



ommission process.

Ed Nix / Church of England

The House of Bishops has given its support to proposed changes to the process of nominating future diocesan bishops to the Crown, to simplify the process and help enable a broad representation.

The House – which is made up of the diocesan bishops and other senior bishops in the Church of England – agreed to ask General Synod to consider changing the rules governing how Crown Nominations Commissions (CNCs), which nominate future diocesan bishops, operate.

It follows two cases in the last year in which CNCs were unable to reach agreement to fill vacancies for new bishops.

When a see becomes vacant, a CNC gathers to consider possible candidates and put forward a name to the King through the Prime Minister. Once the nomination has been approved by the King, the new bishop is announced by Downing Street. (Note: a ‘see’ is the area of a bishop's authority and jurisdiction.)

In each case, the CNC is made up of a combination of representatives from the local diocese and a group of “central members”, elected from the General Synod to represent the national Church.

Following the two recent cases in which the CNC was unable to appoint (for new Bishops of Carlisle and Ely), the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who chairs the Advisory Group for Appointments and Vocations, suggested a series of changes including to the voting threshold required to make an appointment.

Under the current Standing Orders, at least two thirds of the members of a CNC must support a nomination before it goes forward. That includes any who decide to abstain.

However, as Bishop Sarah explains in a paper to the House, currently, with 14 members on a CNC, this means 10 members must agree, meaning the threshold is in fact above 71 per cent.

Bishop Sarah proposed:

- Reducing the threshold required for a nomination to 60 per cent of those voting, also removing any abstentions from the total.
- Remove the secret ballot.
- Giving the presiding Archbishop (of Canterbury or York) an additional vote in the event of a deadlock.

Speaking at the bishops’ meeting in Oxford today, she said: “There is a lack of diversity on the CNC, including gender, race, and theology, which has led to a loss of trust in the process.

“Restoring trust will require the process to be competent, consistent, full of integrity, and compassionate. Ultimately, we need to restore confidence in this discernment process under God.”

The House approved a motion welcoming the recommendations by 27 votes to nine, with three abstentions.

Notes to editors

The motion agreed by the House was:

‘That this House, regretting the difficulties in the recent CNC processes as set out in [HB\(24\)30](#) welcome the recommendations as set out in paragraphs 12 to 14 of that paper and request that work be undertaken to bring the proposals to Synod.’

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