

GENERAL SYNOD

Report on the Archbishops' Council's activities

1. The Archbishops' Council presents this report on its activities since the February 2016 group of sessions in accordance with the requirements of the National Institutions Measure 1998. It has met on two occasions since its last report was prepared – on 9-10 March and 17 May.

Renewal and Reform

2. The major focus of Council meetings remains the various elements of Renewal and Reform. While the Council has had to focus on individual elements of Renewal and Reform as they reach critical points in their development, it has also received regular updates on the totality of the work that is being undertaken. It is keen to ensure that it doesn't lose sight of the vision behind Renewal and Reform – to enable dioceses and parishes to plan for a hopeful future for the work of the Church of England.
3. It has, therefore, focussed particularly on a vision and narrative for Reform and Renewal and invites the Synod to engage with them at the July group of sessions (GS 2038).
4. The Council has also considered the emerging thinking of the Lay Leadership Task Group, which is due to report to the Council in September.
5. The idea of a measure to simplify the process for legislation change was first put forward in GS Misc 1094 *Optimising the Role of the National Church Institutions*. GS 2018, reflecting the outcome of more detailed discussions and work since the publication of that report, was well-received at the February group of sessions. The Synod now has before it for First Consideration the Draft Legislative Reform Measure (GS 2027).

Other mission developments

6. The Council has kept abreast of the initiative taken by the National Society to develop a new national teaching and educational learning partnership (GS 2039).
7. The Council is keenly aware of the mission opportunities associated with the Occasional Offices and has agreed additional funding for the Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals Projects to facilitate more training and resource development.
8. Also of interest are the opportunities for evangelism amongst students. The Council spent time considering the issues at its meeting in March and has commissioned some initial work to be done in advance of its meeting in September.

Other matters

9. The Council reviewed its risk register to ensure that the risks to which it was exposed had been properly identified and that mitigating measures were in place to manage those risks. It agreed its budget for 2017, taking account both the priorities and opportunities that lie ahead and of the major risks it has identified (GS 2041).
10. The Council agreed a 1.5% increase in the National Stipend Benchmark from 1 April 2017.

New Council

11. As part of its March meeting, the Council undertook a day of induction including work to develop a common understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Council and its members. A significant amount of further work has arisen from that meeting and is being taken forward to improve business management and the Council's working processes.

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21 June 2016

William Nye
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