

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 November 2023. It has met twice, on 4-5 December and 22 January.

Meeting of the Archbishops' Council 4-5 December 2023, at the Bishop's House and then the Bishop's Blue Coat School, Chester

1. The Council welcomed the Ven Miranda Threlfall-Holmes to her first meeting of the Council since her election by the House of Clergy.
2. The Director of the National Safeguarding Team briefed the Council on the work of his team. The Interim Commissioner for Independent Reviews briefed the Council on his work to take forward reviews for those cases that had been considered by the former Independent Safeguarding Board. The Council agreed the criteria for independent reviews as proposed, and asked the Interim Commissioner to take forward work with the individual cases on the basis of that, and to report back to the Council.
3. The Council took receipt of the report by Sarah Wilkinson into the events leading up to the termination of the contracts of members of the Independent Safeguarding Board. Council members thanked Sarah Wilkinson for such a thorough report and noted the collective responsibility for the failures and lessons learned in the report. They agreed to publish the report subject to confirmation that the text had been agreed with the relevant survivors and to establish a small working group of staff and members to develop a response. They asked staff to arrange training in being trauma-informed for those members who had not previously had it. The Report was then published on 11 December.
4. The Council considered the interactions between the Wilkinson Report, the forthcoming report on *Future of Church Safeguarding* and legislation on the governance review and asked for this to be explained to Synod in a GS paper.
5. The Council was briefed on the progress with the independent *Future of Church Safeguarding* work and the concerns being expressed by dioceses. It agreed to devote time at future meetings to consideration of the report when it is published.
6. The Council was updated on the due diligence work ahead of the transfer of the Parish Giving Scheme to the national church. It agreed that the transfer should proceed and allocated additional resources to deal with issues identified in the due diligence work.
7. The Council considered its responses to some proposals from the Archbishops' Housing Advisory Board for actions to extend the Church's mission in into the national housing crisis. The Council agreed to the

GENERAL SYNOD

proposals from the Finance Committee for how best to take this work forward.

8. The Council agreed to proposals developed by the Bishop of Bedford with the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People for allocating the resources identified in the triennium funding the Church's ministry among deaf and disabled people. It agreed proposals for reforming the regulation of CBF funds to meet the requirements of the Financial Conduct Authority to be brought to Synod in February 2024. It agreed to proposals from the Pensions Board for allocating additional resources to the Pensions Board to manage the shortfall in the CHARM scheme for the remainder of this triennium.
9. The Council considered its draft Business Plan for 2024 and agreed this, subject to drafting changes. It agreed to continue to prioritise the work on the objective to make the Church younger and more diverse, but asked for additional focus in 2024 on the objective to build a Church of missionary disciples.
10. The Council reviewed its Strategic Risk Register. It noted that there were five risks where the current assessment was greater than the risk appetite – on vision and strategy, on safeguarding, on reputation, on finance and on governance – where it would like further in depth discussions in the new year.
11. Finally the Church returned to the topic of becoming younger and more diverse. It agreed to allocate resources from existing triennium funding to develop the FLOURISH concept of worshipping communities in schools, with a pilot over two years in up to 40 locations. And it agreed to allocate additional resources to communicate the report of the Archbishops' Commission on Families and Households. Finally it had an opportunity to hear from the work of the Bishop's Blue Coat School in Chester and to learn about their mission and ministry.
12. The Council thanked the Bishop of Durham for his service to the Council.

Meeting of the Archbishops' Council 22 January 2024, at Prospero House, London SE1

13. The Council welcomed Bishop Jonathan Frost to his first meeting since his election by the House of Bishops.
14. The Council reflected on the latest Statistics for Mission and learnings from the projects and programmes funded by the Council through its Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board. The Council noted that the overall story of decline and post-COVID 19 bounce back concealed stories of growth and decline and encouraged Council staff to learn from those churches (and cathedrals) that were growing and to understand better the online Church/ Church-at-home attendees. It noted that mission is God's work and not for the Council to decide. It also asked for further work on resources for

GENERAL SYNOD

discipleship pathways.

15. The Director of the National Safeguarding Team briefed the Council on progress including on the public statement on the Makin review. The Council agreed to the recommendations of the project team on proposals for implementation of the first recommendation of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, based on feedback from a pilot with 13 dioceses and 11 cathedrals and noting that these had been discussed with Professor Alexis Jay. It looked forward to feedback from the consultation on these proposals.
16. The Council considered the work done on an initial response to the Wilkinson report on the events leading to the termination of the contracts of members of the Independent Safeguarding Board. With amendments it approved the proposals for an initial response and a process for engagement for presentation to the General Synod.
17. The Council expressed concern at the abuse members were receiving.
18. The Council approved the Fees Order to be presented to Synod and asked for a wider discussion on the principles of fees.
19. The Council conducted a deep dive into the vocations pipeline, noting that the current numbers were well below the target. The Council discussed possible reasons and possible steps, and asked the team and Ministry Council to bring forward a package of proposals to the next meeting.
20. Finally, the Council approved the recommendations from the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee on the National Minimum Stipend and National Stipend Benchmark.

Church House, Westminster, SW1P 3AZ
January 2024

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Secretary General

**Published by the General Synod of the Church of England
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