



# DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

TRANSFORMING CHURCH. TOGETHER.

## Introductory note for the Diocesan Synod, 21 March 2026

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### To: Diocesan Synod members

Please find enclosed the agenda and papers for Diocesan Synod on 21 March at St Paul's Church, Malmesbury Road, Chippenham, Wilts, SN15 1PS

The Diocese of Bristol is continuing its journey through the *Transforming Church. Together* process and your contributions, perspectives, and experiences are essential for the synodical debates to ensure that the views of the people you represent are heard. Therefore, we kindly request that you remain for the entire meeting to ensure that the decisions made by the Diocesan Synod are fully representative of its entire membership and reflect the broader views of the Diocese.

This Diocesan Synod is largely formed of 3 parts:

- 1. Transforming Church. Together:** Update plus a briefing on the next Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) Bid
- 2. Department Updates:**
  - **Carbon Net Zero:** Update on current works and future plans
  - **Education:** Presentation of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) Annual Report
  - **Financial Strategy – 10 year plan:** Presentation of the plan followed by discussion and question opportunities.
- 3. Routine Business:** This includes reports from recent meetings of Bishop's Council, Board of Directors, DMPC, and General Synod.

### Written questions

**Any written questions must be submitted 7 days before Diocesan Synod, so please submit them via the form by 9am Friday, 13 March.** This gives us time to direct your question to the most appropriate person and send you a written answer prior to the meeting.

### Minutes from 15 November 2025

**If you have any proposed amendments or questions about the minutes, please do fill in the form (link given in this email) by 9am Friday, Friday, 13 March.** The minutes can then be amended ahead of the meeting.

If you have any questions, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact [governance.support@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:governance.support@bristoldiocese.org).

## **Note from the Chairs**

As Chairs, we understand that Diocesan Synod meetings can be full and, at times, overwhelming with information. Our goal is to balance ensuring you remain fully updated without feeling swamped, while also providing ample time for valuable discussion and questions.

## **Papers Taken as Read**

To allow more time for active engagement, standing items such as the Bishop's Council and General Synod reports will now be taken as read. This means we won't be presenting and summarising every circulated paper, but there will still be the opportunity to elaborate on certain items as necessary, and dedicated time for your questions on these documents.

## **Housekeeping Information**

At the start of every Synod, we typically share a significant amount of housekeeping information. To use our time more effectively, we've decided to list this information here for your reference rather than announcing it verbally.

## **Accessibility**

As times during Diocesan Synod, you may be invited to stand, this is an invitation only. Please only stand if you feel comfortable to do so.

## **Asking a question**

All Diocesan Synod members are encouraged to ask questions; however, so that all hear and understand the context of the question please wait for the microphone and state your name and deanery before starting your question.

## **Navigating Sensitive Subjects**

Please remember that we all bring a diverse range of experiences, including lived experiences, which shape our views and beliefs. While we fully support the expression of your views, we kindly ask that you are mindful of differing perspectives when contributing to Synod debates and in your informal conversations, with everyone who will be attending Synod. Respecting these differences helps uphold our values, including generosity of spirit, and ensures we meet our legal obligations.

Should any subjects covered at Synod be upsetting or triggering for members, visitors, or Diocesan Support Services (DSS) staff, please know that support is available. Simon Taylor and Denise Channing are available to talk with, and additionally you can email [governance.support@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:governance.support@bristoldiocese.org) during the meeting, and a member of the DSS will connect you with them or an appropriate person either immediately or during the coffee break.

## **Essential Information**

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- **First Aider:** A trained First Aider is available should anyone require medical attention.
  - **Fire Drill:** Please note, there is no planned fire drill during this meeting
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## Agenda, Diocesan Synod

