

**Ninth Meeting of the Fortieth Session  
NORWICH DIOCESAN SYNOD  
Wednesday 26 June 2024  
via Zoom at 18:00**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

House of Bishops – 3 representatives  
House of Clergy – 21 representatives  
House of Laity – 29 representatives

**Apologies:**

Apologies were received from 15 members of Diocesan Synod: 11 Clergy, 4 Laity

**Opening Prayers** were led by Bishop Graham

**NORWICH DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE LTD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**1. Introduction by the NDBF Chair and Chair's Comments**

Mark Jeffries, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance introduced the first part of the meeting, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance Limited (NDBF) and explained that all Diocesan Synod members are members of NDBF and were therefore invited to take part in the Annual General Meeting.

The chair welcomed Mark Proctor, Partner, Lovewell Blake LLP to the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 21 June 2023**

One matter arising relating to the action: "consider if time to tender for the appointment of auditors". This action was considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee who remained satisfied with the level of independence.

The minutes were unanimously agreed and would be signed as a true record at a suitable time.

**3. Receive and adopt the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023**

The Chair referred to the previously circulated report, stating key highlights then invited the Director of Finance to address the meeting.

Susan Bunting, Director of Finance, highlighted key points from the Trustees' and Directors' Report Incorporating the Strategic Report and the financial statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2023.

The Chair invited questions.

Mrs Patricia Menaul inquired whether the balance between the amounts collected and the amounts that need to be collected is recoverable. Susan Bunting responded that funds are not carried forward to subsequent years.

Dr Mary Fewster observed the decline in donations in 2020 due to the lockdown, noting that recovery has not yet occurred. Susan Bunting recommended the parish giving scheme, which facilitates the claiming of Gift Aid on donations and allows for index-linked giving. Furthermore, many parishes have added a giving button to their webpages. Susan Bunting will connect Dr Mary Fewster with the Generous Giving Adviser.

David Griffith inquired whether consultations on the pattern of the Church of England's payments to ministry and licensed clergy had taken place or was scheduled to occur. Tim Sweeting responded that the Diocesan Vision, as agreed by Synod, was to examine mission and ministry and explore ways to support the local parish system. He noted that conversations are ongoing both nationally and at Diocesan level. The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs added that there had been discussions at General Synod last year, during which the Synod approved the strategic reorganisation of the Church of England. Tim Sweeting will have a separate conversation with David Griffiths to provide an update.

The Chair invited further questions.

There were none.

Mark Proctor confirmed that the 2023 accounts received a clean audit with no issues to report.

**The Chair moved to adopt the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023.**

**The result was as follows:**

**In Favour 52      Against 1      Abstentions 0**

**4. To approve the re-appointment of Messrs Lovewell Blake as Auditors at a fee to be arranged.**

The Chair moved to approve the re-appointment of Messrs Lovewell Blake as Auditors at a fee to be arranged.

**The result was as follows:**

**In Favour 52      Against 1      Abstentions 0**

**The Chair thanked Synod for their participation during the Annual General Meeting of the NDBF and handed the Chair to the Revd Dr Patrick Richmond, Chair of the House of Clergy for the first session of Diocesan Synod.**

## **DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**5. The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2024**

The minutes were unanimously agreed and would be signed as a true record at a suitable time.

**6. Matters arising from the previous meeting**

The Bishop of Lynn gave a verbal update following the table discussion at Diocesan Synod November 2023 regarding Project 2 *"Form a diocesan plan to support mission and growth based on population, poverty, and proximity, is to discern how God is calling us to move forward"*. The three key areas that were identified as needing more faith and attention were mission and ministry, net zero carbon and church buildings, with a focus on prayer, locality and leadership.

The Bishop of Lynn invited questions.

There were none.

The chair asked for any other matters arising.

There were none.

## **7. The Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance: 2023 Annual Review and Summarised Accounts**

Tim Sweeting, Diocesan Secretary, spoke to the Annual Review and Summarised Accounts previously circulated and explained the aim of the report was to give a high-level summary of the key activities of the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance staff, the Parish Support Team and commended the work of the team over the last year in their committed support of the parishes.

Tim Sweeting explained that the term Parish Support Team includes all the volunteers and staff of the Diocesan Board of Finance. The name describes their core purpose of the charity which is to serve local mission and ministry through our churches, schools and chaplaincies.

The Chair invited questions.

There were none.

**The Chair proposed that the 2023 Report and Accounts be received.**

**The 2023 Annual Review and Summarised Accounts were agreed with one abstention.**

**The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond thanked Synod and handed the Chair to Kandi Kammoun, Chair of the House of Laity for the second part of the meeting.**

## **8. Amending Canon No 43**

The Chair referred to paperwork included with the Agenda and noted "*I give notice that, at its February 2024 group of sessions, the General Synod resolved that Amending Canon No. 43 be made, promulgated and executed. Amending Canon No. 43 makes miscellaneous amendments to the Canons of the Church of England. It complements the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2024.*"

## **9. Modern Slavery**

This item was taken out of sequence and discussed as item 1 before the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd Annual General Meeting.

The Revd Corin Child opened the session with a prophecy from scripture, Luke Chapter 4, emphasising the difficulty in recognising modern slavery. It was noted that perpetrators of modern slavery deliberately conceal their activities, necessitating greater than average effort to identify the issue, as it is not something likely to be discovered by chance. The Clewer Initiative's strapline, "we see you" aims to offer comfort to individuals trapped in modern slavery while simultaneously challenging members of the church to actively observe and acknowledge these injustices.

The Revd Corin Child asked members of the Synod to share their understanding of knowledge on modern slavery in the chat.

