

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SHEFFIELD DIOCESAN SYNOD AND BOARD OF  
FINANCE**

**AT CHRIST CHURCH PITSMOOR**

**SATURDAY 19 JULY 2025 AT 9.00 AM**

1. **INTRODUCTION AND NOTICES**

Bishop Pete welcomed members to the meeting.

The Reverend Huw Thomas, Associate Priest at Christ Church Pitsmoor, led opening worship. As part of this he expressed concern about some of the tone and atmosphere of recent meetings, and that important items are being lost amongst people's specific reasons for being in the meeting. He asked members to remember the most important quality of love.

Bishop Pete thanked Huw Thomas, Pip Salmon and Will Gowers for hosting the meeting.

Dr Jackie Butcher was confirmed as Chair for the meeting.

The Act of Synod affirming the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 2024 in the form it takes following its amendment at February 2025 Group of Sessions was proclaimed. The Act of Synod Instrument had been circulated to members with the Notice Paper.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were shown on the Notice Paper or could be notified to Elizabeth Lunt.

3. **THE MINUTES** of the Synod's meeting held at All Saints Woodlands on Saturday 8 March 2025 had been circulated as Paper 3.1 and were accepted and signed.

**Matters arising**

In addition to the response from the DAC Secretary to Question 1 at the last Diocesan Synod meeting, the Diocesan Registrar had provided some additional information which had been circulated with the Notice Paper as Paper 3.2.

There were no other matters arising.

4. **BISHOP'S COUNCIL REPORT**

A Report on the proceedings of the Bishop's Council since the last Synod meeting was circulated as Paper 4.1. Canon Peter Rainford and Dr Jackie Butcher presented the report. Dr Butcher informed Synod that the Bishop's Council acts as the Standing Committee of Diocesan Synod. Canon Rainford

indicated that the focus in the last two meetings had been on safeguarding and finance, but also on the “nuts and bolts” of the work of the DBF. He also added that, for Diocesan Synod members, there were options for contributing to Synod agendas via Deanery Synod motions and also by asking individual questions. However, if these routes are not appropriate, there is also the availability of the lay and clergy chairs of Synod if anyone has a specific item to raise which could then be discussed by Bishop’s Council and cascaded to Diocesan Synod if that is appropriate.

*MEETING AS THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE – Miss Julia Newton took the Chair, in place of Canon Ian Walker. She indicated that she is on Bishop’s Council co-opted by Bishop Pete due to her financial background.*

5. **2024 DBF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE UPDATE** – A copy of the Finance Report and Annual Report and Accounts were circulated as Papers 5.1 and 5.2.

Thanks were expressed to Tony Gardiner for his leadership of the finance team and thanks were recorded to the Reverend Canon Mark Wigglesworth who had recently retired after a number of years in the Diocese, including as Interim Head of Finance.

### **2024 Accounts**

Mr Tony Gardiner, Director of Finance, provided an update on diocesan finances. He gave a summary of the 2024 accounts, noting the income for 2023 and 2024 were the same at £10.1m and expenditure in both years was also the same at around £11.7m.

In terms of the general fund, there was an actual end of year deficit of £1m against the budgeted deficit of £2.1m. Income was in line with budget, but expenditure was lower due to lower clergy numbers and lower spending on ingoing works. The restricted funds had a deficit of £700k and endowed funds a net surplus of £200k, so the overall deficit across all funds was £1.5m. There was a net gain on investment funds of £500k which was lower than the £1.6m in 2023 due to market situations. Taken together it meant the funds of the diocese on the balance sheet reduced by £1m to £59m at the 31 December 2024.

Mr Gardiner reported that Safferys had audited the accounts for the third year using a risk-based approach. They look particularly at management, how income is managed, fund accounting and going concern (can the diocese meet their obligations for the next 12 months). The auditors then report to Finance and Property Committee and Bishop’s Council.

Key risks were identified by the audit as Common Fund contributions, ongoing deficit position, reducing reserves pot and reliance on national contributions. These are discussed with the finance team and governance

committees. The auditors had confirmed the 2024 accounts presented a true and fair record.

### **2025 Expectations and Common Fund**

A budget deficit of £1.99m had been approved for 2025. The SMMIB award includes £1m of transition funding, so the total deficit, given current trajectories, is likely to be between £0.75m and £1m because of this.

The budget of £3.5m for common fund receipts was the same as income in 2023, but still substantially below the £4.2m received in 2019. The actual position is expected to be roughly in line with budget, with receipts to date at £1.55m including monies received via the Ephesians and Diocesan Restricted Funds.

The Common Fund Ask for 2026 has requested an uplift in Common Fund giving, and responses will be included in 2026 budget planning.

### **Questions**

1. Mr Brian Wrigley (Ecclesall Deanery) asked about the continuing deficit and whether or not a strategy for deficit reduction over the next five years was being prepared. Mr Gardiner responded that the triennium funding will have significant implications for the Diocese of Sheffield and will impact budgets from 2026. Miss Newton also reflected that there is a clear strategy for growing the Kingdom of God through prayer and hard work, and Bishop's Council also consider how to be wise stewards of the funds available. She confirmed that a detailed financial model exists but highlighted that the various uncertainties and complexities in particular in relation to national funding at this time, mean that these need to be worked through. She confirmed that Bishop Pete would be speaking further about national funding in his presidential address.
2. Dr Jane Patterson (General Synod) asked about lower level of clergy costs and asked how many clergy roles were not filled. Mr Gardiner responded that the budget for 2024 assumed all roles would be filled which has not happened. The budget for 2025 has assumed some of the roles may not be filled. Bishop Pete added that 14 posts were not filled and that projections by the ministry development board expects a further fall in numbers of people called to stipendiary ministry.
3. The Revd Malcolm Liles (Attercliffe Deanery) asked about CCLA's takeover by Jupiter. Mr Gardiner indicated that he understood it is a 25-year agreement and assurances have been given that nothing will change.

In conclusion, Miss Julia Newton, on behalf of the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, moved:

“THAT the Accounts of the Diocesan Board of Finance for the twelve months ended 31 December 2024 be taken note of and the Reports of the Directors and Auditors thereon be received.”

