

Report of Proceedings 2021

General Synod Informal Session

Saturday 27 February 2021

Informal Virtual Meeting

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SATURDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2021

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Kate Wharton (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 10.30 am.

The Chair: Good morning, Synod. Welcome to this informal meeting. I hope that the sun is shining wherever you are as much as it is shining here in Liverpool. It is a shame we cannot all be together today. I am sorry that I cannot see any of you; I hope that you can see me. It is good nonetheless to be together this day. Now I am going to hand over to the Synod Chaplain, who is going to lead us in our opening worship.

WORSHIP

Revd Michael Gisbourne (Chaplain to the General Synod) led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair: Thank you so much, Michael, for leading us in our opening worship. I am now going to ask Sue Booy, the Chair of the Business Committee, to introduce the day to us.

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford): Good morning, my friends. Welcome, wherever you are on this beautiful morning, to this informal meeting of the General Synod: another first. I thought I would explain to you why we are meeting like this and try to answer some of the questions that I have been asked and seen in various places.

The Business Committee met in December, set and published an agenda for an online meeting of Synod. I do not need to spell out for you the way in which the pandemic took hold at the turn of the year. In early January, against the sad background of increasing mortality and infectivity, of new viral strains, and with the vaccination programme only just beginning, the Corporation of Church House informed us that they would not permit the use of either the building or their staff to enable the proposed meeting of the Synod.

The Synod staff and the officers considered carefully whether it was realistic or proper to manage a Synod with a large number of participants and everyone working from home. There were serious concerns as to whether legislative and other business would stand up given the issues of wildly differing broadcast capacity, communication between advisers and Chairs, and between key staff, when working remotely. The possibility was considered of asking only those staff, and possibly Chairs, who were willing to work together to use an alternative venue. Only after serious consideration had been given to this was it concluded that there was no option but to hold an informal meeting delivered from all of our homes which did not compromise the integrity of the Synod, or risk the health of those concerned.

As you know, a remote meeting of the Synod will be held from 23 to 24 April for formal business, and details of that meeting will be sent following the Business Committee meeting on 9 March. Obviously, in this meeting, because a vote would have no legal standing, whatever you may have heard, there are no votes in this informal session. You have, however, been sent a voting link, inviting you to participate in a voting trial at 1 o'clock. This is to ensure that the problems we experienced with the voting system in November are not repeated, if we can possibly help it, in April. You may like to check that have your login details available, preferably on a separate device such as your phone.

Today we have the opportunity to ensure that we are well informed and up to date with developments in safeguarding, housing and vision and strategy; things which will provide a basis for our future debates in the Synods that we will hold later in the year. There is also the chance to be encouraged by stories of hope from across the Church.

I know that some people will find it difficult and frustrating not to ask questions. Many of you have, like me, discovered a new expertise in Zoom during the past year. Even so, I cannot imagine being asked to sit here in my own home trying to chair a session and identify questioners from amongst a meeting of 372 people. You can use the chat facility during presentations to raise questions with a particular panellist from whom you are seeking an answer that is relevant to the subject on which they are speaking. If you want to follow up anything after the Synod, please feel able to email after the meeting, as you would normally expect to do following a presentation to the Synod. Practical questions during the meeting should be referred to Synod support who are working away at home to help us keep together.

We are very grateful to Michael, our Chaplain, and to all those leading worship, especially the Community of St Anselm. I have been asked to make it clear to you that their worship is Covid secure.

At lunchtime I will be hosting an informal opportunity, together with the Prolocutors and Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity, which will enable us to meet in the tea room, and I look forward to seeing those of you who would like to join for a chat.

Before I finish, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for electing me to this office, and for your support and friendship during the time that I have chaired the Business Committee. Twenty years ago, when I joined the Synod, I could not have imagined myself in this role, and yet, it has, ironically, been one that I have relished. Maybe that makes me rather odd, but it has been a privilege to serve the Synod. Nevertheless, 20 years is long enough for one person to take a place here. I was very touched to receive a number of concerned messages about my reason for standing down. When I decided that I would not seek re-election to the Synod in July, it seemed sensible to allow this mature Synod the opportunity to elect someone you know from amongst your number, and who intends to stand again, to offer the continuity that will help in these strange times. You are fortunate in having two experienced members of the Business Committee who are willing to stand in this role, each with much to offer.

Building on our long and friendly relationship, I would ask one thing of you, and that is to consider what kind of a Chair you want for the Business Committee rather than on the views that you feel one or other of the candidates holds.

Before I finish, I want to pay tribute to the staff of the NCIs, with whom it has been a privilege to work on the Business Committee over the past years. We are enormously fortunate in the dedication, commitment and professionalism of all our staff, and I have benefited from that more than most, so huge thanks to all the team.

Finally, friends, can I ask for your patience? Everyone is in the same situation today, staff, panellists and hosts, each in our own time, and all of us are perhaps at a point where we feel particularly impatient and frustrated with lockdown and the things that constrain us. I am praying for myself, and for you, for a good informal session of Synod, for patience, learning, worship and, however strange, for fellowship. God bless you and thank you for your companionship over the years and here today.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed, Sue, for that helpful introduction to the day. As we have just heard from Sue, she is going to be stepping down as Chair of the Business Committee.

Mr William Nye (Secretary General): We seem to have a slight pause as we wait to see if Kate is able to get back on. I am sure she will be with us in a moment. Here we are, Kate is back on again.

The Chair: I am so sorry. I have no idea what happened there. You all disappeared for a moment. That sort of thing does not happen in real life. I do not know what you heard me say, but what I was saying was thank you to Sue, and, as she is stepping down as the Chair of the Business Committee, there is going to be a formal thank you to her when we meet together in April. We look forward to being able to offer her our thanks then.

I am now going to hand over to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York to share their reflections. I will remind members there will not be questions taken for this item.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENTS

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Good morning. I do not know if I am visible or invisible. I am now visible, thank you. It is very nice to be with you, and welcome. And thank you to Sue for all she has done.

This is going to be a joint effort by myself and Archbishop Stephen, together with a couple of others. We are going to start with five minutes or so of conversation. It seems to me, Stephen, that this is an extraordinary moment for this country, and thus for the Church of England, or the Church for England. We see huge challenges as to how we emerge from

Covid and tackle some of the inequalities and injustices that existed beforehand but have been revealed so starkly. In education, how do we deal, as one of the country's largest providers of education, with the disruption that despite the heroic work of schools has affected so many children and young people? How do we deal with the fact that the clergy and many members of the Church who have been working so hard are so tired and exhausted? How do we deal with the gross economic inequalities we have seen and the economic crisis that is now facing this country? How do we support an exhausted health service? How do we deal with, as we will talk about later, the crisis in housing? It is in every area. There are massive challenges. Discerning God's call to the Church at this time, which has put so much into this last year, seems to me to be one of our big questions.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): I suppose I have a strange response to all of that. I was thinking this morning that Lent this year seems to have been very, very long. What I mean by that is it seems like it started in March last year and that it has been one long Lent. I say that with a smile. I also say that with a deep seriousness, because my understanding of Lent is that it is the time when we are called to reset the compass of our discipleship in order to enter again into the Paschal mystery, the joy of the resurrection and the reality of the Cross. Therefore, this past year for Church of England has been a difficult year, and has been a harrowing year, because that has been so for our world, but, actually, I see so many good things.

The press have given both of us a bit of a knocking recently, and I do not like that, it hurts, but what really hurts is when the implication is that somehow the Church of England has not been doing the stuff it has been doing. I have been in awe of what I have seen local churches doing. I do not underestimate how difficult it has been, how exhausting it has been. I have found the past year really hard. However, I often cite the example of the church that set up a food bank on a trestle table outside the front of its church on day one of the first lockdown because they knew there was a deep need in their parish, there were families going hungry, and they just got on with it. There is a phrase which rolls around my head - and this shows my age because my theology was very influenced by Austin Farrer, and I do not know whether he is read any more - where he described the life of a priest as a "walking sacrament". I think I just want to say the baptized are walking sacraments. I want to say the Church is a walking sacrament. Contemporary Roman Catholic theology talks about Jesus as the sacrament of God, the Church as a sacrament, meaning an embodied presence.

I am excited, also, and I know you will be saying more about this this afternoon, by the other things that are happening nationally, which I think are developing narratives of hope for our nation, such as the work with the Housing Commission. I think there are other things on your radar as well.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): There are indeed. To help us think about this and talk about this, we have two people who have very kindly come along to help us. I am going to talk to one for about 10 minutes and then you the

second. The first is Dr Gary Bell, who is a very prominent figure at St Luke's. He is a psychiatrist who I first met as one of his patients, just to be transparent about that. The second is Kersten England, who is the chief executive at Bradford Council, who you will talk to.

As you say, the press has had a go, and I am not sure if I am going to be in persona as "Woke Welby", or, as Rod Liddle said, "so wet that I want to wring him out every time I see him on the TV", or, as Andrew Brown in the *Church Times* said, "a werewolf with stomach ache". I do not quite know which I am today, but let us have a go at a conversation. I hope Gary has had his anti-rabies shots - if he is with us.

Dr Gary Bell: Here I am, Justin. Good morning.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Good morning. Welcome to you and thank you very much for giving up your time on a Saturday morning. It is really kind of you.

Dr Gary Bell: My pleasure.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): As you probably just heard, we are going through a time of unpredictability, uncertainty, uncontrollability. How does that affect people, and what are you seeing in the Church in the way it is affecting people or amongst clergy who you see?

Dr Gary Bell: Those elements of uncertainty that you mentioned - the uncontrollability, the unpredictability - have very much come our way with this novel situation, namely the pandemic. The human response to uncertainty is anxiety. At the end of the day we all like order. We are all mini control freaks at the end of the day, although some more than others I should say. Anxiety is the physiological and psychological response to a pandemic. That has led to an upsurge in mental health problems nationally. In my practice I have had about as busy a year as I can ever remember. We are struggling to find appointments for psychological treatment, et cetera. Health services, both privately and in the NHS, have become much more stretched, and none the less so with the clergy. St Luke's has seen a very significant upswing in referrals, both for psychiatry and psychological therapy. It is two to three times what it was the year before. I feel that St Luke's is seeing just the tip of the iceberg in terms of clergy distress during this period.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): That is obviously hugely important. It is a real cause for concern, particularly as we are working on the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant and we are trying to implement that, that it is affecting the wider society. What does this sort of stress do to us, though?

Dr Gary Bell: Stress has different components. Stress can make people feel anxious, as I have said. It can also tip people into depression. It can affect their behaviour and the way they interact with people. They often become irritable, withdrawn, a whole range of

human responses. We all respond differently because we are all different. We have different personalities. Some of us are more extrovert than others, some of us are introverts, and this will have an influence on that.

Ultimately, the human being, the human organism is responding to external stressors. The first thing we see is chemical changes in the body, both in the brain and elsewhere in the body, and, historically, these were survival strategies. We talk about the fight or flight reaction, for instance. That is a safety mechanism throughout the animal kingdom. You see danger, you get out of the way, or, if you need to, you attack somebody. We tend not to do that these days in a civilised society. And, of course, we have had to try to adapt to new ways of managing stress, many people not very successfully because we are not designed for that. We are not designed for the day in, day out work stress, which is why we see so many people with mental health problems as a result of stress in the workplace. Chemical changes in the brain and the body particularly raise levels of cortisol, which has come to be referred to as the “molecule of irrational pessimism”. They remain much higher when stress continues on.

These are the things that we need to pay attention to in helping our patients develop greater resilience and manage stress more effectively. Although we are not designed for this, we are incredibly adaptable, and neuroplasticity is an important concept to bear in mind. Teaching people how to better manage stress is a key part of our work these days.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): We know that stress shows itself physically, as you have just said - IBS, skin complaints, mental anxiety, depression, as you were just saying, irritability, short temperedness, impulsive actions, character traits exaggerated and so on. Is it deterministic? We have this cortisol, this molecule of irrational pessimism whizzing around inside us, and for some of us who are slightly Eeyore-minded anyway, it is quite welcome, it confirms all our worst suspicions about the world anyway. Is it deterministic, or can individuals and the Church resist this and, if so, how do we support people, how do we help people in this?

Dr Gary Bell: There are many ways we can help people, some of which we are being denied at the moment because of the restrictions we are all living under. One of my colleagues was talking the other day about the importance of human touch. Again, coming back to brain biochemistry, human touch releases oxytocin. Oxytocin is a hormone in the brain that gives us that feeling of comfort, security, feeling connected to people. You get it when you shake hands with someone warmly, you get it when you give them a hug or a pat on the shoulder, and we are all being denied this at the moment.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): So what would you say to individuals who will be hearing this about how they can build up their resilience? Last question.

Dr Gary Bell: In terms of building up their own resilience, we talk about bottom up and top down. Top down is talking to someone about your difficulties as a first step, sharing

the problem, getting a different perspective on it. That then might lead on to counselling or formal therapy, where we look at what we call mind traps: the automatic assumptions that we often all make which, when we are not under stress, are not much of a problem but when we are under pressure often let us down, things such as catastrophising, generalising, mind reading, imagining what people are thinking or saying. Communication with others is key at both a personal level and at a professional level.

A bottom-up approach, where you are trying to influence the brain chemistry from below to help anxiety, includes things such as exercise. I know you are a keen runner. The evidence suggests that strength training trumps cardiovascular exercise. I am sorry to tell you that, Justin. There is also very interesting new research just in the last two or three years about movement, not exercise per se but just movement. I think one of the problems we have at the moment is that we are sitting in our chairs in front of Zoom meetings all day and barely getting out of the chair except for lunch. Moving, making sure I move in between each consultation on my Zoom days, is important. There are certain parts of the brain that that triggers which help in our resilience. That is a recent finding. Other things such as deep breathing exercises, which I used to pooh-pooh, until, again, recent research has shown that a four-minute deep breathing exercise can bring your cortisol levels, your molecule of irrational pessimism that we are talking about, almost down to normal. There are lots of simple things that we can implement which, increasingly, scientific evidence is validating.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): I am going to cheat because I had not warned you of this. Literally, one or two sentences because we are just at the end of our time. I know that you are a regular churchgoer and that you are involved as a steward at St George's. Where do you see God in this? A nice simple one-sentence answer will do fine on that.

Dr Gary Bell: The Archbishop of York mentioned Austin Farrer, and I read one of his sermons in which he used the phrase "simplify your life". I think we have all needed a reset and, although the pandemic has brought a lot of sadness and despair, it has made all of us start to behave ourselves a bit better in terms of simplifying our lives. I see that as a benefit for the planet as a whole as well as us individually. Surely God is in there somewhere supporting us through a major change in our lives, where a lot of my patients are saying, "I don't want to go back to how it was before. It was all too much". I see that as a God-given benefit that has come out of this awful 12 months.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): That was a really good answer. Thank you, Gary. Could you also explain in one sentence, as we have had a request from the floor, what is St Luke's?

Dr Gary Bell: St Luke's Healthcare for the Clergy has been in existence for over 120 years. It was originally St Luke's Hospital. The hospital was sold some time ago because of issues around keeping up with increasing regulatory control with healthcare because of its size. It still offers support for clergy in all areas of healthcare, but it has taken mental

health as a flagship issue to support clergy because it recognises how massive a problem this is in the current age.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Thank you very much, Gary. That is absolutely wonderful and you are very kind to have done this. Please stay with us until 11.35, that would be very kind. Stephen.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) Thank you, Justin. Thank you, Gary. I speak to you as one who is oxytocin deprived. The best thing I have done in recent weeks is I have bought myself a standing desk. I have started moving between the sitting-down desk and the standing desk and it has made a huge difference to the Zoom life. The cheque is in the post because one of our great hopes for the Church of England is that we might simplify our life as we come through this.

It is my great pleasure, a real honour, to welcome Kersten England to our informal meeting of the Synod. Kersten is CEO of the wonderful Bradford Council in the great City of Bradford. She is also a canon of Bradford Cathedral. She wrote a chapter in one of my predecessor's books about health provision and other related matters. She has a real heart for serving and building up some of our most challenging communities. Kersten, thank you for giving us a bit of time this morning.

We are turning our attention now not so much to what it has done to the interior lives of each of us but the physical challenges, particularly in some of our poorest communities. It would be great to hear you share with us what has been your assessment of the impact of Covid, particularly in those communities where some people have suffered disproportionately?

Kersten England: Thank you, Archbishop Stephen. It is lovely to join you and it was great to hear Gary's piece. As the wife of someone who counsels for Relate, the couples counselling service, over the last year I have been running Bradford Council from this spot, and I have been hearing my husband upstairs counselling more and more distressed couples, and hearing not the detail but the damage that has been done to people's mental health through the pandemic.

First of all, I would like to say this has been an incredibly tough year for everybody, whoever they are, and wherever they live, and we have just heard some of that. The other thing I would like to say is thank you to the Church for your prayerfulness and your active service in communities. I think you referred to it, did you not, Stephen, in your opening remarks?

I think this is a sobering and shocking moment for us as a nation. It is one where we have to stop and think about the disproportionate impact. It is a huge sadness to me that, despite having an incredible National Health Service which is the envy of the world and which has done an absolutely brilliant job through this year, and despite being the sixth

richest country in the world, we have one of the worst death rates in the developed world, in the OECD. We have to stop and think about what that is about. It is at least in part because this pandemic has rippled along the fracture lines of our country. Those fracture lines are, as you have just said, about deprivation, the socioeconomic status of people, and they have also been about the ethnicity of our communities. I have seen the stark infection levels in Bradford, the mortality rates, and now the extent of long Covid in communities.

It has stalked the streets and homes of our inner cities, of families with key workers, people in low-paid occupations or in insecure employment. It has stalked the densely occupied neighbourhoods and large multigenerational households. I am speaking now from a place where 50% of the City of Bradford's population is Muslim, where communality and conviviality persist. It is interesting what we were just saying about physical touch and oxytocin, because for my Muslim colleagues, friends and communities, part of their habit is congregation, is being together, is hugging, is holding hands. It is that very physical contact with each other, that physical intimacy, which is so central to their identity, that has also been part of the transmission effects of this. It is the very thing that gives them strength and wellbeing.

These are also communities which have lost more of their income through loss of employment in the retail, hospitality and leisure service sector. It is where children have lost more days of education than any others. These children are living in digitally excluded households. I was hearing a very sobering story about children trying to do their classwork on a mobile phone they were sharing with the mother and three other kids in the household. Often their parents are doing shift work as cleaners or as truck drivers or as taxi drivers and are not able to support them with home schooling.

In places like Bradford, I would just say this is the starkness of it: 40% of the community of Bradford live in the 20 most deprived neighbourhoods in this country. Conversely, Stephen, in York, where you are speaking from, 40% of the people live in the top 20%. They are really stark differences and they play out as life expectancy, and they played out in the death figures, I am afraid to say. In the district of Bradford, youth unemployment has doubled to nearly 15%. It is the second highest in the country. That is 18 to 24 year-olds without a prospect of employment at this point in time.

I have talked about long Covid. We have heard about mental health. I have to say the acuity, the seriousness of mental health issues now, particularly among the young - and we are seeing the suicide rate creeping up and we had the tragic hanging of an 18 year-old boy in Idle this week - these issues are proliferating alongside deepened poverty. That is the truth of it. That is how stark it is really. We have to stop and think about what kind of country are we now.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Kersten, I have two big questions for you. We must try to learn lessons from this, and look at the brutality of this, because I think it has pushed the plaster out of the cracks, and we can see things now

with a starkness that we perhaps knew have been there for years but we are really seeing them now. The first big question is: what contribution do you think the Church can make in building a narrative of hope and a better world? That is the first big question.

The second one is a bit of a cheeky one. I know that you believe in the local church. I was saying at the beginning about this notion of sacrament. It seems to me the church building is a sacrament, the vicar is a sacrament, the presence of a Christian community is an embodied sign of God's care, and yet maintaining a presence in all these communities is a huge challenge. The second big question is: how can you help us? How can Bradford Council or other councils build partnerships more effectively to work together? The big question is please challenge us as a Church about this, but also, please, how can you help us?

Kersten England: Two big questions. I will do my best, Stephen. On the first point, you have referred to the Housing Commission, and clearly the Church is thinking about its presence in national debates, and how it enables these issues to be aired and heard; how it gives voice to the voiceless and speaks truth to power. I think this moment provides an opportunity, if we take it, to have a national conversation about who we are as a nation. Post-pandemic, post-Brexit, as the devolved nations continue to make their journey of strengthening self-identity, it really is the moment for this country to say who are we, what makes for the common weal.

I saw very clearly in the run-up to the independence debate in Scotland the churches playing a very significant part in that debate. What makes for the common weal? What are our responsibilities to one another? How do we discharge them? How do we distribute the wealth that we collectively generate? Do we discharge our responsibilities through the taxation system? Do we do it through creating enough wealth to give everybody good employment, therefore they can purchase services? We need those conversations about our responsibilities to one another.

We have some very significant moments this year. Obviously, the Budget is next week and I heard Ken Clarke on Radio 4 this morning arguing very strongly for that kind of interventionist state at this point in time. There is the spending review at the end of year where the Government will decide what it will spend its money on. I think the Church has a very important role to play this year in creating the conditions for that debate at national level.

At the local level, as in local authority and then hyperlocal in community, it has a really important role to play. I have had the Bishop of Bradford and the President of the Bradford Council for Mosques by my side two or three times a week throughout this pandemic, thinking about the pledges we want to make to the people of the place, right down, as you say, in the parishes, that active service we have seen of both prayer and really practical vital support. I would just encourage that we keep what we have garnered and gained through that. That is some of what I would say about that. You can open doors and your

hearts to the community around you, and to churches working in communities and working in more challenging circumstances.

