

FOREWORD

When I was elected to General Synod, few members could have been more ignorant than I was. Coming from a rather far-flung part of the Diocese in Europe, I had never sat on a diocesan synod and had seldom seen a church newspaper. I did not know exactly what the General Synod was or what it did and above all I did not know what I was supposed to do. Nor, on the whole, could anyone else tell me. General Synod, it seemed, was as remote to most people outside it as it was to me and many other new members appeared at least almost as ignorant.

I spent the whole of my first two years or so finding out all that I did not know - indeed, I continued finding out - and I wasted a lot of my time and that of others asking questions, puzzling over acronyms, trying to make amendments that could not be made and submitting comments too late. Worse, I frequently found myself voting without having fully understood what was happening, why someone was calling for a certain kind of vote, or what the consequences might be. In this I was certainly not alone.

Some kind of booklet seemed needed that gave the answers to at least the most common questions and problems, and which also touched on some of the “hidden agendas” that can of course exist. A small group was formed: two very experienced members in Professor David McClean (Sheffield) and Canon Bob Baker (Norwich), and two new members (1995) in Preb. Kay Garlick (Hereford) and myself (Europe). We also asked for the co-operation of the Synod staff and of all members of Synod in making suggestions for the contents and providing some of the answers, and we are very grateful indeed to all those who did so, especially to David Pite, Malcolm Taylor, David Williams and Sylvia Brantingham at Church House . We are also immensely grateful to the cartoonist Noel Ford for offering to illustrate it for us. We would like to make it clear, however, that this is not an official publication: it has, in Synodspeak, “only the authority of the body that prepared it”.

We hope it will help to enlighten you and speed your Synod career. We also hope that you will find being a member of the General Synod , if often exhausting, sometimes frustrating and occasionally baffling, in the end as worthwhile and rewarding as we have done.

Diana Webster

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ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Church House has a *General Synod Guide*, which gives you practical information about many things. The present booklet is intended as a supplement to it.

We suggest that you read through this *Survival Guide to General Synod* before you go to your first Synod sessions but that you also take it with you, so that you can look things up as they arise.

Words in the text written in **bold** refer to further entries. We have sometimes suggested you refer to *The Church of England Year Book*, especially where more details are needed than can be given here.

TOPICS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Accommodation (London)

A common occurrence after one's election to the General Synod is for a relative or friends in London to ring and offer to put you up during the November sessions. The advantages of accepting are obvious: free accommodation and a hot meal waiting when you arrive back after a day of debates. However, there are disadvantages, too. You will be amazed at how tired you are at the end of the day and chatting may be the last thing you want to do. You will in any event arrive quite late back every day and you may also want to stay on for **fringe meetings**, etc. One advantage for the new member of staying where other members stay is also that you will meet people from other dioceses and make new friends and contacts .



Some of the options in London are:

The Regent Palace Hotel (Piccadilly), The Union Jack Club (Waterloo) and Travel Inn (County Hall Buildings, South Bank): all offer special deals for General Synod members and are within walking distance. *The Regent Palace* has a varied reputation: some always stay there; others find it less than peaceful. Many members stay at *County Hall*, which is a short walk across Westminster Bridge. It has the feel of a tourist hotel, a restaurant with moderate food, and the rooms are large, but there is little space to sit in apart from the bar. *The Union Jack Club* is much the least expensive, with a large cheapish restaurant and an even larger bar. It also has a big lobby with comfortable chairs. The rooms are small but have all you need. An "en suite" is recommended, but during November Synod sessions all may be already booked, owing to the Remembrance Day celebrations. Security is tight.

Caswell House Hotel: basic, reasonable, near Victoria.

Mary Sumner House (Mothers' Union members only): very close, reasonable, lift.

From time to time the Synod Office will circulate details of hotels with which Church House Conference Centre has negotiated discounted rates, but these tend not to be at the *economy* end of the market.

Accommodation (York): Everyone stays in University Colleges on the Campus and meals are provided. See *General Synod Guide (York)*.

Act of Synod: A resolution of Synod proclaimed with especial formality. There are a number, including the **Meissen** and **Porvoo Agreements**, but *the* "Act of Synod" almost always means the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod which set up **Provincial Episcopal Visitors** after the decision to ordain women to the priesthood.

Agenda (pink pages inside the cover): You will receive this before each group of sessions. Pick it out first from all the other papers and read it carefully: it lists the timetable for each day, itemizes the legislative, liturgical and financial work to be done during the sessions, and also lists all the Diocesan and Private Members' Motions to date.. From the Agenda you can work out the material (reports, briefing papers, etc.) you need for each day. Some members write the GS numbers of these on top of each item on the Agenda, *in pencil* because changes are possible, to remind them what to take before coming to the Synod each day. Others also write at the top of each paper the number (in pencil) of the Agenda item for which they are needed. Some members also run through the Agenda marking what is essential to attend, what one should or would like to attend, and what one might skip (useful when trying to take **breaks**). It would be a help to run through the Agenda with other members from your diocese, if possible, before coming to Synod. With your papers there will also be a **Report by the Business Committee**, which will be one of the first things that will be debated.

Timetable of the Agenda: Usually every effort is made to keep to the proposed timetable for major debates so that the press and public who wish to be present are not inconvenienced, but Synod can (and often does) vary the order of business as things progress. Details of any changes are given on a **Notice or Order Paper**. It can sometimes happen, too, that a gap unexpectedly arises and the next **Private Member's Motion** on the list is taken without warning being given on a Notice Paper, so if that motion especially interests you, be prepared.

Amendments:

What they can do: An amendment is a proposal to change the text of a motion before the Synod. (Amendments to legislation and liturgical business have their own special rules; see **revision committees, revision stage**.) An amendment can seek to delete words (or whole paragraphs), or add words (or whole paragraphs), or adjust the order of the wording in some other way. It may be that a particular amendment highlights the one controversial aspect of the business and becomes the focus of the debate. Ill-drafted amendments irritate the Synod, as do *'bus-ticket amendments'* (amendments of no great substance, put in simply to increase the chances that their movers will be called to speak).

How to offer an amendment: To propose an amendment, either write in in advance or hand in its text on a form available at the Information Desk. Your amendment will need to be supported by at least two other members of the Synod in order to be accepted. It is a good idea to have some friends look over the text of even the simplest amendment, to make sure you have used the best wording and identified the right place for the deletion or addition. A member of the staff will also help you. You should give as much notice as possible, as this helps both the Synod staff and members. Some amendments have to be in by a certain time, so watch out for this in the Agenda booklet. The text of amendments is circulated on pale yellow **Notice Papers** and where a number of amendments affect the same motion there is, on a deep yellow **Order Paper** which is circulated before or on the day of the debate, a 'Marshalled List' setting out all the amendments in the order in which they are to be taken.

How they are handled: In most cases, amendments are taken in the order in which they 'strike the text' of the main motion: if the main motion is 'That this Synod likes bacon and eggs for breakfast', an amendment to change 'likes' to 'prefers' would be taken before one to substitute 'continental breakfast' for all words after 'likes'. One amendment (to delete a whole paragraph, say) may preclude others (to adjust the text of that paragraph), so the Chair has discretion in ordering the debate.

What you cannot do: You may not propose an amendment that simply 'negates' the motion (e.g. by inserting 'not' at the crucial point), for the Synod can simply defeat the original motion and secure the same result. An amendment must also be relevant to the subject of the motion and therefore a radical or "*wrecking*" amendment which is designed to produce a substantially different intention might be ruled out of order on this ground. You also cannot normally suggest amendments in the course of a debate if they have not been submitted in writing

and members are often not well disposed to amendments they have not had time to consider.

Archbishops' Council (note the position of the apostrophe!): For details of this and its members, see *The Church of England Year Book*.

Boards (and Councils): You won't be surprised that much of the work of a Synod takes place not on the floor of a debating chamber but in the Boards and Councils which are a key part of Synodical government. All the major Boards, including Education, Mission and Public Affairs and Ministry have places for members elected from the General Synod and you will receive information about **Elections** as they happen. There is no reason at all why new members should not stand for election and if you think you can make a valuable contribution, don't wait to be asked. The major Boards and Councils are also very keen for members to understand what they do and you may be invited to presentations of their work. If you are curious, mystified or eager to get involved, don't hesitate to contact them.

