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**Llandaff Diocesan Conference**

**Minutes of the Diocesan Conference held on**

**Thursday 23 by Zoom Conference Video and Saturday 25 September 2021 at**

**St Teilo’s High School, Cardiff which was also live streamed on the**

**Llandaff YouTube Channel.**

**Thursday**

Present: The Bishop, 93 clerical members, 78 lay members

In attendance: 11 members of Diocesan Office staff and Officers

Apologies: 34 clerical members for Saturday, 95 lay members

(35 individuals watched the Live Stream on YouTube)

Absent without apology: 2 clerical members, 7 lay members

Every deanery was represented at Conference

At the time of the Conference the diocese had 15 Clerical vacancies

**Thursday 23 September 2021 commencing at 6.00pm – Formal Business**

The Bishop welcomed everyone with thanks to the Ven Mike Komor for continuing to act as Secretary to Conference, she also apologised to Llandaff Deanery. The Deanery has generated a formal Motion to Conference. The Bishop has asked that the Deanery undertake some further work around the detail of the Motion. Conference may be reconvened to discuss at a later date.

Prayers were said by the Ven Mike Komor, Archdeacon Margam.

1. Appointment of Secretary of Conference – the Bishop nominated Mr Howard Rees and gave a brief biography of his previous experience and proposed that Conference accept her nomination. Using an electronic Poll, Conference overwhelmingly accepted. Therefore, **Mr Howard Rees was elected Conference Secretary, the appointment to take effect from the end of the 2021 Conference on Saturday 25 Sept.**
2. The Minutes of the Conference held on 24 and 26 September 2020 were **Approved** as a true record.
3. There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes as all would be covered during our Saturday session.
4. The Annual Report from the Diocesan Board of Finance was presented by Mike Lawley, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

*This presentation and the Annual Report and Accounts are available on the diocesan website. Below is a summary:*

The scope of the report this year is to outline budgetary and financial issues, work undertaken since the last Conference and the DBF and governance.

The DBF have long term goal to balance the budget over the next 4/5 years with the use of prudent financial management. The diocese has received £2.97m from the Evangelism Fund to finance part of the Vision. The RB has provided £3.5m Covid Support most of which has been paid to parishes in the form of a rebate on Fairer Share. As of June 2021, the DBF have a slight surplus due to investment gains and savings caused by the changes due to the pandemic, departmental savings, office costs and being unable to fill vacancies.

Looking forward to 2022. There will be budget changes:

* 2% increase in Fairer Share, in line with increase in stipends and salaries.
* Reduction in RB block grant and pension liability.
* 1.6% increase in Parsonage Board repairs and maintenance budget.
* 0% changes where possible on expenditure items.
* Staff resource to focus on support on the ground, delivery of Diocesan Vision and Ministry Area formation and implementation.

Our main risk area will be Fairer Share income.

In 2021 the DBF has also

* Reviewed and updated the Diocesan Constitution and approval of new DBF Articles of Association.
* Co-opted new members to addresses skills deficits to produce balanced board.
* Introduced a new streamlined committee structure.
* Used technology for meetings e.g., Teams, Zoom to save travel time and the environment, and continued to work more flexibly.
* Recruited new staff members to deliver on Vision, which is ongoing.
* Supported continued Ministry Area development, and establishment of Colleges (eg Lay Chairs, Treasurers, Vicars) to enhance communications. The legal and financial systems are being put in place.

Mr Lawley thanked the Board, staff, and clergy who have gone above and beyond their duty and laity who have continued to support and give of time and money.

Plenary session:

Q: Rises in gas prices are concerning, does the diocese have any advice?

A: This is a situation we all need to watch, at every level, and Parish Buying may be able to help: <https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/>

Q: Card readers are a good idea but what type will we have?

A: The DBF has agreed to fund every church having a card reader for donations. Each church will need a different solution, and help will be available from the finance team at the diocesan office.

Q: How will Ministry Areas meet the costs of setting up the new financial software and paying for administrators? Increased costs are a factor and could risk the ability to pay Fairer Share.

A: The diocese will be paying for the software. It will be each MA’s decision whether they need to employ someone to administer the finances, so volunteers will still be important.

