



Esgobaeth Llandaf Diocese of Llandaff

Mae Ffydd Yn Cyfrif | Faith Matters

Llandaff Diocesan Conference 2023

Minutes of a meeting of the Llandaff Diocesan Conference held at 6pm on Thursday 28th September 2023 via Teams, and at 9:30am on Saturday 30th September 2023 at St Joseph's Catholic School & Sixth Form Centre, Newton Avenue, Port Talbot, SA12 6EY

“Rediscovering Christ’s Call”

Chaired by Bishop Mary.

- 1) Bishop Mary gave a welcome, opening prayer and opening remarks.
- 2) Minutes of Conference held on 22nd and 24th September 2022 were approved with no changes.
- 3) There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes.
- 4) Mike Lawley, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance presented the Annual Report from the Diocesan Board of Finance. Mr Lawley noted the DBF’s principles of prudent financial management and the long term aim over the next 5 years to balance the budget. He also mentioned the past commitment by the DBF to make £3m of reserves available to deliver the Vision project alongside the £3m Evangelism Fund grant from the Representative Body of the Church in Wales over the period 2020 – 2025.
 - a) 2022 saw income of £6.5m and expenditure, including Vision spending, of £7.4m, leaving reserves of £10.1m. Against a deficit budget of -£1.1m, a significant part of the net deficit of £941k was a loss on investments of £676k. 2023 saw a reduced deficit budget of £652k, including £647k to Vision delivery and a below-inflation 5% increase in stipends and salaries. As at the end of June 2023 departmental and office savings, vacancies in posts, and investment income have resulted in a deficit of £252k against the budget of £326k.
 - b) The 2024 budget is expected to include a 5% increase in stipends and a 7.4% increase in Parsonage Board costs, a 5% increase in Fairer Share, and no increase in other expenditure lines. The forecast deficit of £238k includes £565k expenditure on Vision delivery, and revised RB “block grant” funding, now reframed as “Partnership Funding” and

- “Structural Resilience Funding”. We are also expecting a new £100m Growth Fund to be announced this autumn with further details about how to apply for it. 2024 will see the DBF conduct a review of the Fairer Share process, and the Evangelism Fund grant and Vision delivery programmes.
- c) In terms of DBF operations, the DBF office in Coychurch closed during 2023, with staff moving to a hybrid pattern of working online, at home, in Ministry Areas, and in 6 Deanery Mission Hub offices in St David’s Pencoed, Christ Church Radyr, St Catherine’s Pontypridd, St Paul’s Aberavon, St Illtud’s Llantwit Major, and St Elvan’s Aberdare. This enables staff to work more closely with colleagues in MAs and deaneries for greater visibility, accessibility, and targeted relevant support. The offices should also enable collaboration within deaneries, and possible deployment of staff at a deanery level. The DBF is grateful for our MA colleagues for hosting these hubs. As this is a new pattern of working, it will be regularly reviewed to make sure it is bringing benefit to the MAs and deaneries, as well as efficiency to the DBF staff.
- d) In response to a request from Dr Heather Payne, Mr Lawley confirmed that the DBF would work for greater accessibility of its work, including physical accessibility of the offices as far as possible, and publishing outcomes of committee discussions.
- e) In response to a question from Revd Dean Atkins about how to access the £100m Church Growth Fund, Mr Lawley replied that the RB had established a group to establish the criteria and process, and that the DBF and DSC will need to develop ideas and proposals to bid for the funds, having consulted and listened carefully to MAs. The Bishop noted that we will take into account the reach and impact of the Evangelism Fund grants, and that the Growth fund will be focused on mission and growth rather than core ministry or buildings.
- f) In discussion, Members noted with appreciation the valuable contribution of MA treasurers, who bear significant responsibility and perform the role without payment and in many cases alongside full employment. A request was made to consider preventative action in relation to Fairer Share arrears, to help MAs who may be struggling but not yet in arrears, and the continued MA Transition grants were noted to support administration, audit fees, and audio-visual equipment.
- 5) The Annual Report from Standing Committee of the Diocesan Conference (DSC) was presented by Harriet Morgan, Registrar, with reference to written report previously circulated. She noted the DSC’s role in articulating vision, identifying priorities and setting strategic direction for the diocese, in close collaboration with the Bishop’s Council and DBF, and in liaison with Provincial governance bodies. She reported on the establishment of the Diocesan Property Group to take on the roles of the Churches and Pastoral Committee and the Parsonage Board, on initiatives to do with the environment, inclusion and transparency, and on the Bishop’s priorities which are reflected in the Diocesan Conference Agenda.
- 6) One Question had been submitted in advance for Oral Answer, by Laura Howe, about the number of Ministry Areas in financial difficulty and what support was available. Mr Lawley



reported that five out of 29 MAs were in arrears this year, with another two bringing forward arrears from prior years, and noted that while the level is about 5% of total Fairer Share, it is under constant review by the DBF's Budget & Investment Committee, and that many of these arrears will be written off since they predate the establishment of Ministry Areas and the MAs have kept regular Fairer Share contributions. Additional rebates have been paid this year, and with better data Rev Peter Watson, the new Diocesan Finance Advisory Officer, has been working with MA Leaders and Treasurers to provide support, often with other Diocesan staff members to help advise on growth or properties.