The motion was carried unanimously.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF 2025 AUDITORS** – On behalf of the Finance Committee, Miss Julia Newton moved:

“THAT Saffery Champness Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, be appointed Auditors to the Diocesan Board of Finance for the year ending 31 December 2025 and that the Directors be authorised to fix their remuneration for the Audit of the 2025

The motion was carried unanimously.

*MEETING AS THE DIOCESAN SYNOD – Dr Jackie Butcher re-took the Chair*

7. **SMIIB BID UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS** – Alex Shilkoff, Strategic Programme Director, and LJ Buxton, Acting Diocesan Secretary led the item. Paper 7.1 was circulated with the Notice Paper for information.

Ms Shilkoff reminded members about the diocesan vision statement and the refreshed strategy which was to work towards that vision statement. She reported that there had been consultations through 2024 which had contributed to the refreshed strategy which was submitted as part of the bid. Deanery engagement meetings will be held throughout 2025. The bid included the hope that 90% of parishes will be growing or holding steady by 2031.

Ms Shilkoff confirmed that the first tranche of funding has been agreed until 2028 with an in-principal response for the period from 2028 to 2031. The bid funds have been allocated to invest in mission and ministry as part of the strategy for growth. Ms Shilkoff encouraged those present to access the support available centrally.

Three key considerations looked at how the money should be spent:

1. What is already going well
2. Demographics, including new homes
3. Learning from the first phase of the strategy

All of this while keeping equity in mind, so deprived areas have the same opportunities as others. Information has been given to ensure openness and transparency, but Ms Shilkoff encouraged involvement from members particularly in consultation processes.

LJ Buxton updated Synod on the communications strategy which was part of an appendix to the SMMIB bid. She indicated that a new overview booklet had been launched and members were encouraged to take them back to parishes.

She also added the importance of story-telling to show how the strategy is in action, sharing encouragements and learning from improvements. The new Network magazine was also shared.

LJ Buxton indicated that the Common Fund pledge requests for 2026 were to be distributed in the coming weeks, requesting a 3-5% uplift. She noted that national support is reliant on matched generosity.

### **Questions**

1. The Revd Paul Richardson (West Doncaster) thanked Alex Shilkoff for the successful bids which enables the growth of mission and ministry in the Diocese. He noted the deficit is around the difference between Common Fund receipts from 2019. He wondered if it was possible to reiterate the importance of Common Fund locally in parishes, while also acknowledging the challenges. He also asked for clarity in how much it costs to support a parish priest **ACTION**.
  2. Beth Henshaw (Laughton Deanery) asked if there was a presentation that could be shared that explains what Common Fund is used for. LJ Buxton responded that animated videos had been created in the past and these will be reviewed to see how current they are **ACTION**.
  3. The Revd Canon Rick Stordy (Ecclesfield Deanery and General Synod) added that local stories were also important in local contexts to encourage giving.
  4. The Revd Beth Keith (Hallam Deanery) asked about the shift towards mission areas, and whether there could be more clarity around whether common fund is from parishes or across mission areas. LJ Buxton replied that the cost that is quoted in the literature is for an oversight minister.
  5. Gillis Robbie (Hallam Deanery) asked about the young leaders and what age they will be and whether the young leaders will be encouraged to seek out routes to ordained ministry in the Diocese. Ms Shilkoff responded that there are two strands, locally and also within the Diocese, for those looking for opportunities for leadership. A ministry experience scheme is also being run and all of those taking part are helping to discern what God is calling them to.
8. **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS** – Bishop Pete addressed Synod, a copy of his full address is included in Appendix 1.

### **Questions**

1. The Revd Paul Richardson (West Doncaster) thanked Bishop Pete for his address and asked about the increase in funding for ordained ministry and whether it may help towards increasing numbers of ordained stipendiary ministry. Bishop Pete hoped that would be the case.
2. The Revd Christopher Hobbs (Snaith and Hatfield) asked if the Common Fund request will be reduced to take account of the national funding towards the 10% increase in stipends. Bishop Pete responded that the Common Fund receipts will not cover stipends so there was an urgent need for General Synod to consider how stipends are covered in future.
3. Michaela Suckling (General Synod) asked about the reduction in racial justice funding and whether this would impact the Diocese. Bishop Pete responded that the funding dropped from around £15m in the last triennium to £12m in the current triennium, but this is now locked in perpetuity for future. It will not make any difference to this diocese.

The meeting broke for coffee, during which there was an opportunity to meet members of the Mission Area Support Team.

9. **A WINDOW ON ECCLESFIELD DEANERY** – the Reverend Will Gowers and John Marsden provided a window on the Deanery, both focussed on café church and what is going well or not.

Mr Marsden spoke about Café Church at St Mark's Grenoside, 'Together @ Ten', which aimed to bring together the different groups within the congregations. Largely it has been successful in that. Its second aim was to bring together the members of the monthly Messy Church congregation and usual church congregation. Unfortunately in this aim it has failed so far. There are two congregations with demographic profiles that complement each other but without integrating together into one larger church family. They are therefore looking at how to encourage commitment, both in attendance, leadership and financial from those attending Messy Church.

The Revd Will Gowers noted his experience of bringing together church family and community, particularly looking at All Age services and how to attract participation. The model adopted was Café Church which was tried in different ways. The positive aspect was the essence of togetherness, particularly post-Covid, and re-engagement of some families.

10. **DIOCESAN OVERSEAS LINKS** – the Reverend Canon Mark Brown was invited to speak about his recent visit to the link Diocese of Argentina which was linked with Sheffield Diocese in 1993. He had been invited by Bishop Brian in Argentina, and spoke at 14 engagements, particularly on mission, leadership, use of Scripture and evangelism.

Bishop Pete concluded the item by indicating that the link is coordinated by the Argentina Link Committee and asked anyone who would be interested in joining that Committee to speak with him. He also noted that he hoped

to appoint an Adviser for World Development, and again asked anyone who may be interested in the role to speak to him.

