



BACKGROUND TO THE HANDBOOK

In July 2015, the Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Southwark approved a report, The Fit for Purpose Report, which made detailed proposals to unify and simplify Diocesan governance and administration in support of mission. Synod directed its implementation. During 2018, the initial implementation was reviewed and found by Trustees and Synod to be, as the original report intended, fit for purpose.

The Fit for Purpose Report, which was adopted by Synod in 2015, was used as the draft handbook during the initial implementation phase in the synodical triennium 2015/2018, during which time a number of key tasks instructed by Synod were undertaken, including the amendments of the Articles of Association. During this time, it has been finalised into this edition as implementation took place and forms and terms of reference were implemented. Those familiar with the Fit for Purpose Report will see that it is an updated version of that report, with appropriate appendices and further clarification that has resulted from queries as they have occurred during the last three years, reflecting the implementation. It will be made available online on the website for the triennium.

A diocese is both an administrative unit and a pastoral body, under the pastoral, missionary and spiritual care of its bishop, through which ‘the members may have the same care for one another’ as Christ has for us. We belong to the body of Christ, we are members of one another and we seek each others’ flourishing.

In this context, we seek to discern the activity of the Spirit in the places of our Diocese and to formulate our strategies in that activity’s light. The theological intent of policy is then to enable, and to draw others into, the living of Christ-like lives.

The following summary highlights the main features of the implementation during the triennium 2015/2018.

The creation of an umbrella Diocesan Council of Trustees. All members now have trustee responsibilities and are simultaneously:

- a. members of the Bishop’s Council
- b. members, Directors, and Trustees of the Diocesan Board of Finance
- c. members of the Diocesan Parsonages Board [now incorporated into the DBF]
- d. members of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee.

This structure is represented in Appendix A. (Since 2015, changes include the Diocesan Minority Ethnic Affairs Committee of the Bishop’s Council which has been added to the formal structure).

This has unified meetings that used to deal with policy and with finance separately, ensuring that areas of large expenditure and decisions about priorities are fully integrated. We also enable policy and finance decisions to sit alongside considerations about the shape of mission on the ground (pastoral reorganisation, Bishop's Mission Orders) and the presence of clergy in parishes (with parsonages) to support and enable mission.

The Articles of Association of the South London Church Fund and Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance were revised and adopted in October 2017, at Appendix B. The accompanying Memorandum of Understanding was also adopted in May 2017 and is at Appendix C.

1. The creation of a much smaller sub-committee structure, a consequent reduction in the number of subsidiary meetings and in the hours of staff time needed to service these:

The Diocesan Council of Trustees (DCT) has two sub-committees: Audit and Governance, now Audit and Risk (from October 2018) and Policy and Finance. Policy and Finance is the standing committee of the DCT. The Policy and Finance committee has two sub-committees: Investment and Remuneration. These changes ended the practice of Diocesan Heads of Department being managed by committees. The Brief for Chairs of the DCT and Committees is at Appendix D. It increases accountability as all Heads of Department, who are Diocesan employees, report directly to the Diocesan Secretary who reports to the Bishop of Southwark. Heads of Department who are clergy office holders have dual accountabilities to both the Bishop of Southwark and to the Diocesan Secretary. The organisation chart of the Diocese of Southwark is at Appendix E.

2. A change of culture and behaviour:

Members of new committees need to appreciate and take seriously an outward facing, ambassadorial role within the Diocese to ensure that parishes and deaneries feel engaged with the activities of the Diocesan and area offices and the service they offer the churches. To speak of membership reminds us that we are the body of Christ and members of that body (1 Cor 12:27), in order that our contribution may be for the building up of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4: 13).

The connection between the Diocesan Council of Trustees and the deaneries is represented through elections to the Diocesan Synod, by and largely from which the members of the Diocesan Council of Trustees are elected. Role descriptions for trustees have been developed. The Model rules for Deaneries is at Appendix F.

3. The adoption of principles of good diocesan governance:

The so-called Nolan principles of the Seven Standards of Public Life inform the principles of Good Governance, and the Code of Conduct for trustees is at Appendix G. In order to have the most effective governance body possible, the Diocese asks potential trustees to complete a skills audit. Synod members and Trustees are also asked to complete the Demographic data form which enables the Diocese to try and ensure that its leadership represents the diversity of the communities it serves. There are a number of external

guides on governance. As the Diocese of Southwark is one of the largest charities, the Charity Governance Code for larger charities is useful, and linked in Further Appendices. However, the Church of England is a complex structure with its own legal instruments known as the Ecclesiastical Measures and these are referred to in the appropriate Diocesan bodies and committees.

