

GENERAL SYNOD**February 2010 Group of Sessions****Report by the Business Committee*****Introduction***

1. The Committee's decision to shorten the July 2009 Synod brought many comments from members both at and after the Synod, and highlighted important differences in the way members perceive the nature and role of the General Synod. Synod is both a legislative and a deliberative body, and opinions vary considerably about the relative importance of these two aspects of its role. The time needed for the process of legislation is clearly defined, but the process of deliberation, and the time needed for it, is more open to question.
2. How important is it that we allow time for common reflection without votes, for debates where the outcome is always certain, but where Synod can be seen to vote with one voice on an issue of the day, for group work or Bible study or other opportunities for Synod to learn together? What should be the priority of Diocesan Synod Motions, and do they effectively link our work with the minds and concerns of the dioceses?
3. Other issues that feed into this discussion - financial constraints at every level of the Church, an acknowledgement of the need for working lay members to take time off work to attend Synod, and the wish to encourage plenty of good candidates to stand for the new Synod this year, encouraged the Business Committee to embark on consideration of the future role and nature of the General Synod, and how it can be best supported.
4. The Archbishops' Council discussed this at its December meeting and supported the Committee's intention to conduct a survey among Synod members to help progress the discussion. A questionnaire will be made available online and a link to the website will be sent to members by e-mail just before this Group of Sessions. To reduce cost and staff time, we would **encourage as many members as possible to complete the questionnaire online**, but a hard copy will, of course, be available for those without access to the internet.

Overview of the Agenda

5. February Group of Sessions will be the penultimate meeting of the General Synod of the present quinquennium. It is customary to attempt to complete legislative business and liturgical business within the same quinquennium (although inevitably the women bishops legislative process will span both this and the next); Private Members' Motions lapse at the end of the quinquennium (unlike Diocesan Synod Motions which are carried over to the next). There is also a particular need for significant items relating to clergy pensions to be taken at this Group of Sessions, prior to a formal consultation process ensuing and decisions being taken at the July Synod.
6. The Revision Committee on Women in the Episcopate has reluctantly concluded that it still has too much to undertake in order to conclude its work in time for the February Synod. At the invitation of the Business Committee, the Bishop of Manchester as Chair of the Steering Committee will make a statement on the latest position.

7. The Business Committee therefore considers that as much space as possible should be made available in July to provide sufficient time for the Revision Stage, as well as the more pressing items in the forecast of business for July.
8. With these factors in mind, the Business Committee has provided time at the February Synod for debates on the following (in addition to the usual financial business, annual reports, question time (v. paragraph 19 below) and a Presidential Address):
 - the final drafting and final approval stages of a number of pieces of legislation, including the Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure and Codes of Practice under the Clergy Terms of Service legislation;
 - the Revision Stage of the liturgical business on the additional Weekday Lectionary;
 - four of the five Private Members' Motions which have attracted over 100 signatures (which the Business Committee considers is a reasonable threshold for being considered for debate) - with the exception of the PMM from the Revd Richard Moy, which the Committee has agreed to postpone until July following a request by the mover who is not in a position to move it in February;
 - two debates on clergy pensions: one being the result of the work of the Archbishops' Task Group; and the other being the outcome of an exercise led by the former Bishop of Warrington on ill-health pensions – both sets of proposals now being brought forward by the Archbishops' Council;
 - the five Diocesan Synod Motions (two on the same subject) which remain to be debated; (these do not include the DSMs from the Dioceses of Southwark and Rochester, which the Business Committee has decided should not be debated whilst the women bishops legislative process continues);
 - a presentation on Fresh Expressions; and a debate on Mission-shaped Church (being a sequel to the earlier Synod debate on Mission-shaped Church);
 - a debate on work with children and young people (following the debate on the Good Childhood Enquiry at the July Synod);
 - a presentation from the Chaplain General and a colleague on the work of armed forces chaplains, in the context of present military operations overseas;
 - an address by the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference (who have been invited by the Archbishops as Presidents of the Synod), to be followed by contributions from the floor.
9. The February Synod Agenda therefore encompasses a wide range of subjects, which are concerned not only with the Church's ordering, governance and finances, but also with its engagement with wider society.
10. The forecast of business (annexed to this report) provides a forward look to the July group of sessions. The inclusion of items within the forecast provides no guarantee that an item will be scheduled for debate.

