

The General Synod has given overwhelming backing to new guidance which will help Church of England congregations to share mission and ministry more easily with a range of churches in their areas.

Members voted today in favour of a code of practice giving guidance to bishops, clergy, lay workers and Church of England Readers on how to work more flexibly with other Christian denominations in their communities.

The vote comes after an overhaul of rules underpinning ecumenical relations was given final approval by the General Synod last year opening the way for parishes to take part in joint worship and share buildings with more churches than previously possible.

The new rules include churches without a large national presence which will particularly affect newer independent evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic groups including many black-led churches.

The Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, addressing the General Synod, said: “We hope and pray, as has already been noted, that this will be a sign of encouragement and enthusiasm, which will lead to the renewal and deepening of our life together and our witness to Jesus Christ.”

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