

The General Synod of the Church of England has today voted to pave the way for the legislative process to enable Women to become Bishops to be completed this year.

In a series of interrelated legislative and procedural items the Synod held four debates dealing with differing aspects relating to women in the episcopate.

The first synod discussion related to the House of Bishops draft Declaration and Disputes Resolution Procedure regulations - [GS 1932](#).

Both the proposed declaration and accompanying regulations were drawn up by the House of Bishops at the invitation of the last meeting of the Synod.

The debate was opened by the Rt. Revd. James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester, Chair of the Steering Committee, who moved "That this Synod welcomes the draft House of Bishop's Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests and the draft Resolution of Disputes Procedures Regulations as set out in GS 1932"

The motion was passed by the Synod.

The second debate dealt with the Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure - [GS 1925A](#) - and Draft Amending Canon No.33 - [GS 1926A](#). At its meeting in November the General Synod voted to dispense with a Revision Committee Stage for the new legislation so that the Synod could conduct the Revision Stage in Full Synod.

After debate the revision stage for both the measure and the canon were completed without any amendments being made.

The Synod then gave preliminary consideration to the draft Act of Synod to rescind the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 - [GS 1934](#).

The measure was accepted by Synod; and the amending Canon no.33 was passed by Synod by 304 votes to 33 with 45 abstentions.

The final debate on women in the episcopate in this session took the form of a procedural motion suspending Standing Order 90(b) (iii) so that the reference of the draft Measure and draft Canon to the Dioceses under Article 8 of the Synod's Constitution can be concluded within 3 months rather than the 6 months stipulated under the standing order.

After debate the motion, requiring a 75% majority of the whole Synod, was approved by 358 votes to 39 with 9 abstentions.

The legislation now goes to the dioceses for approval. Provided a majority approve it by the 22 May deadline the General Synod will be able to hold the final approval debate in July, less than 20 months after the failure of the earlier legislation to secure the necessary two-thirds majorities in November 2012. If passed the legislation would then go to Parliament for approval and could be in force before the end of the year.

ENDS

An audio interview with the Bishop of Rochester, James Langstaff, about the latest approval of legislation towards seeing Women in the Episcopate is available here:

<http://bit.ly/1lvJCRL>

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