



## DIOCESAN SYNOD

### BRIEF OUTLINE SUMMARY OF THE SYNOD'S 10 July 2025 BUSINESS AT ST PETER'S, BATTERSEA

#### Opening Prayer & Introduction to the Synod Meeting

Ninety-seven Members of Synod were welcomed to the meeting, led in prayer by Adrian Greenwood (Lay Chaplain and Mentor to Diocesan Synod). Members were joined by guest speakers, Ruth Martin, Rachel Smith, and Andrew Dickinson (DIP update). The Bishop of Southwark introduced the discussions that were to take place at the end of Synod on Living in Love & Faith. He acknowledged the uncertainty and hurt that many people are experiencing and reiterated that as a diocese we would continue to speak well of one another, respecting the sincerity of those with whom we disagree. Bishop Christopher welcomed Nick Shepherd (National LLF Programme Director), who would be leading the LLF Consultation later in the evening. A copy of Bishop Christopher's opening remarks can be found at Appendix A.

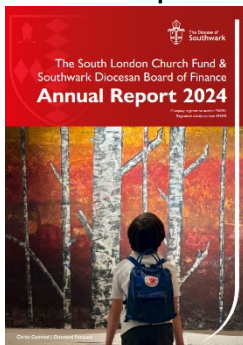
#### Vacancy in See Committees Regulation

The Diocesan Registrar, Jon Baldwin, read the declaration of the promulgation of Amending the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 2024. A copy of the Declaration can be found on the diocesan [website](#) and further information on the General Synod Website.

#### Diocesan Investment Programme

Ruth Martin, Rachel Smith and Andrew Dickinson gave an update on Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP). Members were reminded that DIP was all about resourcing [Southwark Vision](#) and that each project directly fed into the Diocese's Priorities. They were updated on Resourcing Churches and their progress so far, with particular reference to Holy Trinity Clapham who had launched into St Mark's, Mitcham and Kings Cross Church. Who had launched into St Michael's Stockwell. Members were invited to ask questions after the presentation. A copy of the slides used can be found at Appendix B.

#### Annual Report and Financial Statements



The Director of Finance, Mark Rhodes, gave a presentation and update on the Annual Report for 2024. Members were also presented with a hard copy of the Annual Report, which would also be circulated to parishes over the summer. The presentation included a brief update on the financial situation and work of the Diocese in the previous year. A copy of the slides used can be found at Appendix B.

Bishop Christopher moved that:

*"this Synod receives the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024 for the South London Church Fund and Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance."*

The Synod unanimously received the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024 for the South London Church Fund and Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance.

## Formal Questions

Twelve formal Synod Questions were received for written answer. A copy of the Questions Notice Paper, including supplementary questions, can be found on the diocesan [website](#).

## Living in Love and Faith

Diocesan Synod engaged in facilitated group discussions, as requested by the National Church, to understand the journey through the [Living in Love and Faith](#) process, covering the following two parallel areas:

- Allowing the House of Bishops and the General Synod to vote on a complete package, including proposals for 'bespoke' (standalone) services for the Prayers of Love and Faith & appropriate pastoral reassurance – with clarity on the theological underpinning of these proposals
- Allowing the House of Bishops to agree a timetable for consideration of the question of clergy entering same-sex civil marriages.

Through this consultation, those coordinating this work nationally were seeking to understand:

- How well-informed are people on the LLF journey to date?
- What levels of conversations have happened - or are happening - in parishes and other expressions of church?
- What do people think in general about the proposals? Do they help local churches and what challenges remain?
- How might the proposals be better expressed or explained?
- What questions are there that ongoing work needs to help answer?
- What other issues and ideas might it be helpful to consider?
- Feedback on the principles and workability of the proposals to help shape the overall proposals, accompanying guidance, and planning of implementation

In advance of the meeting, members were asked to prepare by reading through the below resources:

- The first one gave a [general update](#) on the process to date, and details key aspects of the draft proposals for the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) including in standalone services, and the accompanying proposed pastoral reassurance.
- [The second leaflet](#) provided more detail on the theological work that has already been done by the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission and the Episcopal Reference Group.
- [A video](#) with further information and context for the conversations.

The session began in groups discussing and answering, using an anonymous online feedback tool called Mentimeter, questions 1-4. Following a break members rejoined in different random groups to ensure that everyone would be able to speak to someone who they hadn't done previously for questions 5-9.

The questions discussed, and an extract of the Mentimeter data can be found on the [website](#).



**The Diocese of  
Southwark**

## DIOCESAN SYNOD Thursday 10 July 2025

### Bishop Christopher's introduction and reflection of the LLF discussions

#### Introduction

Friends and fellow members of Synod, this Synod is largely given to a discussion on the Prayers of Love and Faith.

After an eight year process – in which Southwark led the way in the number of parishes engaging with Living in Love and Faith – and by far the largest volume of feedback - this evening is an opportunity as a Synod to have an open consultation and listening exercise at the request of the National Church at last to discuss and provide feedback on two issues: first, the question of 'bespoke' or 'standalone' services using the Prayers of Love and Faith and the question of pastoral reassurance for those who do not, in conscience, wish to use the Prayers; and second, the timetable for considering the question of clergy entering same-sex civil marriages. Clearly the spirit in which we conduct ourselves this evening needs to be one of mutual respect and regard: listening well and contributing well.

