Archbishop John

“We need to have open hearts and open doors”

See page one
New Archbishop outlines vision of a ‘re-imagined’ Church

The newly-elected Archbishop of Wales was warmly welcomed by members of the Governing Body. The Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, John Davies, had been elected as the 13th Archbishop just days before the meeting and the notification of his accession was the first item on the agenda. The second was the new Archbishop’s first public task – to deliver his address as President of the Governing Body.

Archbishop John admitted he hadn’t had time to craft a carefully honed speech and warned it might seem “random” before setting out to tell members more about himself – how his personal background had shaped his ministry and what he considered the priorities for the Church.

He focussed on five issues that framed his vision for a “re-imagined” Church – the Welsh language, community cohesion, care for sick people, inclusion and welcome, and discipleship and spiritual growth.

**Welsh Language**

Archbishop John recalled his upbringing in a family where Welsh had been the mother tongue of his grandparents and was still spoken by his father.

He said, “One of my first encounters with the Welsh language was listening to my Grandpa who was behind closed doors in his perfectly creosoted shed chopping sticks for the fire, but swearing in Welsh - “Arglwydd mawr” and other such things. And I said to my Grandmother, “What is Grandpa saying?” “You don’t need to know,” was her response. We do need to know about the Welsh language. He added, “It is so important that even those of us who are not first language Welsh speakers, honour that heritage, and that we as a church seek to do what we can to ensure that that heritage and that language continue to live.”

**Community**

The experience of Archbishop John’s grandfathers in industry – one in the steel works and one as a...
miner – helped shape his awareness of the importance of community.

“In my current role as Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, I am in a diocese where there are industrial areas, post-industrial areas, prosperous areas, non-prosperous areas, urban areas, suburban areas and huge rurality and that makes me aware of rural concerns, community concerns, work concerns, economic justice concerns – you see all these things at first hand. But they were there in my early days – with my grandfather walking some distance simply to find work.

“So there are community things which move me quite significantly and what a job, what an opportunity we have as a church to try and cement communities which in so many cases feel they have been forgotten or whose hearts have been, if not ripped out, severely damaged.”

Sickness
The challenge of caring for people with mental and physical health problems was also one Archbishop John saw as a priority, having witnessed his grandfather’s dementia and his grandmother’s suffering from cancer.

He said, “I am so pleased that through social responsibility work in parts of the church now dementia is being addressed. We have dementia-friendly churches going on, for example. From the biography you may have read that I chaired the trustees of a large hospice when I served in the Diocese of Monmouth – this was no random choice. The grandmother from England who married the grandfather from Kidwelly died when I was about 11 from the most horrendous cancer and I still have memories etched into my mind of listening to my grandmother crying at night in pain.

“So care for the sick. The sick in mind, the sick in body is something that as a church we may not be able to deliver but at least we must always be ready to call for.”

Inclusivity
Archbishop John’s upbringing had made him value a welcoming and inclusive ethos. “One of the things that has made me very clear about, is that as a church we have to be welcoming and inclusive,” he said. “We may not always agree about how we achieve that but we need to be at least united in the aim of being welcome and inclusive because that is what our Lord himself was.”

Discipleship and growth
Archbishop John said his vision was of a church re-imagined, not of one simply intent of keeping the “show on the road”.

“We need to try and work together to be a church which is fit for its purpose, fit for its Lord’s purpose, fit for God. A church that calls for life in all its fulness, where the suffering are taken seriously, where the suffering are seen, are heard, where welcome is offered to those who may be troublesome, who may be different, who may challenge us, but who, nevertheless, are loved. We need to have open hearts and open doors.”

Achieving that vision, said Archbishop John, required us to grow both spiritually and numerically. As his diocesan strategy put it, he said, we needed to ‘gather, grow and go’: “We ourselves need to grow in spiritual courage, in spiritual integrity, in spiritual commitment – only then can we presume to go out into our communities to try and bring others into our gathering and help them grow.”

Archbishop John called on the Governing Body to be a united, if not uniform body, in order to enable growth. Referring to the Church’s centenary in 2020, he said, “The Governing Body needs to be very clear that when we come to 2020 we actually have things to celebrate, concrete steps having been taken to confirm our church in its place in Wales, to confirm our relationships with our other churches in making the gospel better known. We can then be perceived far more positively than we currently are perceived.”

