



Corff Cynrychiolwyr Yr Eglwys yng Nghymru The Representative Body of The Church in Wales

A meeting of the Representative Body of the Church in Wales was held both online and at 2 Callaghan Square, Cardiff on 27 March 2025.

Present:

Ex officio members

Archbishop of Wales

The Most Reverend Andrew John ♦

Chairs of the Diocesan Boards of Finance

St. Asaph: Mrs Sam Allin *

Bangor: Dr Hywel Parry-Smith *

Llandaff: Mr Michael Lawley ♦

Swansea & Mr Jeffrey Brown *

Brecon:

Elected members

St. Asaph: The Very Reverend Nigel Williams *
Mr Paul Williams *

Bangor: The Reverend Miriam Beecroft *

St. Davids: Mrs Judith Hayward ♦

The Venerable Paul Mackness *

Llandaff: Dr Heather Payne ♦

The Venerable Rhod Green ♦

Monmouth: The Venerable Ian Rees ♦

Miss Nicola Gibbons ♦

Swansea & The Reverend Dr Adrian Morgan ♦

Brecon:

Nominated members

Professor Medwin Hughes (Chair) ♦

Mr Chris Clarke *

Co-opted members

Mr Richard Anning ♦

* *Attended the meeting online*

♦ *Attended the meeting in person*

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Mr Tim Llewelyn, Mrs Jane Heard, Mrs Hazel Evans, Mr Thomas Lloyd, Mr Ian Loynd and Mr Peter Kennedy.

- In attendance:** The following members of staff were present: the Chief Executive, the Chief Operating Officer, the Head of Legal Services, the Director of Finance, the Governance Manager and the Governance Officer.
- Prayers:** Opening prayers were led by the Reverend Dr Adrian Morgan.
- Conflicts of interest:** No declarations of conflicts of interested were expressed by members.

St. Padarn's 'deep dive' project update

25/01

The Chair reminded the Representative Body that the Finance Committee had asked him to undertake a detailed review of the current business model of St. Padarn's Institute. His report had been finalised and the Chair introduced it to the Representative Body: he had discussed it with the Bench of Bishops in January 2025 and with the Finance Committee at its meeting on 6 March 2025. The report covered a wide range of matters including governance, finance, patterns of training, and the site and buildings.

The report acknowledged and commended the good work of St. Padarn's and what had been achieved since its launch in 2016.

Discussion followed during which it was noted that the place of theological training in Wales was fast diminishing with St. Padarn's therefore occupying an important place. The importance of finding a balance between providing for the Church's operational needs and a model that was financial sustainable, alongside maintaining a commitment to a distinctly Welsh training institute, was emphasised.

A small working group, consisting of the Chair and deputy-Chair of the Representative Body, the Chief Executive, the Chief Operating Officer and the Bishop of Monmouth (as ministry bishop), had been formed to consider the report and next steps. The working group was due to meet on 1 April 2025.

The Representative Body noted the position and would be kept abreast of updates.

Funding for growth and resilience

25/02

The Director of Finance introduced a report which provided an update on the various streams of funding the Representative Body provided to dioceses.

a) Partnership Funding

The Representative Body was advised that the Partnership Funding allocations for 2025 were £436,750 per diocese (total of £2,620,500), as follows:

- a) £178,500 for diocesan boards of finance (DBF) posts
- b) £211,000 for cathedrals funding
- c) £47,250 to be allocated by diocesan bishops

Element b) constituted funding available for an additional post within cathedrals allocated as agreed by the respective diocesan bishop and cathedral Chapter.

Element c) represented the allocation provided to each diocesan bishop per annum from to help strengthen diocesan resilience and to catalyse change. The funding was held by the Representative Body and released to the respective diocesan board of finance at the request of the diocesan bishop. Three dioceses so far had made clear how their allocations would be spent in 2025.

b) Structural Resilience Funding

The Director of Finance noted the allocation of £3.7million per annum to the dioceses via Structural Resilience Funding until 30 June 2032: £3.7million had been allocated between the dioceses using an agreed formula; and £700,000 was held to provide 'safety net' funding for use in exceptional circumstances. The Finance Committee had agreed that any funding not allocated at the end of the year was to be redistributed in line with the agreed distribution formula. At the end of 2024, £621,290 had therefore been distributed between the six dioceses. It was noted that Structural Resilience Funding was not currently index-linked, and the Representative Body had agreed to review this in 2027.

a) Evangelism Fund

The Director of Finance noted that £6.8million had been drawn down to date for Evangelism Fund projects. The latest financial allocations of the five projects funded via the Evangelism Fund were noted.

b) Church Growth Fund

The Director of Finance reminded the Representative Body that the Church Growth Fund represented its commitment of £100million of reserves over ten years to support evangelistic projects. It was reported that nine tier 1 projects and seven tier 2 projects had been awarded to date, with £10.9million allocated overall.

Discussion followed.

