

## HOUSE OF BISHOPS

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

A meeting of the House of Bishops was held in the Guard Room, Lambeth Palace on 14 - 15 December 2015. Those matters reported below were taken in Committee of the whole House, under SO 14.

1. The House discussed next steps on **Renewal and Reform**. They agreed the proposed Motions for Synod on **Simplification** and **Resourcing the Future**. They agreed that the proposals on Resourcing Ministerial Education should go forward to the Council for approval in January, prior to finalising the Motion to be debated at Synod in February.
2. The House agreed to the proposals outlined in the paper **Towards a Revised Catechism**, namely that the work on an informal 'Pilgrim Catechism' should continue.
3. On **Safeguarding**, the House noted the developments with regard to the delivery of the 2015 Safeguarding Business Plan outlined in an Overview paper. The House heard an update on the preparations that were being made by the Church to respond to the **National Independent Inquiry into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)**.
4. The House approved a number of Safeguarding draft regulations and practice guidance. These included:
  - National **Safeguarding practice guidance on responding to serious safeguarding situations** and **risk assessments**
  - **Regulations on diocesan safeguarding advisers and risk assessments**
  - The new **National Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework**
5. The House discussed the work of the **FAOC Theology and Safeguarding Project** and the two papers which were being developed. They agreed to send further drafting suggestions on the first paper to the Theological Adviser to the House of Bishops. The House agreed that both papers should return to the House for discussion at their May 2016 meeting.
6. The House looked ahead to future General Synod meetings. The House agreed that legislation to amend **Canon B38 'Of the Burial of the Dead'** should be brought to Synod in due course. The House agreed that a consultation document on **Canon B8 'Vesture'** should be issued to seek views prior to proceeding with bringing any legislation to the General Synod.
7. The House discussed a paper on **Welfare Reform** from the Mission and Public Affairs Division. The House requested the establishment of a small 'review group' of Bishops to make final changes and submit an amended draft for discussion at their meeting in May 2016.
8. The House heard a presentation from the new Chair of the **Liturgical Commission**.
9. The House noted the progress of preparation of a paper from the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) on **Diversity, Difference and Serious Disagreement in the Life of the Church** which will support the Shared Conversations process.

10. The House heard an update on the progress of the **Shared Conversations** in the dioceses and plans for the structure of the Shared Conversations at the General Synod in July 2016.
11. The House discussed an issue concerning the **ordination of Deacons** in the context of the outworking of the **House of Bishops Declaration on Women in the Episcopate**. They requested the Bishops of Sheffield and Chichester to carry out further work on this issue, reporting to the Standing Committee in March 2016 and the House in May 2016.
12. The House agreed to keep the transitional arrangements for the **Regional Representatives** in place pending a review in 2020. They agreed that this review would be brought forward should a scenario arise before then in which all Suffragans elected to the House were female and/or if the gender balance in the House reached 1/3 – 2/3 or higher.
13. The House agreed that the election of the Bishop of Stockport to the Northern Suffragans should trigger an election of the **Regional Representative for the North West**.
14. The House agreed to send any further contributions for the **Theological Reference Group** headed by Professor David Ford to the Education Office by mid January 2016.

Church House  
Westminster SW1P 3AZ  
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William Nye  
Secretary General