Boards and Councils sometimes produce reports about the general course of their work which are sent to Synod members or are available on request. These cannot be debated, but "hearings" (a kind of **fringe meeting**) are sometimes arranged around them. In addition, many of them arrange **fringe meetings** during Synod weeks to tackle particular issues or canvas the opinions of Synod members. See also **Committees**.

Breaks: In London only lunch is a scheduled break, but tea and coffee are available free all day in the Hoare Memorial Hall. When you feel you need a break - take it. You don't need to miss anything, because debates are relayed through a loudspeaker system and a board displays the number of the item on the Agenda which is being discussed. Be ready to return to the hall to vote, especially if the **division bell** is rung - every vote counts. Sandwiches and biscuits as well as a hot lunch are also available in the Hoare Memorial Hall (you pay for these), which you can eat there or take away (to a fringe meeting perhaps). Tea and coffee are free. Some **fringe meetings** provide food, but they often have to charge very high prices. There is a dispenser for chilled water in the Bishop Partridge Hall in London and on the Concourse in York.

Chairs: A Chair has a very difficult job, so do not be too critical.

Addressing them: The Synod has recently adopted the practice of using the title Chair and addressing them as Mister or Madam Chair. However, you may still hear long-term members using the former Mister/Madam Chairman. In earlier Synods, bishops and archbishops were addressed as 'My Lord Chair' and 'Your

Grace'; the former usage has died out, except on occasions of the utmost formality, but 'Your Grace' can still sometimes be heard.

Chatting them up: A **Notice Paper** circulated at the start of a Group of Sessions tells members who will be chairing which debates. If you particularly want to speak in a debate, it is quite permissible to introduce yourself to the relevant Chair so that he or she might recognise you when you stand to be called - but that does not guarantee anything. See **Speaking**.

Bowing: You are expected to acknowledge the Chair by a bow of the head when leaving or entering the Hall (but don't leave or take a seat during a speech).

Church Commissioners: The Church Commissioners were established in 1948, bringing together two older bodies (Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners) and taking over from them the responsibility of providing financial support to the Church, mainly through pay, pensions and the housing of clergy. The National Institutions Measure ("Turnbull") cut their numbers from 96 to 33 and passed some of their responsibilities to the Archbishops' Council, which also now distributes most of the money generated by the Commissioners. Some of the Commissioners are elected by the three **Houses** of the General Synod.

Church House: is a maze (York is a different kind of maze). Carry your map(s) to start with. The most important (secular) points to locate at once are the **cloakrooms**, the Bishop Partridge Hall (Synod papers, information etc., some tables, trays and pigeonholes marked with the name of your diocese and whether Clergy or Laity, noticeboard, etc)) the Hoare Memorial Hall (tea, coffee and food; tables to sit at, lists of Private Members' Motions), the **toilets**, and the Assembly Hall.

Churchmanship: You are asked to state this on your **Appointments Committee Questionnaire**, which you will be sent after you have been elected. Up to now, you have been given several alternatives to mark. Clergy are no doubt better informed, but some of the laity will never have heard of some of the possibilities. If you don't know what you are, you don't have to mark a box. Some new members leave a blank or put "Church of England". However, when selecting people to go on committees, etc., a balance of "churchmanship" is often wanted, so you may wish to bear this in mind (see **Elections** and **Committees**).

The various groups usually have a **fringe meeting** before or during each group of sessions and you will receive notice of these either in a pre-Synod mailing or in your pigeon-hole or tray. At the beginning of the new Synod,

some new members may be reminded of the “Fresher Fairs” at a University, where they received invitations to join innumerable different clubs. If you have a definite Churchmanship, you will know where you belong; if in doubt, you may find it useful to go to two or three of these to find out where you best fit in. In any event, it is possible for Synod to be a lonely place and to join some group is good advice to start with: you will not only meet people but will also usually be given quite a lot of useful information about topics that are coming up on the Agenda.

Cloakrooms: At Church House there is a main cloakroom in the basement which is often a bit of a scrum. There is also a Ladies Room (turn left on entering by the main entrance) which is much more civilised, with chairs and a table to write at (but no **toilet**). You can leave coats and bags in both, but remember you cannot leave them in the Hall.

Clothes: In London in November and February the central heating in the chamber is temperamental and it can sometimes get very hot. It is sensible to wear layers of clothing if you can. Dress tends to be fairly formal in London and the clergy usually wear dog-collars there.

In York there almost always seems to be a heatwave and dress is very casual and summery. Very few clergy wear dog-collars and you see a lot of t-shirts and some shorts as well, so that you may find yourself arguing with a bishop unawares. Bring something for the rain, too: depending on the college in which you are living, you may be able to walk all the way to the Assembly Hall under cover, but others may have quite a long walk along rainy paths. See also **Speaking**.



Commissions: For a list of these and their members, see *The Church of England Year Book*.

Committees: We all want there to be fewer committees, but actually we would quite like to be members of them, please. There are some rather grand committees which are elected for the lifetime of a Synod (see **Boards, Legislative committee**) but most are set up for a particular purpose, with a run of meetings until the job is done.

Appointing members. The Appointments Committee uses a database of members' special interests and expertise, so if you are interested, do fill in that part of the questionnaire from Church House (see **Churchmanship**). It also publishes advance notice of some of the appointments it expects to be making, and you are free to write in and express an interest in serving. You will not normally be asked to serve on more than one committee at once, and you are under no obligation to serve on any. Every attempt is made to 'balance' committees, so that the members are from different parts of the country, not all female, not all Evangelicals, etc., but real expertise is valued highly.

Expenses. Expenses (travel, accommodation and subsistence) for Committee members can be reclaimed and are paid from central funds (in contrast to expenses for Synod itself which are a diocesan responsibility).

Complaints: Matters that come up during the course of a group of sessions should be reported to the Information Desk or to another member of staff (photos of whom are pinned up in a prominent place during the group of sessions). If they cannot resolve the problem personally, they will point you in the right direction. If you want to put a complaint in writing, either during the sessions or afterwards, please write to the Clerk to the Synod. If the matter is relevant to the work of the Business Committee, it will be brought to their attention.

Confidentiality: Papers are not confidential unless they are marked *Embargoed until (date)*; however, they **are** copyright.

Convocations: The Convocations of the Provinces of Canterbury and York are ancient clerical bodies presided over by the respective Archbishops. Each is made up of an Upper House of Bishops and a Lower House of Clergy. Clergy become members of Synod by being elected as Proctors in Convocation. The Church Assembly, the forerunner of the General Synod, came into being in 1919 and was formed by adding to the Convocations a House of Laity elected by the laity of the dioceses. Most of the legislative powers of the Convocations have now passed to the General Synod, but they still meet occasionally to give clergy

and Bishops the opportunity to discuss matters of particular clerical interest and certain items of business can still be referred to the Convocations as part of the legislative process. (See also **Prolocutor**.)

Dean of the Arches. The most senior ecclesiastical judge, who is an ex officio member of Synod and who convenes the first meeting of the newly-elected House of Laity. (The arches are not a viaduct: the Arches Court of Canterbury traditionally meets at the church of St Mary-le-Bow in London, and the 'bow' bit went into Latin as 'arcibus' and came back into English as 'arches'.)

Division bell: see **Voting**.

Doorkeepers: These help the **tellers** during a division of the Synod. They stand guard over those doors which are not used for the purposes of a division so as to prevent exits and entrances. Like the tellers, they are appointed from amongst the members of the dioceses, which are rotated in alphabetical order. You may therefore find yourself a teller or doorkeeper even at your first group of sessions (but see **Tellers**).