Project management for tier 2 projects was discussed. It was noted that the established framework requiring a dedicated project manager role for tier 2 projects was functioning effectively. Project managers had been appointed in the dioceses of St Asaph, Monmouth, and Swansea & Brecon: the project managers were working with the diocesan secretaries to develop consistent and standardised reporting mechanisms.

It was agreed that a mechanism for providing an overview of Church Growth Fund projects, alongside sharing learning from those projects, would be considered further to allow the Representative Body the opportunity to glean information about the projects approved. It was stressed that any engagement by the Representative Body should promote learning and not cut across the work of the Church Growth Fund Allocation Group.

The Representative Body noted the current position.

Management accounts to 28 February 2025

25/03

The Director of Finance introduced the management accounts to 28 February 2025, which included a draft outturn report for 2024. A deficit of around £2million was reported for 2024, which was partly attributed to fluctuations in investment income.

The Representative Body noted the current position.

Staff resourcing within the provincial safeguarding staff team

25/04

Dean Nigel Williams, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided an update on the recent challenges faced by the provincial safeguarding team. The provincial safeguarding team had experienced a significant increase of over 300% in referrals in recent years, despite staffing levels remaining unchanged. Various options had been presented to the Finance Committee by the Director of Finance at its meeting in March to address these challenges, where the Committee has discussed and agreed to:

- Support the creation of a new permanent, full-time post of Provincial Safeguarding Support Officer within the provincial safeguarding team;
- Approve the ongoing increase to the provincial safeguarding budget to include that additional post;
- Support the temporary increase of the Safeguarding Manager's working hours to a full-time level; and
- Approve the increase to the 2025 safeguarding budget by approximately £30,000 (including on costs) to allow immediate recruitment to the Provincial Safeguarding Support Officer post and the temporary increase in the Safeguarding Manager's working hours.

Recruitment for the post of Provincial Safeguarding Support Officer would take place during April 2025 for an anticipated employment start in late May 2025.

The Head of Legal Services commented that a continued increase in the volume and complexity of safeguarding casework was exerting unforeseen pressure on the provincial safeguarding team, with staff working significantly beyond their contracted hours. Regular supervision of the team was being conducted, and well-being was being considered. In some instances, overtime payments had been made, and in others, changes to working hours agreed. The needs of the provincial safeguarding team would continue to be monitored, and further measures implemented where required.

Following discussion, the Representative Body noted and supported the decisions of the Finance Committee and noted the current position regarding the provincial safeguarding team.

Sales of consecrated property

25/05

The Representative Body were reminded that the Constitution of the Church in Wales required sales of consecrated property to be approved by the Representative Body. In

accordance with Chapter III, section 23(2) of the Constitution, the Representative Body authorised the sale of the following consecrated property:

- A078 – the former St James, Rhosddu (listed grade II) – Former Church and adjacent 1970s Church Hall
- D379 – the former St David, Whitchurch (listed grade II)
- D165 – the former St Sadwrnen, Llansadwrnen, Laugharne (listed grade II)
- D142 – the former St David, Abergorlech
- L083a – the former St David, Margam – Church, Church Hall
- L081 – the former St Andrew, Tonypany
- L315 – the former Ss Peter & Paul, Abercanaid Church and Hall
- M168 – the former St Mary Magdalene, Goldcliff, Newport (listed grade II)
- S393 – the former St Cewydd, Disserseth (listed grade I)

Updates from Chairs on the work of committees

25/06

The Representative Body was provided with oral updates on the work of its committees as follows:

a) Property Committee

It was noted that the Property Committee had been strengthened by the addition of two members, with one vacancy still remaining. Richard Nicholls, Assistant Head of Property Services, would be leaving the Representative Body in April 2025 following almost 25 years' service. The Chair expressed thanks to Richard for his work and commitment.

b) Human Resources Committee

The minutes of the Committee's meetings were introduced with various matters noted.

c) Investment Committee

An ethical investment strategy, and the risk profile of drawing down £100million from investments for the Church Growth Fund, had been considered at the last Investment Committee meeting which would be reported to the Representative Body in due course.

d) St. Padarn's Quality and Standards Panel

An update was provided on the work of the St. Padarn's Quality and Standards Panel. The challenges of bilingualism within ministry and the expectation of Welsh language proficiency amongst ordinands followed.

e) Audit and Risk Committee

It was announced that TIAA had been selected as the internal audit firm following an interview process: initial work by TIAA was already underway.

f) Cathedrals and Churches Commission

The Commission's position as a committee of the Representative Body would be considered when the review of the faculty process had been finalised.

Serious Incident Reports to the Charity Commission

25/07

The Head of Legal Services introduced a paper setting out [REDACTED] serious incident reports made to the Charity Commission since the Representative Body's previous meeting. Members were advised that historical data on reporting had been included within the paper following members' requests at the last meeting.

