



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL
TRANSFORMING CHURCH. TOGETHER.

DIOCESAN SYNOD REPORT

REPORT TITLE	Diocesan Synod Meeting Summary
DATE	20 June 2026
TIME	9.30am to 14:00pm

This is a brief summary of the meeting of Bristol Diocesan Synod and the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Annual General Meeting.

1. WORSHIP AND DISCUSSION ON OUR ONGOING MISSION AND CALLING IN THE VACANCY IN SEE

The meeting began with worship led by Revd Adam Beaumont, Associate Archdeacon, followed by an address from the Rt Revd Neil, Acting Bishop of Bristol. [A copy of the Bishop's address can be found here.](#)

Members participated in table discussions centred on four questions:

- What scriptural insights might guide us in this season?
- What experiences during the vacancy have given us hope and reassurance?
- What concerns do we have, and how can we address them constructively?
- What other comments or questions should be considered?

The discussions generated a wide range of reflections, concerns and aspirations, demonstrating both a commitment to the Diocese's mission and a desire to navigate the vacancy collaboratively. It was agreed that the responses would be reviewed by Bishop's Staff to help inform future thinking and planning.

2. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OF THE BRISTOL DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE LIMITED

The Annual General Meeting of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance (BDBF) formed the next section of the day's proceedings.

Seven newly elected Diocesan Synod members were formally appointed as members of the BDBF. Before the AGM commenced, a point of order was raised concerning the late circulation of the Annual Report and Financial Statements. Following discussion, Synod voted to continue with the business of the AGM notwithstanding the delay.

Members received a summary of the 2025 financial position, which reported:

- **Actual result:** £5.0 million operating deficit
- **Budgeted result:** £4.8 million operating deficit

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- **Positive variance:** £200,000

The presentation emphasised that the outcome is in line with expectations and reinforces the need to follow the direction of the Diocese's ten-year plan, particularly in terms of growing parish share.

3. ROUTINE BUSINESS AND DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Synod received reports from recent meetings of the Bishop's Council, Board of Directors and Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, alongside updates on safeguarding, environmental sustainability, diocesan finances and mission initiatives.

SAFEGUARDING AND ENVIRONMENT

Members received the annual safeguarding report and the latest version of the Diocese's Environment Strategy. Discussion highlighted the importance of supporting parishes in community engagement around environmental initiatives and progressing practical sustainability measures.

FINANCIAL POSITION AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

An update was provided on current financial performance against budget, alongside progress relating to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board funding.

A significant announcement was made by Richard Leaman, Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, who confirmed that Time-Limited Funding has been secured for Transforming Church. Together (TC.T) until May 2027. A full bid for the subsequent Triennia's work will be made in late 2026 or early 2027. This grant was an important affirmation of the Diocese's ongoing growth initiatives, and missional activities.

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Members were reminded of feedback gathered during table discussions at the March 2026 Diocesan Synod, which identified three key themes for strengthening engagement across the Diocese:

- Sharing stories from across the Diocese.
- Clear and consistent communication.
- Greater clarity regarding vision, values and lived experience.

To illustrate the impact of the programme, four lay members shared personal experiences of participation in TC.T initiatives. Synod also viewed a short film introducing Prepared, a tailored nine-month discipleship and lay leadership development programme designed specifically for people living in priority communities.

These contributions helped demonstrate the practical impact of strategic investment in lay leadership and local mission.

4. INFORMAL HOUSE MEETINGS AND LOOKING AHEAD

The final section of the day consisted of informal House meetings, providing members with an opportunity for focused discussion within their respective Houses.

ATTENDANCE: 65 of 101 Diocesan Synod members attended the meeting.

VOTES:

1. Following a point of order being raised the Diocesan Synod voted to continue with the AGM using the Annual Report and Financial Statements notwithstanding their late circulation.
2. The Diocesan Synod received and adopted the Directors Annual Report and Financial statement of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Limited for the year ended 31 December 2025.
3. The Diocesan Synod approved the appointment of HaysMac as auditors for the year ending 31 December 2026 and authorised the Directors to fix their remuneration.
4. The Bishop's Council reports for 20 April, 11 May and 2 June 2026 were received.

ACTIONS: The following actions were agreed at Diocesan Synod:

- Bishop's Staff will review responses gathered during the Vacancy in See discussions.
- Consideration will be given to how a broader range of voices can continue to inform strategic discussions across the Diocese.
- Work will be undertaken to improve communication around suspensions and pastoral reorganisation decisions.
- An Equality and Diversity Questionnaire was launched, with a supporting paper subsequently circulated to Synod members.
- Further support will be explored for parishes undertaking community consultation as part of environmental initiatives.
- Additional information on Green Tariffs will be circulated to assist parishes in making informed environmental choices.