

# Synod Notes

14<sup>th</sup> March 2026 | Huntington School, York



## Presidential Address

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell welcomed our Auction Mart Chaplains and young observers to Synod, as well as the Revd Tom Mumford, who joins the diocese as Chaplain to support the Bishop of Selby.

Archbishop Stephen's presidential address focused on the importance of reconnecting with the land, supporting farmers, buying sustainably and fairly, and recognising environmental stewardship as part of Christian discipleship. He also advocated for a "generosity of will and wallet" to resolve the diocese's financial challenges and build a sustainable future for ministry. Reflecting on conflict in the Middle East, he urged prayer, compassion and a renewed commitment to Christ's peace, justice and mercy.

Read the full presidential address on our news pages at [dioceseofyork.org.uk/news](https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/news).

## General Synod Report

Members received a report on the February meeting of General Synod from Dr Neill Burgess and Archdeacon Liz Hassall.

This included updates on governance and legal matters, clergy conduct, safeguarding, Living in Love and Faith (LLF), mental health, poverty, working-class vocation and ministry, and the Church's response to social care.

Synod also heard about discussions on environmental responsibility, including sustainable church flowers, and wider questions of funding, accountability, and inclusion across the life of the Church.

## Living Christ's Story

Synod received an update on the Living Christ's Story strategy and the work currently under way to support the diocese's future mission and ministry.

This includes preparation for a Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) bid, alongside developing a new leadership programme for licensed clergy and lay ministers, children and youth ministry, church planting, revitalisation, practical support for parishes, and the appointment of an Associate Archdeacon for Hull.

Members heard about the importance of discernment, learning from existing projects, and listening carefully to what churches need so that resources are effective and used wisely.

## Question time

The Revd Kath McBride (Derwent) asked how the diocese is supporting rural mission and ministry within Living Christ's Story. In response, Synod heard that rural parishes make up a large proportion of diocesan life and are being included in current support, consultation and planning, including work to shape the next national funding bid.

The Revd Canon Dr Dominic Black (Hull) asked whether the full Multiply evaluation report would be shared with Synod. The response confirmed that the report is due to be published through the Church Support Hub, with a summary to follow on the diocesan website, and that the full report will then be available to those who would like to read it.

The Revd Andy Hagon (York) asked when progress on Living Christ's Story will be evaluated and shared more widely with parishes. Synod was told

that work is under way to review delivery against the original objectives, and that a fuller update is expected to come back to Diocesan Synod in November.

### Rural Affairs Motion

Margaret Price, Chair of the York Diocese Rural Life and Faith Group and Lay Dean of Easingwold Deanery, and The Revd Canon Dianne Gamble, in her role as Chaplain to Thirsk Auction Mart, presented the rural motion by Easingwold Deanery.

Synod heard about the “perfect storm” of pressures facing farmers and rural communities across the diocese, including economic uncertainty, environmental change, isolation and growing concerns around mental health. Members were reminded of the vital part farming plays in food production, care of the land, and sustaining rural life, and heard about the importance of chaplaincy and pastoral support in these communities.

The motion was carried to affirm farming as a vocation, commit to praying for farmers and rural communities, and support the development of guidance to help churches engage more confidently and practically with rural life.

### Diocesan Conference Update

Bishop Barry Hill reminded members of the diocesan conference, taking place this year at the University of York (23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July). The three-day event will feature speakers including Archbishop Michael Curry and Professor Lisa Oakley, and more than 400 clergy, licensed lay ministers, and members of our two religious communities will be in attendance.

Please contact [emily.bird@yorkdiocese.org](mailto:emily.bird@yorkdiocese.org) if you have not yet received an invitation.

### APCMs and Deanery Synod Elections

Canon Peter Warry noted that the deadline for APCM meetings is 31<sup>st</sup> May, with data returns to the office due by 30<sup>th</sup> June for upcoming elections. Synod was reminded of the importance of completing parish and deanery processes in good time.

Members were encouraged to fill vacancies wherever possible and to think carefully about who might serve at deanery, diocesan and General Synod level. The importance of broadening representation, including younger and more diverse voices, was also highlighted.

### Safeguarding Report

Synod received the safeguarding report for noting, as part of its regular oversight of safer practice and accountability across the diocese.

### Property Sub-Committee Report

Archdeacon Amanda Bloor shared the Property Sub-Committee report and heard about the significant workload being carried by a small diocesan team, alongside staffing changes and continuing vacancies.

Members were updated on housing, lettings, maintenance and glebe income, and heard that work is continuing to improve the efficiency of clergy housing, including through support for net zero carbon goals.

### Good News Item: Generous Giving

Phil McBride shared stories of generosity in action across the diocese, inviting members to reflect on Matthew 18:3 and to receive them with the openness and humility of a child. These included examples of churches growing in confidence and giving, people offering their time and skills to strengthen church life, and one church supporting another in a time of need. Together, the stories showed how generosity can nurture stronger, more hopeful and more sustainable church communities.

**Next meeting: Saturday 20<sup>h</sup> June 2026, online event**

