



Monmouth Diocesan Conference Report

2021



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Monmouth Diocesan Conference

17th October 2020 at Newport Cathedral and via Zoom

Minutes of the Meeting

Welcome and Worship

The President of Conference, The Right Reverend Cherry Vann, Bishop of Monmouth, welcomed members and observers to the virtual Diocesan Conference.

The opening worship was led by Archdeacon Jonathan Williams, Archdeacon of Newport.

Opening Remarks – President of the Conference

The Right Reverend Cherry Vann, Bishop of Monmouth

Bishop Cherry thanked clergy and laity for their faithfulness and creativity over the past eight months noting it's been an enormously difficult time but that it's been good to see people going out of their way to support each other, in the church and in the local community. She thanked all those involved in keeping the life, work and witness of the church going in these very difficult times.

She went on saying, those who read the Friday email would have seen the note from Peter Lea, chair of the DBF, thanking everybody for the ministry share that has come in for the third quarter at an amazing 90% and added her thanks for all those who contributed in such a committed way. 90% in present circumstances, in the third quarter of the year is really a remarkable achievement.

Today we're conducting the business online and it does feel rather impoverished not to be in a room with up to 200 people present, we won't be enjoying the same degree of fellowship and conversation as you'd normally expect to have on these occasions. But it may be the case that we find more people feeling able to interact with what's going on, everyone is encouraged to use the chat function to feed in questions. It's good to get some engagement from those listening. We have quite a few observers with us as well and you are also encouraged to ask questions at the end.

Bishop Cherry finished the opening remarks by thanking Diocesan staff who've worked tirelessly over the past eight months in the office and at home to keep the life of the church going in its administrative functions. And to the staff who have made today possible and to ensure its smooth running.

Business of the Diocesan Conference 2020

1. Amendments to the Standing Orders	To enable the President to conduct the meeting adaptations to the formality of the conduct of the meeting, as prescribed in Appendix One, are necessary to conduct the meeting remotely. Due to the circumstance, we will not be able to vote and therefore the minutes and the reports will need to be ratified at the next in-person conference that we can hold. Members of conference can ask questions and submit comments via the chat function, over the phone or by e-mail.
2. Attendance and Apologies	<p>The 2020 Diocesan Conference was held at Newport Cathedral and via Zoom on 17th October 2020. A total of 94 members of the Diocese attended. There were 48 cleric members (from a total membership of 65); 15 clerics over the age of 70 (from a total of 31); 46 lay members (from a total membership of 77) and 23 observers/diocesan staff.</p> <p>Apologies were received from 7 clerics and 8 lay members.</p>
3. Declarations of conflict of interest	There were no declarations of conflict of interest.
4. Minutes October 2019	The minutes were printed in the report and were signed by the President. They will be ratified at the next in person meeting.
5. Matters Arising	No matters arising from the minutes were raised.
6. List of Conference Members	<p>65 - clergy 31 - clergy over 70 years 67 - lay elected by benefices 3 – Bishop’s Nominees 7 - Ex-Officio</p> <p>The membership list was signed by the President.</p>
7. Report of Standing Committee	<p>Before the report Bishop Cherry explained the process for submitting questions, members can put questions in the chat along with who the question is for and their full name.</p> <p>Archdeacon of Monmouth, Ven Ambrose Mason presented the report for the Standing Committee – see Conference Report for reference.</p> <p>During the presentation, he explained that the Standing Committee exists to further the work of the Conference through the working year and met four times in 2019. He then thanked the members of the Standing Committee, and in particular Sarah Rosser who was the secretary. The most significant work in 2019 was to produce the Diocesan profile and testament to this is our new Bishop, Bishop Cherry. He finished by thanking Isabel Thompson, the new Diocesan Secretary, for producing the report.</p>
8. Report of the Parsonage Board and the DBF	Mr Sandy Blair, Chair of the Diocesan Parsonage Board, presented the Parsonage Board report – see Conference Report for reference.

Mr Blair noted that next year there will be a vacancy for a chair.

Mr Blair gave thanks to Garry Reader, the Parsonage Inspector, Bethan Davies, the Diocesan Accountant, and the members of the board.

Mr Blair also thanked Peter Lea, particularly for the work he's done over the last 18 months which were particularly difficult.

Mr Peter Lea, Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, presented the **DBF report** – see Conference Report for reference.

This report included a three-year financial review (2019-2021)

- The actual expenditure for 2019
- The forecast expenditure for 2020
- The budget for 2021

In 2019, the expected surplus was £7K, the actual surplus was £190K due to a number of reasons to be explained. Income was £3.352 million, very close to the expected figure of £3.410 million. Share collection is the heart of this and collection was again very strong with MA paying by standing order and benefiting from the rebate. Some parishes were generous enough to pass on the rebate to others in greater need. Share produces around two thirds of the board's income and all the board are grateful for the enormous efforts made by MA to make those payments, I want to say a heartfelt thank-you to you all.

Moving to expenditure, this was £3.162 million, quite a bit lower than was expected due to an underspend on ministry cost because it was not possible to fill posts. This was not something that the board wanted to see, although there are short term savings, the difficulties that these vacancies cause far outweigh any benefit. And it's not all savings when in a vacancy, there are still costs for the board to meet. The other main costs are support for parishes, grants, governance and administration. Administration costs totalled £195K, this remains 6% of total DBF expenditure.

Onto investments, these switch between years of increase and decrease. After the drop of £188K in 2018 there was an increase of £222K in 2019.