Elections: Especially at the start of a new Synod, but also throughout its life, elections are held for various **Boards** and some other bodies. A new member need not feel inhibited from standing for election: they are not the preserve of 'old hands'. That statement may need a little qualification: a new member is most unlikely to be elected immediately to the Archbishops' Council, unless he or she is already well-known in other ways, and there are other 'senior' committees (e.g. Appointments and Business) where Synod experience is usually seen as essential. Other vacancies, on the Boards or the Church Commissioners, may depend more on specialist expertise. The voting papers will contain the names of proposers and seconders and a **mini-C.V.** setting out the candidates' relevant experience. So it is important to be able to show that you have a real contribution to make and not just that you are interested in the subject-matter. The Synod does not take kindly to those who stand for every vacancy that comes along. If you can persuade a better-known member to sign your nomination paper, well and good. See also **below**.

Electing members of Boards and Committees: Elections to **Boards**, Councils and some Committees take place shortly after the first group of sessions or early in the life of a new Synod. Many/most/all of the candidates may be unknown to you, so the advice under **Voting for Chair of Laity** applies. In addition, members who know they are going to stand for election often try and speak during the first sessions, so this may give you a chance to see who they are. Take your **List of Members** with you to the debates, so that you can look up the names of the speakers (their Synod number will be displayed on a special board

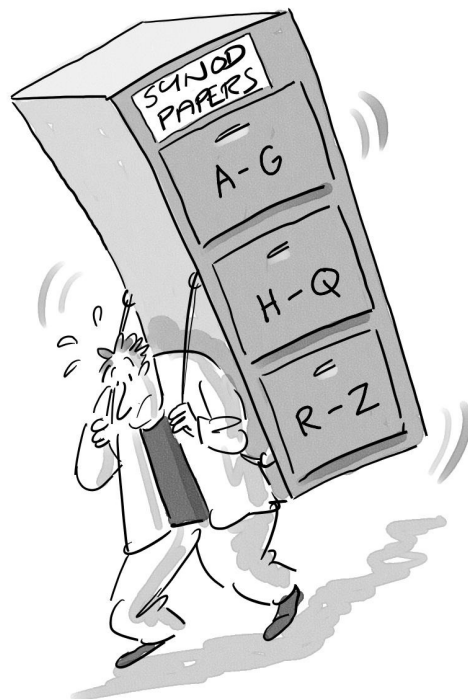
both inside and outside the chamber). Members have been known to sit with torn-out pages of “Who’s Who” from the *Church of England Year Book* so that they can look up more than the name and diocese. Voting is by **STV**.

It is wisest not to vote for those you do not know at all unless they seem to have a special expertise: you may later find you regret having voted for someone. See also **Mini-c.v.**

Electronic voting: At the time of going to press, we know that this will be used in future but not when and how. You will be given further information later.

Expenses: See *General Synod Guide*. Remember to keep your receipts.

Filing papers: Binders for your Synod papers can be bought from the Information Desk. The **List of Members** and other papers can also be held in the back by using a postman’s elastic band round the spine of the file and the centre pages of the list. However, these binders are not always suitable for some of the papers or for a preliminary filing of papers before a Synod. Members have found ingenious free filing systems: one recommends plastic vegetable trays from supermarkets, another uses Toner boxes. One thing is certain - you will certainly need something.



Final Approval: The last stage of consideration of legislation and liturgical; business. There are some special rules, notably that nobody may move the

closure, so the debate can in theory go on as long as members wish to speak (but they can only speak once). The Chair usually copes by imposing draconian and finally absurd time-limits on speeches: 'I limit all remaining speeches to 30 seconds' usually gives the necessary signal.

First consideration. The first stage of legislation, equivalent to a 'second reading' of a parliamentary Bill. Until 1998, the Synod called it 'general approval', but that was found to be misleading. A 'first consideration' debate is meant to be about the general principles of the proposed legislation, not small details: they can be handled in the **Revision committee**. Speakers in a 'first consideration' debate are noted by those who appoint revision committee members, for the aim is to get a revision committee representative of the whole Synod in its likely views on the draft. If the proposals are thought to be uncontroversial and technical, the 'first consideration' debate may not happen. It will then be 'deemed' to have happened, without actual debate, unless members ask for a real debate.

Flying bishops: See **Provincial Episcopal Visitors**.

Fringe meetings: Some weeks before Synod you will start receiving notices of fringe meetings that will take place in lunch breaks, dinner breaks (York) or after the end of sessions on most days of Synod. You have to be a bit choosy about these, because obviously there are clashes, so wait for as many as possible to come in before you decide. Some people make a deliberate decision to avoid fringe meetings and have proper time to themselves or to talk to members; others want to get as much information as possible about the various issues. Many notices contain reply slips: do fill these in and return them by the deadline, especially if there is food provided. In York, if you don't tell the organiser by the given deadline, you will not get a meal at the meeting. A list of the fringe meetings being held each day to be found near the Information Desk. For how to book a room for a meeting, see the *General Synod Guide*.

Galleries: There are two galleries - the Public Gallery and the Press Gallery. Members looking for a change of scene or wishing to sit with their visitors often go to the Public Gallery for a while, but remember you can't speak or vote from there or applaud a speech, as it is for listeners only, so if there is any chance you may wish to add some gems to the discussion, stay in the main Hall. Part of the Public Gallery is reserved for Visitors and members should not sit in these places. See also the *General Synod Guide*.

The Press Gallery tends to be empty for uncontroversial debates and full, plus photographers and TV cameras, when there is a debate on a subject like...(well, you can imagine!). See also **Press**.

Houses: The General Synod comprises three Houses: Bishops, Clergy and Laity. All three have their own **Standing Orders**, which you can find at the back of the Standing Orders book.

The House of Bishops is made up of the Archbishops and 42 Diocesan Bishops plus 8 Suffragan Bishops who are elected from each of the two Provinces. It has its own separate meetings during the year (reported only in a very brief summary) and some items of business can only come before the Synod in a form that has been approved by the House. The special provisions and rights relating to the House of Bishops are designed to reflect the fact that the Church of England is “episcopally led and synodically governed”.

The House of Clergy is made up of the Proctors in **Convocation**. The two **prolocutors** elected by the clergy of each Convocation are in effect the joint Chairs of the House of Clergy.

The House of Laity: Unlike the other two Houses, there is no provincial dimension to the House of Laity, which is made up of the elected lay members from each diocese.

Meetings of the Houses: Apart from the House of Bishops, the Houses seldom meet separately. The House of Laity has to meet to elect its officers (see **Voting for Chair of Laity**), but the House of Clergy gets them automatically from elections within the two Convocations. There are times when laity or clergy may wish to debate items alone, but the prevailing view is that it best for bishops, clergy and laity to hear one another.

Legislation: Legislation (either a draft Measure, which needs parliamentary approval, or a canon which needs only royal approval), goes through a number of stages, **First consideration, Revision committee, Revision stage, and Final approval.**

When legislative business is reached, especially in London, there tends to be an exodus to the coffee room. Seeing one of the Synod's main functions is to act as the Church's legislature, this can be seen as a Bad Thing. However, it has to be admitted that legislation is not easy to read, and perhaps not all members try very hard. If the legislation is about, say, women bishops, then it is amazing how readable it becomes. Since you will have to vote, however, we suggest that if you need help in understanding what is involved you turn where possible to a legal expert in your diocese.

Legislative Committee: In one sense a terribly 'senior' committee, which acts for the Synod in its dealings with Parliament. That sometimes becomes reality when a draft Measure runs into trouble and the committee is involved in a 'Conference' with the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament and has to decide how to meet the objections being raised. For most of its existence, however, the Legislative Committee merely approves the draft text of a paper giving a detailed explanation and analysis of a draft Measure. That paper is spoken to before the Ecclesiastical Committee by Synod witnesses (perhaps two members who had dealt with the draft Measure in Synod, and the Synod's legal staff) but not the Legislative Committee as such. So: a very detailed legal drafting job with occasional ventures into high politics of Church and State.

List of Members: You will receive this with your papers before your first Synod. It is very useful, as it gives the members' Synod numbers and their dioceses, so that you can check speakers' names against the number on the display board. However, it lists members under the name of their diocese, so you will have to try and remember that if you want to look them up again afterwards. The list is updated from time to time. You can also look them up in *The Church of England Year Book*.