He concluded, “So let our discussions turn to concrete steps so that when we come to 2020 we won’t be celebrating that we have hung on for 100 years but that we are making plans, if not for the next 100 years certainly for years to come.”

You can listen to Archbishop John’s full address: www.churchinwales.org.uk/news/2017/09/presidential-address

“We ourselves need to grow in spiritual courage, in spiritual integrity, in spiritual commitment.”
The Church’s finances performed above expectation last year, despite turbulent markets. Presenting the Representative Body’s annual report and accounts for 2016, its chairman James Turner reported that the total value of investments rose by 12% to £606m against a background of “significant events” such as the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency and the EU referendum.

Income and capital growth combined returned an improvement of 15.2% against a benchmark of 13%. Over the past five years, Church funds returned an average of 11% against a benchmark of 9.3%.

The Common Investment fund, which holds bequests, legacies and parish monies, produced a total return of 16.4% in 2016 compared to the Benchmark return of 13.0%.

Looking ahead, Mr Turner said the priorities for the next three years were:

- a 5% increase in the block grant to the dioceses from next year to cover inflation and increased pension costs,
- creation of a new fund for evangelism and church growth projects; more details will be unveiled after the RB’s meeting in November,
- assuming total financial responsibility for St Padarn’s Institute.

Clergy remuneration

The Clergy Pension Scheme is valued at £187.8m and represents 30.9% of general funds. That money is ring-fenced but would require an increase of £596,000pa from each diocese in employer’s contributions.

“This is something the dioceses cannot be expected to sustain indefinitely,” Mr Turner said.

Concerns had also been raised about clergy pay. In response, the HR Committee is to undertake a comprehensive review of pay packages and fees.

“It will take some time,” he said. “But I hope we can structure a remuneration package that reflects clergy life in the twenty-first century.”

Committee chairs

Two long standing RB committee chairmen retired this year. Mr Turner thanked Clive Myers, who chaired the Human Resources committee and Paul Marshall, chair of the Investment committee and deputy chair of the RB, for their contribution.

Peter Kennedy, HR director at the Welsh Government, will chair the HR committee and Mr Turner will chair the Investment committee, for the time being.

Provincial office

The RB’s offices are on the move. At the end of September they moved out of the provincial office at 39 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, to an office in the heart of the city, at Callaghan Square.

“The Callaghan Square premises will offer a modern office facility that is all on one floor with staff able to work together as proper departmental teams,” said Mr Turner. “Meeting facilities will also be much improved with rooms big enough to comfortably accommodate our larger provincial meetings.

Callaghan Square’s city centre location will also mean the office is easily accessible by train and bus for both staff and visitors - it is immediately behind Cardiff Central railway station.”

The full address is 2, Callaghan Square, Cardiff, CF10 5BT.

The phone number remains the same - 029 2034 8200

2020 Centenary

The Revd Haydn England-Simon (Llandaff) asked whether a suspension or reduction in Parish shares could be introduced and the money used to fund local initiatives as a way of marking the 2020 centenary of the Church in Wales “in ministry, mission and maintenance” – following the biblical principle of the “year of Jubilee”.

Mr Turner said it was “a big ask” but parish share levels were a matter for dioceses, not the RB.

Archbishop John thought it “unwise” to be as generous as proposed. There was “a danger of being blind to the needs of others”, he said. But he revealed that plans were under development for “a wholesale review of which buildings remain essential to our mission and ministry”.

Consideration was also being given to a long-term project to mark the centenary which would replace the now-ended support for the mobile dental clinic in Gaza.

One possibility was a partnership with Christian Aid in support of refugees in South Sudan.
Admission to Communion

A call for a debate on the new policy to allow all baptised people to receive Communion, regardless of whether or not they have been confirmed, was supported by members.

A private members’ motion from Revd Harri Williams (St Davids) asked for the Governing Body to be given the chance to consider documents, prepared by the Bench of Bishops, in more detail and for their period of introduction to be extended by a year.

Mr Williams stressed his intention was not to criticise the policy, nor to have the Bishops’ pastoral letter revoked, but to enable greater consideration of its implications.

He said some people had theological objections to the change and their opinions should be heard. An extension of the introductory period until Advent 2018 “would allow the policy to be implemented in the best possible way for the whole of the Church,” he said.

