

A meeting of the House of Bishops took place today Tuesday 29 September 2020 via Zoom.

The focus of the meeting was a reflective practice consideration of the Church's response to the Covid-19 pandemic to date, lessons learnt over the recent months and priorities for the future. The House agreed that its priorities for the future will include working closely with the local civic authorities to deal appropriately with the next phase of the pandemic across the regions.

The House also received updates from the various works streams operating under the auspices of the Emerging Church Groups. An overview by the Chair of the Co-ordinating Group, the Bishop of Manchester was followed by brief reports from the Chair of the Recovery Group, the Vision and Strategy Group, the Governance Group and the Transforming Effectiveness Group.

The House was then updated by the Director of Safeguarding on a range of safeguarding matters.

The House welcomed last week's announcement by the Archbishops regarding the proposed interim pilot support scheme for survivors which will offer immediate support for those who have come forward. A permanent survivor redress scheme will be established with the final sum involved, to ensure full funding of the redress scheme, not yet finalised.

The House expressed support for the Archbishops' Council's statement last week giving a commitment to pursue the principle of independent safeguarding and agreed with the Council's recognition of the need for greater independence and transparency of safeguarding.

In its reflective practice session in the second half of the meeting, the House reflected on the Church's response to Covid-19 and the lessons learnt since the pandemic began. As well as underlining the importance of worship in church buildings for the health and soul of the nation, the House reviewed how the Church could go on learning from the many positive developments of recent months, such as the growth of online worshipping communities, the huge success of Church's digital engagement and the Church's enhanced outreach via digital media to younger people and BAME communities. The reflection began with an introduction by the Archbishop of Canterbury, followed by plenary discussion introduced by the Bishop of London. The reflection concluded with a discussion and feedback led by the Archbishop of York.

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