Liturgy: The Liturgical Commission originates most liturgical business, although the House of Bishops considers this first before introducing it to the Synod. If the Synod is broadly happy with what is proposed, the draft is referred back to a **Revision Committee**. The full Synod then has a look at the revised text and it may be (and often is) referred back to the committee for further revision. When this revision process is complete, it must be sent to the **House of Bishops** for their consideration before returning to Synod for the **Final Approval** stage. Provisions relating to the services or ceremonies of the Church of England can only be returned for Final Approval in a form approved by the House of Bishops. In addition, the House of Laity or one of the Convocations can claim a "special reference" (in essence a separate debate) on the matter. Liturgical business requires a special majority at the Final Approval stage (see Standing Order 35).

Maiden speeches: The general advice to new members is not to try and speak during your first Synod sessions but to wait until you have grasped the flavour of Synod and what the customs and practices are. Another reason for saving your fire is that people making their maiden speeches are often called. Since you may frequently be unsuccessful in trying to speak at other times, it is sensible not to waste your maiden speech on something relatively unimportant. However, if your particular expertise comes up during the first session, forget all that is said above - but do take advice on your speech from experienced members first so as to avoid the usual pitfalls (see **Speaking**), and remember to cross the

“maiden speech” box on the Request to Speak form. It is very unusual for the Chair and the Synod not to accord the maiden speaker a lot of leeway and goodwill - everyone has been in that position. Avoid a joke about “maidens”, though: Synod will have heard too many. If you decide not to make your Maiden Speech after all (or any speech), don’t stand, as the Chair can only call members who are standing. See also **Writing in**.

Meetings: Many dioceses have a pre-Synod meeting (and all are recommended to do so), so that members can talk over the issues that are going to come up, decide if the diocese as a whole has a particular interest in the debate, and who, if anyone, might want to speak. Sometimes members are briefed at the meetings by others from the diocese who have a special knowledge of the issues: the better informed members are before Synod, the more effective the debates and decisions can be. See also **Fringe meetings**.

Messages: See *General Synod Guide*.

Microphones:

London: The microphones are between every other seat, so wherever you sit you will be near one. They are fairly multi-directional and will pick up your voice, providing you remember to switch them on - it is quite easy to forget if you have spent the last half-hour bobbing up and down without being called and then suddenly hear your name. Remember, too, not to hold your paper or notes between you and the microphone or you may be disconcerted to hear loud cries of “Can’t hear!” Remember, too, to switch them off after you have spoken - unless you want the whole Synod to hear that unwise comment as you sit down.

York: There are only two microphones (on podiums on either side of the floor of the Hall). The Chair calls the name of two speakers: the first goes to the microphone, the second stands or sits nearby, waiting a turn to speak.

In either place you just have to speak naturally, as there is a sound engineer controlling the volume when necessary. See also *General Synod Guide*.

Mini-c.v. Members standing for election are invited to supply a 100-word entry, which is then printed in the list of those up for election. This is usually a c.v., but some also state why or how they think they can be of service. To understand the c.v., you may need to consult the list of acronyms. Some members (often unwisely) do not bother to give their c.v. - they are probably very well known to the former members but may not be to you. If so, you may wish to look them up in the *Church of England Year Book*. If you are standing yourself, make sure that your c.v. does not contain irrelevant information (your

eight children or your experience as an Arctic explorer may or may not be relevant). If you include acronyms, make sure they are either well-known to all, or are listed in this booklet or in the *Church of England Year Book*.

Mobile phones: Needless to say, do not have them on while attending Synod - they annoy everyone and will embarrass you too as 500 pairs of eyes turn accusingly in your direction.

Motions: Apart from the official ones, there are two main ways of getting a Motion onto the Synod Agenda: Diocesan Synod Motions and Private Members' Motions.

Diocesan Synod Motions: As the name says, these are motions which have been approved by a Diocesan Synod. These **must** be put on the Synod Agenda at some time, but that time can be very far away, as there are only one or two debated during a session and they are taken in order of the date submitted. You will find the motions and the dates at the end of your Synod Agenda paper, so you can check the movement up the list. Note that Diocesan Motions are carried over to the next quinquennium.

Private Members' Motions: These are dealt with by a different system and some are never debated at all. They first appear as lists (on the dais in the Hoare Memorial Hall at Church House; on a special table on the ground floor of the Assembly Hall in York). Members can sign their names and diocese under these and the number of signatures determines (a) if the motion will be debated at all (100 signatures are needed reasonably soon) and (b) the priority which will be given to the motion. If therefore a motion comes up which many members think should be debated, it may appear on the Agenda quite quickly. However, there is sometimes "tactical signing": members may want a motion debated because they think it will be defeated and the matter cannot then be raised again for the lifetime of that Synod; or they may not want a debate on another motion that is getting close to the top and so will try and raise the numbers of signatures on a more "acceptable" motion so that it will get there first. Note that Private Members' Motions do not carry over to the next quinquennium.

Notice papers: They are always yellow and numbered. The first few come before Synod starts, the rest will appear as if by magic on the seats of the chamber for members to pick up as they sit down. As some might apply to the next debate, it's worth getting to your seat a little early to check them. Notice papers contain vital information and amendments that will come up in the debates. Keep them together in the right order (see **Synod papers**). If you find you have managed to lose Notice Paper 13 between Piccadilly and Westminster, don't worry - there are always spare copies (and indeed of other papers) near the information desk.

Order Papers: These are printed on deep yellow paper and consolidate the material contained in the Agenda. All items of business for consideration thus appear in order on one sheet of paper instead of being scattered around on several Notice Papers. Normally there is one separate Order Paper for each sitting.

Passes:

Photographs: If you have not sent one in advance, on your first day at Synod you will need to get your photograph taken by the staff. As far as possible, make sure the photo is your usual appearance, e.g. if you usually wear glasses, keep them on. Besides being on your pass, this photo will also be used by the various Chairs and officials to help them identify you when calling speakers (see **Speaking**), so if your photo is clean-shaven and you now have a beard or were a blonde in your photo and are now a brunette, don't blame them if they fail to identify you.

Wearing passes: You can choose to have the card on a metal chain round your neck or as a badge with a clip. You must wear them at all times in Church House or during the York Synod, as security is very tight.

Pigeon-holes (See *General Synod Guide*)

Points of Order: You can interrupt a debate *between speeches* by making a point of order. This most often happens when someone wants to move one of the Special Procedural Motions, which amongst other things enable members to bring a debate to a close, to move on to the next business, or even to adjourn or suspend the whole Synod. (See *Standing Orders* 29-34).

Closure: The Point of Order most frequently used is the Closure - "that the question be now put". The Chair can either reject it, in which case the mover can try again later, or put it to the Synod to decide whether it wants the debate to be continued. You may not move this or any other point of order while someone is speaking, so if you want to wind up a debate, you will have to jump in quickly at the end of a speech and call out "Point of Order!" If the Chair is prepared to hear your point of order (they usually are), remember to give your name, number and diocese before making your point. Recognizing exactly when the Synod might be ready to end a debate needs quite a lot of Synod expertise, however, and some members become well-known for it. The Chair is sometimes quite grateful for a motion for closure and if so will look expectantly towards these members.

This procedure is also the one to follow if you wish to ask for a vote to be taken in a particular way (see **Voting by Houses**).

Passing to Next Business: Another Point of Order occasionally moved is that “the Synod do pass to next business” and, if so, the Chair may permit a short debate to give the mover of the procedural motion an opportunity to state the reasons for doing so and to allow the mover of the main matter under consideration to express their opinion. A request to “pass to next business” may also be a tactical move, since if Synod does so, the matter under consideration cannot come up again in the life of the Synod.

Point of information: There is no such thing as “a point of information” in the Standing Orders, but if someone misrepresents you, it is possible to make a point of personal explanation. See *Standing Order 18*.