In my Presidential Address of November 2022, I said, 'It is not a Bishop's job to stifle the work of the Holy Spirit - and shutting down good, healthy and prayerful conversations is a sure sign that the Spirit, who enlightens our God-given reason, is being silenced'. However, it is a Bishop's responsibility to ensure that difficult conversations are held with mutual respect, with kindness, and without rancour. On the whole Southwark does rather well in this regard. I have, as you know, expressed frequently my expectation of clergy and lay people in this Diocese that we should at all times speak well of each other – and do so across the spectrum of theological conviction. I am committed to upholding the spectrum of theological conviction because I believe our different convictions are held in good faith. And I say this again now because there will inevitably be some among us who are anxious about this Synod.

Christians whose sexuality means that they are in a minority are directly affected by the questions under consideration in a different way to those who belong to the majority. Our conversation this evening will, I hope, be sensitive to the reality that when we speak about sexuality – let us say that simply, rather than 'human sexuality' - we are speaking about a precious and mysterious aspect of our lives that (if we are honest) we only ever partly understand. We are not here this evening to speak about another person's sexual identity but we are honour-bound to speak with care and consideration.

I stand by what I said in my Presidential Address of November 2022 and I wish to restate it this evening:

'I support a generous pastoral provision that respects freedom of conscience by the provision of a liturgy of affirmation and commitment for same-sex couples and a conscience clause that means no priest is required to officiate at such a service ... I also support on ecumenical and Anglican inter-Provincial grounds the removal of penalties for those clergy who contract a same-sex marriage, either civilly or in one of our sister Churches with whom we are in full

communion'. What the Church of England is considering at this stage of the LLF process is not far from this.

In November 2023 after the General Synod motion on LLF, I made the following commitment to this Synod which again I continue to stand by: 'The leadership of this Diocese will be utterly unshakeable in protecting the spectrum of conviction on this matter and will continue to hold in high esteem and respect the sincerity of those who do not wish to use the prayers - as we will for those who do. I simply ask once again that we continue to speak well of each other as befits our calling as fellow members of the Body of Christ'.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, I make that commitment again to you today, as do my episcopal colleagues, as I also make clear my expectations for our conversation this evening, the Lord being our helper.

## **Reflection**

While I was Wychcroft this year for the pre-ordination retreats, I saw in the field next to the house some sheep and among the flock a single, lovely, obviously rather late, black lamb. It was still quite skittish, even though it is growing, more mutton than lamb at this point, and it ran to its mother at the sound of a car, or if you approached. It would not take much for a wolf or some other predator to catch it – but thankfully there are no wolves at Bletchingley. So when Jesus says, as he did in this Sunday's Gospel, that he is sending the seventy out "like lambs in the midst of wolves" (Luke 10.3), we think we can imagine what he means without too much effort. But can we? What might Jesus mean by talking to the disciples this way?

It is sometimes suggested that if we encounter opposition as Christians – and this applies equally to all, lay or ordained, in the Church or outside – that we must be doing something right. St Paul's statement in his Second Letter to Timothy that "all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3.12) is sometimes understood to mean that opposition is a proof of godliness. But the logic does not quite hold up. Christians can be opposed for other less noble qualities as much as for godliness, and in each member of the Church there is an inner conflict between these qualities. St Paul himself wrote, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7.15). The only sure sign of a godly life is the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5. 22-23). These are signs of godliness that we can rely on, indications that God is at work in our lives and in our communities.

So, to return to my question: what could Jesus have meant talking to his disciples that way? And what can we learn as the whole people of God, who have been given the Great Commission? I think that Jesus is talking about our sense of dependence upon God. The seventy are instructed to "carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road" (Luke 10.4). They are not to rely on their own provision, but on God's provision – so much so, in fact, that they appear like lambs and those who do provide for themselves like ravening wolves. Jesus clearly expects some of the villages to which he sends the seventy to reject the disciples: "Whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you'" (Luke 10. 10-11). But rejection – or its milder form, disagreement - is not persecution, and the disciples are not eaten up by the wolves who do not want to hear what they say. Rather, the disciples are told to simply walk away, saying, "Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near" (Luke 10.11). Indeed, some of the wolves will put the disciples up in their homes, offering

food and drink, sharing in the peace of God that the disciples offer. Wolves, after all, want what all creatures want: food and water, to live free from the fear of being hunted by humans, to form the social bonds that bind them together.

There is a story about St Francis of Assisi and a wolf that was terrorising the town of Gubbio in Umbria. It does not matter particularly if it is true or not – what matters is what it tells us about making or bringing peace to a place. The story is told in the ‘Little Flowers of St Francis’, a collection of stories about St Francis compiled at the end of the fourteenth century. When the wolf of Gubbio sees the saint he charges towards the friar, and St Francis makes the sign of the cross over the animal saying, “Come here, Brother Wolf. I command you on behalf of Christ that you do no harm to me or to anyone”. As soon as St Francis did this, it says in the ‘Little Flowers’, “the fearsome wolf closed his mouth and stopped running; and once the command was given, it came meekly as a lamb, and threw itself at the feet of St Francis”.