During the year the board became aware of a legacy made by a retired priest, although this was not settled until 2020 it has to be included in the 2019 figures. The whole board are incredibly grateful for this gesture of £387K.

The board also revalued the office on Caerau Road, this happened in 2019 and was set at £400K, an increase from the previous value of £310K. This £90K increase is counted in the overall surplus.

For 2019 there was a total unrestricted surplus of £889K.

The board also took over dealing with the administration of funds previously held outside the board. This contributed to restricted funds of £112K. These are monies which the board holds for set purposes and can't be used for general purposes.

The full accounts are available on the Diocesan website.

They show that the total reserves of the board at the end of 2019 were £4.755 million. £403K are the restricted reserves mentioned which have to be used for set purposes. The remainder are unrestricted or designated funds and can be used as the board sees fit to further the funding of ministry and mission in the diocese.

Last year a budget was set for 2020 showing a deficit of £280K, the diocese was capable to cope with this for one year, but it would be a one off and a major review was needed for the future. This review was commissioned by Bishop Cherry in February who saw this as a priority.

Then Covid hit and at the end of March churches closed and virtually all parish income stopped. New forms of worship were developed almost overnight, new means of keeping in touch as a church community were found and the whole of the church worked together in a way never seen before. The message from day one was we're all in this together. The RB made grants to Diocese and the board are grateful for that support, this has been passed on to MAs in the form of the enhanced 40% rebate for quarters two and three and grants to help with re opening churches. At a more local level parishes have seen giving coming from standing orders, gift direct and collections dropped off to treasurers houses and over the last couple of months churches have very carefully started to re-open again. In a situation which is changing almost daily it's difficult to predict the financial outcome for 2020 but the board is committed to supporting MAs for the last quarter of the year. How much help can be given depends in what has come in for quarter three and the boards available cash reserves. The response for quarter three has been amazing, thank-you. It's heart-warming to all of those involved to see the level of share paid by MAs this year, we know you've all dug deep and so will the board.

The board will incur a deficit this year so that it can give the necessary support to MAs. The 2019 investment gain has been reversed but these investments are held for the long term, so we have to live with these short term fluctuations. We're grateful for the work of our investment managers for the work of looking after the portfolio.

Expenditure has been kept under strict control and some budgets will be underspent because of covid restrictions.

The year's been a difficult one for the office team who have risen to the challenge, undertaking extra work and working from home.

	<p>Mr Lea gave a huge thank-you to Izzy Thompson who was appointed Diocesan Secretary in June and Bethan Davies who has controlled the finances through these unprecedented times.</p> <p>The board itself has worked differently using zoom meetings and meeting more frequently to keep pace with rapidly changing event.</p> <p>Looking forward to 2021, the Diocesan review happened earlier this year and some recommendations have already been carried out. The budget committee went back to basics with a blank sheet of paper to compile the 2021 budget. Having originally had figures which would have given unsustainable levels of deficit this was a necessary call to take. It also meant making the best assessment of how next year will turn out. Based on maintaining the overall share collection of 2020 level, expenditure was set at a level which produces a break-even budget after using a small amount of past designated funds. This has meant looking at what was needed rather than what it would be nice to have, resulting in some hard decisions. If this budget is achieved, it puts the finances on a more solid footing for the future. This year's budgets round is only a part of the review of the finances, it'll be necessary to have a second stage and look further into the future when some of the present uncertainties clear. We've seen in the difficult times how the church has responded in so many new ways and how much that's been appreciated. The primary role of the board of finance is to fund the ministry and mission of the church in this diocese. This includes not only what has been done before but these new forms of worship and communication.</p> <p>Mr Lea thanked all the members of the exec for their hard work, especially during the last eight months. And a huge thanks to Izzy, Bethan and all the team for what they've done this year in unprecedented circumstances.</p>
9. Questions of Reports	<p>A question from Caroline Woollard, lay member for Abergavenny, on the Standing Committee Report asking for an update on what is happening with the evangelism bid and what is happening with mission initiatives.</p> <p>Archdeacon Ambrose answered, the original bid as originally was delayed whilst we had no Bishop. Then when Bishop Cherry was appointed, she seized the opportunity to begin an initiative to construct a new Diocesan strategy and then there was Covid so that caused inescapable delays with submitting the bid. But he went on to say that a great deal of mission initiatives are going on across the Diocese locally and particularly in the valleys now, perhaps the most important one being the streamed and broadcast worship as an introduction to the life of our churches locally which is bearing considerable fruits already. Viewer numbers are considerable and new skills are being learnt and new ways of communicating the gospel practiced. So, the news is good and the future hopeful.</p> <p>A question from Rev Nigel Jukes on the DBF Report asking if the slides would be made available after today?</p>

	<p>Mr Lea answered that the full accounts are available on the website and the slides will be emailed to all conference members.</p> <p>A question from Linda Redmond, lay member for Cyncoed, on the DBF Report asking, are we likely to receive a similar rebate on the fourth quarter of ministry share if we are able to pay in full?</p> <p>Mr Lea answered, there will be a rebate, the board has a special meeting arranged to look at the figures and decide on the level and the board will want to be a generous as possible. As soon as the level has been decided it will be communicated. He reiterated his thanks for all the share payment received for quarters one, two and three already this year.</p>
10. Other Reports	The reports of the Board of Nomination and the Director of Education's report are available in the Conference Report and will be formally accepted at the next in person conference.
11. Written Questions	No written questions were received.
12. AOB	None.
13. Next Meeting	The Bishop explained that we are aiming for a conference after Easter in 2021, hoping that this will be in person, but this remains unknown.