Press: During debates the Press are seated in the Press **Gallery**. They come to life when debates look as though they might be controversial and spend quieter moments looking for that handy snap of someone yawning or dozing off - so be on your guard. In London, the Platform and the place where the main speakers stand/sit is almost directly opposite the Press Gallery and you may sometimes find that a member (or even a whole group) who wishes to attract a press photograph for some reason (e.g. wanting to be shown publicly as abstaining from some motion) may go and sit near the Platform.

Most parts of Church House are off limits to the press, although they can have tea or coffee and eat in the Hoare Memorial Hall. In York the concourse is similarly out of bounds, although you will have plenty of opportunity to meet them (should you wish) in the restaurants and bars.

Press reports: There is a notice board (in the Hoare Memorial Hall in London and in the entrance hall in York) where cuttings of press coverage of Synod are posted up for members to read. It is sometimes hard to recognize yesterday’s debate as interpreted by the papers. It is worth reading the cuttings, however (perhaps especially the misleading ones), as this is probably all the information that people back home have to go on and might explain some of the questions and misapprehensions that greet you when you return to your diocese.

Provincial Episcopal Visitors (PEV): Following **the Act of Synod**, these are the bishops charged with the pastoral care of parishes which do not accept the ministry of women priests. They are sometimes called “Flying bishops”.

Questions: Question-time is a very valuable part of the Synod's

business and it is one of the few ways that a subject can be raised that is not on the Agenda. Visitors (especially from the more hierarchical churches) are amazed to see archbishops and bishops taken to task and asked to explain this or that. When submitting a question, you must ask for fact, not opinion: for instance, you may not ask whether the bishops support vegetarianism, but you could ask whether the House of Bishops or the Community and Public Affairs Council has considered the issue recently. Two or three 'Supplementary questions' are allowed (with the member who asked the original question having first chance) and can of course be used to good effect, as the answers are then off the cuff, whereas the original question will have had a prepared answer. However, a supplementary question must be relevant to the original question and not raise a new topic. An answer that the bishops had not considered vegetarianism would not be a valid 'peg' for a question on pig-farming methods. Questions must be in a week or so before the Synod meets; look carefully at the pink-paged Agenda paper for the deadline, which is strictly adhered to. Humour is allowed: question-time can sometimes be disappointingly dull.

Prolocutor: Usually pronounced “pro-low-cute-er”. There are two: one for the Province of York and one for the Province of Canterbury. They are ancient offices and the Prolocutors still have some responsibilities outside the routine of Synod business. Their main function in the General Synod, however, is to act as joint Chairs of the House of Clergy. The prolocutors have their own seats in the Hall (to the right of the Chair as you face the platform) together with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity. They are elected at the beginning of each new Synod in separate meetings of the **Convocations** and are *ex officio* members of the **Archbishops’ Council**.

Reading matter: More than you probably expect (it has once weighed in at 4 ½ kilos). However, it is of course vital that everyone has access to all the material if debates are to be informed and productive. You will need to put aside some time before Synod to read as much as you can and you will certainly need to put it into order. Everyone develops their own strategy for this (some members make quite elaborate charts and time-tables) but probably the most important thing to remember is that you are not, as you suppose, the only person who is guiltily reading reports on the train to London, or sitting up in bed in your hotel reading the papers for tomorrow’s debate. (See also **Synod papers, Filing papers, Confidentiality** and **Agenda**.)



Can I leave anything out? The short answer is you may find you have to. One tip is to sort your papers into four piles when you receive your mailings: 1. Anything which is not coming up at the next Synod (there are sometimes Reports of this kind in with the rest). 2. What you *must* read. 3. What you should or want to read. 4. What does not fall into any of the previous categories. You obviously leave (1) for now and read the rest in order, but be careful with (4) and consult your **Agenda** - you may find you are going to have to vote on something which at first sight seems to have little relevance to you or your diocese.

What papers should I take to Synod? Apart from the **Agenda** and any **Notice Papers** you have received, this is hard to answer. You can leave behind Background Papers unless you wish to comment on them and, in July, you can probably leave behind the Reports from the various Boards and Committees unless they come into your field of expertise or interests, or you wish to raise a point. You can also sometimes leave behind a report for a main debate, although someone may refer to it. Do not, however, leave behind any paper (such as a Measure or piece of liturgy) in which the words might be amended - you will need to read them closely at the time. It is also useful to have the General Synod's **List of Members** so that you can look up the name of a speaker by checking their Synod number shown on the display board. **Standing Orders** can also be important, especially later when you are more familiar with the procedures and may wish to make a Point of Order. Make sure you also have something with you with which to write notes, comments, voting results or if

you have a sudden urge to speak and want to jot down an idea. You can buy writing paper and envelopes from the Information Desk, too. If you find when you are at Synod that you have left some vital paper or report behind, you can probably get another copy from the Information Desk (but this time you may have to pay).

Refreshments: See **Breaks**.

Reporting back to dioceses: Every diocese should have its own system of reporting back, and it is important to find effective ways of passing on information about Synod debates and decisions to your diocese, deaneries and parishes and, just as important, to find ways of stimulating discussion on current topics and to listen to views expressed. The GS publication *Getting the Message* should be helpful here. Members of General Synod are not elected as delegates and it is understood that they will vote according to their conscience, but it is vital that they are aware of the particular concerns of their own diocese.

After every group of sessions, the Clerk to the Synod writes to the dioceses outlining the business which has been transacted by the Synod. There is also an A5 sheet, printed on both sides in miniscule writing, which gives the bald facts, voting numbers etc. These can be ordered (you will find the details amongst other leaflets you receive) for a small sum per copy and can be handed out to members of your diocese if you wish. See also the Church of England's Website (www.cofe.anglican.org)

Report of Proceedings. Your every word in Synod is taken down and may be used, well, not in evidence but by the historian of church affairs.

The Report of Proceedings is Synod's 'Hansard'. It is an invaluable source of reference if you need to check what was actually said when X was debated, and who said it. Some dioceses buy it for their members, but that is at the discretion of each diocese. Some members have to buy their own copies; it is a false economy to do without it, and if you cannot afford £30 or so a year, take it up with your diocese and ask them to reconsider their policy.

Reports: The Synod spends much of its time considering 'reports', often on a proposal to **Take Note** of them. They may be simply informative or may contain proposals for action. In every case, until the Synod (or sometimes the House of Bishops) approves or endorses them in some way they 'have only the authority of the body which prepared them' (like this booklet). You may get angry letters protesting that 'the Church is going to do (or not do) X' when all that has happened is that the idea has been floated in some report or other. Be watchful! Titles of reports do not always give a clue as to their subject matter and major

reports tend to be known by the name of the Chair of the group that prepared them (see **Bridge, Turnbull, Hind**).

Report by the Business Committee: This is an explanation to the Synod of how the Business Committee arrived at that particular Agenda; the debate gives an opportunity for members to comment on their plans. Sometimes members use this opportunity to comment not only on what is on the Agenda but what is not and they wish had been or then to keep a particular issue in the forefront. A few hobby horses can be ridden this way.



Revision committee: Draft legislation and draft services, once they have had their **First Consideration** in the Synod, are sent to a Revision Committee of perhaps 15 members. Some of these are the **Steering Committee** 'in charge' of the business, but they are always out-numbered by the other members. The proposals are gone through line by line, and amended as the Committee thinks fit. Every member of Synod, as well as those outside it, can write in to suggest amendments. In legislation, this does not mean that you need actually find a form of words to express what you want to say in the proper legal form: it is enough to raise the issue clearly, saying why you think a change is needed and what sort of change it should be. If the Committee agrees with you, it will get the Synod's draftsman to put it in proper language. In liturgy, you may be more likely to propose actual words, but again more general comments ("Make this prayer shorter" or "Could we not have a reference to [whatever] here?") are welcome because they give the Committee a sense of the balance of opinion in the Synod.

