



**EXTRACT OF DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 125th MEETING OF WAKEFIELD DIOCESAN  
SYNOD  
HELD AT ST CATHERINE, SANDAL, WAKEFIELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2013**

**DS2013/01**

**Chairperson: Mrs Angela Byram, Chair of the House of Laity**

**5 Dioceses Commission's Draft Scheme**

**Explanation of the procedure for speaking in the debate**

The Diocesan Secretary outlined the format for the debate. Members needed to fill in a form to request to speak to enable as many people as possible to speak and so that there could be a properly balanced debate. Priority would be given to those who completed the form.

*Synod broke for refreshments*

**Housekeeping matter:**

The Chairperson asked all members not use any electronic media during the Synod proceedings so that full attention could be given to the debate.

Professor Michael Clarke gave a presentation on the Draft Scheme.

He emphasised that the Dioceses Commission had sought to be radical, to find the best framework to carry out mission so that the three dioceses were best placed

for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Dioceses Commission had sought to give a better diocesan structure in the proposals linked to demographic and social structures. The Draft Scheme was minimalist to give the new diocese flexibility to design the future for itself. The new diocese would be able to reconfigure resources for mission by saving money from things it deemed to be less necessary and deploy scarce resources effectively, engage with training laity and clergy and also attract more clergy in to a more vibrant diocese where importance was given to financial clarity and stewardship. Professor Clarke said the Draft Scheme would be God's adventure and mission and the Dioceses Commission simply presented the Draft Scheme to the three dioceses in this spirit.

There were no questions of clarification.

The Chairperson moved:

*"That this Synod give its consent to the Draft Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme 201-"*

There followed a Debate on the motion.

Mr John Bullimore, Kirkburton Deanery, spoke against the motion in answer to Professor Clarke's presentation.

He acknowledged the thought and effort which had gone in to the consultation process, reports and Scheme and that most members of Synod would recognise the benefit of having one bishop for Leeds and area bishops. However, it was important to also consider the negative aspects too and then weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the Draft Scheme. To implement the Draft Scheme would take many months and would be time consuming and energy draining. It could only provide a framework for mission – the task of mission would be the same. The Draft Scheme would create a geographically huge diocese with a large population. Although Southwark and London dioceses are bigger together they exist in less area. The diocesan offices, registrar, diocesan secretary and director of education would have to be shared over this large area. The Draft Scheme put a huge burden on the diocesan bishop: representing the diocese in the House of Bishops, looking after the Leeds area and attend to other national duties. It was unclear how the new diocese's finances could be more secure than those of the existing three dioceses when there would be no new money. The Dioceses Commission's claim that this was a once in a generation opportunity to renew and restructure in this area was the language of the door to door salesman. The Dioceses Commission also claim that one diocese would enable there to be one voice for the area – but whose voice? The financial sector? Farmers? The citizens of Barnsley? These do not all speak together with one voice. If the Dioceses Commission's scheme was rejected this didn't mean that the dioceses couldn't have renewed vision. However, if the vote was for the Scheme then he would support it but felt that the vote should be against the Scheme.

The Chairperson explained that a large number of members had asked to speak on the motion. If each person was allowed 3 minutes to speak Synod would overrun. The Chairperson proposed that the finishing time of Synod was extended to 12.45pm to allow all those who had requested to do so to speak.

**Agreed unanimously.**

Mr Rod Walker – Wakefield Deanery

Having spoken to number of people they had overwhelmingly asked him to vote against the motion. There seemed to be general merit in some restructuring but people thought there was too little detail and so much was left unclear until after the Scheme came in to being. The proposals for Area bishops was positive but this was not in the Dioceses Commission's scheme and would only come in to being if the new diocesan bishop was in favour of it. There was no guarantee that the Cathedral would be funded and this may result in staffing reductions from 2016. Overall it was the Scheme's lack of detail which meant he couldn't vote for it.

The Revd Richard Steel, Rural Dean, Almondbury Deanery – Almondbury Deanery

Even though the Draft Scheme leaves a lot to trust, based on the experience of working in York diocese – where there is an area bishops scheme in a diocese of roughly the same sort of area as the new proposed diocese and which had worked well – the Scheme can achieve positive outcomes. The Wakefield Diocese can contribute many of its current positive aspects to the new diocese. The dioceses need to learn from many of the well known high street businesses which have failed to adapt to change. The three dioceses have an opportunity to blaze a trail with a new model for the Church of England. Synod needs to support the Draft Scheme.