Seconding the motion, the Archdeacon of Cardigan, Dr Will Strange, supported the principle of providing Communion to children who had been baptised but not confirmed. “But there’s a difference between the theory and the practice,” he said. “What happens when a child arrives at the altar rail who you have never seen before? Do we just administer regardless? It’s just one of many pastoral challenges we face if this policy is to work. The motion seeks to enable Governing Body to debate such practicalities in some detail.”

However, others suggested Governing Body was not the best place for such a debate and that it would merely prolong the process.

Carol Colbert (Llandaff) said the admission of children to Communion in her church had been “transformational... an extension [of the trial period] cannot happen in our church – we could not do it,” she said. “Jesus said, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me’; there was no mention of instruction.”

Canon Pam Powell (St Asaph) acknowledged there were problems particularly in church schools. But she said excellent materials existed already and headteachers were careful to ensure children were safeguarded. Meanwhile, the policy had had “a really positive effect on children, who now feel included.”

The Bishop of St Asaph, Gregory Cameron, said the bishops were happy to have matters of concern raised at Governing Body if members agreed to find room for a debate in future meetings; if further guidance were needed it would be forthcoming, he said, asking for the bishops to be made aware of practical questions “so we can be comprehensive in future discernment”. He added that questions about when Communion could be refused were set out in liturgical texts and canon law.

The Revd James Henley (Monmouth) proposed an amendment to rule out further debate by the Governing Body and leave it to the Bench to formulate “practical guidance on safeguarding issues”. He said doctrinal teaching was for the Bishops, not the Governing Body. He suggested there had already been a good deal of debate at this meeting and the Governing Body had other things to discuss rather than “something fairly straightforward”. His amendment, however, was defeated and the original motion was carried by 53 to 40 with nine abstentions.

Motion

That the Governing Body:

i) Request the Bench of Bishops to allow that the “Documents about Admission to Communion” be considered in greater detail by the Governing Body in debate in order for any concerns to be shared and for appropriate responses to be made; and

ii) Request the Bench of Bishops to update the “Documents about Admission to Communion” as appropriate in light of the debate and to extend the period of introduction until the first Sunday in Advent 2018.
One of our greatest gifts is our bilingualism – but we haven’t nurtured it in a way for it to bloom, said the Bishop of Bangor, Andy John, presenting a report from what he believed to be the Province’s first symposium held entirely through the medium of Welsh.

Called To The Living Waters, the event took place in Cardiff in May after two years of planning and was attended by delegates from each diocese, along with colleagues from other Christian denominations in Wales, whose ministry is carried out in Welsh.

Bishop Andy said that ministry and mission in Welsh was an essential task of our Church but it was recognised that we had not enabled it to develop and flourish in recent years.

Responding to the report, Jane Heard (St Davids) welcomed it, but wished to see more emphasis on bilingual ministry.

The Revd Miriam Beecroft (Bangor) asked whether more liturgies, such as for the Baptism of an Adult could be made available in Welsh in an easier format on the Provincial website.

The Revd Kevin Ellis (Bangor) said that he found it deeply incarnational to minister to people in their mother tongue. In his experience Welsh-speakers were generous, humble and gracious to those trying to learn. He encouraged people to give it a try and make howlers with a smile and a song.

The Revd Adrian Morgan (Swansea & Brecon) said that he had walked with people on a journey of learning a language, and that when right support, encouragement and incentive was there, it was surprising what was possible. Our Church was for all the people of Wales, he said, and we needed to take the challenge of learning seriously. He paid tribute to the late Canon Gwynn ap Gwilym and commended the decision to develop the provincial role.

Dominic Cawdell (St Asaph), an ordinand at St Padarn’s, said that candidates had complained about the lack of Welsh learning provision in the new institution. He felt that commitment was there in spirit, but not in practice.

Robert Wilkinson (St Davids) said that though he mainly served in an English language congregation, he had had to take services in Welsh and bilingual churches and was amazed at how using just some Welsh was welcomed so positively.

The Revd Harri Williams (St Davids) said that he had attended a Welsh language school in Pontypool and wondered whether the Province had a strategy to serve Welsh-medium schools in places where Welsh was not the main language of the local community.

Replying, Bishop Andy said funds were available from the Province and dioceses to enable those who wished to learn to do so. He also said that the St. Padarn’s Institute had now made it possible to do placements through the medium of Welsh, and was committed to developing opportunities for candidates to work through Welsh.