To come to your second question, which I think is really interesting, I have been very struck by those churches which have been community anchors in their surroundings. In the Bradford district, the church at Thornbury has a police station in it, an early years presence in it, a job club in it. That brings revenues in that enable that church to manage its books and have a fantastic asset. Bishop Toby will tell you, I do not know if he is with us today, that some of my most challenging conversations with him have been about the lack of presence of the Church in some of our most deprived communities, some of our sprawling housing estates that lack all infrastructure - the post office has gone, the GP surgery is not there, the secondary school is not there, the retail spine has gone and the Church is not even there. We have to be part together of recreating that infrastructure for community life and the flourishing of the human spirit in the most local of settings.

I think we can collaborate and co-venture. The example of Bromley-by-Bow, which I think was a Methodist church, is a very powerful example, where a clapped-out Methodist church now got has a GP surgery, an orchard and a recording studio. It is a hub and hive for people of all faiths and none in that locality, but within it is a sacred worshipping space which actually witnesses to the presence of God in that community. We can tackle that from both angles where you have an asset that we can enable to flourish again, and where we no longer have a presence, that we can co-venture into a place and be in a place. Obviously, we need to understand our boundaries because clearly that is not part of my business. Despite being a worshipping member of the Church of England, that is not my business in my day job. Understanding those boundaries, I think there is much more we can do in this together.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) Kersten, it is so inspiring to hear you speak, and so challenging. Our vision in the Church of England in this next season is to be, the jargon we are using, a mixed ecology Church. That is shorthand for we want more church, not less, but we recognise we are going to have to do it differently. I do not think Bishop Toby is on this call, but Philip North, the Bishop of Burnley is, and he, with others, is heading up a group looking at how we can not just maintain our presence in the poorest estates in this land but also the challenge of finding new ways of being church and plant new churches into these estates. It is a vital and important ministry, particularly for those of us who live here in the north, and for the whole nation.

Thank you so much for giving your time this morning. I have a feeling we might be calling on you again because I think that image of co-venture is something that we need to take into our vision and strategy going forward. May God richly bless you. Please be assured of our prayers for you and all those who work in local government at the frontline. We are grateful for our partnership. God bless you, Kersten, thank you.

Kersten England: And you, Archbishop.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Wow, Justin, why do we not take an early coffee break? How can we follow all that? We were going to speak about more personal stuff, about how this is affecting us, but I guess on the back of that, I feel we have been really challenged to expand our vision even further. I do not know how you would respond.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): I agree with you. Gary was really helpful on the basic issues of resilience. I think we have to respond in two ways. The first is to recognise the importance of clergy and laity wellbeing. Gary used the word “simpler”. That is just marvellous. That was so unprompted, but it was beautiful, and Kersten’s extraordinary, really prophetic idea challenges us to keep involved in the national debate, to not lose our nerve. I loved the point about providing conditions for a national debate. We are doing that.

One thing we have been accused of is being absent from the field of battle over the last year. Kersten made it quite clear that that is not true, but she also pointed out some of the areas where we have done less well over the last 20 or 30 years or 40 years, for example, in outer estates. As you said quite rightly, the Bishop of Burnley is really going for this, and people like Toby are doing such amazing work all over the country.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Speaking personally, of the things that have been reported lately, which I will be referring to later in the update on where are with vision and strategy, the thing that hurt me the most was the suggestion that somehow the parish system is being dismantled. The parish system is so precious and central to what it is to be the Church of England, because it is about what I am going to refer to as that historic vocation to serve every inch of the country and every person in it. We need to recognise on the one hand that in our outer estates we have been failing to do that and solving it is not going to be easy. There are also all the other communities in which people live their lives, not least the digital community in which we live our lives. We need to expand and reimagine and revitalise the parish system, not dismantle it. I want to pledge myself again to trying to ensure that we can have a viable, sustainable, flourishing Christian presence in every community in this land, and I think we need to have a much greater bias to the poor.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): I really join you in that pledge. We have both been parish priests, for goodness’ sake. We are deeply committed. We have spent years of our life in parishes. The idea that we would want to ditch them - and I was in a semi-rural area - and we are against the rural areas, or whatever it happens to be, is just rubbish.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Yes, although I have always thought the one thing Bishops should never speak about is when they were in a parish.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Sorry about that.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Only because people look at you askance because they have forgotten. It is quite good to be reminded from time to time.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): You will come back to the mixed ecology and I do not want to talk about that for the moment. One of the underlying challenges in what I have been thinking about recently comes in the mixed ecology, and it comes in the simpler, bolder, humbler, and it comes in the digital. Dean Robert at Canterbury Cathedral, who is one of my great heroes, has been winter and summer over the last year doing morning prayer online, day by day. His cats and pigs join in. It is just fabulous. They now have 9,000 to 10,000 people joining in that. We could repeat that story all over the country. There are well over half a million people who are regularly online who were not with us before.

The challenge though is that at the heart of the Christian faith is not a bunch of dogmatic statements which make you a Christian if you tick the boxes; it is an encounter with Jesus Christ. At the heart of what we are talking about here is to be so changed in our very being, if you want to use jargon you would say ontologically, by meeting with Jesus, meeting with God through the Holy Spirit, that as the Church responds we have that heart to the poor because it is God's heart, and that we have that heart for the suffering because it is God's heart to the bereaved.

The latest figures I was hearing show that over the last year, if you include everyone who has died, in addition to the much more than 120,000 terrible tragic deaths from Covid, if you include everyone, you have about 6.5 million to 8 million people in the country who have not been able to mourn or go to a funeral. The heart of God calls out to them, "Come to me, all you who labour under heavy burden, and I will give you rest", and, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted". We have that task of bringing people into the presence of the everlasting arms that sustain us and support us.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): I would also want to make a plea, and I think I make it first to myself but to our Church, that we need to be much kinder to each other.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Oh yes.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): We need to assume when we hear each other speak that we speak with the very best of intentions; that our common desire and our heart's desire is to make Jesus known, to build God's Kingdom in the world, and to build up the life of God's Church, which is us, the people of God. I worry sometimes about our discourse with each other and I wonder what other people think when they see that. What I also know is that when we love each other, when we are kind to each other, when we are forbearing with each other, we actually model

something really important to the world, where there is even more cynicism, anger and hot-headed horribleness.

Sometimes I think I could find something more profound to say, but I want to say to our Church of England, sisters and brothers, let us love one another because love is from God. When we love one another, we will be greater able to love the world. And let us believe in each other. Believe that what we long for is to make Jesus known, to build his Kingdom, to build the Church, and that what we want is to find a way of not just sustaining the life of the Church but for there to be more church and more opportunities for more people to come to Christ.

I think Kersten is right that this is a moment of opportunity in the life of our nation, where we can find this more united, more coherent, more loving voice into our national life, in terms of the individual proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in terms of loving service, but also the stuff that you are really pioneering on, Justin, of which the Housing Commission is but the start, these bigger narratives.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): I am going to leave it to you to finish in prayer in a minute. I want to add to what you have just said. I totally agree about this need to love one another. Remember when you put a comment on Twitter that you are not speaking to the person, you are speaking to the whole blinking world. The cruelty and savagery. I also want to add the words forgiveness and mercy. I just see so much. I saw it again this morning, it was not about me, it was about someone else saying, "Yes, they've apologised but look at what they said in 2003". Well, I can promise you, and everyone who is listening, I will mess up regularly. If it is not daily, it will be a miracle. Probably hourly I will get things wrong. If I may speak for you, I suspect you will.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): It has been known.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): It has been known. And so, funnily enough, will everyone, because we are a bunch of sinners who need the grace of God. Let us be merciful and forgiving to one another. I really echo what you say about us loving one another. I will hand over to you.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Synod, you will be relieved to hear this session is almost over, and it is time for a cup of coffee. You can go and bang your head against a wall or have a lie down, take some caffeine and then we will get on with some other stuff.

Twitter is not all bad. There is some nasty stuff on it and there is some lovely stuff. I follow Mark Oakley who posts a poem every day. I find them incredibly helpful to read. I am a poetry lover. I will not read you the whole of the George Herbert poem he has posted today - of course because it is George Herbert's day - but the poem he has posted today ends with: "I will complain, yet praise; I will bewail, approve; And all my sour-sweet

days I will lament and love.” And that “lamentation but love” feels to me to be really important right now.

Let me finish with I am not sure whether it is a poem or a prayer. We do not know who wrote it. Mark posted it a week or so ago. It is credited to Mother Teresa of Calcutta and it is said - sacrament is a bit of a theme this morning - when she received the sacrament, when she went back to her pew, this is the prayer she offered every day: “People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centred. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway. If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway. What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway. The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway. Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway. In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.” Amen. Do enjoy the coffee break.

The Chair: Thank you so much, Archbishop Justin, Archbishop Stephen, Gary and Kersten, for all that you have said. There is lots for us to think about there. As Archbishop Stephen just said, we are going to a screen break. I recommend chocolate and, as we have just heard, make sure that you move. We will be restarting promptly at 12 with worship. Be ready to join us again then.

The Chair: Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome back. I am now going to hand over to the Community of St Anselm, who are going to lead us in our midday prayers.

WORSHIP

The Community of St Anselm led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair: Thank you very much to the Community of St Anselm for leading us in that time of worship. I am now going to hand over to the Archbishop of York, who is going to introduce our item on vision and strategy.

VISION AND STRATEGY

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Sisters and brothers, it is very nice to speak to you again. What I wanted to share with you is, first of all, what a privilege it was to share with Synod last November the emerging vision and strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s. Since then, I have had opportunities to speak with many individual members of Synod in several dioceses, and to meet with other groups, not least the Chairs of the House of Laity and the House of Clergy.

The three words “simpler, humbler and bolder” seem to have landed well, and they seem

to capture, as we heard earlier, something of the spirit of the Church that God is calling us to become. However, there is still much to do. This is still a work in progress. In this session I simply want to bring you up to date with how things are developing, give Synod an opportunity to ask questions, and share my hopes and dreams for this vision, and for our Church of England.

With hope there must also be realism and humility. This is, as we have heard and as we know, a tough time for our nation and our world. We have seen so much suffering. Many of us are exhausted and, no, we do not know exactly what the Church is going to look like when we emerge from the lockdown and start to return to whatever the new normal will be like.

We should, however, be proud of what we have achieved. Churches have been in the frontline of providing care and service in and with our communities. We have, amazingly, managed to do so much online and, as a result, new people have connected with us. We could not have imagined all this a year ago. Some of us, however, will have come to this meeting troubled by stories in parts of the press implying that big decisions about clergy numbers, parishes, buildings and services have already been decided centrally but kept under wraps. Much of this has been very misleading. Archbishop Justin and I have replied in the public domain so as to set the record straight but also, more importantly, keep the work on track, so please read what we have said.

Synod, I want to say again, this is a work in progress. It is my intention to be open and transparent about the full scope of the challenge and to find ways of working on this together. Our vision for being a Jesus Christ centred and Jesus Christ shaped church will help us focus on what truly matters: the Christ-like life of prayer, our worship and our service, the proclamation of God's good purposes for the world, and how all this is fed and nurtured by word and sacrament, and by our own humble acknowledgement of our need for God's grace, so that together we can build a better, more hopeful future.

Here is the diagram I shared with you last time. At least I hope it is coming on screen. Please note a slight change to the wording. We believe that God is calling us to be centred on Jesus Christ and shaped by Jesus Christ. First and foremost, we are those who live our lives in Christ, and through Christ we enjoy community with God.

I am pleased that one of the first responses to the November Synod was an offer of help from David Ford, Isabelle Hamley, Anderson Jeremiah, a member of Synod, and a few other theologians, who have offered to dig into these two phrases and the ideas and objectives that flow from them.

A well-known delaying tactic for any movement for change in the Church is the charge that we have not done the theology. In this instance, I want to suggest that the change I am praying for is the theology. I am hoping that by saying clearly we are called to be followers of Jesus, a Jesus Christ centred and a Jesus Christ shaped church, we are calling for a theological and spiritual renewal in our Church, and that this will lead to a

developing emphasis on apologetics and catechesis, and, from that, more effective evangelism.

But I am also grateful for the many offers of prayer. I am writing this week to a number of places of pilgrimage and communities of prayer asking for their prayerful support. The phrase “Jesus shaped” has a specific connection with the Five Marks of Mission. These five marks, which I hope we will formally adopt later this year, describe a life lived in Christ, and therefore form the heart of our first strategic objective, which is to become a church of missionary disciples. This, too, will overflow and bear fruit in our ministry to the world, enabling us to have a greater prophetic witness and to develop what we were speaking about earlier as narratives of hope. Some shoots of this are already seen in things such as the Archbishops’ Housing Commission, launched last week, but also in Synod’s own bold environmental commitments. These demonstrate the outward focus of our apostolic witness flowing from our life in Christ. The *Setting God’s People Free* agenda is also central to this priority, shaping missionary discipleship in the whole of life, both as the gathered in and the sent out people of God.

Our second objective is to become a Church where mixed ecology is the norm. This, I fear, has sometimes been misunderstood or misheard. I apologise if anything I have said, or failed to say, gave a false impression. However, as I have already said this morning, it is categorically not about the dismantling of the parish system, but about a parish system revitalised for mission. It is our historic vocation to be the Church for every square inch of this country, and every person in it. A mixed ecology church will be the way we achieve this in our current context, enabling every person to have an opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ and be part of His Church. We will develop pathways into belonging and discipleship in the different areas people actually live their lives, such as in their homes, in work and education, where our church schools are so important, but also in leisure and of course in the digital world.

In order to do this, let us be clear, we need priests - more priests - who, with their bishops, will have oversight of the parishes, chaplaincies, new Christian communities, be they online or in purpose, that we will work to establish. It will also need a huge flourishing of lay ministry and lay leadership, and many new ministers, helping us develop new communities of faith. Let us be clear, yes, it is challenging, yes, it is hard, yes, it is going to be difficult, but we want more church, not less. And we will achieve that by the ministry of the whole people of God.

Thirdly, therefore, crucially, we believe that God is calling us to be younger and more diverse. We need to look like the communities we serve in all areas of age and diversity, and this does mean all areas, and it does mean believing in and supporting children and young people in ministry. It does mean facing up to our own failings to welcome and include many underrepresented groups, particularly people with disability, supporting the recent launch of the anti-racism task force, committing ourselves to the LLF process and our already agreed Pastoral Principles, so that LBGBTI+ people are in no doubt that they, along with everyone, are equally welcome in the Church of England.

Separate groups have been helping us work on these in each area. We are developing some ambitious outcomes that we will be sharing with Synod in our future meetings. Paradoxically, apart from the misunderstanding that somehow a mixed ecology church meant dismantling parishes - it does not - the most consistent criticism that I have encountered has not been about the central vision and its three objectives but about what has not been said. Whenever I get up to speak about the vision, and again I am thankful for the opportunities you have given me, I am speaking primarily about the renewal of our life in Christ: the need to put Jesus at the centre, and the spiritual, theological and missiological objectives that flow from that. I am not talking about church buildings, or clergy numbers, or governance structures, or even, for that matter, balancing budgets. These things matter hugely, but they have not been the primary concern of this work.

However, as Synod knows, there have been other groups looking at these things. With hindsight, it might have been better to join the whole thing up at an earlier stage. I hope it will be helpful now to show you another diagram which illustrates the totality of our ambition and the full scope of the work before us. You can also find much of this to follow up on the Church of England's website. Here is a second diagram showing all the groups that are working at the moment.

Yes, to be simpler, bolder, humbler, our Church is going to have to find ways of using resources more effectively. The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich is leading a group which is looking at what this might mean particularly for our central and diocesan structures and services. The Bishop of Leeds is chairing a group on our governance, aiming to find a simpler, more coherent and joined-up way of making decisions, and yes, mindful that many dioceses are having to review their numbers of stipendiary clergy, though let me stress these are decisions made in each diocese, not centrally, and mindful that we - and I do - want to ensure that resources go to frontline ministry. Archbishop Justin and I have invited the Bishop of Ely, along with Mark Sheard and Maggie Swinson, to speak to every bishop in the Church of England to offer us some advice on episcopal ministry, including possibilities for systemic and structural change.

Quite simply, this is a time when we need to look at how we order the whole of our life. It is a time of opportunity, but it is painful. I am not sure that any of us really like it. I have certainly found myself on one or two occasions thinking, "Wouldn't it have been easier to have become Archbishop of York in different and less challenging times?"

But let me say this to you: as we go about this work, this is my test. I want to be able to go to the poorest and most deprived parish of the Northern Province, to meet a member of the congregation who faithfully and sacrificially gives each week to the ministry of the Church, and to be able to look that person in the eye and assure them that we are spending those pounds she gives wisely, that every penny is spent to serve the mission and the ministry of the Church in the communities on the frontline, and where there is necessary cost on central and diocesan structures and services, we have reviewed our work as part of this whole determination to be a simpler, humbler and bolder Christ

centred and Jesus shaped church and believe that where it is spent on anything other than frontline ministry, it is only to provide the necessary and sometimes mandatory care, support and ongoing development and training. Or, as Bishop Martin Seely has memorably put it, “The frontline is the bottom line”.

I do not think we are quite there yet, and this is not anybody’s fault. Our structures have become complicated and cumbersome and, Synod, I believe we can do better. I also believe that it is better to see this as one piece of work shaped by one vision, to put Christ and our discipleship in Christ at the centre. Somebody did accuse us after the last Synod of paying some management consultancy to produce the diagram, which made me smile because, actually, I wrote it myself on the back of an envelope and somebody turned it into a PowerPoint.

I am not apologising for saying we put Christ and our discipleship in Christ at the centre. It is not that we have not done this before. Of course we have. But we need, in this day, for our nation, at this time, a fresh and radical call to a new springtime in our discipleship.

Finally, I have been reading Pope Francis’s beautiful little book “Let Us Dream” and, since I am a bit of a dreamer myself and hopefully stand in the good company of so many great biblical dreamers, I want to finish by quoting what Pope Francis has to say about what he calls the “virus of indifference”, which may get in the way of us seeking a hopeful Christ-centred future.

One of the obstacles he identifies is pessimism. He notes how it is rife in Western society, even amongst Christians, and with it a terrible cynicism. He says that to respond in this way is like “a door you shut on the future and the new things it can hold; a door you refuse to open in case one day there will something new on your doorstep”.

Dear sisters and brothers, in the New Testament, and indeed throughout scripture, we often find the imagery of closed and open doors. Sentries are posted at the gates of Eden as Adam is cast out. Paul speaks of doors opening for the Gospel. The Book of Revelation portrays Christ as the one who knocks on the doors of our hearts. Hosea says that “even in the darkest places doors of hope can be opened”. And then there is the great vision in Revelation of an open door in heaven.

I believe that through this vision, and these strategic objectives, God is opening a door of hope for our Church of England, but, even more importantly, for our nation. I believe that if we can be centred on Christ, if we are humbler and bolder about our life in Christ and the difference it makes, if our lives are shaped by the Five Marks of Mission, if we become a younger and more diverse mixed ecology church of missionary disciples, that will make a difference in our nation, not just feeding the hungry and housing the homeless, but voicing a Christian narrative of hope which can lead to a reordering of our national life where Christian values rooted in Christian belief shape us.

As I conclude, I want to give the last word to a member of Synod. She is a parish priest

just starting in a new post. She wrote to me the other day. She does not know I am quoting her, but her words sum up my hopes. Reflecting on her new role in a multi-parish rural benefice, she writes: "I feel I am called here to encourage a new way of being church: a way that enable empowers the laity, a way of being church in a post-Covid world which has to be a model fit for the 21st century. My hopes are that we see a church emerge where mutual ministry is the default model. This is necessary, not simply to address the financial situation and the decrease in clergy numbers, but because this is how we all live out our lives as disciples of Christ. We plan to create five teams from across the benefice to reflect the Five Marks of Mission. My vision is of benefice, however large that may become, where collaborative ministry is a lived reality, where churches are growing, and where people can find and receive God's radical unconditional love for themselves: find it because it is visible". Thank you.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Thank you, Archbishop Stephen. We have some time now for a few questions that have come in. I am not going to be able to give you them all. We have also been joined by two people from the shaping group: Christian Selvaratnam and Sanjee Perera. Let me kick off with you, Stephen. A couple of people have mentioned the word "simpler", and Paul Ayers was saying does that not just mean fewer people get a voice, but also someone else was asking how might General Synod model a simpler model of being.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Sorry, Dave, my sound went all funny and I missed the first part of the question.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Paul Ayers was asking about the word simpler and is there not a danger that it just means fewer people get a voice.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): I heard the second bit. I suppose it could be heard that way, but that is certainly not how I am intending it to be heard. In fact, my hope would be the opposite. I think sometimes our overcomplicated and over-cumbersome structures limit participation. I find that even in Synod, where I have heard many Synod members say, "It took us years to summon up the courage to stand up and speak because we just didn't understand how it all works". The aim of simpler is to increase participation, not limit it, but you, Synod, must hold us to account for ensuring that that is the case. Just remind me of the second part, Dave.

Revd Canon Dave Male: The second part was how Synod can model it.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): I think I have answered it in the first one. I think the simplification agenda, which we have been working on now for almost as long as I have been a member of General Synod, which is 10 years now, is something we should be rightly proud of, but we still have more to do.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Martin Kingston is saying that he is hearing from you loud and clear, which is great, that the parish system is not being dismantled, but he is just asking

how you think it is likely to be reimagined in a way that is fit for purpose and more missional in focus. Perhaps you could say something and then Christian could make some comments on this as well.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): I have been very moved by this way of thinking that we all live our lives in four different, let us call them, spaces: the physical space of our home and neighbourhood, our work or education space, if we have work, our leisure space and then the digital space. If the whole concept of parish is about serving everybody, everywhere, we need to think about how we can have a presence in those difference spaces where we actually live our lives.

