An Ordinary Meeting of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales was held at University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, Lampeter on Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 September 2015.

The President, the Archbishop of Wales, was in the Chair for the start of the meeting.

15/22 Prayers and Bible Study

The President led a Bible Study and Prayers.

15/23 President’s Mandate

In accordance with Section 16.2 of the Regulations to Chapter II of the Constitution, the Lay Secretary certified the due execution of the President’s Mandate.

15/24 Minutes

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Governing Body held on 15 and 16 April 2015 were confirmed and signed.

15/25 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

15/26 Representatives of Cytûn and Other Churches

The President welcomed those attending the meeting to represent Cytûn and other churches:

Cytûn and the United Reformed Church: The Reverend Sally Thomas

The Methodist Church: The Reverend Dr Stephen Wigley

The Union of Welsh Independents: The Reverend Dr R Alun Evans

The Presbyterian Church of Wales: The Reverend Dr Elwyn Richards
15/27 **Consent for non-members to speak**

Noting that a number of non-Governing Body members would be involved in presentations, the Governing Body gave its consent for non-members to speak during the meeting.

15/28 **In Memoriam**

The Governing Body stood in memory of the Right Reverend Dewi Bridges, Bishop of Swansea & Brecon from 1988 to 1999, who had died since the last meeting.

15/29 **Address by the Most Reverend Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion**

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion addressed the Governing Body.

_____________________________________________________________________

Mr Paul Bennett was appointed as the Assessor.

_____________________________________________________________________

The President vacated the Chair which was taken by Mr Clive Myers.

_____________________________________________________________________

15/30 **Report of the Standing Committee**

His Honour Philip Price QC, Chair of the Standing Committee, presented the Report of the Standing Committee and proposed the following recommendations which were seconded by Mrs Helen Biggin, Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee:

**Dates and Places of Governing Body meetings in 2017**

That the Governing Body meet on Friday, Saturday and Sunday 21, 22 and 23 April 2017 in City Hall, Cardiff, and on Wednesday and Thursday, 13 and 14 September 2017 in University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter.

The resolution was passed by a substantial majority.
Approval of the Report

That the Report of the Standing Committee be approved.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

15/31 2020 Vision Report

Mrs Lis Perkins, recently appointed Chair of the Implementation Group, and the Bishop of Bangor, Deputy Chair of the Implementation Group, presented a progress report on 2020 Vision and the work of the Implementation Group and members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Mr James Turner, Chair of the Representative Body and a member of the Implementation Group, made a presentation to Mrs Helen Biggin for her service as the Chair of the Implementation Group from its inception to July 2015.

15/32 Climate Change

Sir John Houghton CBE FLSW FRS (non-member of the Governing Body), a former Co-Chair of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change Scientific Assessment Working Group, made a presentation on the scientific background to the report from the CHASE (Church Action for Sustaining the Environment) Group on climate change.

The Bishop of Swansea and Brecon proposed and the Reverend Jon Durley seconded the following motion:

That the Governing Body:

(i) agree that proposals for strengthening the Church’s action on climate change be developed;

(ii) invite dioceses to review their representation on CHASE to support this process;

(iii) note that the Ethical Investment Group is advising the Representative Body on how to take account of climate change in investment; and

(iv) note that the Governing Body will receive a report on progress in April 2016.

The resolution was passed nemine contradicente.
Mr Myers vacated the Chair which was taken by the Venerable Peggy Jackson, Archdeacon of Llandaff.

Report of the Representative Body

Mr James Turner, Chair of the Representative Body, and Mr Paul Marshall, Deputy Chair of the Representative Body, introduced:

- the Report and Financial Statements of the Representative Body for the year ended 31 December 2014;
- the Common Investment Fund Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014;
- the Minutes of the Meetings of the Representative Body held on 20 November 2014, 12 March and 11 June 2015.

Mr Rod Davies, Chair of the Property Committee of the Representative Body (non member) presented the following three motions, which were proposed and seconded by Mr James Turner and Mr Paul Marshall.

Redundant Churches Funds

That the Regulations governing the application of the proceeds of sale of Churches, Church sites and Churchyards be amended to give effect to the following proposals:

(i) to include paying for specialists to help parishes manage and plan the treatment of the contents of closing churches; and

(ii) to also be used for works to churchyards where there is a substantial physical danger to persons or property.

That in pursuance of sub section (3) of Section 34 of Chapter II of the Constitution the Standing Committee is instructed to give effect to the appropriate amendments to the Constitution.

Redundant Churches Regulations

That the Regulations governing the insurance of redundant churches by the Representative Body be amended to give effect to the following proposal:

To include the insuring of closed churches after the last service is held.

That in pursuance of sub section (3) of Section 34 of Chapter II of the Constitution the Standing Committee is instructed to give effect to the appropriate amendments to the Constitution.
The Parsonage Improvement Fund

That the Parsonage Improvement Fund provisions be amended to give effect to the following proposal:

To allow expenditure to provide a parish office in other buildings owned or leased by the Representative Body where the Parsonage is unsuitable to provide such facilities.

That in pursuance of sub section (3) of Section 34 of Chapter II of the Constitution the Standing Committee is instructed to give effect to the appropriate amendments to the Constitution.

The resolutions were passed unanimously.

Mr James Turner proposed and Mr Paul Marshall seconded the motion:

That the Report of the Representative Body be approved.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

15/34 Membership and Finance Report

The Bishop of Bangor proposed and Mr James Turner seconded the motion:

That the Governing Body do take note of this Report.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

15/35 Emergency Motion – The Refugee Crisis

The President reported that, following representations from a number of Governing Body members, it was proposed that the Governing Body should debate the refugee crisis. He gave notice of a motion which two members of the Bench wished to propose. As the motion had been received less than five weeks before the commencement of the meeting, the special leave of the Governing Body was required for it to be debated, in accordance with Regulation 23.2 of Chapter II of the Constitution.

