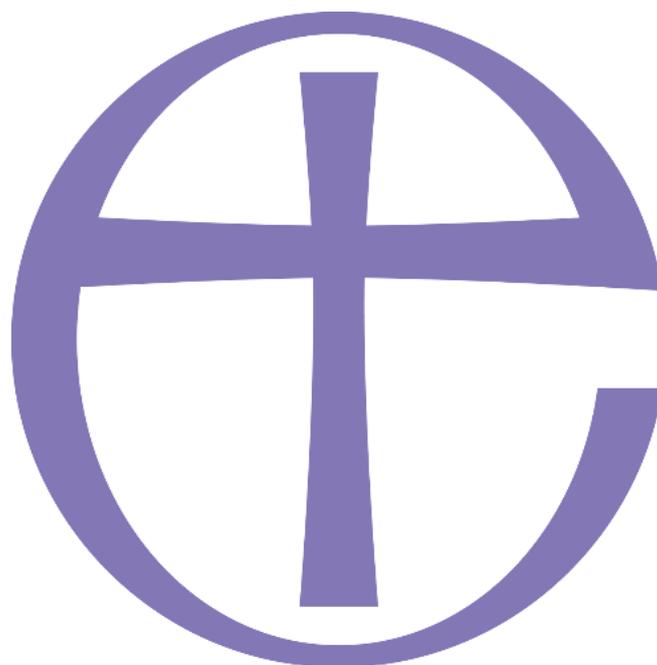


Guide to the General Synod



OCTOBER 2015

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Foreword

This Guide is intended to provide members, new and old, with basic information about the routine administrative details of the Synod's working, and to indicate what facilities are available and where they can be found.

The Guide is not concerned with procedural rules. What the Synod does and the ways in which it does them are a matter for the Synod's Constitution and its Standing Orders, which are being sent to you separately, though it is consistent with them. Its purpose is rather to offer some practical guidance to those first few, often confusing, meetings in London and York.

The Synod Team
Church House, Westminster
September 2015

What is the General Synod?

1. The General Synod was created by the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as the successor body to the Church Assembly which had existed since 1919. The General Synod consists of the Convocations of Canterbury and York (the ancient provincial synods of the two provinces), joined together in a House of Bishops and a House of Clergy, with a House of Laity added to them. The General Synod's functions are set out in Article 6 of its Constitution. This is printed as Appendix D to the Synod's Standing Orders.
2. The Synod's business falls into a number of categories, each governed by its Standing Orders (SO):
 - *Legislative Business (SO 47-77)*: The Synod approves Measures (which, on receiving the Royal Assent, have the force and effect of Acts of Parliament), Canons and subordinate legislation (orders, regulations and instruments). Where legislation is not needed it makes provision by Acts of Synod (SO 41), regulations and other instruments.
 - *Liturgical Business (SO 78-90)*: The Synod also authorises forms of service for use in the Church of England.
 - *Scrutiny*: The Synod receives annual reports from the Archbishops' Council and its Audit Committee (SO 106). At each group of sessions members can ask Questions of the central Church bodies (SO 112-117).
 - *Financial Business (SO 108-111)*: The Synod approves the budget of the Archbishops' Council and the apportionment among the dioceses of the sums to be paid by the dioceses to the Archbishops' Council.
 - *Other Business*: The Synod's final function under its Constitution is 'to consider and express their opinion

on any other matters of religious or public interest.' Some motions are moved on behalf of central Church bodies, some are sent to the General Synod by diocesan synods (Diocesan Synod Motions – or DSMs – SO 7) and some are moved by individual members of the Synod with the support of other members (Private Members' Motions – or PMMs – SO 6).

When and where does the Synod meet?

3. Under its Constitution, the Synod must meet at least twice a year. Under its present practice, one of these meetings is held during a working week in February in Church House, Westminster and the other residentially, over a long weekend in July at the University of York.
4. In addition to these two meetings, a date in November is reserved for a shorter group of sessions for use only if there is urgent legislative or other business.

Church House

5. In London, the day on which meetings begin and end vary. In recent years it has generally been the custom for the Synod to begin on Monday afternoon and to end on Thursday, or, when necessary, on Friday. Morning sittings generally begin at 9.30 a.m. and end for lunch at 1.00 p.m. Afternoon sittings begin at 2.30 p.m. and go on until 7.00 p.m. Sittings may, however, be extended by up to fifteen minutes if the Synod agrees.
6. The Business Committee is mindful of the desirability of finishing the final sitting of a group of sessions early enough to enable the majority of members to get home on the same day.
7. Members arrange their own accommodation and meals when the Synod meets in London (a café is provided for breakfast, lunch and snacks) and reclaim their travel,

accommodation and subsistence expenses from their dioceses.

8. Different arrangements for meeting the cost of expenses obviously apply to those members who do not represent a diocese. If you are a non-diocesan member and you are uncertain what these arrangements are, please contact the Synod Office (details at the back of this booklet).