The report was received unanimously.

Bishop Andy highlighted four areas:

- A shortage of Welsh-speaking ordinands: Bishop Andy said communities who worshipped in Welsh, or who were located in predominantly Welsh-speaking areas, were not nurturing ordinands. St.Padarn’s Institute would be developing opportunities for candidates to train through the medium of Welsh;
- Partnership with a Welsh language centre: Bangor Diocese was one of Nant Gwrtheyrn’s partners in a successful bid for a grant from the Welsh Government’s ‘Welsh in the Workplace’ scheme, and bespoke courses were now being prepared. The Diocese hoped to develop this partnership to include the rest of the Province in the future;
- Welsh-language retreat: a commitment to hold an annual retreat;
- Provincial language officer: the Representative Body would be appointing a full-time officer to continue the work of the late Canon Gwynn ap Gwilym.
The motion, brought by the group Church Action on Sustaining the Environment (CHASE), would set a clear intention to become a greener church, committed to environmental projects, he said. It called on each diocese to register for the A Rocha’s Eco-Diocese award by 2020 as a beginning of a journey.

Bishop Andy highlighted CHASE’s new eco-church guide, which encouraged each church to do simple things which could make a real difference to their carbon footprint and help make the best use of God’s resources.

The Revd Dominic McClean (Bangor) seconded the motion, having had previous involvement with the Eco-Church award. He highlighted that small projects on a local level - recycling batteries at the back of the church, enabling people to cycle to church, outreach in wider community such as a Green Fair (where all the environmental groups in an area come together for a day under one roof) - can help the local church to become a catalyst. He concluded by telling how his church had made its churchyard a place for wildlife.

The Revd Stuart Elliott (Bangor), CHASE group member and author of the new guide, said being green was not a luxury. He encouraged people to engage with the Eco-Church award, stressing that it was not there to shame or chastise, but rather to engage our hearts and wills to do something for God’s creation. The Church needed to be prophetic on the environment and take bold actions, he said, encouraging people to consider creation as a sacrament, as a resource we use and a resource which has been created by God.

The Revd Mounes Farah (St Davids) called for diocesan support to assist with green projects, such as solar panels on large roofs. He told how in response to the concern of local young people, one of his churches had now set aside a Sunday to focus on “creation-care”.

Sandra Ward (Bangor), who had worked in landscaping and planned wildflower areas for churchyards, commended the motion, asking that each church building in Wales should do one thing, and make a big difference.

Linda Tyler-Lloyd (Swansea & Brecon) spoke from her own experience about the amount of food that is thrown away, something which she considered to be a sin. She wished to see work done to educate people about food waste.

In reply, Bishop Andy said that food waste was part of Arocha’s Eco-church programme. He commended the work of Caring For God’s Acre, when considering churchyards. He recognised that young people could have a clear vision for the care of the environment, and be energised about it, because it was their future.

The motion was passed with one abstention.

Motion
That the Governing Body recognise the importance of caring for God’s creation, both as an essential part of the stewardship of our own resources and as part of our mission to the world:

i) Through CHASE members and others, promote A Rocha’s Eco-Church and Eco-Diocese scheme across the Church in Wales;

ii) Secure Eco-Diocese award registration for each diocese by September 2020; and

iii) Receive periodic progress reports from CHASE.
They unanimously supported a Private Members’ Motion brought by the Reverend Jonathon Wright (Llandaff) – a former Royal Navy officer – to invite the Bench to endorse the Armed Forces Covenant and to ask each diocese to consider signing the community and corporate elements in it.

Mr Wright explained that the Bench was unable to sign a corporate covenant on behalf of the Province as it was not a corporate body. However, “as leaders in the faith and our most visible communicators, their voice endorsing the Covenant will be heard”.

Members of the Armed Forces and their families needed to know that the Church’s spiritual support, pastoral care and moral guidance was available to them, said Mr Wright.

Seconding the motion, Archbishop John reminded members that churches would soon be leading Remembrance Sunday services and parades. The smart uniforms, he said, often masked deep psychological pain suffered during military service.

Karen Stafford-Smith (Monmouth) supported the motion and described her personal experience being left to look after her two young sons when her husband, a RN officer, was called to sea for an indeterminate length of time. She asked members to consider what they could do to support families of serving personnel living among them.

