

**BISHOP'S COUNCIL REPORT TO DIOCESAN SYNOD
SATURDAY 19 JULY 2025**

Since the last Synod meeting on 8 March, there have been two meetings of the Bishop's Council, on 29 April and 24 June 2025. The following matters were discussed:

Safeguarding

1. The Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Advisory Panel, Christina Leath, attended to present the Safeguarding Annual Report
2. It was noted that a review of the Service Level Agreement with the Cathedral had been held and agreed that it continues to be a useful link and is working well.
3. Training requirements were noted, including that Domestic Abuse Awareness is now compulsory for clergy.
4. It was noted that preparation for the INEQE audit in May 2026 was underway.
5. Parishes are being encouraged to sign up to the safeguarding dashboards and those who have are finding it a really helpful tool.
6. The Chris Brain Nine O'Clock Service trial began on 30 June. A briefing document was circulated, together with information about the communication plan and support that is in place.

Finance

1. Representatives from Saffery Champness attended the Council meeting to present the 2024 audit findings. It was noted that the process had been much smoother this year, with planning beginning before year-end. The audit had focused on six risks and no material mis-statements had been identified relating to those risks.
2. Proposals from the Triennium Funding Working Group were welcomed, including:
 - a. plans to restore stipend levels to the pre-2011 levels, taking account of inflationary increases;
 - b. Increase in Lowest Income Community Funding
 - c. The end of apportionment, with payments made to a Ministry Training Fund instead;
 - d. A tapering fund to assist dioceses with current levels of deficits.

Governance and Operational

1. The Acting Diocesan Secretary circulated a report which gives an overview of strategic and operational matters, as well as update on HR and team changes.
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 changes in tenancy notice periods.
3. The reduced capacity of the Senior Staff was noted, with the departure of Bishop Sophie, Malcolm Chamberlain and Katie Bell on maternity leave. The

news of the appointment of Leah Vasey-Saunders as Bishop of Doncaster was welcomed, as well as the news of a successful appointment process for the Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham.