

HOUSE OF LAITY OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

Membership

46 (1) The members of the House of Laity of the General Synod are

(a) each person elected by the diocesan electors of each diocese (see [Rule 54](#)),

(b) each representative elected under the Channel Islands (Representation) Measure 1931,

(c) two lay persons elected or chosen by and from the members of religious communities having their mother house in either province, with the election or choice being made in such manner as the rules under [Rule 56](#) provide,

(d) each person who is an ex officio member under [Rule 47](#),

(e) each person who is co-opted under [Rule 48](#), and

(f) at least three but no more than four other persons, each of whom is an actual communicant and who is elected or chosen as soon as practicable after a dissolution of the Synod in such manner as the Armed Forces Synod may decide or, in so far as provision is not made in that manner, in such manner as the rules under [Rule 56](#) provide.

(2) The term of office of a member of the House of Laity under paragraph (1)(a), (b), (c) or (f) is (subject to termination or resignation) for the lifetime of the Synod for which the member is elected or chosen; but that does not prevent the person from doing either of the following during a dissolution of the Synod

(a) acting under Article 3(4) of the Constitution (under which a person may continue to act as a member of a body of the Synod);

(b) continuing to be an ex officio member of a body constituted under these Rules.

(3) The deadline for qualifying as a member of a religious community for the purposes of paragraph (1)(c) is 6.00 a.m. on

(a) the date of the dissolution of the Synod, or

(b) where there is a casual vacancy, the date on which nomination papers are issued.

(4) The total number of persons elected or chosen under the following provisions taken together must not exceed seven

(a) paragraph (1)(f) of this Rule,

(b) in Canon H2 (representation of the clergy in the Lower House of the Convocations), paragraph 1(d) in the form which it takes in relation to the Province of Canterbury, and

(c) in Canon H3 (constitution of the Upper Houses of the Convocations), paragraph 1(bb).

(5) For the purposes of this Part of these Rules, the diocese in Europe is to be treated as a diocese in the province of Canterbury.

Ex officio members

47 (1) Each of the following, if not in Holy Orders, is an ex officio member of the House of Laity

(a) the Dean of the Arches and Auditor;

(b) the Vicar-General of the Province of Canterbury;

(c) the Vicar-General of the Province of York;

(d) each of the three Church Estates Commissioners;

(e) the Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board;

(f) each member of the Archbishops' Council who is an actual communicant;

(g) the Chair of the Dioceses Commission.

(2) An ex officio member has the same rights and is subject to the same requirements as an elected member.

Co-option

48 (1) The House of Laity may co-opt a lay person aged 18 or over who is an actual communicant; but the number of co-opted members may not at any time exceed five.

(2) A person may be co-opted only if at least two-thirds of the Standing Committee of the House of Laity have consented, either at a meeting or in writing.

(3) A co-opted member has the same rights and is subject to the same requirements as an elected member.

(4) A co-opted member serves until the next dissolution of the Synod, subject to paragraph (5); but that does not prevent the member from doing either of the following during a dissolution of the Synod

(a) acting under Article 3(4) of the Constitution (under which a person may continue to act as a member of a body of the Synod);

(b) continuing to be an ex officio member of a body constituted under these Rules.

(5) The House of Laity may impose a shorter term of membership on a co-opted member than would otherwise be the case.

(6) Paragraphs (4) and (5) do not prevent a person from being co-opted on one or more subsequent occasions.

(7) The House of Laity may by standing orders make provision to regulate the procedure for the appointment of co-opted members and provision which is incidental to such appointments or which otherwise gives effect to this Rule.

Numbers

49 (1) The total number of the members of the House of Laity elected by the diocesan electors of each diocese (directly elected members) and the representatives elected under the Channel Islands (Representation) Measure 1931 must not exceed 195.

(2) Each diocese must have at least three directly elected members, other than the diocese of Sodor and Man which is to elect only one member.

