

# **The November 2013 Group of Sessions of the General Synod**

## **Report by the Business Committee**

### **Introduction**

1. The election of the Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford) as Chair of the Committee in succession to the Archdeacon of Dorking has created a casual vacancy among the members elected by the House of Clergy. The process to fill the vacancy is in progress. The current membership of the Committee is set out on page 9.
2. The Business Committee has met once since the July group of sessions, in September, when it was joined for part of its discussion by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Liturgical Chaplain to the Synod. The Archbishop shared his impressions of his first experience of the General Synod in his role as President. The Archbishop and the Business Committee reflected on how to enable Synod debates to become more spontaneous and involve genuine listening, and it was agreed that further work needed to be done to improve these aspects of the Synod, as well as to make it more accessible to new members and to people watching Synod proceedings on the webcast.
3. The Committee intends to discuss these matters further at its December and March meetings. It plans to consider, in consultation with current and former members of the Panel of Chairs, how to introduce more flexibility into Synod debates and create a less intimidating culture in which members will feel able to contribute to debates more spontaneously. The views of the Presidents and the officers of the Synod will be sought before any changes to Synod's procedures are suggested.
4. The Committee has discussed with the Presidents and the Synod Chaplain how to encourage more worship and prayer at Synod meetings. Church House Chapel will be open as usual throughout the group of sessions and will be clearly signposted, and members and visitors are invited to pray there for the Synod and for the business it is considering. The Business Committee will aim to include more time for worship in future agendas and will consider further how to encourage prayer at future groups of sessions.
5. The Committee has invited the Archbishop of Canterbury to give a brief update, in the form of a presentation (without question or comment from members), on topical issues that may be of particular interest or concern to the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion. This is a new feature on the Synod agenda and the Committee will consider in December whether it should be continued at future groups of sessions.
6. This report falls into three parts:
  - Part I introduces the Agenda for the November group of sessions (GS 1915) and highlights distinctive features;
  - Part II comments on individual items of business;
  - Part III reports on other work and recent decisions of the Business Committee.

## **I: The November 2013 Group of Sessions**

7. The Synod will meet at Church House, Westminster from 1.45 p.m. on Monday 18 November 2013 until 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 20 November.
8. The group of sessions will begin with an act of worship and there will be a celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall at 9.15 a.m. on the Wednesday morning, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury will preside and preach. As at some previous groups of sessions, on Monday and Tuesday evenings the blessing will be preceded by a reading from Scripture and prayer.

### **Shape of the Agenda**

9. This is a short group of sessions and, with a substantial amount of time needed to enable the Synod to consider the work that the Steering Committee for the draft legislation on women in the episcopate has completed since July, the Business Committee has had limited room for manoeuvre in planning the Agenda.
10. It has given priority to other legislative business and to two items of business - the system for electing the House of Laity and the workings of the synodical system more generally - which were, respectively, adjourned and scheduled as contingency business (but not reached) in July. It has, in addition, been able to schedule two major policy-focused debates, one on evangelism and the other on church schools.

### **Group work**

11. In the light of the positive feedback following the group discussions in July, the Business Committee has agreed that there should be further group work in November to pave the way for the debate on the Steering Committee's report on the draft legislation on women in the episcopate.
12. The group work will be arranged slightly differently from the group discussions in York, to allow members to reflect upon the legislation being introduced and to take account of the logistical constraints of the London venue. Given that this is the first time that group work has been undertaken in London, the Business Committee is viewing it as something of an experiment and will review the suitability of Church House for this purpose in the future in the light of this experience.

### **Diocesan Synod Motions**

13. The Diocesan Synod Motions ('DSMs') awaiting debate are listed in Special Agenda IV. They are normally debated in the order in which they were received, but the Business Committee has decided that the Southwark DSM on the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod (first in the list) should not be debated whilst the new legislative process in relation to women in the episcopate is in progress. The Rochester Diocesan Synod has withdrawn its motion on women in the episcopate.
14. In shaping the agenda, the Business Committee is required to give special consideration to items included in the agenda for the previous group of sessions that were not reached or not completed. It has accordingly scheduled for debate the

London Diocesan Synod Motion on the Workings of the General Synod, which was included in the Agenda as contingency business in July but not reached.

15. The Bradford DSM on the Name of Dioceses and the Wakefield DSM calling on the House of Bishops to facilitate a theologically informed national debate about the organisational shape of the Church were ‘parked’ pending the outcome of the debate on the Reorganisation Scheme for the Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield. They are now ‘unparked’ and both have been scheduled for debate as contingency business for this group of sessions.