1. The Annual Report from Diocesan Standing Committee (DSC) was presented by Ven Mike Komor, Acting Secretary ofConference.   
   Governance is the responsibility of the Diocesan Conference which meets once per year and delegates authority to the Diocesan Standing Committee to make decisions on its behalf in the meanwhile. The DSC takes care of fine details, agreeing boundary changes, the development of Ministry Areas and other matters of strategy, law and Diocesan mission. The DSC is currently revising the Constitution to meet the needs of the new MAs and is grateful for the hard work of the Diocesan Registrar, Harriet Morgan. They continue to focus on the delivery of the Vision.   
   Please volunteer for DSC if you are interested.
2. Nerys Beckett gave a PowerPoint presentation about Eco Church. This is available on the diocesan website.   
   What has happened?

* Diocese has declared a climate emergency
* Adopted and Environmental Policy
* Developed Resources and help support, Eco Eglwys: <https://llandaff.churchinwales.org.uk/en/outreach-social-justice/eco-eglwys/>
* Become an A Rocha UK Eco Diocese, achieving Bronze award
* Our Buildings – adopting new procedures within our Faculty and Grants processes to meet our Environmental Policy, organising EPC surveys of all PB property, encouraging environmental audits of all Churches, 50% funded by the DBF.
* Our Land – we are developing partnership working with several other organisations and Young Faith Matters (YFM) are working with our schools and parishes to build projects.
* Worship & Teaching – there are liturgical resources available on our website. The most important thing is to keep talking about the subject, tell a joyful story.
* Community & Global Engagement – YFM encouraged people from all across the diocese to join the relay walk to Glasgow in support of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference also known as COP26 to be held from 31 October.
* Lifestyle – think local. Remember the five Rs of Zero Waste: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Q: How much is an EPC Survey for a Church?

A: At most £450, diocese pays 50%.

Q: Can we also consider greening our banking? Look for ethical Banks.

A: DBF will investigate.

1. Elections were held electronically this year.   
   **The following were elected to the Governing Body** of the Church in Wales, to serve from 2022-2024:

The following Clergy were elected with a turnout of 64%:

* The Venerable Mike Komor
* The Revd Zoë King

The following were elected to the house of Laity, with a turnout of 35%:

* Ms Anna Cory
* Mrs Sue Rivers
* Mr Martyn Silezin
* Ms Tina Dando

The following elections will be held in 2022:

Governing Body, DBF, DAC and Churches and Pastoral Committee.

1. Conference agreed to hear an additional piece of business.   
   The Reverend Canon Dr J K van der Lely reminded Conference that before the pandemic parishes used to be invited to attend Evensong at the Cathedral. The Cathedral wants to start this again but will be inviting each of the 29 Ministry Areas. There are 30 Sundays during term time. The furthest in distance will be invited during the Spring and Summer months, those that are nearer will be invited during Autumn and Winter. The last of these Sundays will be used to invite our Schools. Tea will be available on request and will need to be booked in advance. Letters giving details will be sent out soon.

The Bishop thanked everyone for attending.

Closing prayers were said by the Ven Rod Green.

***Conference adjourned at 7.38pm***

***.***

***Conference reconvened on Saturday 26 September 2020 at 9.30am with the Eucharist.***

Presidential Address: Diocesan Conference 25th September 2021

It’s such a great privilege to meet together today. We meet as those on-line and those here in our mission-oriented school of St Teilo’s – thank you Ian to you and your staff for your hospitality.

I always look forward to Diocesan Conference and I’m excited by what lies ahead of us this morning. After coffee we get three opportunities to be inspired by the way the Diocese is going forward, following God’s lead. What I have to say now I hope will feel like an introduction to each of those three Vision workshops.

The sense of it being a privilege to meet has been mightily reinforced for us when we think of the year we’ve just experienced. Last September we gathered wholly on-line for this event and were justifiably proud of the way, even as a large gathering, we engaged with each other on screen. We did Diocesan Conference at home.

We were yet to travel through a difficult winter with Christmas celebrated minimally, severe restrictions on our buildings, the necessity of risk assessments, arduous cleaning rotas, no singing, missing congregants, and deaths we grieved.

I was talking to one of the clergy in the West of the diocese last week who told me that of the about 40 people on the electoral role of one of his congregations, I think it was 12 of them had died in the course of last winter. More than a quarter of his regular worshippers had gone to glory in just a few isolating months. We must allow ourselves to recognize that it was a hard year and, although we count our blessings, like so many others our parishes have had to work diligently just to cope.

