Notes of Oxford Diocesan Synod held 14th November 2026

The third and final Oxford Diocesan Synod of 2026 was a Zoom online meeting, with Bishop Gavin as president.

These notes are a short summary of the main points arising from a long agenda. The Agenda and Synod papers can all be found online.[1]:

Opening Items

Synod commenced with 'Dwelling in the Word" on Romans 8, followed by a short meeting in groups. The minutes of the previous Synod were approved.

Synod Questions

A set of questions and responses made prior to Synod were made available and were the subject of supplementary questions as required.[2]

Presidential Address

For his presidential address, Bishop Gavin reflected on "Who is my neighbour?" in the light of the rise of Christian nationalism and issues of immigration.

Hope and Love in Action

Continuing on the theme of the presidential address, Krish Kandiah opened a conversation about the rise of Christian Nationalism and the challenges that presents for us as a Diocese.

Paper ODS 26.11 [3] produced and compiled by the Diocese Discipleship Team was provided to Synod members. The paper is intended to help church leaders, PCCs, and in turn their congregations to have courageous conversations about the current context of division and hate in which we find ourselves. Six separate area for Hope and Love are considered. Synod broke into groups which were asked to consider one aspect.

2027 Diocesan Budget Update and 5-year forecast.

Paper ODS 26.12[4]The Budget has been adjusted to reflect new information although has been substantially retained from the draft budget approved in April 2026. It was approved by Finance Committee for presentation to Bishop's Council in September and subsequently approved for recommendation to Diocesan Synod on 7th October 2026.

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[1] https://oxford.anglican.org/who-we-are/how-we-are-governed/diocesan-synod/documents/?utm_source=Diocese+of+Oxford+Mailing+Lists&utm_campaign=7562456815-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2026_07_28_07_13_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-7961843f2c-339830949

[2] https://mcusercontent.com/14501d5eebc3e98fa3015a290/files/7860bf64-a60d-6f28-bc9f-d345d20094be/Questions_14_November_2026.pdf

[3] https://oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/ODS26.11-Hope-and-Love-in-action-1-1.pdf

[4] https://oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/ODS-26.12-2027-Budget-and-Parish-Share-allocation.pdf

Currently the budgeted deficit stands at £696k which is an improvement of £61k on the previous approved draft budget. The budget deficit will be covered by transitional relief from the National Church which will extend into 2030.

Canon Julie Dziegiel took questions on the budget, and noted that following recent meetings with Amersham Deanery Treasurers she was well aware of the pressures on individual churches.

Synod accepted the budget by electronic voting.

Environmental Annual Update

There was a presentation to go with Paper ODS 26.13[5]. Amongst other things noted were the continued upgrade of vicarages in support of net emissions reduction. Also one listed church had been fitted with solar panels.

Developing Pathways for Parish Based Ministers

Paper ODS 26.1 [6] The CofE is facing the twin challenges of the number of clergy retirements not being covered by the falling number of ordinands entering training. Consideration has been given to a new "Elizabeth" pathway developed in Oxford, for those over 55 years of age with significant life and ministry experience. The role of lay ministers needs to be better appreciated, and lay ministry more fully integrated into the ministry of the Church of England.

Synod broke into groups to discuss what should be our priorities in encouraging parish-based ministry vocations? In the feedback sessions that followed it was noted that the Living in Love and Faith Discussions and the outstanding issues left by that process may have had an effect on ordinand numbers.

Elected Representation from Deaneries on Diocesan Synod 2027 Paper ODS 26.15

The effect of this document on Amersham Deanery is that the Lay Representation remains at 5 places, and the Clergy representation increases from 3 to 4.

Synod accepted the scheme of representation and first past the post-election system.

General Synod Report

Archdeacon Jonathon Chaffey reflected on the July meetings of General Synod. It was noted that the session included the motion brought by Oxford member Professor Helen King that:

"There are no fundamental objections to being in a committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationship, and that such a relationship can be entirely compatible with Christian discipleship."

The motion passed in the Houses of Clergy and Laity and narrowly lost in the House of Bishops.

[5] https://oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/ODS-26.13-Environment-annual-update.pdf

[6] https://oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/ODS-26.14-Developing-pathways-for-Parish-based-ministers-.pdf