

Questions to Diocesan Synod – 8 March 2025

	From	Question	Response
1.	The Revd Christopher Hobbs, Snaith and Hatfield Deanery	What is the usual time to wait for a response from the Chancellor, after the submission of the Public Notice period of a Faculty Application, if there have been no objections?	<p><i>Response from the Diocesan Registry:</i></p> <p>There is currently no set timescale for a faculty petition to work its way through the Consistory Court process as it is dependent on a number of factors. These include; level of complexity of works and amount of documentation and consultations to review; whether further correspondence is required with the DAC, consultees or petitioners for clarity on any subject; timescales are also dependent on the number of petitions lodged with the Diocesan Registry and being worked through at any one time which may impact wait times for Registry and/or Chancellor review. The Diocesan Registry encourages petitioners to keep communication open with both the Registry and DAC, and to ask for updates and alert the Registry to any urgency associated with an individual petition.</p>
2.	The Revd Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	A recent well-being survey conducted on behalf of Church House Westminster revealed that 1 in 5 stipendiary clergy were clinically depressed whilst 1 in 3 were suffering from some form of depression; what steps are being taken to mitigate this at a national or diocesan level?	<p><i>Response from Bishop Pete:</i></p> <p>We have sought to invest heavily in clergy wellbeing in this Diocese in recent years. A wellbeing group has published a suite of resources called 'Flourishing in Ministry'. It is currently being reprinted. We have encouraged clergy and lay staff to take annual wellbeing days in addition to their full allocation of rest days and annual leave, and for clergy to consider a double rest day in any month in which no annual leave is due. We have introduced and offered pastoral supervision. And this year's Bishops Annual Lecture has a wellbeing theme. The evidence is that these initiatives is having come effect. The Bishop's Advisor in Pastoral Care, Mrs Patricia Hunt, reports that whereas in 2018 the Diocese of</p>

			Sheffield was making the most use, in the region, of the Churches Ministerial Counselling Scheme, we are now making the least use.
3.	The Revd Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	Why are vacant parochial/oversight posts not advertised on the opening page of the Diocesan website even though they may be vacancies of long-standing? I am aware of other diocesan websites providing this information should clergy looking to move happen upon them.	<p><i>Response from LJ Buxton, Acting Diocesan Secretary (Comms Director):</i></p> <p>I think it easier to respond to this in two points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ongoing advertising of long-standing vacancies</i> Parish clergy vacancies are currently advertised in agreement with the timeframe set by the PCC, Patron, Archdeacon and Associate Archdeacon. The vacancy will often go in the Church Times (if approved by the PCC) and will run on the Diocesan website, usually for a period of four weeks, or until the closing date. Following that it is removed until a decision is made on the next steps (either appoint or re-advertise). At this point it might be that a new timeline needs to be agreed, or revisions made to the paperwork before it is re-advertised. • <i>Advertising vacancies on the home page of the website</i> The Vacancies section on our website is accessible via a direct link from the home page. This section of the website does not struggle for visitors. Since we started gathering website analytics in 2015, it has consistently been in the top five pages visited monthly. In fact, in 2024 it was the second most visited page on the website with a monthly average number of visitors of 515. You may be interested to see some of the total website visitor stats to a few of our more recent adverts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anston, Firbeck with Letwell and Woodsetts – 166 • Bradfield – 1,018 • Worsborough – 423

			<p>Listing individual vacancies directly on the homepage could increase visibility further for those not actively seek out the vacancies page. However, we also need to balance this with ensuring that vacancies are presented with the appropriate level of detail, including role descriptions, parish profiles, and the necessary support for those discerning a call to ministry in Sheffield. Also, the homepage is the main entry point for all website visitors so we have to carefully consider the content and features presented. Nothing is done by accident, and all backed by metrics and industry good practices.</p> <p>While more visitors will of course be welcome, what we really need to figure out is what is the 'conversion' ie what makes a visitor decide to apply?</p> <p>Recruitment of clergy has been, and remains, a critical 'project' for us and we will continue to review the approach we take. Clergy and lay sharing our adverts in their own networks is also a really valuable advertising tool and we are very appreciative for those that do this. We may also consider a general statement on the vacancies pages welcoming and encouraging those looking for roles to contact us for further discussion if there are no current adverts for roles of interest to them.</p>
4.	The Revd Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	Can we know of the numbers of clergy with PTO in the diocese for each of the last five years?	<p><i>Response from Harry Steele, Bishop's Chaplain:</i></p> <p>2025 - 114 with PTO 2024 - 118 with PTO 2023 - 113 with PTO 2022 - 110 with PTO 2021 – the data for this year is less easily accessible as it is on a database we no longer use.</p>

