

Bishop of Salisbury to retire in July 2021

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, will retire on the 3rd July 2021, a month short of his 67th birthday. He will have been Bishop of Salisbury for ten years.

“Being the Bishop of Salisbury has been a privilege and a joy”, the Bishop said. “In present circumstances, the timing of my retirement has not been an easy decision but it feels right to me and to those I have consulted. The impact of the pandemic is going to be felt for a long time. The diocese is developing a Mission and Pastoral Plan and we have an agreed financial framework with which to face the future with confidence. We continue to be about Renewing Hope as we Pray, Serve and Grow.

“In Bishops Karen and Andrew and the four archdeacons, the Diocese of Salisbury has excellent leadership. Our Diocesan Secretary, David Pain, is well established and Joy Tubbs is an outstanding Director of Education. The Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Board of Education are people of faith, commitment, skill and expertise. I am enormously grateful to them and to the Diocesan Synod. When the pandemic subsides, the scale of what faces us will benefit from a new diocesan bishop with whom to make decisions about the future.

“This is a testing time and the life of the Church has never been more important as a witness to Christian beliefs and values for the sake of God’s world. In many ways the Diocese of Salisbury is one of God’s small miracles. The energy, variety and resourcefulness of our churches, chaplaincies and schools are just three of the reasons why being the Bishop is a joy. I am full of admiration for our cathedral, for clergy colleagues and for the people of the diocese who have been extraordinarily resilient and creative in the adaptation of continued ministry and mission.

“It has been good to welcome the Channel Island Deaneries to the diocese in a new relationship for which the legalities have still to be finalised. I am sorry not to be able to get to know them better and work with them for longer. The diocese is glad to have them with us and we pray the relationship will deepen and be a blessing to us all.

“When we came to Salisbury in 2011, Helen had just retired as a Maths teacher. She has supported me particularly through hospitality and fundraising in The South Canonry and in the beautiful garden, notably running the Sudan fete. She has maintained her Quaker membership at

Salisbury Quaker Meeting throughout our time here. She established a weekly origami workshop for prisoners at HMP Erlestoke selling their cards to raise funds for prisoner rehabilitation. Helen has been a major part of what I have been able to do and I am grateful for her and our family's support. We look forward to retiring to Brighton to be closer to our children and grandchildren."

Notes

Nicholas Holtam was ordained Deacon in 1979, Priest in 1980 and Bishop in 2011. He served as Assistant Curate at St Dunstan and All Saints Stepney (1979-83); Tutor in Christian Ethics and Mission at Lincoln Theological College (1983-87); Vicar of Christ and St John with St Luke's Isle of Dogs (1988-95); and Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields (1995-2011). As Bishop of Salisbury, he has led the diocese which covers most of Wiltshire, Dorset, Poole and parts of Bournemouth as well as a small part Hampshire and one parish in Devon. In more normal times the diocese has 442 parishes with 570 churches, 150 new ways of being church and 196 Church schools and academies. This year we also welcome the Church of England in the Channel Islands.

The Bishop of Salisbury is a Foundation Trustee of Sarum College and serves on the College Council. He is President of Marlborough College and Vice President of the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust and Dorset Historic Churches Trust. Bishop Nicholas is a Patron of local charities including Alabaré, The Footprints Project and, with Helen, of Children's Chance.

Nationally, since 2014 Bishop Nicholas has been the Church of England's lead bishop on the environment and chairs the Environmental Working Group. From 2013 to 2018 he chaired the Committee for Ministry with and among Deaf and Disabled People. He has been a member of several working groups and was on the coordinating group of 'Living in Love and Faith'. Since 2015 he has been a member of the House of Lords. He is an active supporter of Christian Aid, a Vice President of The Children's Society, The National Churches Trust and The Royal School of Church Music and Patron of the Museum of Homelessness.

Bishop Nicholas has strongly supported our diocesan links in Latvia, Evreux, Sudan and South Sudan and the embryonic rural ministry link with the Diocese of Haderslev in Denmark. He has contributed to the Anglican Communion's Environmental Network and the European Churches

Environmental Network. He is an Ambassador for Hope Cathedral in Norway.

As part of the diocese's Renewing Hope – Pray, Serve, Grow, since 2015 there has been a significant increase in the number of those exploring vocations to authorised ministry, both lay and ordained. One of Bishop Nicholas' responsibilities within the diocese is to be the Sponsoring Bishop for those seeking ordination. Bishop Andrew will take on this responsibility from the 1st March 2021 at least until the arrival of the new diocesan bishop.

We will have to see what is possible nearer the time but Bishop Nicholas hopes to preside at the ordinations of deacons and priests on the 26th and 27th June 2021 and his last service in the diocese will be Evensong in the Cathedral on Saturday the 3rd July 2021.

During the vacancy, Bishop Karen will be the acting Bishop of Salisbury.

The Vacancy in See process will begin shortly and it is currently anticipated that the Crown Nominations Commission will meet in the autumn. The Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee is the Dean, The Very Revd Nicholas Papadopoulos.