The Bishop of St Davids, Joanna Penberthy, whose husband holds a commission, called for research into how many of the country’s homeless people were ex-military personnel suffering from post-traumatic stress, she continued: “If, as a nation, we ask people to do this most terrible of things on our behalf, we have a duty to ensure that our Government, not just our charities, honour and look after those who are harmed by their service.”

Former senior chaplain for the Army in Wales, the Revd Steven Griffin (Swansea & Brecon) said the Armed Forces had more chaplains now than previously – the problem was when people returned home from operational tour – “you come home and there is nothing” he said.

Motion
That the Governing Body, believing that the commitment of men and women who serve in the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom merits a reciprocal obligation to ensure that both they and their families are not disadvantaged:

i) Invite the Bench of Bishops to endorse the Armed Forces Covenant, supporting the Governing Body’s commitment to the pastoral and spiritual support of the Armed Forces Community comprising serving personnel, regulars and reservists, veterans and military families;

ii) Ask individual dioceses to reflect on the Armed Forces Covenant and to consider signing Community Covenants and Corporate Covenants setting out provisions for the pastoral and spiritual needs of the Armed Forces Community in their own diocesan area; and

iii) Ask the Standing Committee to review the implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant across the Church in Wales and report to the Governing Body in two years’ time.
Urgent plea to protect Christians in the Middle East

The Archbishop of Dublin called for an urgent response to the murder of Christians in the Middle East in his address as guest preacher at the Holy Eucharist on Wednesday evening.

Michael Jackson said Christian witness had recently regained the active urgency it had had in the days of Cyprian, bishop and martyr of Carthage, whose feast day was being celebrated. Christians in the original places of faith - Iraq, Syria, and Egypt - had began to witness in their own blood to their faith in Jesus Christ once again.

He said, “Global communications have brought images of murder and martyrdom, of death and defilement into our consciousness as we face the extirpation of Christianity from the Middle East in our lifetime. Until now this was unthinkable and inconceivable. More and more people see it as inevitable. We simply cannot let this happen. We need to do something and do something soon.”

Archbishop Michael also called on the Anglicans to follow Cyprian’s example of holding together compromise and conviction. He said, “A binary world and a binary church seem to care less and less for such a combination of engagement and reticence. We take ourselves and we take each other to the brink out of conviction and, time after time, realize that compromise alone will prevent both of us, or all of us, from falling headlong – we know not where.”

He ended his address by recalling the words of his predecessor in the see of Dublin and Glendalough, George Otto Simms, “We must agree to disagree agreeably”. He said, “I suggest that as Anglicans and as Christians we are still learning painfully that agreeable disagreement agreeably is the way of both compromise and conviction in the spirit of Cyprian of Carthage.”

Overseas Mission report

From children at risk of being trafficked to families of murdered Christians in Pakistan – people in need overseas have been given more than £43,000 in grant aid from the Church over the past three years.

Archbishop John proposed the triennial report of the Church’s Overseas Mission Fund which helps those suffering from conflicts as well as natural disasters. It also helps meet the cost of delegates from churches in developing countries to attend international meetings and supports theological training. Grants are normally made through diocesan bishops or recognised charity agencies, such as Christian Aid, CMS and the Anglican Alliance.

Details of any projects which might be considered for grant support should be sent to John Richfield at the Provincial Office.

WODS report

More than £86,000 was given in grants last year to help families of clergy who have died. Presenting the annual report of the Widows, Orphans and Dependents Society, the Archdeacon of Llandaff, Peggy Jackson, said the money had been shared between 56 people.

For the first time, widows in Llandaff diocese had been invited to events held for retired clergy, said Archdeacon Peggy. The Revd Mounes Fara (St Davids) asked whether divorced or separated partners of clergy qualified for assistance. He was told that clarification of this would be needed and would be passed on.

Worship

On Wednesday, the opening prayers and Bible reading were led by the Rev Dr. Jason Bray (St Asaph). Considering Isaiah 44 - Israel, God’s Chosen - he reflected that it was the task of the whole Church to be witness to saving acts of God in our lives and concluded that the future of the Church was in the hands of all baptised people. On Thursday, Morning Prayer was led by the Revd Hami Williams (St. Davids).