The Revd Canon Dr John Lawson, Diocesan Director of Training - Wakefield Deanery

If change is to happen it must be for the better, that is it must be more effective. Having assessed what currently happens with ministry training, there is no need to have the Dioceses Commission's Draft Scheme to work in partnership with other dioceses: this already happens in training through the regional training partnership. The effects of the geography, scale and corporate approach of the proposed new diocese may militate against effective working in the training field with a resulting drop in standards, reduction in personnel and resources.

The Revd Martin Macdonald - Chairman of the Wakefield Diocesan Board of Finance

The report of the three Chairs of the Boards of Finance has shown that the financial implications are not a deal stopper. There are risks in going ahead with the Draft Scheme but there are also risks if the dioceses stay as they are. Many of the risks in the Scheme are in our control. There are no assurances that funding will stay the same after 2016 – but no one has that guarantee. In his experience, mergers work when everyone involved works together to make it work. The benefits are from economies of scale and better resources even with the same budget. All of this is possible with the Draft Scheme. It is important to vote for the motion to make the diocese better able to cope with the decades ahead.

The Revd Canon Michael Rawson, Sub Dean and Canon Pastor, Wakefield Cathedral - Chairman of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches

From his involvement with the DAC both as a parish priest and as its Chairman, he knows that the DAC works best when there is a good relationship between it and the parishes. The members of the DAC know the parishes and people and the DAC's decisions are supported by visits to the parishes involved. The planning group for a Diocesan Advisory Committee for the new diocese is keen for this same level of commitment to be maintained. Its solution would be to have three sub-committees covering each of the three existing dioceses and then an overall DAC. This creates more bureaucracy adding another level of committee. This does not serve the parishes better than currently. At the moment Wakefield Cathedral has a clear relationship with the parishes of the diocese and would like this to continue – however in a larger diocese the Cathedral's funding and this relationship would be under threat.

Mr Frank McManus – Calder Valley Deanery

He was concerned that a management culture in the church was now mirroring that in secular institutions. Over the last thirty years he had seen the growth of "dossier dealings" such as for the current Synod meeting. He believed that small is beautiful and that there were disadvantages with the bigger way of doing things. The Church could not be contained in the channels planned for it. He was disappointed that no consideration had been given to a two dioceses scheme.

The Bishop of Pontefract

He encouraged Synod to vote in favour of the Draft Scheme. The Church of England had to change if it was going to be ready for challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> century. During the last 16 years the number of clergy had declined and would continue to do so. The Church of England had to reorganize itself. General Synod has set up a Dioceses Commission with teeth. Before the Dioceses Commission could only

encourage dioceses to think about working differently. We need to change and what we need to look for in the Draft Scheme is new vision for future. The Draft Scheme does not tell us what this will be but gives us a structure to make bishops more local, (so they can get to know the parishes and people) relate to the civic area and create new mission particular for that area. The new diocese could put the flesh on the structure and create the vision. He again encouraged Synod to vote for the Draft Scheme as it was an opportunity for the diocese. The Church was asking us to do it. If the diocese didn't take this opportunity now it would be another generation before it could.

The Revd Richard Burge – Birstall Deanery

He said that Synod needed to be aware that the Draft Scheme was a legal process and that the document does not provide for area bishops - that is not part of Scheme. So if members were not certain – they should be aware they would not be voting for area bishops if they voted yes. The new structure would introduce a whole new area of committee structures and hamper mission and ministry in the diocese. As a diocese we looked at the original proposals, then thought more about it and then our decision was tied. If we vote against the Draft Scheme now, it is because we have thought more about it and have decided it is not right for us. There has already been change in the diocese through processes that are already in hand or completed. Future change could be achieved in the same way and would be cheaper.

The Revd Canon James Allison - General Synod member

He said that everything done at Synod is a legal process but Synod also needed to think about trust. At the beginning of the Scheme process Synod was excited by the proposals and voted in favour. The idea is that the new diocese would have local area bishops. In the new scheme we are voting for it. It was not true that we couldn't vote for this in the structure of the Scheme. Those who think regionally recognise that there isn't currently a regional voice. The dioceses don't have a structure that does this but we need one that does. Synod needs to move away from thinking with its head and think about trusting the other dioceses. Synod needs to think about heart because it was the heart that did this in the first place. When Christ placed a child in the midst he did this because children trust – Synod also had to trust God and his people too. Therefore Synod should vote for the Draft Scheme as a people who trust.

Mrs Hilary Pollard – Almondbury Deanery

She said she was not against change and thought the introduction of an area bishops structure would be good for localism. However, she felt that this introduction could be done without the Draft Scheme and the creation of one diocese. Some people think that Wakefield is a long way from their parishes: a new diocese would have a boundary almost with that of Durham. Mission can be

done without re-organisation. Re-organisation as envisaged by the Draft Scheme would take a lot of effort away from mission.