University of York

9. The July group of sessions at the University of York is held over a long weekend, usually beginning on Friday afternoon and continuing until the following Monday or Tuesday.
10. Sittings at York usually run from 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., 2.30 p.m. to 6.15 p.m. and from 8.30 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. Again, sittings can be extended by up to fifteen minutes with the agreement of the Synod.
11. Every effort is made to ensure that the final sitting of the group of sessions ends early enough to enable members to get home on the same day.
12. All meals and accommodation are provided at the University and you will be sent a booking request by email for completion and return to us before the group of sessions. We reclaim the cost of your accommodation and meals direct from your diocese (so you do not have to pay for those directly yourself), but you will still need to reclaim any travel and additional subsistence costs from your diocese yourself.

Dates of future groups of sessions

13. Dates for groups of sessions have been agreed until 2018. Please note that the start and end dates may vary according to the amount of business that needs to be

done:

2015

23-25 November – Inauguration of the new Synod
(Church House, London)

2016

15-19 February (Church House, London)
8-12 July (University of York)
[21-23 November] – Church House, London (if required)

2017

13-17 February (Church House, London)
7-11 July, University of York)
[20-22 November] – Church House, London (if required)

2018

5-9 February (Church House, London)
6-10 July, University of York)
[19-21 November] – Church House, London (if required)

Separate meetings of the Houses and the Convocations

14. The House of Bishops meets separately from the other two Houses, both in the course of groups of sessions and on other occasions through the year. The Houses of Clergy and Laity have occasional separate meetings, usually during the course of a group of sessions or immediately before they start or end.
15. The Convocations of Canterbury and York (which comprise all the ordained Synod members from each Province) also have occasional meetings.

Resources

16. Members will receive a copy of the Standing Orders of the General Synod and its House and the Constitutions of the Synod (periodically updated):
17. You may also find the following documents useful to have:
 - [Church Representation Rules \(available free online\)](#)
 - [The Canons of the Church of England \(available free online\)](#)
 - The Church of England Yearbook

Please also see the General Synod Members' Resources page [here](#)

What can I expect before a group of sessions?

Circulation of papers

18. The Business Committee of the Synod meets about six weeks before each group of sessions to settle the agenda. The outline timetable is published online as soon as possible after that.
19. The papers are available to download from the General Synod web page, unless members have requested to receive paper copies. There are two main series of numbered documents:
 - i. 'GS' is used for all papers and reports for debate by the Synod;
 - ii. 'GS Misc.' is used for background papers provided for information, but not normally for debate.
20. Unless they request otherwise, all Synod members automatically opt-in to download Synod papers electronically, unless they have informed the Synod office

otherwise. Hard copies of the Agenda are available for Synod members to collect on their arrival at Synod. Hard copies of specific papers may also be requested from the Information Desk at Synod.

Agenda

21. The Synod's Agenda contains a useful summary of the dates and times of meetings, deadlines and email addresses for submitting Questions, amendments etc. as well as listing the business which the Synod will be considering. It is normally divided into five sections:

Timetable and General Agenda:

(Items numbered from 1)

Special Agenda I : Legislative Business

(Items numbered from 500)

Special Agenda II : Liturgical Business

(Items numbered from 600)

Special Agenda III : Private Members' Motions

Special Agenda IV : Diocesan Synod Motions

Report from the Business Committee

22. The Business Committee's report contains useful practical information and important background notes about particular items of business.

Notice of amendments, following motions etc

23. The *General Notes* in the Agenda give a reminder of the deadlines for various types of Synod business, including Questions, amendments and following motions

24. Additionally, a separate Notice Paper is included with the Agenda setting out deadlines (where applicable) for specific items of business.
25. Whatever the deadline for giving notice, it is helpful to give as much notice of motions/amendments as possible to enable any difficulties to be identified and resolved. Notice of following motions and amendments should be addressed to the Clerk to the Synod and can be emailed to: amendments@churchofengland.org (see paras 56-58).

Questions

26. Questions are normally taken on the first day of each group of sessions. The deadline for receipt of Questions is always given in the General Notes printed at the beginning of the Agenda and is significantly in advance of other deadlines, so please study the information about deadlines carefully. Notice of Questions should be addressed to the Clerk to the Synod by email to: questions@churchofengland.org
27. More detailed information about Questions is set out at the end of this booklet.

Notice papers

28. Any corrections to the Agenda or papers, and advance notice of following motions and amendments are printed on pale yellow Notice Papers. The first few Notice Papers will be posted on the website with other Synod papers. Others are issued regularly throughout the group of sessions. (These are distinct from the gold-coloured Order Papers, which set out the order of business for each sitting.)