(3) The total number of directly elected members is to be decided by resolution of the General Synod no later than the last day of February in the fifth year after the most recent election of the House of Laity.

(4) A resolution under paragraph (3) must apportion the number of directly elected members between the province of Canterbury and the province of York

(a) in the proportion of 70 to 30 (or as close to that as possible), or

(b) if the resolution specifies some other proportion, in that other proportion (or as close to it as possible).

(5) A resolution under paragraph (3) must divide the number of directly elected members among the dioceses so that the number of members to be elected by each diocese is as nearly as possible proportionate to the total of

(a) the number of names on the rolls of the parishes in that diocese, and

(b) the number of names on the mission initiative rolls for mission initiatives in that diocese.

(6) The method for making the division required under paragraph (5) is to be specified by the Business Committee.

(7) The secretary of each diocesan synod must, no later than 1 August in the fourth year after the most recent election of the House of Laity, certify to the Clerk to the General Synod the total of

(a) the number of the names on the rolls of the parishes in that diocese, as notified to the secretary under [Rule 10](#), and

(b) the number of the names on the mission initiative rolls for the mission initiatives in the diocese, as notified to the secretary under [Rule 27D](#).

(8) The number of directly elected members for a diocese must, once it has been decided by the General Synod, be certified as soon as is practicable to the secretary of the diocesan synod.

(9) If the General Synod is dissolved, or a dissolution is pending, but a resolution under paragraph (3) has not been made, the Presidents or the Synod may give directions as to deciding and certifying the number of directly elected members for each diocese.

(10) Directions under paragraph (9) may provide that the numbers decided and certified on the most recent occasion are to be treated as having been decided and certified for the purposes of the coming election.

(11) For the purposes of paragraphs (5)(b) and 7(b), if a mission initiative is in more than one diocese, the number of names on the mission initiative roll is to be divided equally between each diocese (but if it is not so divisible without remainder, the remainder is to be ignored); and the reference to the number of names on the mission initiative roll maintained in the diocese for that initiative is to be construed accordingly.

(12) The reference in paragraph (7)(b) to notifications under [Rule 27D](#) includes, in the case of any mission initiative roll established under [Rule 29A](#) of the Old Rules, a reference to the notification given under Rule paragraph (7)(b) of that Rule; and "the Old Rules" has the meaning given in [Rule 27A\(7\)](#).

Qualifications for election

50 (1) A lay person is qualified for election for a diocese by the diocesan electors of that diocese if he or she meets

(a) each of the first, second and third conditions, and

(b) one of the fourth, fifth and sixth conditions.

(2) The first condition is that the person has received Communion according to the use of the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it, at least three times in the twelve months preceding the relevant day.

(3) The second condition is that the person

(a) is confirmed or ready and desirous of being confirmed, or

(b) comes within paragraph 1(b) of Canon B 15A (communicant member of Church which subscribes to doctrine of Holy Trinity).

(4) The third condition is that the person is aged 18 or over on the relevant day.

(5) The fourth condition is that the person's name is, as at 6.00 a.m. on the relevant day

(a) on the roll of a parish in the diocese, or

(b) in the case of a cathedral church which is not a parish church, on the community roll of the cathedral church.

(6) The fifth condition is that, in a case where the area of the diocese includes Westminster Abbey, St George's Chapel, Windsor or the cathedral church of Christ in Oxford, the person has at any time in the period of two months beginning one month before the relevant day, been declared by the dean to be a habitual worshipper.

(7) The sixth condition is that the person has, at any time in the period of two months beginning one month before the relevant day, been declared by the leader of a mission initiative in the diocese to be part of the worshipping community involved in the initiative.

(8) A person who is on the roll of more than one parish must choose one of those parishes for the purposes of this Rule.

(9) A person who is part of the worshipping community involved in a mission initiative which is in more than one diocese, or who is part of the worshipping community involved in mission initiatives in different dioceses, must choose one of the dioceses concerned for the purposes of this Rule.

