



DIOCESAN SYNOD
SYNOD QUESTIONS NOTICE PAPER

This notice paper was seated at the meeting, but now includes answers and questions to supplementary questions asked by the questioner.

Question 1

Q **Revd Michelle Edmonds [Tandridge Deanery]**

Does the Property Department have a planned schedule of quinquennial inspections for Parsonages?

A **Ruth Martin**

Yes we do; we have had to pause Quinquennial inspection of parsonages over the last 2 years due to short staffing in the property department which stemmed from the illness and subsequent sad death of one of our surveyors.

We have now recruited a replacement and the Quinquennial inspection programme of parsonages will restart in the new year.

QQ **Revd Michelle Edmonds [Tandridge Deanery]**

How will Quinquennial Inspections be prioritised?

AA **Answered following the meeting from Ruth Martin**

Quinquennial Inspections will be prioritised based on the outcomes of the conditions surveys as undertaken previously, starting with those parsonages that have not been in vacancy between then and the restarting of the inspections.

Question 2

Q **Revd Michelle Edmonds [Tandridge Deanery]**

Please could Synod be updated if there is any progress on the possibility of Southwark Diocese joining the Church of England's Safeguarding dashboard tool?

A **The Diocesan Secretary**

The National Safeguarding Team have entered a 'creative partnership' with the Dashboards provider and the platform has been updated to encapsulate the National Safeguarding Standards Framework. Retention and processing of personal data remains an area for diocesan exploration prior to adoption but we hope that subject to resolving these outstanding points we can move to adoption in 2025.

The Dashboard provider indicated early in discussions that they intended to sell the programme. The Diocese therefore require assurance around the safety of any personal data that will be shared before progress towards adoption can be considered. The benefits of the Dashboards are acknowledged and in interim period, the Diocese are preparing to launch a parish safeguarding audit for January 2025.

Question 3

Q **Revd Mae Christie [Tooting Deanery]**

Has there been any planning or preparation for the eventuality of another pandemic, and, if none, is there a group that might review actions taken by the diocese during the last pandemic, and put together a plan for responding to another?

A **The Diocesan Secretary**

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, a Task Group was immediately established to review, agree, and communicate advice to parishes. This Group was highly successful and ensured that there was a clear and direct line of communication and collation of Government and National Church Advice.

As well as frequent updates to clergy and parishes, it made interim changes to church rules to allow everyday governance and business to continue and offer support for online worship. The Group continued to meet through to 2023 following all lockdown restrictions being lifted and undertook their own internal review.

Task Groups, which have also been established for the cost-of-living crisis, are the main tool in which the Diocese can respond and react to pressing events. They always include the Diocesan Bishop, Diocesan Secretary, Director of Communications and others whose specialities are required.

The Diocese maintains a critical incident plan, which includes procedures for the Diocesan Office. This broad plan, along with bespoke task groups, are able to address any event without the need for a separate plan for many eventualities.

Diocesan resilience has also been strengthened with an IT refresh which has enabled, even more than the previous lockdown, greater ability to work from anywhere with very little disruption using the Cloud.

We are in the process of pre-empting Government legislation surrounding Martyn's Law for terrorist events that could involve invacuation as well as evacuation, by formalising procedures during these events.

Question 4

Q **Revd Mae Christie [Tooting Deanery]**

Paper DS(24)09 on the Diocesan Investment Programme refers in paragraph 4 to the Diocesan Investment Programme as a strategic partnership "in which the Church Commissioners will fund some of the initiatives we plan, to which the Diocese will also contribute." Please could you provide a detailed breakdown (from 2024 to 2035) of budgeted funding, outlining all financial, personnel and property contributions to be made by the Diocese of Southwark to the partnership arrangement?

A **Ruth Martin**

Although the question is understandably directed at the Diocesan funding, the Diocesan Investment Programme is a partnership between the Archbishops Council and the Diocese of Southwark focussed on the outcomes of a number of distinct but interwoven workstreams developed to implement Southwark Vision. Due to the structured focus on outcomes, there is flexibility from one year to another as the projects incubate and develop and it is not therefore possible to give a breakdown year by year. For example, some of the budgeted Diocesan costs for 2024 will be for postholders who will not be starting until 2025. In addition, new Hub and Resourcing churches beyond 2028 have to be identified and the overall funding envelope makes provision which will be itemised nearer the time.

