



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Agenda ref	3.1
Report title	Diocesan Synod Minutes 15 November 2025
Author	Linda Hare
Date	20 November 2025

Bristol Diocesan Synod Minutes

Date: 15 November 2025

Time: 9.15 to 1.00

Venue: St Micheal's Centre, The Green, Stoke Gifford

The agenda and papers for this meeting can be found on the Diocese of Bristol website at: [Diocesan Synod - Diocese of Bristol](#)

1.	Eucharist
Neil Warwick (+NW), Acting Bishop of Bristol, led the Eucharist Service.	
2.	Welcome and Apologies
<p>Bruce Finnamore (BF), Chair of the House of Laity, opened the Diocesan Synod meeting.</p> <p>BF reported that apologies had been received but the meeting was quorate. Apologies received: 0 from the House of Bishops, 11 from the House of Clergy and 11 from the House of Laity</p> <p>He welcomed Eliana Pretorian, a former Synod member, and Ken Petrie, a Lay member who will stand for election to Diocesan Synod at the next Bristol South Deanery Synod meeting, as visitors to the Diocesan Synod meeting</p> <p>BF reminded Diocesan Synod members that it was assumed all papers had been read prior to the meeting.</p> <p>BF outlined the structure for the morning, noting that the meeting would be divided into two sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finance• Routine Business (acknowledged as important despite being routine)	



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

3.	Minutes 3.1 Minutes of 14 June Synod Meeting 3.2 Report of 20 September LLF Synod Meeting 3.3 House of Bishop’s Update
-----------	---

3.1 Minutes of 14 June Synod Meeting

BF confirmed that no amendments had been requested to the minutes for the meeting of Diocesan Synod on 14 June 2025.

BF advised that all matters arising from the June Synod meeting had either been addressed within the minutes or covered during the September Synod meeting. BF encouraged members to continue writing to their local MPs to apply pressure and lobby on relevant issues.

Actions from previous meeting	Minute Ref	Outcome
Diocesan resources on Living in Love and Faith (LLF) to be updated and circulated to parishes to aid with discussions and LLF to be discussed at Bishop’s Council, Bishop’s Staff and Synod	6. Matters Arising	Both items on LLF were covered at 20 September 2025 Diocesan Synod
Question raised by Nick Orman regarding explanation of Dashboard levels on Page 16 Graph	9. Safeguarding Report	Explanation was given in a post meeting note in the Minutes.
All Synod members to write to local MPs regarding the Listed Places of Worship Scheme	12.2 National Funding Scheme	

The minutes of Diocesan Synod on 14 June 2025 were approved and received as an accurate record.

3.2 Report of 20 September LLF Synod Meeting

BF confirmed that no formal minutes had been prepared following the 20 September 2025 Diocesan Synod meeting to discuss LLF, but a report had been prepared and circulated to members and a copy was sent to the National Church LLF Working Group.

BF advised that the follow up summary for wider distribution was currently being prepared and a draft would be presented to the next Bishop’s Council meeting on 1 December 2025.



Actions from previous meeting	Report Ref	Outcome
Summary of LLF Discussions be prepared for use throughout the Diocese	10.3 Next Steps – Encouragement to share with Deaneries and PCC's	Currently being prepared with aim to present at next Bishop's Council
<p>3.3 House of Bishop's Update</p> <p>Summary of Update</p> <p>+NW reported that the House of Bishops had recently met and agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LLF (Living in Love and Faith) will continue to be part of active worship. • Standalone services will be referred to General Synod for further discussion. <p>Context and Reactions:</p> <p>There has been significant concern among LGBTQIA+ individuals and allies regarding these decisions.</p> <p>+NW attended a meeting of three LLF working groups in Leicester approximately 10 days after the House of Bishops' decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The groups expressed disappointment, as their proposals were not adopted. • The meeting was challenging at times, but +NW felt it was important to represent Bristol and engage in dialogue. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further review by the Bishops is scheduled for December. • Outcomes from that review will be discussed at General Synod in February. • It is considered unlikely that the decisions will change, though some groups are exploring future options. <p>Personal Reflection:</p> <p>+NW acknowledged the considerable hurt felt by some as a result of the decisions, while others welcomed them. Many hold views somewhere in between. He echoed BF's comments that the September Synod discussion on LLF was worthwhile and edifying</p> <p>BF thanked +NW for the update.</p> <p>LLF will continue to be discussed at Synod as appropriate and members were asked to continue praying for wisdom in ongoing LLF debates.</p>		
4.	The appointment of members of Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd	



There were no new members of the BDBF to be appointed.

5. Financial Landscape and Challenges

BF invited Richard Bacon (RB) Chair of BDBF to the stand to give an overview of the Financial Challenges.

Acknowledgement of Diocesan Synod members

RB gave tribute to Diocesan Synod members, many of whom were trustees and members of PCC's, recognising their vital roles and the difficult issues they are managing at present.

Focus on Ministry and Collaboration:

Emphasised that the Diocesan budget is primarily about funding ministry. Stressed that success depends on collective effort, Diocesan Synod members' work enables diocesan goals. Expressed gratitude for Diocesan Synod members' ongoing contributions.

Engagement and Transparency:

Thanked Diocesan Synod members for participating in recent online seminars led by Stephen Sheridan (SLS) (Director of Finance), noting positive interaction and constructive dialogue about upcoming decisions.

Scale of Financial Challenges:

Reaffirmed the importance of finance and budgeting, highlighting the significant decisions ahead. Shared that the past nine months have involved extensive behind-the-scenes work due to the daunting scale of challenges.

Team Effort and Appreciation:

Commended Bishop's Council, Bishop's Staff, Diocesan Staff, and Finance Team for their collaborative and positive work during this period.

Presentation of Financial Challenges:

RB presented slides outlining multiple layers of financial pressure occurring simultaneously.

Noted that the 2025 budget was particularly challenging due to increased Employer's National Insurance Contributions.

2026 will be very challenging because of:

- Diocesan Finance Review (increased payments to the National Church)



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

- Stipend Increase (9%)
- Inflation (3.8%)
- Zero growth in Parish Share in real terms
- Some transitional funding, but otherwise bad news
- More regulatory compliance to fulfil e.g. GDPR, IT security, grant monitoring, updating governance, continuous improvement to safeguarding, and ongoing property compliance
- May be more cost challenges in the 26/11/25 Government Budget

RB commended several diocesan departments for their tireless work in resolving compliance issues:

- Property: Addressing gas, electric, and radon safety requirements.
- IT: Managing supplier changes to improve systems.

Emphasised the need for balance when reviewing the financial landscape, while addressing budget pressures, it is important not to halt essential compliance work, as this could set the Diocese back significantly.

Financial Strategy Working Group

- RB advised that +NW has established a Financial Strategy Working Group, active since June 2025.
- The group is supported by an independent financial consultant (with prior experience in Exeter Diocese).
- A report will be presented before 31 December 2025.

Key Financial Challenges

Parish Share Gap: Parish Share no longer covers ministry costs.

- Gap widened significantly during Covid and reached 25% in 2024.
- This is a critical issue requiring urgent attention.

Declining Reserves:

- Pre-Covid reserves were increasing; now reversed.
- Reserves were used during Covid to cushion deficits.
- In 2023, Synod proactively allocated £2 million from reserves for Carbon Net Zero (CNZ).
- Lower reserves reduce income and recovery capacity

Budget Outlook

2026 Budget: Will mark the start of significant restructuring work.

- Long-term sustainability planning required over the next 5–10 years.
- This year's budget is a stepping stone toward that goal.

Carbon Net Zero (CNZ)

RB reaffirmed Synod's commitment to CNZ:



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

- £2 million from reserves already spent as agreed.
- Full CNZ scheme estimated at £7 million; funding will need to be generated.
- New CNZ plan will be developed, incorporating lessons learned.
- Temporary pause in work; revised plan to be proposed in due course.

Clergy Numbers

- General Synod reported a 38% fall in recommended ordinations (July 2024).
- RB confirmed no plans to mandate clergy reductions in Bristol Diocese.
- Clergy numbers projected to increase from 105.2 FTE to 107.1 FTE in the 2026 budget.

RB's Key Message on Future Positioning

RB stressed the importance of putting the Diocese in the strongest possible position for the future, particularly in supporting clergy and filling vacancies.

Priorities highlighted:

- Make Bristol a place where clergy want to minister.
- Provide robust support for clergy through mentoring, administrative assistance, and other resources.
- Maintain vicarages to a high standard.
- Reduce energy costs while implementing Carbon Net Zero (CNZ) measures.

Monitoring:

- Archdeacons will continue to track progress in filling vacancies and provide feedback.

Financial Levers

SLS highlighted the Financial Levers which might be applied to help solve the deficit issues. There are four main ways of affecting our financial position substantially:

- Cut DBF costs (Property, Compliance, Ministerial Training, External Relations, CNZ, core staff, and so on)
- Raise Parish Share
- Reduce Clergy numbers
- Increase fundraised income

Financial modelling had shown that if just one of the first three levers was used, the consequences would be to:

- Close the Diocesan Office, make all employees redundant, stop all support to parishes, become non-compliant
- Increase Parish Share by 9% per annum for each of 10 years
- Reduce clergy numbers by 85% over 10 years



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

SLS advised that a combination of measures was therefore required to bring The Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance (BDBF) finances into a better position while avoiding excessive damage to ministry (and compliance) in the Diocese. The diocesan strategy was last fully revised in 2022. Minor amendments were made last year. A significant number of changes are expected this year as part of the upcoming review process.

Update on New Strategy

A new diocesan strategy is being prepared, with the first draft scheduled for review at the December Bishop’s Council meeting.

