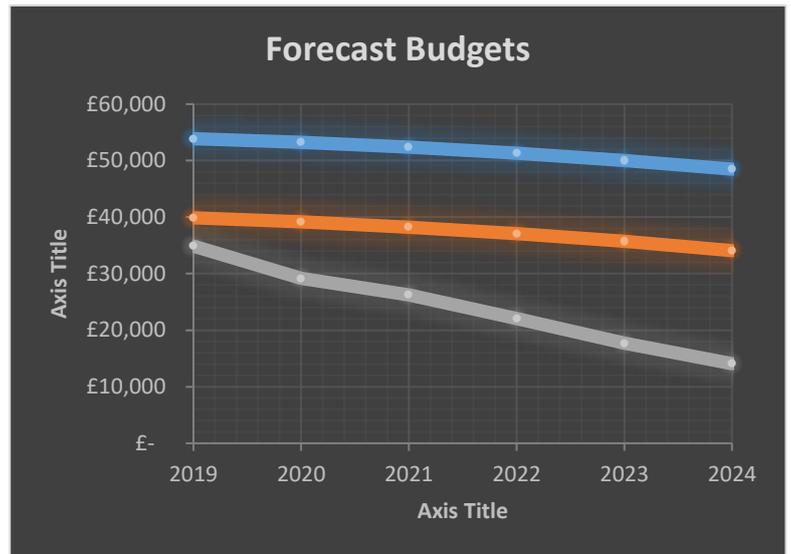


## Diocese of Brechin: Autumn Synod 2019

**Budget Deficit:** The Spring Synod approved a deficit budget as long as Diocesan Council reported back with plans and progress on reducing this deficit. The actions was started with some planning and projections for future budgets, based on different assumptions and cost cutting approaches.

The figure to the right shows some potential projected budget deficits. The Bishop suggested that even the best line might need to be improved upon.

A further report would be made at Spring Synod 2020.



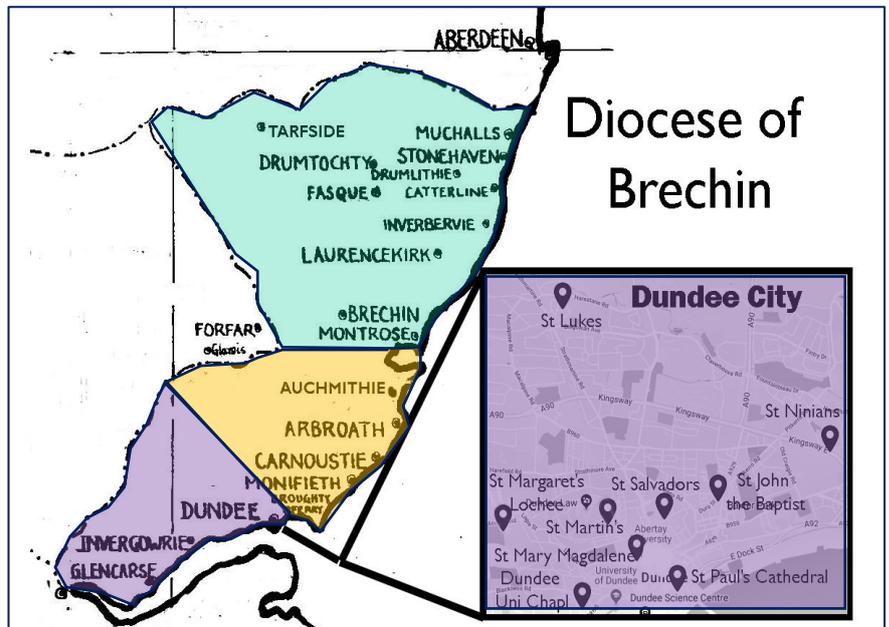
### **Diocesan Strategy for the Diocese of Brechin:**

Not a top-down strategy that tells charges what to do: a strategy to bring health (spiritual & financial) to our churches to let mission grow. Presentations were made on three strands of the strategy:

#### Clusters – Transitions – Support.

Clusters are groups of charges that are invited to meet and, helped by the Diocese, work together for mutual support. This may be in areas such as finance, property, outreach, spirituality. The cluster decides what it needs and what is helpful.

The 'northern cluster' started activities in 2019. The 'coastal' has met once and 'city and west' has a date to meet.



Transitions – helping churches find a long-term future. Churches work in partnership with the diocese to appoint a shared priest for a fixed term to look after the charges and produce firm/agreed proposals for long term future. Priest has special skills/training.

Support – helping ordained and lay ministries flourish. Focus on clergy & lay reader wellbeing, prayer for new vocations and work to help support a variety of lay ministries in every charge:

Discussions round tables and back in the whole Synod explored what this might mean. Clusters looked like some other plans for e.g. Local Collaborative Ministry or Mission Hubs: it was emphasised that what clusters did would be chosen by the cluster itself.

#### Motion approved by Synod:

“That this Synod receives the presentations on Diocesan Mission initiatives and will support the Diocesan Council and Officers and others in developing and growing these initiatives.”

## Money for Mission – Policy on Using Diocesan Reserves:

Diocesan Resources for Mission such as Transitional Ministries are limited. Deficit reduction planning constrains the finances available from year-on-year finances.



But the Diocese has reserves that could support mission initiatives like Transitional ministries and/or to cover deficits while the Diocesan finances are stabilised. Presentations were made on the Diocesan finances, what funds were actually available for general use and what the impact of this use would be. There are significant funds that are available, but which must be used prudently – they can only be used once.

A useful discussion took place on the balance between deficit reduction (which means less ongoing support for some charges) and use of reserves to help other charges to grow and develop long term plans. There was some anxiety about potential loss of support to some charges. The Diocesan Council is the body that acts for the Synod between meetings and needs to be empowered and trusted to deliver Synod's policies.

A motion (which had been amended before the Synod convened) was passed to empower Diocesan Council to act and require reporting back to Synods:

### Motion approved by Synod:

“That this Synod authorises Diocesan Council to prudently use reserves (cash and investment) to support mission and ministry projects, subject to the condition that each project must:

- Be for a fixed period of time
- Have clearly identified, measurable and achievable outcomes as agreed by Diocesan Council and the particular charge or charges involved
- Be supported financially by the particular charge or charges involved as well as Diocesan Council
- Be outlined in written terms which are submitted to the Diocesan Synod following, and thereafter reported upon annually.”



The Acts of Synod were confirmed and lunch was shared!