“The whole town is complaining about you”, Francis told the wolf, gently. “But I want to make peace between you and the people. And so I promise that I will have food given to you regularly, Brother Wolf, by the people of this town so that you will no longer suffer hunger. And I want you, Brother Wolf, to promise that you will never harm any human person or animal”. The wolf agreed by bowing its head – and the townspeople were rightly amazed as the wolf put its right paw in the hand of the saint. “Afterwards”, we are told, “that same wolf lived in Gubbio for two years, and he tamely entered the houses, going from door to door, without doing any harm to anyone and without any harm being done to him; and he was kindly fed by the people ... Finally, after two years Brother Wolf died of old age, at which the citizens grieved very much”. We need to offer the peace of the Gospel to the wolf – our own inner wolf and to those around us.

Christian witness and ministry requires peace and reconciliation. This is what Jesus means when he says the harvest is plentiful – for there is always peace to be made – but the workers are few. Peace requires work, and reconciliation involves risk. When Christ came to reconcile us to God he did so at the cost of his Passion and cruel death on the Cross. We were wolves to Christ, who was the Lamb of God for us. Jesus’s utter dependence on God made peace for those who, like us, were ‘hostile to God’ (Romans 8.7).

So, my brothers and sisters - lay and ordained, members one of another and each a full part of the body of Christ - I encourage you to live your theological convictions in good faith. Have integrity. Make peace by offering Christ’s peace. Hold fast to the Faith we have received and which is beautifully articulated by the Creeds and in our own Declaration of Assent. At all times speak well of your brothers and sisters in Christ – honour them, for to each baptised person has been given an “insight into the mystery of Christ” (Ephesians 3. 4). Be faithful in prayer and receiving at the altar-table, and remain determinedly Christ centred and outward focussed in all that you do.

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Outward  
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12/25<sup>∞</sup>



WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS & NOTICES

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14/25\*



# VACANCY IN SEE COMMITTEES REGULATION 2024 AS AMENDED



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# DIOCESAN SYNOD UPDATE ON YEAR ONE OF THE DIOCESAN INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

# Southwark Vision 2024-2035

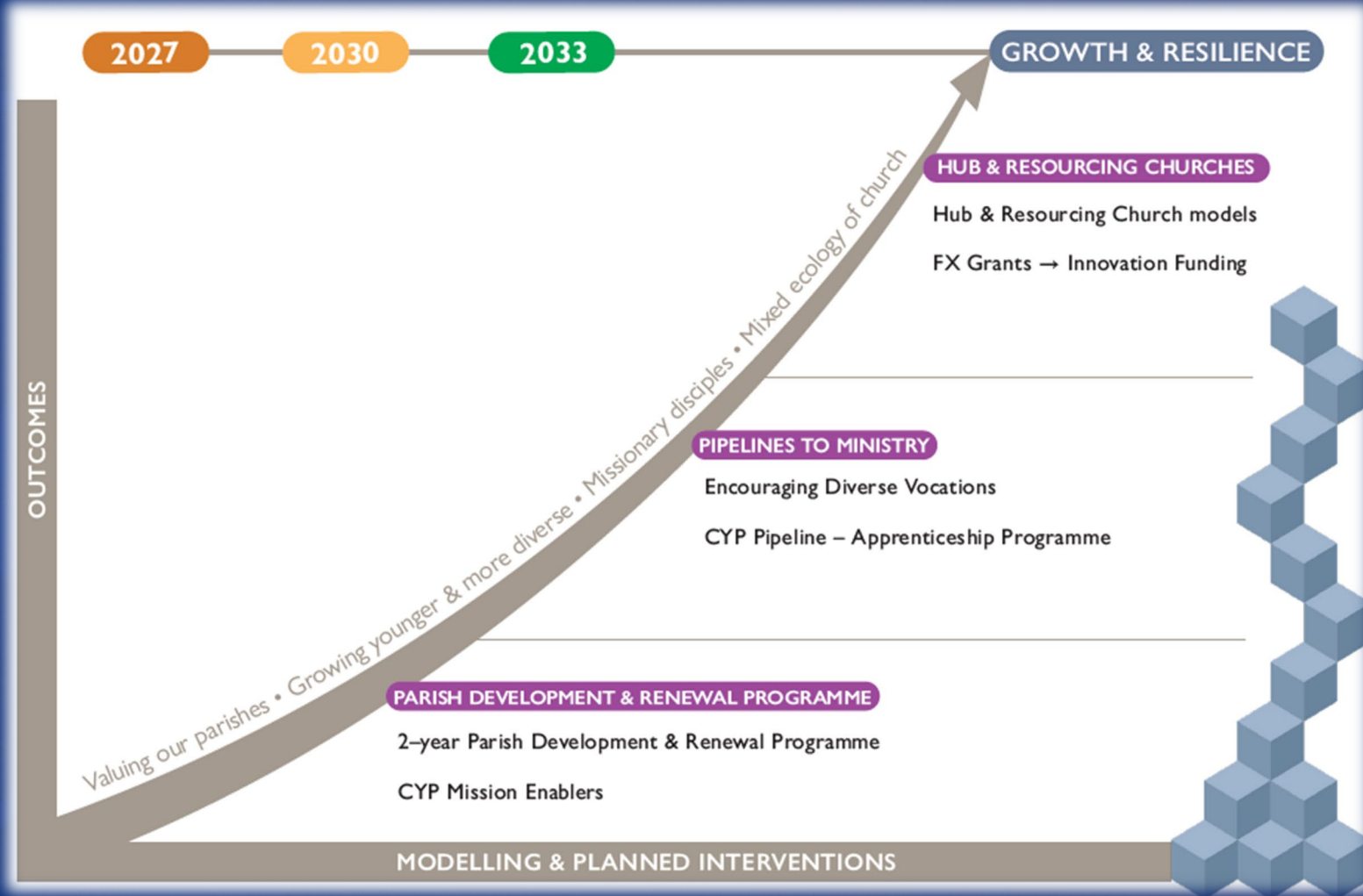
## Our six priorities:

