gathering and analysing data across the Diocese will be an important part and will start to be possible once we complete our recruitment to vacancies in the property team.

The Diocese has been collecting Energy Performance Certificate data from its condition surveys and quinquennial inspection of parsonages. Our data is updated particularly during vacancies when we obtain certificates. The latest EPC data is from 2021, and was collated by the National Church, when the average rating in Southwark was “D” which was in line with the National average. We can inform Synod that as of 2021, 172 diocesan residential properties housing clergy had Energy Performance Certificates, of which 20% were at level “C” or above. This data continues to be updated on a property-by-property basis, when parsonages are vacant, or during the quinquennial inspections which are due to recommence.

The Diocese does not collect insulation information in relation to church halls as these are managed and owned by parishes but as part of our action plan for NZC parishes will have a large part to play.

We can inform Synod that Trinity House has 300mm of Mineral Fibre Insulation in the roof, which is believed to be around 12 years old, with cavity walls. Most of our Parsonages will have a minimum of 200mm of roof insulation.

Question 9

Q Michael Hartley (Camberwell Deanery)

Safeguarding dashboards (see www.safeguardingdashboards.org.uk) are a tool now widely used to help parishes (and other organisations) identify the status of their safeguarding activities. At present, Southwark is one of only four dioceses in the Church of England in which this tool is not yet available to parishes.

The 2022 safeguarding report to the Audit and Risk Committee (January 2023) stated that “...parishes were not asked to self-audit their safeguarding arrangements (in 2022), whilst the Diocese explored the adoption of Safeguarding Dashboards. This (is) currently subject to review with a final decision due imminently.”

I would like to ask if it has yet been determined whether permitting parishes to use the dashboard would represent a useful additional resource for the diocese, and for parishes? If no, when will that determination will be made; and if yes, what is the timeframe for its rollout in Southwark?

A Diocesan Secretary

Southwark Diocese are in dialogue with the National Safeguarding Team (NST) regarding adoption of the Safeguarding Dashboards. The NST have established an executive group in partnership with the provider around the integration of the safeguarding standards, which is due for launch in September 2024, following piloting in the summer. It is not recommended that the diocese adopt the dashboards during this period. Once live,

Southwark Diocese will re-engage with the NST to understand whether the dashboards are now endorsed for adoption. The DSA will provide an update to parishes in October 2024.

In the meantime, the diocesan safeguarding team are preparing to launch a parish audit, for which there will be parish communication in April / May 2024.

Question 10

Q The Revd Aneal Appadoo (Reigate Deanery)

The Church of England's Statistics for Mission 2022 report (which was published in November 2023) showed that by most measures, levels of national attendance and participation in church during 2022 were higher than in 2021 while remaining lower than in 2019, pre-covid. Reading the data there continues to be an overall decline in key metrics over the longer term and I would therefore be grateful for the following:

a) Can figures be provided for the Diocese of Southwark in 2022 compared to 2019 and 2021, for the following key metrics: adult average weekly attendance; child average weekly attendance; adult average Sunday attendance; child average Sunday attendance?

b) If there has been a decline over the last three-year period for the Diocese of Southwark according to these metrics, can this Synod be informed of how the next phase of the Southwark Vision intends to reverse the trend and, by God's grace, stimulate growth? I am especially interested to learn about new or different strategies.

A Deputy Diocesan Secretary

The adult average weekly attendance (AWA); child average weekly attendance; adult average Sunday attendance (ASA) and the child average Sunday attendance are shown in the table below. This information is taken from the 2022 Statistics for Mission report published by the Church of England Data Services -

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/data-services>

	2019	2021	2022	2019-2022	2021-2022
Adult AWA (October)	30,600	22,800	24,400	-20%	7%
Child AWA (October)	7,600	4,600	5,600	-26%	22%
All AWA (October)	38,200	27,400	30,000	-21%	9%
Adult ASA (October)	26,300	19,200	20,800	-21%	8%
Child ASA (October)	6,500	4,200	4,800	-26%	14%
All ASA (October)	32,800	23,400	25,600	-22%	9%

The next phase of [Southwark Vision \(2024-2035\)](#) as agreed by the Diocesan Synod in November 2023 sets out clear priorities for the future. This includes revitalisation initiatives such as:

- creating a culture of missional innovation, revitalisation and risk-taking in a mixed ecology Church, including Mission Action Planning
- Appointing 100 lay and ordained pioneers over the next five years, leading to more, healthy, fresh expressions of Church

- Identifying contexts where Hub or Resourcing Church models might bring fresh life and replicate good practice which, together with the other priorities, aim to see our Diocese surpassing the pre-pandemic levels of attendance in the next 5 years. This growth will include a mixed ecology of worship patterns from Sunday to Saturday.

Question 11

Q Rosemary Wilson (Tooting Deanery)

Could the SDBE confirm whether or not they have responded to the current government consultation on Draft Guidance for Schools for dealing with pupils who are questioning their identity? And if so, could Diocesan Synod be told exactly what was said?

A The Bishop of Croydon

I can confirm that the SDBE has responded to the Government consultation on ‘Gender questioning children: draft schools and colleges guidance’.

The consultation ran from 19 December 2023 to 12 March 2024. It sought views on the content of the guidance and whether it would help to support schools and colleges, teachers and leaders to make considered and lawful decisions in relation to children who are questioning their gender and the wider school and college community.

The SDBE provided a range of feedback and clarifications in response to the consultation covering training, level of detail provided in the draft guidance, conflict with staff beliefs, communication with parents, the role of the headteacher, consistency between schools, and how complaints would be dealt with.