Collection - two charities will benefit from the collections taken during the services. Shelter Cymru and Water Aid will share the £825 + gift aid which was given.
Bishop Andy John (Bangor) reported that, while parishes’ income exceeded expenditure last year, there was a “significant” fall in those incomes - the fifth in a row - which was “a concern”.

Planned giving was also down for the first time since 2000. “Our members continue to give generously,” he said, “but the fewer people who attend is putting a burden on those who do.”

Sunday attendance had declined by two per cent to 28,291. But Bishop Andy said there were also areas where “we can discern significant growth”. Attendance by children and families was up in each age group, notably in non-traditional forms of worship.

“This demonstrates that faith, values and worship - belonging - is something that is powerfully present and important in the lives of our communities. The implications of this are enormous. Are we going to be able to find the resources to develop that part of our life that will sustain us long into the future?”

Bishop Andy said he believed the Church had responded to the Governing Body's decision to accept last year's report “with a heavy heart”. One example was April’s Governing Body debate on evangelism which was enthusiastically received. Meanwhile, the Standing Committee’s group, set up in response to last year’s motion to examine church growth, had identified nine areas of “significant opportunity” including:

- Occasional offices - how can we make them more engaging and become a church of excellence?
- Tools for growth e.g. Natural Church Development or LYCIG (Leading your Church into Growth) - how can we gain measurable things that will lead us to growth?
- What does good nurture look like in our Mission/ Ministry Areas? How do we find the champions of nurture at local levels and see how we can do all of it as well?

But, most importantly, the RB’s decision to release significant funds for the purpose of growing healthy churches was to be welcomed “unreservedly”.

“Who are the people best placed to help us to do things that are a bit risky and which might break new ground in the next 3-4 years?” asked Bishop Andy. He urged the GB to embrace the initiative and hoped more money would follow because “growth creates growth creates growth”.

The report was received unanimously

The Revd Richard Wood (Bangor), who proposed last year’s “heavy heart” amendment, expressed concern that “we are still looking primarily to structural reorganisation to dig us out of the hole we are in”. He said, “I hear it said that we’re not about closing churches but that is exactly what we are about if we don’t grasp the nettle. We will close them all in a generation if we don’t act even more radically than we are now.

“In many ways and in many places, we’re using a tool that is not fit for purpose. We have affirmed the central place of evangelism in the life of our Church but its centrality cannot be reflected when the pressures of keeping an unhealthy church are so strong.”

Funeral Services

The Governing Body approved the Bench’s request to grant an extension of time authorised for the experimental use of the new Funeral Services for a further three years to give time for the Standing Liturgical Advisory Commission to advise the Bench and to bring a proposed final rite to the Governing Body for approval - it is intended that the Bill will be presented to the Standing Committee as soon as possible, but no later than 2019.
Canon Pam Powell (St Asaph) introduced the report on the Ministry Area conference which was held in Cardiff in the summer.

People from around the province met together to share experiences and identify areas of common ground on the journey of establishing Ministry Areas in the six dioceses. It was a small-scale follow up to The Time Is Now conference, which was held in Llandudno in 2014.

The conference brought together people from a wide variety of ministerial contexts. Some were already working in established ministry areas, others were from areas which are beginning to work towards the establishment of ministry areas.

Speakers from each diocese took turns to share a particular aspect of their approach to ministry areas, which was followed by a short period for follow-up questions. Delegates also had the chance to put specific questions to a panel for discussion.

At the end of the conference it was felt that small-scale, focussed events, allowed specific matters to be explored in detail and with honesty.

Canon Powell said that the conference showed that while each diocese had its own approach to ministry area formation there were many common themes and issues. Although each diocese was now at a different stage of development, they were all moving in the same direction. The event enabled people to make important links to enable further communication and joint work across the Province.

The Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, representing the Methodist Church, welcomed the greater co-operation between denominations brought about by the change to Ministry Areas.

Annabelle Elletson (Swansea & Brecon) said Ministry Areas needed to have a proper legal status and that it should happen quickly.

