

# THE ANGLICAN ARCHDEACONRY OF FRANCE SYNOD

13 – 20 – 22 March 2025

Held by Zoom videoconference



A full list of attendees and apologies for absence can be found in appendix A

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## Part 1 Thursday 13 March 2025, 19:00 – 21:15

### 1 Welcome and opening prayer

Archdeacon Peter Hooper welcomed everyone to the meeting. He offered a special welcome to those attending an archdeaconry synod for the first time and although only licensed chaplains and elected lay representatives can vote, he was pleased to welcome priests with PTO, Readers, Churchwardens, Treasurers and others from the chaplaincies.

The focus of the synod this spring is on Mission in Changing Times and it is a common theme across the Diocese in Europe, as applicable to local situations.

The Archdeacon led the meeting in prayer.

### 2 Keynote speech by Bishop Robert

Bishop Robert has just celebrated ten years as Bishop of the Diocese; the reference to Ministry and Mission in times of change and conflict seems particularly relevant in a Europe which has seen major conflict and which is facing up to the need for rejuvenation.

Disruption and unpredictability as a way of operating, climate change, the rise of the far right and the huge cost of rearmament are some of the things causing **fear and anxiety, economic stress and poverty and general feelings of discontent.**

Within the Church of England, the House of Bishops has also been facing an agenda of **change and concerns for the future.**

- Clergy well-being, especially financial is of great concern (although less so in the Diocese in Europe), the cost implications of raising the national stipend and the pension contributions and the natural hesitation of those considering ordination are a worry.
- There is an imbalance between the Church Commissioners reserves of £11 Billion, and the annual deficit of £50 Million across all Dioceses. The deficit in the Diocese in Europe is £200 000.
- The church is still trying to find a way forward following the Living in Love and Faith discussions
- Another area where it is difficult to see the way forward is in Safeguarding oversight and whether Diocesan staff should be moved to a central independent body. Sadly, this debate has become highly politicised.
- Plans are under discussion to reduce Church Governance from seven to four bodies, which has huge implications.
- At the same time, the church has seen numbers falling during COVID, both for congregations and potential ordinands.
- In the DiE, the effect of Brexit has had far-reaching effects, because of the 90-day rule and the consequent effect on congregations; this has serious ramifications in terms of chaplaincy finances.

At the same time, there have been important **staff changes**, notably the retirement of Bishop David and his Chaplain Frances Hiller and other senior members of the team. The recent installation of Bishop Andrew Norman was however a joyful event.

Bishop Robert paid **tribute** to all at the chaplaincy level who have been coping with the challenges of recent years. He welcomed the new chaplains in France and thanked the Archdeacon for his hard work.

Bishop Robert outlined three ways to sustain Mission and Ministry:

**- Building resilience**

Strong in the power of the spirit, a strong community which is committed individually and collectively. He mentioned in particular the strength of Kristina and her colleagues in Kyiv and also this year's celebrations of the Nicæan creed. We need to rebuild confident faith, he said.

**- Interdependence**

In these tough times, we should not turn inwards, but remember that "No man is an island". We need to be careful of the right wing using the Bible to justify rejecting people.

Christian Unity reflects the important message of One Lord, One Faith. He mentioned the Racial justice conference as an example of Solidarity.

**- Sustaining hope**

Hope is the theme of the Roman Catholic Jubilee Year in 2025.

We can find hope in the use of technology in climate change, in the hope of a solution in the Middle East, and for peace in Ukraine.

Hope imagines the possibility of something new, it is audacious and projects faith into the future; it is rooted in the Resurrection.

The Bishop closed with the Collect Prayer for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany.

*O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

The Bishop answered some questions from the floor, clarifying some questions on the finances of the Church of England, Safeguarding issues and clergy pensions.

The Archdeacon thanked the Bishop and said that Hope would underpin the next sessions of the synod and the basis of Mission. He said we have a lot to be thankful for.