Strategic Aim: To enable a “soft landing” for reserves while addressing key priorities:

- Clergy Recruitment: Continue optimising conditions to attract and retain clergy.
- Property Compliance: Complete the current programme of vicarage repairs, enhancements, and compliance works.
- Estates Strategy: Develop an updated approach informed by lessons from the first stage of Carbon Net Zero (CNZ) work. Note: CNZ work will be paused in 2026.
- Diocesan Office Compliance: Finalize improvements in safeguarding, IT (including GDPR), HR, and Finance.
- Staffing: Minimize remaining core staff while maintaining essential functions.

6.

Responding to the Challenges

BF invited Christopher Bryan (CB), Archdeacon of Malmesbury, and Becky Waring (BW), Archdeacon of Bristol, to address Synod and lead consideration of how we can respond to the financial challenges currently facing the Diocese.

CB’s Address

CB spoke of hope amid difficult discussions and decisions, reminding Synod that we can draw strength from God and remain united as we face immediate financial challenges, trusting that this is part of God’s greater plan.

Highlighted the good work being carried out across the Diocese and the importance of collaboration and advice-seeking.

Emphasised that Synod members play a vital role in parish life and in fostering conversations around generosity, stewardship, and mutual responsibility.

BW’s Address

BW outlined the potential for future growth, explaining how Parish Share is calculated and the components considered in determining requests.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Shared details of resources available to help churches review their contributions and explore ways to increase generosity.

Delivered a compelling message: if each parishioner increased their giving by £2 per week, diocesan funds would rise by £1 million annually.

Closing Remarks

CB concluded by affirming that while challenges exist, there are practical ways to respond.

Diocesan support services and the Archdeacon team are ready to assist, whether through financial analysis, campaign support, or direct engagement with PCCs and churches.

Encouraged reframing the financial challenge through a lens of faith and shared responsibility.

For the full text of CB and BW's address please see Appendix A

7.	Bristol DBF Budget 2026 7.1 Presentation of the Report 7.2 Round Table Discussion 7.3 Questions & Answers 7.4 Motion to Approve
-----------	--

SLS, Director of Finance, presented the 2026 budget to Diocesan Synod.

Key points:

Income – Budget total £12,426,000

- Parish Share only covers 76% of Ministry costs excluding property
- There is interim support from the National Church to help cover the imposed Stipends increases but over coming years this will decline rapidly
- Investment income is forecast to decline
- Parish Share does not cover current cost of Ministry (gap is currently £3.2m)
- Parish Share does not contribute to funding DSS Staff or DBF operating costs

Expenditure – Budget total £15,966,000

- Repairs to Pattern Church will be delayed (Pattern Church is owned by the Diocese so repairs come from Diocesan Funds)
- As approved by Synod, All Saints Roof Repairs will go ahead £544
- DSS staff will receive a below inflation pay increase. (A number of roles are gapped or at risk)



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

- DBF Financial costs – we are aiming to be fully compliant and there is rise in these costs.
- DSS costs will decline as cost savings from investments in Property, IT and Governance take effect.

Total Deficit for 2026 - £3,540,000

On an operating basis the deficit is budgeted to fall by 38% in one year thanks to the cost saving measures undertaken. This will put the BDBF in a much better 'Going Concern' position for the future.

The deficit will be covered by a combination of reserves and the profitable sales of surplus building.

SLS completed his presentation highlighting the Next Steps.

- The Financial Strategy Task Group will report back to Bishop's Council on 1 December 2025 with a proposed 10 year plan to achieve a balanced budget over time.
- The 10 year Financial Strategy will be taken to Diocesan Synod during 2026.

7.2 Round Table Discussion

Diocesan Synod members were asked to reflect on what had been presented and were invited to discuss with colleagues.

BF invited feedback from tables

- Not much time to review the budget information
- Noted that CNZ drove policy change
- Queried whether changes were aggressive enough?
- Requested more notice for the Understanding the Budget Webinars
- Questioned the 10 year plan, given the economy and world are unpredictable would a 5 year plan be more realistic.
- Suggested that those parishes that prioritised a CNZ approach will be penalised with the ending of grants

Facilitators written feedback that was handed into the Governance Team is recorded in Appendix B

7.3 Questions & Answers

BF explained that formal written questions submitted prior to the meeting, which relate to finance, would be addressed during this agenda item.

- The questions and responses were included in the meeting papers circulated in advance.
- Hard copies of these papers were available on each table for reference.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Name: Chris Bradley (Lay, Deanery of Kingswood & S. Glos)

Question: By comparing the Bristol Diocese with other local Diocese, how do we compare in the key ratios by which you can monitor and measure any organisation? Such as ratio of Admin vs Clergy; Cost of Admin Staff vs total Opex Expenditure; Ratio of Ordained Clergy vs Number of operational churches; etc etc. A comprehensive data set of comparisons would be very useful. the above list is just a few examples.

Question answered by: RL, CEO/Director Secretary and SLS, Director of Finance and IT and Hannah Sweetnam, Deputy Director of External Relations

Answer: Comparative Diocesan information is difficult to acquire on a like-for-like basis. Some data is accessible via the Financial Statements of other Dioceses but is not set out in a readily comparable manner. We are putting together more data to drive further organisational efficiency working with colleagues in the South West, but these will not be available by the deadline of the answer response because of all the work we are currently devoting to driving strategic cost savings. The National Church is also in the process of updating financial returns to find comparative data, but this is still in too early stage to provide meaningful learnings. In the meantime, the Budget 2026 paper presented at this Synod, will provide some answers to your queries.

A long-standing challenge in the third sector is defining 'admin staff'. Our diocesan staff play a vital role in supporting ministry across the diocese. Through their work in safeguarding, HR, finance, fundraising, communications, and property management, they help ensure that clergy and parishes can focus on what matters most - ministry and mission. Many of these roles directly serve parishes, helping to ensure that our shared resources strengthen local church life. A large majority of roles maintain our legal compliance (governance, safeguarding, education, property safety etc), so whilst they may appear to be 'admin', they are a vital part of a functioning and legally compliant Diocese.

In simple terms, the core DSS staff are engaged on:

- Parish and school-facing/supporting: 29
- Compliance: 11
- Other roles: 3

Many roles are multi-functional, so the numbers above are based on where the role spends more than 50% of the time in a particular area.

Total DBF funded staff numbers v Clergy: 43 FTE v 107.1 FTE or 40% of Clergy numbers. If those roles which ensure compliance, and those which support clergy parishes and schools are removed (40), the number of 'pure admin' staff is 3 which is 2.8% of the clergy numbers. More importantly the cost of clergy in 2026 is £8,701,000 and the total cost of the DBF-funded DSS staff is £1,598,000 (see page



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

16 far right column of the table of the 2026 Budget Overview). The cost of the admin staff is ~£100k. In most charities, the percentage of 'pure admin staff' to 'operational staff' is between 8% and 12%.

The cost of staff (£1,598,000) set against the comparative Unfunded Operating Costs (see same Table) of £10,724,000 is a percentage of 14.9%. If pure admin staff are considered (i.e. those not assigned to parishes schools and legal compliance) the percentage is 0.9%

Ratio of Clergy to Number of Operational Churches depends on how one defines Operational Churches. For Parish Share purposes, there are 177 'entities', but these may be Benefices with multiple Churches, and on that basis there are 205 Churches. Thus the 107.1 FTE Clergy means 0.6 Clergy per Unit or 0.5 Clergy per Church. According to National Church data we are No 13 out of 41 Dioceses in terms of the ratio of clergy per capita (i.e. in the top 3rd).

The Director of Finance and Diocesan Secretary will be happy to answer any other questions of this nature after Synod.

Supplementary Question:

Is there benchmarking across all the local Dioceses?

Question Answered by: SLS, Director of Finance

Answer: SLS highlighted that this was a useful point to raise, the National Church gathers huge amounts of data but there is no feedback to Dioceses; however, the BDBF has had discussions with other Dioceses, especially those in the South West. SLS advised that he meets with South West Financial Directors twice a year, so the BDBF is creating it's own bench marking. Every Diocese is very different but there is lot we are learning from each other.

Name: Rich Cresswell (Clergy, Deanery of Kingswood & S.Glos)

Question: In the light of increasing parish share demands and the reported pressures on the diocesan budget, please could it be clarified:

- a) how many full-time equivalent stipendiary clergy serve in the Diocese of Bristol?
- b) how many of those are curates?
- c) how many full-time equivalent staff are employed by the Diocese of Bristol?
- d) how many of those are employed under funding that has been received through TC.T or other grants, i.e. not parish share? (If some posts are partly funded by both, please allocate as a fraction of a post, as necessary)

For avoidance of any doubt, the term "full-time equivalent" is intended to indicate that part time roles are added together, so two 0.5 stipendiary clergy posts would equal 1 FTE stipendiary clergy post, and similar for the Diocesan staff, based on standard UK full-time working of 35 hours per week.

Question answered by: GERALYN MEEHAN, Director of People & Safeguarding



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Answer:

a) In budget 2026 this will be 107.1 FTE versus the 105.2 FTE estimated in the 2025 Full Year Forecast produced in July 2025. See Budget Overview page 4.

b) how many of those are curates?

Answer to a) above includes Curates of 2026 Budget 25.0 FTE v 2025 Forecast of 26.1. See Budget Overview page 4.

The total cost to the DBF of these clergy in 2026 is £8,701,000

c) There are 43 DBF-funded FTE Staff for Budget 2026 (after a reduction of 3.3 FTE is built into the Budget). There are an additional 37 roles which are funded by the National Church and Grant-giving bodies to deliver TC.T

The total cost of these staff in 2026 is £1,598,000

d) There are 37 FTE staff assigned to TC.T which are fully funded by the National Church and Grant-Giving bodies.