- G** **Growth:** Grow existing churches, including revitalisation and new worshipping communities
- M** **Ministry:** Grow our lay ministries whilst keeping highest possible number of stipendiary clergy
- Y** **Youth & Diversity:** Committed to become a younger & more diverse diocese - one which better reflects the communities we serve
- P** **Parishes:** Valuing our parishes, enabling, serving and equipping them for mission and ministry
- D** **Deeping our Discipleship:** Christ is at the heart of our faith and we grow by going deeper in our journey with him
- H** **Healing:** We will seek God's healing for our communities and our world, including social justice and racial justice

The Diocesan Investment Programme is a significant contribution to implementing Southwark Vision.

# Transformational Change across our Diocese

2024 → 2033



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# Resourcing Churches

- Missionally led Churches that have the capacity and generosity to resource and revitalise another church.
- Led by the Director of Mission, supported by the Pioneer Development Officer, Dean of Estates and the Dean of Revitalisation this workstream has successfully launched within 2 parishes of diverse church tradition across the Diocese.



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- Churches that have created models that can be used in other parishes, with the Hub Church coming alongside to train, support and advise parishes to replicate or adapt these models to their context.
- Models include;
  - Parish Nursing Ministry in a traditional catholic parish
  - Estates Ministry focusing on successful pathways to faith for adults, youth and families
  - CYP Ministry via choral focus
  - Youth Ministry in Communion renewing youth ministry at a parish level in the sacramental tradition.

# Hub Churches



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# FX Grants & Innovation Fund

- Major grant to fund an innovative, creative missional idea.
- 15 applications were received, 3 were shortlisted and developed into a more detailed proposal.
- Smaller Fresh Expression of Church grants continue to be awarded to parishes.



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# Local CYP Missional Practitioners



- Experienced children, family and youth workers already in our Diocese and in our parishes supporting other Churches to develop their CYP ministry.
- Led by the Director of Mission, supported by CYP Mission Support Officer.
- Recruitment for Missional Practitioners has started with an aim of Missional Practitioners partnered and supporting parishes by September 2025.

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# CYP Apprenticeship-style Programme

- Apprentices will work in a parish where they will develop skills, gain experiences, and grow youth and children's work.
- Led by the Director of Discipleship and Lay Ministry this pilot programme will begin in September 2025.
- Recruitment for Apprentices is ongoing followed by the 'matching' process to one of the parishes identified as a potential pilot host.





# Encouraging Diverse Vocations

- Research project focused on identifying, understanding and addressing the barriers to lay and ordained ministries and broader diversity issues.
- Led by Director of Clergy Formation and of Ordinands this workstream has launched with a focus now on gathering and analysing data.
- The Dean of Cultural Diversity has also begun interviewing individuals and groups e.g. those from GMH backgrounds who did not go on to complete vocation process.