Venue and Timing

11. The February Group of Sessions will take place **in Church House, Westminster from 4.15 pm on Monday 8 February to 12.30 pm on Friday 12 February**. Before the start of the full Synod, the House of Clergy will meet at 2 pm (in the Harvey Goodwin suite) and the House of Laity at 2 pm (in the Assembly Hall).

Worship

12. A service of **Holy Communion** will take place **in the Assembly Hall at 9.30 am on Wednesday 10 February**. An act of worship will take place at the commencement of the morning sittings at 9.30 am on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Outline information about services in the Church House Chapel is given in the Agenda (GS 1756).

Order of Business

13. 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. As there is no contingency business available at this Group of Sessions, the Chair of the Business Committee may need to seek a variation in the order of business, which would have the effect of moving forward an item of business which is listed later in the Agenda.

Private Members' Motions

14. Private Members' Motions are contained in Special Agenda III. Notice of any new Private Members' Motions will be published in a Notice Paper, and the motions will be available at the February Group of Sessions for signature by members (to indicate their support for a debate on them) but only if they are received no later than **5.30 pm on Monday 8 February**.

Details of the Agenda

Introductions, welcomes, progress of legislation (Monday, 8 February)

15. There will be the usual introductions of new members and other formal announcements.

Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure

16. The Chair of the Steering Committee will make a presentation to the Synod.

Report by the Business Committee (GS 1757)

17. This will provide the customary opportunity for members to raise points about content and shape of the Agenda for this Group of Sessions, or about the Synod's business generally.

Questions

18. Anyone wishing to ask a question of any of the bodies or persons specified in Standing Order 105 must give notice of it to reach the Clerk to the Synod by **5.30 pm on Wednesday, 27 January 2010**.
19. Members are reminded that **all submitted questions will be presumed to be for written answer** unless an oral answer is specifically requested.

Legislative Business (Tuesday, 9 February)

20. Details of the legislative business at the February Group of Sessions are contained in Special Agenda I.
21. The Synod will be asked to complete a number of items of legislative business – chiefly by giving Final Approval to the Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure, which will put in place a new framework for the making of orders providing for parochial fees. Additionally, the Synod will be invited to complete all the remaining legislative stages for the two ‘consolidation’ Measures introduced at the July group of sessions, which reproduce (with corrections and minor improvements) the existing legislation in, respectively, (a) the Pastoral Measure 1983 and much of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 and (b) the three Measures relating to the care of cathedrals.
22. Additionally, as part of the continuing process of implementing the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure, the Synod will be asked to give Final Approval to Amending Canon No 29 (which makes a number of miscellaneous changes to the Canons needed to give effect to Common Tenure) and to approve two Codes of Practice issued by the Archbishops’ Council under the Terms of Service Regulations, which set out the capability and grievance procedures that will apply to clergy under Common Tenure. (Both Codes will be accompanied by detailed advice, copies of which will be provided to members of Synod for their information.)

Presidential Address

23. The Archbishop of Canterbury will give a Presidential Address.

Clergy Pensions: Proposed Scheme Changes: Report from the Archbishops’ Council

24. The report from the Archbishops’ Council (GS 1758) sets out the reasons for the changes being proposed: the possibility of opting into the State Second Pension; increasing the pension age for future service to 68; increasing the accrual period for future service to 43 years; and limiting increases in National Minimum Stipend, which is used as the basis for calculating pensions at the point of retirement, to RPI. Following a presentation by the Chief Executive of the Pensions Board, Shaun Farrell, the Bishop of Ripon and Leeds will introduce the report.

Clergy Pensions: Ill-health Retirement: Report from the Archbishops’ Council

25. The report (GS 1759) sets out the reasons for the changes being proposed: national minimum standards for occupational health support, a change to pension benefits, and use of

capability procedure as a prelude to ill-health retirement. The report will be introduced by the Bishop of Dudley.

General Synod Elections: Report from the Business Committee on the Distribution of Places (GS 1760)

26. The Synod is asked to agree the diocesan allocation of elected clergy and lay seats on the General Synod, in the light of current diocesan statistical data, in readiness for the quinquennial elections to the Synod after the dissolution of the Synod in July 2010.