This question misunderstands what Parish Share contributes to at the moment. Parish Share (~£5m income) only contributes towards Clergy Stipends and Housing costs (~£8m expenditure) and so the gap between them in 2026 will be £3m. It does not contribute any income at all to support DBF operating costs or staff costs. This has been reported to Synod several times. In the last set of audited accounts for 2024 Parish Share was £4,978,000 (page 22 of accounts) which part-funded Clergy Stipends costs of £4,983,000 (page 37 of accounts) and made no contribution to Clergy Housing Costs of £2,092,000 (page 32 of accounts). This means that even if only Stipends and Clergy Housing Costs are included (ie excluding all the other Mission and Ministry support costs provided by the Diocese's M&M Team) then Parish Share underfunded these Diocesan responsibilities in 2024 by 30%.

Supplementary Question:

Whilst I am grateful for the figures supplied, I am concerned that the additional response underneath was unnecessarily combative and somewhat misleading. Money comes in and goes out. Arguing which pot it comes from is, I believe, unhelpful.

In the same way that clergy are often expected to work across multiple smaller parishes, and sometimes do work that benefits more than one church at a time, what serious consideration, if any, has been given to merging some of the services provided by the DSS and DBF with that of another neighbouring diocese, in order to maximise value for money? (Or even, to address the elephant in the room, merging Bristol with another diocese?) And, if these things have been considered, how often are they reviewed?

Question Answered by: RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer: RL advised that mergers have been looked at nationally. A decision was made not to merge Dioceses. Instead, dioceses have been encouraged to share



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

back-office functions where possible. Diocesan Secretaries in the South West meet quarterly, and sharing back-office functions is a standing agenda item. Current examples include collaboration on church buildings and environmental work, with IT sharing likely in the future. In other areas, reviews have shown that sharing would not necessarily reduce costs. RL confirmed that “sharing” remains on the agenda and will continue to be explored, with potential for further implementation in the future.

Name: Dan Watts (Clergy, Deanery of Kingswood & S. Glos)

Question: At the beginning of September all Parishes received their Parish share request for 2026. I note that the Archdeacons applied a discount (transitional relief allocation) of £27000 to my Parish share request. I have been informed that this relief is being paid for out of Diocesan reserves.

Is there a plan in place to phase out this relief allocation?

For how many years will this relief allocation be applied before my parish share will rise by at least 19%?

Question answered by: CB, Archdeacon of Malmesbury

Answer: The cost of Ministry in the Diocese of Bristol exceeds Parish Share receipts by about £3.0 million per annum (please see the 2026 budget for figures). This has happened because Parish Share gifts have not increased in line with inflation; in fact, the total is about 25% lower in real terms over the past 5 years. We want to get back to the situation where the Parish Share calculation covers the whole cost of Ministry, however the step-up required would be challenging for many parishes. 'Transitional relief' was introduced to buy time during which parishes could grow their income with help from Diocesan Support Services. Transitional relief is paid for from Diocesan reserves which should be generating income, and are finite, so it is important that Transitional Relief is genuinely transitional. When introduced, five years was suggested as a maximum horizon. We want to build a collaborative culture which grows generosity and income for all, in which parishes are accompanied and supported. Excellent resources are available to run stewardship campaigns and make giving easier. Help is available to assist with other sources of income like Sharesy and grants. The Archdeacons and our Giving and Resources Advisor, James Morrey, are keen to support you - please be in touch with them.

Supplementary Question: Thank you for the information provided, please can you clarify when the period of 'transitional relief' started or when it is proposed to end to assist with planning at a PCC level.

Question Answered by: CB, Archdeacon of Malmesbury; and RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer:

CB explained that when Transitional Relief was introduced, it was intended to be a maximum of five years. While that was the original intention, in practice transitional



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

relief is calculated based on what parishes are able to pay, making it an ongoing conversation rather than a fixed term. CB expressed a desire to move towards more intentional discussions, where Archdeacons meet with PCC leaders to explore what a realistic trajectory might look like and identify the support needed to achieve it. He emphasized the importance of building stronger relationships through these conversations.

RL added that James Moray is the key contact within Diocesan Support Services for advice on Parish Share. He commended James for his expertise and understanding of the complexities parishes face. RL encouraged members to reach out to James for guidance on how Parish Share is calculated, how it benchmarks against other parishes, and what steps can be taken to inform decision-making

Name: David Jones (Clergy, Deanery of Kingswood & S. Glos)

Question: Eco Grants. Each church was encouraged to have an energy audit. Recommendations were helpfully made. Many churches benefited from the assured £10,000 grant. Many, due to a lack of solid advice, a lack of funds, or the difficulty of plans being approved, are still working towards green solutions. I discover last week from the diocesan eco advisor the 'assured' financial support is being withdrawn. There has been no official announcement. Many churches will have or will be ordering work factoring this money in. Do those responsible understand how negative the impact on church finance and the green agenda this decision is? If there wasn't enough money, why make unrealistic promises?

Question answered by: Richard Leaman, Diocesan Secretary/CEO and Kit Connell, Environment & Sustainability Officer

Answer: The question is slightly premature as no decision has been made by Synod about the 2026 budget, including CNZ expenditure next year. Without authority, we can neither make an announcement (either way), nor spend any more money.

The Synod-approved reserves-funded £2m expenditure on CNZ is now complete (in fact slightly exceeded) and the remaining work is due to end on 31st December 2025. There is some scope for some parishes who are on the pathway to CNZ, related changes to continue this year (2025), and possibly next year if savings can be made elsewhere in the property budget.

We remain committed to CNZ and furthering our pioneering work in achieving that target, but we are having to review how we can fund it, and what we fund. The CNZ team and parishes have done a great job on spending the allocated funds, but the rich information we now have shows that some investment we had originally proposed doesn't provide value for money. In addition, because of the significant financial challenge we are facing, we will have to find other ways to finance the work; sale of properties or glebe, purchase of more CNZ-friendly properties, plus fundraising and/or national church grants will all be needed before we can commit



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

to further expenditure. We are nonetheless still going to advise, encourage and support parishes on their progress towards CNZ in the interim.

Those responsible in the Diocese (specifically Bishop's Council) are fully aware of the impact of pausing CNZ expenditure in 2026, but we need to review, re-plan, and return to Synod when ready.

Supplementary Question: I understand the budget explains that the money is not there for Eco Grants at the moment, but there will be a great number of churches who will have already been in consultation with the DAC. Two that I work with have already placed orders for systems. I would like to know if those churches that have already started action, will those grants be available for them?

Question Answered by: RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer: RL explained that he has already been in discussion with Kit Connell (KC), Environment & Sustainability Manager, regarding parish commitments to environmental projects. They are fully aware that a number of parishes have made commitments, developed plans, or have approvals in progress. RL assured Synod that every effort will be made to use any underspend from this year and potential savings from the Property Department next year to support these parishes.

He acknowledged that there will inevitably be some parishes partway through projects for which sufficient finances are not available. RL confirmed that KC is aware of these cases, a list will be prepared, and the team will do their utmost to provide support wherever needed.

BF opened the floor to questions.

Name: Beverly Charles (Clergy, Deanery of Kingswood & South Glos)

Question: I would like to reflect back to Synod that the communication was that each Parish could have £10K not that there was £2million and when it runs out, it runs out. We are a Parish with 4 projects, 3 of which only want £1000, yesterday our Eco Champion called to draw down funds and was told there is no money. It has caused panic. If you knew you were running out of money, communication 1 month or 2 months ago saying we are up to our limit would have been helpful. We only found out because we rang up and asked. Tell us what is going on because you are causing havoc on the ground.

There was a brief round of applause.

Question Answered by: RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer: RL opened the discussion by apologising for the lack of communication. RL clarified that the message suggesting there was no more money was incorrect and should not have been conveyed as such. RL explained that the decisions in question had been made very recently by Bishop's Council. It had not been possible to share information earlier because discussions needed to take place with DSS staff whose roles were at risk. RL reiterated an apology for both the lateness of the decisions and the delay in providing information to members.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Name: Stephen Grindrod (Lay, Deanery of North Wiltshire)

Question: Budget Overview document contains numerous abbreviations that are not explained - can we get a glossary of the abbreviations?

Question Answered by: SLS, Director of Finance

Answer: Please see Appendix C BDBF Budget 2026 Overview List V6.5 Final List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Supplementary Comment:

The £16million budget deserves better communication. The presentation and documentation came out late. The numbers and tables are too small to read properly. In future it needs to be earlier, in a format we can read, at a level that is appropriate for us down on the floor. Not using lots of jargon that we do not understand.

Name: Adrian Howkins (Clergy, Deanery of Bristol City)

Question: In November 2019 the Diocese of Bristol declared a climate emergency. How can the decision to cut £800,000 from our CNZ work be justified in the face of this ongoing and worsening climate emergency? Does the Diocese of Bristol no longer think that we are facing a climate emergency? What does this decision do to our much-publicised commitment to get to net zero by 2030?

Question answered by: RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer: No decision has yet been made by Diocesan Synod regarding the 2026 budget, including expenditure for CNZ in the coming year. Without Synod's authority, no further spending can take place. The Diocesan Synod approved reserves funded allocation of £2 million for CNZ has been fully expended, slightly exceeded, and the remaining planned work is scheduled to conclude on 31 December 2025.

The commitment to achieving CNZ remains unchanged, and the Diocese continues to lead pioneering work toward that goal. However, a review of funding and priorities is now required. While the CNZ team and parishes have made excellent use of the allocated funds, recent data indicates that some previously proposed investments do not represent good value for money. In light of significant financial challenges, alternative funding sources must be explored before any new expenditure can be authorised. These may include property sales or glebe disposals, acquisition of more CNZ-friendly properties, fundraising initiatives, and applications for national church grants.

The Diocese is not denying the urgency of the climate crisis; rather, it seeks to ensure that the right work is undertaken and that appropriate funding is secured. A review of progress is underway, and plans will be revised before returning to Synod



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

for approval. In the meantime, advice, encouragement, and support for parishes in their journey toward net zero will continue.

