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

**1st July 2025 at Aldridge Church Centre**

* **Opening Worship** was led by the Bishop of Wolverhampton and the Archdeacon of Walsall.
* The President **welcomed** everyone, and to their first meeting he also welcomed **Bishop Anne Hollinghurst,** a new Assistant Bishop in the diocese and Principal of the Queen’s Foundation, Birmingham; the **Ven Liz Jackson,** Archdeacon of Walsall; the **Ven Nick Watson**, Archdeacon of Salop, and **Sam Rushton** the Diocesan Secretary/CEO.
* The President then moved that:

 *This Synod appoints Mrs Sam Rushton as its Secretary*

This was voted upon and carried unanimously.

* The minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2025 were approved and signed accordingly.
* The Registrar proclaimed an Act of Synod relating to the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 2024 as amended.
* Bishop Michael then gave his **Presidential Address**, speaking about the agenda to come, but wished to speak also of other items that had recently been part of the parliamentary business of our country, namely assisted dying and abortion. Legislation around both matters had been discussed recently and would soon be progressing to the House of Lords. He therefore asked for members’ prayers for himself and his fellow Lords Spiritual and Temporal. He then spoke about his own concerns, including for the vulnerable, and as a Christian, his belief in the God given sanctity of every human life, resting on the biblical truth that we were made in the image and likeness of our Creator. To take away God’s gift of life, he believed, was to choose to go against the good purposes of our creator. He acknowledged that this raised many complex questions, particularly when applied to the beginning as well as the end of life. At both of these points and at every point in between, he wanted to affirm in wonder and gratitude to God that all human lives, his own and those of his loved ones, belonged to God, and every human life was to be treated with reverence and awe as an image of His glory and a temple of His spirit.
* The **Chair of the DBF introduced its Annual General Meeting**. He spoke about the importance of mutual support and noted that several parishes had given more than their Common Fund request, and 378/445 had paid their request in full. On behalf of the DBF he thanked every parish for every contribution to the Common Fund request. He asked members to take away the message of looking to God for guidance on how we could increase giving and improve on the 2024 collection rate.
* The Finance Director presented the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024. Questions were invited and he then moved that:

*The Summary Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Diocesan Board of Finance for the year ending 31st December 2024 be received.*

This was voted upon and unanimously carried.

* The Chair then moved that:

*on the recommendation of the Bishop's Council,* ***Hays Mac be re-appointed as Auditors until the next AGM****, and that the Chairman and Secretary be authorised to determine their remuneration within the budget*

This was unanimously carried.

* Sam Rushton spoke to Synod about some **national developments** and the impact they may have on our diocese. Most importantly, she wanted to ask Synod how we together should look at these issues and make potentially difficult decisions on how to go forward. She emphasised the need for us to face this challenge together as a diocese. She gave a presentation, which had been circulated to members in advance, about the outcomes of the recent Triennium Funding Working Group which made proposals on how Church Commissioners’ funding for the national church should be spent over the next three years. The proposals would be put to General Synod the following week and voted upon. In terms of our diocese, the overall impact of the proposals was positive. We would receive an increased LINC allocation, reduction in the amount to be paid to the national church, and we would also receive transitional support (£1m next year, decreasing over time). However General Synod would also be voting on a stipend increase that could mean an 11.1% increase in our Diocese. Overall our net gain over 9 years, including the stipend increase would be around £7.8 m. It did present a number of challenges however which we must, as a whole, respond to. These included managing Common Fund requests, particularly if (as desired) the numbers of vacancies should fall, managing staff salaries in view of a significant rise in stipends (if approved), managing our reserves, and also how to utilise the significantly increased LINC funding. She asked members how they wanted to be involved in the budget setting process and suggested that a series of online meetings be held to enable members to give their input. Members were encouraged to contact Sam with any further comments or questions.
* The Archdeacon of Salop spoke to a paper setting out revisions to the constitution of the Shrewsbury Area Mission and Pastoral Committee that required Synod’s approval.

He then moved that:

*This Synod approves the amended constitution as set out*

This was voted upon and unanimously carried.

* The **Question Time** paper was discussed, which contained twelve written questions and answers. Several supplementary questions were answered.
* Bishop Michael closed the meeting in prayer.

All papers are available [on the website here](https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/about-us/synod/) or by contacting jo.durber@lichfield.anglican.org or 01543 306067