Mr Tim Slater – Huddersfield Deanery

He welcomed the opportunity to have an open and honest debate about the Draft Scheme. The new diocese would with regard to population to area be average. There was some sense in Wakefield, Huddersfield and Leeds joining together. The issue was what was good for the church in the region, nationally and globally. It was clear from the work done by the Chairs of the Diocesan Boards of Finance that there was no risk financially other than risks which could be managed. Three aspects of mission were addressed by the Scheme: the ecumenical future – the new diocese would fit better with our ecumenical partners' areas; the Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops of Leeds would cover the same area; Interfaith relations – particularly focussing on the dialogue between Christianity and Islam. This was important in a global context. In addition, one diocese would have a bigger Board of Education which would be helpful as there were only a handful of church senior schools in the area.

The Revd Canon Tony Macpherson, Canon Missioner – Wakefield Deanery

He said that nothing in Draft Scheme will make making new disciples easier. We already have the opportunity in the diocese to re-envision how to make new disciples - a new structure isn't needed to do this. Re-imagining has been done more than once in this diocese. To vote against the motion would be saying we can do this ourselves. We are responsible for re-imagining and if we vote against the motion we take that responsibility for ourselves and are all equally important in imagining how to face the challenges before us. We need change but the Draft Scheme is the wrong one and we will regret it if it goes ahead.

The Revd Canon Maggie McLean, Part-time Diocesan Training Officer – General Synod member

She said that the Draft Scheme wasn't change for the sake of it – the Church of England could not go on as it has. In past decades we had been told that parish amalgamations, reduction of clergy numbers and the selling of old vicarages were an opportunity to shape change for the Kingdom of God. Many proposals had been done in a voluntary sharing way. She didn't feel this would work in the future any more than it had in the past. The Draft Scheme gave an opportunity to work with the diocese's two neighbours who looked to support from Wakefield. The proposals were risky and would need time, energy and there were financial implications. The Church had recognised in the past the need to find new ways of working. She encouraged Synod to vote to bring leadership closer to the place that needed it.

Mr John McLeod – Bishop's Nominee

He said he could not vote in favour of the Draft Scheme because too much was left unresolved. He had spent much of his professional life in planning the closure or re-organisation of schools. If he had produced a report to an education committee leaving as much unresolved as is left unresolved in the Draft Scheme his report would have been rejected. It was also unusual to enter in to a voluntary merger without knowing who the head of the organization was going to be. The diocese doesn't need change in this way but change should be for a renewed Diocese of Wakefield which truly honours and develops the achievements of the last 125 years.

The Revd Dr Matt Bullimore – Barnsley Deanery

Mission is about persons, encounter, relationships and this happens best locally. The reason mission has to be personal thing is because God comes among us as the Word made flesh. In the early church pastoral oversight was given to a person in a local area. That person had sacramental and personal authority. In the Episcopal structure envisaged by the Draft Scheme, he feared he would not know the person of the diocesan bishop and wasn't sure how he would hold him and the people in his heart or how they would inhabit that personal authority in a larger diocese.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones, Rural Dean, Kirkburton Deanery – General Synod member

She felt that the Draft Scheme would develop a more collaborative and effective way of working suitable to today. In the past collaborative ministry had been hampered by the structure and hierarchical nature of the diocese. The Area bishops would be closer to people they serve as they would have less distractions from diocesan responsibilities. Whilst the area bishops would have to be approved by the new diocesan bishop if this did not happen it would make a nonsense of that person being appointed. She would vote in favour of the Draft Scheme because it would be imaginative and effective for the mission in the area.

The Archdeacon of Pontefract

He advocated abstaining on the motion. He did not want to vote against the Draft Scheme because we knew we needed to change to be fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. However, we are a national church and we need a debate on what the wider wisdom is on what is to be done in the next 25 years and that what is being proposed is right. Real progress is made by those who consider carefully what they do one step at a time. He encouraged Synod to abstain on the motion and to advocate a national debate.

The Revd Canon Bob Cooper, Rural Dean, Pontefract Deanery – Pontefract Deanery

He said that the debate before Synod was an historic debate because the introduction of the Draft Scheme was looking to change the theology of episcopacy and what it means and its ecclesiology. Synod needed to be aware that voting for the Draft Scheme would mean that its template was taken through the whole of the Church of England. Synod should also be aware that Chichester Diocese was getting rid of its area bishops scheme as their new bishop had decided he did not want to work with such a system. He advised voting against the Scheme because more time was needed to think through its implications. The Dioceses Commission said that the framework could be sorted out locally after the Scheme came in to effect. What if it isn't sorted? What if the framework doesn't work? Where would that leave the new diocese? He believed change was needed but the Draft Scheme wasn't the only model, so Synod should reject the Draft Scheme and promote a national debate. He asked Synod to consider the motion carefully and not sleepwalk in to a finance led future.