Conference Address – The Right Reverend Cherry Vann

Centuries ago, the people of God were in exile having been taken from their home in Jerusalem to the foreign lands of Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. They were dislocated from the land, the promised land, that God had given to them; they'd been taken from their holy city of Zion, and they'd been separated from the Temple, the house of God that was the focus of their worship and life. You'll no doubt be familiar with the words of the psalmist that describe how they felt. 'By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion...How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?'

And yet, far from telling them to wait and to long for the time when they can go back, God tells them to build houses to live in, plant gardens in which to grow food, get married and have children, multiply. Because this time of exile was going to last for generations. In other words, those who left Jerusalem in captivity would not be going back. Those who would be going back were the ones who had no knowledge or experience of life as the people of God had known it. And the words that God speaks to them through the prophet Jeremiah are these: 'For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.' (Jeremiah 29:11) Despite losing everything that was familiar and dear and being separated from the very foundations of their life and faith, God was promising them a future with hope.

It's not difficult to see the parallels between the people of God in exile all those centuries ago and the circumstances in which we find ourselves today. We may not have been exiled to a foreign country but we are living in unfamiliar territory. We may not be separated from our homes, but we are separated from family and friends; socially distanced even when we are able to physically meet with other people. The experience of not being able to go to church, not being able to gather for worship, to sing songs of praise, to receive the sacrament has been a terrible loss and a bereavement. Even when services in church have been possible and people have felt confident and safe enough to go, it's felt to many like a poor substitute to what church life and worship was only 7 months ago. We're living in strange times, navigating our way as best we can in unfamiliar territory.

And just like the people of God who were exiled to Babylon, we don't know when we'll be going back, how long this is going to last, or what we'll find when the exile is over. How can we sing the Lord's song in this strange land in which we find ourselves?

It's because of the uncertainty of it all and the unpredictability of what's going on that God's words to his people in Babylon hold an important message for us today. Rather than long for how things were and yearn to go back to how it was, God invites us to build, plant and nourish ourselves; to get on with living and praying not just for ourselves but for the welfare of the world around us; and, above all, to trust him for our future. 'For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.'

It's against that backcloth that I want to talk about our life together as a diocese and to touch on just a couple of things that I see as being among our priorities for the coming year or so. First to update you briefly on where we've got to on our Ministry Area proposals. I was extremely grateful to all those who took part in the consultation event a couple of weeks ago and to those who've emailed in since. There was a lot of energy and engagement on the day and a sense of

hope and excitement in the direction we're going, which was encouraging and heartening. So thank you again to those who were there.

As I said on that occasion, establishing Ministry Areas is something that this diocese has been doing for some years and it's important now to complete that work so that every church community and every lay and ordained minister knows where they fit and who they are working with. For those who are still unsure what a MA is, it is quite simply a group of churches coming together to share their life of faith and worship, and their resources in mission and service. The churches and communities in the MA are served by a team of ordained and lay ministers who work collaboratively across the MA, sharing their gifts and skills with the churches in their care.

The Bishop's Staff Team has taken the feedback from the consultation day and used it to help us outline what we believe the MAs should be in the light of our financial projections and ministerial resources. We're hopeful of having a final set of proposals by the end of our meeting next week and will be looking to hold meetings in November, with the stipendiary clergy in the first instance and then more widely with others in each of the proposed MAs.

This will give us the framework within which we can develop and invest in our life and work, our mission and ministry, our witness and service.

In all of this, I'd like to reflect with you on two aspects of our Christian life that I believe are foundational to the hopeful future that God promises us. The first is to remember who we are; that is discipleship. The second is to remember that all that we are and all that we have belongs to God; that is stewardship.

In all the business and busyness that makes up church life it can be extraordinarily easy to forget who we are. We put a lot of energy and attention into what we think we should be doing, but perhaps far less energy and attention into being and becoming the people God is calling us to be, both as individuals and as a church community. This can be as true for those of us who are ordained as it is for the laos, the people of God. Just think for a minute about the things that you are or were involved in – all the things that you do or did before the pandemic struck; all the activities that were part and parcel of church life; all the plans that you'd made and perhaps those that you're making now in the light what's been described as the new normal.

Nothing wrong with that on one level, except that all the doing can come at the expense of us being and growing as children of God, as followers of Jesus and as communities of disciples. If we have anything at all to offer the world that's distinctive and that sets us apart from all the other wonderful community groups, service providers and charitable organisations that are around, it's our faith, our relationship with God and our experience of being caught up in God's love for us and for his world. That is what defines us. That is what shapes us. That is what motivates us. That is what we're called to share. If we allow ourselves to get so caught up in activity that we cease to pay sufficient attention both to who we are and whose we are, then we're not being true to our calling as the people of God.

So I'd like to encourage us over the next months and years to focus on our discipleship and on growing as disciples of Jesus Christ, as well as drawing into following Jesus. It's an area of church life that we've not been very good at on the whole, which on one level is a bit surprising. Many secular groups and clubs have in-built ways of helping their members to improve or get better or become more skilled in whatever interest they're pursuing. And whilst that's perhaps not the language that we'd want to use of Christian discipleship, there is a need for us to provide ways for one another to grow in our understanding, to mature in our faith and to explore what it

means to be a follower of Jesus in today's world; so that we're built up and equipped and confident to live the life God invites us into and thereby share with those who are seeking and searching not just the story of God's love for his world but our story (your story, my story) of God's love for us.

