

Report of Proceedings

MEETING OF THE HOUSE OF LAITY

Saturday 8 July 2017

At the University of York

In the Chair:

CANON DR JAMIE HARRISON (DURHAM), CHAIR OF THE HOUSE OF LAITY

THE CHAIR *Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham)* took the Chair at 8.30 pm

The Chair. Good evening and welcome. Thank you for coming. There are so many other things you could be doing, but you are here, so thank you for that. Shall we have a moment of quiet as we gather ourselves before I say a prayer.

The Chair led the House of Laity in an act of worship.

The Chair. It is particularly good to welcome our representatives from Deaf Anglicans Together. You are very welcome. Thank you for coming. Also there may be two of our new members here. I do not know whether Richard Jones and Tracey Byrne are here. Let us give them warm applause. I have had very strict instructions that we must finish by 9.55 at the latest - Anne is looking very pleased - so we can get to the quiz. That is our focus.

I hope you have a copy of the green agenda paper. It was particularly important, and we thought it was worthwhile you coming out on this lovely evening, and we hope you feel the agenda fills some of that. The other question, of course, is when to meet. I think folk felt that last time that rushing up on a Friday afternoon was a bit too difficult, so this was the only obvious slot that we could hold this meeting.

I will go into more detail a bit later, but we have roughly three 20-minute or so slots, which allow a presentation or some comments from here and for you to come, much as we normally do, to the microphones, perhaps asking brief questions and making brief comments but not, as is our wont, speeches. We know tomorrow we have a couple of things on the Synod's agenda that are on our agenda this evening – one particularly in relation to the Crown Nominations Commission – so there may be areas you do not want to stray into tonight. However, there are some things that both Caroline and Aiden can help us with and Aiden is unique in that he has just done two five-year terms so he cannot serve a further term, which is why we can ask him to come and help us.

First, I am going to ask the Revd Canon Simon Butler, the Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, to address us for no more than ten minutes, with ten minutes or so for questions. Simon, come and tell us about clergy well-being.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Thank you. It is very lovely to be invited to the House of Laity. This is a first for me and I will be very discreet and slip out after my item

so that all your confidential business will not be spied on to the House of Clergy!

One thing I do not want to do today is to rehearse the speech that I am going to give tomorrow and I do not think you want to engage in the debate that you might wish to participate in tomorrow.

However, I thought it would be worth saying one or two things very briefly about context. The first thing that has just come into my mind is because I just bumped into the Dean of St Paul's. I said I was going to this meeting and he said, "Please remember that when the clergy get together, they like to whinge and they whinge about all the pressures they are under and they forget that many of the people of God" - which is the language I prefer to use rather than the laity - "work far harder and are under far more pressure than any of the clergy". Sometimes we do ourselves no favours when we get into that sort of dynamic. I am particularly concerned as we address this issue tomorrow that it is not a whinge-fest for the clergy and that it is not an opportunity for special pleading. It is an invitation, which is something that has been on my heart for a little while, for the whole Church to engage in working together for the well-being of the clergy in the Church of England, and I include in that the Bishops as well.

We all are called to life in its fullest in Christ and there are many privileges of ministry; the privileges of having freedom to arrange your own diary; of having the gift of a home usually (and, in my case, very definitely) in an area where you could never afford to live. There are privileges and freedoms; the freedom to enter into the most special and moving and distressing moments of life, and to try to minister the love of God, which come to many of you as well of course – that is not to diminish it – but come to us in a rather particular way by virtue of the orders we hold and the office we are called to. In all of that there is much to rejoice in and to celebrate, but there are also the costs of that as well.

Having a diary that is free can also mean, if you are not very good at looking after yourself, that you fill it with endless things. One of the things that I think clergy are called to do, particularly if they are in a parish ministry, is to think and reflect and pray. We need time to do that and, obviously, if we are forever busy, busy, busy that can be squeezed out. The pressures of home, of course, mean that we are sharing our home as a place where, in very many cases, other people come in and, in some cases, think that they have a right to do that. For those who have families and children, that presents its own challenges. There will be more of that to talk about.

What I wanted to say of course is that there are many joys and privileges of ordained ministry, but there are costs as well. What we are doing tomorrow is to reflect on how best we can ensure that our clergy are happy and fulfilled in their vocation and the role

each of us can play in that.

In the Report there is mention of clericalism and I did get to ponder as we debated *Setting God's People Free* earlier in the year that, while many of the challenges of clericalism are self-inflicted, there are also ways in which clergy can be caught in that situation. I would like us to feel tomorrow that we are talking in partnership and that our debate would not get tied up too much in all the evils of clericalism and the effects that they have.

What I am most keen to do tomorrow, as I will be saying in opening the debate, is to give opportunities particularly for lay voices to bring their own experience and ideas because you, more than anyone else, see the clergy at work. You see the good ways we work and the good ways we look after ourselves and you see the bad ways we work and the bad ways we look after ourselves, and sometimes the bad ways that we are treated perhaps by our congregations and perhaps by the Church itself. Some input from you is going to be really crucial, and not just at this stage, but also as we go forward into hopefully some work over the next two years. It would be great if you can write in and reflect so that the process of this work is ongoing and iterative, as I have said; that we keep reflecting on it and honing it as we go through.

Also - and perhaps this is a final plea - you need to go back to your churches, congregations, institutions, have a look out for your clergy and see how well you think they are and to see if there is anything that you can do in the workplace where you are to support the well-being of your clergy. It might simply be asking them how they are from time to time, not in that English way where we do not really expect an answer. We have all had those experiences of asking someone how they are, and they tell us!

That is an encouragement because this is going to be a partnership of all of us to improve the well-being of the clergy. As an early indication of that, I was very keen to invite – and she was very keen to volunteer – Dr Yvonne Warren from Coventry, who has been part of our initial Working Group, bringing her professional and ministerial experience to our work as well. I am very grateful to her and would like to put on record my gratitude to her for her work so far in the group; it has been great.

That is enough from me. I think the best thing is if you ask questions or make comments at this stage. Do not give a speech because hopefully you will get called tomorrow. Let us see what you might like to say and thank you for listening.

The Chair. Thank you, Simon. I think the easiest thing is for folks to come to the microphones if they have a question or a comment or something to add, perhaps from their own experience, maybe just two or three. We are not going to be too formal, but if

you can just say who you are and where you are from. Just to warn you, this is being recorded so your comments will appear in print!