### **Private Members’ Motions**

16. The Private Members’ Motions (‘PMMs’) are listed in Special Agenda III. There are two motions with over 100 signatures (which is considered by the Business Committee to be a suitable threshold for PMMs to be considered for debate): Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams’s PMM on the Public Doctrine of Christian Marriage and Mr John Ward’s PMM on the Registration of Civil Partnerships. They have attracted the same amount of support (126 signatures) and the Committee is aware of the growing expectation that they should be debated without further delay.
17. The Business Committee has previously taken the view that these two PMMs should be debated at the same group of sessions and, having reviewed its decision, remains of the view that they will require a substantial amount of time at a single group of sessions. In the light of the pressing business that needs to be conducted at this group of sessions, the Committee has decided that there will not be sufficient time to do justice to the two PMMs in November.
18. Since it is difficult to predict how much time will be required after this group of sessions to progress the women in the episcopate legislation, the Committee has not yet taken a view on which future group of sessions these two PMMs (or any other business) should be scheduled. The Committee will review the position at its December meeting

### **Order of Business**

19. Members are reminded that if at any time within the group of sessions an unexpected gap opens in the Synod’s Agenda, business earlier in the Agenda which has not been reached or completed within the period allotted can be called by the Chair, unless other provision has already been made for it. If there is no such business, the contingency business will be taken.

## **II: Individual Items of Business**

20. This section of the Report comments on individual items of business. They are discussed in chronological order.

### **Monday 18 November**

#### ***Quinquennium Goals: Intentional Evangelism***

21. Last July the Synod considered a report on progress towards the three Quinquennium goals (GS 1895), which was accompanied by an annex from the group which had been following up the debate on a National Mission Strategy and another from the Bishop of Sheffield following his attendance at the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops. These materials generated much interest and a strong desire for a focused Synod debate to help prioritise evangelism within the Church. In response to this, the Chair of the Business Committee informed the Synod of the plan to provide an opportunity at forthcoming groups of sessions to debate each of the Quinquennial goals in turn.
22. During this group of sessions there will be the opportunity to focus on evangelism and to debate a motion which supports the formation of an Archbishops' Task Group on Evangelism and commends a programme for its work based on the seven disciplines of evangelisation outlined in GS 1917.
23. The debate is co-sponsored by the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council. In support of the debate, the Bishops of Chelmsford, Sheffield and St Albans have prepared a paper proposing ways forward as well as building on the known priorities of both Archbishops. The Mission and Public Affairs Council is very keen to see this debate take place as it will allow the Synod to focus on a great deal of work that has taken place in recent years but which has so far failed to find an outlet in the Synodical process. The hope is that the debate will enable the Synod to articulate collectively a set of frequently voiced priorities which now need to be stated clearly through the process of a debate, a motion and a vote.

#### ***Legislative Business***

24. The Legislative Business for this group of sessions is set out in Special Agenda I. It will be taken on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.
25. The draft Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure and draft Amending Canon No 31, which make miscellaneous uncontroversial amendments to ecclesiastical law, return to the Synod for Final Drafting and Final Approval.
26. Two further draft Measures will come before the Synod for First Consideration, giving effect to legislative changes which have already been outlined to the Synod.
27. The draft Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (Amendment) Measure takes the reform of the faculty jurisdiction system, begun in July by the approval of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013, a stage further by giving effect to the remaining

legislative changes described in the report of the Archbishops' Council's Simplification Group (GS Misc 1048), which was laid before the Synod in July.

28. The draft Church of England (Ecclesiastical Property) Measure will amend the arrangements for the holding of property by PCCs in the way outlined to the Synod by the Archbishops' Council in July (GS Misc 1060). The Measure will give PCCs and trustees of property subject to the Incumbents and Churchwardens (Trusts) Measure 1964 greater freedom to deal with their property by removing the need for the diocesan authority's consent for certain kinds of disposal and the bringing of legal proceedings.
29. Finally, agreement will also be sought for two instruments which also reflect earlier decisions of the Synod. First, following its approval in July of the scheme prepared by the Dioceses Commission for diocesan reorganisation in West Yorkshire, the Synod will be invited to make transitional arrangements for the representation of the new diocese of Leeds in the Synod. Secondly, approval will be sought for the Vacancies in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2013. It will give effect to the Bradford Diocesan Synod motion passed by the Synod in July 2012, which called for the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation to be amended so as to require Vacancy in See Committees to have at least 21 members.