I have often quoted the example of my next door neighbours where I used to live, some years ago, in a small village. They were a young married couple, with no children, who worked hard, played hard. They did not really live in this village. They slept there a few nights a week, and so traditional models of church were not going to touch them. It does not mean to say you abandon traditional models of church, but you need to expand your understanding of it in order to say, "How could we minister to and come alongside people who do not actually live their lives in the communities where they live". Christian, I am sure, has some more interesting things to say on this than me.

Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam (York): I loved what was said earlier about the parish system being the bedrock of our vision to be a church for everyone. I do not see that that would change. It has been said that parishes are not needed, but some may need to be renewed, or refreshed, or helped and adjusted in some way. In partnership with that, and sometimes building from that, a bit like strawberry runners can go out from something, we can plant these other things that reach aspects of society that are not just geographic. I work a lot with millennials and I know many of them are oblivious to the church building around the corner. Just because the geography is close, it does not mean they are close to it. We could argue they are wrong, but we need to find a way that we connect with them. That is why with the parish system we also need to build other forms of church, that the parish can often be the instigator of or the body that resources. it.

We have also found in York that often, if a parish plants something out, it a bit like children and grandchildren, they often refresh the parent and they bring fresh life and energy. They remind the parent church about the focus on mission, or the people they are not reaching, or about doing better at releasing lay people, et cetera. In its best instance it can be a very symbiotic relationship where each one is blessing the other and helping the other to grow and flourish.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Thank you, Christian. Stephen, one thing we have heard a number of times over this process, and at least two Synod members Abi and Pat have talked about, and I think others are now asking the same question, is the danger of using the phrase "younger" might suggest to older people we are not interested in them anymore. What are your reflections on that?

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): I want to apologise if people hear it as being a voice against anyone else, and, of course, I speak as an older person myself. That is not how it is intended. I have two thoughts. I think I probably said this to Synod last time. My experience is that the people who are most concerned about wanting to share the Gospel with younger people are older people. In most of the churches I go to, when I sit down within a parish and speak with a congregation and say, "What are your concerns?" almost number one is, "We want to reach out to younger people". That is the older members of the congregation saying this. I think it is a concern we all share. We look around and see that the age profile of our Church does not reflect the age profile of our nation. That is why we flagged it up as an issue, not because we do not care about every person of every age. And, of course, when God looks at us, all he sees is children - I guess sometimes quarrelsome and quite difficult children. That is what God sees.

Let us be clear, I want every person of every age to know Christ, and for our churches to serve every person of every age, but I think we do have a particular challenge with underrepresented groups. Clearly children, families and young people is one of them. The way we are going to solve this is we need the little child to lead us. It is not about our ministry to children and young people. It is setting children and young people free to lead and serve themselves. I think that is how we will make progress on this.

Revd Canon Dave Male: A number of people are asking about the second part, the younger and more diverse. Debbie is saying what is wanted is a church which reflects the local demographic in which all are welcomed and needed. Sanjee, could you comment on that, and I will come back to you, Stephen, for a subpart of that question?

Dr Sanjee Perera: Again, this is really about reflecting the nature of the communities we live in, and seeing all people of God not merely as something we want to colonise or where we merely want to put bums on seats, but people who will lead us, who will enrich the Church, who will bring their gifts whatever their age, whatever their colour, whatever their sexuality, all these people bringing their gifts to the Church.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Stephen, a number of people are asking about particular groupings or social groups, rural, LGBT+. How do we ensure that we are being truly diverse? How do we develop that so we reflect society more in the people who are part of our Church and who we are connecting with?

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Of course, I do not know the answer to that question, but I believe it is the right question to ask. If we asked ourselves the question, what is the radical heart of the Christian proclamation, we would perhaps all come up with different answers, but I think somewhere in there would be Jesus's command for us to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. We all know the famous story of when Jesus was asked, "Well, who's my neighbour?" and his answer was a deeply, deeply challenging answer. I note that Jesus makes the hero of

some of his most famous stories people of other faiths: a good Samaritan, a Syrophenician woman, a Roman centurion. This is deeply challenging to the way we often live and takes us way outside our comfort zone.

All I can say is this requires a much longer answer, but there is no avoiding the deeply challenging invitation to love our neighbour, and to have our understanding of neighbour expanded by the scandalous hospitality of God; the scandalous hospitality that we see in Jesus Christ. If we do not care about that as the Church of England, with our particular vocation to be the church for the whole nation, well, what is the point? We will just end up being congregationalist. I mean no disrespect to congregationalists. We will end up being a sect. I apologise, there is nothing wrong with a congregational church, but that is not what we are as the Church of England. We are the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, with a vocation to the nation. We have to face this one, but in facing it I think we will discover new things about ourselves, new things about the Gospel, and I think we will discover reservoirs of love that will overflow from within us to the world we serve.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Christian, do you want to chip in with something there?

Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam (York): I was just thinking there are some qualities that we might imagine a church leads in in society. We have heard them already: mercy and love and forgiveness. I think unity is one of those. The vision is not to catch up in diversity but is to embody a better example for society. I think we lag behind society at the moment and we should be grieved by that, but our ambition should be that when people look at the Church of England and churches in this nation, they see every group and every way in which we might be divided united through the Gospel in a local family. That is powerful in shining out the credibility of the Gospel to people who are finding faith.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Thank you, Christian. Just to say there are so many questions coming in and, obviously, we are not going to be able to cover them all, although we will definitely be taking note. I am trying to put questions together so that more of what is being said is represented.

Stephen, I think your phrase about the importance of priests has been heard by people. At least one Synod member was asking are we going to get to one priest, one parish, is that what you are aiming for? Secondly, and I do not want to make the question too long, you are also talking about the flourishing of the lay ministry. Could you comment on that mutuality of clergy and lay?

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): The Church of England did set itself a bold target some years ago to increase vocations to ordained ministry, and we have almost met that ambitious target. This year there will be the most ordinations in the Church of England for I do not know how many years but a very, very long time. Certainly in the diocese I used to serve we saw a huge increase in ordinations to lay and ministry. Again, I make no apology for calling in prayer for people to come forward to

serve the Church in particular ways. We need to find the right and appropriate sustainable patterns for what the future will look like. I think the models which are most likely to be the ones that bear fruit in dioceses' decisions are where there are teams of people working collaboratively and where the priest has a ministry of oversight, which has always been central to priestly ministry; the ministry which is yours and mine.

One of my understandings of ordained ministry is that the ordinal speaks about the priestly ministry of the whole people of God, and one of the main roles of a priest is to enable that priestly ministry to flourish in the whole people of God. I think if we get that right, we will stop seeing this as, in any way, one or the other. It is about the whole ministry of the whole people of God, of which ordained ministry is an important and vital part.

I know you are going to shut me up in a minute, Dave, and you may have one more question. I have also been whizzing down the chat, and I notice that somebody, I think it might have been Sam Margrave, asked whether we could have a special conference day on Synod to discuss all this to help develop the work. I just wanted to say I think that is a brilliant idea. That is a question for the Business Committee as they plan things in April or July, but I hope that it will be possible when we are meeting, as it were, properly, or differently, for us to be able to, not with passing motions and things, meet in smaller groups, as we have done over some issues, so we can share wisdom and develop these ideas.

Revd Canon Dave Male: I was going to ask you partly that question but I would like to take it one step further. You only have about a minute. I know that part of your desire for this is that it is not a top-down approach. What can people do at a parish level to think around the vision and strategy that you have been talking about today?

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Top down/bottom up, it is the work of the body. We are the body of Christ and every member has a part to play. The foot cannot say to the ankle, "We don't need you". We desperately need each other. I would say to parishes think of this vision, and the diagram is simple, as a series of questions. What might it mean for us to be more Christ centred? What might it mean if we placed a greater emphasis on discipleship? How diverse are we? Do we reflect the community we serve? Think of it as a series of questions to help refresh and direct your own thinking and strategic planning at the local level. Do not think of it as something that is imposed from above, because we do not have the power to impose it even if we wanted to. Think of it as an invitation to think more deeply about what kind of church God is calling us to become.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Sanjee, we have 30 seconds left, are there any last comments from you, and I will ask the same of Christian?

Dr Sanjee Perera: Because there are so many questions about the parish system, I wanted to add that in the shaping group we certainly have seen the parish system as a rich and sacred resource that releases us into a mixed ecology and not a cage that limits

our missiology. It is a part of our witness and our flourishing in the life of Christ. The vision and strategy process has been enriched by the theology of place as we witness, in my language, with the communion of saints.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Christian, any last words from you?

Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam (York): I would observe that for all of the dreadful challenges of Covid, it has also provided an opportunity to the Church. If we reflect on the story of the Church in the Book of Acts, so often great hardship, even persecution, even death and martyrdom, in God's good time open fresh doors for mission and for the Church to be bolder and more effective. I wonder if we are in one of those moments now, not to glorify any pain, of course, but to say will we look back in 10 years and see this as a transforming moment for the Church of England? I think we will.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Stephen, we will let you have the final sentence.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): I do not need it except to say, Synod, I am really, really grateful for your critical engagement with this. We still have a long way to go but I think we are asking the right questions.

Revd Canon Dave Male: Great, thank you, everyone.

The Chair: Thank you so much, everybody. Thank you to Archbishop Stephen, Christian, Sanjee, Dave, and to everyone who contributed in whatever way to that item.

Throughout the day we are going to be hearing a few stories of hope, and I am delighted now to be able to introduce the first of these, and to welcome Chernise Neo to join us to share her story. Chernise, over to you.

STORY OF HOPE AND SALVATION

Chernise Neo: Hello, everyone. It is really good to be here with you all. As Kate mentioned, my name is Chernise Neo, and I am the founder of Proof Bakery in Coventry. It is an artisan bakery which trains and employs refugee women. I have been asked here today to tell you the story of how the bakery came about and our pandemic experience.

I grew up in Singapore. Many of my family members are Chinese Buddhists, but my parents became Christians in the Charismatic revival of the 1970s in Singapore. When their children were born, we grew up attending church on Sundays. Filling in the childhood background, just before going to uni, I had a very powerful personal encounter with Jesus which made me want to live my life in a way that honoured him.

In 2006, I turned up at Warwick University in Coventry. I was there to study for an undergraduate degree and got stuck into my local parish church quite quickly. I joined in with a small group and made many friends there. After graduating, I was invited by my

church to stay on with a visa sponsored by the church as a student worker reaching out to international students, in particular. This was a very fruitful season in my life. I was spiritually formed by being part of this very missional, very vibrant church, full of other young people on fire for Jesus. I saw many international students come to faith and decide to continue to live out their faith when they went home. By and large, I felt incredibly welcome in this country and in my local community, welcome enough to start deciding that I might make the UK my long-term home.

However, in 2016, towards the end of my time as a student worker, there was a jarring incident that stuck out in my mind where my church was inspected by UK Visas and Immigration to ensure that we were complying with all the terms of my visa. I can still remember the official from UKVI coming and me having to gather up reams of paperwork, even Facebook posts and my Google calendar, to explain to this lady what I was doing in the country. I can remember the suspicion on her face, even after I had spoken with her for an hour, as she said, maybe trying to rattle me, "So you're not really a church worker, are you?" Thankfully, in the end, UKVI decided that my documents and my explanations did make sense, and they gave me and my church a clean bill of health to carry on.

At around the same time I was seeing lots of stories in the news of refugees trying to escape war, especially the Syrian conflict. This experience made me wonder if I, as someone who is legitimately in this country and speaks English as a first language, finds it difficult to navigate the immigration system, what would it feel like, for instance, for a traumatised Syrian woman. As I read more and more about refugee matters, I discovered that for some who come to Europe this is the hardest part of their whole journey, when you wish to make a new life here, to use your gifts and skills, to live with dignity, but are continually regarded with indifference or hostility.

I have been a keen home baker for many years. In December 2017, I was invited by a friend to teach a bread workshop to a group of refugees in a supported housing project in Coventry. I will never forget us showing each other our different techniques for shaping dough, and the delight on their faces when I pulled out my proving basket to show them. One woman, who hardly spoke any English at all, said something to her friend in Arabic, and it turned out she had had a similar proving basket back home in Syria. The revelation for me was that nearly all of these women were already excellent bakers. Many had been making bread with their mothers since childhood and all of them really, really wanted to work.

In autumn 2017, having piloted a bakery that trains and employs refugee women, we launched based at St Catherine's Church in Stoke Aldermoor on the east side of Coventry. We sold sourdough bread through weekly loaf subscriptions which were distributed to our supporters through partner churches in Coventry which acted as our bread collection points. Over time we gradually added a whole load more different baked goods. We trade with restaurants and cafes, catering for events and baking classes. Alongside our trading, we developed a baker training programme, using baking as a means to teach employability skills and food industry specific English vocabulary.

All was going well until Covid-19 and the first lockdown when all of our wholesale events and class income streams dried up overnight. With churches shut, we switched into doing home deliveries and we were really determined that none of our team of bakers would lose the jobs that they had worked so hard to attain. As an essential business, we also wanted to find ways to support people in need locally. We went into partnership with our local food bank asking if their visitors would welcome a bakery loaf and if our existing customers, who now could not collect their bread from a church, might be willing to donate their weekly loaf to the food bank. Many said yes, and over time funders have also contributed to this effort, so that our bakers, who started off finding their feet with us in a new city, in a new country, are now baking 500 loaves a week for distribution to households across Coventry through food banks, social supermarkets and loads of other feeding projects. Baking for the food bank is now likely to remain a permanent part of the bakery model in the post-Covid world.

Through the past year all of our team have been able to stay in their jobs. This means that since starting in 2018, 12 women have graduated from our training programmes, of whom nine are now in further education or work. Five of these work in the bakery, of whom three have just been employed from our most recent training cohort. The other two are bakers from our first training cohort. They are Syrian war widows with children. One is now our head of kitchen while the other teaches new trainees our recipes. She has also been able to go up two levels in her English, buy a car when she passed her driving test, and two summers ago this baker was able to take her children to visit her parents in Iraq, having not seen them for four years. Nearly all of our bakers are the sole breadwinners for their households.

We are now looking further afield, as, hopefully, the pandemic is on its gradual way out, to work with other churches across the country to replicate the bakery in other places where there are refugees in the area and the demand for delicious baked goods. If this might be of interest, we would welcome a conversation. You can email me at chernise@proofbakeryuk@gmail.com. If you, by any chance, are in Warwickshire or Coventry, we would love you to try some of our baked goods. You can do that by looking at our website, which is proofbakery.co.uk.

That is all I have to share today. Thank you very much for listening.

The Chair: Chernise, thank you so very much. That was such a wonderful story to hear, so inspiring and really fantastic. Thank you for all that you have shared. It sounds wonderful. I am already planning a Coventry trip at the end of the pandemic as soon as it is allowed. It is at the top of my list.

Synod, we are going to take a moment to pray for Chernise and for this project, for the bakery and the women we have heard of. We are going to do that simply by taking a moment of quiet together for our own prayers. Let us pray.

The Chair led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair: I am now going to invite William Nye to join us. William is going to explain our test vote.

VOTING TEST

William Nye (Secretary General): Thank you very much indeed, Kate, and thank you for taking us through the morning so well. Synod, I am sorry to be the person who is keeping you from your lunch, but please bear with us for just a few more minutes. We are going to do some test voting. You will remember at the November group of sessions there was an issue we had to work through with the Crystal Interactive platform we were using for formal votes of Synod. The platform recorded some duplicate votes so that some members were able to, inadvertently, vote twice. This did not have a material effect on any of the votes at the November group of sessions, but, clearly, we needed to put that right for groups of sessions in the future.

Since then, the team in Synod support and the team at Crystal Interactive have been doing a lot of work to try to fix this. I would like to say thank you to Meeta and Ed from Crystal who have been working hard with us to do this. We have done some internal tests with staff, but we thought that having so many of you here today would be a good opportunity to test it at scale while we are all working from home. We hope that we will be able to do this. We are going to run a test vote. We will not be giving you the results as to how it works in terms of Crystal Interactive's analysis of the data, because that will take a little longer, but it will be very valuable in preparing us for April.

To take you through this, as those of you will recall who attended the practice sections in November, I am pleased to hand over to Dylan Redding, who is going to do the votes themselves.

Dylan Redding: Good afternoon, Synod. As William has just outlined, we are going to carry out two test votes now. You will have received your voting details via email earlier this week, so if you can please log on to the voting platform, as you did during the November sessions with those details, you will be able to access the platform. The changes that have been made mean that if you log into the voting site from a different platform or device, you will be logged out elsewhere but you will remain logged in on the device that you are currently using. For instance, I am logged into the voting platform on my phone, but if I wanted to log in on my computer, it would log me out on my phone and I would just be logged in on my computer. Other than that, there are no changes your end. It is exactly the same process as before.

I will shortly launch the first vote with our partners at Crystal Interactive. The vote will last for 90 seconds and then I will announce the vote is closed and give you the numerical results of that, not a detailed breakdown but just the numerical results, and then I will work

with Crystal to launch the second vote after that. That will again last 90 seconds. If you have any issues please email support@crystalinteractive.net. I might ask one of my colleagues to put that in the chat if needs be. If you bear with me, I will get them to open the first vote.

(Voting test on Item 555)

Dylan Redding: Just while you are voting - we are about halfway through - I want to clarify that the item you are all voting on is Item 555. The vote is now closed. If you bear with me for two seconds and I will get the result of that. The results of that are: for 188, against 50 and 57 abstentions.

We are now going to vote on the motion for closure. Could Crystal Interactive please launch that? You will have 90 seconds again.

(Voting test on Motion for Closure)

Dylan Redding: Some people have mentioned on the chat they are able to vote more than once. That is part of the platform. You are able to change your vote during the voting period as often as you wish. I just wanted to mention that in case there was some concern over that.

I will now check the results and I will share them with you shortly. The results on that are: 239 for the motion, 41 against and 24 abstentions. Those are the two votes and we will see how they went. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, William, thank you, Dylan, and thank you, Synod, for engaging through this morning. We are now breaking for lunch. I would just remind you that there is the opportunity to join us on a Zoom meeting over lunch. If you would like to do that, you are very well welcome to, otherwise we will see you back here again at 2 o'clock.

THE CHAIR *Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 2.00 pm.

The Chair: Good afternoon and welcome back after your lunch break. I hope everybody has managed to get a little bit of exercise and that those who joined the Zoom meeting enjoyed it. It might be of interest to members to know that there were 370 attendees this morning, so we have a really good turnout of people engaging with business today. I have found it really interesting.

In that vein, we heard just before lunch one of our stories of hope, and we are going to have another of those stories now from the Revd Laura Leatherbarrow. Laura, we know you have been heavily involved in mental health work at parish level and it would be really good to hear from you about that work and about how Covid has changed what you are doing.

STORY OF HOPE AND SALVATION

Revd Laura Leatherbarrow: First and foremost, I would like to thank you for inviting me. It is a great privilege for me to be here with you today. Mental health for us was a big issue. When I came to the parish I was not expecting to work with mental health again. My area is an odd little area. It is almost like a gated community with a big country park around it. Poverty is not its main issue. There are great differences between people. There are people who are quite poverty stricken and there are others who are solicitors, nurses, healthcare workers, and that is a great deal of place. Place is family oriented with very few older people.

When we looked at mission, and what we could be doing in our parish, it turned out there had been a high incidence of suicide post Rhys Jones's death, which had been 10 years prior to when I came. It was a question of how we engaged with that. We began Place2Be. This was a mental health and wellbeing cafe which had mental health first aiders available, and would offer a free lunch, people to listen. There were also games you could play so people did not have to keep eye contact if that was uncomfortable. We had card making and we even had karaoke on occasion.

That was just getting established when Covid hit. When Covid came, it was how do we engage with this community and where were the needs, what were the needs. First and foremost, it was neighbourhood buddies and phone buddies for those who were isolating, ensuring that they had prescriptions and shopping, and all the usual things that people were doing and making sure that those who were struggling financially were supported. However, the main problem seemed to be mental health. Everybody was just struggling with lockdown, struggling with anxiety and struggling with depression. We ran the Covid-19 faith and conversation course by the people from Sanctuary. That started to open up some of the questions and allowed people to recognise that, actually, they were grieving. They were grieving for the loss of jobs, finance, people, even freedom to a degree.

We built on that and we ran the Sanctuary course itself, but we ran it a bit longer than the eight weeks because there is so much in it. That really challenged us about how we need to be engaging as a church within our community; being people of companionship who can walk with people and bring hospitality.

We started little things from that. We did pebbles of hope. We did great big signs outside the church in rainbow colours of hope: the main message that we have as Christians. We tried to be the hands and feet to the people in our community.

From there mindfulness began, and I now run mindfulness courses for children under 13, children 14 to 18, and adults, in three different sessions. That allows people to stop, notice what physiological and emotional issues they are struggling with, and just take time for themselves as part of that wellbeing journey. I also became a chaplain to the local GP practice. That was really important because we were supporting the very healthcare

people who were trying to care for us on the frontline. They also prescribed to us, to our pastoral care team, as social prescribers.

All that was going on and building, and now we are running the Wellbeing Journey. which is a course that focuses on how we as individuals can move our own mindsets, move ourselves emotionally, look at financial and relational issues, look at mental health, and improve our wellbeing along the way. That has had a real big engagement. Each group has grown and the last group has been really engaged. It has been really good to see, and to be helping people in that way.

We decided as a church that we would also try and open up our gardens to be allotments so that we could build little allotment beds for people so that we could allow people to get out in the outside. We know in mental health 10 minutes in nature can actually bring down your blood pressure. We wanted to move with that, work with that and try to engage people who were struggling with mental health in that way. We are in the middle of that big build at the moment.