11. **DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING REPORT** – The Diocesan Safeguarding Report, had been circulated as Paper 10.1. If there were any questions arising out of the report members were asked to submit them to Elizabeth Lunt.
12. **GENERAL SYNOD REPORT** – Dr Jane Patterson provided a report of the July Group of Sessions. The following were highlighted in particular:
  - a. The National Church Governance Measure, designed to simplify governance arrangements, was passed.
  - b. Considerable time was given to debating the abuse redress Measure and Rules. Consideration had been given to how the scheme might function, including ensuring applicants are dealt with with care, empathy and compassion. Applications should be made within five years of the scheme being launched, but there is potential for extension.
  - c. There was no PLF item on the agenda, although two debates touched on it.
  - d. A motion to remove agreement on Issues on Human Sexuality from those exploring discernment. An amendment to replace with Guidance for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy while further pastoral guidance is issued was passed.
  - e. Response to the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill – there were a number of thoughtful contributions, after which Synod almost unanimously supported the motion.
  - f. There were encouraging presentations on Church Growth and Revitalisation and celebrating the impact of Thy Kingdom Come
  - g. Two memorable speeches from visiting guests included Brigadier Jaish Mahan who made a comparison between the Church and the Army, while acknowledging not all Christians support armed conflict. The Archbishop of Jerusalem spoke about the encouragement of the prayers, messages, visits and statements made in support of the church in his Diocese.
  - h. Liturgical Business included plans to commemorate the anniversary of a group of 20 Coptic Libyan and one Ghanian Christian men who were kidnapped and murdered by the Islamic State on 21 February 2015.
13. **SYNOD QUESTIONS** – The questions that had been received were circulated with the notice paper together with written responses. Members were reminded that questions can be asked of Synod officers if relevant to their duties but should not ask for opinion.

The questions and responses are set out in Appendix 2. Supplementaries were invited for each question and those received are also set out in the Appendix.

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – The date of the next meeting is Saturday 23 November 2025 at venue TBC.
16. **CLOSING PRAYERS** – The meeting concluded with prayers led by the Reverend Pip Salmon.



**Presidential Address to the Diocesan Synod  
Saturday 19 July 2025**

Dear friends,

I wonder if you recognise these words?

*Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory  
and the splendour and the majesty,  
for everything in heaven and on earth belongs to you.  
Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all.  
Both riches and honour come from you, and you are the ruler over all.  
In your hands are power and might to exalt and give strength to all.  
Now therefore, our God, we give you thanks,  
and we praise your glorious name.  
For everything comes from you,  
and from your own hand we have given to you. 1 Chr 28.11-14*

I don't have much good to say about the 1980 Alternative Service Book, but the prayer it introduced to be said at the offertory, derived from these verses in 1 Chronicles 29.11-14, David's prayer at the consecration of the first temple in Jerusalem, was a work of genius. It recognises that God is all in all: everything comes from him and belongs to him. In particular, it recognises that riches belong to God and that any riches we offer to him have already come from him: from your own hand we have given to you. What a wonderful phrase that is: from your own hand we have given to you.

Friends, I want to focus my address this afternoon on money, because certainly in the eight years of my tenure, the Diocese of Sheffield has never had so much of it. I shall try to outline what we have and how I hope we can use it, to pursue the goal to which I believe myself called, which is the revitalisation of the Diocese, so that the good news of Jesus Christ can be proclaimed in every place and communities transformed by the vision of God's coming kingdom.

Alex has already helpfully put the award of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board into perspective – but to remind you: the national church is prepared to invest £17.5m in this Diocese in the 3 years from 2026 to 2028, with an in-principle award of a further £18.5m for 2029-2031. At the very least, that is a vote of confidence in our vision and strategy, our governance and culture, which I hope encourages you.

But I am going to focus my address not on that SMMIB award, but on the spending plans proposed by the Triennium Funding Working Group for 2026 to 2028. The TFWG is the task group which draws up proposals for the way in which the money provided by the Church Commissioners to support the mission and ministry of the Church of England will be spent. It is made up of members of the Archbishops' Council, the Church Commissioners and the House of Bishops and

its proposals have to be formally approved by the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioner before they are put to the General Synod, including the House of Bishops, to be agreed. As a Church Commissioner, as well as a member of the House of Bishops I was invited to serve a member of the TFWG this time around, and our Diocese was also represented by Katie Bell, who participated as an observer on behalf of the Diocesan Secretaries' Network.

I am very proud of the outcome of this process. It is extremely good news for stipendiary clergy across the Church of England, and especially good news for Dioceses which serve high concentrations of what are called 'lowest income communities' and therefore it is particularly good news for this Diocese.

The first bit of good news is that the Church Commissioners have dramatically increased the amount of funding available. In fact, the Commissioners have been increasing their disbursements each triennium since 2017 – but as you can see from this slide, the jump this time is staggering. The Commissioners have never in their history committed £1.6 billion in one triennium. And though the total sums are projected to drop again somewhat in the next two triennia, please note that what will drop most is the historic commitments (that's things like pensions), represented here in pink, and the time-limited transformational commitments. The strategic ongoing commitments and the core commitments will actually increase in the years to come.

So, where will that £1.6 billion pounds go? Well, here are some headlines. I want to say something about stipends and pensions, something about lowest income communities funding, something about time-limited support for DBFs in deficit, something about apportionment and something finally about the Diocesan Investment programme.

Stipends and pensions first of all. The TFWG made two dramatic proposals. The first was to create a national standard stipend. Previously, the Church of England has agreed centrally each year a national minimum stipend, but individual DBFs have been allowed to pay above it if they have been able to afford it. That has meant that clergy in Guildford have received about £2500 a year more than clergy in Birmingham. I regard that differential as wicked and I am proud to have been part of the process which should now ensure that clergy receive the same stipend, wherever in the country they serve.

But secondly, the TFWG proposed a significant uplift in the size of the stipend, an increase of 10.7% on the average stipend, a bit more than that on the stipend we have been paying in Sheffield. From April next year, stipendiary clergy in this Diocese will see their stipend jump by almost £3500 a year.

And of course, that has a knock on benefit for pensions. In fact, pensions will have a triple boost. First, since the basic pension is calculated with reference to the stipend, if the stipend goes up by 10% a year, so does the pension. Secondly, whereas at the moment, pensions are calculated with reference to the stipend

level of the previous year, they will now be calculated with reference to the current year, which will also mean a small uptick. And thirdly, the pension level is being restored to two-thirds of the stipend – since 2011 it has been calculated on the basis of one-half.