Dr Simon Clift (Winchester): As an occupational health specialist, I spend quite a bit of time in my consulting room, sometimes with ministers and clergy, and generally, when I am talking about recommendations, I am emphasising both individual responsibility – and there are always measures that people could consider for their own well-being – and also, typically, we talk about the employers’ responsibility, particularly where there are reasonable adjustments for disability, so structures and systems would be things that I would be talking about ---

The Chair: This sounds like a speech.

Dr Simon Clift (Winchester): I am wondering whether you feel there is an appetite, Simon, for changes within the systems and structure of the Church of England that might enhance well-being.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath & Wells): I recognise that some pressure is good, but we can put pressure onto ourselves. When I was made churchwarden some years ago and I was told, “And of course you will do this and you will do that,” I said, “Actually I won’t because I don’t think it is in the job description”. Is there a module in clergy ordination training regarding delegation?

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): To Simon Clift first of all, one of the things that struck me as we have begun this piece of work is just how much everyone is keen to take it on. We had an early conversation at the Archbishops’ Council about it and the Council and the bodies that work under the Council such as MinDiv and RACSC are really up for this as well. What we are not going to do, I hope, is create another document that no one will take any notice of. By doing it in this consultative way and drawing people in and doing something that will help us to simply lay down a benchmark, then it will be for us and the bodies that flow out from here to hold one another to account, both in the structures and also in the local context as well; dioceses and even parishes as well.

Tim, I have not been in theological education for 25 years. There was not, and neither was there a module on chairing, which I think most clergy would value. I think it is one of the things about clericalism that the ability to delegate, to empower others is not as common a gift in the Church as we might wish for. That is partly – and we have all been there – as busy members of the congregation as well; you know that it is often far easier to do a job yourself than to get someone else to do it. We can all be guilty of that, but obviously when you are wearing the collar that brings extra power to the situation that you

are exercising over those around you.

I will always remember a story I was told about someone who came into the vestry at a confirmation and he was asking about where he needed to stand to administer the chalice. The Bishop said to him, "Over there will be fine", and after he went out of the vestry the local vicar said, "Do you know that guy is the senior personnel manager in British Airways?" There was all this ability that he had and he was slightly deskilled by the fact he was worried about where he was going to stand to administer the chalice, which will feed, I am sure, into Adrian Greenwood's comments about lay ministry in a minute.

Mr Graham Caskie (Oxford): I grew up in a house where my father was an ordained minister and I am very grateful for it; it is a real privilege. Do you think there is an issue regarding expectation management of ordinands, in that if potential ordinands, who all come from laity, are given a full idea and perspective of what life in ordained ministry is actually like?

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): Simon and I were Clergy Chair and Lay Chair of the Synod and we worked very fruitfully together. I am going to refer to *Setting God's People Free* because I would say, Simon, it has some very good stuff in it for the clergy. The essential principle is full mutuality of vocation through baptism and a call to whole-life discipleship and there is talk of a rule of life. I would like to think that we could have a rule of life and concept of whole-life discipleship which covered ordained and lay. I am therefore not very keen on going on down a one-way track about clergy well-being as opposed to the well-being of the whole people of God. If you have not spotted this it would be interesting to get your comment: on page 23 of *Setting God's People Free* it suggests that clergy should have two days off a week.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Expectation management, Graham: one of the big challenges, if you think about theological education, is that there is so much expectation built up and all of a sudden these new deacons are released into the life of the Church and suddenly they have to discover that all that theology and all that learning has been slightly set into second place because they have been told to go and visit Mrs Smith who wants to talk about her bunions, and every time you go and see Mrs Smith she just wants to talk about her bunions. We do not spend as much time talking about the things of God as we might have done and we might spend time doing things we do not want to do. All the stuff about expectation, moving into ordained ministry and perhaps, even more so, moving from curacy into first incumbency when you have no training incumbent to stand behind, is often a place where clergy fall away from ministry because they become disillusioned, it has not turned out to be what they felt called to, and that is certainly part of our concern.

As to Adrian's point about *Setting God's People Free*, let us see what people think about that. I think there are some particular reasons why clergy well-being is something that we need to focus on; partly because it is good stewardship of the resources that we have. We do need to do that, but there is also – and it was interesting you mentioned a rule of life – when I was rector of my last parish we started a rule of life group of which I was a member, but not the leader. We talked about a personal rule of life in that group over a couple of years as we worked together on that. Just because we are ordained does not mean we stop being disciples or members of the people of God. Sometimes I think we as clergy hide behind the collar and do not allow our own role as disciples to be seen. I think that is often what helps people to come to faith; they meet someone who is a disciple, not who is a priest.

The Chair. We are doing well. We have seven questions waiting and seven minutes.

Mrs Debrah Mclsaac (Salisbury): David Heywood wrote very persuasively about the clergy expectation of themselves to be omniscient. Not only do they seem to expect that of themselves, but they also expect to be omnipresent. It is more than an issue of delegation, in my opinion, and that expectation that the Church, or we collectively, seem to impose on them seems to be quite soul destroying.

Another question I would ask is: in addition to delegation, when and where do clergy get monitored experience of actually working with others? They do not always naturally work well, either with their clergy colleagues, let alone with their lay colleagues, and until that is sorted, stress is an inevitable experience.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): I hope you will not mind me suggesting that this is possibly a “motherhood and apple pie” motion in that it is very difficult to speak against it without seeming to be very hard nosed and unsympathetic. However, as an accountant I am used to taking on that role! I wondered how you were going to benchmark the costs of doing this. I would suggest that we look at a small/medium sized enterprise business, maybe one that has 100 employees, look at a middle manager, work out what they supply for well-being, what the cost is and how they recruit a person with the necessary resilience and coping skills who can inhabit a role without needing lots of hand-holding.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Debbie, I agree with most of what you said really. I do not think there is more I want to say other than I think there is something about stress; stress is a natural part of life and most buildings, including this one I hope, are held together by the stresses of the metal in the structure, but if that stress becomes strain then the building starts to wobble and that is the danger. We all have natural stresses.

Debbie, I think part of the reason why we are testing this out with you tomorrow is not because it is motherhood and apple pie – because I recognise at one level there is nothing you can say against it – but so that we suggest a way forward and the model of a covenant, and I will say more about that tomorrow. What I hope it will do is it will give us opportunities to do exactly what you say and you should really write in or speak tomorrow about that, because particularly the RACSC guys, who are the techy type people in terms of clergy well-being, are going to be very interested in doing that. We are not going to do anything apart from set this up and hopefully find ways of calling the Church to be involved in this work in a much more organic and whole way. I hope it is not motherhood and apple pie.

