

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

The Archbishops' Council presents this report on its activities since the July Group of Sessions in accordance with the requirements of the National Institutions Measure 1998.

The Council has met on four occasions since its last report was prepared – on 7 August, 23 September, 25-26 November and 20 January.

Among the matters considered by the Archbishops' Council were:

MISSION INITIATIVES

The Council has received reports on various mission initiatives in operation around the Church and supported by the Council itself and the Church Commissioners. These include the Weddings Project, the Youth Evangelism Fund and initiatives in areas of new housing supported by money made available by the Church Commissioners. The Council has considered what can be learnt from these various initiatives about delivering change and taking opportunities where they arise.

FINANCE

The financial crisis

The Council has been monitoring what the financial crisis means for the Church of England and has initiated a presentation and debate at February Synod.

Strategic spending review

The Council has begun a wide-ranging review of its spending priorities over the next five years in order to make better use of the limited resources available to it. The review is chaired by Andrew Britton, chair of the Council's Finance Committee.

Lambeth Conference funding

The Council (and the Church Commissioners) agreed to make an interest-free loan available to the Lambeth Conference to enable it to discharge its outstanding obligations while fundraising continued. It also, with the Commissioners, established a review of the funding arrangements for the 2008 Lambeth Conference. The review is being led by Mr John Ormerod.

GOVERNANCE

A sub-committee, chaired by Dr Christina Baxter, has prepared proposals for changing the Council's supporting structure to streamline decision-making and make lines of accountability clearer. The sub-committee's report will be presented to Synod in February and a period of consultation will follow.

REVIEWS

In its annual programme of reviewing the work of its divisions, the Council has considered the work of Mission & Public Affairs, Cathedral and Church Buildings, Human Resources and the Legal Office. The Council has also considered the report of the review of clergy housing in retirement, a report from the Stewardship Committee reviewing progress towards the Church's 5% giving target, a Report from the Board of Education reviewing the present children's and youth strategies and a report from the Research and Statistics Department reviewing its work and examining priorities for the future.

GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT

The Council has discussed a number of current public affairs issues of particular relevance to the Church.

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