Secondly, and more briefly, the TFWG has proposed that Lowest Income Communities Funding be increased by 30% to £133m for the triennium. So whereas in this Diocese we are receiving £1.7m this year, next year it will be £2.2m, an uplift of just over £500k.

Thirdly, the TFWG proposed the introduction of a time-limited fund of £100m to assist Dioceses with post-Covid deficits. You'll be aware that this year alone, the combined budgeted deficits of all Dioceses comes to around £60m. Our share of that time-limited support will be £0.6m in 2026, tapering to nothing over a 9 year period.

Fourthly, the TFWG recommended the abolition of so-called apportionment, which is a sort of Diocesan equivalent of parish share, which DBFs have historically paid to the Archbishops' Council to cover the costs of various central services. Part of those costs relate to the training of ordinands, and Dioceses will still be required to contribute to that, but the new Ministry Training Fund will reform the way that is done, to ensure ordinands are funded more generously and more evenly, more fairly, more consistently across the country. That too is good news for our Diocese, actually. But the net benefit to our DBF of the end of apportionment will be £0.4m.

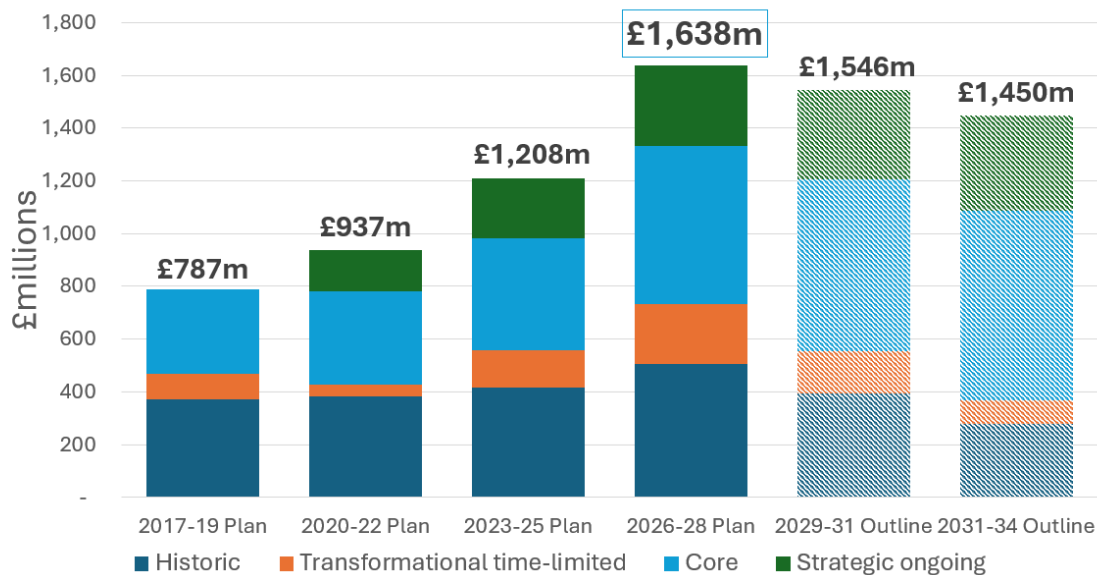
And finally, the TFWG proposed that £236m be allocated for the coming triennium to the Diocesan Investment Programme. That is the fund out of which we received that SMMIB award of £17.5m this year, and out of which we hope to receive the £18.5m which has been agreed in-principle in 2028: so it is potentially good news for us that that fund has had this major top up, because that's the pot out of which our funding would come. If there was no DIP, there would be no £18.5m for us in three years' time.

So what does this mean for our 2026 budget? Well it looks as if we would have been heading into next year with a budgeted deficit of about £1.3m, maybe a little less. If you remove apportionment and add in the MTF contribution, that drops to about £900k. If you add in our extra LinC, it drops to £400k. If you add in the extra costs associated with those increased stipends, you're back to nearly £800k, but if you then add in the time limited support, you're left with a projected deficit of just £200. It will be the first time in my tenure as the Bishop of Sheffield that we have been within touching distance of break-even.

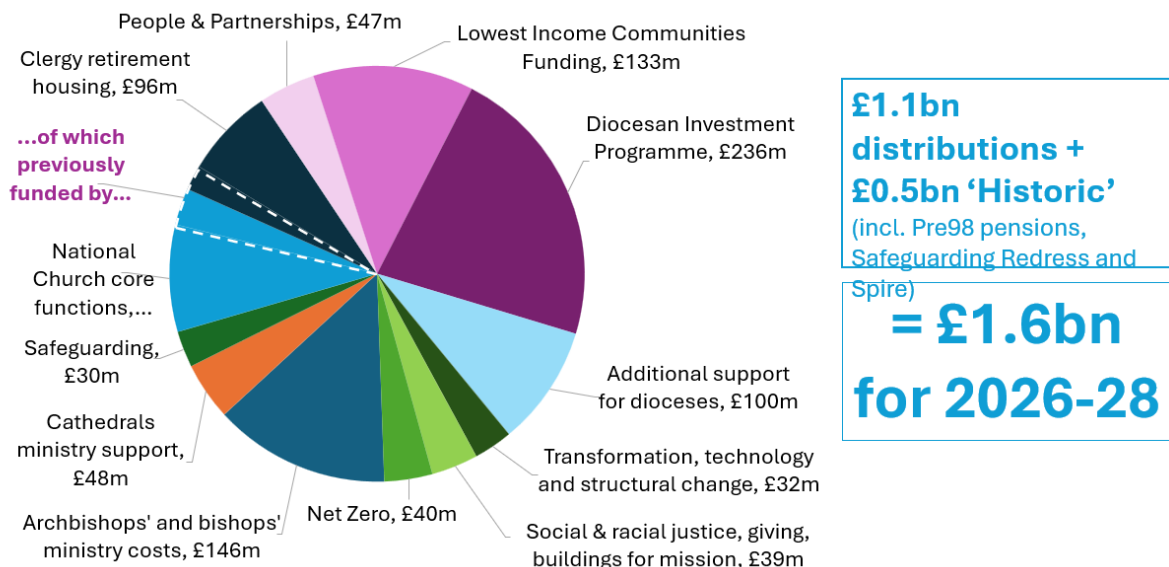
Friends, I have never before delivered a Presidential Address to this Synod in which I have made so little mention of Jesus. But the endorsement of the TFWG proposals by General Synod last week is such good news for us in this Diocese, and gives us such financial headroom in the work of revitalisation in which we are

engaged for the sake of the Gospel and the coming kingdom of God that I hope you might just this once, forgive me. Thank you.