The Southwark Governance Principles are:

1. **Christian values:** Trustees will seek to model and espouse Christlikeness and service. They will be people of prayer. They will be committed to supporting approved Diocesan strategy for the furtherance of the mission of the Diocese of Southwark
2. **Selflessness:** Trustees should act solely in terms of the interests of the Church as the Body of Christ, the Diocese and the wider public. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends. They should take seriously their role as representatives, bringing parish views to meetings and reporting back to their electorate
3. **Integrity:** Trustees should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties
4. **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit
5. **Accountability:** Trustees are accountable for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office
6. **Openness:** Trustees should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it
7. **Honesty:** Trustees have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their charitable, synodical or company duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the interest of the Diocese of Southwark, the wider Church and society
8. **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Diocesan governance should support Diocesan mission. The Diocese of Southwark is committed to Southwark Vision, which is communicated as Christ Centred | Outward Focused and a summary can be found [online](#)

4. **The introduction of fixed terms of service for elected and nominated members of the proposed Diocesan Council of Trustees and its associated governance bodies:**

This is to ensure that new people with different skills and fresh eyes are regularly brought into the governance structures, as well as a pool of experienced people remaining to offer continuity and perhaps to offer mentoring and other support.

The maximum term of service will be three consecutive terms of three years, after which members will cease to be eligible for election or nomination for one term of three years. The norm is likely to be two consecutive terms of three years service unless there are exceptional reasons why a member should stand for a consecutive third term. Members may resign at any time. Fixed terms of service are not here proposed for Diocesan or Deanery Synods.

The elections take place at the outset of each of the three year 'triennium' of Synod and current holders of office continue in place between the ending of one Synod triennium and the start of the next, that is until these elections have taken place.

5. The development of new practices to enhance work:

These include the provision of the role descriptions and also training, induction and development opportunities for Synod members, trustees and chairs of constituent bodies and committees, and their members. These are designed to ensure that electors and candidates alike are aware of the significant responsibilities both of Synod members and those who stand for election as trustees.

They also underline the duty of those elected to communicate with those who elect them, either the members of their own deanery or a deanery to which they are asked to relate for this purpose.

A Framework for Governance

The Diocesan Synod is the overarching governance body, but it is through the Diocesan Council of Trustees that the compliance with charity law, financial reporting regulations, and relevant company legislation is ensured. In the pages below, the headings of Purpose, Procedure, Membership, and Legalities structure the description of the following bodies of Diocesan governance:

- The Diocesan Council of Trustees
 - The Bishop's Council*
 - The Diocesan Board of Finance*
 - The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee*
 - The Diocesan Parsonages Board*
- The Policy and Finance Committee (standing committee of the DCT)
- The Audit and Risk Committee
- The Investment Sub-Committee
- The Remuneration Sub-Committee.

Following the 2018 review of the implementation of the governance changes approved in 2015, there were a few changes. For example, Trustees reserve ongoing governance issues to themselves now that the implementation of Fit for Purpose has taken place and the Audit Committee is to become Audit and Risk, from Audit and Governance, reflecting developments also in the legal reporting requirements of charities.

The DBF also has a close working relationship with the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education, which is a separate charity bound by its own Articles of Association and Ecclesiastical Measures. The SDBE does not report to the DBF, but is part of the Diocesan Family accountable to the Diocesan Synod. The DBF supports the SDBE financially, assisting with elections to its committee, and in building good relationships with its officers and trustees to further its mission and work. The SDBE, and the DBF in matters relating to education, operate in accordance with the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021.

The 2021-2024 changes made in this edition reflected the practical learnings from using the previous edition of the Handbook and the evolving Diocesan structures. Primarily, this reflected the inclusion of the Parsonages Board as a part of the DBF. Consequently, an updated list of appendices was provided, primarily including the revised versions of documents such as the Southwark Governance Structure (Umbrella) and the Deanery Model Rules (2020-2023). Additionally, as more correspondence with trustees, committee members, and parishes moved online, documents such as the Skills Audit and Demographical Questionnaire were completed electronically, removing the need for them to be included in the handbook. The Anti-Racism Charter was included for the first time in order to link the governance to this important priority for the Diocese.