The Report of the Standing Committee was presented by its Chair Lis Perkins (Bangor) and seconded by the Deputy chair Helen Biggin (Llandaff diocese)

Among the recommendations, was one on the Cathedral’s Review. Mrs Perkins said a process was being put in place for the report to be further considered and implemented. The Bishop of Llandaff was convening the Cathedral Deans Group to do more work on the vision for the future role of cathedrals. In the meantime, said Mrs Perkins, to address an urgent governance matter, the Committee asked the Governing Body to give permission for work to be carried out by the Dean and Chapter of St Woolo’s Cathedral, to develop a pilot Cathedral Scheme for St Woolo’s Cathedral to better meet the needs of the Diocese of Monmouth, and to report to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

A further recommendation concerned the trustees of the National Society. Following the formal adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding with the National Society in September 2013, two appointments to its trustees are made by the Governing Body. It was agreed that the Bishop with responsibility for Education (currently the Bishop of St Davids) and the Provincial Secretary be appointed as members of the Council of the National Society.
The Archdeacon of Llandaff

Since April 2015, what actions have been taken by dioceses and/or by the Representative Body, to establish exit interviews with clergy who leave licensed ministry posts in the Church in Wales?

Where such processes have been instituted, what arrangements have been made for the collating and reporting of the information gathered?

Since 1st January 2015, how many (a) male and (b) female clergy have left licensed ministry in each diocese, and of these, how many leavers of each gender:-

- retired;
- resigned, in order to take up stipendiary posts outside the Church in Wales;
- resigned or retired for health-related reasons;
- resigned for other reasons.

The Bishop of St Asaph, Gregory Cameron, responded: he said a procedure for exit interviews had been drawn up for the dioceses. The information, where kept, was with them.

Available data presented to the Governing Body showed the total number of such clergy movements were small. As such there were issues of privacy in publishing more detailed figures. However, the data suggested that the reasons were not on the whole such as to cause undue concern. They tended to be mainly to move closer to family members, or to pursue a change of context by way of “pull” rather than “push”.

Pam Odam (Bangor)

As 2020 approaches, to affirm the progress made by the Church in Wales in its practical application of equal opportunities policy, can a working group be formed to update and review the currently published written one?

Bishop Gregory (St Asaph) responded: that the Working Group on Representation of Women, chaired by Dr Gill Todd, was looking at the matters raised by their second 2015 Report, also received by the Governing Body. The Standing Committee asked various parts of the Church to report back specifically on what they had done.

Pam’s question will be brought to the attention of the Working Group asking that this matter be included in its thinking. He added that matters of equality were not solely confined to representation of women, and so the Standing Committee, when it reviews the work of the Working Group, might be requested to consider whether it would be appropriate to establish another group specifically to consider other questions of equalities.

Dr Heather Payne (Llandaff)

Does the Bench consider that the Church in Wales should hold itself to a standard of behaviour in all its interactions that meets the spirit as well as the letter of the Equality Act 2010, and will they commit to a programme of cultural change if they are not assured of this?

The Bishop of Llandaff, June Osborne, responded: she said the protections for religious bodies enshrined in the Act recognised that faith communities could sometimes encounter legitimate difficulties in balancing what they believe with society’s evolving expectations on matters of equality.

The Bench’s leadership was key here - the bishops had to consider carefully when it might be appropriate to bring forward legislation to change our doctrine, faith and order. She highlighted examples of the Church in Wales meeting the spirit as well as the letter of the Equality Act: the decision by the Representative Body to recognise same sex relationships in respect of pension and death-in-service provisions; the work carried out by the age discrimination working group and the group which make recommendations regarding the Representation of Women in the Church in Wales.

Canon Peter Brooks (Swansea & Brecon)

We are ordaining increasing numbers of non-stipendiary clergy – many of them ‘locally ordained’. Now the working agreement needed for a stipendiary curate is not going to be the same as that needed for an NSM. The support needed by a new stipendiary curate is not going to be the same as that needed by a new NSM curate. Arrangements for on-going training will need to be different too for someone doing a job outside the church as well as that of a curate in a parish.

Can St Padarn’s take account of these differences? At the moment even new direction from St Padarn’s seems designed exclusively for stipendiary clergy.

The Bishop of Monmouth, Richard Pain, responded: he said provincial training stressed the importance of incumbents and curates having a detailed discussion and putting together a formal agreement. The training incumbent/curate handbook included guidance on how to do this. This was updated last year to include examples of agreements for stipendiary and non-stipendiary clergy.

He stressed there was a bespoke training programme, taking account of the context of our curates. It was certainly not ‘one size fits all’.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th of April 2018 at Venue Cymru, Llandudno