

**BISHOP'S COUNCIL REPORT TO DIOCESAN SYNOD
SATURDAY 8 MARCH 2025**

Since the last Synod meeting on 30 November, there has been one meeting of the Bishop's Council, on 4 February 2025. The following matters were discussed:

Membership

1. The new triennium began on 1 January 2025, some members who had served previously had been re-elected (Claire Dawson, Peter Rainford and Michael MacDonald), while three new members joined (Anna De Castro, Ed Morrison, Ben Tanner);
2. Matthew Rhodes and Jackie Butcher filled the ex-officio places as Chairs of the Houses of Clergy and Laity respectively;
3. Julia Newton and Harry Steele were co-opted as members once again;
4. Members were reminded that Bishops' Councils serve differing purposes across Dioceses. In Sheffield the Bishop's Council acts as the Standing Committee of Diocesan Synod and members are Trustees of the Board of Finance.

Safeguarding

1. A large part of the Agenda was dedicated to reflecting on recent failings in the Church of England, in light of the Makin Report, the Tudor Report and the Bishop of Liverpool's resignation.
2. Members were given the opportunity to express their own thoughts and reactions following recent events.
3. The upcoming debate at General Synod about safeguarding independence was noted.
4. The local progress in safeguarding was celebrated, including the development of the Survivor Support and Engagement Group which meets four times a year, and the preparation for a service in the Cathedral in November (around Safeguarding Sunday) which will be survivor-focussed.

Finance

1. The provisional year-end position was noted, together with a brief update on audit progress.
2. Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMIIB) funding – the submission of the bid on 16 January was celebrated, and thanks recorded to all those involved in its preparation.
3. Tony Gibbons was added as Company Secretary for the duration of Katie Bell's maternity leave.

Governance and Operational

1. The Diocesan Secretary circulated a report which gives an overview of strategic and operational matters, including plans for her maternity leave cover. LJ Buxton will act as Diocesan Secretary and additional support will be provided by Judith Knight, formerly HR Director in Gloucester Diocese.
2. Risk Register – a full review of the Risk Register had been carried out by risk owners to regrade or remove risks as necessary. It was noted that a new risk had been added relating to high-profile safeguarding failures in the wider national church leading to a general loss of confidence in Church of England safeguarding policies and procedures, undermining the work being done locally by the safeguarding team and PCCs.