The Revd Canon David Burrows, Rural Dean, Brighouse and Elland Deanery – Brighouse and Elland

He said Scripture believed in growth not change. He wasn't convinced the Draft Scheme would allow growth. Alternative proposals had been put forward and this was the way the diocese should head. He asked Synod to vote against the motion as a vote for the alternative proposals which would deliver much quicker and clearer results. There was no framework for mission in the Draft Scheme and there seemed to be a great deal of weight put on the bishops, archdeacons and other staff particularly with regard to issues of costs and travel in the new large diocese. He was also concerned about whether there would be equal treatment of each area – Halifax for example would not have a cathedral. It had been good to review what the diocese was about but the Draft Scheme wasn't the answer to that review.

The Revd Canon Hilary Barber – Halifax Deanery

He said that new ways must be found of understanding and exploring our faith and evangelism. We must not look for shallow assurance in the status quo but we must explore our belief and not seek simplistic solutions. God is a risk taking god and the church must keep faith with Him. There are many good things to celebrate about the diocese but there are also long term viability issues. If the diocese did not receive the Church Commissioners grant it would be in serious financial trouble. We need to take a calculated risk and vote for the Scheme and discover what we might learn and uniquely offer to the new diocese.



### The Very Revd Jonathan Greener – The Dean of Wakefield Cathedral

He said that the previous voting had been to explore the Dioceses Commission's proposals further. He saw nothing in the Draft Scheme which would help build a living faith in anyone. If we are a mission church we will grow in depth and numbers. The Scheme was feeble, just bones and no flesh: the business plan is coming later; the governance is coming later. Faith alone is not enough. Anyone can think outside the box – but the box is law, it is the organisation that keeps the thing alive. We have been told that Chichester diocese is dismantling its area scheme for "exceptional reasons" – the reasons are always exceptional if that's what the diocesan bishop wants! There is no information about funding after 2016. The reason for this is that the Dioceses Commission believes if it's spelt out that Yorkshire will be losing £500k per year this would scupper the Draft Scheme. If the three dioceses aren't being told this about the Draft Scheme what other truths are not being told? Wakefield Cathedral has been renewed for this anniversary year. It is committed to renewal, worship and mission. We can do these things in the diocese of Wakefield without the Draft Scheme and we can do them more quickly. It's easier to turn round a frigate than an oil tanker.

### The Revd Brunel James – Birstall Deanery

He believed the pros and cons of what was being proposed were finely balanced. From a personal perspective, having been a curate in Bradford diocese, served his first incumbency in Leeds diocese and now as an incumbent in Cleckheaton he felt Wakefield diocese was by far the best in West Yorkshire. However, this should not prevent the diocese forging a new structure. In his judgement West Yorkshire does have sociological coherence. He believed it would enhance mission to have one diocese to speak for West Yorkshire and the Dales and would be strategically good at parish level too. West Yorkshire and the Dales is diverse - so an area bishops system would complement the diocesan bishop. The present diocesan structure reflected a Victorian reality that was not the contemporary one. He commended the motion to Synod.

### The Revd Rupert Martin – Wakefield Deanery

He outlined that in his experience where a church has more than one congregation, when the congregations combine one third of the joint congregation is lost because they don't feel part of it. Subdivision creates growth. It is going against the Gospel principles if we go against this. The church does not live in a vacuum. We are experiencing the worst recession since 1930s and the end is not in sight. We have an opportunity to spread the Gospel and we don't need a major restructuring to distract us from this. The implementation of the Draft Scheme will be costly. We need to ask ourselves whether as a church we should be doing this at this time? The proposed area bishops scheme is cumbersome, the mission justification for the Draft Scheme is weak and this is the wrong time to enter in to a costly and financially hazardous merger.

#### The Archdeacon of Halifax

She advised that Synod should reflect on how it could discern if the Draft Scheme is God given. Does it strengthen God's mission in West Yorkshire? Having read the documents and prayed and gone to meetings about the Draft Scheme, she was disillusioned about how it would contribute to this mission. The Draft Scheme has so little detail that the staff of each of the current three dioceses would have to devote their time to the restructuring leaving little time for the parishes and the task of mission on the ground. The human cost of the Draft Scheme will be profound and had a detrimental effect. In this type of situation the most competent often leave. There is fear, not of change but of being told, (as some of the diocesan staff have) that if they don't agree with the other partner dioceses they will lose their jobs. If a Scheme is God given then it should be possible to willingly lead the sheep to the sheepfold. She didn't think this could be achieved by the Draft Scheme and would not be voting for the proposals.