Supplementary Question:

It was noted that, unless every gas boiler is replaced and every petrol car within the Diocese is sold over the next four years, the widely publicised commitment to achieving CNZ will be unattainable without some form of carbon offsetting. Concerns were raised that offsetting can often present environmental and ethical challenges and is also costly. In light of this, the question was posed as to whether, rather than selling Glebe land, it might be more appropriate to use this land to support the Diocese's net zero targets and advance its environmental mission. If the Diocesan Support Services (DSS) agree with this approach, Synod requested clarification on the amount of Glebe land currently available either for sale or for use in furthering the mission of the Church.

Question Answered by: RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer: RL explained that this issue underpins the current pause in CNZ work. He highlighted the trade-offs between using Glebe land for carbon offsetting, which would address elements that cannot be brought to net zero, and selling Glebe land to generate funds for the remaining net zero projects. RL stated that the Diocese intends to develop a comprehensive plan before proceeding. He noted that there are a few pockets of Glebe land which, if sold, could finance the completion of net zero work; however, selling these parcels would remove the option of using them for offsetting in the future. RL confirmed that this matter will return to Diocesan Synod for full discussion and decision-making.

Name: Kat Champion-Spall (Deanery of Clergy, City)

Question: Communications - what resources will be coming from the Bishop's Council/DSS to help us explain all of this in our context?

Question Answered by: RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer:

RL reported that discussions had taken place with Leanne Hubbard, Direction of External Relations, and KC, Environment & Sustainability Manager, regarding the most effective approach to communications. He noted that the content of any communication will depend on whether the budget is approved. RL confirmed that a database and a set of Q&A resources are already available to provide answers to common questions. He emphasised the need for a proactive communications strategy concerning CNZ, including clarity around the proposed cuts and adjustments, and stressed the importance of delivering a clear and consistent message.

Name: Simon Pugh-Jones (Lay, Ex-officio)

Question: I was at the national DAC conference recently where there was much talk of net zero and it was quite something to hear experts and advisors from around the



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

country telling their parishes that if they want to get to CNZ, they should do it like Bristol. The 'Bristol Way'.

One reading of the revised budget could go like this:

We remain committed to net zero....but we know we need about £7m to get there and we don't have that kind of money. So, we're going to look at the effectiveness of what we're doing and try to find some more cash. We'll get back to you at some point but until then we're not going to spend a penny on CNZ.

But I don't think that sounds like the 'Bristol way'. The 'Bristol way' is being the first Diocese to declare a climate emergency, now the national target. It's having a DAC which was the first to adopt a policy of a CNZ presumption in every project it considers – now the national approach. It's to undertake pioneering work in zero carbon heating with Bristol conceived and developed radiant heating being installed throughout the UK, Europe and as far away as the Cathedral Church in Melbourne. The Bristol way is having a DAC, good people like KC, Archdeacons and a Buildings Team who have been and are and will continue to push forward with NZ. It is to know that NZ is about caring for God's creation and passing that on to future generations beautifully intact.

So, I'd prefer a more 'Bristol Way' reading of today which says:

We are absolutely committed to CNZ because we recognise that the climate crisis is an emergency, and we believe creation care is central to our purpose and mission in faith. We do not underestimate what we've achieved, nor do we underestimate what we have still to do. We do have significant financial challenges, but CNZ is a priority. We're going to work urgently to develop funding plans, for the long term but also to ensure that as far as we possibly can we do not delay progress in the short term and in any case will continue with the resources we have to make progress on every aspect of net zero which is not dependant on capital funding.

Can we be more 'Bristol' and commit to that version, that emphasis and that urgency?

Question Answered by: RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer: RL gave an immediate response - Yes

Name: Auriol Britton (AB)(Laity, Deanery of Bristol South)

Question:

Concerns were expressed regarding the rising clergy costs, which are increasing by 9%. It was acknowledged that this increase is not within the Diocese's direct control; however, the continued reduction of administrative staff was highlighted as



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

a significant issue. The point was made that this concern has been raised at previous Synods, and it was stated that presiding over a situation where administrative costs are repeatedly cut while clergy costs continue to rise is untenable. The need for greater equality and recognition of the value of all roles was emphasised. In addition, it was noted that failure to allocate funding for CNZ is unacceptable. It was made clear that these matters must be addressed before support can be given to the proposed budget.

BF thanked AB for her comments.

The next two questions were asked following each other and one answer was given.

Name: Sally Robertson (Clergy, Deanery of Swindon)

Question: If we do not pass this budget today what would the next steps be?

Name: Kat Champion-Spall (Clergy, Deanery of City)

Question: Carbon Net Zero – we could not pass budget today
Can we pass the budget with a condition that CNZ is reviewed?
What might that look like?

Questions Answered by: Lee Coley (LC), Diocesan Legal Adviser

Answer: LC advised that if the 2026 budget was not passed today then the BDBF would continue using the existing format going forward. The Bishop's Council would need to review the 2026 budget again and bring back to Diocesan Synod in March. He explained that there are other technical resolutions that could be put forward if additional items of expenditure are required in the interim.

BF gave a brief summary of the financial discussions, the following was noted:

- The 2026 budget proposals indicate that the Diocese continues to face a significant underlying deficit.
- While costs are under constant review and control, there remains a tension between what is financially possible and what is desired; the Net Zero initiative is a clear example of this challenge.
- The fundamental issue is a lack of income rather than inadequate cost control.
- Parish share contributions have declined, and the gap between income and expenditure is widening.
- The Diocese relies heavily on its Investment Fund, yet investment income is reducing.
- There is increasing dependence on external funds and grants, which, although currently holding up, cannot be guaranteed in the long term.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

BF asked members to reflect on the motion that is to be proposed and think on 3 points:

1. Are we willing to pass the motion to approve the expenditure for this year's budget?
2. How do we take forward the recognised concerns e.g. cost deduction, CNZ
3. There is recognition of the importance of a long-term financial strategy, built on a combination of continued strong stewardship and with a growth strategy to grow the Kingdom of God in the Diocese of Bristol.

RB assured members that the BDBF will do everything possible to support parishes and individuals with ongoing projects. RB confirmed that funding will be sourced and that a revised plan for Carbon Net Zero, radically different from the previous approach and informed by lessons learned, will be presented to Synod in due course.

7.4 Motion

Richard Bacon (Chair of Diocesan Board of Finance) proposed the motion: That this Synod authorises the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance to expend in the year 2026 sums totaling £15,966,000 (including project costs) in respect of the items in the budget for that year.

The motion was passed by a majority show of hand.

There were 5 Against and 5 Abstentions.

8. Bishop's Address

Trudie Wigley (TW), Chair of the House of Clergy took the Chair. She advised that RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary had left the meeting and welcomed, Simon Taylor (ST), Deputy Diocesan Secretary and Director of Mission and Ministry, to the dais.

+NW addressed the Diocesan Synod. A full copy of the address can be found in Appendix D.

9.	Governance Reports 9.1 Bishop's Council & Board of Directors report (8 July, 18 August, 14 and 31 October 2025) 9.1.1 Questions & Answers 9.1.2 Motion to approve Bishop's Council Reports 9.1.3 Motion to approve CRR Scheme for Concord Church BMO
-----------	---



9.1.4 Motion to approve the Deanery Synod Election Formula for 2026-2029

9.2 General Synod Report (July 2025)

9.2.1 Question & Answers

9.1 Bishops Council Reports

John Sunderland (JS) advised that the report had covered four meetings.

JS drew attention to the [Statement of Needs](#) prepared by the Vacancy in See Committee, which was linked within the report. JS encouraged members to review the document, noting that its 34 pages provide a comprehensive snapshot of the Diocese's current perspective and aspirations for the future Diocesan Bishop. The statement was described as a rich, fact-based and thematic resource that could be valuable when engaging with PCCs to broaden their outlook. JS urged all members to read and share the report widely.

9.1.1 Question & Answers

There were no questions raised.

9.1.2 Motion

John Sunderland, Bishop's Council Member proposed the motion:

The Bishop's Council reports be received.

The motion was passed by a unanimous show of hands.

TW thanked the Bishop's Council for their continued work.

9.1.3 Motion to approve CRR Scheme for Concord Church BMO

A short film giving information about the Concord Church was shown to members.

No questions were raised.

John Sunderland, Bishop's Council Member proposed the motion:

The Church Representation Rules (CRR) Scheme for Concord Church BMO is approved.

The motion was passed by a unanimous show of hands

9.1.4 Motion to approve the Deanery Synod Election Formula for 2026-2029

It was noted that the recommended formula resulted in a higher number of lay representatives across the Diocese than usual. This adjustment was necessary because the standard formula had led to clergy outnumbering lay representatives in



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

the Deanery of City. TW advised that the formula had been reviewed by Bishop's Council on two occasions before being brought to Synod for approval.

Name: Julia Childerhouse (Laity, Deanery of Chippenham)

Question: If this is approved now, can it be addressed again in the future, if we find fewer people taking up the spaces, in particular City Deanery because it is bumping up numbers everywhere else, if we don't fill those spaces can we come back to it in less of a rush?

Question Answered by: Lee Coley (LC), Diocesan Legal Adviser

Answer: LC confirmed that it could be.

Name: Kat Champion-Spall (KC-S) (Clergy, Deanery of City)

Comment: An apology was offered for the changes initiated by the Deanery of City. It was clarified that the Deanery does not have 115 people attending its Synod meetings. The proposed formula was considered preferable to other options and was welcomed for amplifying the voices of smaller churches while also providing additional representation for larger churches. However, it was acknowledged that, in practice, churches with an electoral roll of between 25 and 50 may struggle to find a second person to serve as a Deanery Representative. While the formula appears to be a good solution on paper, the reality is that filling these vacancies will be challenging.