## Funding available



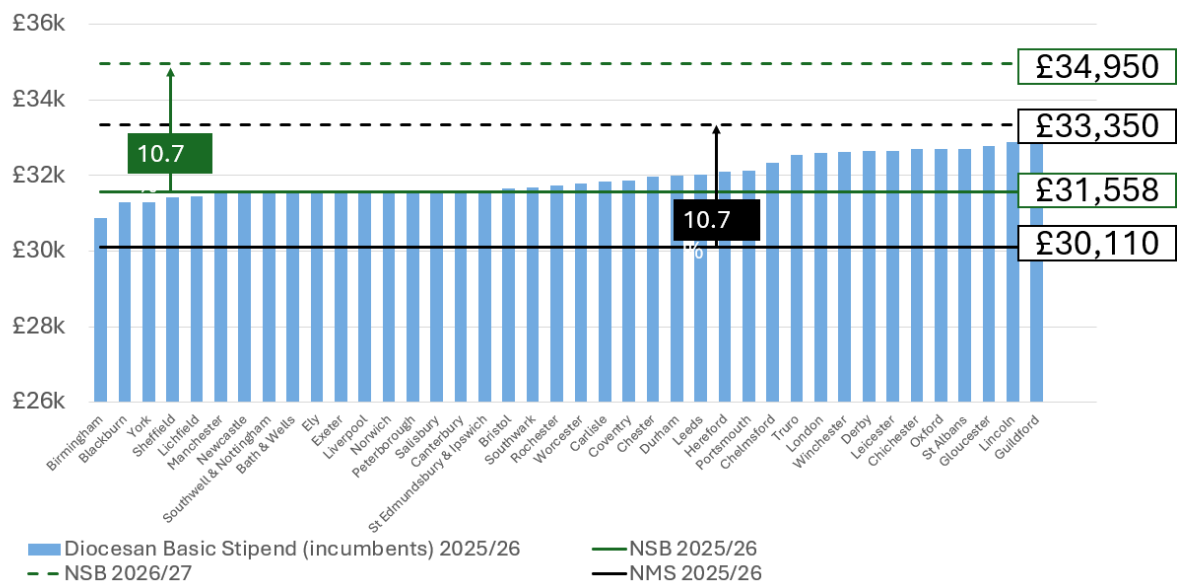
## Planned spending of £1.1bn for 2026-28 (excluding 'historic' matters and contingency)



## Headlines

- \* Stipends uplift (and pensions uplift) and national standard stipend
- \* Lowest Income Communities Funding increased by 30%
- \* End of 'apportionment' (bar new 'ministry training contribution')
- \* Time limited deficit relief to DBFs

## Clergy stipends



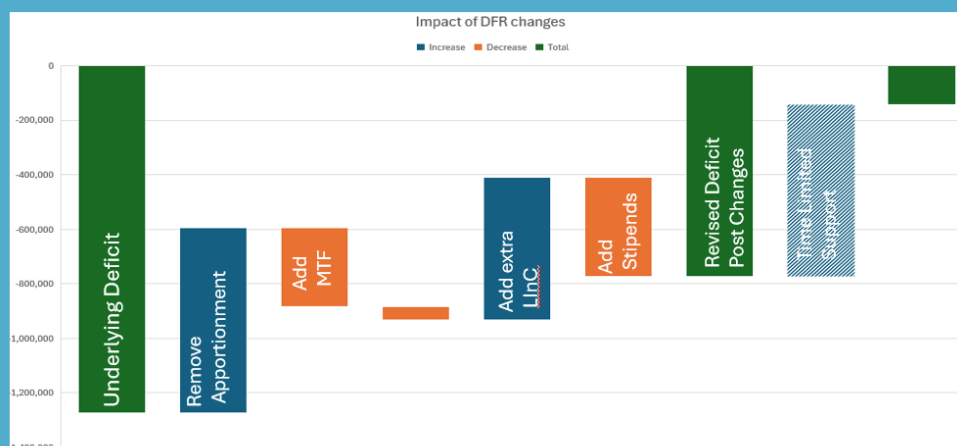
## Pension improvements

- **Increase the National Minimum Stipend** to £33,350 from April 2026 (an increase of 10.7%) increases the starting pension.... and changing the reference point to **remove the one-year lag** is a further boost
- Restoring the **target pension level to two-thirds of pensionable stipend** for future service:
  - Uplifting benefits for active and deferred members to reflect a two-thirds accrual rate since 2011
  - For pensioners, providing an increase to pensions that have come into payment since 2011

### Includes

- Making every day of service count (e.g. removing the limits on max accrual) and going back to needing 40 years' service to provide a clergy pension of two thirds pensionable

