

## **The Bishop's Council of Diocesan Trustees**

27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 meeting digest

The Bishop's Council of Diocesan Trustees convened on the 27th of March 2025, to discuss and make key decisions impacting the diocese. The meeting began with approval of the minutes from the previous meeting, with no additional matters arising not already on the agenda.

Under Bishop's Notices, the Bishop announced the upcoming departure of the Archdeacon of Boston in July and the conclusion of the Bishop of Grimsby's ministry in June. The trustees expressed their support for seeking consent from Diocesan Synod to request a new Suffragan Bishop from the Diocesan Commission.

During the update from the Audit and Governance Committee, trustees noted the chair report, the annual committee report and the strategic risk register. After a good discussion with Adam Halsey, our Audit Partner from HaysMac, trustees approved the financial statements and Letter of representation, noted a separate statement on our "going concern" and the Audit Findings Report. We also recommended the reappointment of HaysMac as our auditors to Diocesan Synod, for when they meet on 12<sup>th</sup> April. Our auditors were pleased to see the progress we had made through Time to Change Together, and that with the careful stewardship of our assets over the last few years, our overall financial position had stabilised.

The Lincoln Diocesan Trust and Board of Finance Ltd segment saw trustees receiving reports from the Finance Committee Chair, the management accounts for January 2025, and the covenant pledge report. Trustees had a wide-ranging discussion on the risks related to renewable energy development sites, agreeing on the need for a framework of principles, effective communication, and case-by-case consideration of sites. After thorough consideration and discussion, the proposed lease of land for a solar farm development site was approved.

Our Strategic Programme Manager had presented a reflection report on the Time to Change Together project, with trustees agreeing on the need for thorough evaluation of the previous implementation group's integration into our governance structure. Responsibility for any remaining TTCT actions was assigned to the Strategic Programme Manager, Ops Group, and SDF panel. The full reflection report would be shared with Diocesan Synod, accompanied by an executive summary.

Reports from various committees were received, including the Strategy Working Group, Investment Committee, Safeguarding Implementation Panel, Mission and Ministry Committee, and Search and Nominations Committee. A diversity update was noted, and a thorough report was considered from the recent meeting of General Synod, which would also be shared with Diocesan Synod in April. Trustees approved recommendations for electing additional lay members onto the Vacancy in See Committee as well as new members to the Mission and Ministry Committee and the Gedney Hill Estate Charity. In addition to the Safeguarding update, trustees considered a draft response letter to the Charity Commission, after they wrote to all Diocesan Bishops in January, seeking assurance from trustees about safeguarding provision in their Diocese. We were able to point towards the results of the recent INEQE safeguarding audit, which was largely positive and pointed towards a respectful and supportive safeguarding culture.

The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee received chair reports from Lincoln, Boston, and Stow and Lindsey AMPCs. Trustees approved consultations to begin on the suggested closure of some churches and initiated processes for joining and suspending specific benefices.

An update on Serious Incident Reporting was received and there were no new legislative changes noted to trustees. During “any other business”, the Chair acknowledged the sad passing of Sue Slater, a Reader, General Synod representative, and former Trustee. The closure of the steelworks in Scunthorpe was also discussed, with trustees asked to keep the affected individuals and Sue Slater’s family in their prayers.

Helen Doyle

31.03.2025