Some of this is happening already. Of course, it is. But through our Continuing Ministerial Development work and some work that I'd like us to do on developing resources for discipleship, I want to encourage us all to pay attention to our calling be disciples of Jesus so that together, as the people of God in this diocese, we'll be able to discover afresh and find renewed confidence in who we are and whose we are.

The other aspect of our Christian life that I'd like us to focus on is stewardship. That is, first and foremost, recognising that all we have including our very lives is not ours, but belongs to God. It's gifted and entrusted to us by God to care for, to enjoy and to use well and wisely. That's what a steward does; she or he manages and looks after something on behalf of someone else. The someone else in our case is God.

The concept of stewardship, of course, has been used almost exclusively in the church to talk about money, and money is not unimportant. Jesus has quite a bit to say about our relationship with the money and possessions entrusted to us. He warns against storing up wealth and possessions for ourselves, knowing how tempting it is for us to look to them for our sense of security rather than looking to God. The first disciples Jesus calls left everything to follow him; their homes, their livelihoods and their families. The new Christians in the early church shared everything they had with one another, pooling their resources to support one another and to share what they had with any in need. Whilst we may like to think that such ways of going on are unrealistic in today's world, it surely isn't unrealistic to allow God to draw us into a security that is based wholly and solely on his love. To help us establish a good relationship with our money, the church has for centuries taught the principle of tithing; of giving a tenth of what we have away to support God's work and mission through the life of the church. That may sound quite radical, but it does have the potential to release us from viewing money just as a means to pay the bills and the ministry share and it might actually enable us to engage in more exciting initiatives in God's service.

But let's not just get caught up on money. Stewardship is about much more than that. We can apply it to Ministry Areas, for example. The principles behind the idea of MAs are about harnessing and utilizing the resources that God has given to us so that the whole church may flourish and be better equipped to share in the work God has invited us to be part of in the communities of our diocese. At its best, this will see ordained and lay ministers working as a team across an area, each playing to their strengths and, as importantly, each supporting one another to flourish as together they seek to serve the churches and communities in their care. It will also see churches and congregation members sharing what they have, being willing to give and to receive as they learn to become the body of Christ. The reading we heard in our worship at the very beginning of this morning's business warns us against assuming that we don't need the other parts of the body and that we can function well enough on our own. Each has a part to play. Each is complimented and enhanced through working together. All are the poorer and disabled in some way if one part is prevented from fulfilling its role, however small and insignificant that may seem to be. God invites us to use everything we have well and wisely in his service. That's good stewardship.

And one more example, amongst many I could give, is the responsibility that God has given to us to care for creation; to be good stewards of the earth and its resources and to share what it provides in a way that all can benefit. As we are learning, almost too late, the state of the planet is a consequence of our poor stewardship, our lack of care for the forms of life with which we share this extraordinary world, and our unwillingness to recognise, until very recently, how each of the parts fit together in an inter-dependent way. Just like a body.

I hope that over the coming year we'll be able to do some work together on stewardship, as part of our growth in discipleship, so that the resources entrusted to us across this diocese can be used to best effect in our common life and witness, for the glory of God.

It is the case that the future is uncertain. It is the case that we have lost much, at least temporarily, of what we hold dear and many of the ways of being church that we've hitherto taken for granted. But it is also the case that God is with us and continues to be at work, both in the church and in the world, in our lives and in the lives of those amongst whom we live and work. And that in the end is all that matters. 'For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.'

Questions on the Conference Address

A question from Rev Justin Groves, will the work on ministry areas include a forecast on the number of stipends we will have as a diocese over the next few years?

Bishop Cherry answered saying, the forecast of the number of stipends will be partly dependent on our finances. One of the consequences of ministry share not coming in is we might have to look at what clergy stipendiary posts we can afford going forward. We have put a number in the budget, and we are hoping to stick with that and to see it go up in future years but that will depend on finances. Part of the work of the Bishop's Staff Team will be to look at not just the geography and shape of the ministry areas but what ministerial provision will be part of those. That will form part of the feedback we give when we meet with the stipendiary clergy hopefully at some point in November.

A question from Rev James Henley, what do you see as being the crucial ingredients to help someone grow in their discipleship?

Bishop Cherry answered, growing in discipleship is a lifelong process, we never stop growing, we never stop learning what it means to be a disciple as we go through life and encounter the experiences of life as we grow older. One of the key things would be prayer, helping people to pray. Sometimes people feel that prayer is complicated or difficult, that you have to do certain things, say certain things, use certain words. But prayer comes out of the heart, it's about our relationship and God hears the prayers of our hearts even before we articulate them and even in cases where we have no words to articulate what's going on inside us. To help people to explore prayer and what it means to be open to listen to hear the voice of God within us and to discern what God is saying to us from the people and the circumstances around us is all a key part of our discipleship. Learning about Jesus and how he lived and the things that he calls us to do in following him are also absolutely key. So, things like Bible study groups are really important alongside other study groups. Some people like to read books on their own but I've found that

it's really powerful and quite profound to meet with other people to explore what it means together to be disciples. We ourselves only have our own experience, we learn about our faith, we learn about growing as disciples as we listen to one another and share with others what our experience of God is and listen to what their experience is and that can all be part and parcel of growing as disciples. And we don't grow in isolation either, being members of a house group or a church where these kinds of things can be explored. The other important thing to say is to create a culture in our churches where people feel that they can ask questions, so often I've come across people who feel it's wrong to question or they don't feel that they can be open and honest about what's going on as it might be deemed as wrong or lacking in some way. We need our churches to be safe spaces for all of us to explore our faith and what it means to be a disciple, so open those spaces, give people permission to talk and to ask as well as to listen and to share. Those are just a few things, there are plenty other, as we move forward I would hope that there'll be a group of people we can work with to explore precisely these things in the way that we shape our resources to help others grow in their discipleship.