## Impact on 2026



## Questions to Diocesan Synod – 19 July 2025

	From	Question	Response
1.	The Reverend Beth Keith Hallam Deanery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The number of concerns raised by female clergy regarding harassment, inappropriate touching, or assault by male clergy.</li> <li>2. The number of these concerns that have been formally lodged as complaints.</li> <li>3. The number of complaints that have led to any form of action.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>5. The number of concerns or complaints that have resulted in disciplinary action.</li> <li>6. The number of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) that have been agreed upon in such cases.</li> <li>7. Whether any clergy who have had allegations made against them have received financial settlements as part of their departure from the Diocese.</li> <li>8. Whether any clergy who have made allegations have received financial settlements.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Response from Harry Steele, Bishop's Chaplain:</i></p> <p>This is a very important question and I am grateful to Beth for asking it: it is important that the Diocese of Sheffield is willing to reflect on its past – including some very distressing cases – and seek to improve on robust process as we seek to do all that is in our power to ensure that the parishes of the diocese are a safe place for all. This question could relate in part to safeguarding as well as dignity at work: I am grateful to Leo Colson, the Diocesan HR manager, and Revd Amanda Barraclough for the work they have undertaken, still in progress but nearing completion, on a new and vigorous Dignity at Work policy for the Diocese. Notably, this includes the selection and training of Anti-Harassment Advisors who will have an important role in this regard. I also remain grateful for the ongoing work of our safeguarding team and the fact that that already highly competent team is always developing and growing in wisdom and competence.</p> <p>The questions that have been asked are hard to answer for two reasons. Firstly, because of how the term 'harassment' should be understood – in its widest or more narrow understanding. Secondly, the answers are hard because of the period of time involved. The record of reported events of harassment, inappropriate touch, and/or assault by clergy are complete, and I am confident that if a member of clergy with a substantiated allegation of this nature made against them were to seek a licence or authorisation in another diocese, or sought to obtain a new licence or authorisation in the Diocese of Sheffield, that substantiated allegation would be reviewed and assessed appropriately before any action was taken. However, there is not an easily accessible list of such occurrences that can be consulted and reported on in a way that would be helpful to answer these questions. There is, of course, a confidential national list of serious incidents of this nature that have resulted in action being taken against a Clerk in Holy Orders such as a limited</p>

		<p>prohibition, prohibition, removal from office, deprived, disqualified, etc.</p> <p>My pointing out the difficulty in answering the questions is not an attempt to not answer them fully or to the best of my ability. I have tried to do that despite these difficulties.</p> <p>The answers below contain one instance where I have taken a wider understanding of the term 'harassment': this is reflected in all the answers but especially the answer to 6 and 7 where, if a narrower view were taken the answer to both would be 'zero'.</p> <p>Finally, before I answer the questions, it should be noted that the questions relate to such instances perpetrated by male clergy against female clergy. The numbers below would be greater if the question were also to include such instances against lay members of the Church, or indeed perhaps instances of harassment by laity toward female clergy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4</li> <li>2. 4</li> <li>3. 4</li> <li>4. 1 person did move to a different diocese. It looks as if this were their own decision, although perhaps inevitable that they would have to.</li> <li>5. 4</li> <li>6. 1 – it was not technically a non-disclosure agreement, but a settlement agreement in which all parties agreed to observe certain confidentiality.</li> <li>7. Yes – 1</li> <li>8. No</li> </ol>
	<b>SUPPLEMENTARY</b>	<p>Thank you for the answer, it is encouraging to see some of the response, but disturbing to see that in a quarter of cases there was something a kin to a non-disclosure agreement and in a quarter of cases there was a financial settlement with the alleged perpetrator, whilst no victims received any finance. ISVA's</p> <p>Bishop Pete responded that the timeframe examined was within living memory, so at least 10 years.</p> <p>The first part of the question will be passed to the Reverend Harry Steele.</p> <p><i>Response from Harry Steele:</i></p> <p>I will liaise with the Dean of Women's Ministry and HR Manager and raise the points that have been made and, if necessary, ask colleagues across the</p>

		<p>(Independent sexual violence advisors) report that only 16% of sexual assaults are reported. They give general societal reasons why people might not report, and in particular note specifics reasons why those in religious communities or churches might not report. Will the work being done on the Dignity at Work Policy include the wider issues around reporting difficulties, as well as what happens when people do report?</p> <p>And can you give us the time frame in which the cases occurred?</p>	<p>CofE if they have anything that can be used as a starting point in this area.</p>
2	<p>The Reverend Stephen Gardner, Adwick le Street Deanery</p>	<p>Does the Chair of the Board of Finance agree that the proposed 10.7% rise in Clergy Stipends is not generous beneficence but simply returns the value of the clergy stipend, lost due to inflation, to its effective value in 2019 and if so, can the chair tell us what steps the Diocesan Board of Finance will be taking to ensure that the stipend isn't allowed to decrease in value over the next 6 years in the same way that has been allowed and enacted by the Board over the last 6 years!</p>	<p><i>Response from Canon Ian Walker, Chair of the DBF</i></p> <p>Unfortunately the DBF has relatively little capacity to deliver what is requested here in terms of future commitments , because the value of the new National Standard Stipend will be determined centrally.</p> <p>However, I am delighted to say that the intended effect of the proposed 10.7% increase in clergy stipends is that stipends, in inflation adjusted terms, will be as they were in 2011. It is also excellent news that the stipend will now be standard across the country.</p> <p>I stated in Synod on 30<sup>th</sup> November that in the past we benchmarked our stipends with other dioceses to ensure that we were able to attract clergy and that furthermore we would look at stipend levels again when more funds became available. Katie Bell then pointed out to Synod that a national review was underway that may impact decisions moving forward.</p> <p>It is wonderful to hear that additional funds have been made available to Sheffield DBF to, at least on a transitional basis, fund these increases.</p> <p>It is important though for Synod to be aware of a couple of matters in this regard:</p>



			<p>Firstly, in the past we have paid above the National Minimum Stipend (“NMS”) recommended by General Synod for clergy of incumbent status and at the NMS level for curate status clergy. The new recommendations are for dioceses to adopt a National Standard Benchmark (“NSB”) for clergy of incumbent status and the NMS for curate status clergy. The NSB and NMS will be determined centrally with the intention that they track the CPIH inflation measure.</p> <p>Secondly although over the last few years, the value of stipends, like many other people’s incomes, has not kept up with inflation during the cost of living crisis, the DBF’s receipts of Common Fund, the principal source of funds to pay for stipends, have fallen by almost half (48%) in real terms since 2011. This, coupled with the fact that the national support to Sheffield to increase stipends is for a limited period only means we need to not lose sight of the fact that, for our sustainability, we need to pray for growth in our churches and our churches’ giving.</p>
3	The Reverend Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	From the Annual Returns for the past 3 years can we be told how many services have been led by clergy with PTO?	<p><i>Response from the Reverend Harry Steele, Bishop’s Chaplain</i></p> <p>This is not easy to ascertain as the PTO ministerial forms are returned in two formats: some are emailed as pdf or word documents whereas others are paper copies that are posted. If they were returned as an online form then it would likely be easy to get this data - I am not convinced it would be simple to collect them as an online form.</p> <p>As it is, it would require going through over 50 forms per year and assessing the data to come up with the figure you have asked for . This is obviously not impossible but would take some considerable hours of work.</p>
	<b>SUPPLEMENTARY</b>	What are the forms for if not to give an account of the services taken by clergy with PTO? Their purpose is surely to inform Senior Staff of the contribution being made.	<p>Bishop Pete responded that the primary purpose is to ensure the person completing the form is properly resourced for their ministry. He will have a further conversation about collating the information.</p> <p><i>Additional response from the Revd Harry Steele following the meeting:</i></p> <p>The importance I place on such forms, and in asking for the number of services undertaken by those with PTO, is that it shows that a conversation and reflection has taken place between a</p>