Fringe meetings and displays

29. Limited space is available at London and in York for fringe meetings and displays. These may be organised by groupings of the National Church Institutions or by individual Synod members or groupings. Fringe meetings and displays operate separately from Synod proceedings. All organisers and participants are required to comply with the Business Committee's Policy on Fringe Meetings and Displays which may be viewed on the Synod website at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/>
30. Flyers advertising when and where these meetings are to take place are published online in advance of groups of sessions.
31. If you wish to attend any of the fringe meetings, you will need to respond to the person indicated on the flyer. Please do not respond to the Synod Office. It is especially important to respond by the time indicated on the flyer if catering is offered at the fringe meeting. This information is essential to enable the organisers to order the right amount of food.
32. You will also notice exhibition stands and displays on various matters to do with business on the agenda or of more general interest in the designated areas of Church House and at the University of York.
33. If you wish to arrange a fringe meeting or display, please contact the Synod Office for advice.

Accommodation booking forms (July only)

34. Around two months before the July group of sessions we will send you accommodation forms for the University of York.

35. It is important that you complete the forms accurately and submit them to us as soon as possible, certainly no later than the date specified.
36. Confirmation details of where you will be staying and eating at the University will be sent via e-mail.
37. It is necessary to charge dioceses or individuals if changes are made after the deadline of submitting information which will be clearly stated on the booking form.

What can I expect during a group of sessions?

Security passes

38. The Business Committee is responsible for all the operational workings of Synod, including overseeing the security arrangements at Synod. The General Synod Security Policy may be viewed [here](#) on the Synod website.
39. These measures are in place to ensure the safety and security of all those attending Synod, whether Synod members, guests, members of the public or staff. All Synod members, guests and visitors are reminded of their responsibility to comply with this policy to ensure the safety of all, to remain vigilant and to report any concerns to security staff or staff on the Information Desk.
40. There is a pass system in operation both at Church House and the University of York. We will ask you to provide us with a passport-style colour photograph (preferably by email) so that we can issue you a photo pass to identify you as a member of Synod.
41. The pass is valid for the period of the quinquennium and you will need to remember to bring it with you – and wear it visibly – at all times during the group of sessions, both in London and York.

42. If you forget your pass, we can issue a temporary replacement; and if you have lost your pass we can issue you with a replacement, although an administration fee of £10 will apply.

Voting cards and handsets

43. The Synod uses a system of electronic voting. In order to vote, you must have a valid voting card. Voting cards are issued at the beginning of each group of sessions. To avoid being caught out by an unexpected vote early in a group of sessions, you are recommended to collect your personalised voting card at the start of each group of sessions.
44. Voting cards **must be returned** at the end of the group of sessions. They are expensive to replace and you won't be able to use them again at the next group of sessions. A replacement fee of £25 will be charged for any missing cards.
45. As you go into the Assembly Hall (Church House) or the Central Hall (York), you should collect a voting handset to use with your voting card. Please return it to the stand when you leave the Hall.
46. If your handset doesn't work, you can use a neighbour's once he or she has finished voting. If your voting card doesn't work, you'll need to get a replacement. Ask at the Information Desk or notify the Registrar if this happens during a vote who will manually add your vote.
47. The Business Committee has issued instructions in relation to electronic voting (reproduced at the end of this booklet), with which members must comply.

Worship

48. The Archbishops in their role as Presidents of General Synod have appointed a Synod Chaplain to oversee the

delivery of General Synod worship. This includes formal worship at each group of sessions and the Continuous Praying Presence which supports the work of Synod, as well as pastoral support for Synod members. Synod members are welcome to volunteer to take part in the worship of Synod and may contact the Chaplain via the Clerk to the Synod.

49. Holy Communion is celebrated in the Chapel at Church House and at the University of York each morning (and, additionally, at lunchtime in the Chapel at Church House).
50. There is usually a celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall at Church House once during a London group of sessions. This also happens occasionally in York. In York, members of the Synod join the regular Sunday morning congregation at York Minster.
51. Each morning sitting starts with a short act of worship and there is a short act of worship following the afternoon sitting.

Business

Order of business

52. The order of business for each sitting is set out in the Agenda, but it is also set out in full, including any amendments to the business, on an Order Paper (printed on gold coloured paper).
53. Advance notice of amendments, following motions and other important information is given on pale yellow Notice Papers.
54. Copies of the Order Paper for the current sitting are available from stands at the entrance to the Assembly Hall in London and the Central Hall in York. Please make sure you pick one up as you pass through into the chamber. The latest Notice Papers are also made available here.

55. If you find that you don't have a particular Order Paper or Notice Paper and there are none left in the stands, additional copies are available from racks near the Information Desk.

Amendments and following motions

56. If you wish to put down an amendment or a following motion to business before the Synod, please complete a gold coloured form available from the Information Desk.
57. For amendments to most business, you will need the support of two other members (although this does not apply to amendments to legislative or liturgical business or to amendments to proposed changes to Standing Orders).
58. It is always a good idea to seek advice on the wording of an amendment before completing and submitting a form. If you are thinking of submitting an amendment before a group of sessions, please contact the Clerk to the Synod. During the group of sessions, please ask at the Information Desk for guidance and the staff will see that a member of staff contacts you. Staff may in any case need to speak to you before accepting the amendment (eg to discuss how an amendment that is out of order might be reworded so that it is in order).

