

A meeting of the House of Bishops took place today Wednesday 17 September 2020 via Zoom.

At the second meeting of the House this autumn, the focus of the meeting was on strategic planning and the on-going work of the Emerging Church groups.

Earlier this week, 130 of the Church's Bishops and most senior leaders in the regions met in a zoom forum entitled "Not the College" which was chaired by both Archbishops. The forum considered how the Church of England can boost its mission and outreach to all communities in this country.

Reporting back to the House in his capacity as Chair of the Church's Vision and Strategy Group which sponsored the meeting, the Archbishop of York spoke of the Church's addressing the spiritual need of a society which is going through an economic and health crisis. In particular Archbishop Stephen focused on the themes of inclusion and broadening the Church's engagement with younger and more diverse groups.

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally in her capacity as Chair of the Recovery Group then updated the House on the recent 'rule of six' announcement by the government and how the announcement will affect church services and church related activities. These will continue to take place while building on the digital engagement and outreach which have been markers of the Church's activities during the crisis.

The Chair of the Governance Review Group then gave an update on the various models of Church governance structures which are being considered by the group.

This was followed by a report from the Chair of the Transforming Effectiveness Group which is looking at what activities sit best at a local level and which are best resourced nationally. The House welcomed this initiative and agreed to feed in ideas and inputs to assist with structured conversations at diocesan and national levels about how all levels of Church activities are best supported.

The House then received an update on the financial position of dioceses and parish share, with the House supporting specific conversations and engagement with those dioceses facing financial strain.

This was followed by an update regarding ongoing plans for the 2022 Lambeth Conference. Although the Conference was unable to take place in 2020, supportive and productive dialogues are continuing between the Archbishop of Canterbury and his counterparts in all parts of the global Anglican Communion who are each facing the crisis in different ways.

The current position of the Church of England with respect to the distribution of Holy Communion and the use of the Common Cup during Covid was discussed with further theological reflection, discussion and work on this matter planned.

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