designated responsible person and the person with PTO: this is a mechanism that introduces a level of accountability. Without the annual PTO ministerial return (plus DBS and training), the bishop will not issue PTO for a further three years. In 'the bad old days' PTO was issued with no restriction and no accountability. This is a notable safeguarding risk. The PTO annual return is a record of a conversation between the priest with PTO and the designated responsible person (who must hold the *licence* of the bishop and not PTO authorisation): it is that aspect that I deem to be important (notwithstanding +Pete's comments about being resourced for ministry) rather than the numbers themselves.

An exercise was completed to collate the forms from the last year (2024), summarised below:

	<b>Total no of services taken</b>	<b>Average per year per person with PTO</b>
Eucharist – in parish	853	12
Eucharist – out of parish	512	7
Preached – in parish	794	11
Preached – out of parish	459	6
Funeral – in parish	122	2
Funeral – out of parish	104	1
Baptism – in parish	47	1
Baptism – out of parish	41	1
Wedding – in parish	24	0
Wedding – out of parish	12	0
Other teaching – in parish	286	4
Other teaching – out of parish	53	1
Pastoral – in parish	302	4
Pastoral – out of parish	117	2
Other – in parish	255	3
Other – out of parish	13	0

4	The Reverend Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	Will the reduction in funding for Racial Justice work by the Archbishops Council affect this work in our own diocese?	<p><i>Response from Bishop Pete:</i></p> <p>As Bishop Sarah was at pains to convey at General Synod, the apparent reduction in funding is more perceived than real; and in any case, the answer to the question is No.</p>
5	The Reverend Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	I understand that the House of Bishops will again be discussing LLF at its meeting in October, and that some dioceses such as Oxford have been consulted on progress so far. However, there is no consultation in our papers for this meeting. How can the clergy and laity of this diocese convey their current views to that meeting by other than a consultation?	<p><i>Response from Bishop Pete:</i></p> <p>Materials were circulated in April for formal consultation by Diocesan Synods, but they included proposals for a particular form of delegated episcopal ministry, calibrated to permit bespoke PLF services. It became clear in May that these proposals did not carry the support of the House of Bishops. Different Dioceses have responded to this in different ways. Just 18 Dioceses have gone ahead with some form of consultation (1 of which approved a motion from the floor at the very start of the item to move to next business). The majority of Dioceses have taken my view, that the time to engage Synods in consultation is when we have a firm proposal on the table to consult over. The most recent advice from the LLF Programme Board was as follows: When the diocesan consultations were first planned, the Programme Team were confident that the suggested framework for discussions would provide helpful insights. Responses from some dioceses that have already held their informal consultation identified challenges in holding these consistently enough to provide the type of feedback required. Some dioceses who were due to hold their consultations before the summer have now decided to postpone these to a later date. Other dioceses are opting to hold conversations around LLF in Synods without the detailed consultation and feedback. The Programme Board recognises that different dioceses will take different approaches and that some dioceses may choose to pause holding these.</p>
6	The Reverend Malcolm Liles, Attercliffe Deanery	In the penultimate paragraph of the Safeguarding report submitted to the April Diocesan Synod it states" The safeguarding team have reviewed the advice around the leadership course and PTO version. Where did that advice	<p><i>Response from the Reverend Harry Steele, Bishop's Chaplain and acting Safeguarding Lead</i></p> <p>The Church of England has guidance on the core safeguarding pathways that can be accessed here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-learning-and-development-framework/section-3-core-safeguarding-pathways">https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-learning-and-development-framework/section-3-core-safeguarding-pathways</a></p>

	<p>come from? I have been in touch with HR at Church House Westminster and they do not know of any advice to the effect that clergy with PTO should be limited to 5 services a year if using the PTO pathway. I have not heard of any other diocese implementing this either.</p>	<p>In that document the required attendees on Leadership training are,</p> <p>'All clergy holding the bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including PTO where exemption has not been given) including Honorary/Assistant Bishops and Chaplains.</p> <p>The document 'Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment - Permission to Officiate' specifies:</p> <p>'For those holding PTO, the bishop granting permission should determine the level of training required in consultation with the DSA: for those who will be in active ministry, C3 is the required module; for those who will only rarely be engaged in ministry it may be more appropriate for C1 to be completed.</p> <p>The House of Bishops' Training and Development Practice Guidance (2017) states at 3.4 that: There may be some extenuating circumstances in which bishops may wish to exercise a degree of discretion in implementing the requirements for training, for example with clergy who because of infirmity never exercise their PTO. The Bishop should seek the advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser prior to giving discretion. If the PTO is being exercised – no matter how limited the circumstances – there remains a requirement for training, but it may be that C1 is a more appropriate level than C3. Where such discretion is exercised, the bishop should record it in the blue file of any clergyperson or the appropriate record of lay ministers.</p> <p>This should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Any exemption from any training must be recorded in the Blue File and monitored.'</p> <p>It is noted that this document uses terms for the different levels of training that have now been superseded.</p> <p>The consultation with the DSA, diocesan safeguarding trainer, and bishop has taken place. It seems logical to assume that in an act of public worship that is led by someone who has the bishop's Permission to Officiate, and in the very</p>
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likely event that they are the only ordained person there, and that they are wearing some sort of robes and/or clergy collar because they are leading the act of worship, that a member of the public would assume that that clergy person has the full authority of a Clerk in Holy Orders (which they do) and they are therefore a 'leader' who should be able to respond fully to safeguarding needs if they should arise in the moment. Therefore, they are to undertake the Leadership safeguarding module and have completed Basic and Foundation training. They will also need to have completed the training, 'Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse'.

