

Diocesan Synod Report | 8th November 2025

By Canon Peter Bruinvels CC

The Revd Scott Smith as our host at St Andrew's Parish Church, Goldsworth Park, spoke of the opportunities offered at St Andrew's to get to know Jesus and to like him. His parish was full of good news offering the friendship of the Lord.

+Andrew's Presidential Address is [here](#).

Next came **Steve Roberts – DBF Chair presenting the Draft Budget for 2026** with Inigo Churchill, Finance Director, which was of particular significance now that CofE National Finance had been reorganised and Triennium Funding ended. But the good news was that the CofE was releasing £1.6bn for 2026-28 in time limited funding. The Clergy were pleased to hear that Stipends were rising with a new National Stipend Standard and Clergy Pensions were being reset. For the first time, Retirement Financial Advice would be offered.

Steve identified the Budget Challenges as Stipends increase; time limited funding decreasing and no more Strategic Mission Funding from the Church Commissioners. He announced Stipends would increase by the recommendation of General Synod, 5.4% for incumbents and 10.7% for curates, subject to +A's approval.

This would clearly mean identifiable charges to be passed on to Parishes in order to fund Ministerial costs in full. To achieve all this, there would need to be a tight and balanced budget, he was pleased to report that income was holding up and that spending was under budget, bar housing repairs (+33%). He therefore was recommending Parish Share be limited to 4.1% (97% recovery).

There then followed a discussion on how Parish Share was worked out and the impact from Average Weekly Attendances. He announced that the Parishes would be consulted via a questionnaire being sent to them. And that the proposed Cap between 5.5% - 8% could affect up to 90 parishes for one year only. Synod, breaking out into groups, accepted that most parishes bear the cost even though many do not have curates. However, they remained worried about the poorer parishes and how they would cope. Inigo Churchill confirmed that savings had been made from moving from Church House to Stag Hill resulting in reduced costs by more than 25%! The decision has been taken that the Diocese should sell property, only with the agreement of the incumbent, which is surplus to ministerial requirements. Having approved the Budget, and parish share parameters for 2026, Synod's comments were to be taken note of by Bishop's Council along with the Cap recommendations.

Revd. Mark Wallace gave an excellent and amusing overview of the York **General Synod** which had been cordial and sociable, Safeguarding Measures making society safer had been approved along with Clergy Pay and Stipends, Armed Forces Chaplains Measure and Final Approval given for the National Church Governance Measure ably steered by +Andrew thereby making the CofE simpler, humbler and bolder. Synod was very concerned by the Terminally Ill Measure which

+Sarah leads on. Uniquely, all GS Guildford Members spoke at least once during this Synod. A record!

Deanery Synod will stay roughly the same in its breakdown between Clergy and Lay reps per house. But concern was expressed at the large variance in the numbers of Clergy and Lay between the small and the larger Deaneries

+Paul and Umair Asif – **Mission Enabler for Racial Diversity** introduced this item and the need for greater engagement with Umair discussing the different hands representing different people – ‘The people of the Rainbow God’. He asked how many churches in the Diocese were not diverse and if so – why? He did not believe the CofE was institutionally racist – but as a Church we did need to build up trust and understanding between each other and the wider community.

And again, at this Guildford Diocesan Synod – nearly all our votes were unanimous, and we were friendly to each other! Yes, a lot of questions were asked - including about safeguarding. But everyone treated each other with respect. There is much goodness in our worshipping Community.