(10) The "relevant day" means

(a) the date of the dissolution of the Synod, or

(b) in the case of an election to fill a casual vacancy, the date on which nomination papers are issued.

(11) Where a diocese is divided into two or more areas under [Rule 51](#), a person who is qualified for election for that diocese

(a) may be a candidate for any one of those areas, regardless of whether the parish or cathedral church whose roll includes the person's name is in that area, but

(b) may not be a candidate for more than one of those areas at the same time.

Electoral areas

51 (1) Each diocese is an electoral area for the purposes of elections to the House of Laity, unless the diocese is divided into areas under this Rule.

(2) A diocesan synod may, for the purposes of an election to the House of Laity, divide the diocese into two or more areas and apportion between those areas the number of members to be elected for the diocese; and the number of members apportioned to each area must be at least three.

(3)Â But if elections to the House of Laity are conducted by the single transferable vote system provided for by rules for the time being in force under the General Synod's Standing Orders, the power under paragraph (2) may be exercised only so far as is consistent with those rules.

(4)Â Where a diocese is divided into areas under this Rule, the election in question is to be conducted in each of those areas as if it were a separate diocese.

(5)Â A division of a diocese under this Rule remains in force until it is revoked by the diocesan synod.

(6)Â Where a diocese is divided under this Rule â

(a)Â a diocesan elector who is a representative of the laity is entitled to vote in the area to which the body by which the elector was elected belongs;

(b)Â a diocesan elector who is not a representative of the laity is entitled to vote in whichever area the diocesan synod decides.

Timing

52Â (1)Â The elections to the House of Laity are to be carried out in the period of three months immediately following a dissolution of the General Synod.

(2)Â The elections are to be carried out in each diocese during such part of that three-month period as the Presidents of the Synod jointly decide.

(3)Â This Rule has effect subject to any directions given by the General Synod or the Presidents.

Presiding officer

53Â (1)Â For an election to the House of Laity, the presiding officer in each diocese or, where a diocese has been divided into areas under [Rule 51](#), in each area of the diocese is â

(a)Â the registrar of the diocese or a person appointed by him or her with the approval of the registrar of the province, or

(b)Â if the registrar of the diocese is a candidate in the election, a person appointed by the registrar of the province.

(2)Â The Business Committee must nominate an independent body which it is satisfied would be able to assist each presiding officer with the conduct of an election in the diocese to the House of Laity (including the issue of invitations to nominate and the lodging of nominations), in so far as the election involves a system of electronic voting.

(3)Â The presiding officer of each diocese must appoint the body nominated under paragraph (2) and may not appoint any other body or any individual for that purpose.

(4) The provincial registrars must jointly make rules imposing duties on the presiding officer in each diocese in connection with elections to the House of Laity held in that diocese.

(5) Rules under paragraph (4) are of no effect unless the Business Committee has approved them.

Entitlement to vote

54 (1) A person is entitled to vote in an election to the House of Laity held in a diocese if, at the close of nominations, the person is a diocesan elector in that diocese.

(2) In each diocese other than the diocese in Europe, the diocesan electors are the members of the house of laity of each deanery synod in the diocese, apart from any person who is

(a) co-opted under [Rule 18\(2\)](#), or

(b) a lay member of a religious community which has separate representation in the General Synod under [Rule 46\(1\)\(c\)](#).

(3) In the diocese in Europe, the diocesan electors are the persons elected by the annual meeting of each chaplaincy, with the number to be elected being determined by the bishop's council and standing committee of the diocese; and a person is qualified for election as a diocesan elector if he or she is a lay person

(a) who is an actual communicant,

(b) who is aged 18 or over, and

(c) whose name is entered on the electoral roll of a chaplaincy in the diocese.