Anyone who sends in amendments can receive the papers of the Committee to track what it is doing and may also attend to speak to the relevant amendments. Most accept the offer of the papers; only a

minority attend in person. See also **Writing in.**

Revision stage: After legislation or liturgical business has been revised in a **Revision Committee**, it comes back to the Synod for a Revision Stage. This means that the full Synod can check, and if need be reverse, the decisions of the small Revision Committee. If it is legislation, actual amendments are proposed (and the Synod staff will help with the drafting, given time). If it is liturgy, the Synod 'recommits' some part of a draft service for the revision committee to look at again, taking into account the views expressed; experience has taught the Synod that voting on rival texts in full Synod was generally not a good idea. What new members (and some old members) find confusing is the 'forty members' rule. The danger with Revision Stages is that a great deal of time can be wasted by one or two members proposing amendments which have very little support. The solution is that there are two 5-minute speeches, one proposing the amendment and one from the **Steering Committee** either accepting it or (more usually) opposing it. At that point the Chair asks if 40 members want the amendment to be further considered; if 40 or more stand, the debate continues and the amendment is duly voted upon; if 39 or fewer stand, the amendment 'lapses' (i.e. is lost for lack of support.)

Seating:

Allocated places: In both London and York the first two rows are customarily occupied by Bishops and there is also a special row for the Ecumenical Representatives. There are also special seats for the Archbishops and their staff on the left of the Chair and for the **Prolocutors** and Chair and Vice-Chair of Laity on the right, whether on the platform (London) or on the floor of the Hall (York). The Officers of the Synod sit immediately to the left and right of the platform (London) or behind the Chair (York) . Apart from that, you can sit where you like. See also **Galleries.**

Reserving seats: In theory, all other seats than those reserved are free for anyone to sit in them and may not be "kept" for any member. In practice, however, some senior members may have got used to sitting in the same place with friends and also, when looking for people who have asked to speak, Chairs may have become accustomed to finding senior members in a certain spot.



Where to sit at the first sessions: At the start, or throughout, you may like to sit with members of your diocese or other friends you already know. It can be quite useful, though, especially at the first Synod in Church House, to sit elsewhere in some of the debates, get there a little before the start and sit next to someone you don't know. In this way you can get to meet more people outside your diocese. It is also good to sit next to an experienced member at some point, whether from your diocese or not, who will be able to explain any points that mystify you. *See also* **Microphones** and **Speaking**.

Speaking: Don't feel guilty if you never speak: you are also doing your job if you read the Synod material, follow the debate attentively and vote accordingly. During Synod, there are always more would-be speakers than get the chance, anyway. However, if you feel you can make a real contribution to the debate, you should certainly try; and if you do...

Request to Speak forms: It is best to submit a Request to Speak form (obtainable from the Information Desk), as this helps the Chair to bring in relevant contributions at the right moment. On it, you should fill in the number of the slot in the **Agenda** or of the **Amendment** on which you wish to speak; your name, number and diocese; whether you are for or against the motion; whether this is your **Maiden Speech**; any relevant expertise you may have on the subject; and your reasons for wishing to speak. It is the latter which will decide whether you are called or not, so make your reason as convincing (and brief) as possible. However, a point may arise during the debate and people may speak off the cuff, so if you feel you have something important to say, don't worry if you haven't filled in a form but leap to your feet (see *Attempting to speak* below).

Identifying speakers: At some point, you may notice the Chair and the Synod officers on the platform consulting a very large book of **photographs** and

peering around the Hall to identify potential speakers. This is not easy for them, especially if they are sitting at the sides of the Hall or at the back. If you wish to speak, try and sit somewhere more central and reasonably far forward. This is even more essential in York, where the lighting makes it almost impossible for the Chair and Officers to see members unless they are “in the stalls” or in the central front rows of the “dress circle”. Particularly at the beginning of a new Synod, the Chair and his entourage may understandably fail to identify your photograph and will not be able to call you by name but will then fall back on something like “the lady over there in the blue blouse”. It therefore makes it easier for the Chair to pick you out if you are wearing something more outstanding than a dark suit, for otherwise the call for “the gentleman in grey” may find someone else starting in on his speech instead of you. It might help if you could put something like “I shall be wearing a yellow sweater” on your **Request to Speak** form, though the laity (especially the women) have an advantage here.

Frequent speakers: The Chairs also have a list in front of them of those who have already been called to speak in previous debates. Chairs are discouraged from calling members to speak who have already done so several times during the sessions, so if there is an item on which you particularly wish to speak, it is wise not to try and make more than one speech (if that) before your item comes up. If there are a small number of members from your diocese, remember that you are less likely to be called if someone from it has already spoken in the debate.

Attempting to speak: Preparing a speech and then not getting the chance to make it is one of the most frustrating parts of Synodical life, but every member knows the feeling. When the Chair opens the floor to speakers, you should immediately jump to your feet (you can applaud the previous speaker when standing). The Chair will probably have decided, from reading the Requests to Speak, on the first few speakers and will call out a name. If it’s not yours, sit down. After the speaker has finished, you jump up again. You may spend the whole debate like a jack/jill-in-the-box and never be called - many do. Regard it as a little exercise in a sedentary procedure. See also *Identifying speakers* above.



When called to speak: In London, press the button of your **microphone**; in York make your way to it. Before you begin your speech, remember to say your name, diocese and number, e.g. “(Adam) Aardvaark, Barchester, 621”. This is so that your number can be noted on the display board and members, the press and visitors in the **Gallery** can know who you are . It is surprising how often one forgets and it is wise to write details at the top of your speech as a reminder. If you do forget, you will hear loud cries of “Name!” - one of the few times that you hear loud cries in Synod. Follow this by addressing the Chair: “Mr/Madam Chair” and then start straight into your speech.

Addressing the Chair: Speeches should be addressed to the Chair, which is great if you’re nervous - you are only talking to one person and you can ignore everyone else.

Advice on speaking: However used you may be to addressing crowds, Synod is something else again. Most people are extremely nervous, even if it is not their maiden speech, and many do not sleep well the night before they are going to try to speak. The Standing Orders give some advice about speaking, rather like that in the radio panel game *Just a Minute*, about avoiding “tedious repetition”, etc. (See *Standing Order 17*). Take this advice to heart. Brevity and keeping to the point are appreciated. Personal anecdote can be very effective (and affective) if truly relevant. A combative, confrontational style may be acceptable in Parliament, but it is counter-productive in Synod. It is also well to remember that General Synod is richly blessed with a great deal of expertise on a very wide variety of subjects.

Timing: Timing is important. If you are very lucky, you might get 5 minutes, but don't assume it. A more likely time is 3 minutes, or sometimes only 2 minutes in a debate where many want to speak. You may well have an internal clock timed to a 6 -10 minute sermon, for instance. If so, switch it off. Few speeches make as little impact as one which has to be cut short in mid-flow by the Chair's red light (or bell) or one where you have to speak so fast no-one can follow your argument. If you have prepared a 5-minute speech beforehand, it is a good tip to work out in advance where you might be able to cut it, especially *towards the end*, allowing for a time limit of either 3 or even 2 minutes, so that if you see the Chair's warning yellow light come on (1 minute left), you are prepared to start shortening it. That way you will at least get in your main points and your punch line.

Reading speeches: The Standing Orders say a speech must not be simply read aloud, yet this is frequently what happens. Although Synod tolerates speeches that are ready-prepared and written out in full, members very much appreciate ones given off the cuff and which have been triggered by a previous speaker - a debate which consists of little but set speeches unrelated to each other can be unsatisfactory as well as very boring indeed. Notes are a better way. As you wait for your turn to speak, you may be so concentrating on what you want to say that you miss what other speakers have said. Try very hard to listen: it may stop you repeating something and may allow you to make a new point.

Jokes: Synod members also appreciate a light touch where appropriate. They especially enjoy spontaneous wit from those with that particular gift. However, Synod equally appreciates the serious and committed speaker, so do not try to drag in a joke at all costs if that is not your forte.

Standing Orders: The set of rules - over 130 of them - by which Synod operates. They cover such things as the quorum, procedures for debate, and rules about handling amendments as well as special procedures for particular pieces of Synod business. You will receive a set of Standing Orders (in loose-leaf form so that they can easily be updated) with your first Synod papers. You *do* need to have a look at them (especially *Standing Orders 7-37*), but you *don't* need to remember every one. It is a good idea to go over them again after your first Synod sessions, when they will make a lot more sense. The rules have recently been updated and are regularly reviewed by the Standing Orders Committee, which is always looking for ways to make the Synod work better. If you wish to make a **Point of Order** during the debate, try to quote the number of the relevant Standing Order if you can.