Mission-shaped Church

27. The report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS 1761) will be introduced by its Chair, Dr Philip Giddings. The motion before the Synod will follow up the debate on Mission-shaped Church in the General Synod in 2004, and will encourage action in three specific areas: recruitment, training and deployment; the making of Bishops' Mission orders; and research on the growth of the mixed-economy Church.

Holy Communion (Wednesday, 10 February)

28. A service of Holy Communion will be celebrated at 9.30 am in the Assembly Hall. The Archbishop of Canterbury will preside.

Private Member's Motion: Mr Nigel Holmes: TV Coverage of Religious and Ethical Issues

29. A background paper by Mr Nigel Holmes (GS 1762A) is being circulated, together with a background paper from the Communications Office (GS 1762B).

44th Report of the Standing Orders Committee

30. The 44th Report of the Standing Orders Committee (GS 1763) reports on a number of miscellaneous proposed changes to the Standing Orders, the details of which are contained in the First Notice Paper. Matters addressed include the procedures for considering 'consolidation' Measures and the procedures of Revision Committees.

Private Member's Motion: Mrs Lorna Ashworth: Anglican Church in North America

31. A background paper by Mrs Lorna Ashworth (GS 1764A) is being circulated, together with a factual background note from the Secretary General (GS 1764B) on issues relevant to the motion.

Military Chaplaincy

32. There will be a presentation from the Chaplain-General for HM Land Forces, the Venerable Stephen Robbins, the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Venerable John Green, and the Chaplain-in-Chief (RAF), the Venerable Ray Pentland, on the work of Armed Forces Chaplains in the context of present military operations overseas. They have prepared a background paper to accompany the presentation (GS 1776).

Liturgical Business: Additional Weekday Lectionary and Amendments to Calendar, Lectionary and Collects (GS1724A)

33. This liturgical business received First Consideration at the July 2009 Group of Sessions. It has been revised by the Revision Committee and now comes back to the Synod for the Revision Stage in full Synod.

Chelmsford Diocesan Synod Motion: Confidence in the Bible

34. This motion was listed as contingency business at the July Synod. The background paper from the Chelmsford Diocese (GS 1765A) and a note from the Secretary General (GS 1765B) are being re-circulated.

Address by the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference (Thursday, 11 February)

35. At the invitation from the Presidents, the Revd David Gamble (President of the Methodist Conference), and Dr Richard Vautrey (Vice-President of the Conference) will address the Synod. There will be an opportunity for questions and contributions from the floor.

Fresh Expressions: Presentation (GS 1766)

36. Bishop Graham Cray (Archbishops' Missioner and Team Leader of Fresh Expressions) will give a presentation on the current programme and future plans for Fresh Expressions.

Realising the Missionary Potential of Church Buildings: Presentation by the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division

37. The Cathedral and Church Buildings Division (CCB), represented by its Chairman, the Bishop of London, will preface the Ripon and Leeds motion with a short presentation on what the Division has achieved since the publication five years ago of *Building Faith in our Future*, and on the challenges that cathedrals and church buildings face today. The presentation will be supported by a background paper (GS 1767), which will also touch on the issues in the Ripon and Leeds DSM.

Ripon and Leeds Diocesan Synod Motion: Repair of Church Buildings

38. The Diocese of Lichfield Diocesan Synod has passed a motion in identical terms to the Ripon and Leeds Diocesan Synod.
39. The Diocese of Ripon and Leeds, in association with the Diocese of Lichfield, has produced a background paper (GS 1768).

Going for Growth: Transformation for Children, Young People and the Church: A report from the Board of Education/National Society Council

40. The Bishop of Lincoln will introduce a report *Going for Growth* (GS 1769) on the Board of Education's revised strategy for children and young people. The strategy document updates the two strategies currently approved by the Synod, *Good News for Young People* (2002) and *Sharing Good News with Children* (2003).

41. Prepared following an extensive consultation process, the strategy provides a theological framework within which the Church's encounter with children and young people can be located, and three clear priorities in that work. The Archbishops' Council endorsed the strategy and its accompanying work plan in September 2009. This provides an opportunity for Synod members to be informed about what is being taken forward in this area of the Church's mission and ministry, and to consider ways of communicating and implementing the Report's strategy and its practical proposals. Synod members will be able to ask questions and offer their reflections on issues raised in the strategy.