Private Members' Motions

59. Members are welcome to put down a motion for debate. Private Members' Motions (or 'PMMs') usually require support from a minimum of 100 members for the Business Committee to schedule them for debate.
60. When we receive notice of a PMM (by post or email to jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org) we may wish to speak to you to check the wording and to confirm that it is in order.

61. Once a PMM has been accepted, notice will be given on a Notice Paper (it will subsequently be listed under Special Agenda III at the back of the Agenda for the next group of sessions) and the PMM will be made available for signature by members (in the Bishop Partridge Hall in Church House in London, or the Concourse in the Central Hall at the University of York).

Requests to speak

62. We would encourage you to give advance notice if you wish to speak in a debate. Requests to speak are passed on to the chair of each item of business and help him or her when preparing for the debate, with a view to securing a balanced debate that properly reflects the range of opinion on the issue.
63. You can put in a Request to Speak form on arrival or at any time during the group of sessions, right up to the start of the debate itself. You can also send in a Request to Speak form by post or email before a group of sessions to the Clerk (jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org). A copy of the form can be downloaded from:
<https://www.churchofengland.org>
64. Request to Speak forms are printed on pale blue paper and are available from the Information Desk. They ask for details such as your name, Synod number, the number of the item on which you wish to speak and an indication of the points you wish to make. Please also see the Code of Practice at the end of this booklet.
65. Please note, however, that anyone who stands to speak in a debate can be called and submitting a Request to Speak form does not give you an automatic right to be called. In some debates many more members may wish to speak than it is possible for the Chair to call to in the time available. The choice of speakers is entirely a matter for the Chair.

In the chamber

66. While the physical layout of Church House and the University of York is clearly quite different, the arrangement of the chamber in which the Synod meets is very similar in both.
67. The Assembly Hall in Church House is circular with a gallery just below the dome where visitors and the press sit. The Bishops usually sit in the two or three inner rows of seats nearest the platform. There is reserved seating for ecumenical representatives, representatives of Deaf Anglicans Together (and their interpreters), and representatives of the Church of England Youth Council. Members of the Houses of Clergy and Laity can sit anywhere else.
68. There is a walkway, called the Ambulatory, all the way around the outside of the Assembly Hall with a large number of doors into the Assembly Hall. The doors are lettered (both inside and out), so it is a good idea to check which door you are sitting near if you need to leave the Assembly Hall during a debate but intend to come back shortly.
69. The Central Hall at the University of York is more like a theatre. Here, the Bishops tend to sit in the front two or three rows of seats with the members of the Houses of Clergy and Laity behind them. Again, there is reserved seating for ecumenical representatives and representatives of Deaf Anglicans Together (and their interpreters), and representatives of the Church of England Youth Council. There is no physical gallery in the Central Hall, so visitors and the Press are allocated special areas towards the top of the seating areas, which are known as the 'public gallery' and the 'press gallery'.
70. There are only two access points to the Central Hall from the Concourse (the ground floor level).

71. There is a raised area at the front of the Assembly Hall and the Central Hall (simply called the Platform). This is where the Chairs of debates sit, with an administrator and a lawyer on either side to advise them during the debate. The administrator mainly assists the Chair in identifying members who wish to speak and keeping the debate to time. The lawyer advises the Chair on procedure, times the length of speeches and is responsible for the conduct of votes (or 'Divisions').
72. Behind them on the Platform sit other members of staff and the members of the Synod who have been involved in the business the Synod is debating.
73. When the Synod is in session, members are not permitted to speak to, or give messages to, the Chair or the advisers on either side of him or her.
74. In London, the Archbishops sit on one side of the Platform and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity and the two Prolocutors sit on the other. In York, they have desks allocated to them on the floor of the Central Hall.
75. The stenographers (who record the Synod's proceedings) and certain members of staff sit immediately below the Platform in London and in the gallery in York.

Entering and leaving the chamber

76. Five minutes before a sitting is about to begin, a bell will ring in the Ambulatory and Bishop Partridge Hall (in London), or downstairs in the Concourse (in York), to warn members that the sitting is about to start.
77. If you need to enter or leave the chamber while a debate is in progress, you should wait to do so until the person speaking has finished.
78. Please take any papers with you when you leave the chamber at the end of each sitting. Recycling bins are

provided at the information desk for the disposal of unwanted papers.

Speaking in debates

79. If you wish to speak in a debate, it is a good idea to sit more or less directly in front of the Platform and, in York, in the lower seating levels, otherwise you may find the Chair has difficulty seeing you.
80. Whether or not you have put in a request to speak, you must (unless special arrangements have been made owing to physical disability) stand in your place if you wish to be called. Anyone who is standing may be called, but precisely who is called to speak is entirely at the discretion of the Chair.
81. Both in London and in York, the Chair calls two speakers at the same time (but will indicate the order in which they are to speak). If you are called to speak, please go to one of the two podiums which are located on either side of the Assembly Hall and the Central Hall. You will need to state your name, diocese (or constituency) and Synod number before you begin to speak.
82. When you speak, address the Chair, not your fellow members.
83. It is customary to listen to speakers in silence (although applause is permitted).
84. The Business Committee has issued guidance on members declaring interests when they speak in debates, a copy of which is reproduced at the end of this booklet.