Most of the Diocesan contribution is though the opportunity cost of our housing stock, together with diocesan posts to support all of the workstreams such as a Vocations Reviewer. The Diocesan investment is therefore a total potential i.e maximum funding of £10.48 million over the nine years (The Archbishops Council

contribution is £29.01m). Financial provision has been made to share with the Archbishops Council the Fresh Expressions grants, and we make those awards upon receiving sufficient successful applications. We will not be buying property for the programme. From 2025 onwards the existing SDF projects begin to draw to a close, releasing housing and other funds so it is not all new finance.

For many of the initiatives the parishes have not yet been identified because the programmes are to be piloted first. Once a parish is identified then the budget for that parish is confidential.

Question 5

Q Susan Patterson [Dulwich]

Does the Diocese make lists of potential ordinands ex-partners, either formally or informally?

A Raymond Baudon

The Diocese does not make or keep informal or formal lists of the ex-partners of people in the vocational processes with one exception. The exception is if the potential ordinand or their spouse has been previously married (and their former spouse is alive), or has been married and divorced twice, then a record has to be made to allow for the process of applying for a faculty under Canon C4 of the National Church canons.

The exception for the Canon C4 cases only applies to former and current marriages recognised as such by the Church of England.

Question 6

Q Grahame Wood [Charlton Deanery]

Could the Diocesan Secretary and/or the Diocesan Director of Ordinands please provide an update on the number of people under the age of 35 who, in either the past 12 months (1 November 2023 - 1 November 2024) or the last official church year, have:

1. Begun the discernment process within the Southwark Diocese
2. Taken part in a 'Carousel Conversation'
3. Participated in a Face-to-Face Discernment Panel
4. Advanced to ordination training
5. Been ordained as a Deacon within the Diocese
6. Been installed as an incumbent priest within the Diocese
7. Participated in any other part of the discernment process not outlined above"

A Raymond Baudon

The number of people aged 35 or under, who, in the year from November 2023 to October 2024, have:

1. Begun the discernment process within the Southwark Diocese: **9**
2. Taken part in a 'Carousel Conversation': **4**
3. Participated in a Face-to-Face Discernment Panel: **2**
4. Advanced to ordination training: **2**
5. Been ordained as a Deacon within the Diocese: **5**
6. Been installed as an incumbent priest within the Diocese: **5**
7. Participated in any other part of the discernment process not outlined above: **no data**

QQ Grahame Wood [Charlton Deanery]

What strategies are there to boost these numbers?

AA Raymond Baudon

Our strategy is to encourage vocations more generally by working with incumbents to promote both lay and ordained vocations in parishes. We also find that parishes where there are a members of our wider vocation team present produce more vocations enquirers and so we continue to actively recruit more Vocations Advisers.

Question 7

Q Grahame Wood [Charlton Deanery]

"Could the Diocesan Secretary and/or the Diocesan Director of Ordinands also provide an update on the number of people under the age of 35 who, in either the past 12 months (1 November 2023 - 1 November 2024) or the last official church year, have:

1. Voluntarily withdrawn from the discernment and ordination process, and;
2. The reasons provided to the Diocese for these voluntary withdrawals."

A Raymond Baudon

The number of people aged 35 or under, who, in the year from November 2023 to October 2024, have voluntarily withdrawn from the discernment and ordination process: **7**

3 gave no reason at end of a Vocations Forum

1 needed more clarity over ordained or lay ministry

1 wanted to wait for more clarity regarding LLF

1 not the right time

1 moved to another diocese

QQ Grahame Wood [Charlton Deanery]

How does the diocese ascertain why they leave.

AA Raymond Baudon

Those who have withdrawn are asked as part of the process and in conversation with those they are working with, including the Vocations Advisor.

Question 8

Q Rebecca Chapman [Lambeth Deanery]

Please confirm which individual person, or committee makes the final decision on how the SDBE formally responds to proposed school changes (closures, amalgamations) from a Local Authority.

A Roz Cordner

The Director of Education has a responsibility to co-ordinate responses to proposed changes to school organisation (closures, amalgamations). In doing so, she is guided by the Chair of the Board and the President of the Board shaped by discussions with the whole Board as to priorities and criterion for consideration. This process is managed by the directorate – drawing together information held by the SDBE, the school and the Director of Education of the relevant local authority. Where a consultation involves more than one school, the director will present a paper to Bishops Staff for further scrutiny, guidance, advice and comment. The

directorates cannot submit a response to a formal consultation regarding a permanent change to school organisation without it being discussed, scrutinised and agreed by both the President and Chair of the Board.