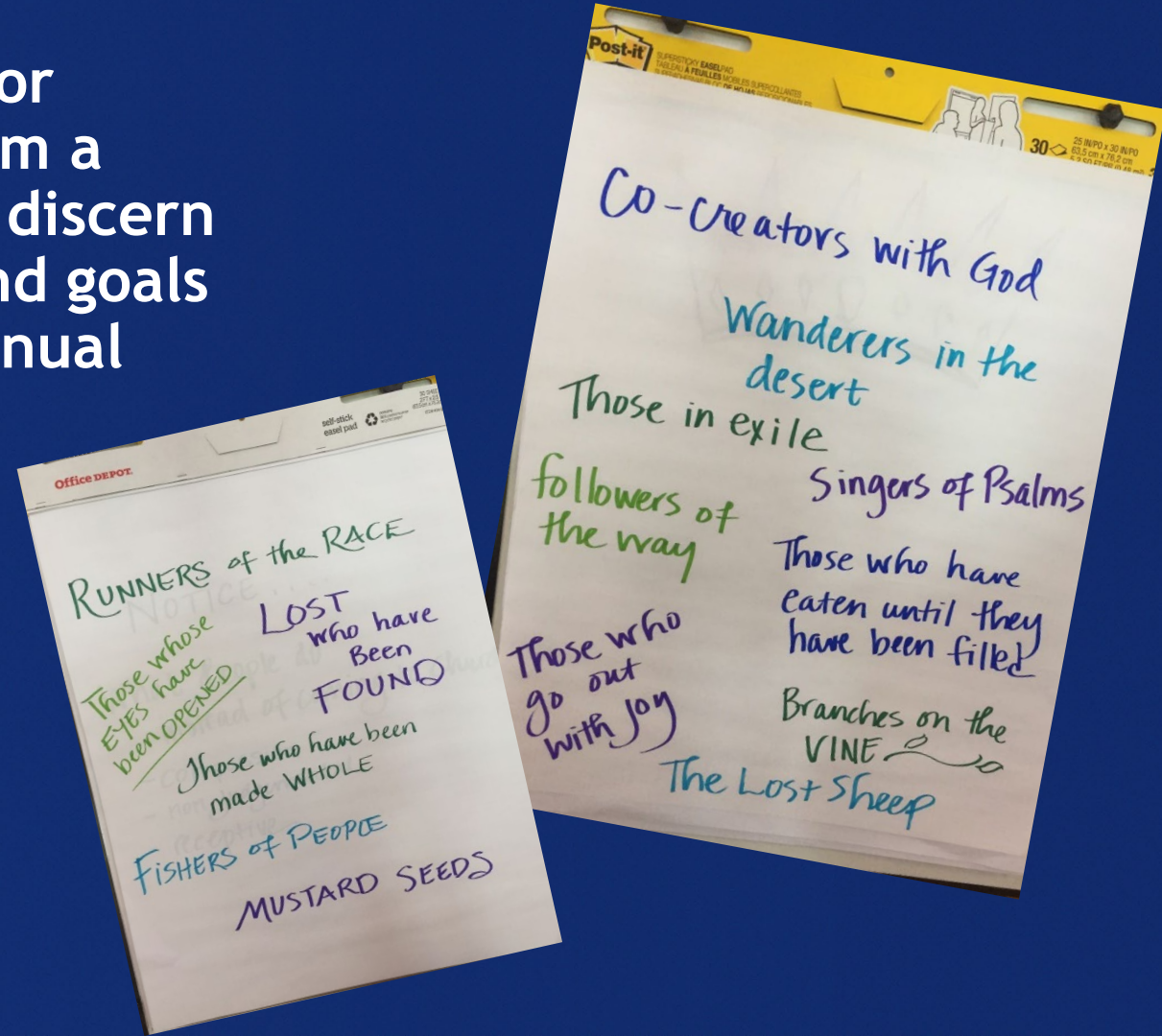


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# Parish Development & Renewal Programme

- A two-year development programme for groups of lay and ordained leaders from a parish to review their current reality, discern their future, work on their strategy and goals with up to 7 other parishes in each annual cohort.
- Led by the Director of Clergy Formation and of Ordinands, preparation is underway to launch this pilot programme in September.



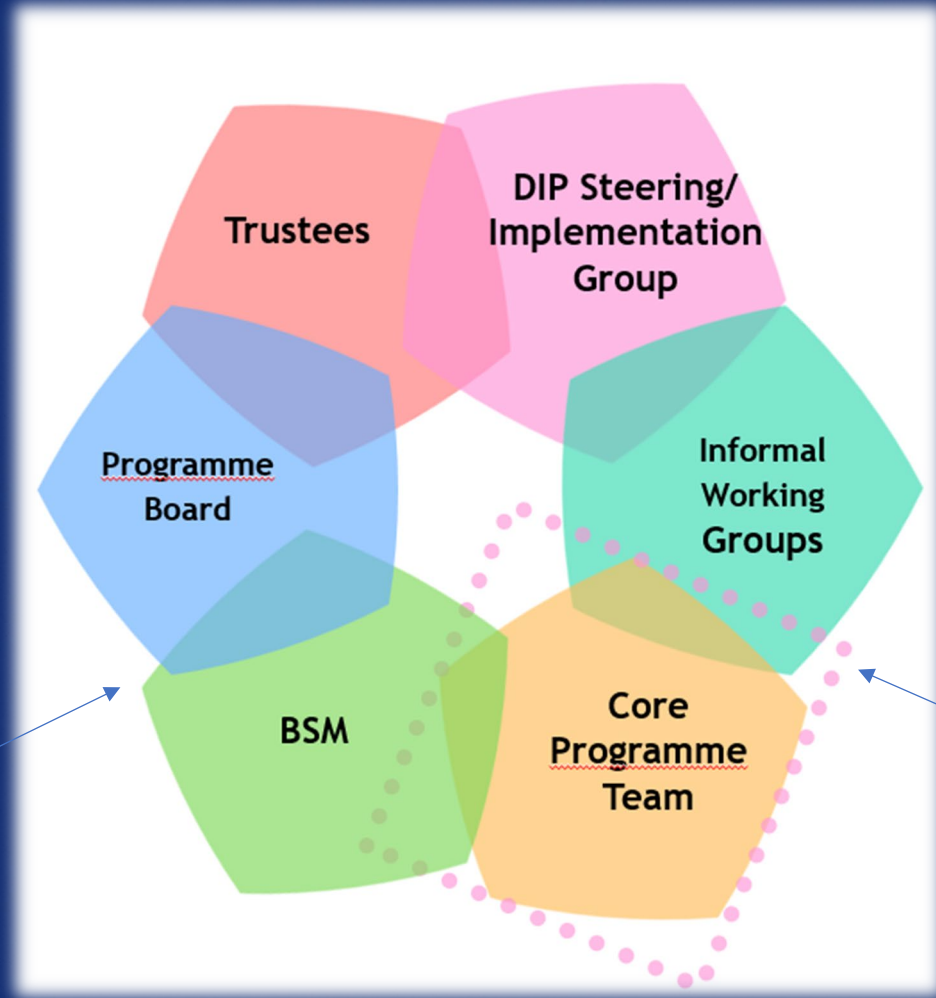
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We are working within this governance structure which meets the needs of the National Church as well as the Diocese.