A question from Rev Jane Butler, you talked about where you want to get to with MAs and something of the process. Is there parallel work relating to your agendas on discipleship/stewardship?

Bishop Cherry answered, this is not something that I'm going to do on my own, that's not what my job is about, this is something that we explore together. The MA are about the structures that relate to our finance, our administration, the way we do ministry together, the way to share our resources, both people and other. In terms of discipleship and stewardship they will be part of the kind of work that we'll be inviting the MAs to undertake, it will be part of the process but again I want to explore that with other people with how that works. It's important to say at this stage that what's going to be right in the churches of Upper Islwyn will not be right for some of our churches in the more rural areas of our diocese. We do have to recognise that these initiative and ways of being Christian, of drawing people into discipleship, of using the resources that God has given to us are going to be particular in some ways to the context in which we're living. It's not necessarily one thing fits everybody, it is a case of working out on the ground how to draw people into discipleship, how to share the resources that God has given us.

Rev Sally Ingle-Gillis asked, I am excited and hopeful about all that you have said this morning, thank you. Please can you tell me what plans there are for training in relation to this new vision and our new ways of working? The webinars we have had so far have been excellent, more would be brilliant!! I am particularly thinking about how we need to engage constructively with those who are new to technology.

Bishop Cherry answered, as we embed our MAs these are precisely the kind of things that we will be looking at. We are intending to put in training for MAs for the ministry teams that will recognise that teams don't necessarily just work well on their own. Very often they need resources, they need investing in, and they need opportunities for building team, for building trust, for building ways of working in which the different elements of the team can complement one another. One of the things we are intending to do as a Bishop Staff Team when we're able to go away and meet together in person somewhere is to do precisely that kind of work, how we build the way we work as a team, how we compliment each other, how we enable one another to flourish in the roles that God has given to us. We'll be looking to invest in our MAs, both the

ministry team and more widely the church communities. I've heard some tremendous feedback from people who've been part of the webinars, those from our own diocese and those from St Padarns. It's clearly a good way of helping people to engage and to come together as best we can given the circumstances we're living in and for some it probably works better than driving miles and sitting in a cold church hall. We will be looking to develop technology our ways of working online and to look at how we support those people who either aren't so keen on using technology or aren't able to for whatever reason so that we're able to embrace those people as well. That will all be part of the conversations we have going forward. If you have any ideas on any of these things please do feed them in, it's not just for me to do or just for the Bishop's Staff Team to do, it's for us all to engage and to share our wisdom and our experience and our expertise.

Ian Loynd asked, will developing the capacity of children and young people to grow the Kingdom in our diocese be a strategic focus of our work going forward?

Bishop Cherry answered, absolutely. We're already looking at talking with and listening the young people in our diocese as part of these exploring vision days. I'm very keen that we work with our CiW schools and other schools who want to work with us and that we find ways of better engaging not just with the school but with the families of the children, the staff and the governors who are part of that. Young people are absolutely vital to all of this and you don't need me to tell you that as we look around our diocese, and it isn't just as our diocese, but as we look around the churches young people and young families are on the whole missing and we have to find ways of focussing our work and our attention and our resources on finding ways of engaging with them, or listening to them, of drawing them in and of learning from them as well. They are living in a world that most of us, unless we're parents or grandparents, know very little about. They are going to be part o of the renewal of the life of our church and we absolutely have to find ways of drawing them in and listening to what wisdom they have to share with us and enabling them to be disciples, enabling them to be evangelist, enabling them to do the work of God in their homes, in their schools, in their lives.

Bishop Cherry thanked everyone for their questions and reminded everyone that further questions can be submitted via the feedback form.

She went on to say, we're all in this together, we're all part of the church. It's future life and direction is the responsibility of all of us. And I think our future is hopeful and exciting, we just have to remember to trust in God, to listen and to discern what it is that God is saying to us and where it is that God is leading us.

Closing of Conference

Bishop Cherry finished by saying thank-you to all those in the cathedral that have been part of the delivery of conference, part of ensuring that it ran so smoothly. In particular to Rev Canon David Neale who has done so much over the past seven months to ensure that the worshipping life of the Cathedral has been able to continue.

She encouraged everyone to complete the feedback form.

The conference ended with a prayer,

May the love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself, the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in his service, the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts, the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you this day and remain with you always

Amen

Membership of the Monmouth Diocesan Conference

1st July 2019 – 30th June 2022

All serving clergy under 70 years of age are members by virtue of the licence they hold from the Bishop, together with the elected representatives from the benefices and parishes of the Diocese.

President: - The Right Reverend Cherry Vann, Bishop of Monmouth

Secretary: - Isabel Thompson

Ex officio: -

The Chancellor
The Chairman of the Board of Finance
The Chairman of the Property Board
The Chairman of the Diocesan Trust
The Chairman of the D.A.C.

The Registrar
The Secretary of the Board of Finance
The Secretary of the Property Board
The Secretary of the Diocesan Trust
The Secretary of the D.A.C.