There are lots of little things going on continually to try to support the parish. This weekend we have love letters going out. These are letters saying, "We know this is hard, we know this is difficult, but you are not alone: we are here", and on the back of the letter are some of the resources we doing. It goes with a little chocolate bar. They are being delivered out to the Croxteth Park Estate. It is constant little things with the bigger things in the background.

The Chair: I guess you are looking forward to being able to open a Place2Be again when we are allowed to have people meeting together.

Revd Laura Leatherbarrow: Yes. It was a real challenge getting a Place2Be to run, to be honest. It was not like an older parish. It was a young people's parish, where everyone was out at work except the people with the very need that we were trying to meet. That was a struggle to begin with, to get those volunteers to be able to run it. That will be the same again, no doubt, because people are furloughed and they are very good at the moment at going, "I'll help, I'll help, I'll help", but, of course, as people go back to work it will be how we run that safely and well.

The Chair: Are you finding that this is giving the people in the community a new sense of togetherness and belonging to one another, as well as improving their general mental health?

Revd Laura Leatherbarrow: Absolutely. I think we as a church have a real challenge now, a real opportunity to be able to engage with social health and mental health. Mental health was an issue for one in four of us. Now it is everyone. The next pandemic will be mental health. Our young people are struggling. Our older people are struggling. Our families are struggling. It affects everyone, so in having those resources we have been able to engage with people who would never engage with the church normally.

We are Christ's hands and feet. We are doing this in Christ's love, with a message of hope. It is that community, that companionship, that good listening that helps so much. A GP can give someone 10 minutes and refer them to cognitive behaviour or counselling. We can give them the time that they need and signpost. We are not counsellors. We are not there to diagnose. We are there to walk with people. I think more and more people in the parish are beginning to feel that sense of community and in this togetherness, which we are.

The Chair: That is really encouraging, and very much ties in with the messages that we heard this morning as part of the presentations we had then. Thank you very much indeed, Laura.

We would just like to a few moments now where I would invite Synod members to pray for the work that you are doing in your parish and to reflect on what they might be able to contribute in their own contexts.

The Chair led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair: Thank you so much. It has been great to see you this afternoon.

Revd Laura Leatherbarrow: If I were to say anything to anyone, I would say just give it a go. You would be surprised what a cup of tea and a chat, even on Zoom, can do. God bless everyone.

The Chair: Thank you, Laura. From that, we are going to move on now to look at the safeguarding item and I will be inviting Bishop Jonathan Gibbs to introduce it. During this item, there will be a ten minute screen break and that will be an opportunity for the panellists to go through the chat, gather the questions and to agree some responses and enable us to get as many of those questions answered as possible. I would invite Bishop Jonathan Gibbs to introduce this item.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): Synod members, you will have in front of you, hopefully now, yes, a shared screen and we will be taking you through some slides and I will introduce the other members of the panel who will be speaking a bit later on. Good afternoon.

This afternoon's safeguarding presentation has two main aspects. First, it will provide an overview of the Church of England's response to the Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (or IICSA), which was published last October. Secondly, it will outline plans for setting up an Independent Safeguarding Board as a first step towards bringing a greater degree of independent oversight of safeguarding across the Church of England, as endorsed by the Archbishops' Council on Thursday this week.

By way of introduction, I think it is worth remembering where we have come from over the last few years. The IICSA hearings into the Church of England in 2018 and 2019 were deeply shocking and the subsequent reports hammered home the message about the way the Church has failed victims and supervisors and the consequent need for repentance and change at all levels of the Church's life.

In order to bring about the kind of profound change that is required, it is essential that we should put in place a carefully planned and well-organised set of measures that will ensure lasting cultural and systemic transformation throughout the Church of England. Quick fixes may earn some early headlines but, in the end, they just will not cut it. What you are going to hear today relates to some of the main aspects of the work that is being led by the National Safeguarding Team (NST), but it does not represent the whole range of what needs to be undertaken.

We are focusing today specifically on the response to the IICSA Report. This has a particular significance just now because the Church of England is required to make its formal response to the IICSA Report in March, six months after its publication. There are other important areas of work which we will not be covering today, including some of those which have attracted the interest and questions of Synod members, such as the operation of core groups which is currently under review. Do not worry, we will be returning to these at a future date.

The other big ticket item that you will hear about today concerns the proposals approved by the Archbishops' Council this week for establishing an Independent Safeguarding Board as part of moving towards creating greater independent oversight of safeguarding in the Church.

Here, I want to pay tribute to Malcolm Brown who took on this work in January following the commitment of the Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops in December to the principle of greater independence. Malcolm has consulted widely, including most importantly with survivor representatives, and worked very effectively, enabling this paper to be brought to Synod members shortly after it was approved electronically by the Archbishops' Council on Thursday.

We need to be clear that this builds on but goes beyond IICSA's specific recommendations. It will be an important step towards addressing the concern that the Church of England should not mark its own homework in regard to safeguarding and that there should be an appropriate degree of independent accountability in our safeguarding structures and systems.

Synod, the underlying reason for this change is that we need to rebuild trust, trust among the wider community and trust, above all, among victims and survivors. Malcolm Brown will go into much more detail in his presentation, but please remember that what we are talking about today is only a first phase in this process and the crucial thing is that this

must and will be done in consultation and co-operation with survivors and with all other key stakeholders across the Church.

Synod, this is holy work in which we are engaged, the work of protecting the weak and the vulnerable, the work of ensuring safety and justice for all God's children and of promoting the wellbeing and flourishing of every human being made in the image of God. Safeguarding is not an inconvenient add-on to the life of the Church. It is integral to the Gospel of Christ, alongside issues of racial justice, diversity and inclusion, poverty and social exclusion and the provision of decent housing for all. This is about our commitment to enabling every human being to experience the overflowing love of God in Jesus Christ and to discover the abundant life that Jesus wills for us all.

We are now going to turn to the detail of the presentation itself, which will be shared between Zena Marshall, the Interim National Director of Safeguarding; Malcolm Brown, the Director of Mission and Public Affairs, and me. If you would like to ask any questions about the presentation, this can be done through the chat function, as some of you are doing already. We will be collating the questions during a ten minute screen break after the presentation and then answering as many of them as we can during the last part of this session.

Could we move now to slide 2, thank you. Slide 2 is entitled A Programme for Change, and this slide lists the main elements in this Programme for Change that we will be talking about today. As I said a few moments ago, we have to adopt a careful and systematic approach to this work if it is to bring about lasting and effective change. The NST is engaged in a thorough review of all aspects of the Church's safeguarding work and there is a great deal to be done, bearing in mind that only just over six years ago the Church of England nationally had only one part-time safeguarding staff member. It is vital that we should develop a co-ordinated approach to this work, including and, most importantly, through engagement with survivors but also through engagement with dioceses and also through them with the parishes.

Slide 3, please. The IICSA Report made recommendations for the Church of England under six main headings. We will be saying more about the details in a few moments, but what we are seeking to do is to develop a joined-up approach to these recommendations so that they support one another and change both the culture and the processes of the Church. This must begin with listening to and working with stakeholders at every level, beginning with our engagement with survivors and their increasing involvement in shaping what we do and how we do it.

It will also mean engaging more closely with dioceses and parishes so that policy and practice are worked out in co-operation and in ways that mesh with the realities of Church life in hugely varied contexts. Synod, I know we have not always got these things right and we are committed to doing it better. Now I will hand over to Zena for the next few slides.

Ms Zena Marshall: Survivor engagement is integral to the ongoing safeguarding work and Programme for Change. We continue to be grateful for the commitment of victims and survivors for working with us to improve safeguarding in the Church. Thank you to all those who have given their time and expertise and I am aware that this is not without personal cost and demand on their time. For that, we are grateful.

Nationally, our engagement work continues with the Survivors' Reference Group, Survivors' Voices and other individuals on a range of work streams, including policy development, the Past Cases Review, Safe Spaces and the Interim Support Scheme. Victims and survivors have also been part of a number of recruitment panels for key appointments within the National Safeguarding Team. We remain committed to developing and expanding our work in this area. We know we have more to do.

We will shortly be starting recruitment for a key post to develop a survivor engagement framework with victims and survivors. This framework will provide a more co-ordinated approach as well as providing a range of ways in which we can work with victims and survivors on a much wider scale.

Slide 5, please. The Safe Spaces service delivered by Victim Support has been live for nearly five months. The service provides advocacy, support and signposting to victims and survivors of Church related abuse. This is a free and independent support service for anyone who has experienced abuse in relation to the Church of England, the Church in Wales or the Catholic Church of England and Wales. This service has been jointly funded by the Archbishops' Council, the Catholic Church and the All Churches Trust.

Next slide, please. Recent figures provided by Victim Support show that Safe Spaces has supported 95 cases, directly working with and supporting victims and survivors with 60 active ongoing cases. It is still early days, but initial feedback from those who have used the service has been positive. A new company, Safe Spaces England and Wales, has been formed by the Archbishops' Council and the Catholic Church to govern the contract with Victim Support for this two year pilot. The directors of this company oversee the contract supported by the Safe Spaces Advisory Committee.

Four victims or survivor representatives have now been appointed to the Advisory Committee and are making valuable contributions to the oversight of the contract. We are grateful for the knowledge and experience they bring to this important work. An independent company has been commissioned to evaluate the service over the two years of the pilot. The independent company will be speaking with victims and survivors who have used the service and those who have chosen not to access the service to understand any barriers.

The evaluation will produce a final report that will be published. We recognise this is a new service and we look forward to how we continue to learn and enhance this where necessary. I will hand you back to Bishop Jonathan for slide 7.

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): We now come on to the area of safeguarding learning, or what used to be called safeguarding training. Synod, the change of name is significant because this is about moving away from focusing largely on process, knowing what to do when something happens, to engaging people's values and beliefs. This is essential if we are to address IICSA's demand for culture change in the life of the Church.

This will involve more work and it will require a deeper level of engagement and reflection in order to help promote the development of safe and healthy culture, because this is about a learning journey not just a requirement fulfilled. As some of you will already know, there is to be a Virtual Leadership Safeguarding Pathway for Clergy, appropriate to those who lead churches and who have an impact on the culture of a church community, as well as a Senior Leadership Pathway for leadership teams in dioceses and cathedrals.

Slide 8, please. Policy development. Now I know that, at the moment, it can feel as though a consultation on a revised policy is landing in our dioceses' in-boxes almost every week. We are now seeking to provide a clear timetable so that dioceses know what is coming, but the reality is that we are currently having to update a whole range of the Church's safeguarding policies. We have introduced a prior stage of sense-checking policies with a representative focus group before they are sent out for wider consultation and the new draft policies on responding to victims and survivors of abuse and Learning Lessons Case Reviews have received very helpful feedback.

There will, inevitably, be issues with the implementation of some policies, but the NST is committed to working with dioceses to address any concerns and to find ways of moving forward together. Tools like the Safeguarding E-manual currently under development will provide improved access to policy guidance.

Slide 9, please, quality assurance. One of IICSA's recommendations was that the work of diocesan safeguarding teams should be quality assured by the NST. This is about ensuring consistency of good practice in safeguarding across the whole of the Church of England, firstly, by establishing national safeguarding standards, which will be consulted on shortly, and, secondly, by developing a quality assurance framework to monitor how those standards are being implemented locally.

This is a model that is widely used in the charity sector and that combines local responsibility with external accountability. At the same time, the NST is beginning a pilot regional model of working and it is likely that the quality assurance framework will be tested alongside this pilot. Now back to Zena for the next two slides.

Ms Zena Marshall: Synod, you voted in February last year in support of a Redress Scheme. This service will develop national proposals for redress within the Church, including financial compensation, support for rebuilding lives, emotional wellbeing support and apologies. As we develop the Redress Scheme, we intend to keep the needs of the survivors and victims at the centre of the scheme by avoiding strict legal process and

principle wherever possible. We need to make this as simple and as accessible as we can. This is felt to be important by those inside the Church and representatives of survivors and victims.

Next slide, please. I am pleased to report that the Redress Scheme manager started in post in January of this year. The manager brings a wealth of experience to the role that will assist him in developing and delivering the Redress Scheme. The project plans are in their early stages and there is still much work to do, including survivor and victim engagement and consultation with wider stakeholders and how the full Redress Scheme will complement and build on the Interim Support Scheme. We will be reporting to the Archbishops' Council in six months on a full proposal for the Redress Scheme with timelines for delivery.

I am pleased to report the Interim Support Scheme has been developing since late summer and actively dealing with cases and applications since October 2020. Since the scheme's launch, 13 survivor cases have been progressed, providing much needed emergency support. We recognise the scheme is still learning and developing and we are committed to reviewing and developing the scheme further to ensure that we get help to those who need it. I will now hand you over to Malcolm Brown.

Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Brown: Thank you very much, Zena. Members of Synod, you may wonder why the Director of Mission and Public Affairs is speaking to you on questions of safeguarding. The simple answer is that since March last year all staff in Church House have just mucked in to do whatever needed doing and this one fell to me. Bishop Jonathan has already spoken to some extent about the background to this proposal and this paper.

The question that many may be asking is why is this so urgent. I think you will realise from the paper that there are many questions concerning the independent element that we need within our safeguarding structures, which will take a considerable amount of time, first, to assess in terms of the benefit and how they would work, and to put in place. If we wait until we have got the answers to all the questions, we will be answering those questions ourselves and there will be no independent element until they are answered.

I hope you will agree that that also in its way constitutes marking our own homework, as it has been put at various points. Instead, the proposal in front of you here, which the Archbishops' Council has accepted and is about to begin the implementation process, is for a phased approach which brings an independent element, which we have called an Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB), which brings that into place as the first step and not the culmination of a long series of discussions.

That means that our Independent Safeguarding Board will be there to accompany us as the much more vexed and long-term questions are thrashed out within the Church. In other words, the independent voice will be on our backs in a good way, I hope, but also as a critical friend or simply as a critic, to enable us to come up with answers to difficult

questions about the role of independence that we should not be answering ourselves because of the conscious or unconscious tendency to answer questions in ways that continue to serve the culture of the institution.

You will see, of course, from all those previous conversations about safeguarding and the culture of the Church why that is so important. You will see again that many of the questions which are already coming up in the chat are questions that will arise in phase 2 in dialogue with the Independent Safeguarding Board. The proposal here is that we simply cannot delay any longer having that independent accompaniment to our work.

I have got the next slide. Phase 1, and still on a very ambitious timescale. Unless we do this on an ambitious timescale, the tendency to drag our feet, I suspect, will be very hard to resist. So a three person Independent Safeguarding Board, at least to start with; a chairperson with the overview; a survivor and victim's advocate - it would be rather odd I think to say in a job description that you have to have been abused to apply for this job but, nonetheless, someone with personal experience here would be extraordinarily well-equipped to take that role; and a third member who will complement the other two, so I think the appointment will be sequenced to ensure that we get complementarity in all sorts of respects, including representativeness, but a third member whose primary role will be leading on the handling of complaints. We are looking for a small but complementary and diverse Independent Safeguarding Board.

Can we have the next slide, please? Thank you. The remit starts with those things which we know we are not doing well now and which we can immediately put in the hands of an independent board, the professional supervision of the Director of the National Safeguarding Team and, hence, of the work of the Team itself. This is professional supervision. You will see from the paper that I have tried to unpack in that paper the really difficult question of management.

The parallel is very clear, I think, with professionals in so many fields. Look at legal advice, we cannot tell our Legal Office what advice they must give us. We should not be able to tell our Safeguarding Team what professional advice and guidance they should be giving us. We should be listening to them. But giving that professional supervision role to the Independent Safeguarding Board is about securing their professional autonomy whilst continuing, at least for now, to recognise that it is probably better to keep the National Safeguarding Team within the structures of the National Church Institutions, quite simply because of the other dilemma that I wrote about in the paper, which is if you put this work too distant from the Church and its culture then it lacks the traction to make a difference.

If you put it too close, it gets sucked into the culture and does not make a difference for that reason. We have constantly to acknowledge the difficulty of getting the proximity right. For now, it seems right that the first step should be to introduce that independent element to introduce independent and professional guidance and supervision and to examine in the future whether we actually need our Safeguarding Team to be wholly

independent itself in the sense of being an independent charity or foundation, as some other churches around the world have done it. But to get to that step will take time and there is no time to wait until then before we introduce any independence at all.

The new Independent Safeguarding Board will have an executive function on those things, as I say, where it is clear we have to do it right now. So casework passed up to the independent board from the National Safeguarding Team which needs that input, responding to complaints about maladministration of cases and procedures, determining how the Church should respond to victims, survivors and, indeed, all those others who are caught up and harmed by safeguarding failures, and ensuring the involvement of victims and survivors in the development of future policy.

That last point I have stressed throughout the paper because the focus group of survivors and victims who worked with me on this were very clear that consulting about something that is already a done deal is not real consultation. We did not have time in this process to begin with the consultation before we did any drafting, and we can do better than this. I have talked about it as a co-production model and I am hopeful that this will be how the Independent Safeguarding Board and the rest of us work together with victims, survivors and other groups who are vulnerable or who have been harmed.

Next slide, please. On other matters which must remain within the remit of the Church of England to be responsible for, the Independent Safeguarding Board will have an advisory function, again in phase 1 while many of these things are reviewed as to their longer term structure and relationships. So, in terms of policies, codes of practice, other measures about creating and sustaining that culture change which we have all said we want, future development of training programmes, recognising that a vast amount of work is already going on in that field but it needs to be made more coherent, and staff appointments and development. So a mixture of a supervising role, an executive role and an advisory role.

Could I have the next slide, please. Phase 2. The ISB in phase 2 will be there, as I said, as a critical friend or just as a critic, if that is necessary, to accompany us to introduce an independent capacity on complex issues such as a separate independent charity or foundation, which I mentioned earlier, the difficult question of introducing the diocesan structures into an independent form of oversight. Diocesan structures were raised specifically by IICSA. Dioceses feel strongly about this and they do not agree.

The structure which will be most cost-effective and deliver the objectives best is not entirely clear at this stage. It must be a priority for phase 2 to enable that shift which IICSA called for from being diocesan safeguarding advisers to diocesan safeguarding officers with authority. What we have achieved I think in phase 1 is to have a chain so that, through the NST to the Independent Safeguarding Board, diocesan safeguarding officers have a source of support and professional validation, not in a formal sense of validation but the back-up to their professional decisions, but that needs to be taken much further in phase 2.

A question has been raised throughout this process of whether the ISB itself requires the back-up of an ombudsman or ombudsperson to handle questions of complaint against the ISB. We attempted to draft that into the proposal but it was pushed back on quite strongly, not least from survivors and victims who said, "Please don't introduce additional layers that will make it more complicated and long-winded for us to get satisfaction". I have listened to that, but the question remains and I think it must be gone into more deeply in phase 2. And further work which requires an independent element.

I note a number of the questions arising are about "what if" questions or "have you thought about" questions and this is really going to be important that the ISB is allowed and encouraged to work with us to question how independence works in ways in which we have not yet foreseen. Introducing an independent element has a considerable number of known unknowns and also an even greater number of unknown unknowns. We have to work these things through on the ground and it is right, I believe, that the independent board is there from the beginning and not only when we have dealt with those questions ourselves.

I think, finally, there is one more slide, is that correct? Thank you very much. This has come out of the commitment of the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops to not only do the letter of the IICSA recommendations, but to reflect very carefully on how we go completely along with IICSA and beyond IICSA to make sure our safeguarding structures are as strong and as robust as they possibly can be.

Consultation has been the key. Before any work was committed to paper in this project, I talked with a huge number of stakeholders or representatives of stakeholders. I want to thank especially the focus group of victims and survivors. I do not know who they are apart from the person who convened them. They kept their anonymity so that their comments and criticisms of our early thoughts could be absolutely robust without any sense of compromise. They did a superb job against the clock and their comments were hugely constructive and thoughtful. We are looking for clear responsibility and clear accountability. That is, of course, always a work in progress when you introduce a new element into a complex structure and something as complex and diffuse as the Church of England.

Again, I reiterate the objective of this plan is that we get the independent element in first and make longer term and more complex decisions with them and not before them. This is the first step. Much work remains to be done. I commend to you the paper that you have received. I thank the Archbishops' Council, in particular, for signing it off under considerable pressure, but they did have about a week to read it as did the House of Bishops.

We have had a long, consultative process where they were able to put their questions and they have been addressed as far as is possible. There have been a lot of fingerprints on this. I take responsibility for the paper, but I also want to thank all those who have

been part of that most interesting and really very penetrating and thoughtful process that I have been privileged to be part of.

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): Malcolm, thank you very much indeed. Thank you to you and to Zena. I think Malcolm was rather doing himself down when he talked about staff at Church House mucking in. I would say that Malcolm is absolutely the right person to bring his considerable expertise to this, not least coming out of all the work he is doing also with the governance stream at the moment and so, Malcolm, thank you very much for your paper and for that presentation today. We are now going to take a ten minute screen break during which we will be going through the 50 plus questions that have come in. We will try and group them together and respond at least to the main themes coming out of that. But let us take a break now and we will be with you again in ten minutes.

The Chair: We are back up and running. Thank you.

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): Synod, thank you very much. Thank you for all those questions. There were well over 50 of them and we can now end the screen sharing if that is preferable. I want to make it clear that we have done our best to collate responses to them and we will be dealing with them thematically. I am going to respond first.

First, we are going to answer questions that relate to this afternoon's presentation. We are well aware there were lots of other questions coming in that were not germane to this afternoon's presentation. We are not underestimating the importance of those but we are not dealing with them today. A couple of practical questions. First, it has been asked if we can share the slides and we are very happy to circulate those to Synod members after today. There was also a question about sharing the independence document itself. It is already on the Church of England website and available publicly, so please feel free to share that.

