

BRADFORD DEANERY

Annual Report 2022

Message from the Rural Dean, Canon Andrew Evans

As I step down as Rural Dean after 15 years, I am aware of the challenges that lie ahead for us as a deanery. In 2022, it became clear to us that not everyone was going to return to churchgoing after the interruption of the pandemic. This has affected some parishes more than others and produced a knock-on effect on finances. The census has been seized upon by the media as evidence of the decline in Christian faith in our society. That is not news to us, but the spin the media has given to it is unhelpful to the message we are trying to get across. As Christians, I think we are all aware that we are increasingly living in a world that is not going our way. What then to do?

I think we all need to do a bit of soul searching. Are we prioritising the things that really matter in the light of eternity? Are we prioritising the things that are proven to attract the presence, favour and attention of God? Are we making disciples who make disciples? Those are three big questions, all of which take some unpacking and thinking about.

The Archbishop of Canterbury came up with the idea of 'Simpler, Humbler, Bolder' and I hope some of that will come into our Diocesan strategy emerging in 2023. Bishop Stephen has stated that there will be no reduction in clergy numbers in 2023, but after that I am sure that there will have to be a balancing of the books.

The simple truth is that we each need to be clear about the positive difference Jesus makes to our lives and to share that with others.

Synod meetings in 2022

09 February via Zoom
18 May St. John's Parish Centre Upper Studley
12 October St. Michael & All Angels in Melksham

Speakers in 2022

February Grace McSharry, Communications Department at Diocese of Salisbury
May Anna Hardy, Giving Advisor Diocese of Salisbury
October Rev. Tessa Mann, Associate Priest, and Zoe Yeomans, Children and Families Worker and both from North Bradford- On Avon & Villages

Grace spoke about all things communications and shared some very helpful thoughts and encouragements for churches to consider implementing during the year and tried to demystify social media and what can seem like a tricky field to navigate.

Anna spoke passionately about finances and provided some examples of what other churches have done to fund raise, shared about the installation of online and onsite giving, and offered to speak to PCCs, Treasurers about all things finance. She was inspiring and very excited about what can be achieved even in difficult financial circumstances.

Rev. Tessa and Zoe spoke about the wonderful success of their outdoor forest church and it was brilliant to hear about this positive and encouraging new service for this particular benefice.

Synod meetings

Synod meetings are open to all those who wish to attend with meeting dates and locations arranged well in advance. The intention is to share good practice around the Deanery, and for it to be a place where ideas can be shared. As part of the meetings there is always opportunity to share what has been taking place and to learn from each other, offer support and receive encouragement whether during the business part of the meeting or during the comfort break.

Officers

Information Officer	Dawn Farmer
Lay Chairman	John Joy
Lay Pastoral Officer	Marilyn Stubbs
Secretary	Dawn Farmer
Treasurer	David Robinson

Clergy and laity news

Rev. Jake Eggertsen licensed as Rector for St. James' Trowbridge and St. Leonard's Keevil
Rev. Joy Albone licensed as Associate Priest to Canalside Benefice

Deanery Share 2022 – David Robinson (Treasurer)

Share

2022 has been yet another challenging year for all our PCCs, and for the Diocese. As of 31 January we had paid 87.8% of Share requested by Salisbury, or £616,591. This was, disappointingly but not surprisingly, lower again than last year when we had paid £677,885 or 93%.

Although I am pleased to report that we are close behind the Diocesan average of 88.5%, I fear the ramifications for the future and our clergy numbers.

100% of Share was paid by all but five parishes, three of which had made significant efforts to pay what they could. We must thank them and all PCCs for the efforts and dedication to have paid Share, often using dwindling reserves.

Kadugli

In spite of the struggles to pay Share, we still received donations from our parishes for Kadugli – some £5,500 in 2022 of which £3,200 was sent there. And we have some £3,990 available for transfer. And to be noted that since January 2012 we have raised over £73,000 with £69,000 so far distributed.

Deanery Account

The account ended the year in credit in the amount of £643.67.

