

3rd October 2023

- Opening worship was led by the Revd Phil Cansdale. The new chair of the DBF, David Wright, and Bishop Jonathan Clark, who was covering during the vacancy for a Bishop of Wolverhampton, were welcomed.
- In its role as the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, council noted a Schemes and Orders update and a Suspension and Restriction report.
- A proposal relating to Shrewsbury Holy Cross involving dissolving the benefice and parish and creating 2 new benefices/parishes was approved. Suitability of St Peter's Monkmoor to become a parish church was also supported.
- Views were sought regarding a request for change of use of St John's, Hanley, which had been sold several years ago. The request related to using the building for Islamic worship. After discussion a vote was held, and members were against this change.
- A proposal to establish a Joint Council for the Central Walsall group ministry was approved.
- The Revd Paul Kingman was elected to fill a casual vacancy on the Board of Patronage.
- The main item to be considered during the Bishop's Council section of the meeting was around re-visiting DVE in the light of the national "bold outcomes". Julie Jones spoke about a restructuring of central staff to build resilience and to provide for succession planning. This included the recruitment of a new Church Buildings Support Officer and an officer responsible for strategic change. These posts would be covered through bids for national church funding.
- Members were then divided into smaller groups to consider questions relating to the national "bold outcomes" and feedback was then given. This was noted to be taken forward to feed into discussions around strategy at the upcoming BSM residential.
- The new Diocesan Director of Education, Mark Davis, was warmly welcomed. He spoke about his background, and his hopes and challenges in his new role. Prayers were said for Mark and for school leaders.
- Opening the meeting of the DBF Executive, minutes of the meeting of FAM held on 20th July and a summary of the meeting held on 26th September were noted.
- Detailed papers relating to Common Fund write off applications in respect of Wednesbury S Paul & S Luke (Wood Green), Longton S.Mary, Great Barr and Stoke Team had been circulated. After discussion these applications were voted upon and approved as set out.
- The draft budget for 2024 was presented (as circulated) by the Finance Director. It was approved as set out to go forward to Diocesan Synod.
- Cyril Randles asked about the upcoming changes to IT for diocesan staff, what preparation had taken place and what training would be provided to staff. JH explained the change and the testing that had taken place as well as the training and support that would be available to staff.
- Bishop Sarah closed the meeting in prayer.