So, the first thing I want to name this day is that you have done brilliantly. For all you have sustained and achieved in this last year, I want to celebrate today the parishes of this diocese. I know it has been really tough but please don’t ignore all the small miracles of ministry which you’ve kept in place, sometimes at considerable costs to yourself. You have kept the faith. You have sustained the offer of Church burning bright when your own resilience was probably low. You have offered worship in Church and frequently on-line – think of those joining in Morning Prayer each day on Zoom in the East Vale Ministry Area (legally inaugurated last Sunday).

And speaking of Zoom you have adapted to the experience of praying remotely and from home. An experience which has sometimes had its rather bizarre elements. I remember how, in the middle of licensing a cleric to their ministry and leading that liturgy wholly on Zoom, I suddenly noticed that one of the online congregation was a lady in a dressing gown, who was making supper in the kitchen whilst presumably she took part in the prayers on her iPad. I guess it’s just a new form of multi-tasking!

As we heard from Mike Lawley, you’ve honoured your giving and paid your fairer share in the face of all the pressures on you. The sheer scale of what has happened to us in 2020/2021 needs to be acknowledged and I’m left with a sense of admiration and deep appreciation which I hope today we can celebrate.

Whilst the pandemic took its toll, so much has happened. Clergy have started new jobs: amongst them it has been terrific to welcome Paul Booth, our Vision Programme Manager and Tim Jones, our Director of Ministry, both of whom you’ll see later in one of the workshops (they’re the good-looking ones with the hair), and Rod Green the very new Archdeacon of Llandaff. (He’s the good looking one without the hair!)

We’ve said farewell to some as they’ve looked with new eyes at their lives and moved on, or into retirement. Amongst them we will say goodbye to our Director of Education, Andrew Rickett, at the end of the year and we wish Andrew well as he leaves an Education team in very good heart – again you’ll hear more of their work from some of Andrew’s colleagues in another workshop. Thank you to Andrew for all he’s achieved on our behalf.

Communities have been served and prayers offered. The sense we might have clung to last summer that Covid would ‘be all over by Christmas’ proved to be a vain hope and we needed to attend to people’s mental health and the well-being of life in our communities. I think of the food share programme being run by many parishes, for instance by St Mark’s, Gabalfa and Aberdare St Fagan’s, who’ve combined it with a school uniform project this summer, or St Winifred’s, Penrhiwceiber with their period poverty and baby basics schemes.

The world has been reset and the Llandaff Diocese has been adapting and responding and I want to thank you. In so many ways I see examples of adaptability, dynamism, sustainability, solidarity and humility. Matt Batten, our Director of Communication and Outreach, does his best to show what you have been about, especially in our weekly Llandaff Matters e-bulletin, but he is always keen to hear about things which may seem small to you, but which tell a joyful story and inspire others.

I’ve talked of the world being reset this last year, but the truth is, as we know, that the world had begun a fourth industrial revolution long before Covid hit us. There are massive shifts happening, like tectonic plates in the earth’s surface sliding in a new direction, which are certainly as dramatic as what happened to this part of Wales in the 19th Century as industry and technology reshaped people’s lives afresh.

How we work, how we consume, certainly how we communicate: the applications of artificial intelligence and algorithms (terms most of us wouldn’t have known a few years back), the advancement of robotics and nanotechnology, from genetic engineering to the nature of commerce: who can doubt that our world is being transformed. And you add to that a global health crisis and a climate emergency, and we all have much to learn.

And yet we are also in the business of Christian transformation, and of not being afraid, of offering a vision of Jesus to our communities. We know that the world, our neighbours and friends, need a living faith in Jesus Christ if they are to move from where they are to a place of greater life and freedom, if they are to be sure of lives free of anxiety. The world needs us to take note of what is happening to it and to respond with the offer of faith as it longs for kindness and mercy and compassion, for beauty and truth and joy.

And in this reset world we stand for the importance of strong community. I spent a day last week at an event at Swansea University. When we finally elect a new bishop for Swansea and Brecon I have to find a moment to break the news to him or her that Swansea have built their new university site in our diocese! This was an event involving people entirely at home in the world to which we are heading and who operated digitally long before we were forced on-line. And yet there was a huge recognition that what is going to be needed for us to be transformed well is strong communities.