Steering committee. A small group of members put 'in charge' of

legislative or liturgical business. They usually have, or soon acquire, expertise in the matter dealt with and in the procedures the Synod uses to handle such business. So this is not often a new member's activity.

STV (Single transferable vote). The voting system that secured your election to the Synod, so it must be a good one. It is used for a number of internal Synod elections too. The important thing to remember is that you have only one vote, which goes to your first choice (but may be transferred in whole or part to candidates you place second, third, etc. if your first choice is elected or eliminated). If 20 candidates stand for 7 places on a committee, you may number them in order of preference down to number 20 (and if you are anxious that at all costs your vote should not go to X, that is what to do, numbering X as 20). But initially only your number 1 gets your support. So what you must NOT do is select the seven you would like to see elected and number them 1 to 7 in the alphabetical order they appear on the voting form, as that would count as a vote for the Revd A. Aardvaark (or whoever came first) and by stopping at number 7, you might find that your vote did not really count in the end if the final contest was between candidates you had not bothered to number.

Suggestions: If you have any suggestions to make about the running of the Synod, however minor, make them to the staff at the Information Desk. If they can't deal with the matter personally, they will pass it on to someone who can. Alternatively, you can write to the Clerk of the Synod, particularly if it is a suggestion which the Business Committee may want to consider.

Synod papers. There are a lot of them. You will need to order them in some way so that you can find what you need during the groups of sessions. It is probably best to follow the order of entries in the pink-paged Agenda paper, inserting yellow Notice Papers they appear immediately after the Agenda. Papers with a GS number (GS 1300, GS1301) are for consideration in the Synod; 'GS Misc' papers are background papers (sometimes relating to business on the Agenda, sometimes on other topics). Legislative and liturgical business has a numbering system that uses letters as well: GS 1400 might be the original proposal, and at later stages revised versions will appear as GS1400A, 1400B, etc. An explanatory report would be GS1400X, and reports of revision committees GS 1400Y, etc.

What should I keep afterwards? It is best to keep everything in the period between one group of Sessions and the next, for you may need the material (such as the Agenda) to report to local Synods or for your own reference. After that, you will have to be selective (unless you have a very large empty house). You will probably want to keep the major reports, which build up over time into a very useful library, and papers relating to your special interests. The **Report of**

Proceedings replaces much of the ephemeral material. Your diocesan office may well keep a full set of all Synod papers, which is a blessing when you have thrown away the one report you should have kept. See also **Reading matter, Filing papers, Agenda.**

Take note: As in “*X to move ‘That the Synod do take note of this Report’*”. Often Reports from Commissions, Boards, Working Parties, etc. will be presented to Synod under a “Take Note” motion. This provides an opportunity for a general debate on the subject of the report without committing the Synod to any immediate action - often reports debated in this way will be sent to dioceses and deaneries for further consideration before returning (if ever) to Synod. The term, however, has misled many people - press, public and new members alike. The fact that the Synod agrees to “take note” of a **Report** does *not* mean that the Report has been approved by the majority of the members of General Synod. It may indeed mean that it was enthusiastically received, but it may also mean little more than “we don’t agree with much or most of this Report but wish the matter to be considered further.” The point is that if General Synod has *voted against* “taking note” of a Report then the matter cannot be further dealt with in the lifetime of that Synod, so the whole subject may be put on hold for several years. To avoid this - or simply out of courtesy and consideration for those who may have spent years in its preparation - a Synod may vote to “take note” of a Report without actually agreeing to much of its contents. Very occasionally Synod may wish for the report not to be considered any further and will refuse to “take note”, but this is rare. The misunderstanding of the term is not helped by the fact that some Reports are printed in an impressive glossy book format which gives the outward impression of an official “Synod approved” publication, despite the written disclaimer inside or on the cover.

Tellers: The tellers stand at the exits, two to an exit, and take a count of the votes at certain times (see **Voting**). The tellers and **doorkeepers** are appointed from amongst the members of the dioceses, which are rotated in alphabetical order, so it is possible for you to find yourself a teller at your first Synod session. Don’t worry, you will be told what to do and where to go at the time and it is not difficult. However, it does mean that you have to be available at any time of the day when it’s your diocese’s turn. Since there can be unexpected calls for a vote of this kind, be on the look-out for the Division Bell (see **Voting**) if you take a break.

Toilets: In Church House there are ones for men and women near the basement cloakroom and outside the Hoare Memorial Hall. There are also others, less easily found. Toilet facilities for the disabled are located in the basement and on the First and Third floors.

Vicar-General: The Vicars-General of Canterbury and York are *ex officio* members of Synod. They are neither vicars nor generals, but senior ecclesiastical lawyers: away from the church context, one is a distinguished specialist in planning law, the other a Circuit Judge. It is in their courts that the formal election of a diocesan bishop by the Chapter of the cathedral of his new diocese is 'confirmed'. The vicars-general's role is not, however, merely ceremonial: they spend much time on the general legal work of the Church at national level.



Visitors: See *General Synod Guide*.

Voting: Most items of Synod business conclude with a vote. This is often just a show of hands by the whole Synod, but sometimes a vote by the three separate **Houses** or an accurate count of the whole Synod is needed (e.g. with Legislation destined for Parliament or for the Final Vote on a piece of Liturgy). From time to time, an accurate count is also taken because it is not absolutely clear from the show of hands where the majority lies. The Chair may (or, if 25 members of Synod request, must) require “a count of the whole Synod”, “a division of the whole Synod” or “a division by Houses” even when they are not mandatory. This usually happens by a member asking, as a **Point of Order**, whether the Chair will order one of these alternatives. The Chair will then ask if 25 members are ready to stand to show their support. Some items of business require special majorities - the Chair will explain in advance about these. Note that only those *sitting down* can vote.

Count of the whole Synod: The Chair does not have to agree unless 25 members stand to support the request (see above). The request may be for various

reasons: for example, by asking for a count of the whole Synod, the members may wish to show how wholeheartedly Synod supported a motion - or how narrowly it succeeded or failed.

Division by Houses: A request for “a division by Houses” can also mean that the member(s) requesting it believe that although the motion would succeed by having a simple majority in the whole Synod, yet it is not supported by a majority in one of the Houses. Since in a Vote by Houses the motion has to achieve a majority in each House, it is therefore possible to cause a motion to be defeated by these tactics. Another reason for the request can be that the members are eager to know how well or how poorly the motion was received in the three Houses. Members of the clergy and laity are counted by **tellers** as they go through different doors (see **Division bell** below).

Division of the whole Synod: This is usually requested when the vote, after a count of hands has been taken, is so close that in order to verify it a division of the whole Synod is considered desirable. The Synod is counted going through the doors – one door for ayes, another for noes.

Division bell: If a formal count is being taken (either by Houses or by the Synod as a whole), the Legal Officer calls out “Divide!” and the Chair rings a bell to warn those outside the Hall that a vote is going to take place. This is when you gulp down your coffee and rush back to any seat (only those sitting down can vote). Two minutes later, the legal officer briefly explains the details of the vote to be taken and asks the members to vote, which they do by going through different exits. There are signs above the doors reading “Clergy Ayes”, “Clergy Noes”, “Laity Ayes”, “Laity Noes”. In York, it is a bit of a scramble, but the Registrar will explain clearly to members which exits are being used. Bishops assemble in separate places inside the Hall. If you want to abstain, you stay put. When the votes have been counted, you are invited to return to hear the result. It is customary for the vote to be heard in silence, although just occasionally the sheer excitement of it all (yes, Synod can be exciting) prompts some spontaneous reaction.