[REDACTED]

Discussion followed, during which it was noted that while referrals made to provincial safeguarding staff mainly related to sexual abuse, abuse could take many forms and continual awareness of other forms of abuse was important. The use and misuse of spiritual authority was the subject of the *Walking in Integrity* report prepared by the Standing Doctrinal Commission, which would be published shortly: a working group was considering how the points made within the report could be turned into action, including the provision of relevant training.

Concern was raised about clergy working alone, sometimes with vulnerable people, and the risks associated. Use of better-equipped meeting places which reduced such risks was encouraged.

The high quality of service provided by the provincial safeguarding team was commended: safeguarding support being embedded within the culture of the Church in Wales, and directly accessible by all, was considered invaluable. One member noted that an explanation of what happened after a disclosure was made may help dispel any sense of trepidation that may be felt by clergy or others about making a report.

Following discussion, the Representative Body noted the report.

Representative Body and committee membership, powers and duties

25/08

The Governance Manager introduced a report providing updates on matters relating to the Representative Body's membership and the membership of its committees.

a) Representative Body membership

It was noted that Archdeacon John Harvey had stepped down as Chair of the Bangor Diocesan Board of Finance in December 2024, and had been replaced by Dr Hywel Parry-Smith. Consequently, Dr Hywel Parry-Smith became an *ex officio* member of the Representative Body, creating a vacancy within its elected membership. The diocese had not yet elected a lay member to fill that vacancy. The lay elected representative from the diocese of Swansea & Brecon remained vacant.

b) Appointment to the Investment Committee

The Investment Committee was carrying two vacancies, and the Committee had indicated it would be useful to use these vacancies to ensure its membership was fortified with knowledge and experience of ESG (ethical, social and governance) matters; particularly to support its management of the provincial Ethical Investment Policy. Following advertisement of the vacancies and various meetings with potential candidates, two proposed appointees were recommended to the Representative Body for appointment to the Investment Committee: Mr Dominic Rowles and the Reverend Richard Williams.

Following discussion, the Representative Body approved the appointments of Mr Dominic Rowles and the Reverend Richard Williams to the Investment Committee, initially for the remainder of the current triennium.

c) Cathedrals and Churches Commission

It was noted that the Cathedrals and Churches Commission carried a vacancy, and an appointment to fill this was being explored. The Commission's Rules stipulated that the Representative Body made appointments in consultation with the Bench of Bishops and the Welsh Government. Officers were following this process and a proposal would be made to the Representative Body at a future meeting.

Also, the Representative Body noted the Commission intended to invite Judith Alfrey to attend its meetings as an advisor. Ms Alfrey would not be a member, so would not need to be appointed and would have no voting abilities, but would be able to comment on cases and provide advice.

d) Property Committee

The Governance Manager explained two points had been identified within the Property Committee's powers and duties that were in need of updating and editions were proposed and discussed. The changes recommended referred to the Trusts Sub-Committee, the work of which had been absorbed into the work of the Property Committee, and updated reference to the site and buildings at St. Padarn's Institute.

Following discussion, the Representative Body approved the proposed revisions to the powers and duties of the Property Committee.

Summary of recommendations

Following discussion, the Representative Body:

- i. Noted its current membership;

- ii. Appointed Mr Dominic Rowles and the Reverend Richard Williams to the Investment Committee, initially for the remainder of the current triennium.
- iii. Approved the proposed revisions to the Property Committee's powers and duties.

Annual renewal of conflicts of interest and trustee eligibility

25/09

All trustees were asked to review their conflicts of interest register and renew their trustee eligibility forms as part of the annual review process.

Minutes of meeting 27 June 2024 and matters arising

25/10

a) Minutes of meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 March 2025 were agreed as a true record.

b) Matters arising

Various matters arising from the minutes were noted.

Members were reminded that the final stage of the legal work on the status of the Clergy Pension Scheme was to confirm the Scheme's position with the Pension Protection Fund (PPF). Discussions with the PPF continued.

Additionally, an annual return for the pension scheme was now formally required to be submitted to the Pensions Regulator, which had been completed with information provided by the actuary. The Representative Body formally delegated authority to the Chief Executive to sign and submit the annual return on behalf of the Representative Body.

Use of the Representative Body Seal

25/11

It was reported that the Representative Body Seal had been used from numbers 37219 to 37275 inclusive. The Seal Register was available for the Representative Body's inspection.

Committee minutes

25/12

The Representative Body noted the minutes of committee meetings that had taken place since its last meeting in November 2024.

Other business

25/13

The Chair observed that the 2012 Church in Wales Review had recommended the Representative Body met jointly with the Bench of Bishops and Standing Committee annually. Consideration would be given to planning such meetings during 2026.

Next meeting

The Chair confirmed the next meeting of the Representative Body would take place on Tuesday 24 June 2025, on a hybrid basis, at 2 Callaghan Square and online.

Closing prayers

The Archbishop closed the meeting with prayer.