The options are presented to the executive committee (Policy and Strategy Committee) (chairs of each sub-committee) and shared with relevant members of the Bishop's Staff Team, for comment, and presented to the President for final approval.

Question 9

Q **Rebecca Chapman [Lambeth Deanery]**

Please detail which factors, and with what weightings, are taken into account in deciding how the SDBE formally responds to proposed changes (closures, amalgamations) coming from the appropriate Local Authority.

A **Roz Cordner**

There is no formal weighting system as the process is driven by pupil numbers, the number of pupil numbers on roll, application trends over time, vacancy rates, projected numbers up to 2028.

In Lambeth there is the equivalent of over 20 classes of 30 to be taken out of the system. We are driven to ensure we maintain the proportionality of CofE places as the total number of places reduces, to secure a genuine choice of strong CofE educational provision for parents to choose from.

With regard to re-organisation of school structure, an amalgamation where the schools both have low numbers and can be brought together on one site offers greater stability for all involved and pupil places and staff employment is protected. Union representatives have been clear that for their members, amalgamation over a closure is a preferred option. The SDBE supports this view.

The formal response will address factors raised by the LA and include information gathered at meetings with governors, school leaders, staff and parents. SDBE offered to meet with all school leaders, governors, staff and parents before submitting a response; they also attended all public meetings arranged by the LA and heard the passion of each community, understandably fighting against any change.

Question 10

Q **David Ruddick [Merton Deanery]**

"a) Total money which will not be received into the Parish Support Fund 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);

b) Total money to come in 2024 from parishes which have made a pledge to the PSF, whilst indicating that this may change;

c) 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;

d) 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 (so that it will be used to fund parishes which support the CEEC), or other alternative payment mechanisms, such as the Good Stewards Trust."

A **Gabby Parikh**

a) There is only one parish who at the beginning of the year, because of PLF, opted not to make a formal pledge nor pay anything to the PSF in 2024. However, they have indicated that they will make a

reduced pledge contribution via the Southwark Good Steward's Trust but we have yet to receive any money. In 2023 their pledge was £36,360 but they did not pay this in full.

- b) Parishes with approximately £221,000 in pledges said that their pledge may change due to the PLF. However all but one of these pledges is paid in full up to the end of October. One further parish changed its mind and indicated that it would donate a further £74k via the Ephesian Fund to support other parishes in the PSF for 2024. . We are grateful and have received three quarterly payments to date.
- c) One parish has chosen not to make a formal pledge but has given an indicative maximum figure of £168,130 which they are paying as things stand.
- d) In 2024 we are expecting £294k from parishes which have opted to pay their pledges through the Church of England Evangelical Council's Ephesian Fund or the Southwark Good Stewards Trust.

Question 11

Q David Ruddick [Merton Deanery]

How many PCCs and / or licensed clergy have notified the Bishops or other senior staff that they are currently receiving "alternative spiritual oversight" from those men and women appointed by the Church of England Evangelical Council?

A Alun Ford

Since the March Synod, the Bishop of Southwark's office has been made aware of three further parishes that have been in communication with the CEEC for temporary and informal 'alternative spiritual oversight'. A fourth parish, with Bishop Christopher's episcopal care extended to it through the Bishop of Ebbsfleet, has also been in touch with the CEEC. This makes a total of eight parishes not receiving extended episcopal care that have entered this informal arrangement with the CEEC. To these eight parishes, 20 clergy are licensed.

QQ David Ruddick [Merton Deanery]

It is a matter of record from the Archbishop of Canterbury saying this has caused deep division in the church. Could the discussion be as soon as possible rather than deferred to "some point".

AA Nicola Thomas

The Diocese is awaiting information from the National Church about feedback wanted from diocesan synods and we want to have this before we have a substantive item.

Question 12

Q Chris Elliott [Reigate Deanery]

Can we be advised how many vacancies for Diocesan Synod each Deanery has in both Houses of Clergy and Laity

A Diocesan Secretary

A list of Diocesan Synod members is on the website, which includes vacancies. We currently are in touch with several deaneries regarding vacancies and advising on how on how to fill them. A reminder email will be sent to Deanery Secretaries, Area Deans and Lay Chairs for those deaneries with places to fill in the next couple of weeks.