### ***Questions***

30. An hour and a half has been allocated for Questions, in the hope that this will make it possible for the majority of the Questions for oral answer to be taken.
31. Any member wishing to ask a question of any of the bodies or persons specified in Standing Order 105 must deliver notice of it to the Clerk to the Synod by **5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 6 November**. Questions sent by email should be addressed to [questions@churchofengland.org](mailto:questions@churchofengland.org)
32. Members are reminded that **all questions will be presumed to be for written answer** unless an oral answer is specifically requested.

### ***Women in the Episcopate***

33. As the first part of a three-stage approach to this work at this group of sessions, there will be a brief presentation on the report from the Steering Committee for the draft legislation on Women in the Episcopate to set the scene for discussion in small groups on Tuesday morning. This arrangement will enable members to go straight to meeting rooms at various locations on Tuesday morning.

### **Tuesday 19 November**

#### ***Group work***

34. Group work will start with worship at 9.15 a.m. The Synod will resume in plenary at 11.45 a.m. The Business Committee has taken the view that it will be helpful to debate other business immediately after the group work and not begin the debates on women in the episcopate until Wednesday morning. This will allow time for members

to reflect on the conversations in groups. In addition the Committee has decided to set the **deadline for amendments to the Steering Committee's motion as 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday** (rather than 10.00 a.m. as it would normally be under the Standing Orders) so that the deadline comes after the group work.

### ***Presidential Address***

35. The Archbishop of York will give a Presidential Address.

### ***The Church School of the Future***

36. There was a presentation on the Chadwick report, *The Church School of the Future*, to the General Synod in July 2012. Members responded positively to the call for determined action to enable the Church's stake in the national education system to be maintained.
37. Since then considerable progress has been made by the National Society / Board of Education on the 26 recommendations which have shaped the wider work of the education team and of diocesan education staff.
38. The Bishop of Oxford, as Chair of the National Society and the Board of Education, will present a progress report (GS 1920) on the work accomplished, with an assessment of what remains to be completed by the end of the Chadwick project in July 2014. The report will offer an assessment of the impact of the work and the implications for future activity.

### ***Diocesan Synod Motion Review of the Workings of the General Synod***

39. The two papers (GS 1914A and GS 1914B) which were circulated in July to inform the debate on the London Diocesan Synod Motion calling for a Review of the Workings of the General Synod have been re-circulated.

### **Wednesday 20 November**

### ***Legislative Business Women in the Episcopate***

40. After the service of Holy Communion there will be the second and third parts of the package of items relating to the draft legislation on Women in the Episcopate. First, the Synod will debate the Steering Committee's report (GS 1924), which describes the package of proposals that the Committee has prepared in accordance with the mandate set by the Synod in July. The motion will give the Synod the opportunity to welcome the Committee's work and the statements of the five guiding principles which were articulated by the House of Bishops in paragraph 12 of GS 1886 and underpin the Committee's approach.
41. The Synod will then be invited to give first consideration to the draft Measure and draft Amending Canon prepared by the Committee. With the agreement of the Business Committee, the Chair of the Steering Committee will move under Standing

Order 57 that the legislation should be committed for revision in full Synod.

***The Work of the Elections Review Group: Second Report by the Business Committee: resumed debate (GS 1906)***

42. In July, the Synod debated the first Report by the Business Committee on the work of the Elections Review Group (GS 1901) and took note of the report. The debate on the second Report by the Business Committee (GS 1906) ran out of time and was adjourned. The Synod will have the opportunity to continue the debate on the motion that will be re-introduced by Canon Sue Booy, as the new Chair of the Business Committee. The main issues before the Synod will be
- the electorate for the House of Laity; and
  - introducing an online facility for nominations and voting in respect of elections to the General Synod.
43. The Business Committee takes the view that while the introduction of a fully functioning new electoral system is not achievable by 2015, the introduction of a nominations process which provides for the submission of nominations by email is still possible in time for the 2015 elections.
44. Three amendments to the motion were tabled in July and will be included in the Order Paper. Further amendments are permissible.

***Farewells***

45. There will be an opportunity for the Synod to say farewell to the Bishop of Guildford and the Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, both of whom will be attending the Synod for the last time, and to the Standing Counsel, Sir Anthony Hammond, who will be retiring at the end of the year.

**III: Other Work of the Business Committee**

*Visual appearance*

46. Following the introduction of webcasting at the July Synod, it has become apparent that the visual aspect of Synod meetings needs to be updated. In the context of its discussion with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chaplain in September (see paras 2-3 above), the Business Committee gave preliminary consideration to some proposals for providing a more modern and media-friendly background to Synod debates.
47. The Committee intends to discuss this further at future meetings as part of its general review of how the Synod works.