To note that Share has gone up for this new year by 3% across the Diocese and across our Deanery. The increase comes after a 5% increase last year, all in order to try to reduce the Diocesan budget deficit. However, the lower collection of Share does nothing to reduce the deficit and can only put pressure on the number of stipendiary clergy we have in this Diocese – 2nd highest in the country at the last published account – as well as all other aspects of Parish Ministry and an even greater workload on the clergy remaining.

So please do your utmost to ensure that Share is paid fully.

Report on Deanery link with Kadugli – John Joy

The highlight of 2022 came in August when, following the Lambeth Conference, Bishop Hassan visited the deanery, accompanied by Bishop Ismail of El Obeid. It was a pleasure to renew our friendship with Bishop Hassan, and to meet with Bishop Ismail, and we learned much about the current situation in Sudan and something of the recent history of the church there.

Last year we expressed concern for the physical welfare of the people of Kadugli and of Sudan as a whole. The military coup in October 2021 has damaged the economy, terrorist incidents continue, and law and order are not being maintained. As an example, recently one of the kindergarten staff was murdered on her family's farmstead. Sudan continues to suffer from international sanctions, and these make it difficult to transfer money there.

Peace Primary School, which opened in 2021 in Kadugli, and the new kindergarten, continue to thrive. Currently there are about 450 pupils. Education in Sudan, however, is not free, and we wish to support the children of the poorest families. Many in the deanery have contributed to this, and we endeavoured to send £3,200 for school fees for these families. Unfortunately, banks have been unable to transfer this money, and have not disclosed the reasons. We suspect the obstacle is the international sanctions mentioned earlier. We continue to look for means to get this money to Kadugli.

We look for an opportunity to visit Kadugli again. We hoped to be able to do so last year, but it was not considered safe to do so; perhaps things will improve this year. Among other things, we should like to encourage the existing Rooted in Jesus groups and to strengthen the church in Kadugli.

Kadugli Diocese is part of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS), and in November ECS held a synod. Archbishop Ezekiel, who has visited Bradford Deanery, was due to retire, but the synod altered the retirement age so he could remain in post. While we would not wish him to forgo a well-deserved retirement, we welcome the continuation of his wise and godly leadership. The synod also decided to divide Kadugli Diocese and create a new diocese based on Heiban. We have no further information, but it may take some time to create and launch the new diocese.

We mentioned the military coup. This has given rise to demonstrations, which continue, particularly in Khartoum. The military government has promised to move to a more democratic form of government, and progress, albeit slow, is being made.

Please remember our brothers and sisters in Kadugli and the whole of Sudan in your prayers.

Diocesan Synod Meetings in 2022 report from Chris Hicks, Lay Member of Diocesan Synod

The Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Board of Finance met three times during last year, as follows:

- Meeting held on 12 February online using Zoom
- Meeting held on 21 June at St Paul's Church, Fisherton Street, Salisbury
- Meeting held on 24 September at St Nicholas, Corfe Mullen, Dorset

A) February mtg of Diocesan Synod (& Diocesan Board of Finance)

This online meeting had 124 attendees from the three houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity. It was chaired by the ***Acting Bishop of Salisbury, Rt Revd Karen Gorham*** who gave the Presidential address. She had visited several parishes and was struck by those who had a vision for the future and those who did not. This echoed the famous biblical verse that states that without vision the people perish.

She had spent weeks in meetings including the General Synod, which had looked at the future of the church. This underlined the difference of approach of those people who can and those who cannot plan for the future.

Please refer to previous report that was given to Bradford Deanery Synod held on 18th May 2022 for further information.

B) June mtg of Diocesan Synod (& DBF)

This was the first meeting to welcome the new **Bishop of Salisbury, Rt Revd Stephen Lake**. The House of Laity Chair introduced **Bishop Stephen – the 79th Bishop of Salisbury**. In his presidential address he mentioned that he and his wife Carol have been ‘bowled over by the welcome we received’. He shared some of the inspirational stories following his gift to all attendees and invitation during the Inauguration – *“This £10 talent is for you to take home and to make it grow as a sign of the Kingdom of God.”* – “Salisbury’s got talent”.