**3 What is Mission? Defining our objectives in France**

The Archdeacon introduced the sessions by looking at the word "Mission", in itself a confusing word. He said that mission is not something created by man but God's mission in the world, where we seek to join in with what God is doing, even if the world has changed.

In faith and hope, we aim to

- grow the number of disciples
- deepen faith and discipleship
- offer loving service to the world

The members then split into groups and discussed how chaplaincies are trying to fulfil these three aims. A summary is given on the next page, but communicating to and serving people outside the immediate chaplaincy is not only service but a way of bringing people into the church.

The Archdeacon closed the session and noted the importance of structuring ongoing development in terms of these three aims.

## HOW CHAPLAINCIES ARE FULFILLING THE THREE AIMS

\* Appear under more than one heading

<b>Grow the number of disciples</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use technology for communicating well: social media, website, Zoom, WhatsApp, online services (interactive if possible)</li><li>• Integrate into the local community: fulfil a need, offer concerts, classes and other events *</li><li>• Use the building: if possible, open it up; glass doors allow people to see in. Make the most of opportunities to explain, to answer questions</li><li>• Adapt to the needs of the local community *</li><li>• Relationships, personal contact with others, including schools *</li><li>• Ecumenical relationships are important</li><li>• Alpha courses</li><li>• Children and young people's groups *</li></ul>
<b>Deepen faith and discipleship</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small groups</li><li>• Music</li><li>• Children and young people *</li><li>• Prayer groups</li><li>• Bible Study</li><li>• Chat groups</li><li>• Offer online groups</li></ul>
<b>Offer loving service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate into the local community: fulfil a need, offer concerts, classes and other events *</li><li>• The choir can sing at outside events</li><li>• Adapt to the needs of the local community *</li><li>• Relationships, personal contact with others, including schools *</li><li>• Church lunches</li><li>• Working with food banks, support for the homeless and the hungry</li><li>• Offer an English library</li><li>• Offer helpful groups, such as parenting group</li><li>• Service to hospitals</li><li>• Mission to Seafarers</li></ul>

4 At the end of this day's meetings, members then joined in a service of **Compline**.

## Part 2 Thursday 20 March 2025, 19:00 – 21:15

The Archdeacon introduced the second session which concerned how we applied the three aims, as a Diocese, and as a strategy for the future.

### 5 Diocesan strategy for the future (Archdeacon Peter Hooper)

The full presentation can be found on the website but a summary of the points he raised can be found below.

- **Walking together in Faith**

This initiative brings together not only all of those called to some form of ministry, but includes ecumenical work and work towards reconciliation and a just and lasting peace

- **Growth in numbers**

Growth needs to be based on a self-funding model; it means growing, reaching out to communities where we are based

- **Depth of discipleship**

Not just attendance, but depth of understanding and vocations. Practical ways to help people to grow and develop

- **Loving service**

Creation, refugees and migrants, welfare, social justice, racial justice ...  
Growing as a caring community

### **Financing the work**

There are three levels of financial support: Chaplaincy, Archdeaconry (something we can maybe look at) and **Diocese and Mission partners**

- **Mission Opportunities Fund**

This funds new work and the France Archdeaconry is receiving around €10 000 a year for new worshipping communities in NW France

- **New Chaplaincies fund**

Chaplaincies have to be self-financing, so this fund provides seed money to get new chaplaincies started

- **Mission Agencies**

For example, USPG partners with the Diocese in Europe and the Diocese of Canterbury to support the post of Refugee Officer

- **ICS**

The historic patron of some chaplaincies in Europe, and indeed in France, sometimes provide funding for specific projects. The Reverend John Gay who will be licensed in Grenoble on Sunday 23 March 2025 is partly funded by ICS.

- **SMMIB**

This is a new source of funding, directly from the Church Commissioners. As a fully-functioning Diocese in the Church of England, we can participate in these programmes. It is not about separate projects, but about holistic and strategic plans.

Initial funds give us the capacity to develop strategy and we are currently working with them to secure capacity funding in four key areas:

- Children and Young People
- New self-funding chaplaincies in areas where there is no current Anglican community; direct funding for start-up chaplaincies; new communities from existing chaplaincies
- Professional development (not just for clergy) in order to equip leaders
- Social justice

Our worship communities are anglophone and more intercultural than in any other diocese. We need to build the capacity to understand what we can do.

Some questions from the floor concerned statistics for mission, standard accounts, a pragmatic approach to membership and the electoral roll, an aging population and how to free up ministers and admin teams from some of the burdens so that they can take part in mission.

The Archdeacon said that although first steps had been taken such as generic statutes for all the chaplaincies, work was ongoing and he hoped that areas like health insurance, general insurance

and social security cover could be grouped for all chaplaincies in the future. This is particularly important for those chaplaincies who do not have skilled volunteers.

Both the statistics for mission and the standard accounts which are sent to the diocese are important tools because they provide a basis for analysis and therefore opportunities. The Archdeacon mentioned also the DinE hardship fund which provides a safety net to support chaplaincies.

### **6 Children and Young People's Ministry (Reverend Iain Bendrey)**

Reverend Bendrey is the Diocesan Head of Strategy for children and youth ministry. His work in this field is funded by the SMMIB.

There is a page on the Diocesan website with lots of information and why this ministry is so important <https://www.europe.anglican.org/children-and-youth-ministry>

Indeed, if there are not enough younger people, there will be problems of vocations.

The full presentation can be found on the Archdeaconry website, but to summarise some of the points made:

The five-year plan has three priorities: to support chaplaincies, to support volunteers and workers, and to support young people.

The results of a recent survey showed that every archdeaconry is different and that there is a lack of designated workers, although most chaplaincies if not all offer eg Sunday club type activities to younger children, but less to teenagers.

The key areas needing support are training, resources and networking: how best to develop and to encourage volunteers. The Vision and Strategy team are looking at how to create a strategy to access funds.

He said that working with ecumenical partners and across other chaplaincies would help to build a sense of community by meeting through sports or choirs, for example.

He also mentioned the Godly Play initiative.

Workers need training and qualifications at different levels but most importantly, young people need to feel valued and part of their community.

The EU definition of youth is aged 15-29 but, in the UK, it is only up to age 18; after that young people still need to be nurtured and encouraged.

**7** At the end of this day's meetings, members then joined in a service of **Compline**

## **Part 3 Saturday 22 March 2025, 08:30 – 13:00**

### **8 Optional Bible Study**

The Archdeacon led a session of Bible Study on Isaiah 55:1-13. If we journey with God, and stick with his plans rather than ours, we will know joy, peace, and glimpses of glory. We must be ready to accept the invitation to spiritual nourishment.

### **9 Introduction and opening prayer**

### **10 Alpha in France: getting your chaplaincy involved**

The Reverend Tiffany Cawood is based in Chantilly and is also on the clergy team of Holy Trinity Brompton (London), which created the original Alpha course in 1977, to explain the basics for people curious about faith.

From simple beginnings, the Alpha course has expanded to other countries and in other languages. It is used by many different churches.

It is a tool to serve the church. The course currently consists of 10 weekly sessions and a day away. Each session focuses on welcome, hospitality, sharing and prayer and the opportunity to discuss openly without criticism. There is also a youth version.

She said that it works best when everyone in the church gets involved. There is a culture of value and prayer is the fuel.

Alpha France offers resources in both English and French, and the course is available in many other languages too. <https://www.parcoursalpha.fr/decouvrir-alpha>

Training for course leaders is available and the Archdeacon said he will try and make sure that we can share information and resources.

## **10 Archdeaconry matters**

### **Recruitment and appointments**

- The Archdeacon presented a summary of recent recruitment and appointments in France. Full details of his presentation are on the website.
- Five lay representatives had been elected to the Diocesan Synod and two clergy representatives. This low number was because at the time of calculation of numbers, there had been many vacancies in France. The Archdeacon is trying to get this updated in order to have a more just representation of reality.  
Lay representatives: David Bargioni, Maggie Devos, John Errey, Carol Hart, Michelle Lavaud  
Clergy representatives: Mark Osborne, Andy Brewerton

### **Minutes of the meeting in June 2024**

The minutes were agreed to be a true record and were accepted without dissent. There were no matters arising.

