Notes of Oxford Diocesan Synod held 7th March 2026

Oxford Diocesan Synod met in person in Didcot. The Synod was perhaps inevitably dominated by this being the final Synod to be attended by the Bishop of Oxford prior to his retirement effective in July. Therefore, there were no motions to be put to approval. Formal minutes will be issued in due course.

Opening Items

Following worship led by young people drawn from churches in the Diocese, the Synod Lay Chair welcomed the Ven' Cassa Messervy as the Archdeacon of Buckingham. It was also noted that the Rev'd Geoff Baylis was standing down as Synod Clergy Chair.

Three questions had been received prior to Synod, and answers were given. The Ven' Jonathnn Chafeey briefed Synod on the February General Synod.

Presidential Address

For his presidential address, Bishop Steven chose to reflect on a number of issues arising from his ten year tenure as Bishop of Oxford. Foundational has been Matthew 5;1-11, which led to the statement of "A more Christ like Church for the sake of God's world", and the three C's of Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous. In a wide ranging address, some of the highlights mentioned were the number of Eco Church Awards, The "Come and See" invitation, and the £ 5.5 million development fund.

Children and Young People

This section was led by the Rev'd Andrew Blyth, the recently appointed Director of Mission and Ministry and Simon Hill, also recently appointed as Head of Children and Youth Ministry. They were supported by a seven young people drawn from Aylesbury, Wycombe and Abingdon.

Synod Paper ODS26.1 Children and Youth Ministry had been circulated in advance and Synod was asked to reflect on progress to date.

The young people were asked their views about being a young person and a Christian. The best comment from one was to remind Synod not to be 'churchgoers" but to be 'followers of Jesus'!

Synod then broke into table groups to discuss the questions at the end of the paper.

Finance – 2025 year outturn.

Canon Julie Dziegiel gave a verbal summary of the financial position at year end. While there was a small surplus both income and outgoings had been less than budget. For outgoings this was a direct result of the above plan number of vacancies across the Diocese.

Vacancy In See Committee

Rev'd Geoff Baylis gave an update on this. Currently the committee has 49 members plus secretariat.

Discipleship and Evangelism

This section was led by the Sue Stott and the Rev'd Andrew Blyth. Synod Paper ODS26.2 had been circulated prior to Synod. Synod was provided with an update and was invited to reflect on the on-going work of 'Everyday Disciples'.

Synod broke into table groups to discuss the questions at the end of the paper.

Appreciation of Bishop Steven.

The final item of Synod was a lighthearted and warm appreciation of Bishop Steven, led by the Lay and Clergy Chairs.