Bishop's Nominations: -

Sean Cavanagh
Sian Harvey
Sylvia Maslen
Natasha Powles

Dan Damon
Gay Kenington
Philip Masters

Lynne Eilertsen
John Lipscomb
Tim McCord

Elected Lay Members: -

Abergavenny

Christopher Cotterill
Diana Williams

Jessica Graham
Caroline Woollard

Peter Lea

Karl Sage

Bassaleg

Gail Carey
Sue Greening
Rosemarie Llewellyn
Ashely Rogers

Helen Carey
George Hughes
Ian Loynd
Perry Turner

Cheryl Christoffersen
Daniel Hutchinson
Sarah Mulcahy

Susan Fergusson
William James
Linda Redmond

Bedwellty

Philip Griffiths
Edwina Samuel

Keith Hayden
Mark Saunders-
Gwynne

Allyson Jones

Janet Jones

Monmouth

Paul Barnes
Christopher Wray

Susan Hughes

Jill Rundle

Jan Pain

Netherwent

Fay Baxter
Catherine Higgs
Roger Williams

Ian Benton
Beryl Pugh

Steve Drowley
Noreen Shaw

Paul Glover
Paul Williams

Newport

Sue Batey
Christopher England
Edward Kinnear
Angela O'Brien
Sue Tidley

Paulette Brown
Timothy Ford
Christopher Matthews
Alan Richardson

Robert Cornelius
Melville Friend
Wendy Matthews
Ann Richardson

Philippa Dixey
Sian King
Trevor Newman
Paul Taylor

Pontypool

Joe Chesterman
Ceri-Anne Jones

Raymond Harris
Keiron Jones

Elizabeth Herbert
Terrie Smith

Paul Johnson
James Thompson

Raglan & Usk

Jayne Collier
Bryony Jacques

Neville Crump
Helen Jones

Robert Evans

Susan Hiscox

Election Results

Election Results for the Governing Body of the Church in Wales (Clergy)

- 2 places -

Elected

Rev John Connell

Rev Justin Groves

Supplemental List

3) Rev Matt Davis

4) Stephen Smith

Election Results for the Governing Body of the Church in Wales (Lay)

- 4 places -

Elected

Dr Jayne Collier

Sarah Mulcahy

Dr Paul Glover

Gaynor Suzanne Parfitt

Election Results for Representative Body (Clergy)

- 1 place -

Elected

Ven Jonathan Williams

Supplemental List

2) Rev Julian Gray

Election Results for Representative Body (Lay)

- 1 place -

Elected

Paulette Brown

Supplemental List

2) Robin Charles Smith

Election Results for the Disciplinary Tribunal (Clergy)

- 2 places -

Elected

Rev John Collier

Vacant

Election Results for the Churches and Pastoral Committee (Clergy & Lay)

- 3 places -

Elected

Dr Paul Glover

Sandy Blair

Rev James Henley

Supplemental List

4) Rev Mark Owen

5) Rev Christopher Stone

6) Timothy Pratt

The Standing Committee of the Monmouth Diocesan Conference

Membership 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2022

Ex-officio:

The Bishop; The Dean; The Chancellor; The Archdeacon of Newport; The Archdeacon of Monmouth; The Archdeacon of the Gwent Valleys; The Registrar; The Diocesan Secretary; The DBF Chair.

Clerical:

Revd. John Connell; Revd. Anne Golledge; Revd. Kevin Hasler; Revd. James Henley; Revd. Mark Owen; Revd. Becca Stevens.

Laity:

Neville Crump; Phillipa Dixey; Robert Evans; Ian Loynd; Annette Masters; Paul Williams; Anthony Williams Price; Michael Younger

Secretary:

Sarah Rosser (until June 2020)
Isabel Thompson (from June 2020)

Meetings

The Standing Committee met on four occasions (February, June, September and November) in 2020.

Diocesan Conference

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions the Standing Committee agreed that the Diocesan Conference in October 2020 should be conducted online. As Bishop Cherry's first Diocesan Conference, her keynote address set the agenda for the coming year by announcing plans to form single parish Ministry Areas and emphasising the importance of Stewardship and Discipleship.

A total of 94 members of the Diocese attended online, with those taking part in Newport Cathedral. There were 48 clerical members (from a total membership of 65); 15 clerics over the age of 70 (from a total of 31); 46 lay members (from a total membership of 77) and 23 observers/diocesan staff. Apologies were received from 7 clerics and 8 lay members.

A copy of the minutes of the conference is included in the pack accompanying this report.

Ministry Areas

The plans to form Ministry Areas as Rectorial Benefices were a significant topic of discussion during the second part of 2020 and into 2021.

Boundary Changes

As part of a wider Church in Wales project to produce online digital maps of all parishes in the Church in Wales, during their February meeting, the Standing Committee approved all parishes boundaries 'on-block'.

The Church in Wales are currently digitising these maps.

Pastoral Reorganisation:

February

During their February meeting the Standing Committee agreed that pastoral reorganisation in Upper Torfaen, Panteg and Griffithstown and Blaenavon.

Proposed by Archdeacon of the Gwent Valleys, following consultation with the churchwardens, this pastoral reorganisation was necessary as both the Ministry Areas of Upper Torfaen and Panteg and Griffithstown had fallen vacant at the same time. Upper Torfaen consisted of Pontypool (with three churches) and Blaenavon (with two churches). Panteg and Griffithstown had two churches in Griffithstown, one in Panteg and one in Llanvihangel Pontymoile.

The Standing Committee agreed to separate Blaenavon from Pontypool, and for Pontypool to join Panteg and Griffithtown to become Mid-Torfaen Ministry Area.