Voting for Chair of Laity/Prolocutor: : Towards the end of the first Synod sessions in November, you will be asked to vote for the Chair and Vice-Chair of Laity and the joint **Prolocutors** of the Clergy for the next five years. The new clergy are likely to have heard of the candidates but new members of laity may well know few or none of them. You may have received an Election Statement from each, but it’s sensible to ask around (more than one person) about the prospective candidates before the Synod begins, as you will hear no more than a brief prepared speech by each before you vote. You should also look out for their names when speakers are being called during the session, as listening to

them in action should help. A borrowed copy of *Report of Proceedings* from the previous sessions might also include a speech by them. The voting is done by **STV**, so be sure you understand clearly how this system works. Note that the Chair and Vice-Chair of Laity and the two Prolocutors are also *ex officio* members of the Archbishops' Council, so that it is a very important job. If you feel that you don't know enough about the candidates, it's always possible to abstain.

Website: The Church of England website (www.cofe.anglican.org) provides a lot of useful information about the General Synod: what it is, what it does, what the various Councils, Boards and Committees are, etc. It also explains certain terms, such as *Measure*, which have not been included in this booklet. It includes the agenda of the next Synod sessions when fixed, the texts of papers for that and previous Synods, a summary of decisions made during a Synod, items which are likely to appear on the agenda in the next year or so, and much else.

Worship:

Services. A list of services held during the synod sessions, as well as who is taking them, appears on a separate notice paper.

Bible Study. In York, there is often an Exposition of Text by some leading theologian as part of the Agenda. See also below.

Group Work. The Synod in York is also often divided into groups for Bible Study (e.g. considering a group of texts and applying them to some aspect of a subject up for debate). Each group is made up of members from the all three Houses and from different dioceses. Apart from an opportunity for every member to exchange ideas and have a chance to speak, they are also good places in which to get to know a few more members and their opinions. You will get a list of the groups and the numbers of the meeting-rooms with your papers. Note the room in which you will meet and if possible track it down beforehand, as much time can be wasted trying to find the place on York's complicated campus.

Writing in: Instead of making a speech on some point, you can always write in to the particular committee, board, etc. and make it then. Such submissions are always carefully considered. This can often be more effective than a speech or an amendment, in both of which you have a time limit and are perhaps unable to give all your reasoning and suggestions. Note that non-members of the Synod may also write in. See also **Revision Committee**.

York: The office will send you a special guide to this. Synod members usually enjoy the York Synods, not only because they are more relaxed but because it is also a chance to get to know people better, since everyone is living on the spot, members of the various dioceses are mixed up in the different Colleges and everyone eats together (the food is good and the meals are paid for by each diocese). See also **clothes**.

2. PREVIOUS REPORTS, AGREEMENTS AND TERMS SOMETIMES MENTIONED

Bridge/The Bridge Report: *Synodical Government in the Church of England:* a report by a group under Lord Bridge of Harwich reviewing the process of Synodical Government, and leading to legislation, some of which is prior to the 2000-2005 Synod, regarding such things as the size of the Synod, etc.

Meissen Declaration/Common Statement: This links the Church of England with the EKD (the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Germany). It was passed by an **Act of Synod** in 1991.

Porvoo Agreement/Common Statement (the name comes from the small cathedral city in Finland where the agreement was signed in 1992): an agreement by which the Anglican Churches in the British Isles are in full communion with the Lutheran Churches of the Nordic and Baltic states, with the exception of Denmark and Latvia.

Reilly Common Statement (the name comes from a suburb of Paris): an agreement in 1999 whereby the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the French Lutheran Reformed Churches made a joint declaration of mutual acknowledgements and commitments.

Sheffield formula: the formula for distributing clergy resources to dioceses, originally prepared by the last-but-one Bishop of Sheffield.

Turnbull/The Turnbull Report: a report by a group under Bishop Turnbull of Durham which led to the establishment of the **Archbishops' Council** and new arrangements for the **Church Commissioners**.

3. USEFUL PUBLICATIONS AND THE CHURCH HOUSE BOOKSHOP

The Church of England Year Book: This is the official year book of the General Synod and is invaluable to Synod members (who get a discount if they order early). It gives details of the central structures and bodies of the Church of England as a whole, of the dioceses and much else. At the back is a Who's Who in the Church in which you will agreeably figure. Its *Review of the Year*, which is written by a different person each time, is occasionally the subject of controversy.

Getting the Message: This contains recommendations to dioceses for improving two-way communication between the General Synod, dioceses, deaneries and congregations. The second part is on aspects of reporting and suggestions for it, which may help new members.

The Church House Bookshop is very close to the Church House entrance/exit in Great Smith Street. Turn left as you go out and it's on your left, on the corner. It not only sells books of all kinds but copies of reports, liturgy, etc. can also be obtained from here. The address is: 31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN.

4. ACRONYMS

You will meet a bewildering number of acronyms. Some will be familiar, many will not, and new ones are constantly being coined (there are some blank pages at the end of this booklet where you can write down any ones not listed here). A few of them are often said as words, which are given in brackets.

ABM	Advisory Board of Ministry
AC	Archbishops' Council
ACC	Anglican Consultative Council
ACCM	Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry
AD	Area Dean
“Affcaths”	Affirming Catholics (group in Synod)
*ARCIC (“arkick”)	Anglican- Roman Catholic International Commission
ASB	Alternative Services Book
AV	Authorized Version (of the Bible)
AYPA	Anglican Young People's Assembly
BAGUPA	Bishop's Advisory Group on UPA's
BCC	British Council of Churches
BCP	Book of Common Prayer
BoEd	Board of Education
BM	Board of Mission
BMU	Board for Mission and Unity
BSR	Board for Social Responsibility
C&YP	Children and Young People
CA	Church Army
CBAC	Committee for Black African Concerns (now CMEAC)
CCBI	Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland (now CCTI)
CCC	Council for the Care of Churches
CCT	Churches Conservation Trust
CCU	Council for Christian Unity
CEC (“keck”)	Conference of European Churches
CECC	Church of England Committee for Communications
CEIG	Christian Ethical Investment Group
CFC	Cathedrals Fabric Commission
CHARM (“charm”)	Church's Housing Assistance for Retired Ministry
CMADP	Committee for Ministry among Deaf People
CME	Continuing Ministerial Education
CMEAC (“see-me-ack”)	Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns
CMS	Church Mission Society
CNC	Crown Nominations Commission
CPAS	Pastoral Aid Society
CRAC (“crack”)	Central Advisory Religious Committee

CRC	Central Readers Council
CSA	Central Stipends Authority
CTE	Churches Together in England
CUF (“cuff”)	Church Urban Fund
CYFA	Church Youth Fellowship Association
DAC	Diocesan Advisory Committee
DACE	Diaconal Association of the Church of England
DBF	Diocesan Board of Finance
DCO	Diocesan Communications Officer
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
DFF	Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum
DRACSC (“dracks”)	Deployment, Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee
ECUSA (“eckoozer”)	Episcopal Church of the United States of America
EGGS (“eggs”)	Evangelical Group in General Synod
ELLC (“elk”)	English Language Liturgical Consultations
FIF	Forward in Faith
FITC	Faith in the City
FOAG	Faith and Order Advisory Group
*GS	General Synod
HCC	Hospital Chaplaincies Council
ICS	Intercontinental Church Society
LC	Liturgical Commission
LEP	Local Ecumenical Project
LNSM	Local Non-Stipendiary Minister (replaced by OLM)
MU	Mothers’ Union
MOW	Movement for the Ordination of Women
NSM	Non-Stipendiary Minister
OLM	Ordained Local Minister
OSG	Open Synod Group
PEV	Provincial Episcopal Visitor
POT	Post-Ordination Training
PWM	Partnership for World Mission
RD	Rural Dean
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SO	Standing Order
STV	Single Transferable Vote
TETC	Theological Education and Training Committee
TI	Training Institute
TR	Team Rector
TV	Team Vicar
UPA	Urban Priority Area

URC United Reformed Church
USPG United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
VRSC Vocation, Recruitment and Selection Committee
WATCH (“watch”) Women and the Church
WCC World Council of Churches

Further acronyms - should you want them - can be found in the *Church of England Year Book*.