TW advised that this had been the basis of the discussions at Bishop's Council and that there is a future option to go to General Synod and propose our own formula.

John Sunderland, Bishop's Council Member proposed the motion:

that in accordance with Church Representation Rules the number of lay representatives on Deanery Synods shall be in proportion to the number on the church electoral roll of each parish in accordance with the formula approved by the Bishop's Council on 31 October 2025.

The motion was passed by a unanimous show of hands.

9.2 General Synod Report (July 2025)

TW thanked Alice Kemp (AK), General Synod member for the report of the July 2025 meeting. KC-S, General Synod member was available to answer any questions.

TW asked KC-S to give a short reflection on the last General Synod meeting which covered some important topics.

KC-S spoke that AK's report had picked out the highlights, a number of items from the last meeting will have real consequences and KC-S hoped that members can



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

feel the difference, have a sense that General Synod decisions do matter and have a context in our Parishes and in our lives.

There were no questions raised.

TW gave thanks to all our General Synod Representative and advised that Adam Beaumont (ABe) has taken on the role of General Synod Representative and also thanked Rich Cresswell (RC) for putting himself forward for the position, for being willing to serve.

11.

This agenda item was taken out of order, to enable all remaining meeting time to be given to Questions.

Priority Communities Update

11.1 Update

11.2 Church Urban Fund (CUF) Together Network Partnership Motion

11.3 Questions & Answer

11.1 Update

Mandy Ford (MF), Dean of Bristol Cathedral, presented an update on the work of the Priority Communities Network (PCN)

MF outlined her role within the PCN initiative, explaining that she was privileged to lead work on PCN as part of Transforming Church.Together (TC.T) and provide oversight. She expressed pride in the progress being made across the Diocese but emphasised that the practical work is being carried out in parishes by clergy, lay ministers, young people’s workers, and volunteers, supported by the DSS team.

MF presented a series of slides, and the following points were noted. Priority Communities comprise 17 churches located in the top 12.4% of deprivation areas within the Diocese, with 13 in Bristol and 4 in Swindon, overseen by 14 incumbents. These communities represent approximately 170,000 people, including 11,000 children living in poverty, and are among the most challenging areas in the Diocese.

MF highlighted barriers to growth, noting that these communities face significant social needs, difficulties in raising leadership, and tight financial constraints. The Diocese is working to address these challenges, enabling healthy church growth and fostering gospel transformation within local communities.

The Priority Communities Strategy was outlined as being structured around three key dimensions, co-created with those working on the ground:

- Training and Development
- People and Resources



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

- Networking, Support and Accountability.

It was noted that PCN work is cross-departmental and integrated within the broader Transforming Church Together (TC.T) context and workstreams. Partnership was emphasised as a central element of the strategy.

MF reported that significant investment and resources are being directed toward the PCN initiative. Networking was highlighted as one of the most important aspects of the strategy, and MF expressed gratitude to Andy Murray, Dean of Priority Communities, for his work in building networks, supporting parishes, sharing good practice, and fostering collaboration to ensure communities feel connected. To date, there have been 20 network gatherings, three South West regional events, 16 Sunday parish visits by the Dean of Priority Communities (DPC), and 28 one-to-one meetings with clergy conducted by the DPC.

In terms of resources, MF noted that data packs have been created and distributed to PCN churches. These have assisted incumbents with governance, communications, fundraising, and other areas, thereby releasing clergy capacity for mission. Administrative support has also been strengthened, with seven administrators recruited and five operational hubs established.

Although the initiative is still in its early stages, positive impacts have already been observed in areas such as grant funding, social media engagement, financial support, and addressing building issues. MF confirmed that funding is in place for one lay worker in each area, with nine out of 14 lay workers recruited to date. Panels have been convened to assess parish lay ministry visions and proposals.

MF also highlighted progress in training and development, noting that the PREPARED Programme is equipping confident leaders and that churchwardens are being called into lay ministry. MF expressed thanks to Michelle, Training Officer, for her work in developing resources and providing mentoring.

Next Steps

- Support parishes in recruiting the remaining lay workers and operations/admin posts.
- Continue mentoring PCN clergy to strengthen leadership and mission delivery.
- Expand the PCN Operations Managers network to enable shared learning and collaboration.
- Launch the PCN Lay Worker network to build community and support.
- Pilot the PREPARED lay ministry development programme to grow local leaders.
- Establish a new mission area in Bristol in partnership with wider TC.T teams and assist churches in accessing PCN resources and investment.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

- Develop and share qualitative and quantitative impact data to inform future strategy and learning.

MF concluded by noting that Andy Murray and the team have identified light-touch ways of providing support, with early signs of increased positivity, greater church engagement, and numerical growth. This focused work in the most challenging areas of the Diocese is transforming communities at street level and is an area for which to give thanks.

11.2 Church Urban Fund

The PCN Priority Communities Network proposed becoming a formal partner of the Church Urban Fund (CUF) and its Together Network. MF explained that CUF was established in response to the *Faith in the City* report, published 40 years ago, which challenged the Church of England to remain attentive to poor communities. Today, the Together Network comprises 50 organisations and dioceses, integrating evangelism, service, and the prophetic ministry of challenging injustice in all its forms.

MF emphasised the importance of being part of a wider network and sharing learning. She noted that Bristol has significant experience and resources to offer other dioceses and networks across the country, while also seeking opportunities to be resourced in return. For these reasons, the PCN expressed a strong desire to join the Together Network.

11.3 Questions & Answers

Name: Toby Boutle (Clergy, Deanery of Swindon)

Question: Why is All Hallows Easton, in the Index of Multiple Deprivation recorded as the second most deprived Parish in the Diocese, not one of the funded parishes?

Question Answered by: MF, Dean of Bristol Cathedral

Answer: MF advised that All Hallows Easton will very shortly be included. There is a desire to talk about a new Mission area, to get more resources into that area of the city and to make sure that All Hallows is inside the Network area.

Name: David Brae (Clergy, Deanery of Kingswood & South Glos)

Question: A question was raised regarding churches and parishes that do not fall within the highest levels of deprivation but are still facing significant challenges. It was asked what measures are in place to capture and learn from the ministerial experiences within these parishes so that valuable insights are not lost.

Additionally, clarification was sought on how resourcing will be applied to these parishes, given that many share similar characteristics with those already funded



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

but have not received support. The concern was that these parishes should not be overlooked in the wider strategy.

Question Answered by: MF, Dean of Bristol Cathedral and Michelle Taylor (MT), Priority Communities Trainer

MF acknowledged the difficulty faced by churches and parishes that fall just outside the eligibility list for funding. She noted that DSS is actively sharing good practice and learning and invited MT to provide further detail.

MT clarified that the PREPARED programme has already been launched and confirmed that there are currently three learning hubs with 22 participants engaged in training. She emphasised that all resources are free and accessible to the wider network. MT explained that there are 16 parishes within this wider network, including those that narrowly missed funding for a paid lay worker. These parishes have the opportunity to send individuals to the PREPARED programme to become trained lay workers. While these roles may not be paid, they will enable participants to take on leadership responsibilities within their parishes. MT reiterated that the work of the PCN is free and available to the entire network.

Name: Mark Terry (Clergy, Deanery of Chippenham)

Question: I represent a very rural Deanery, next to another rural Deanery, in the first instance it wouldn't sound applicable, but it is, can we share the learning please from ops hubs as I think that would be very useful.

Question Answered by: Mandy Ford (MF), Dean of Bristol Cathedral

Answer: MF confirmed that learning would be shared.

Name: Stephen Grindrod (Lay, Deanery of North Wiltshire)

Question: Item 11.2 Church Urban Fund Together Network Partnership - there is no mention of the financial consequences of joining - what are they?

Question answered by: Leanne Hubbard, Director of External Relations

Answer: Thank you for your query regarding the financial consequences of joining the Church Urban Fund's Together Network Partnership.

We can confirm that joining the Together Network is free of charge. There are no membership fees or joining costs associated with becoming part of the network. However, if we choose to participate in events, training sessions, or other activities offered by the network, these may incur costs. We have anticipated this and have budgeted accordingly within the partnership activities budget, which is funded through the Transforming Communities Together (TCT) programme.

This approach allows us to benefit from the network's resources and opportunities while ensuring financial transparency and sustainability.

Supplementary Comment:



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Any proposal that comes forward to us should have a financial impact as part of that proposal.

11.2 Motion

Mandy Ford, Dean of Bristol Cathedral proposed:

The Diocese of Bristol becomes an Associate Member of the Together Network, hosted by the Church Urban Fund, and commits to active participation in its programmes, learning opportunities, and collaborative Kingdom mission to tackle poverty and transform communities.

The motion was passed by a show of hands, there was a significant majority in favour with 1 abstention.

10.

Question Time

TW explained that copies of the formal written question that had been submitted had been included in the meeting papers that were circulated, and a hard copy was on each table.

Name: Simon Stevenette (SS) (Clergy, Deanery of Swindon)

Question: Over this last year a number of our congregation have engaged with the Rhythm of Life resources. We are very thankful to those colleagues who have organised this on our behalf. Our participants have found the resources helpful in a number of ways, eg.: encouraging increasing depth in spiritual formation, new approaches which may not had been considered before, and a great opportunity to meet sisters and brothers from across our Bristol Diocese

We know that having a Rhythm of Life can be transformational for people and churches as they follow Jesus.

In what ways will the diocesan leadership be encouraging and promoting the Rhythm of Life in the coming year so that more people can benefit from the resources as part of their discipleship journeys?