- 7) Results of Elections were presented by Archdeacon of Margam, Ven Mike Komor, who asked all clergy to use their CiW email address so that they can be contacted officially; and that all Members should make sure we have their correct address.
- a)** Governing Body of the Church in Wales. Three lay places were elected unopposed: Anthony Hawthorne, Tony Mullins, and Angela Trehearne, leaving a vacancy. The Archdeacon is awaiting advice from the Provincial office about how to fill it. In the clerical election, Rev Geraint John and Rev Ian Yemm were elected to take up their post from 1/1/24, with three candidates forming a supplemental list (Rev Marcus Nelson, Rev Rob Macdonald and Rev Dan Barnes Davies), the first of whom will take the Archdeacon's position at the GB for one year when Ven Mike retires in January 2024.
- b)** Representative Body of the Church in Wales: Dr Heather Payne and Ven Rod Green were elected unopposed and take up their role on 1/1/24.
- c)** Diocesan Property Group (incorporating Churches & Pastoral Committee): David-Lloyd Jones, Michael Gable, Mr Martyn Evans.
- 8) *Closing Prayer by Brianna Rouse*

At 7.30pm the Conference adjourned

Conference reconvened on Saturday, 30th September, 2023 at St Joseph's Catholic School & Sixth Form Centre, Newton Avenue, Port Talbot, SA12 6EY

The agenda and papers including Eucharist order of service and a transcript of the Presidential address have been published on the Diocesan website: <https://llandaff.church-inwales.org.uk/en/about-us/leadership-governance/diocesan-conference/>

- 9) After Registration and coffee served in the marketplace with stalls of partner organisations, the Bishop led a Celebration of Eucharist and then delivered her Presidential Address. Following a coffee break, Revd Canon Dr Mark Oakley delivered a keynote speech about rediscovering Christ's call on our lives, refreshing those of us who feel flat, overwhelmed, tired or in any way inadequate, because God calls us together, in relationship with each other and Him, to help build a church that is poetic, sacramental, imaginative and just, one that reflects something of the beauty and love of God.



- 10)** The Dean of Llandaff (Very Rev Richard Peers) then led a session on Our Spirituality - Growing the Kingdom of God. We enter the kingdom of God through faith as citizens of the kingdom. We experience forgiveness and freedom in God as we participate in word and sacrament. Faith matters because it brings us closer to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. In seeking to grow the kingdom of God, we seek the truth and the beauty that lies at the heart of the gospel, in the sacraments and in our joint acts of worship.
- 11)** After a break for lunch, the Director of Mission (Paul Booth) chaired a session on Our Identity – Telling the Joyful Story as Welsh Anglicans. The Conference heard from the Llan Ministry Area about the Llanharry Flock, a community cinema and other initiatives that have grown the congregations in recent months, with support from the Growth Enablers and Young Faith Matters teams. Revd Dyfrig Lloyd outlined his work in stimulating pilgrimage and rediscovery and celebration of Welsh Christianity in our diocese.
- 12)** The final session was on Our Vocation - Building our Capacity for Good, delivered by the Diocesan Secretary (James Laing). Faith matters because through it we live lives to the full. Each of us has our gifts whatever our age or circumstances and each of us has our role to play whether in seeking and sharing the truth of the Gospel, conveying beauty or supporting each other and furthering God's work through service. This session looked forward to Archdeacons Visitations and their focus on resourcing to implement the plans developed last year, benefiting from the best contributions of our people, properties and pounds. He also announced the launch of the new Fairer Share process which will move away from a focus on attendance towards a guided pledge developed in conversation and based on a number of relevant factors including level of ministry, population, socio-economic health, education and schools, church buildings and halls, congregations, rurality, outreach projects – and any more that Members thought of and wished to communicate to him. This approach has been taken in other dioceses including Bangor, and we are fortunate to have the Bishop's experience in guiding us through it.
- 13)** In a final plenary session the Bishop drew together the threads of the various sessions, encouraging all Members to reflect on their experience and thoughts, remain in close communication, and take these back to their Ministry Areas. She thanked all those involved in putting on the Conference, including Angela Clarke and the staff team, the Diocesan Secretary, and the Archdeacon of Margam as Acting Secretary to Conference in his final year before retirement.
- 14)** At 16.45 the Archdeacon of Margam closed the Conference with a prayer and blessing.