(4) The deadline for qualifying as a diocesan elector in an election to the House of Laity is 6.00 a.m. on

(a) the date of the dissolution of the Synod, or

(b) in the case of an election to fill a casual vacancy, the date on which invitations to nominate are issued.

(5) The diocesan electoral registration officer must, at least 21 days before invitations to nominate are issued under [Rule 55](#), give the secretary of each deanery synod in the diocese a copy of the names and addresses recorded in the register of lay electors.

(6) The secretary of each deanery synod must, within seven days of receiving the copy names and addresses, provide the diocesan electoral registration officer with

(a) if the names and addresses are correct, a certificate in writing to that effect, or

(b) If they are not correct, a notification in writing of the corrections required.

(7) In ascertaining for the purposes of paragraph (6) whether the names and addresses are correct, the secretary of each deanery synod must ask each elector who has not provided an email address whether he or she wishes to provide one.

(8) The diocesan electoral registration officer must, no later than seven days before invitations to nominate are issued under [Rule 55](#), give a copy of the names and addresses (with any corrections required having been made) to the presiding officer in the election.

(9) The register of lay electors must be available for inspection at the diocesan office during the period beginning with the issue of invitations to nominate under [Rule 55](#) and ending with the close of nominations.

(10) The register of lay electors must, in the form in which it is made available for inspection, include the name of each elector but no other personal data.

(11) Corrections to the register may be made up until the close of nominations; but after the close of nominations, no names may be added to or removed from the register until the declaration of the result of the election.

Nomination

55 (1) A candidate for election in a diocese to the House of Laity must be nominated by two persons, each of whom is a diocesan elector in the diocese.

(2) The presiding officer in each diocese must ensure that each diocesan elector in the diocese is issued with an invitation to nominate.

(3) If a person who is qualified for election but is not a diocesan elector requests a nomination paper, the presiding officer must ensure that the person is issued with a nomination paper.

(4) The presiding officer must determine the period within which nominations are to be given to him or her; and the period so determined must be at least 28 days beginning with the day after that on which the invitations to nominate are issued.

(5) The presiding officer must ensure that, when an invitation to nominate is issued to a person, the person is also given written notification of when nominations close.

Election rules

56 (1) The General Synod must make rules relating to the conduct of an election to the House of Laity (including an election to fill a casual vacancy).*

(2) The rules may, in particular, make provision as to

- (a) the system by which, and the manner in which, the election is to be conducted;
 - (b) the process for issuing invitations to nominate and for the lodging and scrutiny of nominations;
 - (c) the conditions for the validity of a nomination;
 - (d) the preparation, circulation and distribution of election addresses and other election papers;
 - (e) the conditions for the validity of a vote in the election;
 - (f) the functions which the presiding officer is required or authorised to carry out in connection with the election;
 - (g) the assistance which the body nominated under Rule 53(2) may provide to a presiding officer;
 - (h) the entitlement of a presiding officer to a fee for the exercise of a function in connection with the election and the entitlement of the body nominated under Rule 53(2) to a fee for the assistance it provides to a presiding officer;
 - (i) the liability to pay the expenses of the election.
- (3) The rules may, in so far as they provide for an election to the House of Laity to involve a system of electronic voting, modify the application of any provision of these Rules.
- (4) The rules may
- (a) make different provision for different cases;
 - (b) make provision which applies generally or for specified cases or subject to specified exceptions;
 - (c) make supplementary, transitional or saving provision;
 - (d) make provision which confers a discretion on a person.
- (5) The rules are to be made in accordance with the Standing Orders of the General Synod.

Notes

* A list of Churches in communion with the Church of England can be found in the Supplementary Material in the published version of the Canons of the Church of England (available in print from Church House Publishing or online at <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england>).

* A person whose name is on the roll of a guild church in the City of London is treated for this purpose as if his or her name is also on the roll of the parish in which the guild church is situated: see Rule 83(7) and (8).

*Â These rules have now been made by the General Synod and are on the Church of England website.

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