Lt Col Jane Hunter (Armed Forces): As a vicar's offspring and granddaughter of a Bishop, as my children say, "It's in the genes", but I think this is really important because I have always thought, "Who care for the carers?"

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I shall be asking that question about Bishops tomorrow, so that is the answer to that question.

Mr David Ashton (Leeds): Have clergy performance reviews caused extra stress or not?

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I think some people have found them stressful. I think mostly the problems with them are to do with inconsistency because there is not one system of doing them. There are 42 systems of doing ministerial development reviews because each diocese does it differently and, associated with that, the problem can be that the outcomes, at the end of it you fill out a form that says, "These are the things we are going to put in place and these are the training things that you might need to help you", and then nothing happens with the training. It goes off to the officer and the diocese, who is so busy that it drops off the radar. It leaves people feeling, "What's the point?" I hope some of the clergy will talk about that tomorrow.

The Chair: Can we have four quick questions and four quick responses?

Mrs Carolyn Johnson (Blackburn): I have a similar question to the previous one. Appraisals - who should do it and how should they do it to make a difference to your well-being?

Canon Tony Allwood (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I wanted to just mention this work/life

balance area. What do you think is the role of this Synod in setting the culture? I left my bedroom at 7.30 this morning. That was 13-and-a-half hours ago. Is this the sort of example we should be setting from the top body of the Church of England?

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): To answer that one, who is a member of the Business Committee? Someone from the Business Committee must have just heard that remark so we will leave that one there.

What sort of appraisals? There is not one sort of clergyperson. To do it completely the other way, when I got my first Ministerial Development Review (MDR) options, I was given a number of options about the way I wished to do it. In fact, I was given 19 options about the way I wished to do it, which were somewhat too many. I am not sure I can answer that question. It ties in of course with the fact some clergy do not have to do it at all. If you are a freehold incumbent you do not have to take part in MDR.

Mrs Helen Smith (Durham): Could I just say this Mrs Smith does not have bunions, so it is all right.

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): There is a doctor here who can help if you need one!

Mrs Helen Smith (Durham): Can I just ask, is provision going to be made for retired clergy? As the daughter of an 88 year-old retired priest who, since two years ago, has not been able to work due to ill health and has not had any pastoral care, is provision going to be made? Thank you.

Dr Angus Goudie (Durham): Looking a little wider than the job, in the deliberations on clergy well-being have you looked at partner and family well-being, as these two things really do go together?

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): We have made mention in paragraph 8 of the Report about retired clergy. The stories that you tell are not uncommon. I think there are a lot of clergy, both retired and in ministry, who feel that actually the simple pastoral care, the lifting of the phone, the “Oh, I’d heard that you had done this and I thought that was a brilliant idea, well done” or “How are you since your mother died?” does not happen as much as it could. That is a problem about the way we minister and the risk of becoming so much more technical and busy that we end up missing out on the day-to-day care. If a clergyperson is struggling, the simple thing about picking up a telephone and asking a question can be the greatest bit of help that you can get.

Angus, you asked about clergy partners. Again, we make reference to them in the Report. In the Working Group we had at least one clergyperson with children, but vicarage kids are a varied bunch of people and we cannot put them all in one category. Again, it will be about encouraging those people and being responsible for them.

Just to finish off, this really is not about what we are going to do and they are going to do; it is how can we, with the various responsibilities we have, work together to promote the well-being of the clergy, who in themselves, when they work well, can promote the well-being of the whole Church. I look forward to hearing your comments tomorrow.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Simon. I think that worked, thank you for queuing. I hope we can keep that pace going into the next section. Caroline, welcome. Would you like to say who you are and what you do and then we will know who you are and why you are here talking on the Crown Nominations Commission. Thank you.

Ms Caroline Boddington: I am Caroline Boddington. I am the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments. I am based at Church House. Thank you very much, Jamie, for inviting Aiden and me to speak to the meeting about the CNC.

We have been asked to reflect on our work, particularly on the expectations we have of members and what members can expect. To a certain extent we are going to be drawing out some of the same themes, but you will be relieved to know we have spoken earlier this afternoon so you are not going to get identical presentations.

Just to step into the wider context, this summer marks the end of the tenure of those central members who have served on the CNC for the last five years. As you are all aware, nominations close on Monday for people who will serve until the summer of 2022. As you and your colleagues in the House of Clergy ponder who you might wish to nominate or whether you might wish to stand, I am very grateful for this opportunity to share some thoughts.

You are aware that the Archbishops have asked Professor O'Donovan tomorrow to share early reflections on the theological underpinning of the work of the CNC and also on the role of central members, and the Archbishops themselves sent a note with the ballot papers setting out their aspirations for the Commission's work. We are really hoping to provide food for thought for both those who are casting votes and those who might stand to reflect on the responsibilities that are placed on those who might be called to serve on this important Commission.

The calling to serve on the CNC is a demanding one and, as many of you who will have observed our work over the years, you will be aware that members find themselves at the crux of many of the strands of exploration and debate going on in the Church. Whilst the wider Church debates, discusses and explores issues, whether in Synod or on social media, the CNC needs to reach a decision about the needs of a particular diocese, the needs of the Church of England and the wider world Church as the whole Church seeks to share and serve the Gospel.

Members of the Commission, which are the two Archbishops, six members elected by General Synod, six elected by the diocese under consideration and the two non-voting secretaries, seek to discern together whom God is calling to be the next Bishop of a particular diocese. This works as a pooling of insights from across the breadth of the whole Church and also a sharing of perspectives on and from the world that we serve. Thus, drawing together the voices of clergy and laity, of the diocese and the wider Church, of the variety of communities served locally and nationally, different Church traditions, these voices lie at the heart of our work. This diversity is the Church of England and if the Archbishops were here they would want me to emphasise the value of the richness of thought that emerges from these different perspectives. So different voices lie at the heart of the integrity of the CNC process but also, of course, emphasise the importance of listening, of the relational and discerning skills of members and also of their willingness to explore ideas and to be open to possibility rather than come in with a fixed view about who the next Bishop of a particular place might be.