# Governance and Accountability

*Archdeacons &  
Area Bishops  
Sub Committee*



*Archdeacons &  
Area Bishops  
Sub Committee*

# Outcomes Framework

We have worked closely with the National Church to develop a tailored outcomes measurement framework for each project and the overall DIP programme, so we can evaluate how the different workstreams impact each other and the overall implementation of Southwark Vision as well as the National Shared Outcomes Framework.

Attendance change	Number of worshipping communities	Number of leaders	Financial sustainability
Scale of community service	Scale of evangelism	People new to faith	Scale of discipleship groups
Individual discipleship	Resilience and impact of leaders	Changed church practices	Demographics



# Challenges & Key Risks

- Recruitment - 3 parish-based post holders' early exits
- Support - Ensuring adequate parish project leader support, particularly Curates
- Managing expectations - resource and housing provision
- Sustainability - appointed 2 new Fundraisers to support parishes
- Changing context of National Church and their priorities.

# Next: Learning, Sharing & Preparing

- Rolling out projects, learning from pilots, and supporting more parishes through our Diocesan team
- Sharing learnings across our networks to benefit all our parishes
- Preparing for Phase 2 of DIP from 2027 - understanding needs, and developing ideas together

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# ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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The Bishop of Southwark to move that:

“this Synod receives the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024 for the South London Church Fund and Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance.”



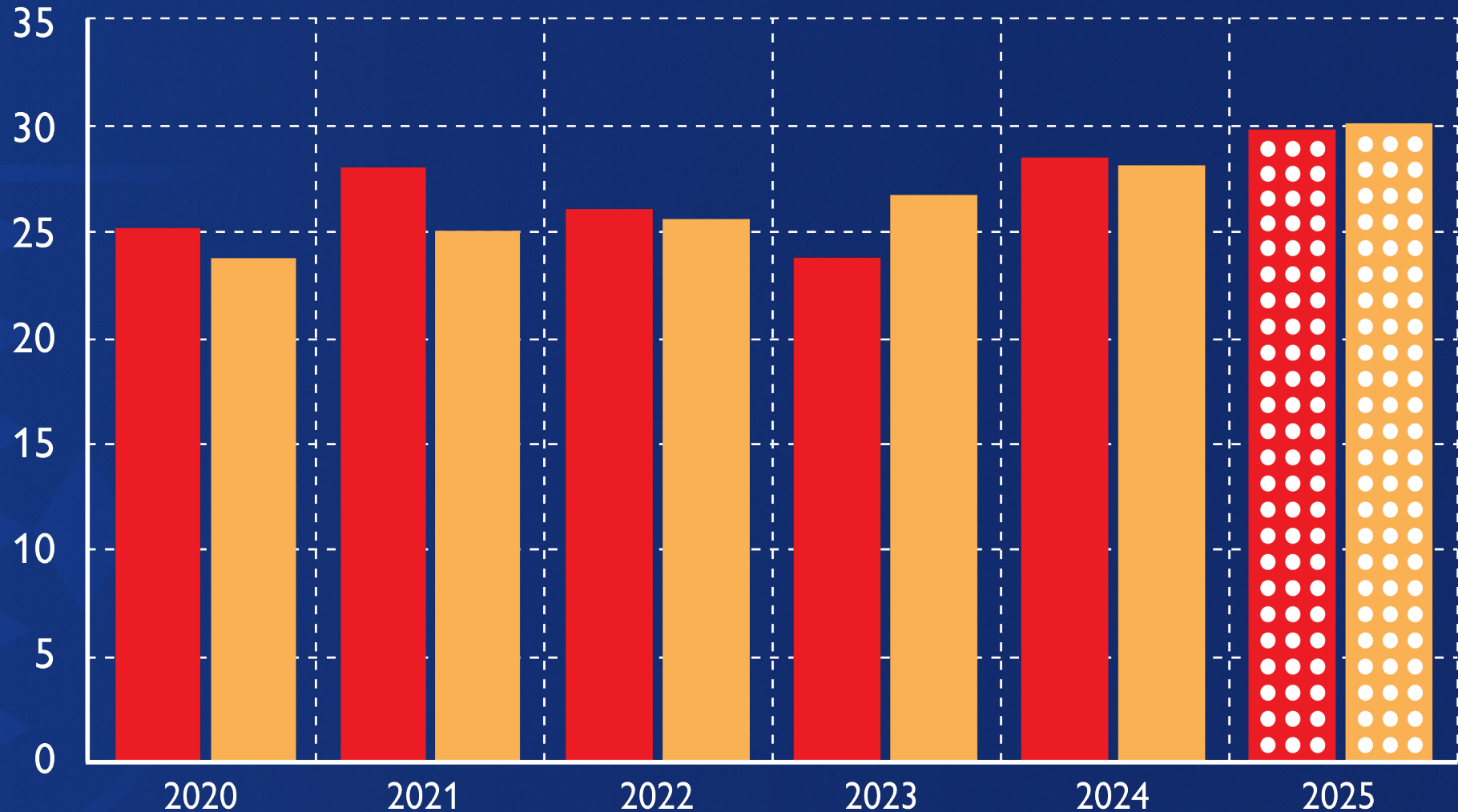
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# Financial history and plan