The chair introduced Eleanor Lyons, Independent and Anti-Slavery Commissioner and asked Eleanor a series of questions.

### **1. What did you bring to the role and what are your hopes for the role?**

Eleanor expressed her gratitude to the chair for the invitation to the meeting and further elaborated on her role. Eleanor explained that the United Kingdom has traditionally been a world leader in combating modern slavery, particularly with the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. However, despite these efforts, the number of victims has been increasing annually. Eleanor highlighted that British nationals represent the largest group of victims of modern slavery in the UK, noting a significant rise in the exploitation of children and young people, primarily due to the activities of criminal gangs, as well as an increasing number of women and girls being exploited.

The hope for the role is to enhance efforts to prevent individuals from being exploited initially, protect those who are already in need of care and attention, and prosecute the criminals responsible for these crimes. The overarching goal is to ensure that addressing modern slavery becomes a priority for everyone.

**2. What has surprised you as you've come into the role?**

One of the positive surprises is the number of dedicated local teams, charities, and organisations that work tirelessly every day to go above and beyond in helping individuals who require support and care, aiding them in their recovery journey. However, one of the unfortunate surprises is that the problem of modern slavery is currently being underreported.

**3. What are the current challenges, political and practical, in the UK's fight against modern slavery?**

One of the significant challenges that has been highlighted in the current general election was that, in 2015, modern slavery was a major priority for the Conservative Government. Since then, the focus on this issue has diminished, and there has been an increasing conflation between legal migration and human trafficking within the narrative.

**4. What are the key messages that can be shared across Norfolk and Waveney at local church and communities?**

The role of the church and community is important in identifying potential victims of modern slavery, as these are often trusted spaces where rapport with individuals can be built. Victims of modern slavery have typically endured significant trauma and may still be exploited without fully recognising their victimisation. It is crucial to look out for signs of exploitation, particularly among vulnerable populations such as the homeless, and to suggest outreach or referrals to external organisations. Raising awareness enables more individuals to receive the support they need. To summarise in one sentence: Tackling modern slavery is everyone's business.

The chair thanked Eleanor Lyons and introduced Paul Sanford, Chief Constable of Norfolk.

Paul Sanford shared that modern day slavery encompasses human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour, identifying three key components: an action, such as recruitment or transportation; the means, such as threat or coercion; and a purpose for exploitation. Emphasising that there is a significant volume of crime that the public does not believe occurs in Norfolk, but modern slavery is indeed present. The message to convey from a local perspective is that it is happening in our neighbourhoods, cities, towns, and villages, both in rural and urban areas.

Paul Sanford shared a presentation on local statistics for Norfolk and modern-day slavery, forced labour, forced criminality and sexual exploitation.

The chair invited any questions for Paul Sanford and Eleanor Lyons.

In response to a question about why 2020 had the highest number of modern-day slavery cases handled by Norfolk Constabulary despite being the first year of lockdown, Paul Sanford explained that lockdown allowed the constabulary to focus on issues that previously lacked attention. Additionally, victims of certain trades were unable to operate, leading to increased exposure to authorities. Eleanor agreed, noting that many vulnerable groups became more visible at the national level during this period.

Eleanor Lyons was asked about how the threat of deportation affects victims of slavery and responded that traffickers often use this threat to prevent victims from approaching authorities. Paul Sanford was then asked about the relationship between sexual exploitation and drug use among British workers and their links

with The Magdalene Group. Paul Sanford acknowledged that there can be an overlap between drug use and sexual exploitation and noted that the Constabulary and the Chief and Crime Commissioner's Office work closely with The Magdalene Group to exchange information on cases.

Members shared helpful links to support and help those who are being exploited:

[www.norfolkantislavery.org](http://www.norfolkantislavery.org), <https://theclewerinitiative.org>, <https://www.modernslavery.gov.uk/start>.

The Archdeacon of Lynn shared The Church of England safeguarding training course, from the Clewer Initiative, aims to provide a general understanding of modern slavery and human trafficking, and how concerns relating to it may be recognised and responded to.

This is accessed online via [www.safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org](http://www.safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org).

Regarding how to help victims reluctant to engage with organisations, Eleanor Lyons noted that an increasing number of adults choose not to seek help but can be referred to first responder organisations under a duty to notify. Survivors often need repeated actions and trust-building efforts. Paul Sanford agreed, adding that 101 is another resource. Bishop Graham reminded members that the Diocesan safeguarding team can also offer valuable guidance and support.

Synod was asked to move to breakout rooms to consider the following question before returning to the main session: 'What are you taking away from this discussion that will make a difference in your parish/area?'

#### **10. Update from General Synod February 2024**

The Chair noted that an official update on proceedings was sent out with the agenda.

The chair invited questions.

The Revd Stephen Thorp requested clarification under item 23. Stuart Jones responded that it is permissible for a divorcee to be ordained providing that a faculty is obtained from the Archbishop.

No further questions.

#### **11. Question under Standing Order 71**

No questions had been raised under SO71.

**Kandi Kammoun handed the Chair to Bishop of Norwich who paid tribute at the end of the Triennium and thanked both Mrs Kandi Kammoun (Chair of the House of Laity) and Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Chair of the House of Clergy) for their respective leadership.**

The chair also thanked Revd David Owen, who is soon to retire, for his work over the years and strong commitment to evangelism.

**Closing Prayer was led by The Revd David Owen and Carolyn Sexton**

The meeting closed at 20:11

Item	Action	By Whom	Deadline
3	Connect Dr Mary Fewster with the Generous Giving Adviser.	Susan Bunting	
3	Have a separate conversation with David Griffiths to provide an update.	Tim Sweeting	

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....