Our headline diversity tends to be that of Church tradition, which means that we can perhaps neglect other diversity. Whilst the gender balance of the central members of CNCs has generally been fairly good, the voice of BAME Anglicans has been woefully under-represented, as has that of young people and, in the last five years, that of deaf and disabled people.

I suspect that tomorrow Professor O'Donovan will explore the concept of trust within the CNC, so I am not going to go into detail about that now, apart from to underline that it is the need for trust that underlines the importance of members of the CNC being able to work in a confidential environment. If candidates are to feel free to trust the CNC with their vocation, CNC members need to be able to demonstrate that they trust each other. Both candidates and members share all sorts of private and personal information with each other and it is important that potential members are able to work confidentially, creating trusting relationships across difference and that they are committed to creating a safe space for candidates and for their other CNC colleagues.

In their note, the Archbishops remind potential members of their particular responsibility to the wider Church over their period of office and specifically their role to draw together the national and the local. Diocesan reps are inevitably focused on the needs of their own diocese and central members, the elected representatives of General Synod, do have a care for the wider Church. As representatives of Synod, it is expected that members are committed to the policies and the statements which this Synod has agreed. The agreed stance on mutual flourishing would be an example of that.

At the last meeting of central members, outgoing members were asked to share advice for those who might serve in the next quinquennium. In addition to practical issues, such as being aware of just how much paperwork CNCs involve and the need for a full understanding of the time commitment, the importance of a full understanding of the breadth of the Church of England was emphasised as well as the ability to act for the good of the wider Church even where this might challenge personal perspectives.

I perhaps just need to reiterate here as well something that was in the paper, which is that, in the light of the different focus brought by central and diocesan reps, should there be a vacancy in a central member's home diocese the Archbishops' expectation is that they would stand back from that CNC.

Just to go into the time commitment, over the last five years central members have considered 19 vacancies, including Europe. Each vacancy requires three days of meetings and several days of preparatory reading. There will be a particularly demanding autumn in this quinquennium, and we have shared the dates with you. The outgoing members have been particularly keen to stress the importance of an induction meeting and this will be overnight in mid-September. Central members do have a responsibility for overseeing how the CNC operates and some longer-serving members here will recall that it was the central members who were tasked to explore and decide whether the CNC processes should include interviews. That is quite a significant responsibility.

One of the aims of the induction meeting is to help new members to tap into ongoing process issues, develop a familiarity with the pool of candidates, to take part in unconscious bias training, which as you will have picked up from questions is an essential requirement for anyone who takes part in the Commission, and also to provide them with an opportunity to develop their own relationships and an understanding of the calling to serve at this time in the Church's life and history.

It is impossible to predict the number of vacancies. Our normal indicator is 70th birthdays, which may or may not continue to be helpful. This would mean that in addition to Bristol and Truro, already identified, there will be at least eight vacancies between now and the

end of 2022, plus any consequences, should there be any, from the London appointment. Outgoing members would actually see this as an easy ride. I think at one point we were doing six vacancies a year, so we have had a very busy five years.

I have said enough. I will hand over to Aiden and then, of course, we are happy to take questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Caroline. As Aiden comes forward, there are three members of the House to be elected. You have probably seen the nomination forms and many of you have perhaps got them in or are seeking to do that. I am wondering, Aiden, if you can give us a couple of minutes but maybe some of the questions might come particularly to you given that people might be asking practical things. Again, if people who have not spoken or asked a question might come to the front of the queue, that would be good. Two or three minutes?

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): I will do my best, Chair. I have been slightly taken aback because Caroline said there was an issue with not enough young people on the Commission and, as I have reminded her for the last ten years, I am the voice of youth on the Commission. I also ought to say that these are personal reflections; I do not speak for anybody other than myself (you would expect that from a Yorkshire man).

The greatest gift I can give to Caroline, I think, is to start with a word which demonstrates how far I have come, which is *process*. I am a convert. The key, when thinking about the Crown Nominations Commission, it seems to me, is to remember that it is a process of discernment under God; it is not simply a competitive job interview process. The simplest thing for me to do is just to explain the process very briefly so you can have some idea about what is involved and some of the skills and the characteristics you might want to consider when it comes to the elections.

What is the first stage? The first stage is there is an announcement of the retirement or the translation of a Bishop to another See, long before the CNC process formally starts, but it is at that point that one needs to have one's ear to the ground to be aware of what is going on, be talking to people, doing one's homework and finding out about things in preparation for when the formal process starts.

The next stage will be when that formal process starts, which is with the first mailing. This is really the point at which the confidentiality issue kicks in and from which point you really need to go into receive mode, so you can hear things but you are not going to be able to talk about anything. In that first mailing there will be the diocesan statement of needs over which the Vacancy-in-See Committee will have worked very hard; there will be the

memorandum written by the Archbishops' Secretary of Appointments and the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary following their comprehensive consultations. That is invariably a really constructive and no-holds-barred document of the very highest quality. There is a note from the Archbishops about the national needs of the Church. There is a list of all the names that have been submitted at any stage in the consultations as well as those on the various lists of those who are ready now to be considered for the episcopate, and there is important background material on the process, including such matters as the Equality Act. Clearly, one needs to take time to consider that carefully, to reflect on it, to pray on it. Very importantly, the whole process needs to be infused and enthused by prayer.

One considers the needs, an individual member of the Commission, and, having considered all that, we come to the next stage, which is the submission of names for consideration. The great privilege and huge responsibility of each member of the Commission is that ability to be able to submit a mandatory name and some discretionary names. A mandatory name is a name that will be considered by the Commission. Huge privilege, enormous responsibility, and as with any huge responsibility the discharge of it again involves time in thinking about it and preparing properly, being imaginative but realistic.

Then comes the second mailing and that mailing – about this thick – includes paperwork for the dozen or so candidates that are going to be considered at the meeting of the Commission. For each candidate there will be a Register of Ministers' form, a personal statement, a reference from the diocesan Bishop, there will be three structured references, so between 30 and 50 pages of material for each candidate. You will see the amount of time and care that one is going to have to put aside for this.

We then come to the first meeting and that is a day-long meeting, normally at Lambeth or at Bishopthorpe depending on which Province the vacancy is. At that meeting, the Commission will consider the paperwork and finalise the role specification and the challenges of the role. It will consider the candidates who are on the list against the role specification and the challenges and it will decide on a shortlist, normally four candidates plus one reserve for interview. It will also identify any specific questions about the candidates to be identified. Sorry, I cannot see if that is a red light. No, thank you. I am getting worried.

