

**GENERAL SYNOD****Report on the Archbishops' Council's Activities****Introduction**

The Archbishops' Council presents this report on its activities since the General Synod Meeting in July 2023. It has met twice, on 18 July and 25 September.

**Meeting of the Archbishops' Council 18 July 2023, by remote connection**

1. The Council began by reflecting on the financial situation in dioceses, as manifest in evidence of continued reductions in the numbers of stipendiary posts, which suggested a serious set of financial challenges. The Council agreed that it would be important to consider these challenges on the basis of evidence and therefore commissioned analysis – as explained to Synod in July – in order to have a detailed understanding of the financial position of dioceses.
2. The Council considered next steps towards independence in safeguarding. It agreed to support the independent review of the future of independent safeguarding to be led by Professor Alexis Jay. It agreed in principle to plans for a lawyer to lead an independent review of phase 1 of the ISB (and agreed by correspondence subsequently the appointment of Sarah Wilkinson to lead this work), and was briefed on progress on establishing arrangements to ensure that the case reviews promised by the ISB could be continued (and agreed by correspondence detailed plans). The Council also thanked diocesan and parish safeguarding staff, and the National Safeguarding Team, for their work to keep the Church safe.
3. The Council considered proposals from the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee (RACSC) for the future of the National Minimum Stipend and National Stipend Benchmark. It agreed with the proposals of RACSC, noting that the long term aim must be to restore the real value of the stipend and that further decisions needed to wait for the work on diocesan finances.
4. The Council, in line with its commitment to discuss young people and the Council's objective of helping the church to grow younger at each meeting, watched a video on the work of Bubble Church and reviewed how the objectives of growing younger and becoming more diverse were mutually supportive.
5. The Council also discussed financial support for the Northern Alternative Vocations project and reviewed the success of its intervention in the Higgs v Farmor case. It agreed by the deemed procedure terms of reference for the Environment Working Group and for governance of the triennium funding for net zero.
6. The Council said farewell to Revd Tim Goode and thanked him for his service to the Council.

## GENERAL SYNOD

**Meeting of the Archbishops' Council 25 September, held at Youthscape, Luton**

7. The Council had provided People and Partnerships funding to Youthscape<sup>1</sup> in 2022 to support work in developing and resourcing leaders of mission with children and young people and took this opportunity to learn how those resources were being used. It heard from the leadership of Youthscape, and directly from a group of young people about the issues, opportunities and challenges facing ministry to younger people. The Council also considered next steps on implementing the General Synod's motion from July 2023 calling for the develop of children, young people and young adults' voices in the life of the Synod and Archbishops' Council.
8. The Council had the opportunity to hear from the Pensions Board about the risks and opportunities for the future of clergy retirement housing. It also heard about the implementation of the work arising from the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community and their report<sup>2</sup> *Coming Home* and asked for urgent further work.
9. The Council considered a number of items of financial business including progress on the review of diocesan finances (set out in paragraph 1 above) and on parish giving; unlocking resources already allocated for lay ministry and incumbent development; the threats and opportunities to its objectives from Living in Love and Faith, and its loans.
10. The Council had read to it the testimonies of a survivor and their partner of the impact of abuse in the Church of England on their lives. Reflecting on this, it considered the case for payments outwith the terms of the Interim Support Scheme in exceptional cases, and on whether to alter the terms of reference of the Interim Support Scheme.
11. The Council also spent time reflecting how it was working collectively It agreed by the deemed procedure a number of appointments and updates to terms of reference for the Ministry Council, and noted updates on the work of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board.
12. The Council said farewell to John Spence and thanked him for his service to the Council, in particular as chair of the Finance Committee.

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William Nye LVO  
Secretary General

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<sup>1</sup> [Youthscape | Youthscape](#)

<sup>2</sup> [About Coming Home | The Church of England](#)