Question answered by: ST, Director of Mission and Ministry Support and Deputy Diocesan Secretary

Answer: I'm grateful to Simon for his question and for his appreciation of the Rhythm of Life resources. I hope that his question will be part of raising the profile of these resources and encouraging to members of Synod to help promote their use. Next year the national church is running a Lent campaign around Rhythms of Life, and we plan to co-ordinate with this. In addition, we are running an 'Encounter Weekend' at Lee Abbey in March, to enable parishes that would not otherwise be able to run a weekend away to have time together to encounter God. Between



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Ascension and Pentecost there will be a diocesan pilgrimage walking the whole of the diocese.

We are about to launch resources for using a Rhythm of Life in schools, a year of resources for schools to use in partnership with local churches, including training for local church clergy and members. This aims to embed six practices in the life of schools that can help children and young people create positive and Godly rhythms of life within the schools.

There are also resources in production to help parishes think through how rhythms of discipleship can be modelled in the life of the church and to help churches / PCCs discern what their 'charism' or rhythms of prayer, community and service might be.

The resources that have been produced are a series of four-week explorations of different practices, with a monthly online Zoom meeting to reflect on our learning together. Alongside each of these there are video examples from across the diocese of lives changed by practicing different rhythms related to the monthly themes and downloadable instructions to try them for yourself.

Feedback on the resources that we have produced says that : “It dared me to think outside my routine to the possibility of seeing how others may have rhythms that I misunderstood”; “Really inspirational and an encouragement to seek further”. I do hope that Synod will be able to share the good news of these resources and that members of Synod may even find them helpful for their own discipleship journey.

SS had given apologies so did not ask a supplementary question.

Name: Will Fairbairn (WF) (Clergy, Bristol City)

Question: The TCT update gives a really encouraging overall picture. The data given clumps all forms of investment together. Would it be possible for the synod to see a granular breakdown of AWA for each category? This would enable us to know what forms of investment are having the greatest impact at this time. Currently we can't tell whether everything is working or whether one form is dragging up the average of the others.

Question answered by: RL, CEO/Diocesan Secretary

Answer: The Diocese is keen that the investments we make (SDF, STF, Innovation Funding, and TC.T) are bottom-up driven - by parishes. These various investments are quite distinct because of the different leadership and objectives of the various contexts, and it is therefore unsound to draw conclusions as to what project/intervention is or isn't working. The Spirit is working in different places in different ways.

If we look at TC.T in particular, it was designed to act as a holistic strategy benefitting from mutually reinforcing support across all the projects, and focussing on some forms of intervention, at the expense of others, would undermine this approach.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Some themes can be drawn out however:

- Contexts which are geographically cohesive and have both strong leadership and a clear vision for the future seem to be more likely to experience statistical AWA / TWC growth.
- These contexts also seem to have a wider and more holistic approach to change, including an emphasis on children, young people and families, and a conscious reflection and focus on local community needs.
- It is worth noting that even the contexts which experienced lower statistical growth did still grow faster than the benchmark, and that there are significant other benefits accruing from the investment in these contexts.

Finally, we should be cautious about only focussing on AWA / TWC increases, as this is only a part of the wider missional impact TC.T was hoping to achieve.

WF indicated that he did not wish to ask a supplementary question.

Name: Dan Watts (Clergy, Kingswood & South Glous)

Question: National figures, in the form of 'Statistics for mission 2024' were released this week, in which the median church in the Church of England has child average weekly attendance of 1 and the 75% church has a child average weekly attendance of 7.

How many churches in Bristol Diocese are at or below the 50th percentile and how many churches are at or above the 75th percentile for child average weekly attendance?

If these figures are not addressed lots of churches will cease to exist in 30 years time. What is the Diocese doing to address these catastrophically low figures? What is the diocese doing to learn (and share ideas/resources) from those churches who are positively bucking the trend?

Question answered by: Liz Townend, Diocesan Director of Education and Sarah Wattley – Strategy Enabler for Under 18s

Answer: Thank you for your question and bringing to attention this vital area of ministry.

Based on the 2024 Statistics for Mission, the number of churches with Child average Sunday attendance (calculated from October count) of 1 or less in Bristol Diocese is 82 (44.32%) and the number of churches with weekly child attendance of 7 or more is 50 (27.03%).

As part of TC.T, an under 18s workstream was developed. During the early pilot implementation stages, it became clear, through consultation with the advisory group and through relational conversations on the ground including with ministry members, that the fullness of young people's spiritual flourishing was not going to



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

be fully supported through this work stream alone. We needed to think bigger and bolder to enable a culture change journey, where children and families are seen as vital to our churches and their communities, and noticed as missing.

The emerging CYPF strategy and workstream, developed with various consultative bodies in this diocese and evidence from other dioceses, has identified nine key outcomes to support the change in the trajectory mentioned in the question, including intergenerational ministry.

Exploratory opportunities, activities and training are well underway. This is a significant journey which requires working together to share, inform, support and grow. We are conscious of the need for continue dialogue across the whole diocese as to how this is implemented and how best practice is shared. Three main areas are shared here:

1. Fostering a cultural shift that places children, young people, and families at the heart of mission and ministry. Four key programmes are already in place - for clergy, chaplaincy, Growing Faith Strategic Leaders, and multi-academy trust leaders, with more planned. A strong programme of school and church leader conferences also support this work.
2. Strengthening connections between churches, schools, and families in local communities to support the national *Growing Faith* vision, ensuring partnerships are collaborative and beneficial for all and consider invitational discipleship opportunities and the connections between these.
3. Continuing phases to build a network of chaplains working with Under 18s and their families through parishes, in single schools, across multi academy trusts and Growing Faith church and school communities.

The next phase of the SMMIB bid is being written, with potential plans to seek further support from the national church and other charitable organisations for future CYP-related initiatives.

We look forward to sharing more with you as we journey together to implement this culture change.

See Appendix E Question 9.Stats for Mission - Diocese of Bristol October 2024

Supplementary Question:

What is being done to learn from those churches with higher average weekly child attendance? (sharing stories, developing successful models of children's ministry, coaching/training clergy on managing culture change in churches, encouraging



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

clergy of churches with growing children's ministry to become coaches/mentors/work consultants to others in the Diocese?)

Question Answered by: ST, Deputy Diocesan Secretary/Director of Mission and Ministry

Answer: ST thanked Dan for his question and supplementary. He explained that from January there will be a new member of the Education team who will specifically work on Church School partnerships and one of their key tasks will be to go around churches to hear the stories and to share insights of those stories. There is a whole range of different training programmes that are either started or getting underway and expertise is being shared, and the team are looking to develop this further. ST highlighted that the CYPF Team will be seeking out Clergy to contribute.

Name: Lydia Morey (Clergy, Deanery Swindon)

Question: Thank you for the TC.T Stats and Update Report. It is very encouraging to see that the Bristol diocese funded churches achieved faster AWA growth and TWC growth than other DB churches. In view of the observations of, for example, Dr Fritz B. Talbot, to what extent has the DBF gathered data to assess whether it is the financial investment that seems to be making a difference, rather than the extra care and attention the funded churches receive (or perceive themselves to be receiving) - i.e. to differentiate causation from correlation?

Question answered by: Rob Mountain, Director of Transformation

Answer: The majority of the contexts studied in this report have been in place for a number of years, and were evaluated on an ongoing basis as they went through their investment programme. We could therefore be relatively confident that the activity that was enabled by the investment was the cause of the statistical growth.

There is a more recent group that has started to show the same statistical growth, but in advance of actual funding being released into the contexts. It is still too early to confidently explain the reasons behind this, but we would expect to be able to understand more as we progress. Of course, the act of being recognised could explain an increase in energy and motivation, but it is probably unlikely to account for this degree of change in its own right. More observation and discernment are required here.

Also, as stated in the answer to a previous question, TC.T in particular, was designed to act as a holistic strategy, where Parishes can work together to their mutual benefit, and in some cases these initiatives can be supported by central resources. The Diocese is therefore keen that the investments we make are bottom-up driven, by Parishes themselves. This should support contexts to create and define their own measures of success, rather than reacting to any perceived outside influences.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Again, it will take time to evaluate this going forward, but we will continue to look at this as more TC.T initiatives are implemented and reach maturity.

Name: Helen Clifton (Lay, Bristol West)

Question: The Bishop's Council report mentions a new charitable organisation called the Kindness Alliance. Please could you clarify why this organisation has been set up, who the trustees are, and what its aims are? Thank you.

Question answered by: Leanne Hubbard, Director of External Relations

Answer:

The Kindness Alliance is a charitable organisation currently in the process of being registered with the Charity Commission. It has been established to support the Diocese's efforts to build partnerships, generate new income, and deliver more social impact. The Alliance aims to:

- Foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among churches, charities, businesses and community groups.
- Establish a robust and transparent grant-making mechanism to support local social action within the Diocese of Bristol.
- Build sustainable income for the Diocese, and its activities.
- Enable more flexible and responsive support for communities in need

As the organisation is currently in its formation phase, an initial board of trustees has been appointed. This includes:

- Bishop Neil
- Archdeacon Becky
- Richard Bacon

Further details about the governance structure and opportunities for wider involvement will be shared as the Kindness Alliance progresses. We look forward to communicating more about this initiative in due course, including how parishes and individuals can engage with and benefit from its work.

Supplementary Question: I support all the aims and that more information will be shared. Why was a separate organisation set up to do this?

Question Answered by: LH, Director of External Relations

Answer: LH explained that the Kindness Alliance was set up as part of the External Relations Strategy, aimed at bringing more money into Parishes and the Diocese. There are various reasons why the Diocese cannot fund raise, mainly due to how we are set up with regard to Governance and our financial reserves. There are changes to the Charity Commission taking place but for now this is the best mechanism for us to raise and distribute funds.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

LH gave an additional note that all Parishes regardless of how much is being raising will have to be registered with the Charity Commission by 2031, Leanne and her team will be contacting everyone to enable support.

12. Blessing and Close

+NW closed the meeting with prayer.

