

Diocesan Synod – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
Bishop's Council Report

**5<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

- An act of opening worship was led by Malcolm Maclean.
- Bishop Michael welcomed everyone. He then sadly noted the death of Geoff Locke who had passed away in January. He was a serving member of our diocesan Synod and in the past had been a member of General Synod, Bishop's Council and of the DBE. On behalf of Council he expressed sincere condolences to Josephine Locke and thanksgiving for all that Geoff had brought to our common life.
- He also paid tribute to Michael Metcalf who had been the Chair of the DBE for some years and was to step down in March, making this his final meeting of Bishop's Council.
- He then announced the resignation from Council of Chris Gill who had recently been elected to the Archbishops' Council. This created a vacancy for a Bishop's Council member on FAM. Two members indicated their willingness to stand for this place and made a short statement. Following a vote, Malcolm Maclean was elected to represent Bishop's Council on FAM.
- Four new elected members were then welcomed: Angela Bernard, Steve Vince, Stephen Robinson and the Revd Lisa Knight.
- The minutes of the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 were approved.
- An update was given on Seeking the Kingdom Project Boards. Copies of the Terms of Reference for each Board had been circulated. The lead Bishop for each Board gave a short update. The BPC and SM Boards would be meeting soon. The FF Board had held its first meeting recently and had begun initial work but would be giving a fuller report to the next meeting. Nick Smeeton added his thanks to all who had put their names forward to serve. All boards were fully populated, and he was excited by the level of engagement which had been considered and supportive but challenging. Bishop Michael added his sincere thanks to all who had engaged with this.
- A previously circulated paper setting out staff arrivals and departures was noted. This included the arrival of Ben Franks, who was seconded to us as Interim HR Director. Ben was welcomed, and he then said that his focus initially was making sure structures were in place to support that staff team to enable our strategy as it emerged.
- A previously circulated paper set out the results of the recent by-elections to fill vacancies on this committee, which was now full. The new Vacancy in See Regulations had also been circulated for information.
- Sam Rushton gave an update on Governance and Strategy which updated members on further work that had taken place. She explained several changes since the last discussion on this, including for example, the addition of the very important enabling structures around safeguarding. Some of our existing governance and management structures had also been added and how the enabling structures could be linked to this, including Finance and Asset Management (FAM) and our Safeguarding committees. There was further work to be done to strengthen our governance processes, including some cultural aspects, and more clarity around roles and responsibilities with better training and equipping for members. There were also proposed changes to governance around Asset Management. Following discussion, members voted to support the direction of travel set out.

- Members voted to support a proposal that the Hereford Motion should be brought to Diocesan Synod for debate.
- Members noted the minutes of FAM 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025 with no questions.
- The Finance Director gave a presentation on the 2025 financial year results, showing a provisional surplus of £177,953 against a budget deficit of £457,000, largely due to two legacies. Despite this, income had been under budget by £193k. Expenditure had also been under budget by around £860k.
- Meeting as the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, members noted a Schemes and Orders Update, a report on Schemes and Orders Completed and a Suspensions and Restrictions update. They also voted to support Bishop Michael in exercising his patronage and presenting a candidate for the role of Incumbent of Newport. It was also noted that that the Shrewsbury AMPC had approved the recruitment of an Interim Minister on Common Tenure to the benefice of Kinnerley.

JD 03/26