September

During their September meeting the Archdeacon of Monmouth asked the Standing Committee to ratify a proposal to move the parish of St Maughans and Llangattock-Vibon-Avel from the Monmouth Fawr group of parishes to Monmouth Town group of parishes. This change was unanimously supported.

Diocesan Board of Finance

This report is available on the Monmouth Diocesan Website. If you would like a paper copy of the report, please contact the Monmouth Diocesan Office by phone (01633 267490) or by email (admin.monmouth@churchinwales.org.uk) and we will be pleased to mail you a copy.

Monmouth Diocesan Parsonage Board

Monmouth Diocesan Parsonage Board

The Diocesan Parsonage Board oversees the work of the Diocesan Parsonage Inspector, Mr Garry Reeder, in managing the clergy houses in the Diocese.

The membership of the Parsonage Board for 2020 can be found on the front page of the DBF Trustees' report.

Activities in 2020

Parsonage inspections - 19 completed, of which 13 were vacancies.

At the end of 2020, the Parsonage Board was responsible for a total of 86 houses. 65 houses were available for clergy, of which 18 were vacant and held available for new appointments. 19 houses were available for letting of which 7 were vacant. Two houses had been identified as surplus to requirements and available for disposal.

Repairs fund (DBF contribution) for the year was £398,520 and was expended. The total expenditure for the year, including improvements, was £542,531. This was lower than in recent years, partly due to a slowing of work caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of Covid-19 had been to slow work progress; work was fully stopped for one month. Statutory works continued. The slowing and delays required planned work to be curtailed and some long-awaited projects to again be pushed back.

4 boiler replacements were completed, to improve energy efficiency and because of failures. Only 4 external painting projects were completed. Much of the work carried out was to vacant houses many of which were planned for re-occupation in early 2021.

The Parsonage Board membership included a clergy vacancy.

Activities in 2021 (to end of August)

The Board has reverted to its original title because the additional duties and responsibilities that led to its name change are no longer within its remit and are being managed within the re-organisation of other committees.

Parsonage inspections - 13 completed to date, of which 10 have been vacancies. Quinquennial inspections are up to date. With many vacancies in recent years, only 11 quinquennial inspections are planned for 2022

The Parsonage Board has control of 86 houses. Currently 65 houses are available for clergy, of which 16 are vacant – the vacant houses are being held available for new appointments.

18 houses are available for letting of which 1 is empty, but work is in hand to move towards marketing. 3 houses have been identified for disposal. The number of houses available for rent is variable due to uncertainty over timings for clergy vacancy and the impact of the Welsh Assembly Government's decision to extend tenancy notice periods to 6 months.

Repairs fund (DBF contribution) for the year is £387,450 and all will be expended. The total expenditure for the year, including improvements, is expected to be around £600,000. The continued impact of Covid-19 has been to slow work progress, especially in occupied houses where people remain cautious about giving access for work other than urgent works and that required by legislation. However, work to unoccupied houses has not been curtailed and the work to several houses was completed enabling lettings to take place and new appointees to occupy.

5 boiler replacements have been completed, to improve energy efficiency and because of failures. 10 external painting projects have been completed to date, although others are planned. The Parsonage Board currently has one clergy member vacancy.

With Mr Sandy Blair having to retire in August 2021 as Chair, he nominated Mr Alan Jones as his successor. This was warmly welcomed by the membership of the Board.

Monmouth Diocesan Board of Nomination

Membership 1st January 2020 to December 31st 2023

Ex-officio:

The Bishop; The Archdeacon of Newport; The Archdeacon of Monmouth; The Archdeacon of the Gwent Valleys.

Clerical:

Rev John Collier; Fr John Connell; Rev Canon Patricia Anne Gollidge; Rev Justin Groves; Rev Canon Jeremy Harris;
Fr Mark Owen

Laity:

Paulette Brown; Neville Crump; Philippa Dixey; Susan Beryl Fergusson; Melville Friend; Edwina Samuel; Mark
Saunders-Gwyne; Terrie (Therese) Smith; Paul Williams

Secretary:

Sarah Rosser

Report for 2020

During 2020, members of the Board of Nomination consulted with the Bishop on the appointment for Caldicot Benefice.

Report from the Diocesan Education Team

Andrew Rickett – Director of Education and Young People

Deborah Griffiths – Education Support Officer

Beccie Morteo – School Development Officer

In October 2020 Llandaff Education team joined with Monmouth Diocese to provide school support and development. As part of this we:

- Provided advice with regards to statutory responsibilities around areas such as admissions and CRAMP.
- Provided support and advice to governing bodies and foundation governors.
- Met regularly with head teachers and RE leads
- Provided a range of training opportunities for senior leaders and teachers
- Ensured that we kept schools up to date with national curriculum developments.

In addition we worked with schools on the following projects:

Covid 19 Home learning

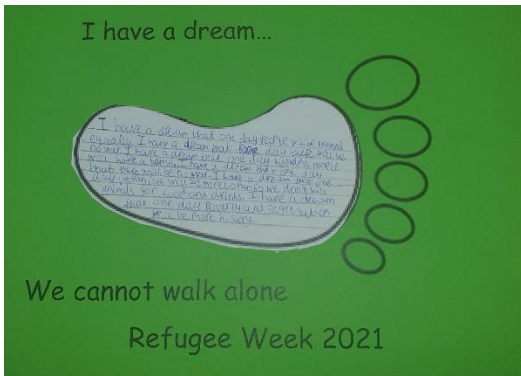
We provided Religious Education home learning packs during lockdown which were sent weekly to schools and available to all on the Monmouth website.