Which brings me to the Vision of the Diocese and all that is being achieved to work towards ourselves being a network of strong and transformed communities.

I’ve said this many times over the last year but the main purpose for our move to Ministry Areas is to ensure that we protect and develop parish ministry, that we continue to build a Christian response around local communities. That we live, as Christ lived, embedded, invested, incarnated in the here and now of our place.

Strong local church combined with a reduction in bureaucracy, planning for mission, learning together about our faith, and a conviction that Young Faith Matters. That’s what we’re about. Our Vision declares that we’re enhancing lay leadership alongside priestly ministry. One of the great encouragements of this last year has been the College of the Lay Chairs and the College of Treasurers and the Ministry Area Transition Teams.

Anxiety was expressed on Thursday about us not being able to find volunteers who would be willing to carry the responsibilities of the Ministry Areas. I understand that concern, but I must tell you that one of the consistent joyful stories of this last year is the willingness and the calibre of lay people wanting to take leadership roles in our Ministry Areas.

By the 1st January all the tough bits, the legal deeds will be in place and then the really interesting work starts. Each Ministry Area works out its own style, its priorities and its speed of operating. What transformation does this Ministry Area Council want to bring about, specific to the area it serves?

Again, another message I have reinforced throughout the year is that nothing about this move is motivated by a reduction in clergy numbers. On the contrary we’re having more transparent and proactive conversations about how the Ministry Areas are to be resourced than I think the diocese is used to, and we’ve consistently run recruitment processes which have attracted new clergy into the diocese. Clergy are critical to the church’s strength and growth. And I want to pay tribute to our clergy who are faithful and hardworking, resilient and creative. Llandaff is proud of its clergy, and I constantly appreciate their wisdom: my senior colleagues, the Area Deans, Ministry Area Leaders, Vicars, Self-Supporting Associate Priests and our curates. We are so blessed with them.

Would the clergy in the room please stand - and I’m going to ask the lay members of Conference to give them a thank you clap for all they have achieved this last year.

In addition to the new Ministry Areas we are powering ahead with the Young Faith Matters aspect of our Vision. We’re addressing the lack of engagement we have those under 35, those we call the Millennials and Generation Z, who think entirely differently about how the world operates. We are resetting our ambitions towards the young, and with the help of the Evangelism Fund creating a team to help schools and Ministry Areas to work on new schemes of outreach. That’s what one of our workshops will showcase later this morning and I know you’ll find inspiration in what transforming young people is about.

Once Ministry Areas are in place I’m going to challenge each one of them to think about how it can expand its offer of worship to appeal more to young people. Is there a church building in which the young themselves can lead a congregation because that’s how faith comes to matter to people, we catch it from others who are like us, who speak our language and become our friends. There are new resources to help us do that. It’s not as hard as you may fear.

So there are two forms of strengthening our communities in the year ahead. To grasp the opportunities of your Ministry Area which, far from threatening our parish life, is there to sustain and develop it. And to embrace all the opportunities that Young Faith offers right across the whole diocese.

It’s an invitation to engage better with our world and our society as it goes through the next global revolution. For we’re not here to attend to our own comfort, to serve ourselves, or simply take care of our current congregations. We’re called to minister to new audiences, especially those who have yet to feel the transformative and compassionate love of God. Christ’s call to us is to grow faith, to make new disciples.

My friends, by the mercies of God let us be transformed by the renewal of our minds, by the stretching of our imaginations and stirring of our spirits, by our collaboration with one another, so that we may together discern what is the will of God – what is a joyful story, what grows his Kingdom, and what builds our capacity for good, to his glory and in his name.

**Workshop 1** – Transforming Outreach and Mission, Christopher Auckland, Senior Outreach Officer. The PowerPoint presentation can be found at: <https://llandaff.churchinwales.org.uk/en/about-us/diocesan-conference/>

Mission or outreach is the core part of our faith.

Pre-Pandemic our three biggest challenges were – substance misuse, mental health and poverty.

Post-Pandemic they are – Grief, Bereavement, Isolation, fear, mental health, job loss and state dependency, and refugees.