The Chair: If you would like to see one, do.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): I will take my lead from you, Chair. There is then a period between the first meeting and the second meeting where, by email and telephone, we will settle the questions that are to be included at the interview.

Then we come to the third mailing, which will bring a further set of papers, usually including a structured reference dealing with questions specific to that vacancy and candidate.

Then to the second meeting, which will be a two-day residential meeting normally from late morning on day one to mid-afternoon on day two. At the start of that meeting we will formalise the format of the interview, tweak the questions and then there will be an interview with each of the four candidates, normally for around 90 minutes. They will give a homily on the readings of the day, a presentation on a topic identified by the Archbishop and questions put by some of the members of the Commission. There will then be an extended period of consideration and deliberation, lots of prayer and discernment before the Commission moves to make a decision about the process.

That in one sense is the end of it, but of course it is not because it can then be some months before there is an announcement and things can happen in that period too, as you will be aware at various Vacancy-in-Sees over the last few years.

The further stages are the confirmation of election. That is the legal point at which the Bishop actually becomes the Bishop of the diocese and it is certainly where I feel we can then hand over to the diocese and the diocese will ultimately inaugurate/enthroned the Bishop at the start of his or her public ministry in that place.

That is the process. I hope that has given you some flavour of it. Can I just throw out a couple of points very briefly?

The Chair: Can we be very brief?

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): I will be very brief. Prayer is absolutely crucial in the whole thing. Confidentiality is a real challenge. It is not secrecy; it is confidentiality. It may be obvious but there is a need for quite a lot of emotional resilience in this. There is a care for the candidates. There is also the fact that a lot of people will say things – press reports, social media – and a lot of it might be completely off the mark, but one is not in a position either to explain or justify oneself.

Most importantly of all, the Commission works best when it works together, whether it is the central six or the whole Commission, and it needs people with a genuine commitment to the breadth of the Church, working constructively and sensitively across their views and conscientious positions. Everybody will bring their own views, experience and skills, there will be open and honest debate, sometimes quite robust, but it is working as one Commission when the Commission works best. The key characteristic is not about who has got the loudest voice around the table, but who has the ability to listen most sensitively and discern. I will leave it there.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I think we have got time for about two questions. Why I wanted to let them run was to give us a real context for tomorrow. I think if we do not understand how the CNC works it really is a problem when we go into debate about it if we have not got the background. Some of us have been on CNCs, but most have not.

Dr Yvonne Warren (Coventry): This is for Caroline really. When thinking about having a diocesan Bishop, how much notice is taken of their experience as a parish priest, and I do not just mean a curate?

Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester): Again, a question for Caroline. Has any thought been given with regards to time commitments, so the two-day meetings, having one of those days on a Saturday? For those of us that work full time, the time commitment would be very pressing and difficult and that would be helping more fully employed people perhaps if more meetings were held on a Saturday?

The Chair: So parish priests and Saturday.

Ms Caroline Boddington: Parish priests may or may not feature depending on the will of the Commission as they determine their specification and requirements for the role. That depends on the discussions that happen in the Commission and that is determined by each individual Commission.

The question there was about Saturdays. That has been raised and it has just never happened. I think that is what I mean by central members need to determine the business and I think if it is particularly important to central members they need to share that with the Archbishops. We tend to plan diaries about six to 12 months in advance. It is not ruled out; it has just not happened in the archiepiscopal diaries.

The Chair: Thank you. I think what that should do is whet our appetites for tomorrow so we are on the edge of knowing everything to say and ask tomorrow. Aiden will be floating

around the Synod if we wish to bend his ear and his arm about what it is really like. He has been very kind in the public domain. Thank you both very much. We look forward to your retirement from the CNC on St Aidan's Day apparently.

I am afraid we have got to move swiftly on to looking at *Setting God's People Free*. Alison, you have five minutes to give us a presentation and then take some questions and comments. Thank you.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): I have rather too many slides here so I will have to go quite speedily, but then it is nearly bedtime so let us crack on!

It is my joy to give you an update on progress on this Report that you will remember came to us in February. The reason I am here is because I was a member of the original Task Group and now I am a member of the Steering Group. I will speed through and tell you where we have got to and then I would love to hear your ideas, your thoughts, and I will take those back to the Steering Group.

I just want to say before I start that if I was where you are, I would be asking, "Well, what progress has been made? Have we made enough progress?" Maybe that is why they asked me to do this.

We are building foundations and we need to get it right because this is a once-in-a-lifetime moment. It may look as if we have been a little bit slow, but I think that the foundations we have laid are good and so I will ask you to bear that in mind as you hear what we are doing. Perhaps the most important thing has been to secure resource for this project. Mike Eastwood is not here, but I think he has done a really excellent job in securing the resource that we need to make sure we do this well. It may not have been the fastest out of the starting blocks, but I think we are doing it well.

Okay, crack through. Just a reminder of the two culture shifts that we agreed in the paper when it came to Synod in February. First of all, that everybody needs to be free to follow Jesus in every area of their life, particularly Monday to Saturday. Sunday is important but we are quite good at that, so this is really focusing on Monday to Saturday discipleship and ministry. Secondly, about the baptismal mutuality; we need to work together better as laity and clergy.

We agreed four priority areas: national champions, pilot dioceses, a national portal and thinking about selection, training and ministerial development. Just a little update on where we have got to. We have established a Steering Group. We have met once and

we are hoping to meet again in September and hopefully about four or five times a year. It is a lay and clergy mix. There are some members from the pre-existing Task Group that wrote the paper and some new members and we are looking seriously at how we involve children and young people. This is about all God's people being free.

Excitingly, we have interviews on Wednesday for a new director for *Setting God's People Free*, and that is what I meant about the resource. Once we have a dedicated director that will really help the work to make good progress and be well organised, so please pray on Wednesday for the appointment of that person.

We have had some quick wins. Many of the peer reviews involved laity, some did not, and there is guidance out now that the House of Laity does need to be involved in that. I am sure there have been some mixed experiences in this room and we have taken that on board, so revised guidance there.

Anglican Voices. There was a pilot run for Anglican voices a couple of years back which was more clergy-focused. The second cohort will ensure a good clergy/lay balance and this will take place in the autumn.