Taith Adfent, Refugee Week and Schools of Sanctuary

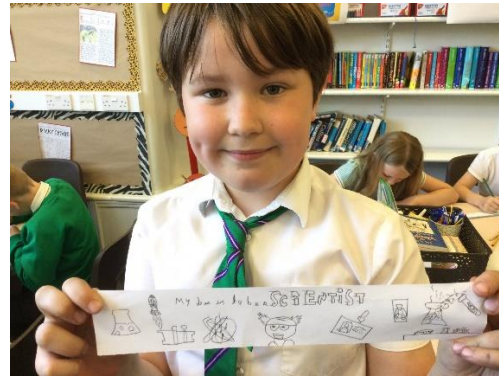
Schools were encouraged to take part in the Church in Wales Advent project 2020 which focused on refuge and seeking sanctuary. Bilingual support resources were produced by the education team, including teacher notes, a list of suggested resources, pause and reflect posters and worship suggestions. All resources were available on the Monmouth website. Each school was given a copy of the book *Refuge* by Anne Booth as a stimulus for the project, which focused on three main aims:

1. To increase children's awareness and understanding of the concept of people seeking sanctuary.
2. To understand how the church school ethos supports and enhances children's ability to reflect on the concept of refuge.
3. To explore whether children's attitudes and behaviours have changed and how the Christian ethos has supported this change.

Directors of Education and school support officers met with schools in their diocese to disseminate the information. This also allowed schools to share ideas and approaches with colleagues. We developed set of resources alongside Welsh Refugee Council that were sent to all schools to use during refugee week.



Refugee week footprints - All Saint's



Paper chain dreams - Charles Williams

Two schools from the diocese, St Mellons and St Davids, are now working as part of a group of church school in South Wales to gain School of Sanctuary recognition.

Mini Missions

Our Lent project focused on Mini Missions. These were devised using the NHS five ways to wellbeing approach and included a suggestion for a way to be active, connect with others, give, take notice and keep learning. Due to the ever-changing Covid 19 situation these resources were produced to be used either in school or at home. Weekly videos were produced by Llandaff Young Faith Matters team to support the learning something new aspect.

The missions finished with a photography competition where children were asked to take a picture of something they found beautiful and to write a short "Thank you God" sentence to go with it. We received a number of entries and the top ten entries were put into a short video which was shared on social medias. Bishop Cherry chose the winning entry which was Ben form All Saint's and Ben received a voucher and a certificate.



Ffrindiau'r Byd

Following the Church in Wales declaring a climate emergency we produced resources for schools to explore how to make a difference to their community, Wales and the world. We worked with Christian Aid resources to look at how our actions make a difference to our neighbours across the world and helps us to think about social justice.

The Constitution of the Diocesan Conference of the Diocese of Monmouth, adopted 13.10.01

Appendix One – Standing Orders

1. All meetings of the Conference shall open and close with prayer.
2. All notices of motion shall be received by the secretary not less than twenty-one days before the annual meeting and if allowed by the President shall be placed on the agenda paper. Any business may be brought forward at the annual general meeting by the President or with his consent.
3. The business to be transacted at the annual meeting shall be included on the agenda paper which shall be sent to all members of conference at least ten days before the meeting.
4. All motions and amendments shall be in writing, signed by the mover. Unless given to the secretary prior to the meeting, two copies thereof must be handed in by the mover, one to the President and the other to the secretary.
5. Amendments on motions on the agenda paper of the annual meeting, sent to the secretary not later than five days before such meeting, shall take precedence of all other amendments, except motions of adjournment, or of the previous question.
6. No amendment on an amendment shall be in order unless when an amendment shall have become a substantive motion.
7. A motion from the floor for the suspension of standing orders shall not be in order unless a majority of the members present rise in support.
8. (i) A motion which is set out in full on the agenda paper or its accompanying papers need not be read before being put, unless the President, or ten members (the latter signifying their intention by rising in their places), so require.
(ii) All other motions or amendments shall be read immediately before the vote thereon is taken.
9. Any member may move the previous question, and if this is carried, the next business shall be immediately proceeded with.
10. Speeches shall not exceed five minutes with the exception of those made by the mover and seconder of a resolution, who shall be allowed ten minutes each. An amendment is not a resolution within the meaning of this order. The President may with the leave of the meeting extend the time for a speech.
11. No member shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same question, except in explanation, or to order, provided that the mover of any resolution not being an amendment shall be allowed the liberty of reply.
12. A member shall address the conference only from a position which is within range of a microphone and shall give his or her name, office (if any) and the parish or benefice from which he or she comes.
13. If, during a debate, thirty members rise in their places and demand that a vote be now taken, the President shall put that question to the meeting for a decision by show of hands. If the meeting decides such question in the affirmative, a vote shall thereupon be taken on the question before the meeting provided that before such vote is taken the mover of a resolution, not being an amendment, shall be allowed the liberty of reply.
14. Whenever the President rises during a debate, any member speaking or offering to speak shall immediately sit down.
15. When the President shall have taken the chair, no member shall continue standing up, except when addressing the chair.
16. If any member after due warning persists in being out of order or in speaking off the question, the President shall forthwith move that the said member be no longer heard. If such motion be carried and be disregarded by the said member, the President may suspend the member or at his discretion suspend the sitting of the conference.
17. *When a division is called, tellers of both orders of clergy and laity shall be appointed*