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**Date:** 21 March 2026

**Time:** 9:15 am to 13:05 pm (coffee from 9.00am)

**Venue:** St Paul's Church, Malmesbury Road, Chippenham, SN15 1PS

	Topic		Paper	Led by	Time
1.	<b>Worship and Commissioning of Revd. Ruth Harding as Adviser for Self-Supporting Ordained Ministers (SSOM)</b>			Julia Childerhouse (House of Laity; Chippenham Deanery) and The Rt Revd Neil Warwick (Acting Bishop of Bristol)	09:15 (15 min)
<b>Diocesan Synod</b>					
<i>The Revd Trudie Wigley, Chair of the House of Clergy, in the Chair</i>					
2.	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	I		The Revd Trudie Wigley (Chair of House of Clergy)	09:30 (5 min)
3.	<b>Minutes</b> Minutes of 15 November 2025 Diocesan Synod Meeting	LO	3.1	The Revd Trudie Wigley (Chair of House of Clergy)	09:35 (5 min)
4.	<b>The appointment of members of Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd</b>	LO		The Revd Trudie Wigley (Chair of House of Clergy)	09:40 (5 min)
5.	<b>Bishop's address</b>			The Rt Revd Neil Warwick (Acting Bishop of Bristol)	09:45 (15 min)
6.	<b>Transforming Church Together (TC.T)</b> 6.1 Culture and Origins of TC.T Belonging, Hope, Thriving & Joy	I		The Ven Becky Waring (Archdeacon of Bristol)	10:00 (5 min)
	6.2 TC.T Progress Update	I		Rob Mountain (Director of Transformation)	10.05

Topic			Paper	Led by	Time
					(5 min)
	6.3 TC.T in practise – What it has meant to us	I		Invited Synod Members	10:10 (10 min)
	6.4 Briefing on next Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) Bid	I		Richard Leaman (CEO)	10.20 (5 min)
	6.5 Table Discussion and feedback to Synod How can synod enable greater involvement and engagement of Parishes?	D&A			10.25 (20 min)
7.	<b>Question Time</b>	Q&A		The Revd Trudie Wigley (Chair of House of Clergy)	10.45 (15 min)
8.	<b>Giving</b>	I		The Ven Christopher Bryan, (Archdeacon of Malmesbury)	11.00 (10 min)
Coffee					11.10 (15 min)
<i>Mr Bruce Finnamore, Chair of the House of Laity, in the Chair</i>					
9.	<b>Carbon Net Zero (CNZ) and Environment</b> 9.1 Overview of current work and future plans	I	9.1	Mr Kit Connell (Environment & Sustainability Manager) and Joe Flatman (Director of Property & Estates)	11.25 (10 min)
	9.2 Question & Answers	Q&A			11.35 (5 min)
10.	<b>Financial Strategy – 10 year Plan</b> 10.1 Presentation of Plan	D&A	10.1	Canon Richard Bacon (Chair of BDBF) and Stephen Sheridan (Director of Finance)	11.40 (10 min)
	10.2 Round Table Discussion	I			11.50 (15 min)
	10.3 Questions and Debate	D&A			12.05 (20 min)

Topic			Paper	Led by	Time
	10.4 Motion to approve (see below)	DE			12.25 (5 min)
11.	<b>Governance Reports</b> <b>11.1 Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) Annual Report</b> 11.1.1 Presentation of Report	I	11.1	Canon Liz Townend (Diocesan Director of Education)	12.30 (10 min)
	11.1.2 Question & Answers	Q&A			12.40 (5 min)
	<b>11.2 Bishop's Council &amp; Board of Directors report</b> (1 December 2025 and 5 February 2026) 11.2.1 Questions & Answers	Q&A	11.2	The Ven Christopher Bryan, (Archdeacon of Malmesbury)	12.45 (5 min)
	11.2.2 Motion to approve (see below)	DE			12.50 (5 min)
	<b>11.3 General Synod Report</b> (February 2026) 11.3.1 Question & Answer	LO	11.3	Mr Brendan Biggs (General Synod Member)	12.55 (10 min)
12.	<b>Blessing and Close</b>			The Rt Revd Bishop Neil (Acting Bishop of Bristol)	13.05

### Proposed motions for debate

- 10.4 Richard Bacon, Chair of BDBF to move:  
That the Diocesan Synod approves the proposed Financial Strategy – 10 year plan.
- 11.2.2: Christopher Bryan, Archdeacon of Malmesbury and Bishop's Council Member to move:  
That the Bishop's Council reports for 1 December 2025 and 5 February 2026 are received.

### Upcoming Synods:

20 June 2026, 9:30-15:30 to include separate House of Clergy and House of Laity

Meetings, lunch provided. St Michael's Centre, Stoke Gifford, Bristol  
BS34 8PD

21 November 2026, 9:30–15:30, lunch provided

St Michael's Centre, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8PD

13 March 2027 – TBA

12 June 2027 – TBA

20 November 2027 – St Michael's Centre, Stoke Gifford, BS34 8PD

### **Diocesan Synod legend**

Purpose: to outline the functions of Synod (with abbreviations), and for those abbreviations to be used against each agenda item.

<b>Function</b>	
Article 8 decisions passed down by General Synod, or fulfilling Synod's statutory legal obligations	LO
Decisions on expenditure	DOE
Discussion, and advice to the Bishop	D&A
Information to enable Diocesan Synod members to be advocates in a particular area of Diocesan business	I
Questions & Answers	Q&A