DRAFT



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Appendix A

So what we have heard is undoubtedly a significant challenge to the Diocese. We have expenditure which substantially outstrips our income and if we continue to draw down our reserves then that affects our future income, so this is a situation which when we meet in Bishop's Staff that does cause us an amount of anxiety, but there are many reasons where we can be positive and when we come away from those meetings, we come away with confidence and I think the ultimate ground of our confidence is in God I was so grateful for Matt in leading us in worship and so in the hymn 'Love Divine' I think of all that Christ has done for us

But also, for me that final verse it puts everything into that eternal context and somehow we have to hold together the immediate financial challenges that we face and God's great plan and that for me is ultimately the ground of hope.

When we come to the specifics of what is going wrong, we see God at work in the Diocese, that the paper which was circulated with your agenda.

There is great news there about what is happening with attendance across the Diocese and whether we as the Archdeacons go round we see so many signs of encouragement and wonderful things that are happening. There is some great vision in Transforming Church. Together that is making an impact.

And when we come to the specifics of the finances there is also cause for hope, because as we have heard there is a group that is looking at the different levers that we are able to pull, the ways that that challenge may be addressed and as you have heard any one of those levers is significant in its self but it looks like there may be ways though a combination of looking at each aspect, a way towards a balanced budget in a few years time could be achieved, that involves looking at the size of the DSS, it looks at Parishes also it looks at the plan for the use of reserves and how much we need and also the ability to generate income both in a Diocesan level and at a Parish Level.

I think that for me is the final reason to have hope, to be positive, because in this room we have represented people who are involved in the day to day life of our parishes and we are all playing a part in conversations about generosity, stewardship and mutual responsibility. We know what that is like, we know the joys, we know the challenges, especially when it comes to finance.

Final verse – Love Divine, All Loves
Excelling – *Charles Wesley, 1747*

'Finish, then, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restore in thee;
Changed from glory into glory
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

We recognise too that the Parish Share that is received represents the generosity of thousands of people who give to their local church, and the generosity of these who contribute into that central pot out of which the Mission and ministry of the diocese is funded. So there is a great deal about which we can give thanks and a great deal about which we can be hope.

Becky is going to share a bit more about the potential we have for the future.

Good morning everyone. We are so grateful that many parishes are giving what they can in their current income situation. Christopher and I were saying we know from recent experience that the Parish Share conversation at PCCs isn't always easy, we know when we receive that pack of information it is tempting just to go straight to the page that says how much do you want this year? can we afford it? but what we really want to reinforce this year is that there is so much additional information and resources which has come out with those packs of information.

You know this but I am going to just remind you that there is a formula which generates the first figure for each Parish in what your Parish Share request might be and that is based on various factors including: what Ministry provision is allocated to each parish and then, what the levels of deprivation are, the average household income, what your church income is compared to others in the diocese and if yours is significantly higher than other churches.

We do hope and expect that there will be generosity in that parish share gift, in to what we might call a common fund that enables ministry across the whole Diocese and then myself, Christopher and Adam sit down and we look at that amazing spread sheet and we go through every single parish share request in turn that has been generated by that formula. Ideally it would be quite straight forward, we would push a button and all those figures could come out to you in letters but the reality is that if that happened you would turn to that page and you would see the figure and for the vast majority of churches, your eyes would water and you would say that is 30 or 40 percent more then you were asked for in previous years.

So what we need to do is make adjustments to those figures because we want to enable requests to come out that we believe are both stretching but achievable, so what we do is look at your accounts from last year, we look at your end of year balances and we look at your levels of unrestricted reserves. For those that are in higher levels of deprivation, there are funds we can draw upon, the Low Income Communities Fund and we can use that to bridge the gap between what the formula generates and what we



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

discern, according to your accounts and your figures that you could possibly afford to pay in your gift.

Otherwise what we have to do is apply something we call Transitional funding, we count the Diocesan reserves that we are going to draw into, to bridge the gap between what the formula suggests your Parish Share gift could be and what we feel you are able to pay, because again we know because we have been in those seats. We have got the same conversations going on in parish and PCCS.

We call it transitional because we really do hope that this is a temporary arrangement with the expectation that the parish could grow in financial sustainability and generosity. What we do know this year is that your requests have been a lot higher, in some places there has been 10% increase on what you were asked for last year or on what you were able to pledge last year and we know the reason for this is all the things we have previously said. We are in uncharted territory in terms of the pressures that we had not anticipated and that are new, that we have not had before. We know that the costs have gone up significantly and that we need to respond to it together.

So then what happens when you have had your PCC meetings you then send in your responses, you make your generous gifts and again we are so grateful for every single penny that you offer. What we are noticing already this year is that the pledges are lower than the request, some have stayed at the request for last year but for some, at the moment it is about 25%, are pledging a lower amount than you pledged last year, and it is really helpful for us for you send in a commentary as to how you have reached that decision. In a lot of cases what we are noticing this year is that because you are anticipating building work and quite often what happens during a year is we may get a phone call from a Parish that says 'we know we pledged that gift, but now the roof has fallen in and so we are going to have to stop paying our Parish Share or we need to upgrade our heating system so we are going to have to cut our Parish Share by 50% or something else has happened and so we are going to have to pause for a month. We are all in this together, and our External Relations team can support you to be fundraising ready to raise alternative funds for building work so that you don't have to withdraw, stop or reduce your Parish Share, because it is Parish Share that pays for the cost of our Ministry, the gift of our Ministry.

So when you have those PCC conversations about Parish Share there are some principals to help guide you, and in that pack which came out, there was a button to click, it would have taken you to a page, which said here are some of the questions that



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

may come up, here are some of the things, the principles that you may want to have in your conversations as we make our decisions.

You might want to consider your levels of unrestricted reserves, in some cases, some churches don't have any reserves, I can appreciate that but in some case some have got 3 years worth of running costs in their unrestricted reserves, that is far more that you need, if you are waiting for a rainy day, let me tell you it is raining. So it may be time to say that actually inline with the fact the Diocese is having to use its reserves perhaps we need to use some of our reserves.

You might want to consider how you budget and I know that many of you put comprehensive budgets together at the start of the year so you are able to plan your expenditure equally I know many are just reactive, can we afford to pay the bills this month. You might want in those meetings to consider your financial priorities, and my suggestion is that ensuring we have ministry provision is a priority.

The incredible, James Moray and the assumptions team are able to help and there are resources available to help you grow a culture of generosity if you haven't done a stewardship campaign or a generosity campaign for a while there are resources to help you with that.

We do believe that there is scope overall to increase giving in the churches, for example the number of doners in the Diocese is about half of the electoral role on average and very succinctly if each person in our churches gave an extra £2 a week that would generate an extra million pounds in a year.

So we have a challenge and we also have ways that we can respond to it and I would just like to reiterate that message that the team in Diocesan Support Services and Archdeacons team are here to help, please do get in touch, James is able to help with the analysis of funds and we also have resources available to for stewardship campaigns.

If you would like AD to come and speak with PCC or church we would only be delighted to do so, this is something where resources are around to help us all as we try and reframe that landscape as we look at the challenge that we are facing and try to see it in the eyes of faith.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Appendix B Feedback from 7.2 Budget 2026 Round Table Discussions

Please **note** not all tables handed in handwritten notes.

- Massive piece of work required to inform the church of where we are; only one solution is to pay more if ministry to grow.
- Framing it as £2 a week is helpful, but make it relational – point to the people who it employs
- Investment into having clergy is appreciated
- Growth we are observing means that growth is giving should be possible. Play the long game of discipleship.
- There is a spiritual challenge to the Church Communities – wise stewardship versus hoarding of wealth
- Help with legacies would be good
- LEPS can be draining financially, need a reasonable discussion with partners.
- What is lay involvement in the financial strategy – need to use lay involvement more.
- People don't understand inflation
- One church giving less, due to necessary work. Another church giving more, despite needing major work
- Have we made too much of the fifth mark of mission, at the expense of other marks?
- We need to think strategically about our spending.
- Concerning that those who have taken a considered approach to CNZ spending are the ones who are being penalised.
- One view – Online webinars didn't add to Diocesan Synod presentation
- Another view – Budget paper was longer, so webinar helped.
- Not enough notice for online webinars. Sparsely attended.
- Understand situation we're in. Rural parishes have already seen cutbacks. Struggling to manage without eg. Support or church wardens
- Why isn't TC.T helping? There is a little support but not much/enough.
- We can see why they're doing their best. But what if roof at Pattern becomes more expensive for being left?
- Has pushed to increase parish share but very little response despite really trying, and even though doing things suggested by James.
- How useful are 10-year plans? It's so difficult to predict 10 years in advance. 5 years would be better and review often. Needs to be more reactive to country



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

economy and people's income. Remember in 10 years congregations will be much smaller due to age of congregation.

- A lot of where we are but not enough on how to get there.
- Hard to push parish share for clergy because it's paying their stipends.
- Parishes still suspicious of parish share, despite all the extra info provided.
- Before the parish share discussion, what Becky shared at Diocesan Synod should have been shared with parishes. We should have had this in September i.e. how it is calculated.