Indicators

85. Screens in the Assembly Hall in London and the Central Hall in York (and outside the chambers) display the number of the item being debated and the Synod number of the person speaking. There are also coloured lights

located on the Platform and on each podium for the guidance of speakers. The green light means that you may speak. The amber light comes on one minute before the end of your time limit and this is a warning to begin drawing your remarks to a close. The red light comes on to tell you that your time is up and you must stop speaking (though it is acceptable to finish your sentence) and resume your seat.

86. If you continue beyond the red light, the Chair will ring a bell and direct you to stop speaking and resume your seat.

Voting

87. Voting takes place either by a show of hands or by means of a 'counted vote' (formerly known as a 'Division'). A counted vote may be either a counted vote of the Whole Synod or a counted vote by Houses. You will be told which it is. In the case of a counted vote by Houses the question concerned must secure a majority of the votes cast in each of the three Houses if it is to be passed.
88. For counted votes, the Synod uses a system of electronic voting. In order to vote, you will need your personal voting card, which you should collect from the Information Desk at the beginning of the group of sessions, and a voting handset, which you should collect from and return to charging stands outside the Assembly Hall in Church House or the Central Hall in York.
89. The handsets are easy to use and instruction will be given. You can register a vote in favour of the motion or against the motion. You may also register an abstention if you wish it to be recorded publicly that you were present but did not vote.
90. Once an electronic counted vote has been concluded, the result of the vote is announced by the Chair. Only the number of votes cast for and against, and abstentions

recorded, is given at the end of a vote. A detailed record of the votes cast, showing how each member voted on the question or if they recorded an abstention, will be posted on the Synod's pages of the Church of England website as soon as practicable after the group of sessions, but not during the group of sessions.

91. Please make sure you return the handset whenever you leave the Chamber and the card at the end of the group of sessions because they are expensive to replace.
92. Although the Synod's Standing Orders retain provision for conducting counted votes by passing through voting doors, the practice is only in that way in the event of the electronic system breaking down. Should that happen, instructions will be given as to the procedure to be followed.

Practical information

Information Desk

93. The Information Desk will be a valuable reference point for you during groups of sessions. The Information Desk will be staffed while the Synod is in session and will only close at meal times.
94. In London, the Information Desk is set up in the Bishop Partridge Hall, just a couple of steps away from the Assembly Hall. In York, it is on the lower level (or Concourse) of the Central Hall, immediately opposite the main entrance to the building.
95. It is at the Information Desk that, amongst other things, you can:
 - get practical advice on any aspect of the Synod
 - pick up and leave messages

- find and submit request to speak forms
- find and submit forms to put down amendments or following motions
- collect your electronic voting card
- pick up extra copies of Order or Notice Papers
- pick up hard copies of specific papers if required
- buy meal tickets for guests (York only)
- reserve tickets for the coaches to York Minster (York only)

Letters and messages

96. Trays are put out in the Bishop Partridge Hall in Church House and the Concourse of the Central Hall in York for members' letters. The trays are labelled by diocese or non-diocesan groups. Please check the trays (especially on arrival since the trays will often include documents which relate to the forthcoming debates) fairly frequently during the day and remove any material addressed to you. Only personally addressed material may be left in the trays. There is a separate table provided for general publicity material.
97. You are advised to leave any messages for bishops behind the information desk.
98. Notice of urgent letters or messages will be given on the screen by the Information Desk. Please check this when passing through the Bishop Partridge Hall or Concourse.

Notice boards

99. There are notice boards for posting general information in the Bishop Partridge Hall in London and in the Concourse in York.
100. Please note that these notice boards will have information regarding any fringe meetings taking place that day.
101. Tables in the Bishop Partridge Hall and the Concourse may also be used to distribute leaflets. Members must not under any circumstances place leaflets on the seats in the Assembly Hall or the Central Hall.

Statement of Business Done

102. The statement of 'Business Done' prepared for each sitting is posted on a notice board between sittings. It includes a record of motions and amendments carried or lost during a sitting and, if read together with the Agenda and Notice and Order Papers, provides a useful summary of decisions. It normally refers only to the item numbers of amendments without quoting the full text but, where a motion is carried in an amended form, the Business Done contains the text of the motion as finally carried.
103. A copy of the Business Done will be made available on the Church of England website as soon as possible after the group of sessions has closed.

Report of Proceedings

104. A verbatim account of the proceedings of the General Synod is published online a couple of months after each group of sessions. The most recent reports are available to view and download from the General Synod section of the Church of England website.

Private Members' Motions

105. Synod members who wish to indicate their desire that particular Private Members' Motions be debated can do so by adding their signature to the lists available for the purpose during groups of sessions (in the Bishop Partridge Hall in Church House or on a table in the Concourse in York) or, during the period of the groups of sessions, by sending the Clerk an email requesting the addition of their name to the lists.