*Circulation of Synod papers*

48. The Committee has reviewed the arrangements for circulation of Synod papers. Over a hundred members have now asked to receive papers electronically; circulation of

paper copies to Diocesan Secretaries has been reduced and has been entirely discontinued to Registrars and Chancellors. From now on Agendas and associated papers (eg Notice and Order Papers) will also be available electronically on request. It is expected that an increasing number of members will sign up to electronic circulations in the future and the Committee would encourage them to do so.

#### *General Synod website*

49. The Committee has also considered a proposal for developing a dedicated Synod website. Currently the main source of information about the General Synod is the Church of England website and it is proposed that a separate, distinct website - with a clear link to the Church of England website - should be established to make the Synod more accessible to both Synod members and casual enquirers. It will provide information frequently sought from the Synod Office (with regard to Synod papers, groups of sessions, the process for tabling Diocesan Synod Motions and Private Members' Motions, procedures for elections, etc). The Committee has asked for a detailed proposal to be developed for consideration at its March meeting.
50. The Committee welcomes comments and suggestions from members about the way in which the Synod works and these should be sent to the Clerk at:

[jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org](mailto:jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org)

#### ***Forecast of Future Business***

51. The forecast of future business annexed to this report provides a forward look to the groups of sessions in 2014. This should not be read as more than a broad indication of the business expected to come to the Synod next year.

On behalf of the Business Committee

Sue Booy  
Chair

September 2013



## **Membership of the Business Committee**

### *Chair*

The Revd Canon Sue Booy (Oxford)

### *Elected by the House of Bishops*

The Rt Revd James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester

### *Elected by the House of Clergy*

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)

The Revd Charles Razzall (Chester)

(Vacancy)

### *Elected by the House of Laity*

Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter)

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich)

Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester)

### *Appointed by the Archbishops' Council*

The Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield)

Mrs Christina Rees (St Albans)

The Secretary to the Committee is the Clerk to the Synod (Dr Jacqui Philips)  
and the Assistant Secretary is Eva Sadowski.

## **Forecast of future General Synod business**

This forecast should not be read as more than a broad indication of business that may come to the Synod in 2014 and 2015. Timings are therefore approximate and not a guarantee that they will be dealt with at the Synod session indicated.

One or more reports are usually taken at each group of sessions.

One or more Diocesan Synod Motions and one or more Private Members' Motions are customarily included in the Agenda for each group of sessions (see Special Agendas III and IV).

### *Legislative business*

#### **February 2014**

- Women in the Episcopate legislation – Revision Stage
- Women in the Episcopate legislation – consideration of the draft House of Bishops declaration and draft dispute resolution procedure
- Pensions (Amendment) Measure [to extend the Church Commissioners' power to resort to capital for pensions liabilities] – First Consideration
- ? Amending Canon to give effect to the Southwell and Nottingham DSM – First Consideration
- Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution [to give effect to the changes to the CRRs proposed by the Simplification Group]
- Terms of Service Amending Regulation
- Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order
- Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order
- ? Declaration of incompatibility under s.8 CDM

#### **July 2014**

- [?Women in the Episcopate legislation – (depending on timing and outcome of Article 8 reference to dioceses)]
- Amending Canon No. 32 and Amending Resolutions relating to GS elections etc – Revision Stage
- Measure and Amending Canon in relation to the Chichester Visitation recommendations – First Consideration
- Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (Amendment) Measure – Revision Stage
- Church of England (Ecclesiastical Property) Measure – Revision Stage
- Pensions (Amendment) Measure – Revision and Final Drafting/Final Approval
- ? Amending Canon to give effect to the Southwell and Nottingham DSM – Revision Stage
- Payments to the Churches Conservation Trust Order
- Usual fees orders

### *Liturgical business*

- Additional Texts for Holy Baptism

### *Reports*

- Proposals for legislative and other change arising from the Chichester Visitation
- Re-imagining Ministry (Ministry Division)
- Debate on the Economy (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- Anglican-Methodist Covenant: Report from the Joint Implementation Commission
- Aspects of Rural Church Life (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- The Armed Forces Covenant and Community Covenants: debate sponsored by the Mission and Public Affairs Council in consultation with Chaplains General to the Armed Forces and the Royal British Legion
- Welfare Reform – follow-up to the July 2013 debate (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- Chaplaincy (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- Violence against women (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- Theology of taxation (Mission and Public Affairs Council)
- Churches' Mutual Credit Union (CMCU): presentation
- Ethical Investments: Presentation by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group
- Follow-up to CMEAC report *Unfinished Business: A pastoral and missional approach for the next debate* (GS 1844) (Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns)