

Report of Standing Committee to Synod 2016

During the year your Standing and Finance Committee, operating also as Bishop's Council, has met on three occasions, one of which has been immediately prior to Synod and from which a verbal Report will be delivered.

At each of these Meetings there is an update on developments from the two Archdeaconries, and this year there has been particular concern about the internal situation in Dubai and the Northern Emirates, and the external circumstances in which the Chaplaincies in Baghdad and Aden have had to function. The situation in Dubai prompted consideration of several scenarios with regard to diocesan budgets. In Cyprus the steady progress towards a single Ammochostos Chaplaincy / Parish, deriving from the present four entities of Christ Church Agia Napa, St John's Deryneia, St Mark's Famagusta, and the Student Chaplaincy at EMU, has been reported. The potential of the Famagusta Student Chaplaincy to attract external funding has been explored.

Each meeting also receives a Report on Ministry, Spirituality and Communications. The latter two have been the subject of Reviews and the results are available in other Reports to Synod. There is also a separate Ministry Report, and a report from JEMT (Cyprus) all of which reflect reports made to Standing Committee throughout the year. Following correspondence, it was decided to ask Synod to agree to receive an annual report about Diocesan property in the Gulf.

The incorporation of the Diocese as a Limited Company in Cyprus has now been completed. Each Standing Committee Meeting now will be accompanied by a Directors' Meeting with a prescribed agenda. The first such Meeting took place in November.

Standing Committee has looked carefully at the material produced by the discussion groups at last year's Synod, together with the feedback forms and the Synod 2015 motion 10. It was decided to maintain the 2015 format, which was generally welcomed, for 2016. The theme would be 'Our Common Mission' and this would help us to explore further both the mission itself, and the common bonds and understandings that make it our business. A paper on Stewardship was presented to the Committee which, in an amended form, is to be shared with Synod. It was decided to ask that this paper be the focus of discussion in each of the Chaplaincies, with subsequent feedback to Synod through Standing Committee, thus reflecting the joint responsibilities involved in Stewardship.

The Committee expressed concern about the content of discussion on clergy movements as reported in the draft minutes of the House of Laity at Synod 2015. Since these were in draft form only it was decided to see in what form they were adopted before entering the conversation that the discussion apparently wished to see.

Standing Committee has been made aware of the interest shown by the Anglican Alliance, the official Anglican network for social concern, advocacy, and action in having a stronger presence in the region, following their Conference in Cyprus in Spring 2015. An invitation has been given and accepted for a guest place at Synod. Standing Committee also noted with pleasure that The Episcopal Church of the USA would be represented at Synod 2016.

The area of Human Resources has continued to be an area of interest. The incorporation of the Diocese as a limited company in Cyprus has given one focus for that, in addition to recent HR issues within the diocese. One omission to date has been that of a stated and agreed Disciplinary Process. Such a process is necessary both to protect the Bishop from malicious claims, and to protect clergy in the future from actions of bishops that could be construed as capricious or lacking due process. We have been fortunate to have had the services, for free, of a very experienced practitioner in this field and a Draft has been considered by Standing Committee. The matter is now in the hands of the Archdeacons. It is noted that in addition to a Disciplinary Process per se, there needs also to be a Competence Procedure, and work is in hand on this.

There has been discussion about how the Diocese might mark its fortieth anniversary. A special commemorative calendar has been produced and it is hoped that a new history might be published. In addition, Standing Committee has decided to commend the All Saints weekend as a time when a special diocesan liturgy, to be devised by the Bishop, will be used. It was hoped that a hymn competition to be launched at Synod 2016 might produce one piece of the liturgy that all could celebrate.

JH