Our general communications work is much more *Setting God's People Free* aware. I asked a question about story telling earlier and I am hoping to make sure that is good story telling from all the people of God. This is a lot about how we tell our stories and make sure that those are heard.

The next wave of quick wins. A summary of the Report, which will be more suitable for diocesan and deanery synods, will be out by the end of the summer in August. I have a draft in my inbox, but because of Synod I have not had a chance to read it yet. That has been written by Mark Greene and the team at London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. This will be supported by films. There will also be *Seven Steps: Rule of Life*, some practical things that churches can do, and that will be available in October.

We agreed some priority areas in the paper. The first one here is national champions. I am very pleased that Jamie is our lay champion. Thank you, Jamie, that is marvellous. Episcopal Champion is out for consultation, so please pray for that. I really hope that is agreed soon. I have heard of some exciting names in the mix and I cannot say more than that at the moment.

The pilot dioceses. We are probably going to move away from using that term because this is not very helpful. We have so many people interested in being involved that it is not

really going to work like a pilot, so I think it is best to think of learning sets and different waves of learning sets. We are going to have a learning set for the first cohort in the autumn and then the second wave maybe a little bit later in the year because we have three pilot groups of six to eight dioceses, which is a lot; half the dioceses expressed an interest. In my head I am thinking about learning sets for that. That is very encouraging.

The national portal. We are exploring that and making sure we get that right. Those of you who have not met Adrian yet, he really is great. I know I said that earlier. The new C of E website is excellent and I have every confidence that that will be well done, but again that is part of the foundation, making sure we do not do something too quickly that is not going to be effective and useful for people, so we are making sure we get that right.

The trickier one is around clergy selection and training and some of the things we talked about earlier. This is a major area of challenge but we are working with Ministry Division to look at that. I think this is going to take a little bit longer to get right.

Finally, I would really value your thoughts on this. When I spoke in February to this motion in Synod I said that the language of change was not, “The Bishops really ought to ...” or “The Church should ...” or “That Task Group, they really ought to ...”, the language of change is “I will” and “We will”. It is all of our responsibility to take this forward. We are the laity, we are the lay leaders here, and it is all of our responsibility.

I will try and answer questions if you have them and if I cannot answer them, I will take them back. I would also love to hear your stories and your suggestions to share best practice and to share the leadership of this really important work. Thank you.

The Chair: We have got about ten minutes, preferably people who have not said anything yet, do go to the microphones. Brief comments, brief stories, quick, sharp questions.

Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds): Mine is a practical question. It would be easier to take this back if we could have a copy of the slides, please.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Yes, very good.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): We had a lay conference and it was all on this theme that we need training material sooner rather than later. That was a big plea. We all have to learn to work together as a team and that is one of the things that is lacking.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): What sort of materials do you want, John?

Mr John Freeman (Chester): I do not really know. I have been in this game for a long time, but lots of my peers who were at this lay conference for possibly the first time in their lives – some of them had never been to Swanwick before even though they had been Readers for over ten years – they felt there was a dearth of material to help them. I have been banging on about them for long enough.

Canon Lucy Docherty (Portsmouth): My tablet has just died, so I am trying to remember my question. There was a slide previously that you had up, Alison, that said something about clergy selection and more lay involvement. As a BAP adviser myself, a lay vocations adviser, I would really like to understand exactly what you meant by that and what is involved.

The Chair: Shall we take another question?

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Yes.

The Chair: Shall we have another one?

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Yes. Yes, that is a good idea.

The Chair: Yes, go on.

Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): It is not a question. It is just to share experience. Last week we had a meeting of our Diocesan House of Laity on Tuesday evening to discuss this very important Report. One contribution to the discussion from one member was this. In their church, to make the link between Sundays and being a Christian Monday to Saturday, at each Sunday service a member of the congregation was called out just to say in two or three sentences what they are going to be doing at this time tomorrow and then the church prayed about it.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Thank you. I have also used that in church and have found it very good. If you want to know more about *This Time Tomorrow*, look on the LICC website. I think that will probably come out as one of the tools in the autumn.

The Chair: Remind us. LICC stands for ---?

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. I think if you just put in “LICC” it will be easier.

The Chair: What is the response to the question?

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Clergy selection. We are working with Ministry Division on this. As you will remember, in the Report we talk about the importance of having good relationships, with mutual respect, and I think it has already come up about team working. We are not using those questions in the selection process. We are not thinking about: “What experience does this person have of team working? Are they going to be good at team working? Are they going to be good at empowering and releasing others?” We are not really training people for that job either. We are training people to work on their own in quite an independent and academic way. I do not want to tar all training and all people with the same brush – that clearly is not right – but that is the general feeling. So I think it is quite a sensitive conversation with Ministry Division. There are obviously a number of different competing needs and values, so I think just some wisdom there. I am looking at Jamie, as my lay champion, to help navigate through that.

Lucy, I am sorry not to be clearer, but I do not want to make strong assertions that I cannot back up. I want to be sensitive around it. I think this is just a tricky area that we need to get right. It would be wrong for us to be critical of people who are offering to serve the Lord, but at the same time we all know how it can go wrong when it is well intentioned but does not quite work out.

Mrs Anne Foreman (Exeter): I am very grateful for this Report. I have already done a presentation to our Deanery lay chairs and they look forward to the shorter version that will come. For myself, when I read it, the thing that struck me is the bit in the Report that talked about looking at your structures and whether they reflect good and healthy clergy/lay relationships. I would welcome some tools that help develop those relationships and tackle them, because it is no good having projects that involve lay people – you can have projects until they are coming out of your ears – until our structures have been improved and they really do have more healthy relationships. So some information or some tools about how to develop those good relationships, please.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): I think I am hearing something in here about we are quite good at doing tasks but we are not always so good at doing people. I will take that back. Thank you.

Ms Alison Fisher (Leeds): Just going back to your point about Ministry Division and working with people who are training, some of us as lay people here are attached to theological institutions, and of course we sit on the councils. I am just wondering if there is a bridge there in terms of maybe some of the things we could take to those councils and also to the staff of those institutions about some of the things you are talking about and how to move on that agenda with some of the trainees.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): I would be very happy to look at that. I am on the council of Wycliffe Hall and so I would be in that camp too. Thank you for that suggestion.

The Chair: We have six speakers, six minutes, no more. Thank you.

Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich): I am really pleased to hear there is going to be a summary of the Report. That would be great. I hope it will be really well publicised so we do not miss it when it comes out. I do not know whether, either there or somewhere else, there will be some sort of summary of the Lay Ministries Working Group Report *Serving God Together* or some document that clearly distinguishes them. We started having a bit of a discussion about this at our Deanery Synod and it very quickly ended up with us talking about lay ministry much more than actually the Monday to Saturday stuff, so something on that might be helpful.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Thank you. I am not sure how it will be publicised, but I am really keen that the Report is sent out. Maybe we could ask that it is sent to every member of General Synod actually when it comes out. I think there is some work to do to be clear about the roles of the two different Working Groups. So I will take that back as well. Thank you very much, Caroline.

Miss Rhian Ainscough (Leicester): I am really excited about this Report. I am glad that you are taking it slowly and getting it right, definitely.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Thank you.

Miss Rhian Ainscough (Leicester): You have briefly mentioned that you are trying to include children and young people. I am wondering what you are doing, or what you are going to do, to integrate them into the process and to get their voice heard.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): I am going to be really honest here. I do not know. That is because Mike wrote the slides, with my help, and he put that in, and so I do not know how he is planning to do that. Can I get back to you about that?

Miss Rhian Ainscough (Leicester): Yes.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Because I would hate just to kind of bullshit up here. Sorry, I should not have said that word. It is not allowed in Synod.

The Chair: I cannot believe you said that! I think the message is, “We are aware of a priority we are not responding to”, and I think the message is there: “We need to sort it out”.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): First of all on training: it may be that you were referring to this earlier when you were talking about it, Adrian. I am just wondering what progress is being made with a web-based training tool such as is used in many industries. We use one in the financial services industry. You do not need to reinvent the wheel with this stuff. It is just a matter of putting the content into a format which is already there. I am wondering what is happening on that.

The second question is about team work. We were hearing about that earlier on. We were hearing from Simon earlier about clergy delegation. The key thing about team work is the clergy actually working as part of a genuine team with their laity. How are we taking steps to make sure that clergy are actually going to recognise the enhanced abilities which we all hope that lay people are going to have going forward?

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): I cannot answer that second question, Gavin. I think all of us need to work together to do that, and that is part of the work of the ongoing group. That is a very big question. I guess what I was saying is that we are recognising that and we are starting a conversation with Ministry Division. We need to work with our colleagues. It is not going to be quick to do. It is something for all of us to work at. Hopefully some of that will start tomorrow, talking about clergy well-being here.

The national portal: the information I have is here. We have commissioned this research from CODEC, finding out what people want. I am pretty encouraged that Adrian knows his stuff on digital and we will not be reinventing the wheel. But we will be trying to do that. I will, of course, take your comments back and make sure that those are heard.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): Good. Thank you.

Mr Philip French (Rochester): I am just sharing something that I already mentioned to the diocesan lay chairs this morning. It is important that this is not just discussed by lay people, as it is important that clergy well-being is not just discussed by clergy, or we shall just simply happily agree with one another.

Just as one model, what we tried in our Diocesan Synod, which seemed to work quite well, was at one meeting we broke into Houses. The House of Clergy discussed clergy well-being and the House of Laity discussed *Setting God's People Free*. At the following meeting, the Clergy Chair and I interviewed each other in front of the Synod as a whole on what we had spent our previous meeting talking about. That seemed to work quite well.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Thank you. Good idea.

Ms Carrie Myers (Southwark): A brief reflection on your comments about piloting. You mentioned that your intention was to do this well rather than quickly. I just wonder if trying to pilot in so many dioceses at one time is going to mean that the pilot is not designed with enough rigour to really measure success. It is just maybe something to think about in the planning.

Also a comment in response to a couple of the previous speakers asking for resources. My profession is in volunteer management. I work in the charity sector. A huge range of resources already exists to support people in building relationships with volunteers, in empowering volunteers, lots of the kinds of themes that we have been talking about this evening. I suppose my question would be: have you considered those resources and would you consider looking at them if you have not yet?

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): I have not personally, Carrie, but I would love to consider them, so thank you for offering. Thank you very much. Be careful what you offer!

Mrs Joan Beck (Southwell & Nottingham): As someone who has managed social care for over 40 years, I wonder if it is too late to change the phrase “Monday to Saturday working”. The fact is that so many people now work on Sunday – and not just in social care and health, but in B&Q and Sainsbury’s – and that is actually a barrier to their lay ministry: the fact that they are not in church on Sunday. I think to change the phrase would acknowledge the number of people who work on Sundays but also acknowledge that that has an effect on their lay ministry.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): We have talked about that.

Mrs Joan Beck (Southwell & Nottingham): So the question is: “Have we missed the boat?”

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): We talked about that at the diocesan lay chair meeting this morning. Do you have another suggestion?

Mrs Joan Beck (Southwell & Nottingham): Something like “People’s working week” or “working days”.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Okay. Obviously you feel strongly about that. I hear that. Perhaps you would be so good as to let us know what you would like because we struggled this morning to think of different ways. In the LICC work – I was talking about that organisation earlier – they use the word “frontline”. I think people are not happy with that terminology and so we have moved to “Monday to Saturday”. I completely acknowledge that many people now work on a Sunday. I think it is just finding the right phrase. Please send us your suggestions.

Mrs Joan Beck (Southwell & Nottingham): Thank you.

The Chair: Shall we say thank you to Alison? Nick has some exciting news on Article 7. And just to say hello to Paul. Thank you, Paul, for being our legal adviser tonight. So over to Nick, who is going to tell us what is happening and tell us about Article 7.

Mr Nicholas Hills (Secretary to the House of Laity): Thank you. Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, it falls to me to say something about Article 7, just at the right time of day, you might think, and probably just at the right time in the process, when the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Prolocutors and the Presidents have decided they do not want to require the reference, but it is absolutely fine because we are just partway through the process.

Let me first of all say: “Article 7 of what?” It is Article 7 of the Synod’s Constitution and it deals with provisions “touching doctrinal formulae or the services or ceremonies of the Church of England or the administration of the sacraments or sacred rites thereof”. So you can see why amending Canons No. 36 and No. 37 was designated as Article 7 business: because they both do that.

They are designated early in the process. They are referred to the House of Bishops before Final Approval. The House of Bishops can amend the legislation or whatever it is before Final Approval. That is what the House of Bishops did this morning. That is the stage it was at. The Amending Canons went through the Final Drafting stage yesterday evening. They went to the House of Bishops this morning. They decided they did not want to change them.