Disabled members

106. Please let us know if you need particular assistance during your time at Synod.
107. A hearing loop is available in the Assembly Hall at Church House and in the Central Hall at the University of York.
108. Limited parking is available for blue badge holders. Parking at Church House must be arranged well in advance. There is, of course, no charge in either location.
109. Disabled access to Church House is via the North Door entrance in Great Smith Street. There are ramps in other parts of the building, but the routes can be a little circuitous.
110. The University of York is generally very accessible for disabled people (though the Central Hall is less so and the distances to be covered are greater). If you require a specially equipped room at the University of York, please let us know when you book your accommodation.
111. There are accessible toilets in the basement of Church House and on the first floor (where the Synod meets). At York, they are on the ground floor of the Central Hall.

Toilets, Lifts and Cloakrooms

112. Cloakrooms and toilets are located in the basement of Church House. Further toilets are all situated on the first floor of the building. However, there are no cloakroom facilities at the University of York.
113. There are lifts (located between the North Door entrance and the Dean's Yard entrance) and stairs (inside the Dean's Yard entrance) serving the basement, ground floor and first floor.
114. Despite the generally high level of accessibility at the University of York, the Central Hall itself is less well-served. The Concourse (with the Information Desk) and toilets (including accessible toilets) are located on the ground floor. The chamber where the Synod meets is on the first floor. There is a lift which serves the building, but it is only available for those who require disabled access. The route from the lift to the seating area is not immediately obvious so please contact us in advance so that we can assist you.
115. The lifts must not be used in the event of a fire or fire alarm. If you will need assistance to enter or leave the building, please let us know as soon as possible.

Security

116. All Synod members will be issued with a security pass incorporating their photograph. These passes must be worn visibly at all times in Church House and at the University of York. Entry to Church House and to the Central Hall at York will be refused unless a member is wearing their pass.
117. Members are asked never to leave luggage or briefcases unattended except in the cloakrooms. It is particularly important not to leave briefcases in the Assembly Hall or Central Hall between sittings. All items found by staff in

either place will be removed and can be collected from the Information Desk.

Visitors

118. In London, members are welcome to invite visitors to join them in the Hoare Memorial Hall for refreshments, but must accompany them at all times. Visitors must wear the temporary sticky badge provided by the reception staff at the Dean's Yard or Great Smith Street entrances.
119. Visitors are not permitted in the Bishop Partridge Hall, which is for members only, in the Ambulatory (the circular walkway surrounding the Assembly Hall) or in the Assembly Hall itself.
120. The public gallery to the Assembly Hall (which is open to visitors) is situated on the second floor and access is gained by the main staircase.
121. Access to the public gallery is by ticket only. These are made available on a first come first served basis and can be obtained only on application in person to the receptionists on duty at the desks in the Dean's Yard or Great Smith Street entrances to Church House. There are separate tickets for each morning and afternoon sitting.
122. In York, access to the public gallery is again by ticket only. Members are not permitted to invite visitors into the Concourse as access to the Central Hall is strictly by photo pass only.
123. In all cases, guests are expected to adhere to any security arrangements which are in place. These arrangements are outlined in the [Security Policy](#) on the CofE website.

Refreshments

124. Tea and coffee (both free of charge), hot lunches and a variety of sandwiches, pastries and biscuits (for which a charge is made) are available in the Hoare Memorial Hall

in Church House. There are no restaurant facilities on the premises, but there are a number of (licensed) restaurants, supermarkets and sandwich bars in the vicinity of Church House.

125. The group of sessions in York is fully catered. Tea and coffee are available in the Concourse for limited periods during the morning and afternoon.
126. Please note that food and drink (except bottled water) may not be consumed in the Assembly Hall or the Central Hall. Visitors are not permitted to take water or other food or drink into the Public Gallery, but a water dispenser is available for those who require it.

Smoking

127. Church House and the University of York operate strict no smoking policies.

Mobile phones and other electronic equipment

128. Mobile phones should be switched off or set to vibrate or silent mode in the Assembly Hall and the Central Hall. Members may use laptops and tablets in the Assembly Hall and the Central Hall.

Photography

129. Photography (including using a mobile phone camera) is not permitted in the Assembly Hall or the Central Hall except by authorised press photographers.

Church House Bookshop

130. Church House Bookshop in Great Smith Street is one of the largest religious booksellers in the UK and provides a mail order service worldwide. During Synod meetings in York the Bookshop has a stall near the Information Desk offering a more limited range of stock. In London you can just pop next door.