SoFA results: actual 2020–2024 and budget 2025

£ million



Income Spending

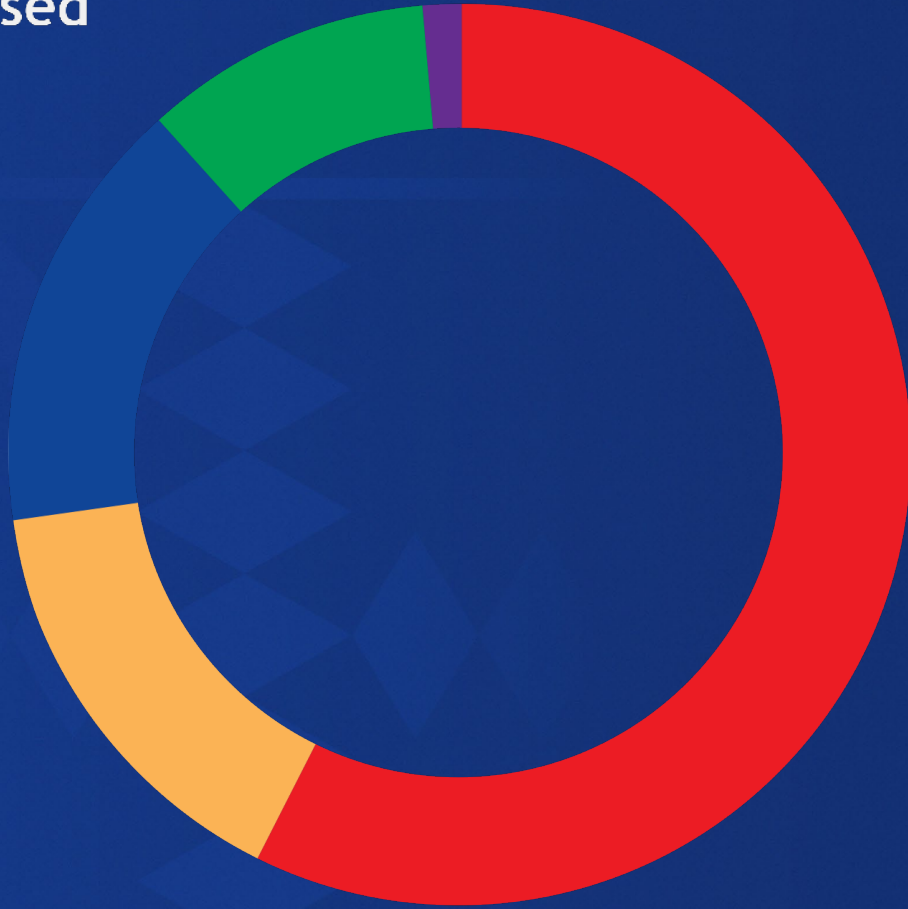
Actual = solid colour Forecast = dots

# Financial Statements

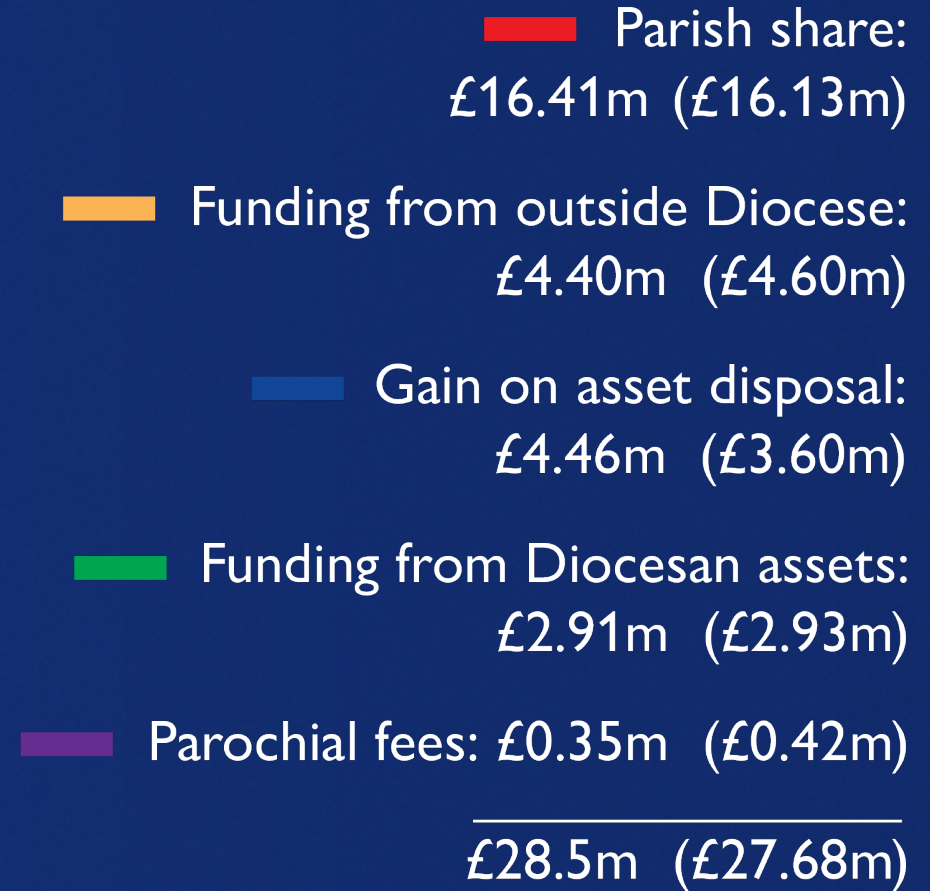
- Before investment gains and property gains the DBF had a small surplus of £0.4m on an annual turnover of £38.5m
- Our principal source of income remains the Parish Support Fund, with a fantastic collection rate of 99.7%
- Income for the year was £0.8m higher than budgeted
- The increase in income was attributable to gains on asset disposals, all other income sources were on budget
- Costs overall were £0.3m higher than budgeted, with the main increase on the costs of maintaining ministry housing
- Other costs well controlled
- Detailed breakdown of income and expenditure on the following slides

