**Summary of a meeting of Lichfield Diocesan Synod**

**16th March 2024 at Telford Minster**

* Opening Worship was led by the Revd Matt Beer.
* The minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2023 were approved and signed accordingly.
* The Revd Neil Robbie brought the Vexatious Complaints Policy back to Synod for ratification following some amendments resulting from discussions at the last meeting. The following motion was then voted upon and carried:

*This Synod welcomes the policy for identifying and handling persistent, unreasonable, and vexatious complaints and encourages its use in the diocese.*

* Revisions to the constitution of the Stafford AMPC were put to Synod. The following motion was then voted upon and carried:

*This Synod approves the revision of the Stafford AMPC constitution.*

* Helen Palfrey, the Diocesan Mothers’ Union President, gave a presentation about its work. Following a heartfelt thank you from Bishop Michael on Synod’s behalf, the following motion was then voted upon and carried:

*This Synod endorses and encourages the work of the Mother's Union*

* Members of the Diocesan Green Team, Abbie Walsh and Debbie Loughran gave an update on our response to environmental challenges, including Eco Church, and a video on Creationtide. The Diocesan Secretary also spoke about the imminent recruitment of a Net Zero Carbon Project Manager, for which funding had been obtained from the national church. The following motion was then voted upon and carried:

*This Synod takes note of the update.*

* Mrs Penny Allen spoke to her report of the February General Synod sessions. The following motion was then voted upon:

*The report of the General Synod sessions in February 2024 be received.*

This was carried with 15 votes against and 2 abstentions.

* In his Presidential Address, Bishop Michael said that he was pleased to be back and in particular as the strategic framework was now being discussed further and potentially taken forward. He then thanked all who had sent messages, letters and cards, assurance of prayers, and shown great kindness in so many thoughtful ways. He looked forward to the strategic discussions and hoped that members would endorse the framework. He stressed that at all times we must pray in humility, expectation and trust, knowing that our gracious God would bless us.
* The Question Time paper was the discussed, which contained nineteen questions and written answers from diocesan officers. Several supplementary questions were asked and answered verbally.
* A paper setting out a strategic framework for 2024 – 2030 had been circulated following much work and consultation through the governance process. The Bishop of Stafford and the Archdeacon of Stoke-upon-Trent gave an accompanying presentation. Members were then asked to discuss the documents during a break, and a plenary session was then held. It was noted that the recruitment of a new Director of Communications, plus a new nationally funded strategic role were both important in the implementation of the stratgey and would be actioned immediately following Synod’s endorsement of it. Members were asked for their prayers for these appointments and for the 9 goals set out in the strategy. It was intended that all deaneries would also have access to a presentation. The following motion was then moved, voted upon and clearly carried:

*This Synod endorses the principles and priorities set out in the strategy direction paper with regular updates and reviews at future meetings.*

* Greg Bakker of the Church Mission Society, and Catherine Matclock (Pioneer Missioner) spoke about the work of Pioneering Parishes , which provided tools to help parishes become more outward looking, enabling parish priests and their churches to extend the care of souls to all in the parish, and how this could be worked out in the diocese, particularly in the light of the new strategic framework.

The following motion was then moved and voted upon:

*This Synod takes note of the work of Pioneering Parishes in supporting our ongoing outreach efforts.*

* Bishop Michael paid tribute to the Archdeacon of Walsall on the occasion of his last meeting before retiring on 8th May, noting that there would be a farewell service on 28th April, at 3 pm at the Church of the Good Shepherd, West Bromwich. The Archdeacon of Lichfield then led prayers for the Archdeacon and Mrs Francis as they moved into retirement.
* Bishop Michael thanked all for their attendance and engagement and closed the meeting in prayer.

All papers and presentations are available [here](https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/about-us/synod/), or by contacting [jo.durber@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:jo.durber@lichfield.anglican.org) or calling 01543 306067