### **Finances and budget**

The Treasurer presented the accounts for 2024. The accounts are monitored by the book-keeper and overseen by the Treasurer. These are split into two sections.

### **Archdeaconry accounts**

Apart from the necessary expenditure such as insurance, bank charges and also admin costs for the website etc, there are few charges on the account.

As there have not been in-person synods, no Archdeaconry quota has been requested (the quota is mostly used to pay travel costs for synod attendance; the aim being to spread costs between richer and poorer chaplaincies).

The CME (or CMD) fund is for ministerial education for clergy and readers but can sometimes be used for lay members. Approval is needed from the Archdeacon.

As requests have been few, chaplaincies have not been asked to pay into the fund.

The accounts currently show a positive result.

The meeting was reminded that the 1905 association is merely a federating group as required under French law, with no assets, no bank account, no income and no expenditure.

### **The second part of the accounts**

concerns the fact that the Archdeaconry acts as a facilitator for the Diocese and its partners via the 1901 Association in order to employ (1) the Refugee Officer based in Calais and (2) the Net Zero Officer based in Lyon.

As a 1901 Association, we do not have the same restrictions on receiving money from abroad that a 1905 Association would have.

Funds to support these posts are received from UK and paid into a special bank account, salaries and associated costs are paid out from this account.

The Archdeaconry is only involved in so far as to provide banking and payroll facilities, which are kept separate from Archdeaconry accounts.

A summary of the accounts is attached (Annex B)

Lay member A Phillips said that she did not understand the accounts and requested a more detailed analysis. The Treasurer and the Archdeacon said they would liaise with her to provide further information. However, details of salary etc for the two employees are private and cannot be shared.

The budget for 2025 reflected the fact that the Net Zero Officer contract had now finished. Budgeted income for the Archdeaconry account in 2025 was zero, and as anticipated for the mission partners for the two officers. Expenditure for (1) the archdeaconry is limited to usual expenses, as no in-person synod was planned and (2) only expenditure for the refugee officer was projected.

In response to questions, the Archdeacon said that it was clear that an in-person meeting was much wished for. However, the total cost of about €50 000 had to be borne by the chaplaincies and many found this a huge burden. Solutions for meeting places which incurred lower travel costs meant increased site and accommodation costs; the overall cost was much the same. However, research continues.

The accounts for 2024 and the budget for 2025 were approved with one abstention (Anita Phillips).

## **11 Expanding Horizons in the Diocese and in France**

### **In the Diocese**

The first part of this session was a presentation by Reverend Tumas Mäkipää, based at St Albans Copenhagen and who spoke about strategy in the Diocese in Europe.

His presentation is available on the website, where you will find more information, and he has also shared a longer and more detailed analysis; a link to that paper is also available on the website.

The **aim** is to explain different models of church planting but models are only tools and there is no single solution. The key (but not the only) models are:

- Revitalising existing chaplaincy churches
- Establishing a new congregation with a specific mission focus (Bishop's Mission orders)
- Chaplaincy church planting, creating a new congregation within an existing chaplaincy
- Small groups in community-focused outreach and worship

**Funding** requests must be well-structured and strategic. Funding may come from Strategic Development Fund, Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment or Diocesan Funding and Grants.

**Strategic considerations must include** Vision and Mission, Local adaptation, Leadership and Measurable growth.

In conclusion, he said:

- Church planting is about renewal and mission



- The Diocese in Europe has unique challenges and opportunities
- Strong leadership, strategic funding and community involvements are key
- Collaboration and innovation are essential for success

*“See, I am doing a new thing!” Isaiah 43:19*

### **In France**

The second part of this session was a presentation by Reverend Ian McLeod, from Christ Church Brittany. His presentation is also available on the website, giving details of experiences in NW France (for which he is Area Dean).

The first question is who we are looking for. He noted that most of the members of Christ Church Brittany are aged over 70 and that the question of demographics is very important. It is clear from the maps that English speakers are grouped around specific urban areas or spread out through inland rural areas; most people are prepared to drive up to 45 minutes to attend a church service, although some travel much further.

Young families tend to attend French-speaking churches.

Practical questions, such as not liking to drive at night mean that Zoom sessions are popular.

But it is clear from the mapping that there is potential for growth in certain areas. This growth could come from building communities around social events, choir, library, courses, small groups, lunches etc. He said that relationships are vital, with ecumenical partners, and by offering hospitality and support.

Contact has been made and plans are under way to start a monthly service for English-speaking students at the Protestant church in Rennes, and Bible Study at the Protestant church in Pontivy. Opportunities are being sought around the area.

### **Questions**

- Where is there need?
- Opportunities for growth?
- Demographics? (e.g. ages)
- Where are the Anglophones / English language users?
- Where do we have good relationships with other Churches? Communities? Individuals?
- How far are people prepared to travel in your region?

### **Building capacity**

- Prayer
- Discipleship
- Growth & Development of Gifts
- Leaders
- Lay and Ordained Ministry
- PTO Ministry
- Funding

The Archdeacon concluded the session saying that in Europe, we are not constrained by Parish boundaries, as they are in UK but that does not mean that we do not need to coordinate plans with neighbouring chaplaincies.

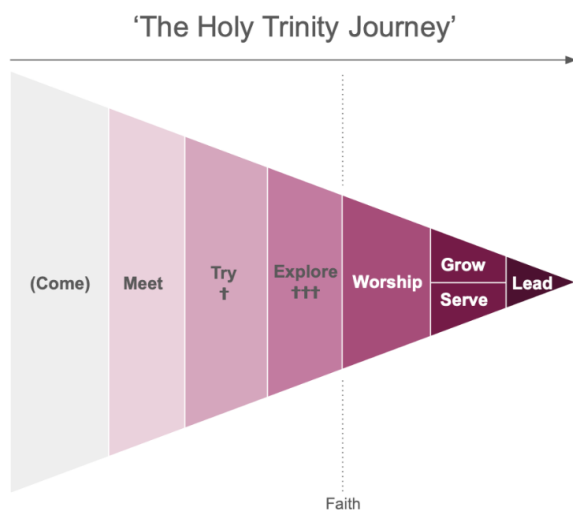
### **12 Getting better at mission: how do we become more missionary minded?**

The meeting split into breakout groups to discuss this question.

Feedback from the groups is summarised here.



- Become visionary-minded
- Urban vs rural chaplaincies
- Personal contact is vital whether with friends, local contacts, ecumenical groups and others
- Good publicity of events and lunches
- Carol services for example attract people
- Ensure that volunteers' skills are used, not ignored
- Travel distance can be a problem as can a fluctuating congregation
- Hospital and prison visiting
- Live out your faith
- Suggest organising archdeaconry prayer group
- Share links to online services around the archdeaconry
- Make sure information and resources are up to date on the website
- Don't be afraid to start small-scale but keep going, don't give up
- Unite around social justice themes
- Why are we here?
- Reach out to men through activity-based events
- Planting a church is like planting a seed, it takes time to grow.



In particular, Reverend Vivian Sockett from Maisons-Laffitte shared some work they had done to analyse the local environment, in particular following changes such as Brexit.

Strategic thinking enabled them to identify gaps and the need for different activities. One area of success was the young children's group, previously called Messy Church but renamed and rescheduled: it had gone from a tiny number to a large and popular group "Discovery Club".

The Archdeacon thanked everyone for their participation and took note of all the ideas mentioned.

The session closed and all the presentations and the minutes would be shared on the Archdeaconry website.

## 12 Morning Prayer

The synod closed with Morning Prayer

*Rosemary Ulyett  
Secretary  
25 March 2025*