Headlines from the presidential address:

‘The Diocese of Salisbury can be and should be one of the jewels in the crown of the Church for England. We ought to be leading the way in generosity and evangelism, in social engagement and community resilience. To do this requires understanding the future we are already in and deciding together what we are going to do about it. This is a theological task, a leadership task and an organisational task for our time and place.’

‘We need a good strategy that fulfils the priorities of the Gospel today that is an investment in who we are and who we can be. The task is clear. Pastoral care and evangelism need to go hand in hand. The bishop must be ambitious, must ensure alignment and action, and together we must hold ourselves accountable to God and to each other.’

Here is a link to his Presidential Address which is well worth viewing and hearing:-

[\(28\) Bishop Stephen Presidential Address June 2022 - YouTube](#)

This was also the AGM for the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF)

Outgoing Chair of the DBF – Nigel Salisbury introduced the AGM section of the meeting – an encouraging story with progress and innovation in the DBF.

Liz Ashmead gave an overview of the accounts accompanied by slides (Accounts Slides) Salient points on the 2021 DBF annual accounts include:

- Overall positive movement in funds by £2.8m mainly due to investments increasing in book value (most of this increase has already been ‘lost’ in Q1 of 2022 due to the volatile markets)
- The balance sheet is strong at £128m which gives us option; however, 72% / £92m is tied up in clergy property
- Of investments £34m, 26% (£12m) is Glebe and although we have a disposal strategy for part of this it is not a very liquid asset. Cash, if needed, can only come from a) Sale of surplus clergy houses (not many), b) Sale of investments (not advisable at present and we are reliant on investment income) and c) Sale of Glebe lands (some development potential and some sales prospects 2023-2024)
- Our current surplus cash will quickly be used in 2022-24 by the structural deficit and the bank loan repayment

- The external auditors are currently content that the DBF is a going concern as we have some options to utilise our assets such as investments, Glebe and the sale of Church House; we have a plan to eliminate the deficit by 2025; total return does give us a bit more security/options but must be carefully used.

C) September mtg of Diocesan Synod (and DBF)

The meeting started with a welcome to representatives of the Cathedral Chapter. Then followed a short service of Eucharist with Loyal address and the National Anthem.

The Dean of Salisbury Cathedral, Very Revd Nicholas Papadopoulos presented the Annual Report of the Cathedral's life and events.

The presidential address from Bishop Stephen was given and a related discussion of **Vision and Strategy 'Your Kingdom Come: here and now'** took place.

Approval of the Diocesan Board of Finance Budget for 2023 was given.

[NB. A guide to the budget was circulated after approval by the Bishop's Council, 15th September] please see here: [2023-budget-guide-sept-22-dbffin.pdf \(d3hgqlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net\)](https://d3hgqlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/2023-budget-guide-sept-22-dbffin.pdf)

This guide contains the need to balance the budget where **the request is for each Parish to increase their contribution by 3%. This is a straight increase for all parishes** except where there has been a change in share deployment in the benefice.

As trustees of the DBF, Bishop's Council must ensure that **the charity remains a 'going concern'**. **This is at risk.** Synod was asked **to approve a budget which takes us forward to 2025, as per our 5-year plan**, with a targeted reduction of deficit each year. This still leaves a substantial operating deficit for 2022. As well as a £642k deficit, which will be funded by the selling of clergy houses, it includes a drawdown of £250k from unapplied Total Return which will come from selling of Glebe land and will be used to subsidise stipend payments.

A Business Plan will be developed in response to the strategy, covering all areas of income and expenditure. There was then an update from the Exploring Options Share survey, and next steps given by the new DBF Chair, Jane McCormick.

Bradford Deanery Synod Meetings for 2023 at 19:30 taking place as follows:

15 February St. Katharine's Church, Holt
14 June Holy Trinity Church, Bradford on Avon
18 October St. James' Church, Trowbridge