The other thing I want to stress is we are talking about how we take things forward from here, but we are also very much acknowledging and want to affirm the excellent work that is going on across the dioceses and parishes of the Church of England. We are enormously grateful for all that has gone on, recognising the huge journey of change that people have been on already and the excellent work that has been done both in dioceses and in parishes as well.

The other area I have been asked to comment on is with regard to funding for this process. Having talked that through with William Nye, the questions about the funding of this work will be going to the co-ordinating group which brings together the National Church Institutions, the dioceses and the Church Commissioners, et cetera. We are well aware of the current financial pressures which all dioceses are facing and those questions will be seriously taken into the process.

In terms of the future also, of course, there will be further opportunities for debate and discussion on all of these issues, as Malcolm has made clear in his presentation, at future and “normal” groups of sessions of General Synod. I am going to hand over now to Malcolm who is going to answer some of the questions which come into his remit.

Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Brown: Thank you very much, Bishop Jonathan, and thank you for the questions. One questioner asked me to just think again about the phrase that said “this one landed with me”. The fact is I offered my services in fear and trembling. You asked for that to be put on the record and I hope that sounds okay. Another phrase in the paper that someone was not entirely happy with - and I can see why - is the line about bishops having a “line of defence”.

The point here is I think that we have a lot of anxiety about safeguarding in different places and, whilst the Bishops’ own anxieties about their role - one might say it is their job just to get over it and face the fact that as leaders they will be in vulnerable positions - nonetheless, they were concerned that their legal obligation and responsibility could be undermined by an Independent Safeguarding Board if they had to adopt its advice. The point, surely, is that if they have advice from an independent board and choose not to take it, they have to come up with a jolly good case why they are not taking it. It still is their legal responsibility but if they say, “I was advised professionally”, that is a defence surely stronger than just saying, “I thought it would be good to”. So that is what that phrase is intended to mean and, as I say, it was part of a consultation with survivors and victims as well who were, I think, comfortable with that, or at least did not object to it.

A question was asked early on in the chat, will this ISB be a public body subject to legal review and so on. It really rather depends on how the first question in phase 2 is addressed about whether and for how long we want to keep the phase 1 ISB in place. If the decision were made with the ISB members to move quickly to another structure, or indeed to a public body structure, that could happen, but it would be quite a lot to put it in place only to unpick it because we want to go in a different direction fairly soon. I think that is a question that needs to remain open but not for very long.

Another question was about independent legal support. The ISB will have access to the Church’s Legal Office, but it can commission legal advice from wherever it likes, and so that is one thing that has been considered within the budgeting for this.

A lot of questions were about consultation. Some of them were, as it were, backward looking, saying, “Did you consult?” Well, you have heard a lot about the consultation. There were many others, including - which I have not mentioned in the paper or verbally - other churches which have faced this question: our Roman Catholic colleagues and other Anglican provinces in these islands.

Other questions were about, “Will you consult?” and that I think falls within the part of the paper which speaks of co-production or co-creation of decisions on future areas of work. You can define stakeholders in many many ways but, when we look very closely at who

is involved, who has a stake in things, I think you will see that on some questions it broadens out considerably.

A question was raised about whether we had considered the Ecclesiastical Law Society's recent paper. The answer is, no, the timing did not work like that, but that relates almost entirely to potential phase 2 questions. I come back again to the fact that the purpose of this piece of work was to get some independent element in quickly so that we were not making decisions that amounted to marking our own homework. There were some useful comments - I think they were more comments than questions - on the culture and clericalism and so on.

I just draw attention to the fact that the section of the paper on culture change is explicitly not comprehensive. There are many other aspects of culture. Those are just four or five examples of what culture change might look like. Some people have asked is there going to be a flow diagram. I can only say that has been suggested but my own capacities in that direction are not great. I do not think very visually. As those of you who have heard me speak endlessly know, I am a verbal person. I am sure someone else with a more visual, diagrammatic mind could do that quite straightforwardly. We have not had time to do it yet.

Is the Independent Safeguarding Board large enough to be resilient? That question has arisen a number of times. Others have asked, is it actually too big? Not too big in terms of numbers, but is there actually enough work for them for the time we have given them? So that has been pulled in both directions. I will only say that, having taken HR advice on where we setting up the number of hours and personnel in an appropriate way to manage the remit, the answer was, "Well, it is a very hard question but it looks about right to start with". Again, that is a question that may need revision and revisiting but we are starting in a place where we feel this is about right for now.

A very specific question about the legal authority of the Archbishops' Council. We understand - or I understand anyway, not being an expert in this - very clearly that the Archbishops' Council has trustee responsibility for national level safeguarding work. They, therefore, must be the body that makes this decision. Synod is having this shared with them.

When this was first put on my desk, the remit was to have something to announce at Synod, not something to debate at Synod, but if you look very carefully at phase 2 you will see many questions where issues for dioceses are drawn into the picture and that, I think, is the obvious place where synodical consultation and possibly decision-making need to be built into the structure. I think that is about all that fell to me but my colleagues may advise me otherwise.

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): Thanks very much, Malcolm. I will turn to Zena.

Ms Zena Marshall: Yes, there were a couple of questions about the Redress Scheme taking time to deliver. Yes, we absolutely recognise it is a year since Synod agreed to a Redress Scheme but it is important that we get this right. We now have someone dedicated to deliver the Redress Scheme and I am confident that this will be progressed in a timely manner and we will report back to Synod in six months in terms of the progress that we have made. The Interim Support Scheme continues to be available for victims and survivors that are in need of emergency support in the interim period.

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs): Zena thank you very much indeed. Well, as you will have seen, Synod, that was a canter through our best efforts at bringing out the main themes from the many many questions that you had asked. I am sure many of you will want to engage further with questions and, as has already been said, if you have got specific issues you want to raise with us, you are very welcome to write in, to email.

This, today, is a presentation to Synod. The intention has been to give you as much information as we can about where we have got to both with regard to our response to the IICSA Report and also towards independence in safeguarding. There will be times, as Malcolm has said already - very soon no doubt - when we will be returning to Synod with a further discussion and debate and questions about where we are going with this, in particular as we move forward beyond phase 1 with regard to independence, in particular, of course, with how those questions engage with the dioceses and the parishes.

The purpose of today has been to give you as much information as we can, as quickly as we can, about where we are going. The response to IICSA will be formalised and finalised by the Archbishops' Council in the next few weeks. It has to be submitted to IICSA by 22 March. That will be very much in line with what you have been hearing today.

May I thank everybody who has been involved in the presentation today. Can I thank especially my colleagues for all that they have done leading up to today. Can I thank all of you for all that you are doing, for the seriousness with which you take the whole work of the Church's safeguarding in our parishes and in our dioceses, and to say that we look forward very much to co-operating with you to build on what you have heard today and to make it work across the whole breadth of the Church. Thank you for all the questions that you have raised, for your engagement with today's presentation and I would like now to hand back to Maggie as Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed, Bishop Jonathan, and the panel members. That has been, I think, very useful time that we have spent. We are going to move now to hear another of our stories of hope. This one comes from a different angle again and we are going to hear from the Revd Tosin Oladipo, who I believe will be on screen in a moment, I hope.

Revd Tosin Oladipo: Hi.

The Chair: That is great. Lovely to see you, Tosin. So do talk to us and tell us a bit about your context, your parish and what you have been doing and how Covid has changed and helped that to develop.

STORY OF HOPE AND SALVATION

Revd Tosin Oladipo: Thank you, Maggie, and hi everyone. I think it is good for the nerves not to be able to see every face and so I am grateful for that. As Maggie said, my name is Tosin. I am a third year curate at Hackney Church. Hackney Church has been a resource church since 2017. It is also part of a partnership between the Dioceses of London and Chelmsford and Bishop Joanne of Stepney and Bishop Peter of Barking have been instrumental in setting that up alongside our rector, Revd Al Gordon, and we have a vision to bring hope to the people of East London.

We are a church in five locations: St John-at-Hackney; St Luke's, Homerton; St Mary's, Leyton, and, since the autumn, also All Saints, West Ham, and St Leonard's, Shoreditch. So five churches in three boroughs across two dioceses. The three boroughs that we are in - yes, a lot going on there - also happen to be three of the areas of the highest gentrification and also the highest deprivation in the country. You will note that, for those on the margins, it means that anything that changes in terms of the economy, in terms of Government policy or even in terms of the weather to some extent, has a disproportionately high impact on those in need.

The pandemic has, of course, been a cataclysmic change. It has been huge and the impact and the effect of it has been massive. I wanted to tell you a little bit about what has been happening within our churches and in our community. I think I will start with the punchline, and the reason I am probably here to speak to you, which is that in the 12 months leading up to the pandemic we distributed through our Lighthouse Project, which is our work with the vulnerable, 5,000 meals. In the last 12 months, since the pandemic hit and we went into lockdown, that number has gone from 5,000 to over 250,000 meals distributed across East London to the marginalised.

That is the story. I suppose I could stop there, but I wanted to say a little bit about the story behind the story, if you like, because it has been a huge shift for us in terms of what we do. There are just a few things I wanted to speak to and those are worship, invitation and vision. Those are the three things that I believe have enabled us to do this. If I start with worship and I think the key with worship is that acts of worship flow into acts of service. When we gather and we receive the love of God and we share the love of our God in our church community, we then go out to love and serve the Lord, to love our neighbours and to serve them, and this is the story for us.

The first thing we did when lockdown happened was to work out how we were going to enable worship to continue. Before we did any other distribution of food or anything else, we made sure that we had an online presence and that every tradition in our Church was

represented. We created booklets for people who were not yet able to get online at that time so that they could worship at home with liturgy or written reflection, hymns and readings.

Then, through that, we were able to go to the community and say that the church is still very much open. The doors might not be open but we are still a worshipping community and we are here to help and, from that, we began to be able to serve people. People could email us or call us and we created a list of people to call and to help with deliveries, with prescriptions, with just phone calls so that they were not isolated. Out of worship came service. Worship is really key and it is what has sustained us throughout this entire period.

The second thing is invitation and I think invitation leads to mobilisation. We needed a lot of people to be able to do this, but invitation and mobilisation to my mind are, essentially, very similar in that all we are doing is asking people to join in with us as we join in with what God's doing. We have been able to invite people to our online services. We have seen the church grow in lockdown. We now have 1,500 plus people tuning in every week to our online church services. We have also run Alpha and lots of people have joined the church through that.

I want to just tell you a little story of someone called Charbolina, who is remarkable. Charbolina, before the pandemic, had no connection to the Church but started to ask, as they say, the big questions and so got in touch with an old friend from school who is part of our church and they invited Charbolina to Alpha. Through Alpha, she came to faith and decided to join the church and, having joined the church, decided also to apply for a little intern programme that we have for people under the age of 25. She applied and she is now part of that programme. She has gone from no connection to the church to being steeped in what the church is doing and is still actively inviting her friends and she will tell you that this has been a process of healing and of receiving the grace and love of God and it has been transformational in her life.

We have lots of stories like that through Alpha. We have had over 250 people involved in Alpha just in the lockdown alone. So invitation is absolutely key. We have also invited lots of people to come and help do this work. We have invited over 200 people, 40% to 50% of whom have no connection with the church other than they are helping to pack parcels, make deliveries and reach out to people who are in need at this time. We are inviting people to come along and that has enabled us to mobilise the strength that we need to make this happen.

The third thing I want to talk about is vision. I will just use the phrase I have written down, "Vision leads to provision". I was struck thinking about this that, at the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus says to his disciples, "You give the people something to eat. You give them something to eat". We were confronted at the start of lockdown, and as we saw the numbers start to double and treble and people showing up at The Lighthouse, that we could either say we have capacity and knowledge and experience of delivering 5,000

meals and those are our two fishes and loaves, if you like, or we could do what Jesus did in that moment, which is to realign the vision with what God can do.

As we have stepped up and said let us not trust what we are able to do and trust what God might be able to do, we have been met in incredible ways with great provision, not just in terms of people, which we have talked about, but also support from donors. Love your Neighbour and the Church Revitalisation Trust have been absolutely instrumental in helping us to do this in funding our work and encouraging us and so we are really grateful for that.

Over Christmas, we were part of the Love Christmas campaign, which I know many of you took part in and we were able to distribute 5,000 boxes of mini-hampers across East London and the impact of that is still being felt. We are still receiving thank yous and invitations to participate and partner with others as a result of that. Vision, we align our vision to what God can do and that has been a real learning for us in this season and we continue to learn.

I want to finish really by saying that the numbers might sound big - and, really, in the scheme of things they are not that large because so much has been done across the country and across churches and we know we are just playing a tiny little part in all of that - but the reason that we talk about the numbers is because behind those numbers are people and, actually, we want to see people's lives impacted and changed, whether that is from participating and being involved or being a recipient of help and support.

I want to tell you quickly the story of a lady called Tracey. It is not her real name. We met Tracey just recently at All Saints, West Ham, where she came to The Lighthouse and she told us her story. She had been living in a sort of broken down garage and sleeping in an electrical cupboard and because she is dependent or addicted to heroin she sort of missed out on everything that the Government was providing at this time. She had been supported by friends and handouts from strangers and somebody told her that we had opened up at All Saints. She turns up and she receives not just a parcel of food, but just a good conversation and encouragement to go and explore the services that are available to her and, through that, she was able to get help.

A fortnight later, when she came back, she did not come just to receive a parcel of food. She came back to say thank you because she was now living in a bedsit. She had got out of the cupboard. She was now on a drug recovery programme and starting to make her way off drugs with support and medical help and she now had a place to come to where she would receive a parcel of food and sort of spiritual nourishment and encouragement too.

That is really why we do this. For us as a church, we believe that as part of the Church of England this is our mandate. This is our mission in the parish and in the areas in which we serve and as the people of God this is our heart to share the love of God in word and in deed. The reason we were able to do that, in a sense, is just by being the Church and

so it is not anything particularly special, but it is through being the Church that we have been able to do this. I hope that encourages you. That is our story and thank you so much for having me and for listening.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much for what you have shared with us. It is so good to hear these different things that places are doing, the things that are appropriate to their particular local context. Thank you very much for sharing that. I would just like to invite Synod now in a time of quiet to just pray for Tosin, for the people that he is serving and the people he is working alongside and for all those in our country who are finding life difficult who may be suffering from addiction maybe wondering where their next meal is going to come from

The Chair led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair: Thank you very much and our best wishes go with you in your ministry as you continue with the working with people in Hackney.

Revd Tosin Oladipo: Thank you so much.

The Chair: We have now reached the point where we have our scheduled screen break. We are due to resume at 3.45, so please come back promptly and we will then move on to the consideration of our next item on our agenda. Stretch your legs and have a cup of tea and we will see you soon.

The Chair: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome back from that short break. We are going to move now to the Housing Commission item and I would like to begin by inviting the Archbishop of Canterbury who will introduce and take us into this item.

ARCHBISHOPS' COMMISSION ON HOUSING

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby): Good afternoon, everybody. Of the areas of national challenge faced by our country as we reimagine it post-Covid, and as we reimagine it in the midst of the massive and rapid change from culture, science and technology, as the Church we have a deep responsibility in this country. we are particularly connected in a number of areas but three I am going to mention now very briefly.

Safeguarding we have talked about how we can not only be a safe Church but a place of safety for every person in this land. In schools and higher education, where we are one of the largest educators in the country. Now we turn to housing and land. We are a huge property owner through the Church Commissioners, the dioceses, the glebe, charities and parishes - one of the largest in the country when you put everything together. God has given us these resources so that they may be used in the mission of the Church. They are God's resources for God's people for the people God loves.

The Commission arises, at Malcolm Brown's suggestion, out of a book that I wrote about three years ago called *Reimagining Britain*. In the course of that, there was a chapter on housing because the Church's interest in housing goes back over a thousand years. The Commission was set up to follow that up. What we have here is one of the most important reports to come out of the Church since *Faith in the City*.

The Report is not the end of the process. It is only the end of the very beginning of the process. We have a long way to go. We have a housing crisis with eight million people in substandard homes. We have more children vulnerable in substandard housing than when Ken Loach produced *Cathy Come Home*. That is not the least of it. There are many more things you could say. The housing crisis is not just one of availability. It is not even one of availability. It is one of affordability.

This Report is a radical, theologically profound challenge to Government, individual builders, developers, individuals and the Church of England in all its different forms. You will hear about its different challenges, about its theological basis, its five S's, which are the vision for good housing. We have one for good health, that the NHS should provide good quality healthcare free at the point of need. There is nothing similar for housing. As the Report says, we have to add two to those five: sacrifice and strategy. This is what the Synod motion will accept when it comes subsequently.

I want to end very briefly in thanking the Commissioners. They were put together as an incredibly diverse group with very different views. I want to thank, much against his will - he has asked me not to today - the Chair of the Commission, Charlie Arbuthnot. Malcolm Brown described to me that his Chairmanship was absolutely extraordinary. He has led a brilliant process of challenging and managed disagreement with challenge groups.

I want to thank those who are in the next stage. Bishop David Walker, who has led on housing for so long and is such an expert. Bishop Guli, and the other Bishops supporting her. I want to thank, strangely, the Prince of Wales, who has allowed Nick Pollock, the Chief Executive of the Duchy of Cornwall, to be seconded part-time to us to help us. And the Diocese of Gloucester, as with other dioceses, but particularly Gloucester which has put money into this in great support for it and I will hand over for the main Report.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you, Archbishop Justin. I want to, if I may, begin by saying what an enormous privilege it is for me to have been appointed as the new Bishop of Housing, a role that I will be taking up this summer. I am very conscious that some of my fellow bishops have been closely involved in housing issues for many years and that others of you on Synod will have extensive experience in this field, some of you through your parish ministry and others through your professional work.

I am looking forward to working alongside you and the new executive team that has been set up to take this important work forward as we seek to make what could be a real difference to our nation. The Commission has spent nearly two years developing a broad

range of actions and recommendations to tackle the housing crisis, starting with what the Church of England can do with its own land and resources but also looking at what Government and others can do.

One of the key messages from the *Coming Home* Report is that the Church of England needs to lead by example. In July, subject to confirmation from the Business Committee, we are hoping to bring a motion for debate to General Synod. If passed, this motion will endorse the key recommendations from the Commission's Report, including the fundamental principle that meeting housing need and strengthening communities is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Church of England.

The motion also seeks to approve a number of specific recommendations for the Church nationally and locally. You can find the wording of the draft motion in the Commission's full Report. The purpose of today is to give the Commission an opportunity to present to you the key findings from the Report. We have about 40 minutes together which we will split evenly between the presentation and questions. Please do use the chat button at the bottom of your screen and we will endeavour to address as many of your questions as possible.

Now I am delighted to be joined by four members of the Commission. The Right Revd Graham Tomlin is the Bishop of Kensington and he is the Vice-Chair of the Commission. Bishop Graham will start by presenting the theological framework underpinning all of the Commission's work. Mr Charlie Arbuthnot, who chaired the Commission, is a former adviser to housing associations and he will be talking about what the Church can do at national and diocesan level.

The Revd Lynne Cullens is the Rector of Stockport and Brinnington and also Vice-Chair of the National Estates Church Network. She has led the Commission's work on equipping churches to respond to local housing need. Finally, Mr David Orr, who is the former head of the National Housing Federation and is here to present the Commission's recommendations for Government and others. We have asked them to give you a very brief overview of the Report, no longer than four minutes each, in order to allow as much time as possible for the Q&A. Without further ado, Bishop Graham, can I hand over to you, please, for a summary of the theological framework.

The Bishop of Kensington (Rt Revd Graham Tomlin): Thanks, Bishop Guli, for your introduction. Good afternoon, everyone. One of the key questions we asked ourselves at the beginning of this Commission was how do we bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the realm of housing? We have sought to read the Scriptures and the Christian story and listen to the voices of those in housing need on many study visits we did over the time of the Commission.

Maybe a starting point for this is that one way of seeing the story of the Bible is it is a story about home and about land. It is a story about a home that is given to us as the human race and all life, a home which is a beautiful planet. Then, it is the story of our

rejection of the hospitality that we are offered and becoming homeless: as in the fall, we are cast out of the garden. But it is then the story of a long way back, of a welcome back into the presence of God. It is a place where God makes his home with us in Revelation 21.

Throughout that story, land and shelter and home are key themes. In that story, there are actually five key moments: creation, fall, redemption, the coming of a church and the new creation. What we sought to do is to map housing onto that story which has given us five key values.

The first comes from the doctrine of creation. Housing that resonates with God's creation that works with the grain of that creation will not do damage to it or consume it and, therefore, it will be sustainable if it is to echo the goodness of creation.

Secondly, the doctrine of the fall. We now live in a broken world and, left to its own devices, the way the world and human society works will always tend towards injustice, inequality and suffering. We see that in the Old Testament where housing is concentrated into a few hands where there is poverty and there is danger, especially for the poor, and it leads, of course, to exile. We need to ensure that housing is properly safe, safe from destruction, from unwanted intrusion, damage and danger.

The third moment of the story is redemption, the long story from the calling of Abraham through to the coming of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection and then the coming of the Holy Spirit. At the heart of that story is incarnation, the Lord coming to dwell among us where God, if you like, puts down roots among us. God in Jesus Christ has a home in Nazareth, in Capernaum and in Bethany. Housing that reflects this part of the story will be stable, which will enable people to put down roots to stay as long as they wish, to commit to communities because we invest in communities where we will stay for a long time.

The fourth moment of the story is the birth of the Church at Pentecost, this new community with the old barriers broken down. Again, housing that reflects this part of the story will create community. It will be properly sociable. It will be housing where you can invite your neighbours in and exercise hospitality. It will create mutual communal space in housing developments that will bring people together.