We need to develop new strategies; the pandemic has changed everything and nothing. There is focus on churches, we need to free up clergy and offer support. This needs to be long term.

You need to see; the diocese needs to inspire, resource, and mobilize.

Our priorities are impacted by mental health, substance misuse and domestic violence. We need to support the marginalized; those living in poverty and deprivation, the homeless, and prisoners. We are experiencing great cultural and social change; we must reach out and welcome everyone in. We can use our voice to bring lasting change.

During the first group discussion, Ministry Areas were asked what they thought the barriers were that they faced and also the unique opportunities.

During the second group discussion the MAs were asked about how to break down barriers to welcoming, such as dementia, autism, people whose first language is neither English nor Welsh.

**Workshop 2** – Re-engaging Mission, the Revd Canon Tim Jones, Director of Ministry and Discipleship, Julie Davies, Interim Officer for Lay Training and Newly Licensed Ministers, and Paul Booth, Vision Programme Lead

Tim Jones - introduced the Engel Scale of Evangelism and the Gray Matrix. This was used to illustrate the cultural changes of recent decades, and the way in which these necessitate new patterns and structures of ministry.

Julie Davies:

* A great opportunity lies before us. It is the same opportunity that has presented itself to the Church for decades,
* We are not trying to train up new volunteers to fill the gaps left by declining clergy numbers or make people work even harder. The laity have a unique and powerful role.
* Develop a learning culture that will resource, support and develop lay discipleship: Ministry Areas need to identify what the training needs will be for the emerging forms of collaborative ministry.
* We will be responsive.

Paul Booth:

Participants were encouraged to list the various mission or outreach activities they had been engaged in prior to the pandemic, are currently engaged in, or have plans to introduce as the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

This list was then divided into three sections:

* “Briefcase” - Your priorities: you want to get everyone involved.
* “Suitcase” - You want to do this but you’re not quite ready to start or restart it.
* “Packing case” - Either stop doing or revisit at a later date.

Things identified for the “Briefcase” were written on to post-it notes, and collected in.

Tim Jones –

In 1995 Archbishop David Hope acknowledged that “*We cannot continue giving individual clergy ever larger groups of parishes and expect anything other than a dilution of their ministry*”. A quarter of a century later we are only now restructuring into collaborative Ministry Areas, recognizing that new realities require us to move from the familiar but no longer appropriate model of ministry. This may well be uncomfortable, but it is our vocation.

By moving to Ministry Areas as collaborative groups we will be able to identify our strengths.

***Perhaps you were born for such a time as this.*** Esther 4:14

The PowerPoint presentation can be found at: <https://llandaff.churchinwales.org.uk/en/about-us/diocesan-conference/>

**Workshop 3** – Young Faith Matters (YFM), Beccie Morteo, School Development Officer, Andrew Rickett, Diocesan Director of Statutory Education and Ryan Forey, Citizen Church

Beccie gave a brief overview of the work the team has been doing including:

Refugee Week 2021

The Message Bus

Beach BBQ

Forest Church

The team are developing resources that are and will continue to be available on the diocesan website. Some of these are now being launched across the province. Please call on the team for help with training volunteers, physical materials, events etc. Please ask for help. What three things would you most like to achieve?

Andrew Rickett explained that the work of the YFM team was being funded by the Evangelism Grant from the RB. He then introduced Ryan Forey from Citizen Church who summarised what they were doing:

* Due to delays caused by the pandemic they were able to hold their first Sunday service on 25 April 2021, they are now achieving 400 people attending. The average age of attendees at the 6pm service is 21, at the 11am service it is 30.
* They have organised 4 activity based ‘hang-outs’ for “Graduates & Young Professionals”.
* 100 people have attended Alpha, they are baptising 20 people in October.
* If you want to find out more there is a Culture Catalogue available on their website. They are breaking down pre-conceived ideas.
* There is a pandemic of loneliness and social media is not making real connections.
* Plans are to take Alpha into prisons (Cardiff & Parc), schools, refugees and online.

The Ven Mike Komor addressed Conference to remind them that the diocesan office is there to be used. The Bishop cannot do the necessary work alone, the Clergy cannot do the work alone – it will need to be Team Work.

The Ven Mike Komor said prayers, and the Bishop gave the blessing.