

New measures to strengthen governance and operational frameworks for England's cathedrals received their final approval today by General Synod.

The Gaia installation at Gloucester Cathedral is shown in the nave

Gloucester Cathedral

The [Cathedrals Measure](#) brings into legislation recommendations first brought to Synod in July 2018, following a [report by the Cathedrals Working Group](#) set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Under the new structures, Chapters will remain as governing bodies for cathedrals, but with changes to their composition to achieve a majority of non-executive members.

The Measure also sees Cathedrals come under Charity Commission regulation, ensuring they are in line with best practice elsewhere in the third sector.

Revisions to the Measure were [supported](#) in February 2020, meaning the legislation was able to go forward for final approval today.

The final approval follows publication last week of [statistics showing the cathedrals remain enormously popular](#) for visitors and worshippers, and in 2019 recorded the highest ever number of worshippers attending in Advent.

The Measure will now be referred to Parliament and will come into force on receiving Royal Assent.

**Speaking ahead of the final approval, the Third Estates Commissioner, Eve Poole, said:**

“This Measure marries church and state in partnership, through the Church Commissioners and the Charity Commission, to encourage our cathedrals in their mission to the whole nation.

“We want cathedrals to be exemplars of best practice in this as they are in worship, liturgy and heritage.

“I have been delighted by General Synod. We had a brilliant Steering Committee, together with a skilful Revision Committee, who worked incredibly hard to marshal the many amendments we received and come up with elegant solutions for their accommodation. I was very proud to be part of such a robust and productive legislative process.”

**In summary, Steering Committee Chair, Robert Hammond (Chelmsford) said:**

“The draft measure puts cathedrals into a firm governance footing which is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“It provides for co-regulation of Cathedrals by the Charity Commission of England and Wales and the Church Commissioners and brings them under the Charities Act.

“It provides for a clear governance structure, separating governance and management activities. It provides clarity over the roles and responsibilities of those involved in our Cathedrals.

It provides for better, professional control of finance, risk and audit. It clarifies issues of property ownership and, most importantly, it has safeguarding at its heart.

By adopting a really consultative approach to our work, the Steering Committee hopes it has provided a draft measure which will allow cathedrals to get on with their vital task in our Nation of providing a focus for the life and work of the Church of England in the Diocese.

The Measure received overwhelming approval with votes recorded as follows:

- Bishops - for: 34, against: 0, recorded abstentions: 0
- Clergy - for: 148, against: 0, recorded abstentions: 3
- Laity - for: 175, against: 0, recorded abstentions: 2

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