#### The Revd Matthew Pollard – Brighouse & Elland Deanery

He asked Synod to vote in favour of the motion. There was no demographic connection between Huddersfield and Halifax and Wakefield. Wakefield was just one town in the area. Huddersfield and Halifax, demographically, geographically, historically and culturally had more in common with Leeds and Bradford. Leeds is the regional city. We all live in the hinterland of Leeds – so church structures should reflect this. However, there are issues of a new single diocese being too large, but the area bishops proposals would address this.

#### Ms Kate Taylor – Bishop's Nominee

She had written the new book on the history of the diocese. The diocese was being asked to have vision, but there always has been vision in Wakefield diocese. In addition it has been a small diocese with the bishop in contact with his people. One of the arguments for the new single diocese has been for there to be a single voice. History has shown that this works if the bishop can go along with the local authority. One hundred years ago, when the diocesan bishop did not go along with the local authority, it was the voices of three local bishops that counted. She asked Synod to vote against the Draft Scheme.

#### Mr David Corps, Lay Chairman, Huddersfield Deanery – Huddersfield Deanery

He reminded Synod that the Draft Scheme was not about Wakefield diocese but about the area of all three dioceses. An effective way to cover this area needed to be found so that the Common Fund could support all. An area bishops scheme would achieve this more readily than the current structure. As a diocese we needed to look to relate to those who are un-churched through the metropolitan structure which is more beneficial and useful. The Wakefield Diocese could take to the new diocese all that has been best in it. He asked Synod to vote for the Scheme.

Mrs Deirdre Morris – Wakefield Deanery

She felt that the Dioceses Commission's papers would make more sense if the word "mission" was replaced with the word "administration". Synod should note that although not in the Draft Scheme a basic underpinning of the proposals is the adoption of an area bishops pattern. However, this does not take in to consideration the issues surrounding the introduction of women bishops. These are issues which should not be underestimated in their importance to people in the parishes. She cited the controversy involved in the appointments of bishops to Blackburn and Chichester dioceses and in the appointment of the Bishop of Whitby. In this latter case, York diocese works on an area system and people felt their needs were being overlooked. At the moment in the Wakefield diocese we have one female and one male archdeacon and one bishop for and one against the ordination of women bishops. How would the oversight of parishes in an area system work if they don't agree with their area bishop on these issues?

The Chairperson invited The Bishop of Wakefield to speak to the motion.

Bishop of Wakefield

He thanked everyone who had contributed to the debate. He explained that the diocesan system has been the structure used by the church for many hundreds of years and was used throughout the World. Originally the system provided for one diocese with one bishop. This was the ideal. The introduction of suffragan bishops was to support the work of the diocesan bishop – but this was a compromise solution. Fewer dioceses is therefore not the answer. It is increasingly difficult for a diocesan bishop to be effective in a large diocese. Smaller dioceses, each with one bishop and one cathedral would be a better approach. This is why Wakefield diocese had lodged a motion for General Synod to have a debate on what the shared vision of the national church is for its structures for the future. It is unclear why the Dioceses Commission came to West Yorkshire first. The matter had not been discussed during the 10 years he had been in the House of Bishops of General Synod. Change is needed but not the change envisaged by the Draft Scheme. A debate was needed to establish the vision needed to focus on local mission. This is what is missing in the Draft Scheme. The development of ideas and vision was needed, not just for the three dioceses subject of the Draft Scheme, but for whole of Yorkshire. We need to make sure the boundaries between dioceses are porous and to strengthen the parishes. He asked Synod to recommit itself to a new vision and a better one than that presented by the Draft Scheme.

The Chairperson invited the Diocesan Secretary to outline the procedure for voting. A point of order was raised asking for Richard Alwyn's cameras to be switched off during the voting. The Chairperson asked for the cameras to be switched off.

The Bishop of Wakefield led Synod in prayer.

The Chairperson reminded Synod of the motion before them:

*"That this Synod give its consent to the Draft Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme 201-"*

Synod voted on the motion.

The Chairperson announced the result of the voting on the motion.

The result was:

	<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
<b>BISHOPS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>CLERGY</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>LAITY</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>4</b>

**The motion was rejected by Synod.**

## **6 Close in prayer**

The Bishop of Wakefield led Synod in closing prayers.