5.	The Revd Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	In July Peter Wright will be retiring as Retired Clergy Officer after 23 years in this post, will there be an occasion of official recognition of this period of voluntary service to the diocese? When will his successor be known to enable a smooth transition?	<p><i>Response from Bishop Pete:</i></p> <p>Peter will be thanked fulsomely at the annual meeting of retired clergy on 17 July. A potential successor has been identified and a smooth succession is therefore very possible.</p>
6.	The Revd Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	Which parishes are receiving funding in 2025 from the share of Lowest Income Communities Support received by Sheffield diocese and what are the respective amounts receivable by each of those parishes? Do those amounts add up to 100% of the funding received by the diocese?	<p><i>Response from the Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary</i></p> <p>100% of this money is allocated towards the costs of providing ministry in the most deprived parishes in our Diocese. The allocation is calculated taking account of the cost of providing ministry in the parish, and using the national deprivation ranking of parishes, and with reference to Common Fund payments.</p> <p>It is allocated starting with the most deprived parish and then the next until the grant has all been allocated. In 2023 it was allocated to the 51 most deprived parishes which are all amongst the 20% most deprived parishes in the country.</p>
7.	The Revd Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	Is there a plan for an educational programme around LLF for deaneries and Diocesan Synod to enable an informed response to the General Synod consultation on LLF which may take place later this year?	<p><i>Response from Bishop Pete</i></p> <p>The period for an educational programme in relation to LLF is really behind us. Parishes and deaneries were repeatedly encouraged to run the LLF short course in 2019-2021 and several Diocesan-wide and expertly facilitated courses were offered. A team of outstanding LLF advocates sacrificially agreed to support the process. In addition, a Diocesan-wide study day was arranged in May 2021, attended by over 150 participants. That phase was intended to inform the process up to the Synod debate of February 2023. We are now in an implementation phase. That said, as soon as guidance is issued by the LLF Programme Board about the engagement now being asked of Dioceses,</p>

			appropriate arrangements will be made to enable as full and effective an engagement in our Diocese as possible.
8.	Dr Cathy Rhodes General Synod Rep	How many churches in the diocese are placing limitations on how their common fund contributions can be used, by withholding common fund contributions, donating through the Ephesian Fund or similar third party, or through a special arrangement with the diocese, such that their contributions cannot be used to support all churches and clergy in the diocese? How much money is affected by these arrangements?	<p><i>Response from Tony Gardiner, Finance Director</i></p> <p>Six parishes currently give to the Ephesians Fund and two to the Diocesan Restricted Fund, with three expressions of interest about the Diocesan Restricted Fund.</p> <p>Between them all 11 parishes are pledging £312,000 (£165,000) Ephesians and (£147,000) Diocesan Fund. Ministry costs across those 11 parishes totals £790,000 so the contributions fall short of the full cost by £488,000</p>
9.	Vicky Vidler Ecclesall Deanery	<p>1) How many parishes have elected to make their Common Fund contributions into the newly created Common Fund Restricted Account?</p> <p>2) What proportion of Common Fund receipts do these contributions make up?</p>	<p><i>Response from Tony Gardiner, Finance Director</i></p> <p>1) See above</p> <p>2) In 2024 Common Fund receipts totalled £3.4m, £312k is 9.2% of this.</p>
10.	The Revd Canon Amanda Barraclough Adwick-le Street Deanery	<p>1) How many parishes in the Diocese have subscribed to the Ephesians Fund?</p> <p>2) Is this information in the public domain? In the interests of transparency, should it be?</p>	<p><i>Response to part 1 from Tony Gardiner, Finance Director and part 2 from Bishop Pete</i></p> <p>1) See above</p> <p>2) The information should be in the public domain in my opinion and indeed I believe I am right in saying that eventually it will be: my understanding is that when our DBF accounts for 2025 are published, they will have to identify this restricted fund, indicating who contributed to it and how much.</p>
11.	The Reverend Beth Keith Hallam Deanery	1. The number of concerns raised by female clergy regarding harassment, inappropriate touching, or assault by male clergy.	<p><i>Response from Harry Steele, Bishop's Chaplain:</i></p> <p>We have had a number of people in different offices (the Dean of Women's Ministry, bishop's office, archdeacons'</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The number of these concerns that have been formally lodged as complaints. 3. The number of complaints that have led to any form of action. 4. The number of female clergy who have made allegations and were subsequently encouraged to take time off, move to a different deanery, or leave the Diocese. 5. The number of concerns or complaints that have resulted in disciplinary action. 6. The number of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) that have been agreed upon in such cases. 7. Whether any clergy who have had allegations made against them have received financial settlements as part of their departure from the Diocese. 8. Whether any clergy who have made allegations have received financial settlements. 	<p>offices and Church House) working on these questions since they were received on 28 February. The data we have been able to collate in the time available is almost certainly only partial. We are therefore intending to provide a comprehensive response in time for the next meeting of the Synod.</p>
--	--	---	--