Deanery	Laity	Clergy	Vacancies	
			HoL	HoC
Croydon North	2/2	2/2	0	0
Croydon Addington	1/2	0/2	1	2

Croydon Central	3/3	2/2	0	0
Croydon South	2/2	2/2	0	0
Sutton	2/3	4/4	1	0
Reigate	4/5	5/5	1	0
Tandridge	4/4	3/3	0	0
Lambeth North	2/2	5/5	0	0
Lambeth South	2/2	2/3	0	0
Merton	4/5	5/5	1	0
Battersea	2/2	1/2	0	1
Tooting	2/2	3/3	0	0
Wandsworth	2/3	3/3	1	0
Richmond & Barnes	0/2	2/3	2	1
Kingston	4/4	4/4	0	0
Charlton	2/2	3/3	0	0
Eltham & Mottingham	2/2	2/2	0	0
Plumstead	2/2	2/2	0	0
East Lewisham	2/2	2/4	0	2
West Lewisham	0/2	0/2	2	2
Deptford	2/2	2/2	0	0
Bermondsey & Rotherhithe	2/2	2/2	0	0
Southwark & Newington	0/2	0/3	2	3
Camberwell	2/2	2/2	0	0
Dulwich	2/2	1/2	0	1
Total Vacancies			11	12

As of Wednesday 13 November 2024

Question 13

Q Christopher Parker [Croydon Addington Deanery]

In the synopsis of feedback from outgoing members of the last Triennium of the Diocesan Synod provided at the new Diocesan Synod Representatives Induction Meetings, immediate responses were made in a number of areas, which is to be welcomed. However, can I ask:

1. might there be more detailed responses to those already replied to and when can I expect this?
2. On matters such as the Diocesan Synod 'not being a rubber stamp', 'not enough diversity' and 'more focus on how congregations grow', may these be, likewise, responded to and when can I expect these?

A Diocesan Secretary

Feedback sought from Synod members in the previous triennium was received and analysed by the former chairs of the Houses of Laity and Clergy and Bishop Christopher. Information was collated to ensure that all unique comments were included. This was presented to Diocesan Synod in July, and also used to brief new Synod members at their induction sessions, this year. Synod were informed that each area of positivity and improvements would be taken into consideration by the Presidents' Meeting when each group of sessions is being developed and agendas approved. We are happy to receive suggestions and comments, not just at Synod, about how we can make the process better for members.

Details of the roles and responsibilities of Diocesan Synod members, their connection to the Boards and Councils of the Diocese were discussed at all three induction sessions for new members, and can be found in the Handbook of Governance, online, and Synod induction packs included in your bags (received at the

induction or available at this Synod). Increasing diversity is something we take very seriously including in the process to encourage people to stand for this Synod election, led by our former Chairs.

Question 14

Q James Hills [Sutton Deanery]

Since the last Diocesan Synod, the Archbishop of Canterbury has publicly said that the introduction of Prayers of Love & Faith give rise to "complex questions that have caused deep division in the church". Bishop Christopher has spoken in his Presidential Addresses' of remaining united in the midst of this process. But when has, and when will in this Triennium, these issues of deep disunity be discussed in depth by synod members in Diocesan Synod?

A Alun Ford

LLF is on the Agenda for next year. Matters surrounding its presentation to Synod will be considered by the Presidents once we have more clarity about what feedback would be helpful to the National Church.

Question 15

Q James Hills [Sutton Deanery]

How many parishes in the Diocese have indicated broken relationships with others in their deanery as a result of the introduction of Prayers of Love & Faith? If there are any, what is the plan to address these?

A Alun Ford

The Bishop of Southwark's office has received correspondence concerning two clergy from one BMO who are declining to attend Deanery Chapter or pray with their colleagues. In his last Presidential Address, Bishop Christopher charged Deanery Chapters and Synods to continue to pray with one another so that they might honour one another. The decision whether or not to pray, however, lies with individuals. The structures for our common life of prayer have not changed.

QQ James Hills [Sutton Deanery]

In light of Diocesan Synod discussions on LLF, could this be a piece of work on local level.

AA Nicola Thomas

Yes, we will continue to discuss with Area Deans and Archdeacons as we do at present.