



## IN FOCUS...

### Diocesan Synod

# Lay ministry, Deaneries and eco issues dominate Synod

Football fever was in the air when members met online on 7 July for the last Diocesan Synod of the triennium.

The meeting opened with prayers led by Bishop Christopher, after which he welcomed the new Director of Finance, Mark Rhodes, for whom this was the first Synod, and also formally thanked the Revd Duncan Swan, Deaneries Development Adviser, as he moves into a new role.

Diocesan Secretary Ruth Martin followed with an update on Deanery, Diocesan and General Synod elections, before Bishop Christopher gave his Presidential Address.

Reflecting on the past extraordinary year, he thanked all those who had stepped up to help during the pandemic: "in our food banks, packing PPE equipment...and our hospital chaplains and others on the front line". He also thanked parishes for their "magnificent support" through the Parish Support Fund.

The Bishop acknowledged the contribution to the Diocese of colleagues who had retired or moved to new roles in the past year, and paid tribute to two members of Synod — Brian Wilson and Sarah Swanson — who had recently died.

Formal business began with a technical motion put forward by Adrian Greenwood, Chair of the House of Laity, and carried unopposed. Next, Alan Saunders, Chair of the DBF, formally presented the 2020 Annual Report and Financial Statements to Synod (copies can be downloaded from: [bit.ly/3hJN2Va](http://bit.ly/3hJN2Va)), before Ruth Martin and Mark Rhodes gave attendees a brief financial update. This too passed unopposed.

### Lay leadership in action

Next on the agenda was an end-of-triennium update on the Lay Leadership and Lay Ministry (LL&LM) report, delivered by the Revd Canon Wendy Robins, Director of Discipleship, Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Development. Wendy discussed the work of the Lay Council, the creation of which was a key recommendation of the report, and its role in developing new licensed, commissioned and affirmed lay ministries.

She also discussed other actions taken to celebrate LL&LM, including a liturgy for parish use for those entering affirmed ministries; the showcasing of lay-led stories in Diocesan communications; the refocusing of clergy appointment, training and review to emphasise the role of lay people in missional service; and progress



towards additional authorisation of lay ministries, to be launched in September.

The Revd Canon Jay Colwill, Director of Mission, spoke next on the work of the Deaneries Advisory Group, another priority for this triennium. Jay revealed a positive picture when it came to breathing new life into Deaneries. More than 50% have a Deanery Leadership Team, where lay and ordained work together with a missional focus, and more than 60% are keen for a Mission Accompanier to help them. "We have begun a journey, and begun it well," said Jay.

### Environmental journey

Bishop Richard came next with an update on the Eco Diocese Working Group, revealing that Southwark is almost ready to apply for its Bronze Award. As part of this process, a renewed Diocesan Environmental Policy has been created, for which Bishop Richard sought formal approval from Synod and which was accepted unanimously.

Bishop Richard said: "There is very much a gospel imperative in all we do [on the environment]. There is also a practical imperative: there is no Planet B." In this he was backed up by young people from the Kingston Youth Forum, who had their say via a video in which they discussed their hopes and fears around climate justice (find the video at: [bit.ly/2Uq2IVA](http://bit.ly/2Uq2IVA)).

Head of JPIC, Nicola Thomas, then shared more detail on the Environmental Policy. "This is a vision that people need to be committed to at local level," she said, "in schools, parishes and Deaneries, and we are working to build that infrastructure."

Adrian Greenwood and Archdeacon Rosemarie Mallett ended by thanking Synod members for their work over the triennium, a sentiment which was seconded by Bishop Christopher, while Bishop Richard thanked outgoing Diocesan Environmental Officer Sue Mallinson for her service (see page 12). The meeting closed with compline at which the Revd Mark Smith was commissioned as Bishop's Advisor for Self-Supporting Ministry.

## CofE chooses SDBE to deliver new teacher qualifications



The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust has been chosen by the Church of England Education Office as one of its regional partners to deliver teachers' CPD, it was announced in June.

In May, the Department for Education awarded the Church of England one of nine national contracts to deliver National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). These newly revamped qualifications offer teachers and school leaders the chance to develop expertise in areas of practice such as behaviour management and leadership.

The CofE Education Office decided to recruit and accredit Regional Delivery Partners to deliver the qualifications. In June, the SDBE MAT heard that it had been approved as one of these partners, meaning that, from November 2021 when the courses launch, it will deliver the qualifications to all schools and their leaders from across the

Diocese, including faith and non-faith schools.

Marcus Cooper, Chief Executive Officer for the MAT, said: "We are absolutely thrilled to be a Delivery Partner for the Church of England, able, equipped and accredited to deliver NPQs to staff from across the entire Diocese."

He added: "We are especially proud that the qualifications will be delivered by leaders from across our Trust schools as part of our model for distributed leadership. It's great to see our serving leaders training other serving and aspiring leaders."

Meanwhile, Amanda Blackburn, Trust Leader for NPQs, said: "It has been a real privilege to see the transformation in our middle leaders across the Trust as they have engaged with the NPQML programme and developed and refined their leadership skills."

*Pictured above: the SDBE MAT colleagues involved in the NPQs.*

## LLF taster event a positive experience for participants

On Saturday 26 June a group of almost 50 people, lay and clergy, gathered together online for a Living in Love and Faith Taster Afternoon, writes the Revd Canon Wendy Robins.



We were delighted that Eva John, the Enabling Officer for Living in Love and Faith (LLF), was able to facilitate. The Bishops of the Diocese have encouraged all our churches, as well as individuals and Deaneries, to get involved in the process, which is designed to encourage thinking about how questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ and what it means to live in love and faith together as a Church.

People who attended the session were very positive about the insights it gave them into the Bible study material and were encouraged to consider gathering together a group to be part of LLF. The input into the afternoon was recorded and will shortly be available on the LLF page of the Diocesan website. Why not have a look and consider whether you could draw together your own group? There is more information on our web pages or on the National Church of England website at: [www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith](http://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith)

We hope to be able to have a Diocesan round-up session in the Autumn so people can share their experiences. Please do join this important initiative.