Staff and Useful contacts

Secretary General

William Nye LVO

tel: 020 7898 1360

email: william.nye@churchofengland.org

Clerk to the Synod (and Secretary to the Business Committee)

Dr Jacqui Philips

tel: 020 7898 1385

email: jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org

Head of Events (General Synod and the House of Bishops)

Andrew Brown

tel: 020 7898 1374

email: andrewj.brown@churchofengland.org

Secretary to the House of Clergy

Jonathan Neil-Smith

tel: 020 7898 1373

email: jonathan.neil-smith@churchofengland.org

Secretary to the House of Laity (and Secretary to the Appointments Committee)

Nicholas Hills

tel: 020 7898 1363

email: nicholas.hills@churchofengland.org

Questions

questions@churchofengland.org

Amendments

amendments@churchofengland.org

Passes

synod.passes@churchofengland.org

Changes of address (including e-mail address)

synod@churchofengland.org

Question Time: A guide for members

1. A Question Time is held at every Group of Sessions, normally on the first evening. Question Time is governed by Standing Orders 112 to 117

‘Should I ask a Question?’

2. Question Time is not intended to be a means of enabling individual synod members to inform themselves about the work done on behalf of the National Church Institutions. (There are other ways of doing this that are less time-consuming and more effective.) Rather, it is a means of asking questions in such a way that the answers are drawn to the attention of other members, are given ‘on the record’ and are therefore available for future reference. It is a means of publicising facts and holding to account those responsible for the work done on behalf of the National Church Institutions.
3. Processing Questions and preparing Answers involves a significant amount of work on the part of the staff. Before submitting a Question, please reflect on whether the use of staff time involved is justified. If you simply want to obtain the information, rather than to place it on the record, have it given publicity or ask a Supplementary Question about it, it would be better simply to contact the responsible member of staff concerned and ask the question direct. He or she can often be identified by consulting the Church of England Year Book or in the booklet sent out at the beginning of the quinquennium offering a broad overview and contact details of each department. However, members of the Secretariat stand ready to assist with finding the most appropriate addressee.

'Is my Question in order?'

4. Questions can only be asked of individuals or bodies covered by Standing Order 112, and Standing Order 113 makes a number of stipulations as to their content.
5. Many of the Questions received are not in order in the form in which they are submitted. Instead of simply ruling such Questions out of order the Registrar attempts, where possible, to assist members by redirecting and/or redrafting their Questions in order to bring them into order. Where a Question does not relate to the duties or business of the person or body concerned, it will be redirected – if this is possible. Where redrafting is required, the wording proposed by the Registrar will be sent to the member, with a deadline for response and an indication that approval will be assumed if a response is not received by that deadline.
6. A Question is out of order:
 - if the member has already submitted two other Questions for answer at the same Group of Sessions;
 - if it is not in fact a Question, but a series of questions;
 - if its meaning is unclear;
 - if it contains any argument (although brief factual material necessary in order to establish the basis on which the Question is asked is unobjectionable);
 - if it contains any imputation (ie any express or implied criticism);
 - if it asks for an expression of opinion (including on a question of law);
 - if it asks for the solution of any hypothetical problem;

- if it does not relate to the duties of the Secretary General or the Clerk to the Synod or to the business of a body to whose Chair Questions may be addressed. (Only the Secretary General and the Clerk may be questioned about their own duties. In other cases, the Question must relate to the business of the body chaired by the person to whom the Question is addressed. In particular, please note that the Archbishops may be questioned only about the business of the bodies which they chair. The Archbishops are not answerable to the Synod for their personal actions or statements, for their responsibilities as metropolitans, or for their Anglican Communion responsibilities.)
7. In order to reduce the amount of time and effort involved (for both staff and members), please test your Question against this list of points before submitting it, and reword it if necessary.

‘What is the deadline?’

8. The deadline for submitting a Question for answer at a Group of Sessions is 12.00 noon on the day which falls seven clear days (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) before the first day of the Group of Sessions concerned (SO 11(3)).
9. In the case of a London group of sessions beginning on a Monday, this will be a Wednesday (with two weekends intervening before the Synod begins).
10. In the case of a York group of sessions beginning on a Friday, this will be a Tuesday (with one weekend intervening before the Synod begins).
11. The meaning of the deadline is that the Question must have been received before the relevant time. The only fair way to apply the deadline is to apply it strictly.

12. In recent years, it has been common for half of all the Questions received for a Group of Sessions to arrive on the last day. This means that the Registrar has less than a day – and in many cases, three hours or less – to check each Question and redraft it where that is necessary in order to bring it into order. Sometimes a conversation with the member concerned is necessary in order to establish the meaning which the Question is intended to have or to explain why it is necessary for the wording to be changed.
13. The later the Question is submitted, the less likely it is that any necessary redrafting and consultation can be completed by the deadline. The deadline is the deadline for submission of a Question that is in order. If, when the deadline is reached, a Question is not in order and cannot readily be brought into order by simple redrafting, it will have to be ruled out of order. If you submit your Question at least one day before the deadline, that will ensure that there will be time for redrafting and consultation if that proves to be necessary.

‘How should Questions be submitted?’

14. Questions may be submitted direct to the Questions email
 - questions@churchofengland.org (from an email address previously notified to the Clerk); or
 - in writing to the Clerk to the Synod
15. Please include in your email or letter a telephone number and/or email address at which you may be reached in the time up to the deadline.