Private Member's Motion: The Revd Mark Bratton: Parity of Pension Provision for Surviving Civil Partners

42. A background paper by the Revd Mark Bratton (GS 1770A) is being circulated, together with a background paper by the Deployment, Recruitment and Conditions of Service Committee (GS 1770B).

Legislative Business

43. Please see paragraphs 20 to 22 above.

Private Member's Motion: Mr Thomas Benyon: Violent Computer Games

44. Background papers from Mr Tom Benyon (GS 1771A) and from the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS 1771B) are being circulated. The Government has, within the last year, commissioned, received and acted on a report on violent computer games, and this will be reflected in the background material.

Manchester Diocesan Synod Motion: Compatibility of Science and Christian Belief (Friday, 12 February)

45. A background paper from the Manchester Diocese (GS 1772A) is being circulated, together with a background paper from the Mission and Public Affairs Division (GS 1772B), which has been prepared by two members of the Mission Theology Advisory Group with scientific backgrounds.

Coventry Diocesan Synod Motion: Deanery Synods

46. Background papers from the Coventry Diocese (GS 1773A) and from the Secretary General (GS 1773B) are being circulated.

Farewells

47. There will be a farewell to the Bishop of Southwark.

Prorogation

48. The Synod will be prorogued by the Archbishop of Canterbury no later than 12.30 pm.

The work of the Business Committee

49. The Committee considered eleven items of correspondence which had been received (and which had been acknowledged and copied to the Committee) following the July Group of Sessions, four of them in response to the Business Committee's invitation to members to comment on the optimum timing of Synod meetings. Some comments on the agenda for the July Synod commended the planning of the business, but others felt the agenda was too inward-looking.
50. There was positive feedback from the group work on the ARCIC report *Life in Christ*. Other comments included two requests for the Business Committee to consider whether guidance should be issued to Synod members on the declaration of interests in debates – and this is now under consideration by the Committee.
51. The Committee's attention is turning to the elections to the Synod in 2010 and the inauguration of the new Synod in November. In particular, it is looking at ways of stimulating interest in the Synod elections, and encouraging and supporting new members of the Synod, and is doing so in consultation with the Communications Department. The Committee is also continuing to look at ways in which the technical facilities at the Synod (both in London and at York) could be further improved.

On behalf of the Business Committee,

Kay Garlick

December 2009

Membership of the Business Committee

The Revd Prebendary Kay Garlick (Hereford) - *Chair*

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Trevor Willmott, Bishop of Dover

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Ven Alan Hawker, Archdeacon of Malmesbury (Bristol) - *Vice-Chair*

The Revd Sue Booy (Oxford)

The Ven Julian Henderson, Archdeacon of Dorking (Guildford)

Elected by the House of Laity

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich)

Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester)

Mrs Rosalind O'Dowd (London)

Two members of the Archbishops' Council

Professor John Craven (Appointed)

The Revd Canon Glyn Webster (Appointed)

The Secretary to the Committee is the Revd David Williams
and the Assistant Secretary is David Pertaub

Forecast of future General Synod business

One or more Private Members' Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions are customarily included in each Group of Sessions.

The forecast of business provides a forward look to the Groups of Sessions in July 2010. **There are always considerable uncertainties when looking ahead in this way, so this should not be read as more than a broad indication of business that may come to the Synod before the end of the present quinquennium.** In particular the Business Committee is committed to giving priority in July, subject to scheduling other essential business, to providing as much time as possible to facilitate the completion of the Revision Stage of the legislation on the admission of women to the episcopate.

There will also be the customary Presidential Address, financial business, annual reports etc.

Legislative business

- Ordination of Women to the Episcopate: Revision Stage
- Amending Canon No 29 [Clergy Terms of Service] – Promulgation
- Usual Fees Orders
- Order under s.11 Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure
- Directions relating to maternity and related leave under the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations
- Clergy pension scheme rule changes

Liturgical business

- Additional Weekday Lectionary: Final Approval

Reports

- Pensions: proposed changes to Pensions Scheme, in the light of the consultation process
- Anglican Covenant
- Review of Constitutions: further consultation
- Nature and role of the General Synod: result of survey, and response by the Archbishops' Council and the Business Committee
- Relationship between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland: *Pathways to Partnership* report
- Standing Orders Committee report relating to Commissions of the General Synod