Then, finally, the last moment of the story is the new creation, the new Jerusalem where God makes his home with us which, of course, is depicted to us as a place of staggering beauty, this garden city with light and jewels and rivers and gold and colour. Housing that reflects this part of the story will be deeply satisfying. We will long to come home to it. It will bring delight and joy. It will give people a taste of the heavenly home that beckons us.

So there we have our five values. Good housing will be sustainable, it will be safe, it will be stable, it will be sociable and it will be satisfying. It is interesting that the other source

of our theological work, the voices of those in housing need, echoed exactly those same points because their experience of housing was so often that it was unsafe, it was unstable, it was unsatisfying and so on.

It is for us how we tell the story of the Gospel in the bricks and mortar of the houses that we build, how we give people a taste of the home that God invites us to, which is why the title of this Report is *Coming Home*. This gives us a picture of what good looks like. As Archbishop Justin has said, that is largely lacking in wider debates on housing. It is a vision that is rooted in Christian theology but is recognisable by those who do not necessarily share that.

You do not have to buy into the theological framework to adopt it. It is a standard that others can adopt as well. It gives us a key area for witness and missional contribution, an opportunity for us to enact social justice but also to bear witness to the Gospel in the very way that we build our homes and use our land.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you very much indeed, Graham. Charlie, we come to you next, please.

Mr Charlie Arbuthnot: Certainly. Thank you, Bishop Guli, very much. Thank you, Bishop Graham, very much as well for unpacking profound theology in a way that people like me can understand and relate to. I really appreciate that. Thank you, Archbishop Justin, for that absurdly overgenerous commendation at the beginning. I hope I can live up to it in the next three and three-quarter minutes that I have left.

Graham has outlined our five values. We have then needed to ask in the Report, in light of that what should the Church do, how do we align with these five values? Lynne and I will address that. And then what can others do, which David will address.

But, first, maybe two quick opening points. The Commission sees housing as an issue of social justice. The tragic outcomes of Covid have shown us that that is the case. It is not a “nice to have”, it is a moral imperative.

Second, the gratitude that has been poured out to Archbishop Justin in the press and in social media, with people saying, “Archbishop, thank you for raising your voice; thank you for flagging our concerns; thank you for speaking of our pain”, tells me that we have a window of opportunity or, to quote from Archbishop Stephen’s presentation this morning, a door of hope to lead by example and to encourage others to follow.

So what could the Church do? The Church Commissioners own 6,000 acres of land which will deliver around 30,000 homes. The current plan is for around 9,000 to be affordable. But, given the level of the crisis, eight million people in unsatisfactory homes in our nation, and given the crisis is not just one of availability but one of affordability, we have asked how could the Church Commissioners go over and above the local authority required minimum affordable housing? Could they, for instance, give land - give land - at

historic cost to others on which to build truly affordable housing? The 6,000 acres makes up around 3% of their total assets. That feels like a viable option.

Secondly, we ask whether the mission and ministry of the Church is better served by saving money for the future or, possibly, more simple, more humble, more bold, by leading a national response to a national crisis now. At diocesan level, we have aimed simply to enable, to resource and to empower dioceses to steward the land they have, around 100,000 acres, really well. We have done this in response to issues raised up and down the country as we have talked with dioceses and parishes.

Three key areas. We have created a central resource. Many have said to us there is a skills shortage, there is a finance shortage and there is a time shortage. We are thrilled that Bishop Guli and other Bishops around her are championing housing as a missional activity. We are thrilled that we have an executive team and an advisory board supporting them, so there is a central resource for dioceses. We are not going to tell people what to do. We are offering, should people need help and support, to provide that.

Second, for the first time ever we have mapped all the land, through Knight Frank, owned in any of the various guises of the Church of England across all the dioceses. This is to enable dioceses to steward resources really well. Two really important points here. We are not setting everybody up for a fire sale of assets. It is about stewarding assets well and stewarding them missionally, to know what they are and to decide how best to use them. We are not making that publicly available because the purpose of the map is not to empower developers to bully dioceses to do things they do not think they should do and so it will be made available to diocesan secretaries and password protected.

Thirdly, there is a frustrating constraint, or an apparent or perceived constraint, in charity law. There is a perception, and it is not clear, in my view, as to whether churches have to maximise upfront cash or not. Unfortunately, because the perception is that we do, it results in the community being short-changed and the reputation of the Church being damaged.

We are, therefore, recommending that a new Church Measure is introduced to make it absolutely clear that dioceses and PCCs can sell land at less than full value when they are doing so for community benefit and specifically for affordable housing. With dioceses, we are aiming, we hope, to have removed the constraints so we can steward our resources very well and, at parish level, many exciting things, for which I will hand over to Lynne.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you very much indeed, Charlie, and can I just take the opportunity to thank you personally for your support over the last few weeks and your patience in bringing me up to speed. But, Lynne, over to you, for your contribution.

Revd Lynne Cullens: Thank you, Bishop. I am going to talk for the next few minutes around how we have sought to enable, resource and equip parishes to meet local housing need. We have been really blessed over the last two years to have worked with a really wide range of housing experts, specialists and providers and one of those has been the housing charity, Housing Justice. We are really delighted that Housing Justice are hosting all the Commission resources that have been produced for use by and within local churches and I think you have the link to those resources in your paperwork. So what do those resources look like? Well, they fall into three categories.

First of all, there are housing based Bible study guides which we are presenting for local churches to use to prayerfully discern and consider what God might be calling that church to within that context in terms of meeting local housing need. Secondly, we have a bank of case studies, over 40 case studies. Charlie was asked the other day when is the local church going to get going on meeting local housing need and, quite rightly, he responded, "It is already well underway". Those 40 case studies are a real celebration of what is happening up and down the country already. We have churches repurposing church halls; we have churches providing housing advice surgeries; we have churches developing land in partnership - a whole range and spectrum of approaches.

The third category of resource that we have on the Housing Justice website falls into two parts. First, we have development guidance that has been specifically written for the local church context and we also have 20 "How to" guides, how to engage missionally in areas of new housing. An ask from the local church and community stream today would be, please, click on that link; please, have a look at the resources; and, please, within whatever roles you have and wherever you are, can you share and disseminate those with local churches and local parishes. That would be absolutely wonderful.

I just wanted to add a comment from me as a parish vicar to those of us who may also be parish vicars. I am very well aware how busy parish life is. I am very well aware we do not particularly need to go out looking for new things to do. What I wanted to add was, what I always say to the folk in my parish is remember God calls us to what we can and not what we cannot. These resources actually just give a really broad range of what we can do in our parishes and I think every parish can do something.

We could have somebody sitting on a residents' group to help amplify local voices. We could have somebody writing to lobby for more affordable housing within the Local Plan process, for instance. Somebody made a great comment that said, "This chapter of the Report is an invitation to the local church to act as catalyst for social change in our neighbourhoods". Is that not a wonderful line? I absolutely loved that.

Some of us are called to great things but most of us are called to do small things in great love. We are working with one church who are building a single unit of accommodation for somebody within their congregation who has lived with issues of addiction for many years, has come through rehabilitation and now requires local supported housing and the church are going to provide that themselves.

That is wonderful. That is a really strong example of responding to human need with loving service, proclaiming Christ in our communities and preaching the Gospel in bricks and mortar, as the Report has it. So, please do click on the link; please, do share the resources, and thanks very much for listening.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you very much, Lynne. That is really excellent, thank you. David, finally, to you for your contribution.

Mr David Orr: Thank you very much and thanks, everyone, for inviting me to be part of this presentation today at the end of a process with the Commission which has been fascinating and enlightening in equal measure. This Report is called *Coming Home: Tackling the Housing Crisis Together*. It has been at the centre of the thinking of the Commission that we need to engage everyone in what has become a huge challenge, a challenge that has not been properly focused on and invested in for decades now.

We are in this position not because of some very short-term thinking in the last few years but because a long-term problem requires long-term engagement and collective thinking which we have not had. That is why we have argued so strongly in the Report that, at the centre of the role of Government in this regard - and Government has a big role to play in terms of how land is used, in terms of having money available, helping with capital investment - the fundamental challenge to Government is to give us a long-term housing strategy, something that is explicit about the objectives, perhaps about decarbonising our existing homes, about the proportion of new affordable homes that we need, something that drives change not just over the 12 months but over the next 20 years because it is that kind of timescale that we need to be able to deliver.

We need no more short-term initiatives like Starter Homes, which used up a whole lot of energy but delivered absolutely nothing - seriously, not a single thing. We have to have long-term, coherent objectives that all of us can get behind and work together for the benefit of the nation. It is completely clear that we are presently leaving the poorest in our communities behind. It has been made even more clear by Covid-19 that many of us who seek sanctuary in our homes are actually having to shield in places that are not safe because they are cold, because they are damp, because they are physically unsafe and, yet, that is where we are having to spend all of our time.

We need this focus on a long-term strategy to change that. We know that the welfare system is now no longer fit for its own objectives or fit for its own purpose in terms of housing, which is why we have recommended that there should be a root and branch review of how that is operating and why we need to see a bit more direct public investment in new homes. If we can marry that new investment in new homes with land that is available at less than the full open market value with residential planning consent, then we really can drive a huge change in the supply of genuinely affordable homes and we can do that quickly.

We need to rebalance the power relationship between landlords and tenants, which is why we are proposing a new tenancy agreement in the private sector with an explicit duty of care imposed on the landlord in respect of the tenant with mechanisms for complaints and redress when these complaints are not properly met. It is why, if we are ever to have homes that are properly safe, we need rapid action to deal with the absolutely shaming crisis that the cladding that caused that horrible tragedy at Grenfell is still, three and a half years later, on too many of our properties and too many of our homes.

But, fundamentally, this is a shared national endeavour if we are to make the long-term change that is needed. We, all of us, have to engage. We are asking the Church to make land available at less than full value. We are asking that to be an act of national leadership. We are asking Government and other landowners to do the same, to put social value at least on the same level as straight financial benefit.

I believe that you in the Church have an opportunity here to play a critical leadership role to set an example to the rest of the nation, not just to be telling others what to do but to say, “We are doing this. We invite others to join us in this huge endeavour”. That role will depend to a huge extent on how you use your people and your land and property resources to set that example.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you very much, David, and thank you to all of you. Panel, we have relatively little time left for questions, so if I could encourage you to offer as brief an answer as you are able. I am going to pose the questions to individual panel members, if that is okay. Charlie, I am going to start with you and this is a question about the pressure on diocesan and, indeed, national Church budgets and finances and this is the question.

The mandate of “best value” imposed on charitable organisations makes this vision of housing difficult to deliver without addressing effects on diocesan balance sheets and national Church investment institutions. Is the Church prepared to sacrifice best value returns which has knock-on effects, for example, to pensions to see more social housing built on Church land?

Mr Charlie Arbuthnot: That is a really important point about pensions. We are absolutely not suggesting that we damage pensions at all. The Church Commissioners runs £8.7 billion of assets. It needs £1.6 billion to cover all the pensions they run. Other pensions are run in the Church of England Pension Fund. So, no, we are not suggesting any of that. What we are calling for is a review.

We are not saying that this has to change and you have got to do this. We are saying, “Is it time to have a rethink? There is a national crisis, let us rethink this”. There are other priorities alongside, we recognise that. But we do have to think about how 6,000 acres of land are used missionally and, at the moment, what is happening is driving best value is damaging the mission of the Church and we need to recognise that, I think, to be really blunt. So we do have to address this.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you, Charlie. David, I think I will come to you next, if I may, with this question. The questioner says: "There are many references in the Report to truly affordable housing. There is also a great need for inalienable social housing for rent which cannot be sold. Has consideration been given to that?"

Mr David Orr: It has, to both of those questions. The Government has been using a definition of affordability which is really a discount to market rents. It tells you absolutely nothing about affordability because market rents do not really tell you anything about affordability. We have argued in the Report that any measure of affordability has to be a relationship between the price of the good and your income and that, to deliver homes that are genuinely affordable, people have to be able to afford to live in them and for far too many people that is not the case.

The Report also argues that any public investment or even, I suggest, anything that comes from selling land at less than its apparent full market value should be seen as a subsidy that needs to be made available in perpetuity. So, yes, if we are going to invest in new homes for affordable rent, those homes should be kept as affordable rent homes in perpetuity and not see that subsidy value, that generous public investment, turned into a private good and a huge benefit to an individual who happens to be in the right place at the right time.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you very much indeed, David. There are a number of questions that have come in along a similar line which deal with kind of cross-cutting themes. Archbishop Justin, I wonder whether you would be willing to respond to this one. The questioner says: "In the light of one of the key factors underlying the housing crisis being the break-up of parents or the nuclear family, which means that each family straddles two homes rather than one, should we not also be looking to the long-term and intentionally working with Government to invest in marriage, relationships and parenting courses?"

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Right Hon Justin Welby): Of course, we should. It is absolutely correct and please watch this space.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you very much, short and sweet. Lynne, I am going to come to you with this one, a fairly short question. "Is the work of the Commission also picking up the existing work of the Church's Homeless Task Force? What is the connection between the two?"

Revd Lynne Cullens: Yes, very much so. There is a real overlap between those two areas of work, naturally. Bishop Guli, you have been in touch with Housing Justice this week around the fact that the National Audit Office has recently said the Government's homelessness strategy needs updating in the light of the pandemic. The MHCLG want to move from intervention crisis need models over to preventative models which we have

tried to have sight of in this Report. So, yes, very much so, we will be working in tandem as we go forward with homelessness interventions and focusing more though on the preventative element.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Charlie, I think I will come back to you with this one. This is a question about land and if it is sold at less than the market value. “How are we going to ensure that others do not make use of this to increase their profits? Also, how will the Church ensure that property is managed in a socially just way?”

Mr Charlie Arbuthnot: Fantastic questions and I think what we would be saying is we are not talking about selling land, we are talking about stewarding land. I think we would encourage dioceses to hold onto their land, to develop it out but stay as the landlord of the land for absolutely those reasons. I would also say that Bishop Graham has developed five wonderful core values. Let us decide that whenever we appoint any contractor to do anything, they need to sign up to those values so that we know that there is a level of integrity there.

Another point I would suggest is let us make use of the faith covenants set out by the APPG on Faith and Society which sets a fantastic framework for relational health in dealing with faith groups and contractors and councils. So there are lots of safeguards there, absolutely really important points which we need to get right.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Bishop Graham, I am going to draw you in now. This is a question on many people’s minds, I think, about the ongoing crisis around questions to do with cladding. Does anyone have a simple answer as to why the renewal of cladding is not paid for by architects, builders, suppliers or possibly planners instead of owners and tenants?

The Bishop of Kensington (Rt Revd Graham Tomlin): The cladding issue, in one sense you could say it is a complex one and in another way you could say it is quite a simple one. Clearly, as in the Grenfell Inquiry, there is lots of buck passing going on in the cladding question. One of the things that we have said in the Commission is that we feel that the strongest moral case is that the leaseholder should be protected because they are the innocent party in this. They bought their flats or their houses in good faith and they should not be passed on the costs of remediation. Therefore, we have argued that the burden of the costs should go back to the developers not the taxpayer.

There may be a short-term need for the Government to step in to cover the costs to enable the remediation to be done but, in the long-term, the Government needs to work out a way to ensure that the original developer, where possible, should be made responsible. Sometimes, the developers may have gone out of business and, clearly, we do not want developers to go out of business either. That is, obviously, something that needs to be borne in mind at the same time. That does not help anyone if we do not have developers to develop new housing.

It is a complex area, but I think at the end of the day there is a simple moral case here which is that leaseholders should be protected and that is what we have been arguing and which the House of Lords have been arguing too.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): David, can I come back to you, please, with this question. “How can homes provided on land sold at reduced cash prices by churches and charities be protected from the right to buy?”

Mr David Orr: Well, actually, the statutory right to buy is only available to people who live in homes that are produced by local authorities. There are other mechanisms but the voluntary right to buy, for example, in the housing association sector means that the discount that the tenant receives is paid for by Government, so the organisation retains the whole value of that asset and is then able to reuse it.

But, truthfully, the sensible answer is to get rid of the right to buy. We have a real shortage of good quality, affordable social rented homes and the sale of that without replacing it means that we lose access to people who are in acute housing need to genuinely affordable homes. I think the right to buy is a policy measure that has played its time out. That is a matter for Government. It is a matter for a long-term housing strategy.

The commitment needs to be that any public investment by the Church or anyone else is a genuine subsidy should be retained for that purpose in perpetuity. To whomever it is going, as the stewards of those resources, whether that is the board of a housing association or a community land trust or a parish or whoever, that obligation has to remain with those people to take that responsibility in perpetuity.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Charlie, I think this may well be the last question and if you want to tag on any final comments you have and then, if we have time, I will offer 30 seconds for each of the other panellists to do the same before handing back to the Archbishop. This is a question about politicians, really. “Is there any sign that the challenge to Government and opposition parties will be taken up?”

Mr Charlie Arbuthnot: Very much my question too, thank you. Yes, we have had some great discussions with the opposition parties and I am actually very positive indeed. We really want to work with the incumbent Government as well. If you look at the Secretary of State, he is very much more focused on building well than possibly previous Secretaries have been. There is much more talk about building communities, Danny Kruger writing for Boris Johnson, “Levelling Up Our Communities”.

There is a much greater communities sort of more holistic approach that is beginning to be taken on board by the current Government. Yes, with Labour and Liberal Democrats, we have just had some terrific conversations but, actually, yes, I think there is a real possible connection here. I think the other thing I would say to that is the number of endorsements of what we have said that have specifically focused on the fact that now is

the time for a national strategy indicates to me there is a mood to bring a change that is widespread and so I am excited and positive and upbeat.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you, Charlie. Let us hope that you are right. Very briefly, please, the other panellists. It is literally a sentence each, if you would like to say anything. Lynne, do you have any final comments?

Revd Lynne Cullens: I would just urge please have a look at the resources. Please share the resources. I mentioned before that comment about this could be a catalyst for social change across neighbourhoods across the country and it really could if we all do in our own context what suits our context and what we feel called to do. I will just finish with that, Bishop.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): And Bishop Graham.

The Bishop of Kensington (Rt Revd Graham Tomlin): I think at the heart of this Report is a real spiritual challenge for the Church as to whether we really believe Jesus when he says, "Give and it will be given to you". He says that and it asks us whether we are really only interested in the survival of our institution or whether we really believe that the Church will thrive when it gives itself riskily to the mission that God gives us to bear witness to the Kingdom of God.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani): Thank you very much indeed, Graham. I am afraid we have run out of time and my apologies that we have not been able to answer many of the questions that have come through. We will, of course, look at them. I invite you to keep an eye on the website which provides further information, can keep you updated and there are resources on there too. For now, I think all that remains for me is to thank our four panellists and everyone who has been working behind the scenes as well and to hand back to the Archbishop for his closing remarks. Archbishop Justin.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Most Revd & Right Hon Justin Welby): Thank you very much indeed. I will be extremely to the point. I want to echo what Graham has just said. At the heart of the Church's message is that our mission to the country is that we carry the good news of a God who intervenes, who comes and is part of our life and there is the complete change in us that is caused by meeting with God. If we take that seriously and we listen to what Jesus says when he says, "Your heart will be where your treasure is", is our treasure where it should be?

I think this Report constitutes the most wonderful challenge to the soul of the Church of England and it calls us to rise to the challenge that God sets before us. It has huge difficulties. My other comment is please read the Report. I echo what Lynne has said: use the resources. They are really good and the Report is a real page turner. Thank you

very much indeed for listening and thank you again to the fantastic panellists and to the Commission.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Archbishop Justin, and the panellists. That was very interesting and an area where I am sure we actually can engage goodwill way beyond the Church in tackling this issue.

I am going to move now to the next of our stories of hope, our final story of hope for the day, of the presented ones - I hope we all find stories of hope as we live out our lives. Revd Andy Dovey is here, I hope. He is going to be giving us a different perspective than the stories we have heard so far and talking about endurance and a particular area of work he has been involved in. Are you there, Andy?

Revd Andy Dovey: Yes, I am, yes, I am here.

The Chair: Oh, fabulous, great, lovely to see you. If you would like to share with us about what you have been doing. It is interesting and very different to the other things that we have heard and it would be good to hear from you.

STORY OF HOPE AND SALVATION

Revd Andy Dovey: Well, I am Revd Andy Dovey. I am ordained and a healthcare chaplain in the Diocese of Southwark. I am the lead chaplain for Croydon Health Services, which includes not only a hospital but it includes two hospitals as well as 15 community hubs, district teams for adults and children as well. To ensure that I am working within the community as well as the hospital, I am also a member of Faiths Together in Croydon and Churches Together in Croydon.

Covid has been a very big stretch for us and I think it has taken us in the healthcare industry into areas that we never expected to be. As a multi-faith and multi-cultural borough, a key thing for us in this pandemic has been to work with all of our faith communities.

There are two examples I have got that I would like to share with you. The first is the fact that we closed down the hospital to visitors and to all members of faith communities. This put an extremely high demand on us as a team. In examples that we had - and I will give you one particular day - I was called to ITU where there were three people who were dying of Covid and were expected to die within the next hour and a half. My visit there started with a video Zoom call to the first member of the family so that they could say their final goodbyes to their relative and then listen to the final prayers that I gave. That was to one of our Jewish members of the community.

We then moved on to the next bed which was somebody of Muslim faith with a family that was absolutely desperate for him to have the final Muslim rights of prayers before he died. This was done with me holding an iPhone next to the patient's ears so that the Imam

could recite the prayers over the phone to him with the family on Zoom listening and watching. We said goodbye to the Imam after the prayers were said and stayed with the family for 20 minutes, at which point the family decided that they could not wait any longer and it was too agonising for them. They asked me to stay with him and hold his hand till he died, which I did, and 40 minutes later we were arranging the death certificate so that his family could register the death on Saturday morning and continue with his funeral in accordance with Muslim tradition within 24 hours.

After that one, it was to move on to yet another bed. This was a repeated occurrence in our hospital that was the third worst hit hospital for Covid patients in the country. We are coming out of wave 2 now and it has not been that different for wave 2. The other key aspects that we have done is to link up with Faiths Together in Croydon and Churches Together in Croydon, both Bishop Christopher who has been a fantastic support and Bishop Jonathan as well, to identify people in the community who were over 80 years old so that we could make sure that they were on our register to get the vaccine as quickly as possible.

I am pleased to say that we started off with 50 people and, by the time all the community had worked together to identify those people, we had actually got up to 50 to 100 people per day emailing me with details for people over 80 years old. In the end, we had about 1,500 people come into our Trust that were over 80 to have the first of the vaccines and we got commended very greatly by the hospital itself.

I think it is true to say that probably somebody is thinking how do we sustain ourselves. I could tell you it is in my daily prayers and in my prayers to God, but you would expect me to give you that answer, but I have to say Bishop Christopher and Bishop Jonathan have been a fantastic support and we could not have done it without them nor all of our staff who actually looked after us as clergy. I would walk around the hospital and they would ask me, "Father, how are you?" My answer would be, "I am okay". And their response is the same as mine, "No, stop, how are you really?"

I cannot tell you how many times we were in tears. But this is my calling. God has called me to this and that is what sustains me more than anything. My humanity, suffering with those who pass away and the tears of the families, the things that are part of our life and people see that agony in us and I think it brings them comfort. To be the very presence of God at the bedside as people pass by and people die is just an unbelievable ministry that I think we can all be proud of.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed. That is a very moving and very appropriate point for us to pause and to pray for you and for all those who are ministering in our health services, all those who are with those people supporting families at that time of desperate need. I would invite us all to just keep silence for a while and to pray. Pray for those who are watching and waiting and pray for those who are holding the hands of people who otherwise would be alone. Pray for those who are praying by bedsides.

The Chair led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed, Andy, and blessings on your work as you continue in ministry.

Revd Andy Dovey: Thank you for inviting me. It has been very much appreciated. God bless to you all.

The Chair: Before Chris Newlands delivers our final worship for today, I would like to invite the Archbishop of York to say a few words and then to hand over to Chris. So, Archbishop.

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Thank you very much, Maggie. I do not know whether Andy is still on the call but, Andy, thank you so much for that extremely moving testimony to the work you are doing. I think the stories of hope and salvation that we have heard through the day have been such a blessing and enriched our day together and so demonstrated the good stuff that is going on in our Church day by day.

FAREWELL

The Archbishop of York (Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): It is fitting, really, now to give a farewell to a parish priest, somebody who is in the frontline of ministry. Although this is not a formal sitting of Synod, I did want to record my profound thanks and our thanks to Chris Newlands for whom this is his last meeting of the General Synod and, therefore, as Prolocutor of the Convocation of York. Although I am still relatively new in post, Chris, I want you to know how grateful I am and how grateful the clergy and the people of the Northern Province and the Church of England are for the way that you have represented us and for your goodness and your wisdom.

Of course, being Prolocutor opens up a whole new world of possibilities, including being a member of the Archbishops' Council. I know colleagues on that body have valued your wisdom, your attentiveness and your dedication to the Council's work through all the different things that we deal with. On the occasions that you have been chairing meetings, you have always guided us superbly well, ensuring that all voices and all opinions are heard and, where needed, you have challenged us, but always with generosity, dignity, gentleness and determination.

Chris, the wisdom and the spirit that you have brought to your role in the national Church is that of a parish priest and a pastor and that has been so valuable, enabling the voice and experience of ministry on the frontline to shape policy and procedure in the life of the Church in all its central bodies and networks. This has been a huge blessing. I simply note in passing that, of course, your time as chaplain to my predecessor in Chelmsford will have prepared you well both for parish but also for national ministry.

Chris, Lancaster Priory, of course, more than anywhere else, has been hugely blessed by your ministry. They are going to miss you but, Chris, we are going to miss you too. Thank you so much for the giving of yourself in the life of our Church. As you move forward in your life to new chapters and new opportunities, please be assured of our love and affection for you and our continuing prayers.

It is not even a Zoom, it is a webinar, so I do not know how we show our appreciation but I am clapping here in York and I am sure your brothers and sisters across the Synod are joining me. God bless you, Chris. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Archbishop. Chris, I can see people putting claps into the chat and I would like to invite you now to lead us in our closing worship and I echo that applause.

Revd Canon Chris Newlands (Blackburn): Thank you very much, Maggie, and thank you Archbishop Stephen for those very generous words. I am most, most touched. I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead you in prayer.

WORSHIP

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chris.

QUESTIONS

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

1. *Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In answer to a question (Q.23) from me in November 2020, Dr Jamie Harrison, answering on behalf of the Presidents, stated: "all complaints considered by core groups, and those brought under the CDM, are confidential." Please state where, in a Measure, Rules, Code of Practice or otherwise, the authority for this statement can be found.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The House of Bishops' Practice Guidance: Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers lists "setting and maintaining boundaries of information sharing and confidentiality" as one of the responsibilities of a core group (1.6.2). It refers (at 3.92) to confidentiality being required, and states that advice should be sought from the diocesan registrar and the DSA on what can be shared and with whom. The Clergy Discipline Measure (s.18(3)) and Rules (r.40) generally require tribunal hearings to take place in private. The Clergy Discipline Commission has issued statutory guidance (available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/clergy-discipline/code-practice-and-other-guidance>) stating that while

proceedings are under way they should be confidential (subject to limited exceptions relating to suspension and media attention). The statutory guidance states that penalties that are imposed following an admission or finding of misconduct should, however, be made public.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

2. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the Archbishops' recent reminder in the *Spectator* that each diocese is its own legal and charitable entity and makes its own decisions, and that the implementation of the national vision and strategy will therefore depend in practice upon the extent to which it resonates with dioceses' own visions and strategies, to what extent will the Implementation Group be encouraging dioceses to reflect upon what can be learned about pro-actively engaging with people affected at a local level from past attempts to make organisational changes, such as mergers of Church of England dioceses, local government restructuring and the Beeching rail reforms?

The Archbishop of York (Most Hon & Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell) replied as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops: This Vision and Strategy work is all about inviting the whole Church of England at every level to share with us in this work of renewal as we re-centre our lives on Christ, truly working together as the Body of Christ, and of finding the way forward that will best serve our nation. This is why we have included people at the local level throughout our consultation period in developing the vision and strategy. As this work is developed, we are certainly encouraging dioceses to talk and discuss the outcomes at the local level of parish and deanery. From the start we have been clear that this is not a 'top-down' exercise but the invitation is for us all to share together, at every level, in God's work for us in the next ten years.

3. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In what ways is the existing priority of promoting whole-life Christianity through *Setting God's People Free* expected to be taken forward through the development and implementation of the Vision & Strategy?

The Archbishop of York (Most Hon & Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell) replied as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops: *Setting God's People Free* is key to the development of a Church of missionary disciples which is one of the three strategic priorities. This will enable a Church where all God's people are set free and empowered and enabled to live the Christian life in and for the world, shaped by the five marks of mission.

The Director of SGPF has been co-chair of the Missionary Disciples sub-group. The plans include enabling every church community to become a place where people are envisioned, trained and equipped for ministry and mission in the whole of their life. So much of this will be about carrying forward the implementation of recommendations in *Setting God's People Free* to empower the whole people of God, to serve the whole mission of God in the whole of life.

4. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In recent years the Church of England has taken to establishing a large number of Church Plants and Fresh Expressions in buildings other than those they have owned, often because it is more appropriate accommodation and better placed for mission. Many of these require a certain amount of spend on the building and generally require a long-term commitment.

On the other hand, an increasing amount of our own buildings are found to be unsuitable or insufficiently flexible for use in Mission and often are not in the best location for our work. Trying to adapt or sell off buildings for better use, where they are considered to have architectural or historical significance, takes up a considerable amount of resources. What consideration has the House of Bishops given to the way in which they can release the burden of our historical building stock in order to deploy more resources for mission?

The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The majority of our 16,000 church buildings continue to serve the communities of England as they were designed to do. They are at the heart of being 'A Christian presence in every community'. It is true that some are now in the wrong place or contain features that make mission and worship difficult, and need to close. It is also true that in some places caring for the building places a disproportionate burden on parishes. However in many places historic buildings are part of what is on offer – places of beauty, contemplation and service. The House of Bishops, along with representatives of other NCIs, is considering buildings issues as part of the ongoing work on Emerging Church, including developing a strategic approach to assessing the potential of buildings, offering new building management approaches, reviewing the Faculty system, and improving closure and pastoral organisation processes to reduce administrative burdens on parishes.

5. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Whilst many of our Diocesan functions are run efficiently and effectively and are probably best managed at the "local" level, it has been suggested that there are some functions which could be more effectively managed at a national level and which would provide more consistency across the national Church. Safeguarding has been suggested as one, clergy ministerial review another and maybe there are others. What consideration has the House of Bishops, or other of our bodies and councils, given to whether functions currently managed at a Diocesan level ought to be managed at a different level (National, Regional, Deanery or Parish)?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The work on Transforming Effectiveness is part of the Emerging Church of England body of work and therefore is regularly considered by the House of Bishops, Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners.

It is focused on the practical ways the Church is organised and gets things done that enable the local church to flourish, interrogating everything using three questions: Does this enable the flourishing of the local church, and/or the networked forms of mission, and/or does this make the Church of England more coherent and effective in its national role?

In our scoping so far a number of areas have been suggested by dioceses that could work better by being done once, and we are just beginning a further piece of scoping work to identify which functions dioceses would most value being done once rather than individually in each diocese.

6. *Dr Mike Lawes (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the light of General Synod's decision (GS 2159) to call upon all parts of the Church of England to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in carbon emissions and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target; what reduction is estimated to have been achieved by the Church of England during the restrictions on our activities over the last year, and how might this reduction inform the proposed plan of action?

The Bishop of Salisbury (Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The reduction in energy use due to COVID-related closures cannot yet be estimated. Figures for 2020 church energy use will be entered into the Energy Footprint Tool throughout spring and summer 2021, and analysed this autumn.

However, the recent analysis of the first year of EFT data shows that in 2019 we had achieved a 12.5% reduction compared to 2006 levels, and that 5% of churches are net zero (generally due to electric heating and a 100% renewable electricity tariff).

It was not in any way the intention of GS 2159 that net zero carbon be achieved by restricting our activities. Instead, we seek ways for churches to thrive whilst being more efficient. Reducing heat loss, swapping to low-carbon heating, and renewable tariffs mean we can fulfil the 5th mark of mission, to care for creation, whilst still fulfilling the other four. See GS Misc 1262.

7. *Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops let the UK government know of the House's opposition to making abortion pills by post – brought in during the pandemic – permanent?

The Bishop of Carlisle (Rt Revd James Newcome) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Mission and Public Affairs Council has submitted a response on behalf of the Church of England to the DHSC consultation on 'Home use of both pills for early medical abortion'.

8. *Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Could the House of Bishops give details of their response to the UK government consultation “Home use of both pills for early medical abortion”?

The Bishop of Carlisle (Rt Revd James Newcome) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: In its response to the DHSC consultation on ‘Home use of both pills for early medical abortion’, the Mission and Public Affairs Council highlighted concerns with regard to safety, dissemination of accurate information, consent, privacy, potential coercion and safeguarding of vulnerable girls and women as well as potential adverse effects on NHS services, and recommended that the current temporary approval be time limited for two years or end when the temporary provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 expires, whichever is earlier.

9. *Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What range of practical and legal options concerning the distribution of holy communion in individual cups was considered by the House of Bishops on 19 January 2021? Please give full details.

The Bishop of Lichfield (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The result of the discussions at the House is recorded in the press release issued on 19 January. The House considered three propositions in respect of the administration and reception of Holy Communion in individual cups. The first two of these reiterated the existing teaching that Holy Communion received in one kind is sufficient, with the form of simultaneous administration available for those who cannot in good conscience receive in one kind. The third proposition would have signalled the House’s intention to introduce the liturgical and legislative business that would have enabled individual cups for Holy Communion to be used lawfully in the longer term. The House did not assent to any of these propositions.

10. *Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: When will the House publish the full response from the Legal Advisory Commission to the Legal Opinion from six barristers concerning individual cups at holy communion, which was circulated to the House of Bishops in August 2020?

The Bishop of Lichfield (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Legal Advisory Commission prepared an Addendum to its existing opinion *Holy Communion: Administration of the Sacrament* (2011) for the benefit of the House of Bishops. While the Addendum touches upon issues raised in the barristers’ opinion, it was not intended as a direct response to that opinion. The Commission decides which of its opinions it ‘stars’ for publication. It has not starred the Addendum

11. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: After many months when Holy Communion in one kind only has been the required practice and as churches make plans to reopen when the current lockdown restrictions ease, please would the House of Bishops Recovery Group give an indication of how soon the current

period of “deep reflection on our practices, as all members of the Church seek to respond to changing circumstances and the spiritual needs that emerge from them.” may translate into action, and let local incumbents in consultation with their PCCs decide the most appropriate method of safe distribution of both bread and wine for Holy Communion, (fulfilling thereby both the principle that “exceptional actions may be acceptable in order to preserve a greater principle (Footnote 1, p5 of *Some Guidance on the Celebration of Holy Communion*) and the reality that “Clergy, mindful of the centrality of Holy Communion to the life of the Church, are approaching the present situation in different ways” – as stated in *Different approaches and their implications*.

The Bishop of Lichfield (Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Because of the complexity of the issues at stake, the House of Bishops has committed itself to further study before it comments again on these matters. Clergy and PCCs who wish to celebrate Holy Communion at this time do have two options in relation to the safe distribution of the consecrated elements:

- reception under the form of bread alone;
- reception in both kinds by simultaneous administration, for those who cannot in good conscience receive in one kind.

These ‘exceptional actions’ and ‘different ways’ allow us to continue receiving the Sacrament, the ‘greater principle’, until such time as it is safe for us to resume doing so according to the historic practice of the Church of England

12. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the Revd Graham Roberts’ testimony in *Living in Love and Faith* of moving away from same sex temptation, will the House of Bishops withdraw its support of the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy, which this Synod endorsed in July 2017 with the Private Member’s Motion GS 2070A, condemning so-called “conversion therapy”, including calling on the government to ban it, for those wanting to move away from their same sex desires?

The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: No, the House of Bishops will not withdraw its support of the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy. In the words of the LLF Book (pages 48-49) the purpose of the LLF story films is to “call us to be courageously honest about the diversity that exists among the people of God in the Church of England.” Their purpose is not to use them either as a means of validating a particular way or path of life, or as the sole means by which the Church arrives at a Christian ethic of sexuality. “They can help us to follow the way of Christ, in being truly human in our deliberations and learning and discernment [...] They are there to deepen our desire to be more Christlike in our life together as individuals and as a Church.”

13. *Mrs Andrea Minichiello-Williams (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops considered whether a marriage where one party is

transgender, and therefore the same birth sex as their partner, is a same sex marriage and therefore unlawful according to Canon Law, specifically Canon B.30?

The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Dame Sarah Mullally) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House has not discussed this matter. As a matter of law, a trans person may marry in church on the basis of an 'acquired gender' under the Gender Recognition Act 2004, but section 5B of the Marriage Act 1949 provides an opt-out from solemnizing a marriage where the clergyperson reasonably believes one of the parties to be of the acquired gender. The House has accordingly left the matter to individual members of the clergy and has not expressed a view or given any guidance on this. The Pastoral Advisory Group has considered the position if a partner in a heterosexual marriage subsequently transitions and concluded that they could see no circumstances in which the Church would insist that a couple was morally obliged to divorce.

14. *Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the House of Bishops' policy on the eligibility for ordination of candidates who indicate that they seek a change in the doctrine of Marriage, or who do not assent to or affirm the Church's teaching on human sexuality through their teaching or witness?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: All candidates during the discernment process are asked to give assurance that they have read the House of Bishops Statement *Issues in Human Sexuality* and they are willing to live according to its guidelines. This document states in the Preface that it does not claim 'to be the last word on the subject'. The *Living in Love and Faith* process invites the whole Church, including clergy, to contribute to and learn from the diversity of views that currently exist in relation to the Church's teaching on human sexuality and marriage.

15. *Mr Samuel Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What percentage of those who are a) recommended for ordained ministry and b) are being ordained; seek to change the doctrine of the church on same sex marriage?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the Declaration of Assent clergy are required at ordination and every time they take up a new post to declare their 'belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness'. Bishops are responsible for upholding the faith and doctrine of the church. No statistics are gathered on those who seek to change the doctrine of the church on same sex marriage or on any other matter of doctrine.

16. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House (and/or College) of Bishops considered in depth the issues surrounding the culture of clericalism which have been identified in several recent Reports including *Setting God's People Free* (GS 2056), *Kingdom Calling* (GS Misc 1254) and those issued

by IICSA? If so, what conclusions have been reached and what actions have been agreed to be taken to address these issues? If not, when will the House or College consider these issues?

The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Rachel Treweek) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House has considered SGPF and IICSA and continues to hold the recommendations in these reports as priorities for implementation. The Faith and Order Commission Report *Kingdom Calling* will continue to be drawn upon in discussions around forming the whole Church as missionary disciples and the role lay ministry plays in this as the Church both gathered and sent. The House has not discussed 'clericalism' as a discrete issue, however, the diagnosis of the problem this poses in the culture of the Church is acknowledged and full support is given to implementing recommendations to address this.

17. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops studied and, if so, what conclusions has it drawn, regarding (a) the prevalence of bullying of clergy by laity and (b) measures to improve the support provided to the victims of such bullying?

The Bishop of Hereford (Rt Revd Richard Jackson) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: We have not considered it as a House, but I am sure that I speak for my fellow bishops when I say that we are all concerned about the impact on clergy wellbeing of bullying by some lay people and we are aware that bullying of clergy is an issue, even though we do not have figures about its prevalence and compiling reliable figures would be difficult.

We encourage any clergy who feel they are being bullied to contact their diocesan bishop so that they can receive appropriate assistance, support, and advice. An increasing number of dioceses have Employee Assistance Programmes which enable clergy to access confidential counselling and support, if clergy do not wish to involve the Bishop. Many dioceses adopt a Dignity at Work policy, which helps to promote a culture of mutual respect and kindness throughout the diocese.

18. *Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In view of the postponement from February to April of the Implementation and Dialogue Group's Report's publication and the House of Bishops' Presentation and debate of its issues and recommendations, what now is the timetable for this Report and debate and for any assistance the House can offer to ensure that its continuing importance is respected and not squeezed or minimised for all those most closely concerned?

The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There had been a strong desire for this Report to come to Synod when in-person engagement could be possible. The continued pandemic has made this impossible, but the House of Bishops has continued in discussion about the Report and its dissemination. Those discussions focus around how the Report can be as useful as

possible to the Church, given that some of the original research is now dated and further questions and experience are of course emerging.

The timetable for taking this Report forward will be clearer as these discussions continue in the context of planning for future meetings of Synod.

19. *Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEIs)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Would you please provide a comprehensive overview for Synod as to how the Interim Scheme for Victim Restitution is progressing?

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The interim support scheme, approved in outline by the Archbishops' Council in autumn 2020, is designed to enable the Church to improve its response to eligible current and non-current survivors of Church-related abuse where the victim or survivor is known to be in seriously distressed circumstances. The scheme has operated on a pilot basis since October 2020. To date more than 20 survivors have applied to the scheme and more than a dozen have received pastoral and financial support. The Church will continue to learn and develop from experience and will take into account any lessons learned from this support scheme as it develops a wider menu of options for restorative practice working with key stakeholders, including survivors.

20. *Revd Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Are there any guidelines provided to Bishops and clergy about managing their relationships with those whose PTO have been withdrawn for safeguarding reasons, to avoid those of known risk, being held out as safe and endorsed by the Church of England?

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There are two policy documents relevant to PTO and safeguarding:

1. The HoB Policy on Granting Permission to Officiate, July 2018.
2. The HoB Safeguarding Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment, Permission to Officiate.

These documents do not address the specific point raised; they do make it clear that when Bishops grant PTO, they must do so in line with safer recruitment principles.

There is a requirement for the Bishop to inform the Archbishops' Council of the withdrawal of PTO so that the National Ministry Register can be updated. Incumbents and priests in charge are not permitted to invite clergy to officiate in their churches unless they have PTO or other authority to officiate. The National Ministry Register should be consulted by incumbents etc. in order to discover whether a particular member of the clergy has the necessary authority to officiate in the Church of England.

21. *Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can you please provide your best estimate, to date and to finality, of what the abuse of John Smyth QC has cost the Church of England?

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There is no measure that can estimate the true impact of the horrific abuse conducted by John Smyth on victims/survivors and the Church of England. What is important is that we listen to the findings of the Makin review and ensure we work together to improve our Safeguarding practices across the Church to ensure this cannot happen again. As with any Independent Review, there is always a financial cost, but this has to be balanced with establishing the truth and listening to the voices of victims and survivors.

22. *Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the current projected date for the publication of the Makin review into the abuse committed by John Smyth?

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Makin review into John Smyth has received a considerable amount of new information, both written and verbal, which has all required careful examination and analysis. New sources of information continue to arrive, making any definite estimation as to the likely completion date of the review difficult to establish. Additionally, the Covid restrictions are meaning that interviews which are very sensitive in their nature and can only be conducted face to face, have been delayed.

An update on timings last year noted that publication had moved 'into 2021', it is now likely that the completion of the report will be mid-summer 2021 at the earliest. Following that, there will be a need to ensure that the report is legally sound and that people who may be directly referenced will have had the opportunity to comment on those references.

23. *Revd Valerie Plumb (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Are there any guidelines or protocols which apply to NST which assist members determine whether a senior figure is subject to an independent investigation collating all evidence, or simply and administrative review of historic papers and procedures?

The Bishop of Huddersfield (Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The NST applies the House of Bishop Practice Guidance: Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers to safeguarding allegations against senior figures as it would with any Church Officer. The guidance states that "the complexity and variety of the lines of enquiry will be determined by the specifics of an individual case", this will be reviewed and determined by the core group. Each allegation is considered on its own merits depending on the specifics but this objective principle, outlined in the guidance, is applied in every case.

SECRETARY GENERAL

24. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Secretary General: Could you please provide for Synod members the latest position in relation to the complaint about Church CDM processes which was addressed to the Charity Commission by a wide range of signatories in August 2020?

Mr William Nye replied as the Secretary General: The Charity Commission was in touch with me in August 2020 following the open letter of 11 August 2020. A meeting took place between the Charity Commission and Archbishops' Council staff and trustees in the autumn of 2020. As requested, I provided information to the Charity Commission on safeguarding policies and proposed improvements. The Charity Commission was grateful for this information and was reassured by the steps the charity is taking to address the concerns raised in the open letter of 11 August 2020 to the Chair of the Commission. It was agreed that conversations between the Charity Commission and the Archbishops' Council would continue as improvements and changes to safeguarding policies are made.

25. *Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Secretary General: In answer to a supplementary question from me in July 2020 relating to Q.20, the Bishop of Huddersfield, Dr Jonathan Gibbs, stated "the NST is currently reviewing the functioning of core groups with a view to revising the guidance and clarifying their operation," and in answer to a supplementary question by Mrs Kathryn Tucker (Q.23) he said "it is vitally important that the respondents should be properly represented, they have full understanding of the allegations made against them and they have opportunity to respond to those. That is a basic issue of justice... respondents must be properly represented in order that they have a full chance to respond to any allegations." (Report of Proceedings, July 2020, pages 25-27). Dr Gibbs further stated in answer to a supplementary question from the Revd Canon Rosie Harper, "we are proposing to introduce fairly soon new guidance on the conduct of core groups." (ibid, page 28). Further, in the written answer to a question (Q.79) from Mr Martin Sewell in November 2020 you stated: "Work to update the core group policy and guidance will include consideration of whether an appeal system, or a dedicated complaint system, should be included."

In the light of these answers, please inform Synod of the work done (and by whom) since November to update the current core group policy and guidance, stating what (if any) provision has been or is proposed to be included, or is under consideration, to provide respondents with both the right to be represented at all core group meetings by a person of their choice and a right of appeal against core group determinations.

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: Two workstreams are underway:

1. The revision of the Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers guidance which sets out the core group's role. The NST, in consultation with representatives from dioceses and a cathedral, is exploring the questions posed through a series of workshops, involving representatives from dioceses and cathedrals.

2. The undertaking of two workshops involving the Legal Office, the NST and a Bishop's Chaplain to specifically review the function of core groups in the kinds of cases the NST works with.

We anticipate that draft policy should be ready by summer 2021 for wider consultation. It will address how core groups may better factor in the respondent's views and concerns taking account of the group's role.

The policy will make clear that it is the role of core groups to identify, mitigate and manage the risk in any situation; it is not its role to try to establish guilt or innocence.

26. *Revd Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Secretary General: Do the contractual retainers of our professional advisors, negotiated with the Church's professional advisors, contain any provision to ensure ethical behaviour in accordance with the Church's values and public pronouncements?

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: In July 2018 the National Church Institutions adopted a procurement policy and a supplier code of conduct which apply to the procurement of professional services as well as to other types of procurement. These documents emphasise that staff engaged in procurement must consider the social and economic impact of procurement and that suppliers need to comply with best ethical practice as well as legal requirements. Prospective service providers are given the code of conduct and a questionnaire for completion. Areas that are specifically asked about before a procurement decision is made include health and safety, sustainable procurement, equal opportunities, anti-slavery and human trafficking, compliance with GDPR, payment of a living wage, anti-fraud measures and compliance with the NCIs' Supplier Code of Conduct. The procurement team seek and obtain evidence from suppliers that they operate in accordance with our expectations.

27. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Secretary General: Has consideration been given to changing the interval for elections to General Synod from five to six years, thus allowing the timing to be held in a consistent relationship with that for diocesan synod elections and the six-yearly preparation of new electoral rolls?

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: There has not been any consideration of this to date. Section 1(2) of the Church of England Convocations Act 1966 sets out that the Convocations stand dissolved at the expiration of five years from the date on which they are called together unless dissolved by the monarch on an earlier date. The General Synod is automatically dissolved on the dissolution of the Convocations. To extend the lifetime of Synod to six years as a default, the Church of England Convocations Act 1966 would need to be amended.

CLERK TO THE SYNOD

28. *Miss Sophie Mitchell (Church of England Youth Council)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: What active efforts are being made to ensure that there will be youth representation in the next quinquennium?

Dr Jacqui Philips replied as Clerk to the Synod: The Business Committee is well aware of the need to increase the youth representation on Synod in the next Quinquennium. Promotional materials encouraging younger people to stand for Synod - including a short film - were being prepared prior to the postponement of the elections to the new Synod in 2020. Work is now underway to revise these materials and to make them ready for release in the summer of 2021. These materials will be made available on the Church of England website and related social media accounts and will also be available for use by dioceses who wish to encourage younger candidates to stand for election in their dioceses.

29. *Dr Mike Lawes (Rochester)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: In view of The Corporation of Church House and its subsidiary allowing the use of its premises for activity which advertises and promotes gambling, are steps being taken to distance and dissociate the General Synod from the decision to allow Church House to be used for such purposes?

Dr Jacqui Philips replied as Clerk to the Synod: The Corporation of Church House is established by Royal Charter. It is permitted to manage its business as it thinks fit and expedient in order to fulfil its stated purpose of owning and maintaining Church House for the use of the National Church Institutions. The Conference Centre is held to the same Ethical Letting Policy as all other tenants of Church House and the recent boxing booking passed the Ethical Letting Policy as the Hirer (Queensberry Promotions) did not fall foul of any of the conditions in the policy, their main income coming from BT Sport. However, following representations from Synod members, two further boxing matches, to be held under the same conditions as the previous ones, have since been refused by the Corporation.

NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL

30. *Canon Dr Addy Lazz-Onyenobi (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: According to the records, one in four primary and one in sixteen secondary schools in the country are Church of England schools and there are more than 47,000 Church of England schools, nationally. How many of Heads of these Church of England Schools are from UKME background?

The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied as Chair of the National Society Council: The government's school workforce data shows that:

- 85.7% of all teachers in state-funded schools in England were White British (where ethnicity was known)

- there were around 22,400 headteachers in 2019, and over two-thirds of those (around 15,100) were women
- 96.1% of female headteachers were White (92.6% White British, 1.7% White Irish, and 1.8% White Other)
- 97.0% of male headteachers were White (92.9% White British, 2.1% White Irish, and 2.0% White Other)

There are just under 4,700 Church of England schools. We do not collect any Church school workforce data nationally but are working with the DfE to ascertain the data for Church schools to inform the work we are doing to promote opportunity, justice and equity in teacher recruitment and headship appointments.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

31. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What steps have been taken in the recent revision of the discernment process to ensure that those selecting future clergy fully represent the diversity of the Church, especially with respect to gender and sexuality?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The guidance notes sent to all Bishops on appointing Bishops' Advisers for Discernment for the new Shared Discernment Process, in December 2020, emphasised ensuring a diverse cohort of Bishops' Advisers. Bishops were invited to include in their cohort 'A balance of men and women, and those who do not define their gender in binary terms'.

32. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Given that at present there is only one place for a lay person on the Council, what steps, if any, is the Council taking to increase the number of places available for lay people on the Council?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (Rt Revd Martin Seeley) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: There are currently four lay members. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Ministry Council these are; one elected from the House of Laity, the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee, the Chair of the Ministry Division Finance Panel, and one co-opted member.

In addition, there are two roles which could have lay incumbents but currently do not; a theologian not on the staff of a theological college or course, and a person with significant experience in the area of selection and/or professional development and/or leadership development.

MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

33. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Please could the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council summarise the response by the Church of England to the recent consultation carried out by the Law Commission on possible reforms to the law governing the conduct of weddings, focussing particularly on issues of dignity and solemnity of the ceremony, commensurate with the huge public importance of marriage to the flourishing of society and the nurture of children?

Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: The Law Commission's on-line consultation posed c.150 questions relating to their 500-page report.

We commented that, by addressing the law around weddings without considering the question of marriage, the proposals were conceptually flawed. The Commission's approach led them to conclude that the state should, in effect, support a deregulated market of wedding celebrants and venues. Consequently, the Commission's stated desire that weddings must be "dignified" would be undermined by its own recommendations.

We noted, *inter alia*, that commercialisation of the wedding ceremony was undesirable; that the public nature of marriage necessitated that weddings should not be held behind closed doors; and that the report's definition of a "religious group" for the purpose of licensing celebrants was inadequate. We suggested that the present ban on all religious content in civil weddings should be eased to permit Christian or other religious references that were, for instance, taken from literature rather than liturgy.

34. *Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: After having debated the Armed Forces in General Synod with both Archbishops then signing the Armed Forces Covenant in February 2015 and many Dioceses including Guildford, Lichfield and Portsmouth subsequently signing their own Covenants; when might we have a debate in Synod to celebrate the successful partnership of the Military and the NHS fighting COVID-19 and to review progress to date with the operation of the Armed Forces Covenant?

Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Cooperation between the NHS and armed forces (and other agencies) in combating COVID-19 is greatly to be welcomed.

It is encouraging that the General Synod debate in 2015 and the subsequent signing of an Armed Forces Covenant by both Archbishops has led several dioceses, including those mentioned, to sign their own Armed Forces Covenant. A review of this activity when the dioceses (and the NCIs) have the staff capacity and energy to take on new work might well prove useful in documenting progress and sharing best practice. Whether or not to hold a Synod debate is, of course, a matter for the Business Committee.

CLERGY DISCIPLINE COMMISSION

35. *Mrs Kathryn Tucker (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: The Church appoints investigators to inquire into CDM complaints. Is there a published national list of those who may be instructed, which contains a CV of those authorised and approved?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: Complaints under the CDM are investigated by the Designated Officer, a barrister or solicitor employed in the Legal Office of the Archbishops' Council. The CDM allows the Designated Officer to delegate his investigation to another individual and this has happened twice since the Measure came into force.

36. *Mrs Kathryn Tucker (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: What mechanism exists to evaluate and review the integrity and competence of those instructed to act as investigators into CDM so that standards may be established and maintained?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: The current Designated Officer is a barrister (as was his predecessor) and holds a practising certificate. Barristers are regulated by the Bar Standards Board and are subject to a code of conduct, continuing professional development requirements, and a professional disciplinary regime. As an employee of the NCI he takes part in a yearly Performance and Development Review.

37. *Revd Valerie Plumb (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: What guidelines, rules or protocols exist to ensure consistency in practice on the issue of determining which respondents to CDM complaints have their cases processed in anonymity until determination, and which are placed in the public domain?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: The Clergy Discipline Commission's statutory guidance (available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/clergy-discipline/code-practice-and-other-guidance>) sets out the practice that is to be followed in relation to publicity and complaints under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. The guidance states, "while a complaint is under way, there is normally no good reason for the Church to disclose publicly the existence or details of a complaint, and the proceedings should be confidential." The guidance goes on to say that there are two situations where it should be disclosed that a complaint has been made. One is where a cleric is suspended and an explanation needs to be given to the local congregation. The other is where the media already know a complaint has been made and seek confirmation from the diocese. In the latter case, the details of the complaint should not be made public at that stage.

38. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: Pending overall structural reform of disciplinary processes, has any provisional step been taken by way of guidance, protocol, exercise of discretion or alteration of contractual terms, to prevent perceived conflicts of interest on the part of legal and other professional advisers undermining confidence in the Church's disciplinary processes?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission: The CDM Code of Practice contains guidance on dealing with conflicts of interest amongst those administering the Measure. The Commission is aware of the importance of this issue and will keep the area under review. The ongoing reform of the disciplinary process is wide ranging and will include consideration of conflicts and how they are resolved.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

39. *Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark)* asked the Church Commissioners: What evidence is there that the Church Commissioners' engagement with ExxonMobil is producing results, in terms of alignment with the carbon reduction targets agreed in Paris in 2015?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: We recently escalated our engagement with Exxon, supporting an activist approach led by a new (Environmental, Social and Governance) ESG-focused fund, Engine No.1, in collaboration with US pension fund CalSTRS (California State Teachers' Retirement System). The campaign launched in December, highlighting poor financial performance and capital allocation, refusal to diversify or meaningfully tackle climate change and plans to significantly increase production. The campaign nominated four alternative directors to the board with far greater experience in energy transition and innovation than the existing board, aiming to drive a change in strategy that would see Exxon play its full part in the energy transition.

Since the launch Exxon has:

- set new emissions targets for 2025 with greater scope and ambition;
- published their scope 3 emissions for the first time;
- announced a new Low Carbon Solutions division, to commercialise Carbon Capture & Storage; and
- appointed the ex-CEO of Petronas to the board to provide greater energy and transition expertise.

These developments demonstrate progress, but more is required; we are committed to pushing for further transformation to achieve alignment with the Paris goals.

40. *Mrs Kathryn Winrow (Oxford)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given that the board of ExxonMobil blocked resolutions on climate change from the Church

Commissioners from being considered at its AGMs in 2019 and 2020, what reasons do the Church Commissioners have for continuing to engage with ExxonMobil, what criteria do they have for deciding when to divest from ExxonMobil, and how much have they now lost by not divesting from ExxonMobil five years ago?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: Considering Exxon's stance on climate change the Commissioners are supporting an activist approach pushing for a change in board leadership. The campaign has nominated four alternate directors with greater willingness to embrace the energy transition and superior energy expertise than current members.

Marrying [concerns](#) over poor returns and strategy with a failure to tackle climate change to highlight the need for a transformation driven by new leadership is an industry first, with positive sector-wide repercussions. (See response to Giles Goddard - Question 39 - for progress.)

As requested by Synod, the NIBs require fossil fuel companies to align with a well below 2 degrees scenario by 2023. A number of energy companies are likely to fail additional interim criteria this year.

The Commissioners have not had one continuous holding in Exxon over the last five years; our external managers adjust their positions through time, therefore a single return figure cannot be disclosed. The Commissioners' public equity investments, in aggregate, have delivered strong, above benchmark, returns over the last five years despite a volatile market environment.

41. *Revd Dr Mark Bratton (Coventry)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given that Shell has announced that, although 2019 was its year of maximum oil production, it is still planning to increase its gas production by more than 20% in the next few years, what plans do each of the NIBs have to engage with Shell and challenge them on this and also ask them what they are doing to help communities in Nigeria that have been devastated by oil spills resulting from their operations?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: The National Investing Bodies (NIB)s have continued to engage robustly with companies on their approach to climate change and it is clear that engagement with Shell has resulted in significant advances in the company response.

The Pensions Board leads for the NIBs on engagement with Shell and will be engaging with the company on its strategy including any increase in gas production. The recent Shell strategy announcement will be independently assessed by the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) which underpins the global investor engagement initiative Climate Action 100+ on behalf of which the NIBs' engagement is also undertaken. That assessment will inform any judgment of the latest Net Zero commitment.

The NIBs have previously been part of collaborative engagement by investors with Shell related to Nigeria. We have noted the recent outcome of legal proceedings and are awaiting the outcome of the Bayelsa Commission led by the former Archbishop of York.

42. *Dr Tina Nay (Chichester)* asked the Church Commissioners: The Church Commissioners are significant landowners and this, of itself, presents built development opportunities, mainly in the form of new housing. What experience does the Commissioners' team have of creating new, ambitious and genuinely sustainable communities which seek to address this country's housing shortage?

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: The Commissioners have a well-qualified internal strategic land team and sufficient land at present with the potential to bring forward around 28,500 new homes including 8,600 affordable homes across England.

By way of example of the team's work, in 2020 an extensive programme of stakeholder, council and public engagement, including engagement with the local church and diocese, culminated in the preparation of a framework masterplan for Commissioners' land near Chichester. This new community adjacent to Barnham will ultimately deliver 4,300 homes, including new affordable homes, two new local centres, two primary schools, community halls/library facilities, as well as extensive areas of green open space, and a new sports hub.

The framework masterplan, which sets the overarching sustainable principles for the development will be used to inform and monitor forthcoming planning applications within the site. The masterplan was wholeheartedly and enthusiastically endorsed by Arun District Council members in late 2020.

43. *Mrs Enid Barron (London)* asked the Church Commissioners: While I welcome the Church Commissioners' involvement with initiatives to improve corporate behaviour, in particular in relation to climate change, I would be interested to know if they have plans to strengthen the focus on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) matters in relation to their property portfolio.

Ms Loretta Minghella (ex officio) replied as First Church Estates Commissioner: The Church Commissioners have committed to achieving a net zero emissions portfolio by 2050, with the first interim emissions reduction target to be set in March 2021. We are establishing a rigorous baseline for our property-related emissions in order to develop net zero strategies for our Commercial, Rural and Residential portfolios. At the same time, we are developing a natural capital approach for our forestry, rural and strategic land to ensure we reach net zero whilst enhancing nature.

In addition, we are developing an ESG framework for our development land holdings. We have completed an important first stage ESG priorities assessment (summary available

on our website) and will continue to develop this work into a measurable strategy for our strategic land holdings in 2021.

44. *Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough)* asked the Church Commissioners: How many clergy of incumbent status have been dispossessed in the past two years, and how many schemes including dispossession of office are currently being prepared?

Dr Eve Poole (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner: In 2019-2020, four pastoral schemes were bought forward which would have led to the dispossession of nine clergy of incumbent status. One scheme was rejected, and another person moved on before the scheme was made, leaving six clergy who were actually dispossessed. Of those, two have a new post, one retired and the remaining three have Permission to Officiate but no new office at this time.

There are currently only three pastoral schemes in our caseload which would lead to the dispossession of three incumbents if they are approved, and no new cases pending. We gather from our consultations with dioceses that most are not expecting to use the Mission and Pastoral Measure's processes to manage many immediate clergy reductions.

45. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given the recent focus, in the church press, on the long-standing resentment that may be caused when a diocese sells off a parsonage, would the Church Commissioners consider issuing new guidelines to dioceses?

Dr Eve Poole (ex officio) replied as Third Church Estates Commissioner: The Church Commissioners are responsible for providing support to dioceses and parishes on the legal processes for the disposals of parsonages under the Church Property Measure 2018 or the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. Incumbents (and Team Vicars occupying a parsonage) can veto a sale, and Patrons and PCCs can make a representation against the disposal to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners have no plans to issue further process guidance as the online Parsonages and Glebe manual was updated in 2020. Bishops and Diocesan teams are responsible for managing their property portfolios and it is not for the Commissioners to advise them regarding the decision to dispose of a parsonage.

Recent meetings with Diocesan representatives have confirmed that many are retaining parsonages as they are critical to future mission, and those which are making disposals are generally selling corporate property and glebe houses, where that is an appropriate course of action.

PENSIONS BOARD

46. *Revd Julian Hollywell (Derby)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: What scrutiny is in place to ensure that the Pensions Board adhere to the usual legalities regarding its relationship with tenants, and, where a sitting tenant is served notice in order to accommodate a retired cleric, what is the required period of notice?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board: Oversight of the Pension Board's retirement housing portfolio is carried out by its Housing Committee, which reports to the Board of trustees. Retiring clergy can reserve a suitable property up to five years in advance of their anticipated retirement date. During this time, the property may be let to a private tenant. The relationship with that tenant is within the legal framework of Landlord and Tenant law and the period of notice depends on the tenancy agreement upon which they occupy the property. This is usually a minimum of two months, but in the current pandemic situation was extended to a minimum of six months. Our experience is that most tenants leave at the end of the tenancy's fixed term.

ETHICAL INVESTMENT ADVISORY GROUP

47. Ms Valerie Hallard (Carlisle) asked the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group: Following the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster's letter (12/06/2020) to the then Israeli Ambassador, Mark Regev, and the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, expressing their opposition to any move by the Government of Israel to annex West Bank territory after 1 July 2020; what advice has the EIAG provided to the National Investing Bodies (NIBs)?

The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd David Walker) replied as Vice-Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group: The EIAG advises the NIBs to expect all the companies in which they invest to manifest conscientiousness with regard to human rights and sensitivity towards the communities in which they operate. The NIBs have established processes, in line with the recommendations of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises to periodically undertake due diligence analyses aimed at identifying portfolio companies complicit in breaches of international norms and human rights. Following the letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster (12/06/2020), the NIBs procured appropriate research and data in order to evaluate investee companies' business practices for upholding international norms and human rights when operating in disputed territories and will identify any companies deemed unwilling, uncooperative or complicit with human rights violations in Occupied Territories as part of their established due diligence processes.

The Chair: In a moment, I will invite Sue Booy to deliver the blessing but, before then, I would just like to thank a few people. I would like to thank all of the Synod members who

have been here today. I think we have had a very rich day in terms of input and a lot of food for thought.

I would particularly also like to thank Jill, Katherine and Hannah, who have been signing for us through the day, and to thank the staff. I suspect that a lot of the stress of the day - well, certainly from my point of view - has been borne by the staff who have been bringing people in and out of being panellists and so on, so thank you very much to all of the staff. I would like to invite Sue to deliver the blessing, please.

Revd Canon Sue Booy's prorogued the meeting.