The Governing Body gave its leave for the motion to be debated.

The Bishop of Swansea & Brecon then proposed and the Bishop of St Asaph seconded the following motion:

That the Governing Body:

(i) recognise the enormity of the refugee crisis currently facing Europe;

(ii) affirm our solidarity with all those who are fleeing conflict, war and destruction;
(iii) endorse the statement made by the Bishops of the Church in Wales on 8 September 2015, which calls for a practical response based on hospitality and generosity;

(iv) continue to commit the situation and all affected by it to our prayers.

The resolution was passed unanimously. [The Bishops’ Statement is attached as an Annex to these minutes.]

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned until the following day.

Celebration of the Holy Eucharist

There was a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

The Meeting of the Governing Body resumed on Thursday, 17 September 2015.

The Chair was taken by the President.

15/36 President’s Address

The President addressed the Governing Body.

Mr Sandy Blair, CBE, DL was appointed as the Assessor.

The President vacated the Chair which was taken by His Honour Philip Price QC
15/37 Same Sex Marriage

The President reported on the outcome of the diocesan consultation earlier in the year and invited the Reverend Dr Ainsley Griffiths (non member), a member of the Doctrinal Commission, to present the options upon which the Governing Body was being consulted.

After a discussion in which 34 members of the Governing Body spoke, members were invited to express their view on the following three options using an anonymous form to help inform future consideration of how the Church might respond to recent changes in the Marriage Law:

Option 1: No change to the Church’s current teaching and practice on marriage and partnerships;
Option 2: To allow same sex unions to be blessed in the Church in Wales;
Option 3: To enable same sex couples to marry in the Church in Wales.

The results of the expression of members’ views were as follows:

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His Honour Philip Price QC vacated the Chair which was taken by the President.

15/38 Report of University of Wales, Trinity Saint David

Mr Gwilym Dyfri Jones, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Wales, Trinity Saint David (non member) presented the Report of University of Wales, Trinity Saint David.

The Bishop of St Davids proposed and the Chair seconded the motion:

That the Report of University of Wales, Trinity Saint David be received.

The resolution was passed unanimously.
15/39 Confirmation and Admission to Holy Communion – Group Discussions

The Bishop of St Asaph and the Reverend Dr Richard Hainsworth, a member of the Doctrinal Committee, introduced two papers entitled ‘Confirmation’ and ‘Admission to Communion’ prepared by the Doctrinal Commission, and a ‘Response’ from the Bench of Bishops.

The Governing Body then divided into ten discussion groups to consider and respond to the question in the Report.

15/40 Evangelism – Report on April Group Discussions

The Bishop of Bangor reported back to the Governing Body and reflected on the issues raised in the discussion groups held in April. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

15/41 Ministry Report

The Bishop of Monmouth proposed and the Archbishop seconded the following motion:

That the Governing Body do take note of this report.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

15/42 Question Time

An oral answer to a written question from the Reverend Canon Sue Huyton was given by Mr James Turner, Chair of the Representative Body.
15/43 **The Widows, Orphans and Dependants Society**

The Venerable Robert Williams, Archdeacon of Gower and a member of the Widows, Orphans and Dependants Society, proposed the following motion which was seconded from the Chair:

That the Governing Body do take note of this Report.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

15/44 **Highlights**

The Archbishop warmly thanked the Venerable Philip Morris, Archdeacon of Margam, who was to retire in November, for all his work in producing *Highlights* for 18 years and made a presentation to him on behalf of the Governing Body.

15/45 **Date and Place of Next Meeting**

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Governing Body would be held on 6 and 7 April 2016 at Venue Cymru, Llandudno.

This concluded the business of the Meeting and the Archbishop gave the Blessing.
As bishops of the Church in Wales, we have watched with horror and dismay the growing crisis involving refugees, and the number of deaths that have occurred of families and even young children as they flee war and persecution in the Middle East or Africa in the hope of finding a secure future in Europe.

We recognise that the situation is complex and that there is no one easy answer to this situation. We believe nonetheless that any and all responses should be characterised first by compassion and mercy; that efforts need to be redoubled to secure peace and justice in the troubled parts of the world, and that a generous but sustainable welcome must be offered to those most in need who seek a secure future among the prosperous nations of Europe.

Christians are called by God to show hospitality to strangers and to extend help to those who are vulnerable, homeless, and victims of injustice, so we now ask our congregations to join us in prayer for all displaced and persecuted minorities and refugees and also in practical action.

This includes:
- Making a donation to charities directly involved with humanitarian work;
- Organising welcoming groups for refugees who join Welsh communities;
- Collecting and distributing essential items for refugees who arrive with nothing;
- Sign petitions for the UK to take its fair share of refugees and adequately resource initiative to help them;
- Assess if there is any available church property which could be offered to agencies as suitable shelter or accommodation for refugees.

We are grateful that Anglican congregations across Europe, alongside other churches, are offering hope and practical help to refugees, especially in Mediterranean countries. Christian Aid and others are at the forefront of life-saving action in war zones and refugee camps, whilst some church groups in Wales are already preparing to support new arrivals.

However, we also call upon the British government:
- to accept a fair share of refugees seeking sanctuary in Europe,
- to be pro-active in developing policies to protect those most in danger of religious or ethnic persecution, and
- to co-operate with the European Union and charitable agencies in co-ordinating a comprehensive shared response.

We hope as well that particular attention will be paid to the Christian minorities of the Middle East, who are often the target of the most fierce persecution, and that their distinctive needs will not be overlooked. We pray that the nations of Europe, and especially our own country, have the strength, courage and wisdom to respond generously and swiftly at this time of critical need.”