



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL  
TRANSFORMING CHURCH. TOGETHER.

## DIOCESAN SYNOD REPORT

|              |                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| REPORT TITLE | Diocesan Synod Meeting Summary |
| DATE         | 15 November 2025               |
| TIME         | 9.15am to 1.00pm               |

Diocesan Synod had 2 parts:

### 1. Finance

**a) Financial Landscape and Challenges-** Canon Richard Bacon, Chair of Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance gave a presentation outlining the multiple layers of financial pressure which are occurring simultaneously. He emphasised that the Diocesan budget is primarily about funding ministry and stressed that success depends on collective effort. Mr Stephen Sheridan (SLS), Finance Director, advised the Synod on a new long-term strategy being prepared which aims to enable a 'soft landing' for reserves while addressing our key priorities.

**b) Responding to the Challenges-** Archdeacons, Christopher Bryan (CB) and Becky Waring (BW), addressed Synod considering how we can respond to the financial challenges currently facing the Diocese. CB spoke of hope amid difficult discussions and decisions, reminding Synod that we can draw strength from God. He emphasised that Synod members play a vital role in parish life and in fostering conversations around generosity, stewardship, and mutual responsibility. BW outlined the potential for future growth, explaining how Parish Share is calculated and the components considered in determining requests. She also shared details of resources available to help churches review their contributions and explore ways to increase generosity. CB and BW closed the address by sharing the statistic that if each parishioner increased their giving by £2 per week, diocesan funds would rise by £1 million annually.

**c) Bristol DBF Budget 2026 –** SLS presented the 2026 budget to the Synod, concluding that there will be a £3.5 million deficit for 2026. This was followed by a round table discussion and a question/answer session before the motion to approve the budget was made. The budget was approved, with 5 Against and 5 Abstentions.

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- 2. Routine Business:** This included reports from recent meetings of Standing Committee (Bishop's Council, Board of Directors, DMPC) and General Synod.

As part of these reports the following matters were approved:

- The Bishop's Council report (8 July, 18 August, 14 and 31 October 2025) was received.
- The Diocesan Synod approved Church Representation Rules (CRR) scheme for Concord Church Bishop's Mission Order (BMO)
- The Diocesan Synod approved the Deanery Synod Election Formula for 2026-2029

**a) Priority Communities Update:** Diocesan Synod received an informative presentation on the work of the Priority Communities Network. Barriers to growth were highlighted. It was noted that these communities face significant social needs, difficulties in raising leadership and tight financial constraints. The Priority Communities Strategy was outlined with four key dimensions:

1. Training and Development
2. People and Resources
3. Networking
4. Support and Accountability

Each dimension was expanded and explained. It concluded by highlighting there are 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 ground level and is an area for which to give thanks.

**b) Church Urban Fund** – there was a proposal to become a formal partner of the Church Urban Fund and its Together Network, an explanation of the fund and the benefits of joining were outlined before a motion was proposed and approved.

**ATTENDANCE:** 64 of 102 Diocesan Synod members attended the meeting to vote and discuss a packed agenda.

63 attended in person

1 attended via zoom

**VOTES:**

1. The Diocesan Synod approved the authorisation of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance to expend in the year 2026 sums totalling £15,966,000 (including project costs) in respect of the items in the budget for that year.
2. The Bishop's Council report was received.
3. The Diocesan Synod approved CRR Scheme for Concord Church BMO
4. The Diocesan Synod approved the Deanery Synod Election Formula for 2026-2029

5. The Diocesan Synod approved that the Diocese of Bristol become 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.

**ACTIONS:** There were no actions recorded