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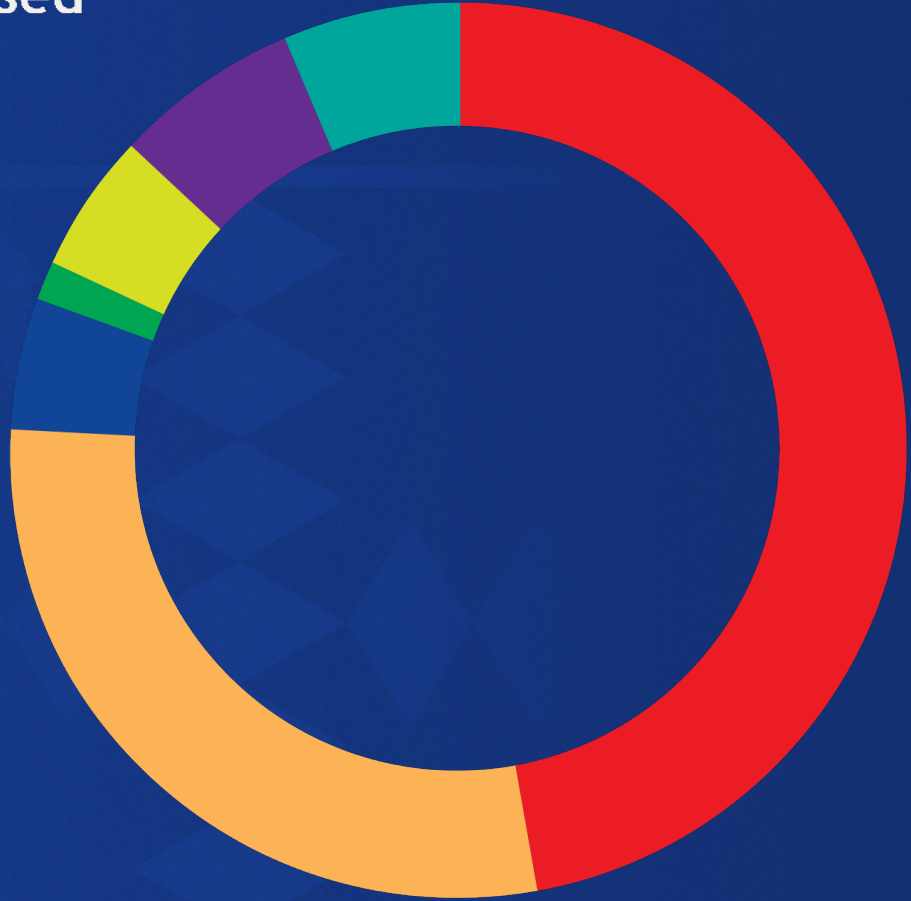


## 2024 Income vs (Budget)



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## 2024 Expenditure vs (Budget)

- Ministry stipends: £13.35m (£12.97m)
- Ministry housing, training & support: £8.04m (£7.51m)
- Area Mission & JPIC: £1.33m (£1.60m)
- Board of Education: £0.37m (£0.37m)
- Strategic Development & Fresh Expressions: £1.48m (£1.89m)
- Governance and administration: £1.81m (£1.79m)
- National Church: £1.79m (£1.70m)

£28.16m (£27.84m)

# Other Key Achievements in 2024

- P** Launch of parish conversations - Valuing all our Parishes
- M** Clergy wellbeing: launch of Nine in Twelve initiative
- G** DIP award in June 2024: significant investment in growth
- Y** Diocesan conference on CYP ministry
- D** Bishop's certificate completed by 55 people
- H** Anti-Racism Charter Parish Study resource launched
- Election and induction of new Diocesan Synod

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The Bishop of Southwark to move that:

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# FORMAL QUESTIONS

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**BREAK**

**19.10 - 19.30**



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18/25



LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

1. How familiar are you with the  
LLF process to date?

2. Describe in max 3 words how you feel about today's conversation on LLF

3. How does LLF feature in the  
life of your church?  
(choose all that apply)

3. How does LLF feature in the  
life of your church?  
(choose all that apply)

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# 4. Use of the Prayers of Love and Faith in your church:

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# COMFORT BREAK

5. Which of the available resources on the draft proposals have you read (or seen, in case of the video) ahead of today's meeting?



6. Please give your opinion on the following statements about the proposals. On a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree)

7. What further guidance, if any, on the use of the PLF and Pastoral Reassurance, would be helpful and in which area(s)?

7. What further guidance, if any, on the use of the PLF and Pastoral Reassurance, would be helpful and in which area(s)?

8. If the bespoke PLF are introduced alongside this form of pastoral reassurance, do you think your church would:

9. What other feedback on the draft proposals would you like to share?

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# DIOCESAN SYNOD