Following the spirit of the guidance quoted above, it is recognised that some priests wish to maintain Permission to Officiate as it is important to them that they could function as a priest even if, because of age or other factors, they do not do so.

Furthermore, some priests only wish to participate in worship, for example, by robing and processing in occasional services such as in patronal festivals or other festivals such as Easter. A benchmark was set to cover such occasions, and it was agreed that this would be five services a year or fewer that the priest was involved in worship and needed Permission to Officiate. In this case, the priest in question is required to undertake PTO leadership training as well as Basic and Foundation training. This is not designed to restrict priests in their service but to identify a guideline which could be used to identify which priests would be exempt from completing the full leadership course and could instead legitimately complete the PTO version.

I understand that even in this case, that is a significant amount of training. The challenges of safeguarding are significant; the implications if the Church fails at the task of safeguarding are more than significant. The training that is offered is excellent: it is of a very high quality. The Basic and Foundation training can be accessed on demand via the online portal. We encourage incumbents and area deans to help those who may not be IT literate to undertake this training - sharing with them a laptop or tablet to enable them to do this training and being with them for the hour or so each course takes. The fact that it will result in a priest being granted PTO in the vicinity of the

		<p>incumbent or area dean will, I am sure, be beneficial to the incumbent or deanery!</p> <p>The in-person training is delivered in a lively and winsome way that is very helpful and engaging. It can be done online or with Claire physically present. Claire works extremely hard to do all that she can to overcome any barriers to people being able to access this training: she and the bishop's office encourage people to let us know the needs they may have that they might feel would prevent them from accessing training we will then do all we can to help overcome these barriers.</p>
<b>SUPPLEMENTARY</b>	<p>Thank you for the full response, but intrigued by reference of robes and collar conveying leadership and wondered about those churches where leadership do not wear robes or collar. He asked if the decision was diocesan or national?</p>	<p>The question will be put to the Revd Harry Steele <i>Response provided after the meeting:</i></p> <p>I made reference to the wearing of clerical vestments and a collar as this <i>could be</i> considered to be the most minimal act of participation in worship as a Clerk in Holy Orders and for which a licence or authorisation is necessary.</p> <p>I did not mean to imply that robes convey leadership, but robes do convey the authority of ordained ministry which inherently implies leadership, trust, responsibility, and notably and unarguably, being under Canon Law. There are, of course, some traditions in the Church of England that do not wear robes or clerical collar. Nevertheless, ordained clergy of any tradition must adhere to Canon Law.</p> <p>Section 5A of Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, was inserted by the Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021 and came into force on 1 March 2022. The provisions replace the former "duty to have due regard" with a duty for all relevant persons to comply with the requirements of a Code.</p> <p>The Church of England guidance on the core safeguarding pathways can be accessed here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-learning-and-development-framework/section-3-core-safeguarding-pathways">https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-learning-and-development-framework/section-3-core-safeguarding-pathways</a></p> <p>The Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework is part of the Safeguarding Code of Practice and there is, therefore, 'duty to comply'.</p>

			<p>As already mentioned, in that document the required attendees on Leadership training are,</p> <p>'All clergy holding the bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including PTO where exemption has not been given) including Honorary/Assistant Bishops and Chaplains.'</p> <p>Bishop Pete has made an exemption for those who hold PTO from taking full leadership training <i>only</i> if they act as a Clerk in Holy Orders on <i>five occasions a year or less</i>.</p> <p>To answer the specific supplementary question, the decision to give the exemption and set it at five times a year is a decision that relates only to the Diocese of Sheffield (if it is used by other dioceses that would be a coincidence); the duty to comply to undertake leadership training for all those that have a bishop's licence, commission, authorisation, or permission (including PTO where exemption has not been given) including Honorary/Assistant Bishops and Chaplains is, of course, a national duty to comply and is the law.</p>
7.	Mr Pete Sandford, Ecclesall Deanery	<p>The Diocesan Strategy 2025-31 proclaims a "commitment to social justice through ... equipping our people to speak out against prejudice and connect with their communities".</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging the commitment to resourcing and actions against racial prejudice, what specific resources and actions will be allocated, when, and by whom with particular reference to the increased prejudice faced a) by LGBTQIA+ people following the recent Supreme Court ruling on gender (especially Trans people) and b) to Disabled people in the context of the Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition</p>	<p><i>Response from Alex Shilkoff, Strategic Programme Director</i></p> <p>This question appears to broadly be about social justice. Many of our churches are of course already engaged in various aspects of social justice work in their communities and more widely. In the recent SMMIB award we have secured funding for a paid role to support the Board of Faith &amp; Justice in developing their programme of work and supporting social justice more broadly across the Diocese. The Job Description for this role will be developed in the autumn as part of the delivery of the refreshed strategy which is newly in place.</p> <p>In terms of direct training Revd Anesia Cook has adapted some of our established unconscious bias training and some equality diversity and inclusion training produced by the Methodist church to be delivered across the Diocese. This has been introduced as the next step on from the unconscious bias training which has been completed by hundreds of people across the Diocese since 2020. This new training is felt to be a positive development as it is broad, not only</p>

		<p>casting doubt on the genuineness of disability?</p>	<p>covering racial justice, but also more tailored to a church context with theological underpinning. This training has been trialled with St John's Owlerton PCC and the feedback was extremely positive. Consideration is being given as to how to roll this out with more trainers than just Anesia.</p> <p>The Bishop also has an LGBT+ Adviser and a Disability Adviser to ensure that experiences of these communities are given suitable awareness at a senior level.</p> <p>A well-known factor in breaking down prejudice is folks getting to know people who are different to them. At Deanery level how could different people getting to know each other be facilitated? It is possible to initiate somethings centrally, but local connections are often the most powerful.</p>
	<b>SUPPLEMENTARY</b>	<p>Thank you for the reply and to Huw Thomas for his encouragement. Will the Board of Faith and Justice take on the understanding of prejudice to equip the church to speak out against prejudice?</p>	<p><i>The Archdeacon of Doncaster confirmed that this would be taken forward.</i></p>