It is then referred to the Presidents, the Prolocutors for the Convocations, to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity. They consult with their respective standing committees. That happened at lunchtime in all cases. They consult, but they are not dictated to by their relevant standing committees. They obviously wisely listen to them, but they can make their own decision, and their decision is conclusive.

It would not actually have mattered very much if Jamie and Liz had said, “We don’t want to require the reference. We don’t want to have a meeting of the House of Laity to discuss this”, if the Convocation of York had said: “We do”. A lovely 1970s trades unionism for you is “One out, all out, brothers and sisters”. So if the Convocation of York wants the meeting, or the Convocation of Canterbury wants the meeting, or the House of Laity wants the meeting, but none of the others does, it has to happen.

The process is that the House and the Convocations have to meet separately. The broad outline of the motion that they have to debate is set out in Standing Order 96(2). It cannot be amended when the Convocations or the House of Laity meet and no procedural motions are permitted; so, you cannot, for example, move next business or the adjournment. It has to happen, just carrying on, so it is like a Final Approval debate in a way. Anybody who stands to speak must be called to speak. That is not going to happen because none of the competent bodies required the reference.

I have tried – I scratched my head quite a lot – to come up with a kind of pictorial description of what happens. The House of Laity is actually quite simple. The Chair and Vice-Chair make a decision whether they wish to require the reference or not. If they do not require it, it goes straight on to General Synod for Final Approval unless – and we will get to the “unless” in a bit – but if they do require it, there has to be a meeting of the

House. If the House approves it, it goes on to General Synod for Final Approval unless – we will come back to that. If it does not approve it, the legislation goes no further. For the House of Laity it is very simple. If the reference is required and you agree it, unless – it goes on. If you do not agree it, it stops. So the House actually, because it is the largest of those bodies, has quite a lot of power in its hands. It is only a simple majority vote at that meeting.

However, the Convocations also go through the same process. That is, so far as it goes, easy enough. However, each Convocation is made up of an upper House – the Bishops – and a lower House, which is the clergy. If one of those Houses says no, then there is a slightly more complex procedure. If one House of one Convocation does not approve the recommendation, it can be deferred to the next group of sessions for the same question to be put to both Convocations again. The House of Laity has done its stuff, but now it is up to the Convocations to sort themselves out. When I say one House of one Convocation, I also mean one House of each Convocation. This is the process it goes through. The House of Bishops in the Convocation of York and the House of Clergy, the lower House in the Convocation of Canterbury, does not make up a whole Convocation. So one House of one Convocation or one House of either, if they say no, it is deferred to the next group of sessions - or it can be.

It is open to any Synod member at that stage, when the news is given, to ask for the matter to be referred back to the Convocations at the next group of sessions and it is put to the vote. A simple majority will take it on to the next group of sessions, for the Convocations to go round the loop again. It may be possible for those people who voted against to be talked around, it might not, but, whatever, they have to do it if that is what is agreed.

If they go round the loop again and another House of one of the Convocations says no, it is then open to any member of Synod, once that is reported, to move that the House of Clergy and the House of Bishops – that is, the House of Clergy of the General Synod and the House of Bishops of the General Synod; not just of the Convocations individually, but both Convocations together – should debate those matters separately. If that is carried, the House of Bishops and the House of Clergy debate the matter separately at the next group of sessions.

So this can drag on quite a bit. That is why I say the House of Laity is so much simpler. It is not provincial. It does not have different bits and pieces in it. It is just one House and it is so much simpler.

If at the first stage when one of the Houses of one of the Convocations has said no and somebody at Synod says “Well, let’s defer it to the next group of sessions and the Convocations can look at it again” that vote is not carried, the legislation stops. We are at the same stage we were if the House of Laity had said no. If that goes through, however, and another House of either Convocation says no, and there is a vote on whether it should be referred to the House of Clergy and the House of Bishops, if there is a vote which says no then, the legislation stops there. So there are a number of cut-off points or break points in the procedure for the clergy that can stop it or delay it, but we are not doing that with these two Amending Canons and so all is well.

I know this is complex, and it is not the right time of day to be doing it. After I have checked everything with my learned colleagues, I will put these slides on the House of Laity website so that you can look at them and refer to them – for future reference – but it may be a little while before we come round to an Article 7 reference again by which time we may have a new House and somebody else will have to do it! I leave it with you.

The Chair. Can I just say, this is a complete set-up, because of course this is Nick’s last meeting with us and we are losing someone who actually understands Article 7 – or, at least, claims to or seems to! It is very important that Liz says a few words. Where has she gone? She is over there.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): Nick, what a *tour de force*! That was wonderful! An enormous collective thanks and gratitude from the whole of the House of Laity. Your work in support of our House and individual members has been exemplary. Your personal work and the responsibilities that you have taken have increased over the many years that we have had the privilege of you working at Church House, and you have accepted all of these changes and all of this extra responsibility and work with your usual aplomb. We thank you for that very much indeed.

It reminds me of the story of the swan that you all have heard told. Here he is. He is gliding along gracefully and elegantly and he is belying the reality that he is paddling like hell underneath. You do it so well, Nick! Your professionalism, your expertise, are shared generously with any who ask for it, and your often mischievous sense of humour, as we have just seen this evening – because now you have befuddled all of us – has endeared you to us all.

We wish you every blessing as you move into your new role as the Director at St Andrew Holborn, a Guild Church with a number of charities that make many grants and awards across the piece. It also has a conference centre. I think he is going to another huge job.

Nick, your vision will greatly enhance the mission of that place. Our losing you is their good fortune.

We have a small gift to show our real appreciation for all that you have meant to us. We wish you every success and fulfilment in your new life.

Please, Laity, let us show our real appreciation.

Mr Nicholas Hills (Secretary to the House of Laity): Unaccustomed as I still am to public speaking, I should like to thank you very much. I am very, very touched. It has been a privilege to serve the House of Laity and a privilege to work on your behalf. It will be something that I will actually miss, I am discovering at this group of sessions. The General Synod is indeed something I will miss, and all of you. Working at Church House possibly less so! But working with you and for you is definitely something which has been one of the biggest privileges of my working life. I am, however, looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting on with the business at St Andrew Holborn. Thank you very, very much.

The Chair: It is 9.55 pm. Shall we stand and say the Grace?

Thank you. And go to the quiz!