‘Should I ask a supplementary question?’

16. If your question is in order, the answer to it will appear in the yellow Questions Notice Paper which is circulated electronically to Synod members at least 24 hours prior to Question Time. At the allocated time on the agenda, you –

or any other member – will have the opportunity to ask a supplementary question (though if you have asked the question you have priority over other members). Normally this is restricted to a maximum of two per question, though the Chair does occasionally exercise his/her discretion to allow more. Your supplementary must be relevant to the original question and needs to meet the same criteria as in para 6 above. It should be framed as a question – not a speech – and be as concise as possible.

17. If you are intending to ask a supplementary question, you should seek to position yourself in the chamber where (1) you will be seen easily by the Chair; and (2) in reasonable proximity to one of the podiums. If called, the Chair will request that you ask your supplementary question from one of the podiums.
18. Any queries about the advice given in this note should be addressed to:

The Questions Administrator - Sue Moore
sue.moore@churchofengland.org

Instructions given by the Business Committee under Standing Order 37(f) for the conduct of divisions conducted by electronic means

In exercise of its powers under Standing Order 36(f) of the Standing Orders of the General Synod, the Business Committee of the General Synod HEREBY ISSUES the following instructions for the conduct of divisions conducted by electronic means:

Members must take a handset from the designated locations. On leaving the hall they must return their handset to one of the designated locations. (The designated locations are the following locations or such other locations as the Business Committee may from time to time specify in writing:

- in London: the landing outside the Bishop Partridge Hall; and the exit from the Hoare Memorial Hall to the ambulatory; and
- in York: the Concourse.)

In order to record a vote or an abstention on a question members must (a) insert their voting card into their handset and (b) enter the randomly generated number which will be displayed on screens in the hall immediately before the vote. Subject to paragraph 3, Members not in possession of a voting card may not therefore record a vote or an abstention on a division conducted by electronic means.

If satisfied that the voting card issued to a member is defective, with the result that the member would not be able to record a vote or abstention by electronic means, the Registrar shall allow that member to record a vote or abstention with him, which shall be treated as having been recorded by electronic means.

Members must not allow their voting card to be used by any other member for the purposes of recording a vote or an abstention in a division conducted by electronic means.

Members must not communicate the randomly generated number to any person outside the hall.

Unless the Chairman directs otherwise, the length of the period during which members may record a vote or an abstention ('the voting period') will be one minute.

The Chairman must announce, or cause to be announced: (a) how long the voting period will last, (b) that the voting period is beginning, (c) before the voting period ends, that it will end in a specified period of time and (d) that the voting period has ended.

The Registrar will be responsible for the operation of the electronic voting system. In doing so he must give effect to the Chairman's directions.

At the end of the voting period the Registrar must give the Chairman a written statement of the result of the division, which the Chairman must then announce.

December 2014

Declaration of Interest: Recommended Code of Practice

Preamble

1. The Business Committee recommends that all members of the General Synod adhere to the code of practice set out in this document, which concerns the declaration of interest by members of the General Synod in any business transacted by the Synod, during each group of sessions.
2. The Committee has drawn up this code because it believes that with the increasing scrutiny of those engaged in public life, there is a legitimate expectation that the members of the Synod - which is a body with legislative and other functions set out in its Constitution - should conform to the Seven Principles of Public Life (promoted by the Committee on Standards in Public Life – see overleaf). In particular, the sixth Principle states:

‘Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.’
3. The Committee recognizes that the specific rules applicable to a conflict of interest on the part of trustees of charities do not apply to the members of the General Synod, as it is not a charity.
4. Declarations of interest are desirable because they disclose factors which may be relevant to the way in which a member’s arguments may be heard and evaluated by others members. As the House of Lords Code of Conduct puts it, the practice of declaring a relevant interest ‘is necessary in order that [the] audience may form a balanced judgement of the arguments.’ Members who contribute to debates or other Synod business should

therefore declare any interest which could reveal a conflict of loyalty, or which could otherwise affect other members' ability to form a balanced judgement of their arguments.

5. The Business Committee takes the view, in the light of the factors set out above, that (a) Synod members should declare relevant interests; and (b) they should declare them orally at the beginning of their contribution to any item of business on the Synod's agenda.

Code

6. Members should consider the need to make an oral declaration of the following, when contributing to the Synod's debates:
 - (a) financial interests, whether direct or indirect, in any matter which is under consideration by the Synod (for example, shareholdings or other financial interests in organisations which may be materially affected by the decisions of the Synod);
 - (b) personal non-financial interests, including those which arise from membership of, or holding office in Church and other bodies (such as acting as a trustee or office-holder of any body whose affairs are likely to be affected by the decisions that the Synod takes).
7. Members should declare any interest which might reasonably be thought to influence what they say and do and which is relevant to the issue under debate.
8. Members may also consider the need to declare the financial, or personal non-financial, interests of close family members.

May 2010

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Committee believes that 'Seven Principles of Public Life' should apply to all in the public service. These are:

Selflessness: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.