

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL HELD AT ST JOHN THE BAPTIST HALL MOREHAED STREET LAMBTON, ON THURSDAY 26 APRIL 2007 AT 10:00AM

ITEM SUBJECT
2007.033 PRAYERS

The meeting opened with prayer.

2007.034 PRESENT:

The Right Reverend Dr BG Farran (Chairman); The Right Reverend GS Rutherford; His Hon Judge J Lincoln; The Very Reverend GR Lawrence; John Cleary (Diocesan Business Manager) The Reverend Canon SL Benson; The Reverend HN Bright; The Reverend Canon CL Bullock; The Reverend AJL Copeman; The Reverend M Davies; The Reverend SR Pullin; The Reverend Canon PS Robertson; The Reverend S Roulston; The Venerable DS Simpson; Mr WK Allen; Ms R Brand; Mrs B Fenwick; Mr AG Green; Mr JA Helman; Mr JC Price.

APOLOGIES:

Mr C Shevels.

The Bishop also noted that he had been informed of a number of late arrivals.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Tim Mawson (Diocesan Secretary)

The Bishop advised that he had asked Canon Barbara Howard to celebrate the Eucharist and give the Homily. Canon Howard would join the Council for lunch.

2007.035 DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

Mrs B Fenwick in respect of agenda item [Manning Valley Anglican College, application for Episcopal Certificate]

The Reverend SR Pullin declared an interest in respect of the change of name proposed for the parish of Gorokan.

2007.036 BISHOP'S REPORT TO COUNCIL: P 1- 6

Diocesan Council and recognition of conflict of interest: P1

In a special meeting of Diocesan Council to consider the 2007 Budget the Bishop spoke about the requirement for good governance, and that the primary responsibility of each member of the Diocesan Council was the welfare of the Diocese of Newcastle.

Diocesan Business Manager's 3 Month Review P1

The Bishop noted that this had been undertaken and that Mr Cleary's review had been most satisfactory. He further noted that Mr Cleary had made a significant contribution to the Diocese in many ways, particularly in financial areas.

The Bishop had therefore written to John indicating this high level of satisfaction and confirming John in the position of Diocesan Business Manager.

The Bachelor of Theology in the University of Newcastle:P2

The Council of the University of Newcastle approved the degree of bachelor of theology at its Council meeting of Friday, 9 March 2007. This was an historic decision that culminated the dreams of many of his predecessors.

Inauguration Ceremony of Ordained Ministers: P2

Nine applicants for ordained local ministry (priesthood and the distinctive diaconate) had been invited to attend a Vocation Discernment Weekend at St John's Morpeth.

In order to ensure consistency across the models of ministry in the Diocese, the Bishop had met with each of the applicants and awaits the advice of the Examining Chaplains who had interviewed them during the Discernment Weekend.

St John's College Library Transfer to the University of Newcastle: P3

It was expected that the transfer would be completed by August 2007.

Historical collections of interest at the University of Newcastle: P3

The Bishop provided web addresses

The relationship between the Diocese of Newcastle and the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle: P3

Relationships between the two Dioceses was progressing well.

Quarterly meetings between the business managers of both dioceses had been arranged to allow for discussion of joint ventures.

Parish Administration: P4

In an attempt to assist small Parishes with their administration, a pilot program, similar to one in Bendigo, was to be undertaken. This program allowed for parish accounts to be paid through the Diocesan Office.

The pilot program was to assist in gauging this model's effectiveness and operational requirements.

Affiliated churches Ordinance of the Diocese of Sydney: P4

The Bishop noted that a frank exchange of views had taken place. As a result Archbishop Jensen would write a letter outlining their discussion. A copy would be sent to Bishop Farran before circulation.

Policies Consequent upon the practice of Professional Standards: P4

The Bishop noted the importance of the Professional Standards motions which would be addressed later in this meeting.

The first proposed policy was concerning the processing of lay workers. The second proposed policy was concerned with compensation to victims who had been sexually abused by representatives of the Diocese.

The Bishop hoped that a pastoral approach would be adopted to this policy.

Parish Council Visits: P4

The Bishop had already made 3 visits and found these meetings very enlightening. Both he and Bishop Graeme would continue these visits throughout the year.

The Bishop noted that these visits were an attempt to bring closer linkages between parishes and the Diocese and to make visible that we are and Episcopal church both in practice as much as in theory.

The Second Diocesan Convention: P5

As at 9am 26 April 2007 355 acceptances had been received.

Insight from Loren Mead: P5

The Bishop noted the need for rapid change to meet the challenges facing the Diocese.

The Bishop quoted from Loren Mead's final book in the series *The Once and Future Church* as well as from Dr Robin Gill, the Michael Ramsey Professor of Modern Theology in the University of Kent.

2007.037 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE:**(A) Policy for the selection and accreditation of lay parish workers**

On behalf of the Professional Standards Committee Gwen Vale joined the meeting at 10.30am and spoke to the business papers.

General Synod had asked that all dioceses develop a policy for the selection and accreditation of Lay Parish Workers. The Professional Standards Committee had recommended as per pages 7-8 of the council business papers

After debate The Reverend Canon PS Robertson moved, seconded Mr WK Allen

"That the recommendations be received and adopted in principle."

Carried

Gwen Vale noted that in general, the committee felt that working with lay people was the responsibility of the incumbent parish.

(B) Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme

The Chancellor spoke to the legal matters of this motion and suggested the following comments and changes on pages 9 – 16 of the business papers.

P16, Line10 – 13

The claimant may obtain assistance from the Chamber Magistrate.

The following amendment was suggested for P16 Line16:

"The Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme will be made known to the public and will be administered in conjunction with church or ANGLICARE disciplinary procedures.

The Chancellor noted the following:

1. Solutions and amendments were only suggestions
2. If no solicitor had given legal input, (on the deed of release) it may be unenforceable
3. On the other hand, if a solicitor was engaged, this may complicate enforcing the deed of release
4. A Public Officer could be used.

It was suggested that the Diocese of Newcastle might adopt the Sydney Model with an upper limit of \$75,000. This scheme was an alternative to litigation.

Moved The Reverend Canon PS Robertson

Seconded The Venerable DS Simpson

"That Diocesan Council accepts in principle the Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme for Victims of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct by a church worker (as used by the Diocese of Sydney) and that an upper ceiling of compensation be set at \$75,000.

Carried**(C) Pastoral Care and Assistance – Frequently asked Questions**

Moved Canon PS Robertson. Second The Very Reverend Graeme Lawrence

(D) Deed of Release p 26-30

Moved Mr WK Allen Seconded Mr JC Price

"That the Diocesan Business Manager explore the issues raised by the Chancellor relative to the document, commencing on P20 of the business papers, and to report back to Diocesan Council."

Carried