DRAFT



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Appendix C BDBF Budget 2026 Overview List V6.5 Final List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations/Acronym	Full Description
BDBF	Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance: the company/charity name for the Diocese of Bristol
CCLA	The primary investment manager/platform used for Investments by both the DBF and the National Church
CNZ	Carbon Net Zero: Government and Diocesan plan to try and reach a "Carbon Net Zero" position by a target date (currently 2030)
CSTG	Culham St Gabriel's Trust: an organisation which runs religious education training
DAC	Diocesan Advisory Committee: Church of England body which has an advisory and compliance role on the maintenance of Church buildings
DBF	Abbreviated form of BDBF
DFR	Diocesan Finance Review: a review set by the Archbishops' Council on Diocesan financial interactions with the National Church
DSS	Diocesan Support Services
Fincom	Finance Committee
FSTG	Finance Strategy Task Group: a group set up by Bishop Neil in July 2025 following the negative impact of the 2025 DFR/other factors to review strategy options to reduce the deficit
FTE	Full Time Equivalents: mechanism to combine part-time staff with full time staff; thus, a unit with one full time staff member and one half-time would have 1.5 FTEs
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation: the legal framework in the UK for Data Protection
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
LFL	Like-for-like reference to trying to give correct comparative financial information between periods or forecasts and budgets
LINC	Lowest Income Communities Funding: methodology by which the National Church provides financial support to Dioceses relative to their proportion of such communities



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

NCI	National Church Institutions: 7 bodies within the National Church that support Mission and Ministry including the administration of Stipends
NMS	National Minimum Stipend
NSB	National Stipend Benchmark
RMF	Diocesan Resourcing Ministerial Formation: relating to funding of ordinands' training
SACRE	Standard Advisory Council on Religious Education: local authority committee relating to religious education
SLT	Senior Leadership Team of the DSS comprising the CEO and the Directors of Ministry & Mission, People & Safeguarding, External Relations, Education, Finance and Transformation
SMMIB	Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board: National Church body that administers funding for large Diocesan projects such as TCT
TC.T	Transforming Church Together: Bristol Diocesan transformation project mainly funded by the SMMIB
Un-M	Abbreviation for Unmatched in Budget 2026 referring to costs not directly matched to external funding
VPF	Value Proposition Form: form used in the DBF 2026 Budget process by each DSS Department to justify every material cost applied for in the Budget
ZBB	Zero-Based Budgeting: process used in the DBF 2026 Budget, whereby each element of income and cost is built from first principles rather than as a movement from the prior years and budgets



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Appendix D – Bishop’s Address

Address to Diocesan Synod - Building Together

Nehemiah 3 & 4; John 13:34–35

Introduction

Firstly, thank you for the trust this Synod has in one another and the trust you have shown in passing the Budget for 2026. We will work hard to honour that trust.

In the Old Testament book of Nehemiah when Nehemiah looked at Jerusalem’s broken walls, he saw possibility. Unlike everyone else, he saw a city that could be rebuilt if everyone brought what they could.

If you read that long list in Nehemiah 3 — and it is long — it’s full of names and small details. Each person repairs “the bit opposite their house.” Each one takes a section of wall.

And the miracle is not that any of them was extraordinary — it’s that they did it together. Different skills.

Different strengths. Different sizes of stones - every contribution mattered.

Building Amid Opposition

Of course, the rebuilding wasn’t easy.

There were mockers — “What are these feeble Jews doing?” they said.

There was fear. There were disagreements about how and why to build. Some were discouraged. Some felt left out. Some were angry.

This can sound familiar to any group or community - and is recognisable in the UK at present.

We know about building God’s house in Bristol Diocese and where you are you may experience opposition, fatigue, even division.

We can also tell 101 stories around this Synod of goodness and breakthrough where lives and communities transformed by Jesus.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Today, across the Church of England, conversations and decisions around human sexuality have brought deep hurt and confusion. For some, there is relief and recognition, for others, grief and alarm.

We must name that pain truthfully with the same compassion and patience that you demonstrated at our last Synod.

We also notice our work and desire for racial justice and for social justice.

This is what faithfulness looks like - holding together when it's hard.

Building with One Another

In Nehemiah's time, people didn't rebuild because they agreed on everything. They rebuilt because they belonged to one another.

They knew that God had called them to a shared purpose, and that the wall could only stand if each section held.

We have discerned a shared call as a Diocese to follow Jesus, serve others and transform communities.

In this mission, some can carry heavy stones; others can only bring a handful of mortar. Both are needed.

Christ Among the Builders

For us as disciples of Jesus, being together — in good times and in tough times — is not just practical; it is Christlike.

Jesus had people follow him who disagreed about many things they were fishermen, zealots, tax collectors, Samaritan women. Jesus invited them to stay at the table, to love one another as he loved them.

As a Diocese, Deanery, local church...to be together through difference is part of our witness. It says to the world: this is what grace looks like — not tidy, not simple, but faithful.

And that's why our work now — in parishes, BMO's, schools, and communities — is an act of service, each generous prayer is another stone set in the wall.



With regards to parish share and the resources for mission

We can do this - close the deficit, balance our budget and keep on with lively, local ministry right across our Diocese, with empowered and resourced clergy and lay people.

In the early days of the HIV pandemic, I was a fundraiser at World Vision. Raising money in the UK for that cause was tough - children were orphans and innocent, therefore adults were seen - here and overseas - as less deserving. Early Anti-RetroVirals weren't given in rural areas as water and nutrition was deemed inadequate. Villages I visited in Uganda were left with grandparents and orphans only. Me and the team needed a paradigm shifting moment. It came when we heard from 2 Princess - herself living with HIV and caring for an eight-year-old daughter. She said - if you provide me with ARV's and I live four more years, my daughter will be 12 years-old and in a much better place to manage without me.

We then worked with partners to get ARV's into the hands of people like Princess - an early trial of ARV's in rural location, World Vision supporters got behind it...lives were transformed.

When I was a parish priest in Reading, making our Parish Share request was always a struggle. In living memory, the parish had been unable to pay its Parish Share and had relied on neighbouring parishes and the common purse to subsidise St Nicolas and keep the doors open. That memory meant the PCC were super committed to always making their share. Some years we'd get near the deadline and be £10k behind a £75,000 ask. We always made it - and in that period was the recession of 2008/9. I had to get better at asking for money; we had to make it obvious how to become a committed giver; we prayed a lot; we could all talk about why St Nicolas was good news for our community - and we were motivated to help other parishes as we had once been helped.

It's my experience that all things are possible when it comes to giving and generosity. £2 extra a week from everyone who attends our churches will raise £1m.



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

Back to Nehemiah - the wall is complete. When the people see it finished, they give thanks for what God has done through them.

That's the vision for us too: a Diocese held together by God's love.

A Diocese where each person, each parish, each community adds their piece, and where we keep on building.

I believe, and I have seen, that when everyone and every church gives generously and bravely, then all things are possible.

Prayer

May God strengthen our hands for the work;
may Christ be seen among the builders;
and may the walls we raise — with all our different stones —
become a home for God's grace,
and a sign of Christ's hope for the world.

Amen.



October Stats for Mission- Diocese of Bristol 2024

Data- Child average weekly attendance

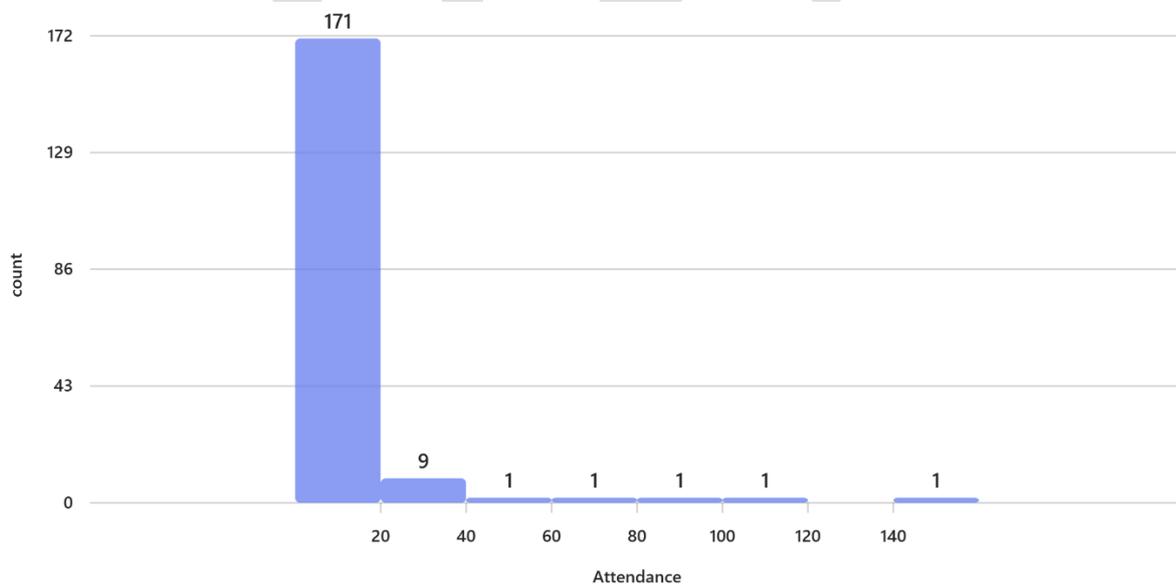
n= 185

Analysis

Here are the results for your dataset:

- **Mean (average): 7.25**
(This is high because of a few very large values like 157.25 and 109.25.)
- **Median: 2.25**
(Half the values are below 2.25 and half are above, so this is a better indicator of typical attendance.)
- **Mode: 0**
(Most entries are zero, meaning many churches reported no child attendance.)

Histogram of the data



Analysis

Here are the quartile calculations for your dataset:

- **Q1 (25th percentile): 0.5**



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

- **Q2 (Median): 2.25**
- **Q3 (75th percentile): 7.0**
- **Interquartile Range (IQR): 6.5**

What this means:

- 25% of churches have attendance \leq **0.5**.
- 50% have attendance \leq **2.25**.
- 75% have attendance \leq **7.0**.

The middle 50% of values span from **0.5 to 7.0**, showing a widespread, even before the extreme outliers.

Key Observations:

- **Most values are clustered near 0–10**, with a huge spike at **0** (many churches reported no attendance).
- There are **extreme outliers** (e.g., 82, 109.25, 157.25) that stretch the scale.
- The distribution is **highly right skewed**, meaning the mean (7.25) is much higher than the median (2.25).